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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

DDI #1099-82

8 February 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: See Distribution

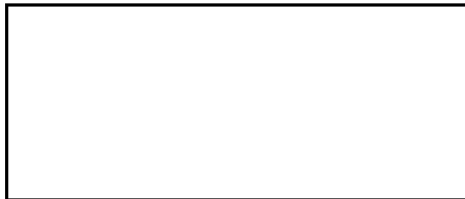
FROM :
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

SUBJECT : Coping with Diplomatic and Military Surprise

1. The attached memorandum has some interesting perspectives on coping with diplomatic surprises and sudden military initiatives. Although most of the points are oriented toward a specific warning function the paper is relevant to the duties of most analysts dealing with political and military problems.

2. The author also does some contingent forecasting by describing six situations where circumstances are converging in a way that creates a potential for shock diplomacy or sudden military initiatives.

- Israel - Egypt
- China - US - Taiwan
- West Germany - NATO Missiles
- South Africa - Namibia - Angola
- Poland
- Iran - Iraq



Attachment

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DDI #1099-82
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SUBJECT: Coping with Diplomatic and Military Surprise

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February 4, 1982

Memorandum for: NIO for Warning

From :

Subject : Preparing the Warning System to Cope with Surprise

1. The DCI's renewed mandate to define the warning mission broadly in terms of avoiding surprise to US decision-makers requires new and more imaginative analytical methods and processes. The fundamental requirement for avoiding surprise is to strengthen the warning community's ability to detect or sense when a target government's policy is ripe for a significant break with, or departure from, existing positions and lines of action.

2. Most foreign policies are based on a high degree of continuity, inertia, routine, and incremental decision-making. Political leaders everywhere usually prefer to cling to the "security" of familiar and well-tested policies rather than gamble on leaps into the unknown. As a result, most actions taken by governments fall within fairly narrow limits and are thus reasonably predictable. Governments resort to major departures or faits accomplis, which often produce surprise, only infrequently, and usually under the pressures of a combination of domestic and international forces and incentives. Surprise diplomacy generally seeks to employ secrecy, surprise, and shock to achieve its objectives.

3. The central task of warning is to monitor both the target government's domestic and international situations and (even more importantly) its perceptions of these situations in order to be in a position to detect or sense when a breakpoint is imminent. Even if this kind of detailed and exhaustive monitoring enables the warning community to judge that circumstances exist that may trigger surprise actions, most warning forecasts necessarily must be cast in contingent terms or in a context of changes in a situation that have created a potential for shock diplomacy or sudden military initiatives. The intrinsic difficulties and ambiguities of warning intelligence will always preclude clear and confident predictions. Contingent forecasting is the most that warning can strive for, and the demands of this process are daunting enough.

4. Historically, two of the most common sources of policy breakpoints and surprise have been (a) actual or impending failures of a given line of policy, a bluff that has been called, or a power play that has backfired; and (b) changes in the prevailing balance of power--either domestic or international.

5. The current warning agenda offers four examples (actual or potential) of the first category: the impending failure of Prime Minister Begin's strategy since Sadat's visit to Jerusalem to trade an

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China - U.S. - Taiwan

1. The Chinese leaders are facing their most consequential decisions in relations with the U.S. since President Nixon's visit in 1972. Their bold attempt to pressure the Reagan Administration into terminating arms sales to Taiwan has failed, and they now find themselves locked into a position in which they must either retreat or bring this sensitive issue to a head. Both options carry high political risks for Deng Xiaoping and his supporters, and the Taiwan dilemma probably has intensified divisions in the leadership.

2. A retreat would seem to be excluded because this course would require a politically costly admission that China had been caught in a bluff. Although some Politburo members apparently have urged that China demand an immediate and explicit suspension of the Administration's decision to continue arms sales to Taiwan, Peking apparently has decided to concentrate on extracting a deadline for ending U.S. arms sales. China's official news agency contended on 31 January that a time limit would "safeguard" China's sovereignty over the island while giving "due consideration" to U.S. interests. The Chinese may be willing to acquiesce in a continuation of limited U.S. arms sales for a short period (perhaps one to three years), but only on condition that the U.S. accepts the "principle" that the sales are incompatible with China's sovereignty and with the December 1978 agreement to establish full diplomatic relations.

