

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

File # 131

TO
À

MR. B. WILLIAMS
OFFICE OF THE UNDER-SECRETARY

SECURITY
Sécurité

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM
De

Defence Liaison (2) Division

DATE

January 10, 1966.

REFERENCE
Référence

NUMBER
Numéro

SUBJECT
Sujet

SECURITY CLEARANCE OF FOREIGN
SERVICE OFFICER CANDIDATES

FILE	DOSSIER
OTTAWA 10-19-4-4	
MISSION 48	

*Mr. Williams
Plan links*

ENCLOSURES
Annexes

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DISTRIBUTION

c.c.-
Mr. C. Hardy
Personnel
Operations
Division

You have asked me to discuss with you at 12:00 tomorrow a proposal that this year's foreign service candidates should be offered employment in the Department upon being cleared for security to Confidential level on the basis of a favourable RCMP fingerprint nominal records check to reduce the risk of candidates being lost to the Department because of the two or three months it normally takes to effect full security clearance.

2. Although we are not in a position to assess the merit of this proposal from a personnel point of view the disadvantages for security are quite clear.

(a) We would be obliged to employ in the Department for some months a number of new FSO's who are ineligible for access to highly classified material. Since there are comparatively few positions in the Department where FSO's working under such a restriction could be employed without real danger of them having access to Secret and Top Secret information, it may be difficult to employ them at all until the restriction is lifted. Should it be decided to ignore the relevant provisions of Cabinet Directive 35 of December 18, 1963, and to accept the risk of employing in a sensitive capacity persons who, upon subsequent investigation, are found to be unreliable or disloyal we may find ourselves in the difficult if not impossible position of having to answer charges that we deliberately violated a Cabinet directive on security. Although the size of the risk in numerical terms is small (rejections on security grounds in the FSO category have run over the years to only four to five per cent; only about one per cent was rejected on the basis of information contained in personal history forms or turned up in the course of RCMP records and fingerprint checks), we consider that the consequences of only one such case would be so severe as to make this course unacceptable. The Brossard case, described in the attached British report of the Standing Security Commission, is a classic example and we believe it offers an object lesson in this regard.

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- (b) We would probably be obliged to engage or continue to employ in the Department for some months (or longer, judging by the [REDACTED] a number of FSO's who upon investigation would have to be considered unreliable or of doubtful loyalty and therefore ineligible for a security clearance of any kind. While it might be possible to assign or transfer such persons to comparatively non-sensitive positions until they could be separated from the Department, this strikes us as an incongruous situation which should be accepted only for the most compelling of reasons.
- (c) The Civil Service Commission have assured Personnel Operations Division orally that employees who are found unacceptable for any reason may be dismissed without right of appeal provided they are still on probation. Cabinet Directive 35, however, draws no distinction between probationary and established Civil Servants and clearly grants the right of appeal to any federal employee threatened with dismissal on security grounds. This robs the Civil Service Commission contention of a good deal of its relevancy in the present context since it can be considered valid only where adequate reasons exist, on other than security grounds, for separating from the Department a probationary employee of doubtful loyalty or reliability. Indeed, even where such reasons exist, which is likely to be seldom, we may nevertheless find it quite impossible to utilize administrative procedures in the face of assertions by the employee that he was being dismissed for security reasons. Again the [REDACTED] is much in point.
- (d) It has been suggested that the risks involved in the new procedure could be further reduced by withholding offers of employment to candidates whose personal history forms indicate there may be difficulty or delay in granting full security clearance. There is no doubt that cases of this type are on the increase. However, be that as it may, this suggestion must be rejected since its adoption would preclude the issue of an eligible list, in the absence of which no offers of employment could be made, until all candidates had been fully cleared.

3. We are of the opinion, therefore, that the proposed modification of security procedures could only be effected at the expense of security and might possibly lead to disaster. This is not too strong a word: in almost every one of the recent cases examined by [REDACTED] there were indications that, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Security clearance procedures are useless unless they are thorough, and to be thorough takes time.

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4. It occurs to me that a possible solution to any difficulties which might arise in arranging separation where such action is required might be for prospective entrants to the Department to be carried on the strength of the Civil Service Commission until security clearance has been effected. This would make it possible for the Civil Service Commission to offer assignment to a less sensitive department without bringing into play the difficult provisions of Cabinet Directive 35.

*This
is
interesting*


J. Zimmerman