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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES

PRODUCED BY THE INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTION FACULTY,

SEPTEMBER 1967

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FOREWORD

This volume is designed as a training aid to be used in the Intelligence School, Office of Training. The volume also may be used as a ready reference for intelligence officers who may wish to review or reflect on the charter, organization, and some of the philosophical concepts and problems related to estimative intelligence.

Whether in the business of intelligence collection or intelligence production, most professional intelligence officers probably have had the opinion, at one time or another, that a given National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) suffered because it did not reflect the best -- if any -- use of significant information known to the critic. All except the most innocent in the intelligence community probably have heard the cliche that if NIE's were rated for "runs, hits, and errors," the percentage in the last category would be excessive.

In response to this charge, this volume presents some opinions of the estimators themselves. It is clear from such comments that those most closely associated with fashioning the ultimate intelligence product -- the National Intelligence Estimate and the Special Estimate -- probably are more conscious than any of their critics that those who risk making such estimates are "engaged in a hazardous occupation."

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INTRODUCTION

One authority on intelligence has written that:

> "National Intelligence in the United States may be distinguished by two features:
>
> 1. It is intended to serve the formulators of national security policy.
> 2. Its content, transcending the exclusive competence of a single department or agency, is presented as the consensus of the intelligence community.
>
> Since national policy is not designed to be a shifting guide to action but rather to serve as a standing precept over a considerable span of time, intelligence is needed that will afford rather long-range fore-knowledge of the capabilities, vulnerabilities, and probable courses of action of foreign nations. Such intelligence is usually presented in the form of a 'strategic estimate.' When prepared at the national level as a composite of the views of the intelligence community, it is produced as a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE)." *

In a crude analogy, the finishing machinery through which estimates are processed to become the "consensus of the intelligence community" is the United States Intelligence Board (USIB). The cutting, shaping, and forming machinery for handling the host of input considerations on a given problem is represented by the Board of National Estimates (BNE) and the Office of National Estimates (ONE).

THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

Authority

Statutory authority for the USIB is given in National Security Council Intelligence Directive (NSCID) No. 1 (New Series). Included among the

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* [redacted] National Intelligence (Washington: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1964), p. 27.

other responsibilities of the USIB and/or USIB members are the following which are most pertinent to estimative intelligence: *

> 1. To support the Director of Central Intelligence in the production of national intelligence and concur with such intelligence, or, if not in concurrence, to provide written dissent. (Par. 4a)
>
> 2. To provide information of impending crisis situations to the Director of Central Intelligence, to other USIB members, and to the National Indications Center; and to assist in preparation and dissemination of NIE's on such crisis situations. (Par. 4e)

In addition to the authority spelled out in NSCID No. 1, each of the other NSCID's issued to date (Nos. 2-8) makes quite clear the concurrence/consultative responsibilities of the USIB vis-a-vis the Director of Central Intelligence. In terms of the production of intelligence estimates, the following paragraphs of NSCID No. 3 (New Series) are noteworthy:

> National Intelligence....relating to the national security which has been produced as interdepartmental or departmental intelligence may also, when appropriate, be submitted through the U.S. Intelligence Board for issuance by the Director of Central Intelligence as provided by NSCID No. 1. (Par. 5)
>
> Despite the above mentioned allocations of primary production responsibilities (of CIA, State, and Defense), there will be areas of common or overlapping interest which will require continuing interagency liaison and cooperation. In the event that a requirement for intelligence is established for which there is not existing production capability, the Director of Central Intelligence, in consultation with the U.S. Intelligence Board, shall determine which of the departments and agencies of the intelligence community can best undertake the primary responsibility as a service of common concern. (Par. 8)

Membership

The membership of USIB as specified in NSCID No. 1 is constituted as follows:

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* For the full range of USIB responsibilities, the complete text of NSCID No. 1 is reproduced as Appendix A to this volume.

The Director of Central Intelligence, Chairman
The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency
The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency
The Director, National Security Agency
A Representative of the Atomic Energy Commission
A Representative of the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Par. 2b)

To further guarantee that USIB decisions shall be of the "consensus" type:

> "The Director of Central Intelligence, as Chairman [of USIB] shall invite the chief of any other department or agency having functions related to the national security to sit with the U.S. Intelligence Board whenever matters within the purview of his department or agency are to be discussed." (NSCID No. 1, Par. 2b)

In addition to the statutory members and specially invited participants, the chiefs of intelligence of the military services (Air, Army, Navy) attend sessions of the USIB as observers.* Chart 1, "Structure of the United States Intelligence Board," illustrates the USIB structure.**

Operations

Chart 2, "Types of USIB Agenda Items, Fy 1965," illustrates the nature of the work load handled by the USIB during a single year.** The chart makes obvious the importance of estimates and estimate-related items in the continuing work of the USIB. Moreover, a considerable number of both the COMOR *** and SIGINT items are related directly to estimative intelligence [redacted] 25X1

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* Prior to March 1964 when the Director of DIA was named to be a USIB member the military intelligence chiefs were USIB representatives.

** Charts 1 and 2 follow page 3.

*** COMOR has since been replaced by COMIREX, Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation. [redacted] 25X1

In addition to the discussions which take place at the formal meetings of the USIB representatives as reflected in Chart 2, the USIB members will have had informal discussions of terms of reference, substantive questions, or specific problems with representatives of the Board of National Estimates, with members of the ONE Staff, or with participants on one or more of the 14 official USIB committees. The USIB committees, committee chairmen, and committee vice-chairmen or secretaries (as of 1 March 1967) are identified in Appendix B in relation to the CIA component with which they are most closely associated. All of the USIB committees with the exception of the National Intelligence Survey Committee are authorized by specific DCID's, and the NIS Committee follows from implementation of National Intelligence Survey Standard Instructions of December 1948 which were developed in implementation of NSCID No. 3.

