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17 June 1966

Talking Paper

SUBJECT: Proposed Transfer of NIS Production Responsibility  
from HEW to Bureau of the Census

The NIS Program

The National Intelligence Survey is an interagency program established in 1948 to provide the Government with coordinated intelligence on the basic and relatively unchanging characteristics of foreign countries. An NSCID (NIS 10-3) laid on the Program as a consequence of World War II experience with critical gaps in basic intelligence.

The idea underlying the Program is to have intelligence available, on hand, when the need arises. To that end, a broad topical outline was adopted covering such factors as military geography, transportation, sociological, political, economic and military. These topics are covered in separately published NIS sections, on a selective basis as appropriate to the country.

A particularly important element of the NIS Program is the allocation of production responsibility. By National Security Council Directive the DCI was enjoined to utilize all appropriate resources of the Government in the production of intelligence, including the non-USIB agencies. In this way the NIS Program utilizes the specialized know-how and production capability of all agencies. In addition to the USIB agencies, the Departments of Commerce, Labor, Agriculture, HEW, Interior, have meaningfully contributed to the national intelligence production effort.

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Current Situation:

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has been responsible for the production of certain sociological units of the NIS: Characteristics of the People; Religion, Education and Public Information; and Welfare. HEW has advised the CIA that it wanted the International Survey Staff of HEW (the group doing the NIS work) transferred to another agency, explaining that Secretary Gardner did not want passage of two upcoming bills jeopardized because of an HEW-CIA relationship. Subsequently, HEW and CIA tried and failed to have the Department of State assume this NIS responsibility. CIA is not an appropriate locus for this Staff because the HEW personnel want to retain Civil Service status and several are beyond CIA retirement age.

The CIA Director of Basic Intelligence then consulted the Bureau of the Census where the reaction to producing this sociological intelligence met with a generally favorable response. It was explained, however, that basic consideration of Census' mission had to be weighed before the Bureau and the Department of Commerce could reach a decision.

Role of Department of Commerce in NIS:

Commerce is now responsible for some Free World economic units of the NIS -- Manufacturing and Construction, Trade and Finance, and Population -- accomplished by the Bureau of International Commerce, the Business and Defense Services Administration, and the Bureau of the Census. We believe this relationship has been mutually beneficial.

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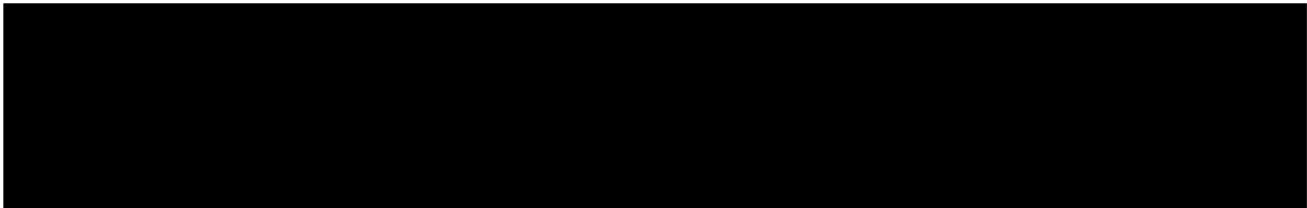
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The Bureau of Census' mission in demography could appropriately be broadened, we believe, to include the sociological units of the NIS. There is nowhere else in the Government where it would be more appropriate.

The sociological sections are a key element of the NIS Program. We are also witnessing a growing demand for sophisticated intelligence on how people live, think, and react as our national security interests expand, particularly as to the developing nations. The loss of a trained group, attuned to sociological intelligence needs, would be more than unfortunate.

What is involved:

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This money already has been allocated. The HEW Table of Organization comprises 20 full-time employees, GS-4 to GS-15, with an average grade of 10.3. HEW has agreed to provide space and administrative housekeeping on an ad hoc basis for the 20 personnel involved for up to three months beyond 30 June.

For your information:

On the basis of past experience with the Bureau of the Census, we know that their unit cost for production will be higher than HEW's cost. Adjustments in schedule or in total funds to be made available is to be expected if Census undertakes the work.

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