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USIB-D-25.1/6
13 June 1963

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Priority National Intelligence Objectives (PNIOs)

- REFERENCES :
- a. USIB-M-250, 3 January 1963, Item 4. b.
 - b. USIB-M-251, 9 January 1963, Item 5

The attached report regarding the subject which was prepared, pursuant to actions recorded in the references, by a special review committee will be scheduled on the agenda of the 26 June USIB meeting for consideration and action on the recommendations set forth in paragraph 3 of Mr. Cline's memorandum.

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Executive Secretary

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Attachments

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GROUP 1
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Attachment to
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Priority National Intelligence Objectives

REFERENCES : a. USIB-M-250, 3 January 1963, Item 4b.
b. USIB-M-251, 9 January 1963, Item 5
c. NSCID No. 1, 18 January 1961
d. DCID No. 1/2, 15 September 1958
e. DCID No. 1/3, 9 January 1963
f. DCID No. 2/2, 26 June 1959

1. Pursuant to References a. and b., a Special Committee has reviewed the basic concept, purpose, and form of DCID No. 1/3 and herewith submits its findings and recommendations.

2. The members of this Special Committee are Mr. Ray S. Cline, Deputy Director (Intelligence), CIA Chairman; Mr. Allan Evans, Deputy Director for Research, INR, Department of State; [redacted] Chief of Staff, DIA; [redacted] Deputy Assistant Director for Production, NSA; and Mr. Ludwell Montague, Board of National Estimates, CIA.

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3. The Special Committee recommends that the United States Intelligence Board:

- a. Note the study of the subject in the Enclosure.
- b. Adopt Appendix A as DCID No. 1/3 (Revised __ June 1963).
- c. Adopt Appendix B as an initial Supplement to the June 1963 revision of DCID No. 1/3.
- d. Assign to the Board of National Estimates, in coordination with USIB representatives, continuing responsibility for submitting to USIB an annual revision of DCID No. 1/3 and a quarterly supplement similar the initial one proposed.

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e. Direct the USIB committees concerned (EIC, GMAIC, JAEIC, SIC, COMOR, IPC, SIGINT and CCPC) to report to the Executive Secretary of USIB the procedures adopted and actions taken or planned to discharge their responsibilities with respect to the implementation of DCID No. 1/3 pursuant to their respective Charters.



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Ray S. Cline
Chairman

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THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITY
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OBJECTIVES

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The Requirements of NSCID No. 1

1. NSCID No. 1., subparagraph 3 b, requires the issuance of DCIDs to provide "general guidance and specific priorities" for the production of intelligence and for collection and other activities in support thereof, including:
 - a. The "establishment of comprehensive National Intelligence Objectives generally applicable to foreign countries and areas"; and
 - b. The "identification from time to time, and on a current basis, of Priority National Intelligence Objectives with reference to specific countries and subjects."

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2. DCID No. 1/2, "Comprehensive National Intelligence Objectives", is intended to meet the first requirement specified above (subparagraph a). The DCID is criticized as being all-inclusive (and therefore of no practical utility), but that is precisely what the NSCID requires. Amplified by the NIS Standard Instructions, which are incorporated by reference, the DCID does fulfill the intent of the NSCID, as revealed by its legislative history, and does make formal provision for indispensable intelligence coverage of those countries and subjects not singled out for special attention as Priority National Intelligence Objectives (PNIOs).

3. DCID No. 1/3, "Priority National Intelligence Objectives," is intended to meet the second requirement specified by the NSCID (subparagraph 1b above). The language and the legislative history of the NSCID make it evident that PNIOs should be:

a. Selective, with explicit reference to specific countries and specific subjects.

b. The basis for special ("priority") attention and effort. "Priority" may be interpreted in terms of order in time. In this context it should be understood to mean preferment in the allocation of resources, without implying the denial of adequate resources for the general and basic intelligence coverage prescribed by DCID No. 1/2.

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c. Subject to periodic revision ("from time to time"), but also to constant review ("on a current basis").