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The USIB Committees on Economics, Science, Guided Missiles and Astronautics, and Joint Atomic Energy are directly involved in the preparation of estimative intelligence; but at least five other Committees whose responsibilities lie principally in areas of collection and indications should be and are necessarily involved with the estimators in order to make the best possible judgments on any given situation.* Before estimates are submitted for the formal USIB seal of approval as National Intelligence Estimates (NIE's) or Special National Intelligence Estimates (SNIE's), however, there will have been a series of coordinations within the Office of National Estimates and the Board of National Estimates.**

THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES AND THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

Authority

Director of Central Intelligence Directive (DCID) No. 1/1 (New Series) ***

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** Additional comments on the coordination process follow in the next section of this report on the BNE and ONE.

*** Effective 5 Aug 59. A copy is attached as Appendix C to this report.

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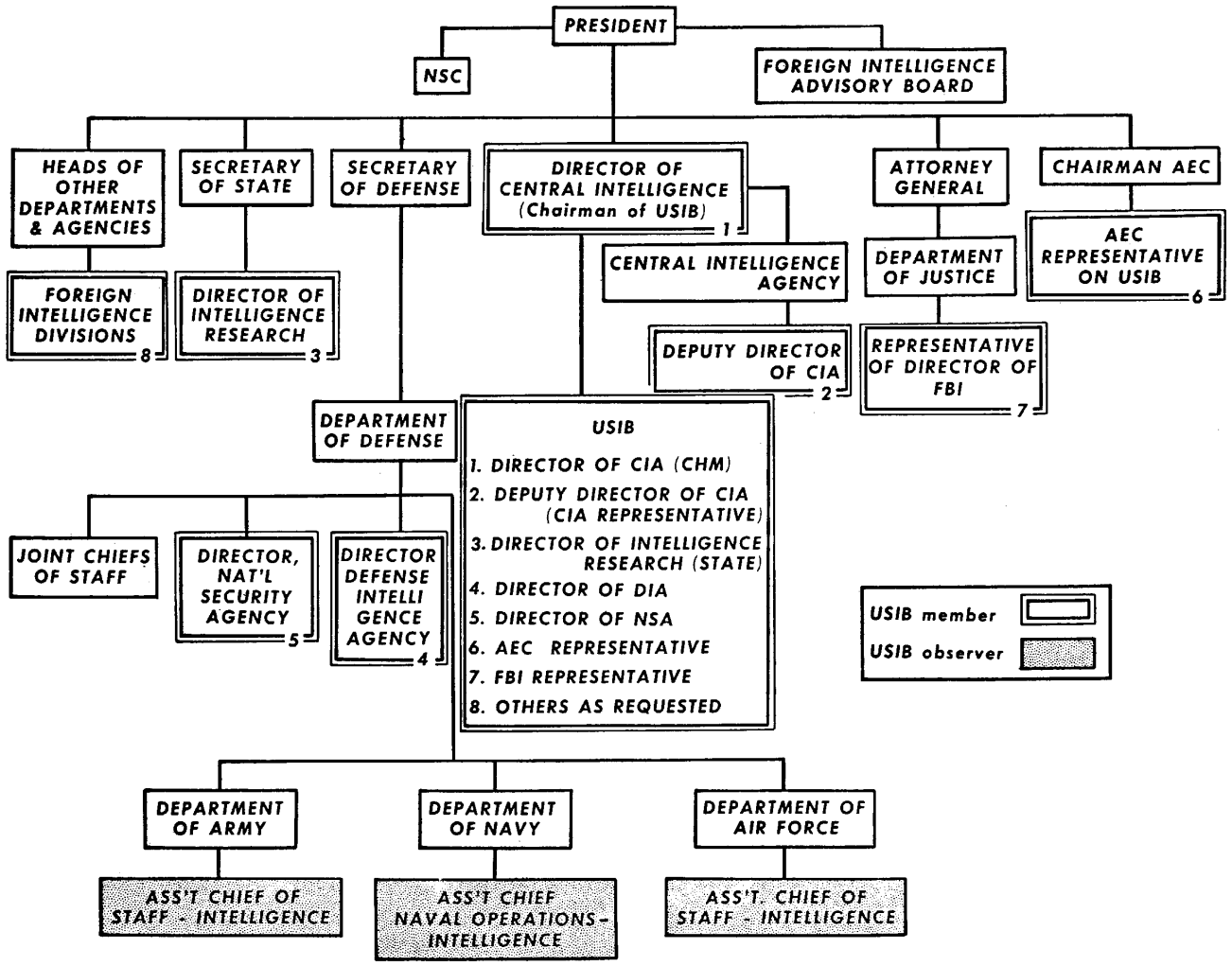
Chart 1

STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD



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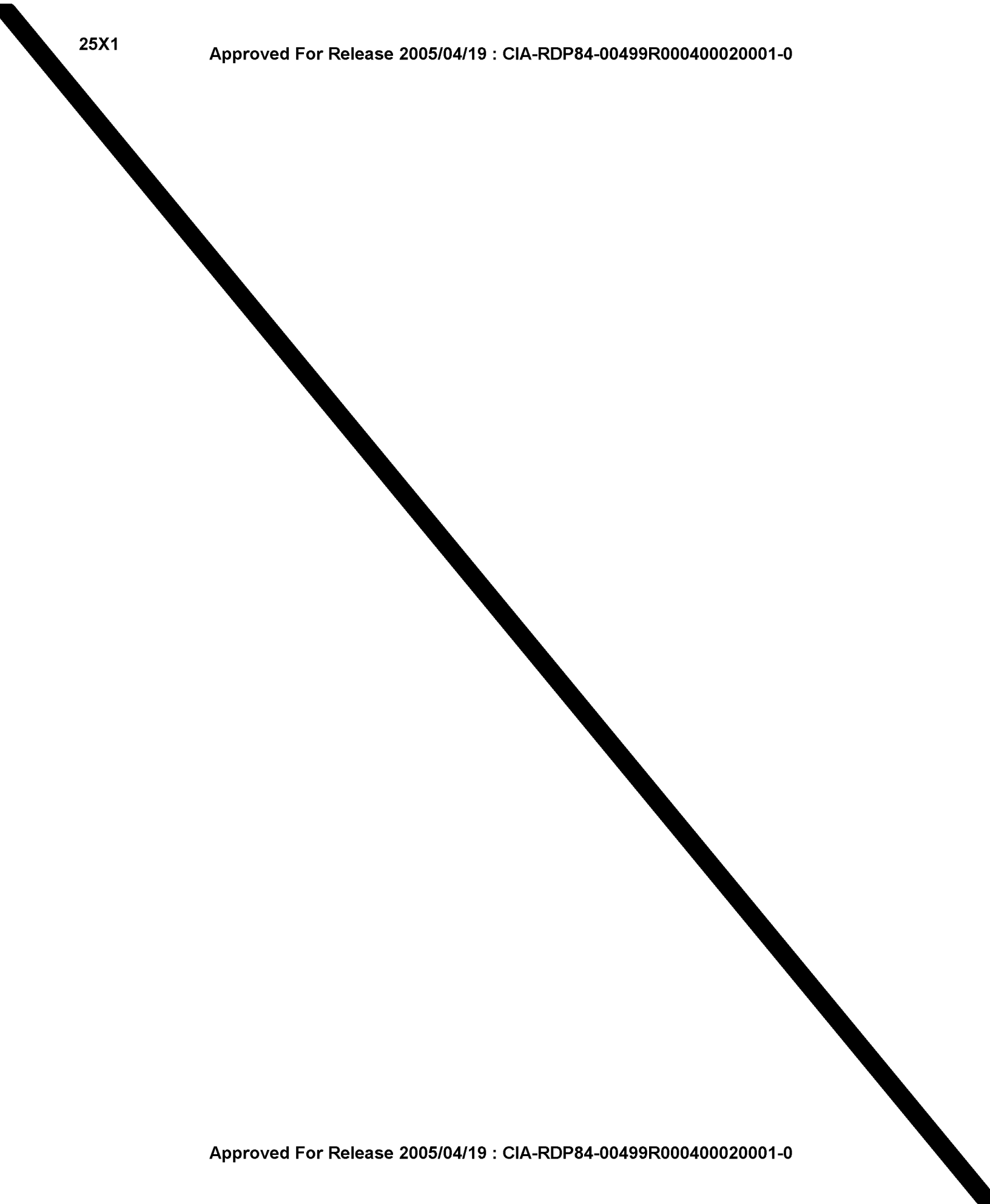

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identifies the Board of National Estimates by that title. The referenced DCID, other DCID's the NSCID's and CIA regulations which establish the proceedures for the production of national estimates fail, however, to specify the manner of selection, the number of members, or the duration of terms of members of the BNE. In practice, the members of the BNE are selected by the Director of Central Intelligence in consultation with the Director of the Office of National Estimates who, as noted in Chart 3*, also is Chairman of the BNE. Membership on the BNE generally has been limited to 12-15 individuals. Because of some confusion in past years regarding the relationship of BNE and ONE in the Agency's organizational structure, an official notice, issued early in 1966, clarified the situation. The notice read as follows:

> 1. Effective immediately, the Board and Office of National Estimates are established as a component reporting directly to the Director of Central Intelligence.
>
> 2. The Board of National Estimates continues as the Director's instrument for the production of National Intelligence Estimates, and the Director of National Estimates will continue to be Chairman of the Board. The Chairman and the Board will report directly to the Director on substantive estimative matters. The Director of National Estimates will maintain close and substantive consultation with the Deputy Director for Intelligence, who will continue to serve as advisor to the Director regarding the substance of all finished intelligence. The Deputy Director for Intelligence will continue to ensure substantive and analytical support for the work of the Board of National Estimates.
>
> 3. The members of the Office of National Estimates will continue to be members of the Intelligence Career Service. The Deputy Director for Intelligence, in consultation with the Director of the Office of National Estimates, will be responsible for meeting the staffing needs of the Office of National Estimates. *

Mission

The principal tasks of the Board of National Estimates -- however it is chosen -- are defined as follows:

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* Chart 3 follows page 5.

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1. To present for USIB approval, on at least a quarterly basis, a program of NIE's and SNIE's for production during the forthcoming six months.

2. To develop and circulate terms of reference for all NIE's and SNIE's; to prepare the drafts of given NIE's and SNIE's; to discuss draft estimates with representatives of USIB agencies and make such revisions as necessary; and to submit final drafts of national estimates to the USIB for approval. (DCID No. 1/1, New Series effective 5 Aug 59, Pars. 1-3)

3. In addition to the specification of his duty as Chairman of the Board of National Estimates, the Director of the Office of National Estimates also is charged with:

a. Directing the production of NIE's, including the setting of priorities and assignment of production responsibilities among components of the CIA and among the intelligence agencies of the government.
b. Preparing national intelligence estimates for issuance by the Director of Central Intelligence.
c. Providing CIA representation and intelligence support at the Staff Assistants level of the National Security Council Staff.
25X1 d. [redacted]
e. Giving appropriate guidance to both the intelligence collecting and intelligence research
25X1 agencies. [redacted]

Membership

Except for the DCI, the members of the Board of National Estimates bear the heaviest burden within the intelligence community for the adequacy and accuracy of estimates which are most likely to be of importance to the formulation of the foreign policies of the U.S. government. Since 1950, there have been fewer than 50 individuals who have served or are serving as members of the BNE. Almost without exception, the BNE members have been involved in public service types of activities -- civilians in government, career military officers,