3. While pondering their next steps, the Chinese are trying to convey subtle signals to the U.S. that they retain the option of improving relations with the Soviet Union if the Administration declines to negotiate on Taiwan. The Chinese on January 25 confirmed that they have held "unofficial" talks with Sergei Tikvinskiy, deputy chairman of the Soviet-Chinese Friendship Society, about a resumption of the stalled border negotiations, last held in Peking in June 1978. Tikvinskiy, formerly deputy chief of the Soviet delegation at the border talks, is said to be seeking clarification of Peking's diplomatic note of December 26 which agreed in "principle" to resume the border talks.

4. If further soundings convince the Chinese that the U.S. will not agree to place limits on the duration and quantities of arms sales, Peking will either have to make good on its threat to downgrade diplomatic relations from the ambassadorial to the charge'level, with the knowledge that Washington promptly would match this move, or accept the consequences of a serious loss of prestige and credibility. The Chinese leaders pride themselves on making good on explicit warnings--the intervention in the Korean War, the border war with India, and the "lesson" administered to Vietnam in 1979. In view of this record and the probable domestic political repercussions of a backdown, the Chinese probably will act to reduce diplomatic relations with the U.S. in the next three to six months.

5. A downgrading of diplomatic relations, accompanied by a cooling in Sino-U.S. economic ties, would represent a potentially

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South Africa - Namibia - Angola

1. South Africa's decision to play the "Cuban card" in the contest over Namibia strongly suggests that Prime Minister Botha's government has sharply downgraded its assessment of the chances for an acceptable agreement on Namibia and that it may now move within the next six months toward a unilateral declaration of Namibian independence under the control of Pretoria's client Democratic Turnhalle Alliance. On January 5, the acting commander of South African forces in Namibia announced that his forces had clashed with Cuban troops for the first time in nearly seven years. He claimed the Cubans had interfered with South African and Namibian troops engaged in a "follow-up operation" against SWAPO insurgents in the "operational area straddling the (Namibia-Angola) border." The Angolan Defense Ministry promptly challenged this claim and asserted that South African forces had attacked Cuban and Angolan units 190 miles north of the border deep in the interior of Angola.

2. The significance of South Africa's claim resides in the fact that it is now contending that the clash with the Cubans confirms that Soviet-directed Cuban forces are taking over the Namibian insurgency from SWAPO guerrillas, thus "internationalizing" the conflict. South African media have linked the incident to the negotiations on a Namibian settlement and emphasized that the South African public will not support a settlement unless Cuban troops are withdrawn from Angola. The South African government has long made it clear that there can be no real progress on Namibia unless the U.S. delivers a satisfactory Cuban withdrawal from Angola.

3. South Africa's decision to play the "Cuban" card at this time almost certainly reflects an intention to stall the negotiations and blame any breakdown on the Cubans and Soviets and on the U.S.' failure to secure the departure of Cuban forces. The timing of Botha's decision probably was influenced by his perception of the significance of the Reagan Administration's decision to hold high level talks in the State Department with UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi in late December, and the Department's announcement that, "This Administration has stated that the U.S. considers UNITA to be a legitimate political force in Angola which must be taken into account."

4. Botha appears to have interpreted this statement as meaning that the Administration now endorses South Africa's view that the Namibian problem cannot be settled in isolation from a broader regional settlement, i.e., a Cuban withdrawal from Angola and an internal political settlement in Angola itself. If South Africa now intends to make a Namibian agreement conditional on an Angolan settlement, this will obviously stalemate indefinitely the efforts of the five-power Western "contact group" to implement the U.N. Security Council's resolution calling for independence for Namibia in 1982. It will also open the way to a South African unilateral declaration of independence for Namibia, probably before the end of the year. This outcome would precipitate an expansion of the conflict in southern Africa and confront the U.S. with an array of problems that would far overshadow the stakes in the immediate Namibian problem.

