

11 October 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Consultants

SUBJECT: Assumptions for Planning: The World Situation, 1969-73

We would appreciate your reactions to the main judgments herein concerning principal world trends in the period 1969-1973. We have been asked to contribute a short assessment along these lines for use by the Agency in long-term planning. The attached is a first draft, and does not represent a firm ONE position. Obviously, the time-frame is somewhat artificial, since the years before and after the specified period can neither be ignored nor crisply distinguished from 1969-73. Obviously too, the estimates in a short paper of this sort must be very general and, since it is done for planning purposes, must allow for variations, "other possibilities," and some "worst cases."



Acting Deputy Director  
National Estimates

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Planning Assumptions

I. General

1. Any forecast of the future world situation, particularly for a period three to seven years ahead, must allow for great uncertainties. Change and turmoil are more the rule than the exception in an era of rapid technological progress, speedy and widespread communication, close economic interdependence, rising socio-economic aspirations, the great gap between rich and poor nations, explosive population pressures, and the breakdown of traditional societies and attitudes in many parts of the world. Chance continues to play a large role in affairs, and to set limits on what can be foreseen. Thus while certain lines of development in some geographical or problem areas can be estimated with reasonable confidence, in most instances it is necessary to allow for varying alternatives. Moreover, we feel obliged to take note of certain contingent possibilities, or "worst cases" -- which, though often not "probable," are nonetheless of sufficient importance and likelihood as to deserve noting in any prudent planning for the period.

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2. It is also important for planning purposes to distinguish between situations which affect vital or important US security interests, and those which do not. Change of almost any sort, anywhere, affects US interests in some form and to some degree -- but in many cases the interests are not vital, nor closely related to security. Communist involvement may constitute grounds for counter-action by the US in situations which would not otherwise warrant US action; but there will also be turbulent situations in which Communist involvement is neither the main cause nor the central issue. How and to what extent US interests are affected in these situations will depend on cases, but the mere fact of change, instability or disorder does not automatically establish the existence of Communist responsibility and opportunity, nor does it necessarily mean that important US security interests are engaged.

## II. Armed Conflict

3. Nuclear war involving the US will remain a possibility during this period, but not necessarily more so than at present. The chances of a large-scale US conflict with Communist China will probably be greater than of one with the USSR, but the many

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variables involved in both cases -- including the course of the Vietnam war and the uncertainties in China -- prohibit confident assumptions on this question. Lesser conflicts -- wars between smaller powers, limited wars involving one or more larger powers, and insurrections will probably occur and will involve US interests, directly or indirectly, and perhaps US forces.

III. Threats to US Interests: The Communists

4. The Communist powers will constitute the chief political, subversive, and military threat to the US during the period in question, and the USSR in particular will be the chief rival power center. We anticipate some continuing erosion of the USSR's authority over other Communist states and parties, and a growing assertion of nationalism among such states and parties generally. The process will not, however, go so far as to end the USSR's paramount influence in the Communist world. In terms of threats to US interests, these trends may in time work to reduce Communist militancy as against the West and the underdeveloped world, but this cannot be assumed for any particular period.

5. The USSR and Eastern Europe: While it is only prudent to assume the continued hostility of the USSR toward US interests, this

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will probably not again take the form of openly aggressive threats as it did in the late 'forties and early 'fifties. The threat will be less stark, and more selective. It is most likely to take the form of political, economic, and subversive efforts to weaken US and Western positions -- particularly around the Soviet periphery. It cannot be assumed that the Soviets will avoid adventures in more remote areas -- Latin America, Africa, the Far East -- indeed they will continue efforts in all these areas and no doubt exploit opportunities as they arise. However, these remoter areas are likely to be lower in the Soviet scheme of priorities than those on the Soviet periphery. The USSR will probably continue to avoid the kind of overt military threat to Western Europe which tends to galvanize NATO, but it will retain an active interest in Europe, particularly on the German question. The Eastern European states will not themselves pose a threat to US security, but will present both problems and opportunities.

6. Communist China. The political scene in Communist China is likely to be one of great uncertainty and turmoil, as the regime seeks to arrange for the succession to Mao Tse-tung. This political atmosphere will make Peking's policies -- both at home and abroad -- more difficult to predict. Whatever the outcome of internal

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increase their efforts to expand their influence throughout the area at US expense, though often in sharp competition with each other. British presence and influence will diminish and Australia and New Zealand will increasingly look to the US for assistance in supporting their interests in the area.

8. The Middle East. It is likely that the Middle East will present much the same sort of problems and prospects in 1968-1973 as it has in the past few years. There will be a rather small number of fairly smoothly functioning countries -- e.g., Turkey and Israel; a rather larger number wherein governmental continuity will be critically dependent on one man; and the same area quarrels -- Arab-Israel, revolutionary-conservative, etc. In a world that is decreasingly bi-polar, most governments will be less willing to cooperate with the US in matters relating to the USSR. Moreover, radical nationalist regimes will be aligned in many foreign policy positions with the "non-colonialist" Communist countries. There are a number of places where political instability, especially if accompanied by insurrectionary activity, could develop so as to involve US military forces, and the one remaining sizable military installation in the Arab world -- Wheelus in Libya -- will have gone by the end of the period. Yet, the

massive US commercial investment is likely to be increased rather than eroded.

9. South Asia. Indo-Pakistani hostility and the Chinese presence along the Himalayas will continue to share the top of the list of worries with economic development problems of over half a billion people. Governmental stability will be less a problem than will a debilitating arms race. While Soviet support for India

  
it also introduces complications in overall US relations with India and Pakistan. We foresee no developments, barring trouble between India and China, which are likely to require major use of military forces in the area.

10. Latin America. The governments of most Latin American countries are inherently unstable and the causes of instability will continue. Failure of the Latin American version of the capitalist system to make rapid economic and social progress will enhance the appeal of extremists of right and left. Anti-US sentiment will increase further, and a variety of nationalist-populist movements are likely to emerge, seeking to overturn the established order and prepared to accept aid from all sources. Cooperation with such a movement would probably give a Communist



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party its best opportunity to improve position and influence; the possibility that Communists following this course might then go on to gain control of another Latin American country cannot be discounted. This possibility is probably greater in the Caribbean area than in the rest of Latin America. In any case, Cuban, Communist Chinese and Soviet efforts to support the various and competing Communist parties, and to foster subversion, will continue.

11. Africa South of the Sahara. Most black African countries will remain subject to acute internal instability, arising out of tribal, racial, religious, and sectional differences, as well as from political inexperience and social and economic tensions. Border conflicts will probably increase in frequency. The various "liberation" movements in white-dominated southern Africa will become more active, and the efforts of the black African states to force the US and other world powers to overthrow the white-dominated regimes will become even more vocal. Although Africa is an area of secondary importance to both the USSR and China, they will continue to seek to increase their influence in certain countries and to undermine the US position in countries where it is strong (e.g., Ethiopia). China and, in some cases

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Cuba and the UAR, will encourage wars of national liberation and other forms of internal strife in hopes of bringing to power groups beholden to them.

12. From the increased turmoil in Africa, in one or another of the above forms, incidents will arise that threaten US control of the few installations we have on the continent or US influence in countries where we have significant aid programs or private investments. Various disorders may also give rise to anti-American or pro-Communist regimes in countries where we now have no significant interests. More remotely, African instability could touch off an internal or international crisis that could expand to involve the US and a Communist power as antagonists.

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