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S.V.(64) 3 (Final)

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14th February, 1964

CABINET
COUNTER SUBVERSION COMMITTEE

FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

Note by the Secretaries

At Annex is a copy of the memorandum on the functions of the Committee, in the form in which it has been sent to the Chiefs of Staff Committee in accordance with the conclusion recorded at the last meeting of the Committee (S.V.(64) 2nd Meeting, Minute 7). The appendix to the memorandum containing the terms of reference of the Committee and the directive to the Chairman, is not attached.

(Signed) W.M. KNIGHTON
J.S.H. SHATTOCK

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

14th February, 1964

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MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEFS OF STAFF

The Counter Subversion Committee

As the Chiefs of Staff are aware, the Committee was originally set up as an informal Foreign Office committee, with representation from other departments, to act as a "cold war lobby". Responsibility for counter-subversion action rested in the Overseas Departments, F.O., C.R.O., and C.O.

2. The Committee continued in this form throughout 1963, though its efficiency was much improved by the provision of a full-time permanent secretary of senior grade. It operated on the basis of the following definition of subversion:-

"Activities other than major political, economic and military measures, intended to weaken or destroy pro-Western or independent elements or the sources of Western strength in any country with the object of gaining the support of that country for the policies of Communist or other hostile powers and eventually bringing it under their control".

3. As a result of an enquiry and recommendations by Lord Strang in 1963, the Committee was elevated on January, 1 1964 into an Official Inter-departmental Cabinet Committee, chaired by a Deputy Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, and reporting, when necessary, to the Defence and Overseas Policy (Official) Committee. Details of the composition and terms of reference of the new Committee, and of the Cabinet Office's directive to the Chairman, are annexed.

Intelligence

4. The Committee cannot work without adequate overt and covert intelligence. During 1963 improved arrangements were made with J.I.C. for the J.I.C. Outlook or Threat papers to be broadened to include subversive activities by Communist or other hostile elements. In addition, threat assessment papers prepared by Departments in Whitehall (e.g. the Security Service or the Information Research Department of the Foreign Office) are now first fed into the J.I.C. machine for further examination and subsequent issue of J.I.C. papers. Most Foreign Office Missions abroad and some C.R.O. Missions have been sent a counter-subversion questionnaire which acts as a list of "indicators" on subversion to be examined by the Mission at regular intervals. During 1963 it remained broadly a fact that the covert collection of intelligence was not permitted in Commonwealth territories.

Priorities

5. In the absence of any overall planning machinery for the Overseas Department, Information Research Department of the Foreign Office issued twice a year an assessment of Communist priorities for subversion by regions with the

object, inter alia, of the priorities being taken into account when Overseas Departments draw up e.g. economic and technical aid programmes.

Counter Measures

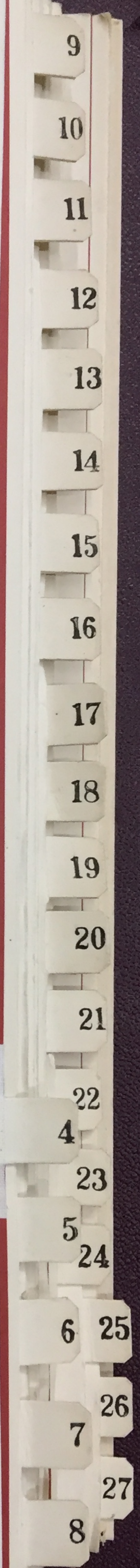
6. The countering of subversion in other people's independent and sovereign territories or even in Colonial territories where the Government is largely autonomous is in the nature of things a difficult and delicate task.

7. The measures which are available for countering subversion may be grouped under three principal heads:-

- (a) The first consists in the obtaining by us of intelligence on clandestine subversion and its communication where practicable to the Government which is threatened, in order that appropriate security precautions may be taken. In this group also may be included help towards training the special branches and the police generally of cooperative overseas governments.
- (b) The second, of a longer term nature, consists of open measures designed to counter and pre-empt hostile subversion in its more open forms and to create conditions in which subversion cannot readily flourish. Under this very wide heading come, e.g. the activities of the overseas information services, external broadcasts to the B.B.C., the operations of the British Council, capital aid and technical assistance.
- (c) The third group includes covert activities of all kinds, including covert propaganda.

8. Although the Counter Subversion Committee is concerned with all these forms of counter measures, it does not control any of them because it is not an executive body. Day-to-day coordination of all H.M.G.'s activities directed to any particular overseas territory is the responsibility of the Overseas Department of State concerned; and the bulk of action under all these heads is taken in the normal course of departmental business without stimulus from the Committee.

