

COUNTER-SUBVERSION

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The following comments refer to the memorandum which is to be circulated as a basis for the discussion.

Paragraphs 1 - 2. There is nothing new about these "principles". But it may be worth while to reaffirm them, in order to prevent misunderstanding in military circles.

The Chiefs of Staff have sometimes seemed inclined to view these covert activities in isolation from policy. They also tend to overestimate the results which can be achieved by activities of this kind.

There have also been some signs that the Chiefs of Staff would like to be in a position to control C's organisation.

Paragraph 4. The arguments summarised here seem to lead to the conclusion that the Official Committee on Communism (Overseas) can now be disbanded. Before accepting this conclusion, however, Ministers should be reminded of the reasons why this Committee was appointed. It was set up, by the Labour Government, at a time when the Chiefs of Staff were restive about <sup>the conduct</sup> ~~a check~~ of foreign policy and thought that the Foreign Office were not doing enough to counter Communist encroachments abroad. The Committee was designed to provide them with a forum in which they could air their views on this and suggest ways in which more might be done. The Committee does, in fact, provide the Chiefs of Staff with opportunities to "needle" the Foreign Office on what are essentially aspects of foreign policy. The recent report by the Chiefs of Staff (C.O.S.(55) 262) on "Cold War: Countering Covert Aggression" is an example of this.

For myself I doubt whether this sort of sniping serves any useful purpose. But, if it is to be stopped and the Committee is to be disbanded, it will be necessary for Ministers to explain the position clearly

to the Chiefs of Staff and to make it clear that these matters fall within the responsibility, not of the military, but of the Foreign Secretary and Colonial Secretary respectively.

Paragraph 6. Ministers will probably wish to know who is to preside over the group of officials proposed at the end of this paragraph. I do not think that the Colonial Secretary is right in suggesting that this body should have a Colonial Office chairman. This might be appropriate if its sole function were to decide whether a particular "counter-subversion" operation should be undertaken in a particular Colony. But in the early stages it is more likely to be concerned with the wider problems mentioned in sub-paragraphs (i) and (iii) of paragraph 6 of the memorandum. Therefore, in the initial stages, while these questions of principle and organisation are being thrashed out, we shall need as chairman someone who has knowledge (not to be found in the Colonial Office) of our secret intelligence agencies and their inter-relation. The best choice would be Mr. P.H. Dean (Foreign Office) - in his capacity as chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee. I hope that the Colonial Secretary may be willing to agree that he should be the chairman of this body. It is just conceivable, however, that the Colonial Secretary may feel that Mr. Dean had too much to do with those recommendations in the Templer Report which were critical of the lack of any effective intelligence organisation within the Colonial Office, and may object on that account to his being appointed chairman of this body. I hope that this may not be so; but, if it is, it may be necessary for the Secretary of the Cabinet to preside over this group in the initial stages of its work.

If Ministers approve the proposals in the memorandum the next steps will be:-

(i) To prepare a draft directive, for the guidance of the Departments concerned setting out the main points of policy and organisation on which agreement has been reached.

(ii) To see the Chiefs of Staff (together with the Minister of Defence and the Secretary of State for War) and to explain how policy and organisation in respect of "counter-subversion", is to be arranged in future.