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24 October 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR:

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SUBJECT:

[Redacted]

Warning Paper (attached)

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1. This paper, except for the paragraph on the Alert Memorandum, is an excellent summary of the mechanisms being developed to improve communication within the community during a crisis. I think it inaccurate, however, to call these mechanisms "A National Warning System" and to imply that their use will enable the community to provide better warning of impending crises.

2. The national warning system consists of the Alert Memoranda procedures, the Watch (or Strategic Warning) mechanism, the procedures being developed under NSDM 242 to cope with unclear warning, and ultimately (but not a responsibility of the intelligence community) tactical warning systems, such as BMEWS. NOIAON, CONTEXT, etc. can in one way or another support these warning systems but are not in themselves such a system.

[Redacted]

Acting Chief, PRD

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Attachment:

As stated

Distribution:

Original - Addressee

- ① - IC Registry
- 1 - PRD Subject
- 1 - PRD Chrono
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A NATIONAL WARNING SYSTEM

Introduction

Beginning with Pearl Harbor our ability to obtain and act on warning information has been conspicuous for its failures rather than successes. With the exception of the Cuba Missile Crisis, there have been an almost continuous succession of failures down through the Yom Kippur war and Cyprus. In almost every case there was adequate information existing within the structure of our government but the information failed to converge in time to allow warning.

Part of the problem derives from the proliferation of organizations who are contributors to the warning process. In the area of intelligence alone, for example, at the time of Pearl Harbor there were only three intelligence agencies (Army G-2, Office of Naval Intelligence, and the FBI) and now there are over two dozen. The intent here is not to criticize these various activities--they all do useful work--but rather to point out that the problem of converging critical and relevant information is growing exponentially more difficult.

From time to time there have been major organizational efforts to consolidate--the creation of CIA and NSA being notable examples--or repeated efforts to reorganize, such as the current discussions on the role of the Watch Committee/National Indications Center.

A different approach is to take organizations as they exist but give them a new dimension of communication by means of interagency remote conferencing techniques. Some efforts are made in the direction of interagency

communication by the exchange of liaison officers, or, during a crisis, the creation of interagency task forces, but their efforts are hampered by being away from their parent organizations, among other problems.

Current Conferencing Networks

In May, 1973, the then DCI (and later the current DCI) accepted the proposal to explore the use of remote conferencing networks. In April 1974 the USIB agreed to make the National Operations and Intelligence Watch Officers Net (NOIWON) operational. The NOIWON consists of the Watch officers of CIA, DIA, NSA, State, State/INR, J-3 and the White House Situation Room. The NOIWON proved particularly useful in the Cyprus crisis, being used as much as four times within one hour. If any two Watch officers concur the NOIWON issues a National Watch Officers Advisory, such as the one issued during the Cyprus crisis. Advisories are issued sparingly, reserved for only the most significant events.

Another conferencing capability, the "Meet-Me Bridge" has just become operational. This bridge allows anyone who has access to a "gray" phone to conference with up to five other parties who have access to "gray" phones. The National Indications Center plans to coordinate the drafts of the Watch Report with this system. The NIOs (Middle East and Latin America) also wish to use the system for coordinating documents. The simple conferencing procedures will be issued as soon as some experience with them has been accumulated.

CONTEXT

An additional conferencing system will start tests in December 1974. This is a Conferenced Text Editing (CONTEXT) technique which will allow

not only a secure voice conference, but an ability for the conferees to create a hard copy document during the conference. For the test we are using existing computer consoles, printers, cathode ray tubes (CRTs) and secure speaker phones. The test will be conducted at three stations (two in Headquarters CIA and one at NSA). If the tests are successful the plan is to establish, at the least, one CONTEXT conferencing room at each of four major agency locations (Headquarters CIA, NSA, State Department, and the Pentagon) to satisfy interagency conferencing requirements.

NOIAN

Included in the original exploratory proposal which was accepted by the DCI over 18 months ago was the concept of the National Operations and Intelligence Analysts Net (NOIAN). The basic idea was that once a tension or crisis situation occurred, there would be a means of conferencing the analysts who were experts in the crisis area. As in the case of NOIWON, the analysts would not be confined to the Intelligence Community but would include the area desk officers of State and the J-3. Thus the NOIAN has the same membership as the NOIWON with two exceptions: 1) the White House Situation Room is omitted and 2) the area NIO will be added to the net and act as chairman.

The NOIAN would have two conferencing nets available: the Meet-Me Bridge and CONTEXT. The choice of the net would be dictated by the requirement for the conference.