Concepts Underlying the PNIOs

4. Prior to December 1954 the DCID on Priority National Intelligence Objectives was a list of seven highly generalized topics related exclusively to

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present PNIO criteria and format were developed during 1954 in response to demands for:

a. Broader coverage, in recognition of other major concerns of the NSC.

b. More specific guidance than could be derived from the generalities of the then existing DCID.

c. A means of distinguishing at least broad categories of relative priority within an expanded and more specific listing.

5. The present concept presupposes that the bulk of the intelligence required for the formulation and execution of national security policy will be the product of normal intelligence collection and research pursuant to DCID No. 1/2. DCID No. 1/3 seeks to provide priority guidance through the identification of specific critical intelligence problems within the general body of the intelligence required for that purpose, particularly those revealed in the preparation of NIEs. For this reason, the task of formulating the

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PNIOs has been assigned to the Board of National Estimates in coordination with USIB representatives.

6. USIB identification of specific critical intelligence problems within the general body of the intelligence required for policy planning purposes is conceived to be but the first step toward determination of the priority, if any, to be accorded to specific collection requirements. Not every bit of information somehow related to a priority problem will be required with equal urgency; some may be procurable by routine means. The full process requires further analysis by research personnel to determine (a) the elements of information essential to the solution of the problem indicated, (b) the elements already available or readily obtainable through research, (c) the additional information obtainable through routine collection, and finally (d) the residual information of such critical importance as to warrant a priority collection effort.

7. Even when it is thus determined that a real and specific priority collection requirement exists, problems remain with respect to its consignment to one or more of the various disparate systems of collection. A priority requirement appropriate to one system may be of no priority whatever with respect to another because unsuited to it. The PNIOs cannot be expected to provide automatic solutions for such problems. They require consideration and coordination among personnel familiar with the operational capabilities of the various collection systems.

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Problems of Formulation

8. The latest revision of DCID No. 1/3, dated 9 January 1963, lists 47 PNIOs in four categories of relative priority. These 47 items vary greatly in scope and specificity. Most of the subjects included might be considered the ordinary grist of the intelligence mill (e.g., political stability and orientation, economic development), the only effect of their inclusion being to emphasize the special importance of such matters in the cases of particular countries deemed to be of critical significance.

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9. It is evident that DCID No. 1/3 has been overloaded with subjects which should have been left to normal intelligence coverage pursuant to DCID No. 1/2. This is attributable to a widespread lack of understanding of the concept set forth in paragraph 5 above, and to consequent pressure by analysts, through USIB representatives, to obtain priority listing for every matter of more than passive intelligence interest, on the ground that otherwise no attention will be paid to it. Obviously, if every matter of active interest should be made a matter of priority, the concept of priority would

