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28 SEP 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Streamlining the MIS Program

1. At the suggestion of the Executive Committee, I have studied the MIS Program to determine whether the large workload and budgetary expenditures are essential and whether chronic deficiencies in coverage and timeliness can be remedied.
2. A description (memorandum from Office of Basic Intelligence, with enclosure) of the present status of the Program and current efforts to complete major elements of the MIS rapidly by selective summary coverage is appended.
3. I think the Program is moving in the right direction and efforts to simplify treatment and improve coverage are commendable. It seems to me, however, that more needs to be done to streamline the Program and provide complete, reasonably up-to-date coverage of all strategic areas of the world.
4. I believe the MIS Program has been led astray by its effort to cover the USSR in a detailed and expensious manner. The outline and scale of treatment appropriate to the USSR is obviously not entirely suited for the multitude of smaller countries on which rather simple general surveys are required. More important, the MIS Program has erred, in my opinion, by trying to crank in comparatively transient political materials which cannot possibly be kept up-to-date under the somewhat ponderous coordination and publication procedure of the MIS Program. Thus the persistent problem of obsolescence results from including subjects which are of no value as intelligence unless quite current.
5. SECID #3 defines basic intelligence as "that factual intelligence which results from the collation of encyclopedic information of a fundamental and more or less permanent nature and which as a result of evaluation and interpretation is determined to be the best available."

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6. A review of the NIS Standard Instructions suggests that the following portions of the NIS concern information of a fundamental and more or less permanent nature: military geography, transportation and telecommunications, static structural elements only of the sociological, political and economic Chapters, the map and chart appraisal, and the Supplements dealing with ports and naval facilities, coasts and landing beaches, and urban areas. The NIS units on marine climate and oceanography also appear to concern information of a more or less permanent nature. I would expect that none of these units would go out of date so quickly that they could not be handled in a realistic maintenance program.

7. On the other hand, it appears to me that most of the political Chapter, most of the scientific Chapter, the Chapter dealing with the armed forces, large parts of the economic and sociological Chapters, the Supplement on communism, and the NIS on International Communism are likely to have to deal with subject matter that changes at a much more rapid rate than is contemplated in the concept of basic intelligence set forth in the definition or in the current maintenance program of the NIS. Naturally some of these subjects will remain relatively stable for some areas of the world, but they are most likely to remain stable in the least important areas of the world and likely to change most rapidly in many high-priority areas. The intelligence community has considerable assets devoted to the production of various forms of current intelligence, and this machine is capable of doing good work on current political, sociological and economic developments in all the countries of the world of strategic interest to the United States. It can schedule production on these countries in accord with actual requirements rather than as a matter of encyclopedic tidiness of coverage. I see no point in trying to make an encyclopedia compete with a daily newspaper for the coverage of these subjects.

8. It is also obvious from the proliferation of handbooks, the Army Special Warfare Area Handbook series and others, that the NIS Program does not include all of the more or less permanent type information that might be useful to planners and operators. In part this is true because the current NIS Program tends to produce research that is too

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highly classified to be useful in some field situations. A strenuous effort should be made to produce as much as possible of the NIS on an unclassified basis. External research should be contracted for wherever feasible. Some subjects of critical importance, however, should be covered by highly classified research that could be downgraded to a more useable level in the event of a national emergency.

9. I believe the NIS Program could be put on a more streamlined and effective basis if the following steps were taken:

a. Divest the NIS outline of all of the items of a more or less transient nature such as those listed in paragraph 7 above.

b. Review the needs of the users both in Washington and overseas to insure that the outline includes all items of a more or less permanent nature required in the military and intelligence operations likely to be encountered by the U.S. Government in the foreseeable future.

c. Direct that research studies prepared in support of the NIS be labeled as such and published immediately upon completion by the contributing agency. These sections would not be republished as part of the NIS but would be used as source material in the preparation of the NIS in a new format.

d. The NIS as such would be reduced to the scope of the present Chapter I, plus some of the material now contained in various supplements.

e. Direct that appropriate parts of the intelligence community produce the necessary current studies to cover the needs of the U.S. Government for information on the politics, economy, science and armed forces of the various countries of concern to U.S. policy.

