

# USIA's Criteria . . . . .

## Questions Raised About Rejection of 2 Books on LBJ

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WHAT CRITERIA does the United States Information Agency follow in deciding to distribute a book about Lyndon B. Johnson?



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The agency has spurned two recent studies of the President — both favorably reviewed — for use in its overseas libraries.

The agency bought and distributed 214,830 copies of "The Lyndon Johnson Story," a flattering profile by Booth Mooney, a Texan who served six years on Mr. Johnson's Washington staff.

In 1964, USIA also passed favorable on "The Professional," a book about the

President by William S. White, a syndicated columnist and long-time personal friend of Mr. Johnson's.

The two books that failed to make USIA's "recommended list" are Philip Geyelin's "Lyndon B. Johnson and the World," published last June, and "Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power," by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, which was released yesterday.

Both Geyelin, a diplomatic correspondent for the Wall Street Journal, and Evans and Novak, deal critically—as well as favorably—with aspects of the President's policies and personality.

"I'm sorry to hear this," Mooney, now a free-lance writer, said yesterday when he was informed by a reporter of USIA's decision

on the Evans-Novak volume.

"It's a darn good book," he added. "I think it's quite objective and a very accurate portrayal of the President's personality."

A USIA SPOKESMAN said the decision not to recommend or translate the Geyelin and Evans-Novak books was "made routinely at the normal level" deep within the bibliographic division of the agency's Information Center Service.

After consulting USIA Director Leonard H. Marks, the spokesman reported that the matter "did not come to the Director's attention." Before being named to his present post, Marks served as a consultant to the Johnson family for their Texas broadcasting interests.

The spokesman explained that USIA intends to spend

\$6 million in the coming fiscal year for its book programs. Last year the agency purchased a total of 175,032 books, including paperbacks, gleaned from some 1500 titles.

In making its choices, the spokesman noted the agency's book selection staff is guided by a "Statement of Policy" established in July, 1953.

That statement calls for choosing books that provide "useful information about the United States, its people, culture, institutions, policies, programs, achievements and diverse views on national and international issues, including materials suitable to counteract propaganda campaigns directed against the United States."

LIBRARY FIELD requests for the Mooney book, revised and reissued in January, 1964, totalled 618 hard and 350 paperback copies, according to USIA.

But the agency issued 5000 hard and 50,262 soft copies of "The Lyndon Johnson Story" for its "Student Editions Program."

In addition, it translated the Mooney volume into 24 languages, including Persian, Vietnamese and Bengali.

Appearing yesterday on NBC's "Today" show, in conjunction with the publication of their book, Evans and Novak, syndicated columnists, noted the large distribution of the Mooney account in contrast to USIA's refusal to recommend their Johnson study.

Novak said the author's publisher, New American Library, had been informed by the agency that the book was "not suitable for a foreign audience." "What worries us," Novak added, "is that (the agency's policies) sometimes get a little akin to censorship."