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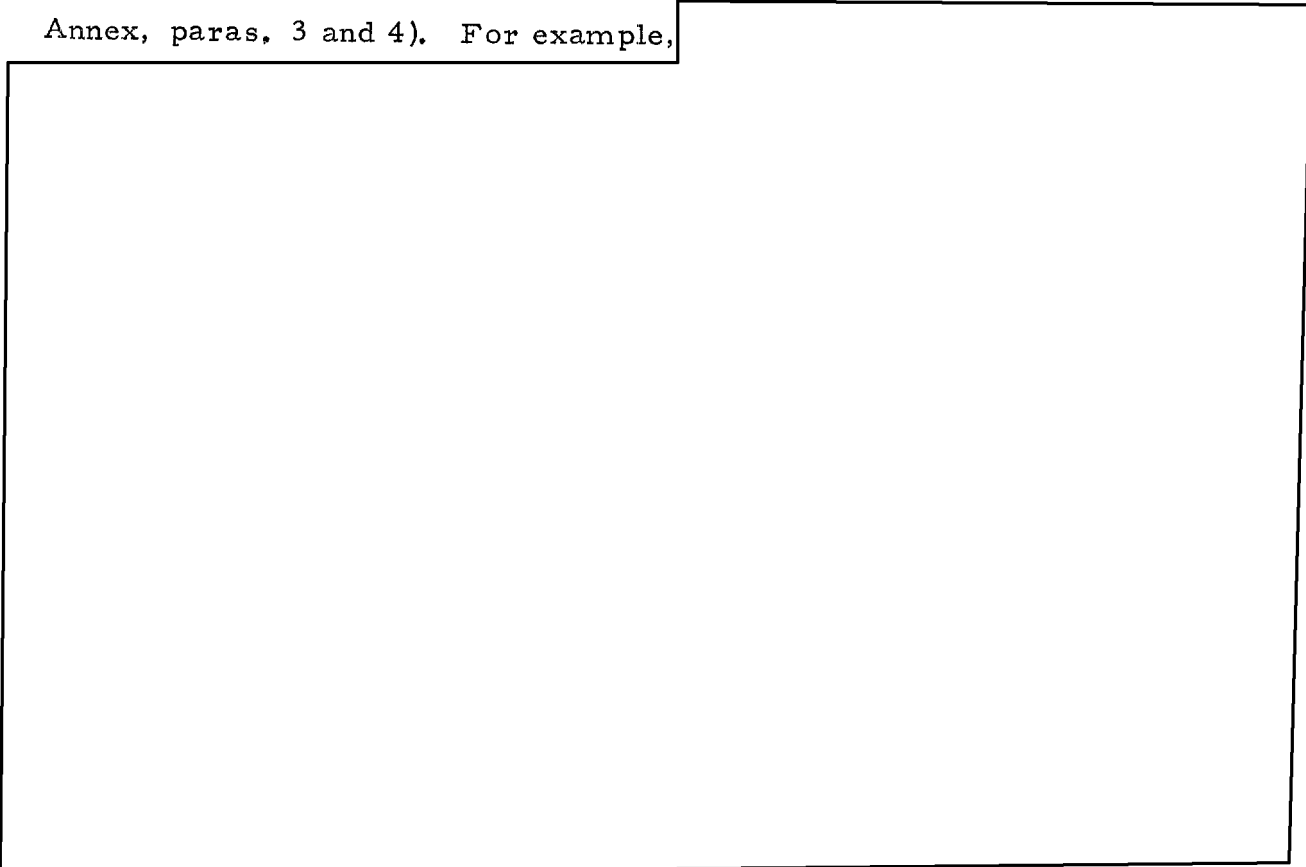
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lose all meaning.

10. Another reason for the disparities evident in DCID No. 1/3 is confusion of purpose--an attempt to provide a stable basis for planning the allocation of research and collection resources and at the same time to restrict the listing to specific current problems (see DCID No. 1/3, Annex, paras. 3 and 4). For example,

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11. In the judgment of the Special Committee, these problems should be met by redesigning DCID No. 1/3 to serve as a basis for long-term intelligence planning, excluding topics of current but transitory interest

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(see DCID No. 1/3, Annex, para. 3). Under this concept the DCID, to be reviewed and revised annually, would attempt to look ahead for about five years and to identify the really critical intelligence problems deemed likely to persist or to develop during that time. Such guidance would have to be expressed in broad terms, but nevertheless could explicitly identify the subjects of primary concern with respect to particular countries (the USSR) or regions The DCID would correspond roughly to the first two categories of the present DCID No. 1/3, with the addition of a few generalized items from the other two categories. (For an example, see Appendix A.)

12. If this revision of DCID No. 1/3 be accepted in principle, the requirement for more specific guidance on a current basis could be met by the quarterly production of a supplement like the example in Appendix B. This supplement would not attempt to catalog every subject of current intelligence interest, but rather, within the context of the basic DCID, to anticipate specific developments in the situation, looking forward six months or so, which might warrant some shift of emphasis in the employment of research and collection resources.

Problems of Implementation

13. The USIB has never made comprehensive provision for the systematic implementation of the PNIOs. Consequently, actual practice in

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this respect varies according to the interest and initiative of the various components of the Intelligence Community. Particular research units sometimes generate specific collection requirements spontaneously, in accordance with their particular concerns, but then tend to claim priority attention for them on the basis of a sometimes tenuous relationship to some PNIO, generally without any authoritative determination that the information called for is in fact essential to the solution of the problem indicated by the PNIO and obtainable only by a priority collection effort. (See para. 6 above.) Such "priority" requirements have often been served on several systems of collection, without sufficient consideration as to which may be appropriate for the task, in the hope that some one of them will act to fulfill it.

