

DIR 7041

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Executive Registry
71-4983/1

21 December 1971

6383
Barnet

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Senior Seminar Guest Speaker's Article
Criticizing CIA

1. This Memorandum has been prepared as a result of the publication in the New York Review of Books issue of 30 December 1971 of an article by Richard J. Barnet referring to the CIA Senior Seminar. (A copy of the article is contained in Attachment A.) Barnet, Co-director of the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, D.C. was a guest speaker in the Seminar on 4 November.

2. The Seminar is discussed in the first two paragraphs of the article in which Barnet gives a misleading account (a) of the purpose of the Seminar, (b) of his role in it; and (c) of his discussions with Seminar participants. Contrary to Barnet's assertion, the purpose of the Seminar was definitely not to "consider its (the Agency's) image" except in a limited sense of having the Seminar participants reflect on the subject briefly. Further, in a single paragraph Barnet tendentiously connects previous "conversations with a number of CIA officials," who he believes agree with his views but none of whom are identified, to the Senior Seminar participants with the following statement: "One CIA man after another eagerly joined the discussion to assure me that the days of the flamboyant covert operations were over." One or two participants did indicate agreement with Barnet's contention that technical collection has come to overshadow agent collection, but the recollections of the Seminar Staff and record of the discussion preserved by the Senior Seminar rapporteur for this session simply do not support Barnet's account. (Further details concerning the Seminar discussions with Barnet are contained in Paragraphs 6 and 7 below, following a resume of the circumstances surrounding the Seminar's invitation to Barnet.)

3. Barnet was invited to make a presentation on 4 November to the Senior Seminar as part of the four-day Block of the program devoted to domestic changes which are directly relevant to the Agency. This Block corresponded to the following announced objective of the Seminar:

"To develop greater insight into problems and pressures facing CIA management, the processes of change within the Agency and in its external relationship, and developments in American society which are relevant to CIA as an organization."

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The overall scope note for the "domestic environment" notes that the Block "examines contemporary domestic problems and issues and their impact on national priorities, foreign policy and the Central Intelligence Agency; and explores the relationships of the communications media and public opinion with the executive branch of the U.S. Government in general and with CIA in particular. In this Block the Seminar Staff sought to present "critical" as well as "orthodox" views of problems so that participants would be challenged intellectually. Separate presentations were scheduled on "Social and Cultural Change in American Society -- A Report," "Changing Economic Priorities and the Implications for CIA," "A Youth Viewpoint," "The Drug Culture," "Government and the Media," "CIA and the Media," "A Critic Looks at U.S. Foreign Policy," and "Social and Cultural Change in American Society -- A Perspective." The penultimate was the topic proposed to Mr. Barnet (see Attachment B, copy of topic scope note). Thus in no sense, as his article implies, was he invited to discuss the "Agency image."

4. Our selection of Barnet as a speaker was based on several considerations. He has achieved prominence as an articulate, if a hairshirt, critic of U.S. foreign policy via his books and articles (one of the latter, an excerpt from his latest book Washington Plans an Aggressive War, appeared in Harper's just a few days prior to his scheduled session with the Seminar.) He is not totally ignorant of the foreign policy process, as some academic critics are. Finally, I knew him personally from our service in the U.S. Disarmament Administration and its successor ACDA and believed he would live up to his billing as a "critic."

5. Prior to making any move to invite Barnet, I submitted his name, along with that of many other possible guest speakers, to the Office of Security. Approval to use Barnet on an unclassified basis was granted by Security on 1 September. Contrary to the usual Seminar practice of writing a formal letter of invitation outlining the nature and objectives of the Seminar, our contact was limited to my telephone call inviting him to speak and a follow-up letter asking for his suggestions concerning pertinent reading material and arranging details of his transportation to and from the Seminar site. (See Attachment C for a copy of the letter to Barnet.) His name was listed in the Senior Seminar guest speakers regularly forwarded to the DD/S by the OTR Speaker Coordinator.

