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Provenance:

Category: **Uncategorized**

Person:

Date:

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Chief, WE

SUBJECT: Mr. James A. Noel Fitness Report Covering the Period 14 August 1961 to 31 March 1962

1. Mr. Noel assumed his duties as Chief of Station, Madrid on 23 September 1961. The Station, as constituted when Mr. Noel arrived, included some 21 staffers plus numerous contract personnel, as well as a two-man base in Barcelona. The Madrid Station proper not only includes the Embassy installation but an outside operations section as well. Since Mr. Noel arrived the Station has been launched into a Cuban operations program of considerable scale and on a crash basis. In addition, in this period, one State cover slot was withdrawn, and the experienced Chief of Base, Barcelona had to be brought home due to a family emergency.

2. To date Mr. Noel has given every evidence of a particular ability to cope with the crash program and the acute shortage of personnel with judiciousness and maturity. While it is too early, yet, to pass judgment, there are indications that Mr. Noel has been preoccupied with Cuban problems (an area of special interest to him) to the detriment of lower priority but, nonetheless, necessary Spanish targets (for example, contact with the local opposition and a building effort against the Spanish Communist Party).

3. As indicated above, Mr. Noel has not been in place as Chief of Station long enough to justify firm reservations concerning his management, nor to permit meaningful criticism. Also, as indicated above, his outstanding intellectual strength to date has been his ability to cope with a heavy operational program, a shortage of personnel, and a sometimes difficult operational climate, with judgment, calmness and patience.

THOMAS F. TICKLE

Chief, WE/5

CONCUR:

[Signature]

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