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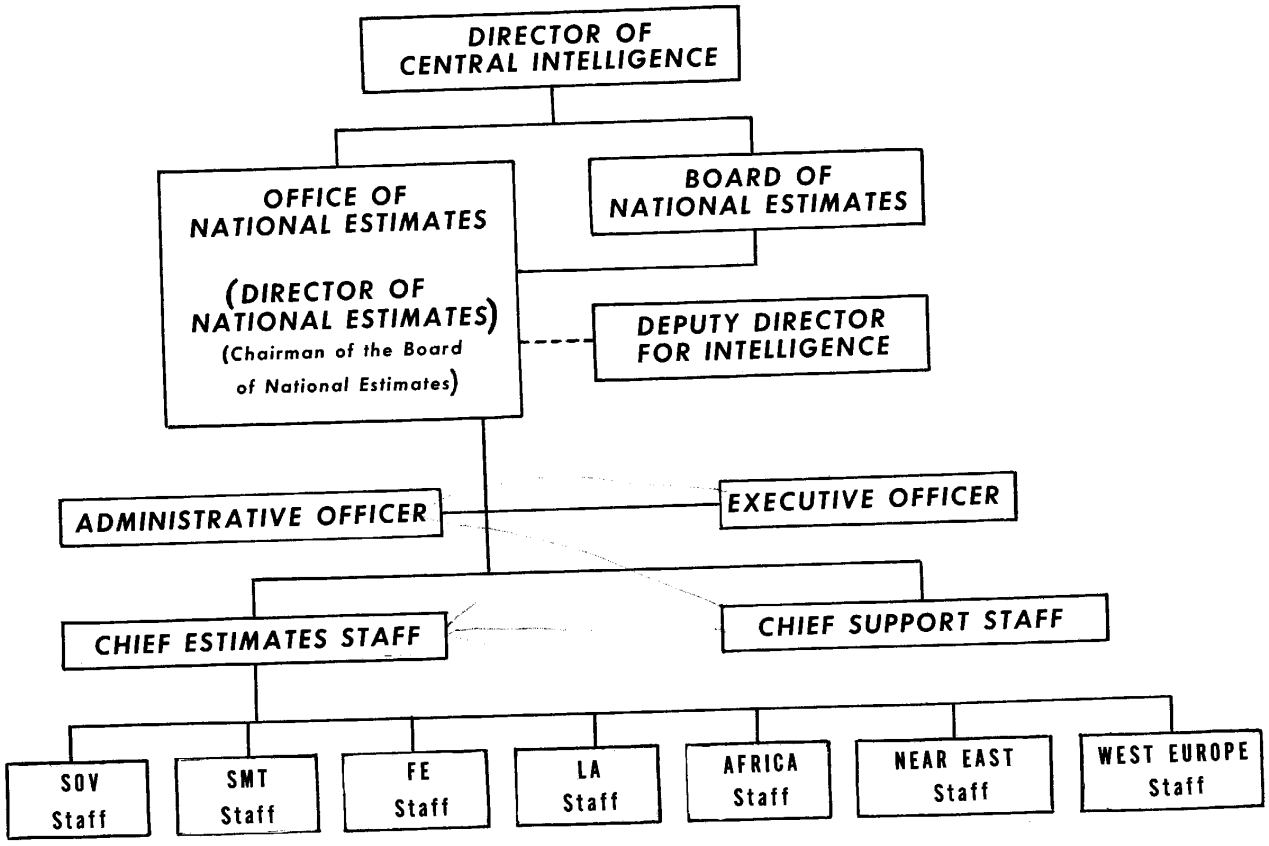
Chart 3

THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES & THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES



and academicians. They are articulate and have both the ability and willingness to deal with a broad range of highly complex problems -- including some highly technical ones. Unlike their contemporaries in other agencies of government, in business, or in academic research, BNE members frequently are forced to make critical estimates on the most fragmentary data base.

The membership of the present BNE reflects a high degree of formal training in the fields of history and political science and long experience in the intelligence community. Three of the present Board members are career military officers of flag rank and another is a former ambassador. Whether because of the speculative nature of intelligence estimating or for other reasons, there has never been a top-level scientist on the BNE. *

Operations

Chart 4, "Preparation of a National Estimate," ** illustrates how the burden of producing an NIE or an SNIE falls on the BNE and on the Estimates Staff of ONE. For each estimate -- recently the production of NIE's and SNIE's has averaged 50-60 per year -- the BNE/ONE will draw up, in consultation with the USIB representatives, the terms of reference, the assignment of responsibilities among USIB members for contributions, and the deadlines for submission of contributions on given estimates. *** Even though a particular agency may formally be assigned the task of responding only to a very specific part of the problem being studied, such assignments are not mutally exclusive -- each USIB member is free to make submissions on any or all parts of a national estimate, regardless of the areas of his charter responsibilities. (Obviously, this has made and probably will continue to make for some confusion in those areas of overlapping responsibilities -- e.g. both State and CIA have competence on economic development in non-Communist nations and both DIA and CIA have an interest in military developments in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries.)

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* The problem created by this omission is discussed in some detail (see selected readings in this volume) in [redacted] article, "Scientific Estimating," Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 9, No. 3, Summer 1965. [redacted] is currently a member of the BNE.

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** Chart 4 follows page 7.

*** The special numbering system currently in use for national estimates is reproduced in Appendix D. The system is designed to permit rapid identification of geographic areas, and, in the case of the USSR and Communist China, some special areas of activity.

In any event, responses from the USIB members to estimative problems will be forwarded to one of the seven ONE Staffs (see Chart 3) for use in preparing a draft estimate. For each estimate, a BNE member is assigned responsibility as Chariman; and when the particular estimate is to be discussed by the BNE, this member chairs the session with his peers. Once agreed on by the BNE, the estimate is discussed informally with the USIB representatives and such revisions as necessary are made. The estimate is then formally submitted for USIB review and approval. Following concurrence by the USIB, the NIE or SNIE is forwarded to the National Security Council and/or such other consumers as determined by the Director of Central Intelligence.

The foregoing represents an oversimplification of the production of a national estimate and gives no hint of the stresses attendant upon a process which necessitates such continuous coordination -- a subject of great controversy in any discussion of the estimative process. To emphasize this coordination activity -- sometimes likened to the spinning of wheels -- a circular pattern has been indicated in Chart 4 between USIB and BNE, between BNE and ONE Staff, and between ONE Staff and Intelligence Producers. Although the details are never specified, corridor gossip has it that the efforts to achieve "in house" coordination between the ONE Staff and the BNE sometimes impose a severe strain on tempers. Similarly there are suggestions that the occasional footnote which is "taken" in a final NIE or SNIE represents only the surface ripple of the tempests buffetting BNE-USIB or USIB itself as coordination and/or consensus are achieved. Some credence might be given this view on the basis of a USIB memorandum in the late autumn of 1965 which stated, among other things, that the following procedures would be followed with reference to all NIE's and SNIE's:

1. The DCI will personally sign the orginal front cover of each NIE or SNIE.

2. The list on the inside front cover showing the actions taken by the other USIB Members will include, in addition to the title as presently shown, the name of each USIB Member or the Representative who acted for him.