10. The outline finally adopted for the streamlined NIS Program should be developed on the basis of careful interagency study, but I would envision that, in accordance with the principles outlined in paragraph 9 above, the new outline would look something like the following:

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National Intelligence Survey - Country X

A concise statement of the more or less permanent aspects of the following:

- Section a. Significance of the area
- Section b. Military geography
- Section c. Transportation and telecommunications
- Section d. Basic sociology
- Section e. Political structure (Section 51, 52, stable parts on structure of remainder and general character of subversive threats)
- Section f. Basic economic characteristics of the area, including petroleum industry
- Section g. Scientific level of development
- Section h. Armed forces
- Section i. Map and chart appraisal

- Supplement I. Ports and naval facilities
- Supplement II. Coasts and landing beaches
- Supplement III. Urban areas

1. Naturally the NIS on the USSR will continue to be a monumental effort and the Sections may be published in separate volumes. On most countries, however, the NIS proper would constitute a single slim volume not much larger than the present Chapter I treatment, with Supplements of varying lengths.

12. The subject matter of remaining Sections of the NIS dealing with more rapidly changing features of foreign countries, such as political dynamics, status of subversive efforts and influence of communism in the country, should be dealt with by current intelligence components of the intelligence community. CIA is prepared to do its part.

13. The proposal outlined above should enable the intelligence community to produce a National Intelligence Survey that is truly basic in nature, which will remain up-to-date for longer periods of time, and which could be renewed with considerably less effort than the current program. At the same time, this proposal would retain one of the best features of the NIS Program in that it would still require the organized production of supporting research by the most competent elements of the U.S. Government.

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14. I recommend that the above matter be placed on the USIB agenda and that the Coordination Staff be directed to prepare the necessary paper for this purpose. By this means, some prior coordination with the community can be achieved and USIB action hopefully expedited.

RAY S. CLINE
Deputy Director (Intelligence)

Enclosure:

Memo from Office of Basic Intelligence

O/DD/I: RSCLINE: HDSheldon:jmm

Distribution:

Orig & 1 - Addressee, w/encl.
1 - [redacted] w/o att.
1 - AD/BI, w/o att.
2 - O/DD/I, w/att.

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28 August 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Intelligence

SUBJECT: The NIS Program

1. The purpose of this paper is to examine the NIS program in terms of format, requirements, and production capabilities, and to determine where we should go from here for optimum results. The enclosure provides a general background of NIS developments from the inception of the program in 1948 to the present.

Format

2. The format of the NIS was developed along traditional lines and in conformity with well-established and understood basic intelligence practices and terminology. Since a major purpose of the NIS is to support the national security in war, an exhaustive examination was made of the principal US wartime program, the Joint Army and Navy Intelligence Study (JANIS). All departments, agencies and military commands were questioned regarding the strengths and weaknesses of JANIS.

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3. The [redacted] US programs have been modified in the light of postwar developments but retain their fundamental character. The NIS Committee, the Departments of State and Defense, the Joint Staff, and the Services have queried in detail their principal users respecting the structure of the NIS program. Although NIS users have criticized constructively and otherwise various aspects of the program, none has ever commented except favorably on the NIS format.

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4. The NIS format may appear complex yet it is as simple and flexible as worldwide basic intelligence collection and production permit. A truly simple format would, in fact, be quite rigid, because of its monolithic structure, and would be incapable of the innumerable combinations of topical coverage required for production and use with respect to the variety of areal situations ranging from the primitive state to world powers. Fundamental in the development of the NIS format is the requirement to fully meet the expansion for wartime needs without major change or dislocations.

Requirements

5. The NIS is not a world encyclopedia of knowledge. Its requirements are selective and directly support and are responsive to national security needs. These requirements must also serve a wide range of purposes from the highest levels of policy and planning to operational needs.

6. In consequence, the manner in which the NIS is used and the amount of detail desired is subject to wide latitude, which is provided by NIS units at three levels of detail within the integrated survey: 1) a general summary; 2) standard detailed treatment under eight chapters; and 3) extended detail for certain subjects in supplements.

7. These levels of detail provide a flexible range of treatment suited to the wide variety of foreign country situations and further provide for expanding requirements as a country develops, without redoing work already accomplished. Moreover, this flexibility provides a balanced work load in terms of production capabilities and ensures optimum coverage, consisting of the general summary and such detailed treatment as priorities require and capabilities permit.