Category B: Changes in the domestic balance of power

Poland

1. Developments in the past two weeks reinforce the impression that sharp differences within the military and party leadership are paralyzing the Military Council's ability to make major political and economic decisions. The regime is also displaying great anxiety over public reaction to the massive price increases that took effect on February 1.
2. The most striking evidence of the regime's inability to make tough decisions was General Jaruzelski's failure in his speech to parliament on 25 January to lay out the kind of comprehensive program that had been promised in late December. The speech itself was delayed for three weeks, almost certainly because of irreconcilable differences in the leadership. On the crucial issue of the future of Solidarity, Jaruzelski acknowledged that proposals on trade unions remain to be worked out. In contrast to his forthright statement in his Christmas Eve address that "there is room for self-managing and really independent trade unions" and for "workers' self-management," Jaruzelski on 25 January could say only that he himself saw a need for a self-governing union as a "counterweight to the bureaucracy" and that there was support for the "idea" of unity among all trade unions. He said nothing about workers' self-management. The hardline Army newspaper on 20 January had bluntly ruled out workers' self-management and union participation in the selection of enterprise managers.
3. Jaruzelski's vague formulations on the future of Solidarity were dictated by disagreements between "moderates" who favor preservation of a Solidarity purged of "antisocialists," restricted to non-political issues such as wages and working conditions, and reduced to a constituent member of a party-controlled national trade union federation, on the one hand, and hardliners who demand the complete elimination of Solidarity, on the other. Jaruzelski himself probably favors the moderates' prescription, but he found it necessary in his 25 January speech to avoid repeating his earlier assurances that he has no intention of returning to the state of affairs before the Gdansk Accords of August 1980.
4. The sole issue on which Jaruzelski was able to express a reasonably clear position--his pledge to ease some martial law restrictions by the end of February "if no illegal actions develop"--was prompted by two considerations: (a) the military regime's desire to give West European governments a rationale for resisting U.S. pressure to impose economic and political sanctions; and (b) concern that an indefinite extension of full martial law would gravely compromise the Army's reputation in the public mind and jeopardize its reliability as the only effective instrument for ensuring public order and guiding economic recovery through the system of military commissars in industry, mines commerce and transport.
5. The next four to eight weeks probably will bring decisive tests

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of Jaruzelski's ability to keep the lid on open resistance and lay the foundations for gradual economic and political recovery. Public reaction to the price increases will be the first significant test. Jaruzelski is counting on his pledge to lift or reduce some martial law restrictions by the end of February to buy him crucial time both at home and abroad in influencing decisions by the Western powers. He clearly hopes to counter President Reagan's warning that "we're not going to wait forever for improvement" by encouraging the kind of West European interests and sentiments represented by Foreign Minister Genscher's statement on 6 January that, "Together with our Western partners, we are prepared to grant financial aid in large measure to a Poland that returns to the path of reform and renewal."

6. If Jaruzelski is unable to make good on his martial law pledge, if he fails to reduce leadership differences that are paralyzing major decision-making, and if the kind of street violence that occurred in Gdansk on 30 January spreads, Jaruzelski's position will become much more precarious, the hardliners will strengthen their influence and emerge more openly, and Jaruzelski's days in power probably will be numbered.

Category B: Shifts in the International Power Balance

Iran - Iraq

1. A major breakpoint in the conflict is becoming increasingly likely in the next three months. President Saddam Hussein's search for a way to end his losing war reflects a growing fear of mutinies in Iraq's demoralized army, especially if the Iranians carry the fighting into Iraqi territory. Faced with the prospect of further military setbacks and rising dangers of a threat to his leadership, Saddam may unleash his superior air force against Iran's remaining oil facilities. Such attacks would draw Iranian counterstrikes against Iraq's three oil pipelines to ports in Turkey, Syria and Lebanon. Mutual military escalation might bring Gulf shipping to a halt and virtually remove the oil production of Iraq, Iran and possibly some of the smaller Gulf states from the world market.