3. Each dissenting footnote or statement in the estimate will correspondingly show the name, as well as title, of the USIB Member of Intelligence Chief of a Military Department. *

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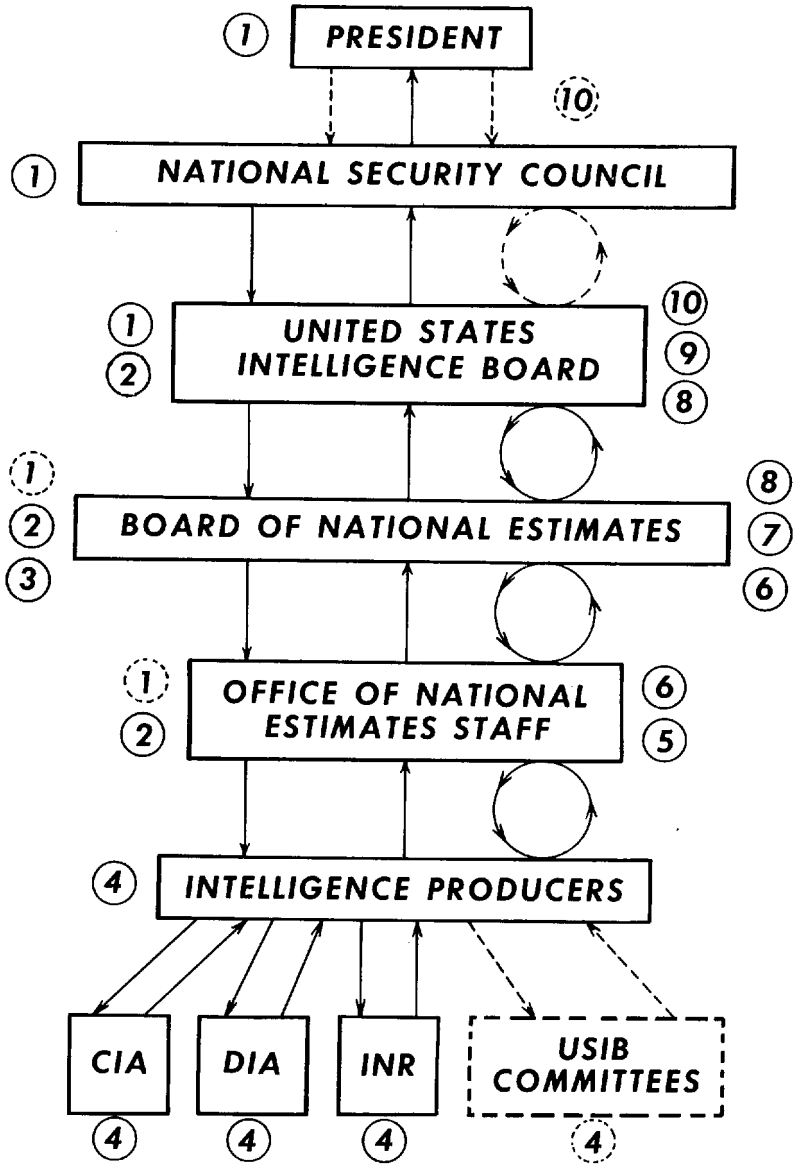
* It should be remembered that although the Chiefs of the military intelligence services are only observers insofar as final approval of a USIB estimate is concerned, they are free to enter dissenting footnotes or explanatory statements in footnotes.

Chart 4

PREPARATION OF A NATIONAL ESTIMATE

1. *Formulation of problem*
2. *Terms of reference*
3. *Assignment of responsibility*
4. *Preparation and submission of individual contributions*
5. *Preparation of preliminary draft*
6. *Discussion of preliminary draft*
7. *Approval of draft by Board of National Estimates*
8. *Informal discussion of BNE draft*
9. *Concurrence on final BNE draft (or dissent)*
10. *Transmittal*



major responsibility

minor responsibility

Revision and Review; discussion and debate

4. The Executive Secretary, USIB, will sign the front cover as authentication.

(USIB-D-13.1/30, 18 Nov 65)

Whether obtained with or without blood, sweat, and tears, the NIE represents the intelligence community's best judgment of given conditions at a given time; and there is little question of its increasingly important role in the policy planning councils of the U.S. government. Additionally, there appears to be a growing flow of memorandums from ONE so that questions of qualifications, interpretations, emphasis on given NIE's, or suggestions regarding the need for additional NIE's can be brought to the attention of policy makers or to representatives of other government agencies. Whether dissenting views of an individual BNE or ONE member have ever been, or could be, more important than an approved NIE in affecting decisions on national policy on a particular problem is a question beyond the scope of this training aid or competence of this office -- such a study could be prepared only by someone who had been closely associated with estimative intelligence over a long period.