Production Capabilities

8. The initial terms of reference for the NIS program directed the production and continuous maintenance of basic intelligence, as set forth in the NIS Standard Instructions, on all foreign countries and areas of the world. The production capabilities required for this task were determined to be at a level which would provide for the production of complete NIS on 15 areas, or their equivalent, each year. This would have completed initial worldwide coverage in about 5 to 7 years and maintained it on a continuing basis at the same rate. When the actual production capabilities turned out to be about half those required, a policy decision was made to complete initial worldwide detailed coverage with existing capabilities at the correspondingly lower rate in order to provide a reservoir of

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on-hand basic intelligence in event of war anywhere. Concurrently, it was decided to direct field collection worldwide on gaps and deficiencies revealed by this basic research and analysis, so that the necessary information would be available in the producing agencies files to quickly update any NIS units.

9. Today the NIS program has essentially completed worldwide detailed coverage and has revised about one-third of it. Continuing worldwide collection has provided much later information in the files of the producing agencies as a basis for a comprehensive maintenance program. However, with initial world coverage completed it is most feasible to concentrate existing production capabilities on priority topics and areas while continuing field collection worldwide so that the files on all areas may be maintained in emergency readiness. An important and necessary aspect is the greatly accelerated production and maintenance of the general summary chapters on all priority areas to provide the focus for selective detailed maintenance.

10. The essential problem of the NIS program throughout its fourteen years of operations has been to bridge the gap between requirements and capabilities. Both the producing agencies and the users have confirmed the validity of the NIS requirements for policy formulation, for planning, and for operations. A major deterrent to the development of an efficient production organization has been the ungainly and dispersed staffing complex of the Community. Some 40 different components have been involved in NIS production, directed through a variety of echelons and control points. Consistent diversion of these staffs to more immediate requirements than basic intelligence was the normal pattern. With the centralized control by CIA and DIA of the new integrated staffs the way is clear at long last to efficient and proper production performance.

What needs to be done now

11. In order to determine what changes are needed in the NIS program for optimum results, it is necessary to analyze its present shortcomings. The overriding one, based on experience and detailed replies over the past eight years from NIS users, is that the rate of NIS production is inadequate. The most recent survey of NIS users in the military establishment and overseas commands, conducted last year by the Joint Staff, puts it in these terms:

"Although the survey indicates that there is general satisfaction with the scope, format, and basic concept of the NIS and that the program should be continued, comments on the inadequacies of the NIS pointed almost exclusively to lack of initial coverage and need for more timely maintenance."


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12. By dint of certain favorable circumstances it is now feasible for the first time to meet this problem head on. These circumstances are: 1) the essential completion of initial NIS coverage worldwide; 2) the realignments of CIA's and DIA's NIS staffs to permit integrated control and production; and 3) development of procedures to provide for accelerated maintenance. These should provide a 25% increase in NIS production at present budgetary and manpower levels. Concurrently, and backstopped by initial NIS worldwide, detailed NIS coverage can now be concentrated in priority topics and areas, thereby reducing production requirements by some 30%. These steps will provide for adequate maintenance on the long range basis.

13. Another problem that is being looked into is the time differential among related NIS units on political intelligence. The Research Division, OBI has already taken steps to produce consolidated NIS units, comprising all political intelligence requirements for an area under the same date line. The publication of a consolidated NIS unit not only retires a sizeable number of disparate NIS units but also provides a more manageable and efficient unit for subsequent revision.

14. Modification of this system may be suitable for production of sociological and economic intelligence, although the number of separate staffs involved and the topical relationships do not readily lend themselves so well to this method. Certain consolidations are being explored in the Military Geography and Transportation portions of the NIS. The Scientific and Armed Forces units are already being produced in this manner.

15. It does not appear to be either necessary or prudent to go beyond the present measures at this time. The format and requirements have been and will continue to be modified as necessary. To change the nomenclature of the NIS would seem to little purpose inasmuch as the present system is well understood and has been tested by more than 14 years' use. The steps being taken will provide, with the present manpower input, the production of essential basic intelligence on all areas of the world to the depth of detail germane to the subject and required by the majority of users, and with a high degree of timeliness. To reach this goal will take time. More than that, however, it will take constant support and direction of effort, and a freedom from unproductive diversions.


