

60-6033

17 July 1964

**MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence**

**SUBJECT: Role of the Director of Central Intelligence**

1. This memorandum is for information.
2. In telling us of your talk with Mr. Clifford, you mentioned the phrase "executive agent" in connection with the role of the Director of Central Intelligence. A historical note on this might be of interest.
3. The first Director under the Truman Directive establishing the Central Intelligence Group in 1946 was Admiral Souers, who saw his role as that of a coordinator only, and CIG was in effect a small committee of representatives of the intelligence components to achieve coordination but was without any operating body. Little progress was made by the time General Vandenberg became Director on 10 June 1946. He immediately decided that he needed an operating arm, and by September 1946 CIG had absorbed the elements of the Strategic Services Unit, Department of the Army, which consisted of the remaining operating elements of OSS. Meanwhile, a series of Directives were being handed down by the National Intelligence Authority, which was the predecessor to the National Security Council in the intelligence field. It consisted of the Secretaries of State, Army, and Navy, and Admiral Leahy as the President's personal representative.
4. General Vandenberg vigorously pursued his aim of bringing the other intelligence components into a cohesive group, with CIG as the controlling element. Dismayed by the lack of progress he was achieving through persuasion and referral of issues to the National Intelligence Authority, he repeatedly briefed the members of NIA on his difficulties and frustrations. Finally, the NIA issued a Directive in the spring of 1947 designating the DCI as its executive agent in all matters pertaining to intelligence. General Vandenberg proposed to use this to exert command authority to achieve his aims. The consternation this caused in the other intelligence elements in the Government brought a most violent reaction, particularly in the military

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services, who saw it as a violation of the integrity of command channels.

5. During the summer of 1947 the National Security Act creating CIA came into effect and with it the new Director, Admiral Hillenkoetter, who was well aware of the antagonism to the executive-agent concept and, therefore, went into negotiation on NSCID No. 1 without any reference to the executive-agent paper. Consequently, while formally approved by the NIA it was never in fact made operative.

**S/ Lawrence R. Houston**

**LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON  
General Counsel**

cc:DDCI  
ExDir-Comp  
D/DCI/NIPE

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15 July 1964

**MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence**

**SUBJECT: Position of the Central Intelligence Agency  
in the Executive Branch**

1. This memorandum is for information.
2. I was most interested in your comments on your talk with Mr. Clifford about the role of the Agency and the Director. A historical note on this might be of interest.
3. The two functions have gone in almost opposite directions. Starting in 1947 there was a determined effort, particularly by the military services, to establish the concept that the Director was merely one among equals. It was not until the rewrite of NSCID No. 1 in 1958 that this struggle was finally abandoned and the pre-eminence of the DCI accepted by the other intelligence components of the Government. I believe his role as the intelligence adviser to the President has now been well established by you.
4. The Agency in 1947 started with the concept that it had the sole responsibility for the production of National Estimates. Thus, the old Office of Reports and Evaluations proceeded with the theory that it should have the competence to take the raw intelligence, and intelligence data in all fields of interest, analyze it, correlate it, and evaluate it for the production of National Estimates. This was bitterly opposed, particularly by the military intelligence services. As an example, they asserted that the Agency had neither the competence nor the responsibility to produce finished intelligence relating to weapons. Towards the end of Admiral Hillenkoetter's regime this dispute broke down the estimative process to where literally a National Estimate could not be produced. I participated in the negotiations between Admiral Hillenkoetter and General John McGruder, trying to resolve this impasse, but no solution was in sight. Before General Smith arrived he asked me what I saw as the primary problems with which he would be faced, and I told him I

thought this was No. 1. He assigned this problem to his first Deputy, William H. Jackson, who proposed a concept that the National Estimates were the common responsibility of all the intelligence community. I objected strongly, and General Smith modified this to say, in effect, that the responsibility was in the Agency under the DCI and required the combined effort of the intelligence community. This led to the establishment of the present system of contributions by other intelligence components in their assigned fields with the correlation and evaluation done through ONE and the USIB structure.

5. There is no question of the statutory responsibility. This is the only specific function assigned to the Agency by the National Security Act of 1947, and the legislative history makes it quite clear that the Congress intended to look to one place and one place only for intelligence success or failure and would hold the Agency responsible. The Director, as head of the Agency, is of course the focal point for this responsibility, to which is added his over-all responsibilities as Director of Central Intelligence.

6. The present concept tends to downgrade the intelligence function of the Agency to the position of one among equals and to widen the split between the Agency's intelligence functions and the DCI, which cannot, of course, be completely separated. Present organization with the Office of National Estimates in rather an anomalous position under the DD/I but processing its material through USIB, contributes to the problem, and the emergence of DLA tends to underline the situation. Some move to upgrade ONE and tie it in more closely organizationally with the Director might be one move that could be considered in the near future.

S/ Lawrence R. Houston

LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON  
General Counsel

cc: DDCI  
ExDir-Comp  
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