Post Mortems and Validity Studies

At the time an NIE is submitted for approval of the USIB representatives, or at any time shortly following such approval, a Post Mortem (PM) may be prepared on the report. The purpose of such PM's is to spell out the problems, particularly the gaps in intelligence, which were revealed in the course of preparing an NIE. There is no regulation requiring that a PM be prepared, and the PM may be initiated by the contributors to the NIE, by ONE Staff members who worked on the estimate, by BNE members, or by the USIB representatives. At a recent meeting of the USIB, the representatives agreed that in the future:

> "In presenting each post-mortem to USIB, the Board of National Estimates (BNE) in coordination with the USIB representatives, should include a recommendation that USIB member agencies be requested to take such steps as may be deemed necessary to overcome the deficiencies noted in the post-mortem. If the deficiencies are considered critical and of sufficient priority, an additional recommendation should be included to refer the post-mortem to the CCPC / Critical Collection Problems Committee/ for analysis and recommendations as to appropriate actions deemed necessary to overcome the cited deficiencies." *

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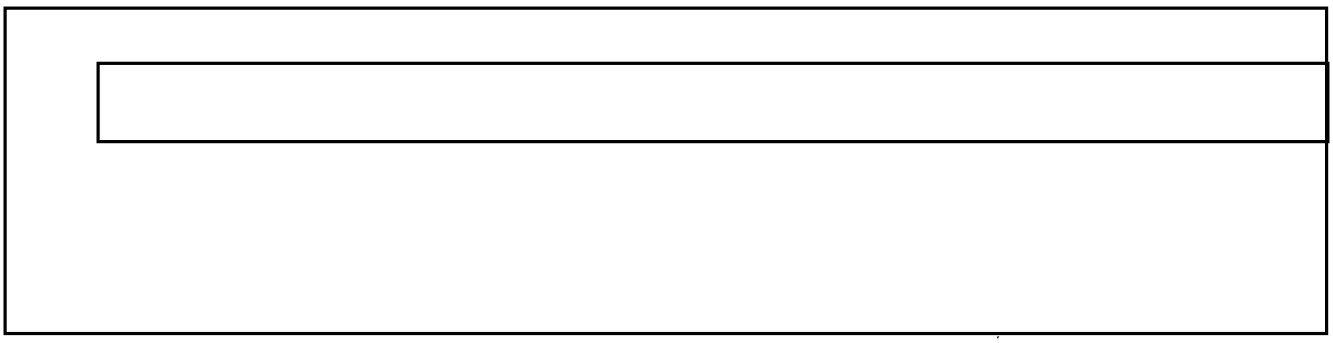
* USIB-M-399, 26 Aug 65, "Draft Minutes of the 26 Aug 65 Intelligence Board Meeting." (S)

PM's are prepared on roughly 10 per cent of the NIE's published during any given year.

The Validity Study gives the estimators an opportunity to look backward to determine the "accuracy" of an estimate or series of estimates. For all practical purposes, the Validity Study as a formal tool has largly disappeared. Requirements for evaluation of current estimates are probably best met by memorandums or discussions among principals; and, over time, there would seem to be no useful purpose served by dredging up points wherein old estimates would be labeled as accurate or inaccurate. More to the point, for example, is the informal re-examination of a controversial estimate in the manner of Sherman Kent's review of the Cuban missile situation in Studies in Intelligence.*

* "A Crucial Estimate Relived," Studies in Intelligence Vol. 8, No. 2, Spring 1964. This item is reproduced in this training aid beginning on p. 106.

SELECTED READINGS



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B. PROBLEMS OF ESTIMATIVE INTELLIGENCE

NOTES ON "CAPABILITIES" IN NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE *

Abbot E. Smith **

I

When CIA was established with the mission of producing "national" intelligence it perforce drew heavily for doctrine upon the military intelligence agencies. Over the years, the intelligence organizations of the armed forces had developed a well-tested routine. Formulas were available to meet various requirements. Agreement had gradually been reached on what needed to be known about the enemy, what data were necessary for the estimate, why they were necessary, and how they could most usefully be presented. CIA had no counterpart to this doctrine. It therefore frequently borrowed from the military, and in no instance was this borrowing more conspicuous than in the matter of "capabilities."

The doctrine of enemy capabilities was one of the most characteristic and useful that military intelligence has to offer. A capability is a course of action or a faculty for development which lies within the capacity of the person or thing concerned. More particularly, in military intelligence, enemy capabilities are courses of action of which the enemy is physically capable and which would, if adopted and carried through, affect our own commander's mission.*** In short, a

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* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring, 1957, pp. 1-18.

** Mr. Smith is Vice-Chairman of the Board of National Estimates and Deputy Director of the Office of National Estimates.

*** "capabilities, enemy -- Those courses of action of which the enemy is physically capable and which if adopted will affect the accomplishment of our mission. The term "capabilities" includes not only the general courses of action open to the enemy such as attack, defense, or withdrawal but also all the particular courses of action possible under each general course of action. "Enemy capabilities" are considered in the light of all known factors affecting military operations including time, space, weather, terrain, and the strength and disposition of enemy forces..." Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage, issued by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

list of enemy capabilities is a list of the things that the enemy can do. It is therefore apt to be the most significant part of a military intelligence officer's "Estimate of the Enemy Situation."

It is true, of course, that a military intelligence officer collects and transmits to his commander a great deal of other information. He reports on the weather, terrain, and communications in the zone of operations. He may set forth the politics and economics of the area. He collects and evaluates data on the enemy's order of battle, logistical apparatus, equipment, weapons, morale, training and the like. All this is made known to the commander, but it is still not a statement of enemy capabilities. Only when the intelligence officer has acquired all this information, and constructively brooded over it, can he set about describing the courses of action open to the enemy. It is this list of capabilities that tells the commander what, under the conditions existing in the area, the enemy can do with his troops, his weapons, and his equipment to affect the commander's own mission. The enumeration and description of enemy capabilities is the ulitmate, or at least the penultimate, goal of military intelligence. It is one of the characteristic modes to which the great mass of intelligence information available is bent, in order to give the commander the knowledge of the enemy he needs to plan his own operations.

Adaptation of this doctrine to the requirements of national intelligence presents at first no real difficulty. Courses of action may be attributed to persons, organizations, parties, nations, or groups of nations as well as to military units, and to friendly or neutral, as well as to enemy, powers. They may be political, economic, psychological, diplomatic, and so on, as well as military. It is true that a national intelligence estimate * is not made for a military commander with a clearly defined mission, to which enemy capabilities may be referred to ascertain if they do in fact "affect" the carrying-out of that mission. An equivalent for the commander's mission is not far to seek, however, since national intelligence is obviously concerned only with foreign courses of action which may affect the policies or interests -- above all the security interests -- of the United States. It is by no means as easy to be clear about all the policies and interests of the United States, and to perceive what might affect them, as it is to understand the mission of a military commander, which is supposed to be unequivocally stated in a directive from higher authority. But this is one of the

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* Throughout this paper the term "national intelligence estimate" is used generally to mean not just the solemnly coordinated "National Intelligence Estimates" approved by the Intelligence Advisory Committee, but any estimate, great or small, made by any office or person producing national intelligence.

reasons why a national intelligence estimate is apt to be more difficult to prepare than a military estimate of an enemy situation.