2. If the Khomeini regime interprets Saddam Hussein's peace feelers as a sign of growing weakness and vulnerability, it is likely to attempt to intensify Iranian military operations in an attempt to bring him down. Iran will therefore resist any outside diplomatic intervention to arrange a ceasefire and Iraqi withdrawal from Iranian territory.

3. King Hussein's theatrical announcement on 28 January that Jordan will send volunteer troops to assist Iraq and that he will join this force probably was prompted by his concern that the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and a humiliating Iraqi defeat would greatly enhance Syria's position in the Arab world and expose Jordan to harsher Syrian pressures. King Hussein, moreover, probably hopes that his gesture will induce the

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Saudis to increase their financial support to Iraq and perhaps prevail on the U.S. and Western Europe to intervene to arrange a ceasefire as the only way to avert an Iraqi defeat and a dangerous expansion of Iranian power in the Gulf.

4. The Administration may soon receive urgent appeals from Jordan, Saudi Arabia and perhaps Egypt for prompt diplomatic intervention to deny Iran and Syria what would be potentially highly destabilizing changes in the Gulf and Arab balance of power.

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

Dick Kerr, D/O
[redacted] NIO/EA
Doug MacEachin, DD/OCO

FYI.

[redacted]

NIO/W

Date 8 Feb 82

Strategic Warning Staff

Washington, D.C. 20301

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[redacted]

5 February 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER FOR WARNING

SUBJECT: Southeast Asian Potential for Crisis

Vietnam's offensive in western Kampuchea has again created conditions for a potentially much more serious crisis involving Thailand and China, and ultimately even the US. Indiscriminate Vietnamese violations of the Thai border to strike at the support infrastructure of, or to envelop, Kampuchean resistance forces could lead to clashes with Thai units stationed in the border zone. Vietnamese battalion-level units have already operated up to 5 km inside Thailand, but so far have avoided engaging Thai units. On the other hand the danger of escalation is increased by Thai apparent willingness to join the fray, evidently in support of Kampuchean allies. Thai counterbattery artillery fire and aerial reconnaissance have already occurred. One small Thai unit reportedly made an incursion into Kampuchea. Should Thai troops get into serious trouble, or just in the way, Bangkok is likely to appeal for support to its allies, the US and China. [redacted]

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So far the Chinese have been conspicuous by their silence about Vietnam's latest predations in Kampuchea. The Chinese have yet to even mention the Vietnamese offensive in propaganda. A slight increase in skirmishing and shelling across the Sino-Vietnamese border has occurred, as part of the annual rites inaugurating the lunar new year. Chinese mention in press of civilian casualties inflicted by the Vietnamese portends some retaliation, but nothing relates this to the fighting in Kampuchea. [redacted]

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The Chinese usually do not retaliate immediately along the Sino-Vietnamese border for Vietnamese operations in Kampuchea. It is likely that they are watching the performance of the Kampuchean clients in the face of the Vietnamese onslaught as well as judging the gravity of the latest Vietnamese threat. The offensive has been underway since at least late November, with its most intense phase beginning three weeks ago. But so far it has not even been mentioned by the Chinese, in public or in private. This is unusual. [redacted]

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Chinese deliberations about a response are probably complicated by internal conditions and the presence in Indochina of a Soviet military delegation led by Chief of the General Staff Marshal Ogarkov. Ogarkov's visit raises a strong inference of complicity in the offensive beyond the provision of required military support, and flaunts Soviet and Vietnamese

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solidarity. The danger to Chinese allies in Southeast Asia plus Vietnamese and Soviet hauteur place heavy pressure on China to make some riposte to signal its interests, if not protect its equities. One explanation for the alleged presence of Deng Xiaoping in South China is to plan with local commanders the nature and timing of a Chinese military response against Vietnam. [redacted]

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The linkages make the situation almost unpredictable with a large potential for a chain reaction. A serious clash in Thailand could occur at any time without warning. The amount and quality of warning available in the event the Sino-Vietnamese border heats up hinges on the Chinese response. Low level demonstrations of force could begin at any time without warning. A buildup on the scale of the 1979 border war, which does not yet seem likely, would be detected several weeks at a minimum before major hostilities. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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Acting Director, SWS