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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

1 December 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR  
(Draft for Board consideration)

SUBJECT: National Intelligence Objectives

REFERENCE: IAC-D-50/3, 30 November 1954

1. IAC-D-50/3, as submitted to the IAC, contains no analysis supporting its recommendations. The draft adopted by the Board and submitted to the IAC representatives did contain such an analysis (attached hereto as Tab A) and two additional recommendations derived therefrom:

a. That the recommended annual review of priority national intelligence objectives be conducted by the Board of National Estimates in conjunction with IAC representatives.

b. That your Special Assistant for Planning and Coordination, in conjunction with IAC representatives, be directed to review existing provisions for the development and coordination of specific information requirements and collection tasks in conformity with established priority objectives and to submit recommendations to the IAC.

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2. The Board found it impossible to secure general concurrence in this analysis and these recommendations for reasons discussed in Tab. B. However, the IAC representatives have stated that they anticipate no objection to the Director's adoption and implementation of the foregoing recommendations on the Board's recommendation and his own authority.

3. The Board believes the implementation of these two additional recommendations to be essential to the effective implementation of the recommendations in IAC-D-50/3. Accordingly, the Board recommends that, following the adoption of IAC-D-50/3, the Director inform the IAC that he has:

a. Designated the Board of National Estimates to conduct the annual review of priority national estimates, in conjunction with IAC representatives.

b. Instructed his Special Assistant for Planning and Coordination, in conjunction with IAC representatives, to review existing provisions for the development and coordination of specific information requirements and collection tasks in conformity with established priority national intelligence objectives and to submit recommendations to the IAC.

4. The Board further recommends that discreet means be found to impress upon individual members of the IAC the desirability of their

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being represented, in the review of priority national intelligence objectives, by persons more broadly informed regarding substantive intelligence problems and more deeply imbued with the community spirit than those who have represented them hitherto. In the opinion of the Board, such representatives can now be found only in the estimates staffs of the several IAC agencies.

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TAB A

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS OMITTED FROM  
IAC-D-50/3

Text would consist of paragraphs 6-23 and 31-33 from the 20 October draft on national intelligence objectives, with an explanation that paragraphs 24-30 are in IAC-D-50/3 as Appendix C.

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TAB B

FACTORS AFFECTING THE COORDINATION OF IAC-D-50/3

1. The problem presented in IAC-D-50/3 is, essentially, how to provide long-term guidance from policy planners (the NSC Planning Board) and intelligence estimators (the Board of National Estimates and the IAC representatives with whom it normally collaborates) to intelligence collection and research. It is axiomatic that collection and research personnel need such guidance and are not in a position to supply it to themselves. For years it has been their complaint that no effective means have been devised to provide it for them, despite occasional earnest efforts on the part of several full-time intelligence planning staffs. Reference of the problem to the Board of National Estimates implied an IAC desire for a radically new approach from a more comprehensive point of view than that of those who had hitherto failed to solve it.

2. The Board reviewed the history of the subject, since 1946, and, although not eager to add to its own burdens, concluded that estimates personnel (itself and its colleagues in the departmental agencies) were in the best position to translate planners' intelligence requirements into priority national intelligence objectives through the identification of the critical substantive intelligence problems.

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At the same time, the Board recognized that intelligence objectives, as thus determined, could not serve as the final formulation of specific collection requirements. In the Board's concept, it would be the function of estimates personnel to translate planners' requirements into intelligence objectives, the function of research personnel to translate such objectives into specific information requirements, and the function of collection personnel to translate such requirements into specific tasks of collection. Thus each would have his appropriate function in the over-all plan -- but it was essential to the concept that the formulation of intelligence objectives is not a proper function of collection personnel.

3. The Service agencies, however, treated the formulation of national intelligence objectives as though it were primarily a collectors' problem. Although the Board communicated with them through their respective estimates staffs (its normal channel), the matter was referred internally to their chiefs of collection, who initially appeared as agency representatives. Subsequently the task of representation was transferred from collection to front office personnel, but the collection element continued to dominate consideration of the subject in the Service agencies. This circumstance had a severely adverse effect upon coordination.

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4. None of the IAC representatives with whom the Board had to deal in this matter had ever acted with it before in the preparation of a paper for IAC consideration. At the first meeting with them it became shockingly apparent that the confidence in mutual good faith which has been developed among estimators since 1950 was altogether lacking at the collectors' level. The atmosphere was like that which prevailed generally before 1950: the Service representatives frankly assumed that any proposal by an element of CIA must ipso facto be designed to entrap them. The tone of discussion improved materially when front office personnel replaced the collectors as IAC representatives -- that change alone made possible such progress as was achieved with respect to the subject -- but by that time the Service agencies' position had been strongly prejudiced, so that it was never possible to secure candid consideration of the Board's draft in its entirety.

5. DCID-4/2, in effect, assured priority to any collection requirement proposed by a Service agency, regardless of its actual importance in relation to national security considered from an NSC point of view. Service collection personnel were naturally loath to impair the monopolistic position which they thus enjoyed. However, any review of DCID-4/2 in the light of NSCID-4, and consequently of NSC 162/2, necessarily entailed an expansion of priority national intelligence objectives to assure appropriate consideration for non-military matters of major importance in the broader view of national security. The Board

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understood that that was precisely what the IAC had directed it to do. The original Service representatives, however, emphatically refused to make any significant change whatever in DCID-4/2. The front office personnel who replaced them withdrew from that untenable position and accepted the Board's draft of Appendix B as a basis for coordination, but their footnote on item I(c) is a manifest attempt to maintain the advantage enjoyed under DCID-4/2 while acknowledging that other matters not mentioned in DCID-4/2 are worthy of some secondary consideration.

6. The Service representatives were not well qualified to discuss the relative importance of the items listed in Appendix B as substantive intelligence problems within the context of over-all national security interest. Consequently their consideration of relative priority was governed almost entirely by calculation of procedural advantage or disadvantage for their separate agencies, and the over-all national interest went by default except insofar as it could be maintained by the Board with some support from State.

7. The Service representatives, in effect, refused to act on the analysis presented by the Board in support of its recommendations, except that they accepted a portion of it as Appendix C. Their objections to the remainder took the form of flat denial of demonstrable historical fact and of questioning the relevance of matters which the Board supposed the IAC would wish to know about in acting on the subject. The underlying objection, however, was probably to the tendency of the analysis

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to demonstrate that the previous directives had been grossly inadequate, that estimates personnel are best qualified to formulate priority national intelligence objectives, and that procedures for the application of established priority objectives should be thoroughly reviewed. The Board considers the specific objections raised to have been ill-informed and invalid, but deemed it expedient not to prejudice such constructive action as was possible by prolonging a hopeless argument.

8. Although it may cover corresponding substantive objections, the position taken by the Service representatives with respect to the additional recommendations presented in the covering memorandum was strictly legalistic: that it was inappropriate for IAC representatives to make recommendations involving the assignment of tasks to component elements of CIA. Having taken this position, they could not object to the Board's direct submission of these recommendations to the Director. They anticipated no IAC objection to the Director's adoption and implementation of them on his own authority.

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