In national intelligence, then, capabilities may be defined as courses of action within the power of a foreign nation or organization which would, if carried out, affect the security interests of the United States.

It is probably unnecessary to argue that statements of capabilities are useful as a means of organizing and presenting national intelligence. The parallel with military intelligence doctrine seems perfectly sound. High policy-makers doubtless want to be supplied with authoritative descriptions and analyses of the politics, economics, and military establishments of various foreign nations, together with explanations of the objectives, policies, and habitual modes of action of these nations. They need to have the best possible statistics, diagrams, pictures, and data in general. But when all the labor and research has been finished, the results collated and criticized, and the conclusions written down, it will still be worthwhile to go on to a statement of what each foreign nation or or ganization can do to affect the interests of the United States. This is the statement of capabilities.

In recognizing, formulating, testing, and presenting foreign capabilities intelligence doctrine comes into its own. Apart from the special function of intelligence operations in collecting data, most of the preliminary spade-work for intelligence estimates is the province of other disciplines than that specifically of intelligence. This spade-work of course takes nine-tenths of the time, trouble, and space devoted to any estimate. Political scientists analyze the structure of government and politics in a foreign state; economists lay bare its economic situation; order-of-battle men reveal the condition of the military establishment; sociologists, historians, philosophers, natural scientists, and all manner of experts make their contribution. When all this has been done it is the peculiar function of intelligence itself to see that the learning and wisdom of experts is directed towards determining what the foreign nation can do to affect US interests. Thereby the major disciplines of social and natural science are turned to the special requirements of intelligence estimates.

Let us be careful not to confuse this with the function of prophecy. To predict what a foreign nation will do is a necessary and useful pursuit, albeit dangerous; it rests on knowledge, judgment, experience, divination, and luck. To set forth what a nation can do is a different matter. One still needs judgment, experience and luck as well as knowledge, but soothsaying is reduced to a minimum. There is an element of the scientific. The job can be taught, and its techniques refined. It can be reduced to doctrine.

II

Generally speaking, in military usage an enemy capability is stated without reference to the possible counteractions which one's own commander may devise to offset or prevent such action. The Navy's handbook entitled Sound Military Decision puts it this way (italics added): "Capabilities . . . indicate actions which the force concerned, unless forestalled or prevented from taking such actions, has the capacity to carry out." Here are three examples:

a. The Bloc has the capability to launch large-scale, short-haul amphibious operations in the Baltic and Black Seas.

b. The USSR has the capability to launch general war.

c. The Chinese Communists have the capability to commit and to support approximately 150,000 troops in Indochina.

These statements give no estimate of what the effects or results of any of these courses of action might be. There is no indication for example that the United States or some other power might be able to make it difficult or impossible for the Chinese Communists to support 150,000 troops in Indochina, or that the West might possess such strength that a Soviet decision to launch general war would be tantamount to suicide. The statements simply lay down what the nations concerned could do, without regard to any possible opposition or counteraction. Such unopposed capabilities are frequently referred to as "gross" or "raw" capabilities. They are the kind of enemy capabilities which are reported to a military commander by his G-2, in the "Estimate of the Enemy Situation."

The high policy-makers for whom national intelligence is designed, however, are not in the comparatively simple position of military commanders facing an enemy. They have broader fields to cover, and more numerous problems to face. They need to have a picture of the security situation in the world as a whole and in various areas of the world. This picture ought to show not only the multifarious forces which exist, but also the probable resultants of these forces as they act upon each other, or as they might act upon each other if they were set in motion. The policy-makers need, in short, to know about net capabilities, not merely about gross or raw capabilities.

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b. The Chinese Communists have the capability for conquering Burma.

c. We believe that the Chinese Communists are capable of taking the island of Quemoy if opposed by Chinese Nationalist forces only.

It is an intricate and difficult operation even to attempt to work out the probable resultants of the enormous forces actually or potentially at work in the world -- political, economic, military, and the like. Without such an operation, however -- sometimes called "war-gaming" when limited strictly to the military sphere -- national intelligence estimates of capabilities would lose much of their usefulness for the particular purpose they are designed to serve.

Obviously no estimate of the security situation anywhere in the world will be worth much unless the capabilities of the United States are taken into account and their effect weighed. At this point, however, grave practical difficulties arise. We of the intelligence community are solemnly warned that we must not "G-2 our own policy." Military authorities are shocked at the suggestion that we should indulge in "war-gaming." We are told that it is the function of the commander, not of the intelligence officer, to decide what counteraction to adopt against enemy capabilities, and to judge what the success of such counteraction may be. It is pointed out that no adequate estimate of net military capabilities can be made without a full knowledge of US war plans, and a long and highly technical exercise in war-gaming by large numbers of qualified experts. Since intelligence agencies as such quite properly have no knowledge of US war plans, and possess no elaborate machinery for war-gaming, they are estopped from making an estimate of net capabilities where US forces are significantly involved. As a result there is, for instance, no statement in any national intelligence estimate of how the military security situation on the continent of Europe really stands, i.e., of the probable net capabilities of Soviet forces against the opposition they would be likely to meet if they attempted an invasion of the continent.

This state of affairs is unfortunate, and the value of national intelligence estimates is thereby reduced below what it ought to be. The difficulty is really not one of intelligence doctrine, however. Practically nobody doubts that high policy-makers ought to be supplied with estimates of net capabilities even in situations where the US is actively engaged. It is agreed that they ought to have the best possible opinion on the security situation on the continent of Europe, and that they must be informed not merely of the gross capabilities of the USSR to launch air and other attacks on the US (the subject of an annual National Intelligence

Estimate) but of what the USSR could probably accomplish by such an attack against the defenses that the US and its allies would put up. In one way or another policy-makers get such estimates of net capabilities, even if they have sometimes to make them themselves, off the cuff.