9. The function of the Committee is to facilitate the pooling of ideas, to ensure that due account is taken of counter subversion interests and priorities when plans are under consideration and when necessary to stimulate action by departments or authorities which have executive responsibility, and to coordinate activities of different departments. Two important limitations on the Committee's ability to carry out this role should be mentioned here. The first is the ban on covert operations in Commonwealth countries which continued throughout 1963 and the other the understandable reluctance of our friends to have secret operations in Colonial or foreign territories discussed in a Committee with such an extensive membership. Despite these limitations, the field to be covered is enormous and, for this reason, a start was made during 1963 with the setting up of Working Groups to examine particular threats



and to recommend counter measures. The Working Group procedure has now been officially sanctioned in the Directive to the Chairman of the Committee, and will, it is hoped, make it increasingly possible for covert operations to be discussed more freely than in the past. This should add appreciably to the effectiveness of the work done, since it is obviously desirable that covert and overt measures should be properly coordinated.

10. The process of appointing I.R.D. Field Officers overseas and of giving Foreign Office Regional Information Officers special I.R.D. duties proceeded during the year. The primary task of these officers is to assess local Communist and other hostile subversive activities, particularly propaganda in all its forms, to propose counter-measures and to carry out unattributable counter-propaganda. The missions in which such officers are posted are Accra, Lagos, Leopoldville, Nairobi and Algiers; Aden, Beirut, Nicosia, Baghdad and Ankara; New Delhi, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Rangoon, Saigon and Hong Kong; Caracas, Lima, Mexico City, Recife, Rio de Janeiro and the U.K. Mission to the United Nations New York. Further posts at present under consideration are the Caribbean (to help, inter alia, over British Guiana), Havana and Santiago.

Activities of Committee during 1963

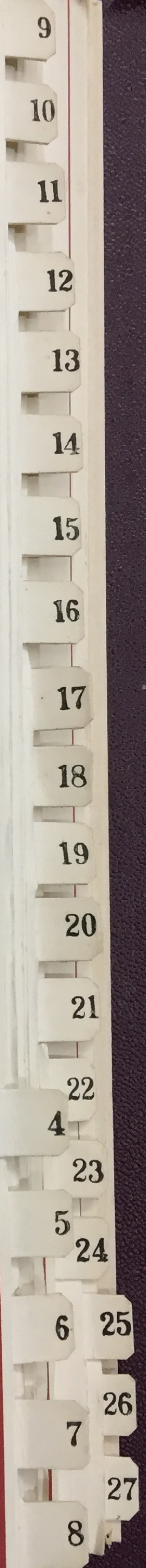
1. (a) Malaysian/Indonesian confrontation

In the months before the establishment of Malaysia, the Committee aided the coordination of open and unattributable propaganda, both in the field and in this country as between the three Overseas Departments concerned and the Ministry of Defence. Since August, 1963, the Committee has continued to act as a coordinator on counter-measures, particularly with the C.R.O. and the High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, and has obtained a special subvention of £50,000 from the Secret Vote for aiding the Malaysians in this field.

(b) Miscellaneous. The Committee has also been engaged in reviewing and stimulating action over a number of different questions. Examples are the Communist threat to British Guiana; the Communist threat to Somalia and the gap in Western efforts resulting from the rupture of Anglo-Somali relations; subversion from non-Communist sources in Kuwait; Information questions of various kinds, particularly in new Commonwealth countries; the threat to Aden; and Communist technical aid to developing countries and means of dealing with this.

Funds

2. (a) The Committee has no funds of its own but has a general responsibility for scrutinising the expenditure by the three Overseas Departments of small special counter-subversion discretionary funds on the Open Vote. These funds are intended to fill "the gap" to deal with which was one of



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the objectives for which the Committee was formed. They provide quick finances for minor projects with counter-subversive objects which either fall between different Votes or which were not provided for in the current year's Estimates and are too urgent to wait for next year's. They have proved a great success. In 1963/64 £21,000 was allocated to the Foreign Office and £5,000 each to the C.R.O. and C.O. Increased provision is being sought for 1964/65. A sum of £33,000 for police training for foreign nationals (an important counter-subversion activity) was also provided for the Foreign Office in the Open Vote on the sponsorship of the Committee.

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- (b) The Committee also solved another "gap" problem by securing agreement for the provision of overt funds from the Services budget for Community Relations activities for the Services overseas. £28,000 was provided in the 1963/64 Estimates and a slightly increased allotment has been asked for in 1964/65.
- (c) The Committee has both individually and collectively given support to proposals for further increasing the budget allotments for the Information Services and for technical assistance for developing countries. In particular strong support was urged for increasing the activities of the Voluntary Service Overseas. As a result of increased provision of funds the number of Volunteers will have increased from 296 in 1962 to an estimated 800 in 1964. The Treasury are beginning to ask for the Committee's advice when asked to provide special funds for overseas projects said to have special counter-subversion justification. The Committee's recommendation for example helped towards getting funds for the new television operation in Aden.
- (d) There has not been any difficulty in the sanctioning of secret funds when required.

3. Although its status has been enhanced the Committee remains a stimulator and coordinator and not an executive body. Responsibility for counter-subversion actions, both overt and covert, remains with the Overseas Political Departments concerned. The Committee has two Secretaries, one full-time now that it is within the Cabinet Office structure. All three Overseas Departments and the Ministry of Defence are increasingly using I.R.D. as an infrastructure of the work of the Committee.

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