Alerting Memorandum

A new concept which can assist in the creation of a national warning system is the Alerting Memorandum (AM). The AM can be proposed from almost

any segment of the community and, if accepted, will be issued by the DCI. The AM has two features which make it distinctive. First, it recognizes warning as constituting not only an estimate but the decisions and actions being taken within the issuing (or proposing) organization on the basis of the estimate. This, of course, gives the warning estimate greater credibility. Second, the warning estimate has the potential of being expressed in probabilistic terms (e.g., "There is a ___% probability that...") which results in being able to watch the change of the "temperature" of the tension situation over time.

Conferencing and Warning

Assuming these conferencing networks are operating, what would be their impact on the problem of warning? In order to have an impact they would have to be procedurally integrated into the organizational structure of the Intelligence Community as well as the JCS and State Department. If so integrated, these procedures and networks could constitute a National Warning System.

To establish the procedures of a National Warning System one must attempt to gain a picture of what constitutes the national nervous system. The means of discovering what constitutes the national nervous system is to examine the functions of the 24-hour watch centers of the government. The task of identifying these centers is underway and a first draft of a Crisis Directory has been written which includes, as a first step, the 24 hour watch centers in the Washington area. This activity is critical because each crisis is different and thus from crisis to crisis different watch centers will be most likely to have relevant information. The Crisis

Directory will allow a watch officer in NOIWON or an analyst in NOIAN to aggressively seek information from some 24 hour center which might have it, rather than passively wait for the information to come to him.

Another problem which presents itself in the creation of a National Warning System is to insure that the conferencing nets do not contribute to "concensus reenforcement" or "mind-set" which are the direct result of the lack of a mechanism to express dissenting views. This phenomenon is illustrated by the fact that the weekly Watch Committee Report has generated less than a half dozen dissenting footnotes in a dozen years. Although the Watch Committee Charter allowed for dissent, the language of the report was usually watered down sufficiently to be minimally acceptable to all and as a result lost its meaning. The procedures of the National Warning System can help overcome this problem.

Procedures

NOIWON

In many, but not all, crisis situations the first people in the Washington area to know that a crisis is impending (or exists) will be the watch officers of the NOIWON. Any NOIWON member who originates a NOIWON Conference will have three possible objectives:

- 1) to share immediately available information that is relevant to the situation and to note what is unknown or ambiguous;
- 2) to notify the other members of the net if the matter is being brought immediately to the attention of his superiors (especially in off duty hours), or if his or any other agency is contemplating any type of alert, special watch, warning notice, spot report or other action related to warning;

- 3) whether or not the situation calls for issuing an Advisory (which can be issued on the concurrence of any two members of the NOIWON).

If an Advisory is issued it will be LDXed laterally to all agencies in NOIWON plus such other government agencies who might be concerned (AEC, FBI, etc.). On receipt of the Advisory each agency has the responsibility for the dissemination within its own command, staff and subordinate elements. The CIA member will be responsible for dissemination to the appropriate NIO(s), the NIC and the DCI. Responses to the Advisory should be directed to the NOIWON member.

NOIAN

The NOIAN can be established on the basis of:

- 1) the desire of the chairman (area NIO) or any NOIAN member,
- 2) a NOIWON alerting conference or the issuance of an Advisory.

The NOIAN has two conferencing options: "Meet-Me" Bridge (gray phone) or CONTEXT. The most convenient will be "Meet-Me" because most NOIAN members will have ready access to a gray phone (usually in their office). "Meet-Me" is sufficient to pool information or to coordinate a short report. However, if it is decided that a longer report, such as a proposed Alerting Memorandum (AM), it may be desirable to have a CONTEXT conference to produce the document quickly in a printable form.

At this point care must be exercised that all concurrences and dissenting views are clearly expressed. Also any independent alerting actions by any agency must be reported in the proposed AM.

It is now the responsibility of the area NIO (chairman) to forward the proposed AM to the DCI. If the DCI approves the AM it will then be transmitted to the NSC and/or the President.

Feedback

Once the National Command Authorities (NCA) have the AM the decision process begins, usually by the presentation of options. The intelligence community should be consulted on possible foreign (friendly or other) responses to the options, a process which should involve the substantive area analysts of the NOIAN, whose assessment would be transmitted through the NIO to the DCI.

Once the NCA takes a decision this should also be fed back through the NOIAN in order to prepare to watch for foreign responses.

If a response is detected through our armed forces operating in the crisis area the information would be transmitted through Unified and Specified Command (USC) channels to the J-3 and into the NOIWON and, in some cases, directly into a NOIAN conference initiated by the J-3 member.

If the foreign response generates a response by our own operating forces, it must be made known through NOIWON and/or NOIAN as quickly as possible.

The feedback linkages in the National Warning System are as critical as the indicator networks. It is always critical to know how our own actions might bring a foreign reaction.

The feedback procedures will become even more critical as we move into the era of real time sensing.