Assistant Director
Basic Intelligence

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Enclosure: Background on NIS developments 1948-62

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28 August 1962

Background on NIS developments, 1948-1962

1. In 14 years, over 6,000 NIS units have been published and initial worldwide coverage has in large part been achieved. From its start in 1948, the NIS Program has constructively met the challenges posed by changing user requirements and growing experience in the complex field of basic intelligence production. The recent emergence of centralized production direction under CIA and DIA provides new opportunity for more comprehensive developments in the NIS program leading toward more current coverage worldwide.

2. The mission of the NIS program is to prepare through systematic interagency effort, the fundamental intelligence of the world required by the U.S. Government, its civilian agencies as well as its military departments. World events have strongly substantiated the objectives of the NIS mission. Chief among these objectives is the on-hand availability of published NIS at the time that a crisis erupts. This is well exemplified by the 1958 Lebanon landings, when COMSIXTHFLT cited the NIS as the most important primary source of intelligence available and used by the U.S. forces suddenly ordered into the area.

3. In structure, the NIS consists of Chapter I, which gives an integrated overview and selective summary of the intelligence aspects of a country, and the supporting Chapters which cover the traditional subjects of strategic intelligence: a country's physical environment, its transportation and telecommunications, the people, the government, its resources and the economy, its scientific potential and developments, and its military forces. This information is prepared, as appropriate, on each country of the world.

4. To meet the different needs of the broad range of NIS users, NIS units are prepared in three levels of basic intelligence detail. As noted above, Chapter I is the most general. The other Chapters supply more detailed information. This is normally prepared in separately published parts called Sections, each of which treats a major subdivision of the field covered by the Chapter. For example, the Transportation and Telecommunications Chapter includes a Section on Highways in which the details of a country's roads are given. For some users, even more detail is required on certain subjects. For this reason, the Supplement has been developed. At present, there are two active Supplements covering Ports and Naval Facilities, and Coasts and Landing Beaches.

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5. Since the inception of the program, there have been several major NIS developments, resulting largely from increased specialized user requirements on the one hand and limitations on producer effort on the other. These developments, for the most part evolutionary in nature, have led to changes in NIS content and new measures to expedite production.

6. As early as 1950 the delineation of beach categories was greatly expanded in response to new amphibious warfare techniques and changes in military concepts reflecting atomic warfare tactics. In 1955 the NIS incorporated socio-economic aspects in its health and sanitation units, thereby significantly broadening intelligence coverage traditionally given to foreign military medicine. In 1957 NIS marine climate and oceanography content was considerably amplified in response to military planning and operational requirements for nuclear missile and submarine developments. About the same time, to satisfy Army psychological warfare requirements, content revisions were made to NIS sociological and political elements. It is noteworthy that these psywar changes have provided a more comprehensive NIS base for answering present counterinsurgency requirements.

7. To meet the need for more timely maintenance, the NIS Committee initiated measures to increase NIS coverage rates within the framework of the limited production resources. These measures included greater selectivity in scheduling NIS areas and topics for maintenance production and procedures for conserving production and processing resources where relatively few changes were required to update a published unit.

8. A new comprehensive plan to achieve more timely essential coverage in the NIS has recently been developed in OBI and approved in principle by DIA. Based on accelerated production rates by producing components under CIA and DIA control, the plan includes these features:

a) The NIS Chapter I titled General Survey, becomes the basic unit of coverage for 115 areas and is produced at the rate of 30 per year (as against 12 per year in the past).

b) Detailed supporting units are produced on a highly selective basis. Detailed Armed Forces coverage would be limited to bloc areas and some subtopics on Military Geography, now published separately, would be combined.

c) The General Survey is prepared on a 2-year cycle for critical areas and a 4-year cycle for other areas. An average 5-year maintenance cycle is established for most other NIS.

d) Production is suspended on some 22 NIS areas of low priority and little current strategic significance. For appropriate topics, NIS areas are combined to gain maximum coverage per unit production effort.

9. The plan establishes a total standing requirement of about 3,600 units, a considerable reduction from the present 5,000-6,000 section requirement. CIA and its supporting agencies are responsible for about 2,300 units; DIA's total requirement is 1,300 units. It is anticipated that the planned accelerated production, which calls for a total of about 650 sections per year -- a 25% increase over the FY 63 scheduled commitment -- can be achieved with present budgetary and manpower levels through the economies and efficiencies implicit in the plan.