14. As indicated in paragraphs 5-7 above, the PNIOs have been intended to provide guidance for the administration of intelligence research and collection through the identification of critical substantive problems, but have never been intended to provide an automatic determination of the priority to be accorded to particular collection requirements by particular systems of collection. Their use for this latter purpose, in default of responsible determinations by research authorities as to which requirements are really of such importance as to warrant a priority collection effort, and by collection authorities as to which means of collection are best suited

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for the task, is an abuse of the system.

15. Reference has already been made (para. 9 above) to the tendency of analysts to seek priority status for ordinary information requirements on that ground that otherwise no attention will be paid to them. This attitude results in large part from the assertions of specialized collection agencies that they have no time or resources for any matter not a matter of priority. In this, both parties ignore the consideration that the designation of certain subjects as matters of priority, in DCID No. 1/3, is not intended to cancel the requirement for general coverage pursuant to DCID No. 1/2.

The Assignment of Responsibilities for the Formulation and Implementation of the PNIOs.

16. The task of formulating the PNIOs, conceived as the identification of specific critical substantive intelligence problems, has been assigned to the Board of National Estimates in coordination with USIB representatives. This is as far as the Board is qualified to go in relation to the total process; further determinations regarding the priority of specific collection requirements, and regarding the suitability of various systems of collection in each case, require the participation of research and collection personnel.

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17. For this reason, the Special Committee has considered proposing the establishment of a new USIB committee on which all the required competences would be represented, not only to formulate the PNIOs, but also to supervise their implementation. The Committee has rejected this suggestion for the following reasons:

- a. General aversion to the proliferation of USIB committees.
- b. Consideration that a single committee on which all the specialized competences and USIB interests were represented would be too large and unwieldy to work effectively.
- c. Consideration that existing USIB mechanisms can be made to work effectively to accomplish the desired purposes, under new and positive direction from USIB.

18. On the basis of the foregoing considerations, the Special Committee concludes that responsibility for the formulation of the PNIOs, in accordance with the revised concept stated above (paras. 11-12), should continue to be assigned to the Board of National Estimates in coordination with USIB representatives and in consultation with the appropriate USIB committees. There will remain, however, a need to provide for more systematic implementation of the PNIOs as finally adopted by USIB.

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19. The development of essential elements of information and related collection requirements, including determination of the relative priority of such requirements, is in the first instance the responsibility of the research offices of the Departmental agencies (INR, State and DIA) and CIA (DD/I). Certain USIB committees, however, are charged with responsibility for community-wide coordination in this respect. The Charters of GMAIC, JAEIC, and SIC contain explicit provisions on this point--see DCID No. 3/3, para. 4b; DCID No. 3/4, para. 4b; DCID No. 3./5, para. 4b. The Charter of the EIC contains provisions which can be interpreted to the same effect--see DCID No. 3/1, para. 3.

20. Certain other USIB committees (COMOR, IPC, SIGINT) are charged with responsibilities in relation to the implementation of the PNIOs, insofar as particular systems of collection are concerned--see DCID No. 2/7, para. 2; DCID No. 5/5, para. 2; DCID No. 6/1, para. 3c. The over-all view required for the efficient utilization of collection resources on critical collection problems is provided for in the Charter of the CCPC-- see DCID No. 2/2, para. 1.

Recommendations

21. The Special Committee recommends that the United States Intelligence Board:

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- a. Note the foregoing study of the subject.
- b. Adopt Appendix A as DCID No. 1/3 (Revised ____ June 1963).
- c. Adopt Appendix B as an initial Supplement to the June 1963 revision of DCID No. 1/3.
- d. Assign to the Board of National Estimates, in coordination with USIB representatives, continuing responsibility for submitting to USIB an annual revision of DCID No. 1/3 and a quarterly supplement similar to the initial one proposed.
- e. Direct the USIB committees concerned (EIC, GMAIC, JAEIC, SIC, COMOR, IPC, SIGINT and CCPC) to report to the Executive Secretary of USIB the procedures adopted and actions taken or planned to discharge their responsibilities with respect to the implementation of DCID No. 1/3 pursuant to their respective Charters.

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