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20 February 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Intelligence Information Handling in the
Community

REFERENCE : D/DCI/IC memo to DCI dtd 8 Feb 74, same
subject

1. The referent defining information handling as the dissemination and display of collected and processed data assumes that the Community has a gigantic problem in this area. The problem, if left alone, will result in unacceptable costs, confusion, and inadequate systems. To prevent such a catastrophe, the D/DCI/IC recommends the DCI halt all development or expansion of existing or planned systems and that the DCI establish an Intelligence Information Project Officer and a full-time interagency steering group and utilize a contractor to:

- a. Analyze Community-wide information flows,
- b. Build a single "coherent" information system utilizing parts of existing systems developments now underway,
- c. Create a management structure to implement this single intelligence system, and
- d. Develop an overall plan for "coping" with the information handling problem.

2. The Community's information handling history is filled with the corpses of grandiose plans of action similar to the one proposed--ACSIMATIC (ACSI), 438L (AFCIN), Project CHIVE (CIA), DoD's Worldwide Automated Biographic System, and UNIFILE (DIA) to name a few. The recommendation to

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study and analyze the Community-wide information flow is analogous to the ill-fated SCIPS (Survey of Community Information Processing Systems) venture (1960-1964) that involved manpower from all parts of the Community to study information flow and processing. These efforts were doomed from the start because their scope was too broad and their project managers, participants, and contractors became enamoured with "the ideal" and failed to perceive the "today" requirements within manpower and budgetary limitations. If individual agency efforts failed in the past, a comprehensive Community effort would almost certainly fail. The DCI should be told that such a plan will not meet the Community's information handling requirements and could result in many more confusions and delays than those alluded to by his D/DCI/IC. A large scale Community/contractor design team, no matter how successful the DCI is in indoctrinating "DCI and the Community spirit", will not succeed. Its tasks are not product-oriented like those of NRO, NSA or DDS&T cited as being successful.

3. If we learned anything at all from these other ventures, it was to start small; involve the users; build system modules or pieces that could be tested, discarded (if not technically successful and cost effective) and expanded after demonstrated successes; and utilize "state of the art" in software and off-the-shelf hardware. This "bite size", stairstep, module approach minimizes costs, ensures a more responsive system, and enables management to become more attuned to the system as it is developing rather than waiting for a "customized package." The DDI's Project SAFE is based on this premise. The DDI should alert the DCI about this project, the minimum risks when compared to previous unsuccessful comprehensive projects, and the eventual goals of such an undertaking if it is successful. Even a small effort such as SAFE has experienced critical testing and developmental delays resulting from the merger of the CRS computer operations with OJCS. These would be compounded a thousandfold if such a project were to be developed for all agencies of the Intelligence Community and military commands.

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4. The D/DCI/IC proposal is not only too large to be effective, it could eventually lead, if adopted, to the development of a community "F-111"--a system designed to satisfy everybody's requirements and not meeting anyone's. Like the F-111, this system would require technology not yet proven and electronics with only laboratory existence, and because of size and complexity the effort would be a budgetary monster. From another point of view, this rather undefined, open-ended project would dwarf the SAGE project.

5. The information handling needs of the DDO are different than those of NSA's in data reduction or of the DoD's in presenting military, naval, and air order of battle. Numerous smaller interagency efforts to standardize document number systems, microfiche, indexing language, data elements, content control codes, responsibility allocations, requirements registries, etc., have had mixed success. Those that succeeded were implemented when a specific interagency need was addressed and met. Others failed because (1) the standard did not meet an in-house requirement, (2) the standard was too expensive to implement, (3) there was inadequate or inconsistent policing and (4) programs had to be curtailed because of manpower and monetary reduction. Such efforts and failures cannot be dismissed as bureaucratic footdragging or parochial concern. They probably more often reflect the differing requirements, priorities, manpower and budgetary ceilings and uses for intelligence information within the Community.

6. The information handling problems raised by the D/DCI/IC are exaggerated. He has grouped a number of on-going projects under the general heading of information handling and states that any individual project within his grouping is a piecemeal approach that cannot be tolerated by the DCI. Warning and crises support system; new collection systems; incompatible file structures, retrieval

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languages and file management systems; rudimentary research techniques; currency of COINS files; dissemination of decompartmented TKH to military commands; and the information needs of military field commands are lumped together as justification for the creation of his interagency/contractual study team. Rather than indications of chaos, these piecemeal solutions are indications of priorities. Warning and crises support systems warrant a higher priority than Community COINS-like files or the dissemination of decompartmented TKH to military commands.

7. It would not be prudent for the DCI to temporarily halt any further contracts or procurement for existing Community information handling projects. This standdown could last two or more years. These projects have been developed to meet specific requirements--Project SAFE and the creation of a national operations center, for example. Delays while a committee or an individual examine their credibility could halt their momentum and much of what has been accomplished to date would be lost.

8. Security is dismissed as an obstacle to Community information flow, without an understanding of the "real" world. CIA has been characterized as a "bureaucratic foot dragger" by many of the COINS advocates because it is unwilling to make its sensitive files available for general community interrogation. "Need to know" still remains a fundamental tenet of intelligence. CRS, for example, is unable to get access to a DDO STAR terminal because the DDO feels there will be a compromise of their operational data. The number of dissemination controls on intelligence documents continues to increase and each control requires different access rules. To suppose that a Community plan will minimize or eliminate such access without a complete revision of the "need to know" principle is ridiculous. Recent actions by the DDO do not indicate such revision in the near term nor does the DCI's recent ruling on access to the *National Intelligence Daily*.

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9. An information handling advisor to the DCI (not unlike the NIO concept in the substantive fields) to provide technical advice and assistance to the DCI in the field of Community information processing is probably the only viable aspect of the D/DCI/IC proposal. The DCI should utilize the advisor to review existing projects underway in the Community, to determine their applicability elsewhere and to effect coordination when necessary. The DCI could also direct that all future projects of this type be reviewed by his advisor before money and manpower are allocated. Such an advisor, working with individual agency project managers in information handling, could also assist the DCI in developing a better set of Community programs if required. A qualified and unbiased individual, however, will be difficult to find, much less recruit.

10. In summation, the DDI should recommend that:

a. The D/DCI/IC proposal for creating an Intelligence Information Project Officer, interagency steering committee, and a contractor to study information handling with the Community be rejected. The rejection should be based on failures of previous large-scale Community efforts and the size and complexity of the proposed tasks. The DDI should endorse the concept of keeping such studies down to a manageable size that involve active analyst participation and the module building approach. CRS's Project SAFE or MAD should be cited as a model of the "how to approach" the problem.

b. Continuing projects be allowed to grow "piece-meal" in response to specific problems and priorities subject to each agency's manpower and budgetary restrictions. The Community budgetary process should force periodic review of these projects to ensure their utility and cost effectiveness.

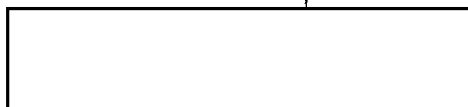
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c. As an alternative to the D/DCI/IC plan, the DCI appoint an information handling advisor to provide technical advice and assistance in evaluating on-going Community efforts and futuristic programs.

d. The DCI inform PFIAB of his plan to appoint an information handling advisor and request their recommendations and endorsement.



Director, Central Reference Service

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