

S E C R E T

TAB A

9 September 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Intelligence Required under NSC-159

1. NSC-159 states that "the value of more complete intelligence (related to continental defense) would be so tremendous that no restrictions on funds or manpower should be permitted to hamper technological or covert avenues of approach". DCID 4/2 has long placed the highest priority on collection and production of intelligence bearing on possible Soviet attack on the Continental United States. The intelligence community and the highest policy levels of the government have until now interpreted this as giving overriding importance to information on the Soviet atomic and thermonuclear program. Recently, however, informed opinion has almost unanimously conceded that, once the Soviets acquired an atomic weapon stockpile in the hundreds, the question of exact numbers becomes academic.

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2. Now, the paramount threats facing those responsible for our national security are, first, the Soviet ability to deliver an atomic attack on targets in the Western Hemisphere, and second, the Soviet capability to counter the U.S. retaliatory attack.

3. Conceding that the Soviets can cover most of the United States with existing aircraft on one-way missions, the key factor in the first threat is their ability to navigate to and locate exactly the desired targets versus our early warning and interception capability. In the second threat, the crucial factor is the Soviet ability to locate and effectively intercept our attacking aircraft. In the ultimate, the outcome in each case will hinge, to a large extent, upon the strengths of the opposing electronic systems, and they become the prime U.S. intelligence problem.

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6. It is recommended:

a. That the Intelligence Advisory Committee:

(1) Establish Soviet delivery capability as the highest National Intelligence Objective.

(2) Establish Soviet air defense capability as the second highest National Intelligence Objective.

b. That the National Security Council direct the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence jointly to:

(1) Study all means that can be employed to collect intelligence on these Objectives.

(2) Recommend to the NSC the establishment of such organization as will insure the most efficient development and utilization of such means and the optimum collation and evaluation of all resultant data.

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Deputy Director/Intelligence

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