6. The salient points of Barnet's formal presentation and ensuing discussion period were recorded by [redacted] Chief Personnel Security Division, Office of Security, who acted as Seminar rapporteur for the Block in which Barnet appeared. (See Attachment D for Rapporteur's summary of Barnet's session with the Seminar.) His presentation consisted of two hours with the Seminar members which commenced with formal lecture-style remarks

for one hour. His comments were critical, in a rather rambling fashion, of present day U.S. foreign policy. He particularly emphasized the impact of the Nixon Doctrine on foreign policy, contending that the Doctrine is a throwback to the Cold War and the policies of that era. Moreover, he claimed that CIA is an antiquated instrument of that cold war and its image is that of a "sinister force."

7. Following Barnet's formal remarks and a coffee break, the Seminar group reassembled in the Seminar lounge for discussions. Several questions were put to Mr. Barnet, but his detailed responses left far more questions unanswered than the group would have liked. Despite an occasional question posed by Barnet, no specific information was volunteered by the Seminar members. There was one lively exchange stemming from his claim that CIA is responsible for training [redacted] in methods of interrogation with primary reliance upon the use of physical torture. When considerable skepticism was expressed by the group, the speaker asserted he had his information on "good authority" -- a personal friend. Pressed further to identify his source, Barnet claimed that the syndicated columnist Jack Anderson had given him this information. (Incidentally, he did not allude to this contention in the N.Y. Review article.) 25X1C

8. Near the close of the discussion period, Barnet raised the charge that CIA has engaged in assassination. I joined several members of the Seminar in rejecting this claim in a most positive manner. Notwithstanding, he concluded his article with a general reference to the Agency's having developed "brilliant techniques" for assassination, sabotage and deception.

9. Following the informal session, five of the participants and I took Barnet to lunch since he had declined the Seminar's proffered honorarium on the basis that it was against the policy of his institution to accept government money. The conversation at lunch, according to the recollections of those of us in attendance, would certainly not have generated any of the allegations in the Review article.

10. The Seminar members were not particularly impressed with Barnet's theses or arguments. Some members expressed astonishment over the apparent lack of knowledge on the speaker's part as well as the sources of his information. Most Seminar members did state, however, in their critiques that they found him provocative and stimulating. (See Attachment E, copy of student evaluations of Barnet.)

[redacted] 25X1A
Chief, Senior Seminar

Atts: A/S

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP					
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3	<i>DDS</i>				
4	<i>DTR</i>				
5					
6					
ACTION		DIRECT REPLY		PREPARE REPLY	
APPROVAL		DISPATCH		RECOMMENDATION	
COMMENT		FILE		RETURN	
CONCURRENCE		INFORMATION		SIGNATURE	

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Remarks:

Colonel White:

The attached memorandum and cover sheet although lengthy and perhaps unnecessarily defensive responds to your comment on the Barnet appearance at the Senior Seminar. I can see the wisdom of exposing students to critics of the Agency and generally endorse the concept. Although a majority of this seminar would apparently endorse inviting Mr. Barnet again I intend to tell Hugh not to do so not because of the content of his presentation or views on the Agency but because he violated our confidence and attempted to trade on his seminar appearance.

FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER

[REDACTED] ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.		DATE
John W. Conroy Deputy Director for Support 7D26 ext. [REDACTED]		30 DEC 1971
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FORM NO. 2-61 237

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25X1

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

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COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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The attached Memorandum for the Record sets out the whole story of Richard Barnet's appearance at the Senior Seminar.

Two factors connected with this episode cause me to wonder whether we really are "the loser in this particular case":

a. Beginning his article with the boast that he had been invited to appear in our Senior Seminar seems to me to emphasize the point that CIA is not afraid to listen to its critics. The several paragraphs about the Seminar, however tendentious and misleading, do detract a good deal from the points he later goes on to make.

b. One exchange with the students during the Seminar suggests that his article would have been even more critical if he had not been talked down on one of his favorite points. This was his allegation that CIA is engaged in training [redacted] in the use of torture. He made a good deal of this point to the students; given his grasping at all other types of criticism of CIA he would surely have included this one in the article if he had not been persuaded otherwise.

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HUGH T. CUNNINGHAM