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SR/10-61-0066

3 February 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Central Cover Group

ATTENTION : Mr. Thomas Strange

SUBJECT : Basic Proposal to Cover Field Assessment
of Potential REDSKIN Agent Candidates

1. A meeting was held 1 February 1961, to discuss the feasibility of conducting field assessment of potential REDSKIN agent candidates by staff psychologists of the Assessment and Evaluation Staff, OTR, under suitable (non-official) cover. Conferees were Messieurs Thomas Strange and (John Lynch) of Central Cover Group, John Gittinger of TSD, Dr.³ (James Lau) and Dr. John Golder of the A&E Staff, OTR, and Fielder Dudley of SR/10. The problem discussed in para 2 below was recognized and tentative agreement reached on the basic proposal discussed in para 3 below.

2. Heretofore field assessments have been conducted by SR/10 case officers whose capabilities in the rather esoteric science of psychological assessment are, at best, based fundamentally on intuition and subject to variable degrees of objectivity. Furthermore these case officers reveal their Agency connection on initial contact supported by credentials in alias. Thus all agent candidates screened in the field become aware of Agency interest to exploit legal travel to the USSR for intelligence purposes. These include a considerable percentage who are screened out during the initial interview or subsequently as a result of Headquarters assessment.

3. The Problem:

a. To screen out unsuitable REDSKIN agent candidates without revealing Agency interest and to reduce possibilities of irrational reaction, i.e., going to the Press or writing letters to the President when later approached by an Agency representative proposing an intelligence mission.

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b. To restrict revelation of SR Division safe apartments, staff employees and general tasks germane to REDSKIN operations only to those candidates most likely to be accepted for recruitment.

c. To cut down on the necessity of processing Provisional Operational Approvals on all leads to be contacted for initial screening, thereby reducing the heavy workload now imposed on the Office of Security and the CI Staff by SR/10.

4. Basic Proposal:

a. To send staff psychologists of the A&E Staff, OTR, to conduct field assessments, when feasible, of potential REDSKIN agent candidates, based on leads furnished by SR/10's spotter network. The staff psychologists will represent themselves as employees or consultants of

[redacted] a well established proprietary of TSD, conducting interviews on behalf of anonymous but actual clients in the fields of education, industry, commerce and government (both federal and state). Other established proprietary cover can be provided if and when appropriate. The proprietary organizations can provide full "backstopping" throughout every normal working day. Appropriate documentation is to be provided in true name or alias, whichever is appropriate in any particular case.

b. As a test run, twelve potential REDSKIN agent candidates in the New England area have been selected for initial contact and assessment by Dr. John Golder as soon as this proposal has been concurred in and approved. Candidates in the Midwest are tentatively scheduled for screening by Dr. (James Lau) during the latter half of February.

c. Those agent candidates recommended as likely prospects by the staff psychologists will then be contacted by SR/10 case officers, when Provisional Operational Approvals have been granted, who will ascertain willingness and availability for travel in the USSR on intelligence missions. When response is affirmative each candidate will be invited to Washington for full Headquarters assessment and possible recruitment.

3/27/61
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5. Earliest consideration of this proposal is requested so that the time consuming screening and processing of suitable REDSKIN agents can be accomplished in time for utilization during the 1961 travel season.

6. Any questions concerning this proposal should be directed to Fielder Dudley, SR/10, extension 8297.

HOWARD OSBORN
Deputy Chief, SR Division