The question is, then, not whether estimates of net capabilities are legitimate requirements, but simply who shall make them. This problem is outside the scope of a paper on intelligence doctrine. It may be suggested, however, that the difficulty has probably been somewhat exaggerated. The jealous prohibition of "war-gaming," on grounds that to conduct it requires a knowledge of US war plans and an enormous apparatus with numerous personnel, is overdone. In four out of five situations where an estimate of net military capabilities is needed the judgment of wise and experienced military men, based on only a general knowledge of US war plans, is likely to be about as useful as the most elaborate and protracted piece of war-gaming. Such exercises have too often given the wrong answer -- they are really no more dependable as guides to the outcome of future wars than research in economics is dependable as an indicator of the future behavior of the stock market. This does not mean, of course, that economics and war-gaming are useless pursuits.

Gradually, indeed, the difficulties respecting estimates of net capabilities are disappearing. In the most critical situations -- air attack on the United States, for example, and perhaps the security situation in Europe -- it may be necessary to establish special machinery for the most careful playing-out of the problems and ascertainment of net capabilities. In less critical situations the trouble is solving itself. Military men are becoming a little less shy of making an educated guess as to net capabilities, even when US forces are involved, and the community is not as distressed as it used to be at the accusation of "G-2ing US policy." A doctrine is gradually being evolved by trial and error, which is as it should be. Some day it may be desirable to commit the evolved doctrine to writing, but the time has not yet arrived.

III

Of course any foreign nation of consequence is physically capable of a vast number of courses of action which would affect the security interests of the United States. One task of intelligence (after the spade-work is complete) is to recognize these capabilities; another is to test them against known facts to make certain they are real and not imaginary; a third is to test them one against another to see how many could be carried out simultaneously, and how many may be mutually exclusive; a fourth is to work out in reasonable detail the implications, for the nation concerned and for the United States, of the actual implementation of each

important capability. I propose to pass over all these tasks without further discussion, and to concentrate on the problem of selecting from among the capabilities those which are to be included in the formal estimate. For even after all the testing is finished there will still remain far too many capabilities to put into any document of reasonable size. Considerations of space, time, and the patience of readers make it imperative that some principles of exclusion be adopted, so that the list of capabilities presented will be useful rather than merely exhaustive.

Capabilities are excluded from national estimates for one of two reasons: either because they are judged unlikely to be actually adopted and carried through, or because they are considered to be so insignificant that they could be implemented without more than minor effect on the security interests of the United States. For short we may say that they are excluded on grounds either of improbability or of unimportance.

The second of these criteria does not require much discussion. Clearly it would be a waste of time and paper to fill a national estimate with lists of courses of action which, even if carried out, would affect the security interests of the United States only to an insignificant degree. One applies common sense in this matter, and forthwith rejects a great number of capabilities from further consideration. Along with common sense, however, there ought always to be plenty of specialized knowledge available. Everyone knows that an expert can sometimes point out major significance in things which are to the uninformed view negligible, and conversely that experts will sometimes inflate the importance of things which common sense and general knowledge can see in juster proportion. Out of discussion and argument on these matters comes the best verdict at to the importance or unimportance of a given foreign capability, and the best guidance as to whether it should be put into the formal estimate.

To reject any foreign capability because we judge it unlikely to be implemented is a more serious and difficult matter. Here indeed we part company with military doctrine, which frowns upon the exclusion from an estimate of any enemy capabilities whatever, and especially condemns any exclusion on grounds of improbability. There has been much debate, among the military, on whether an intelligence officer should presume to put into his formal estimate an opinion as to which of the enemy capabilities listed is most likely to be implemented. It has been said that such a judgment is for the commander alone to make, and some have even held that the commander himself must not make it, but must treat all enemy capabilities as if they were sure to be carried through, and must prepare to deal with them all. This latter doctrine is somewhat academic. It is doubtful that any intelligence officer, or any commander worth his salt, has ever acted strictly in accordance with it. Yet it remains that according to the more rigorous teachings of military intelligence no enemy capability of any consequence may be omitted from the list presented to the commander. The disasters which can result from even a carefully considered exclusion have been frequently pointed out.

Nevertheless, in a national intelligence estimate we must for the reasons already stated exclude many foreign capabilities because we judge them unlikely to be carried out. The unlikelihood is in turn generally established on one or more of three grounds, namely, that implementation of the capability (a) would be unrelated to, or incompatible with, national objectives of the country under consideration; (b) would run counter to the political, moral, or psychological compulsions under which the nation, or its rulers, operate; or (c) would entail consequences so adverse as to be unprofitable.

The most obvious capabilities to exclude are those which, if implemented, would serve no objective of the nation under consideration, or would clearly run counter to some of that nation's objectives. Thus we do not bother about the possibility that the British might conquer Iceland, although they certainly could do so and if they did US security interests would be affected. The conquest of Iceland, however would serve no British objective that we know of, at least in time of peace. Again, it is clearly within the power of the USSR to give up its Satellites, renounce its connections with Communist China, and retire modestly into isolation. Or the British might, in order to improve their economic condition, abandon all armaments and cease to be a world power. We do not give such capabilities serious consideration, however, because we believe them manifestly contrary to the fundamental aims of the Soviets and British respectively. By applying this sort of standard we can immediately reject a great number of courses of action which lie within the power of the nation concerned and which would affect US security interests.

One must be careful in using this test, however, for national objectives change, sometimes with changes in government, sometimes without. It is, for example, impossible to be sure about the objectives which will determine West German policy in years to come. Even the Soviets do not always appear to the Western view to act in such a fashion as to serve what we estimate to be their real aims. Moreover, all nations have various objectives, many of which are to some degree incompatible with each other. Sometimes one is governing, sometimes another. Nations can even pursue simultaneously several conflicting objectives, to the confusion of their own citizenry as well as of foreign intelligence officers. We must be very certain, before rejecting a foreign capability as incompatible with a national objective, that the objective is genuine, deeply-felt and virtually certain to govern the nation's courses of action.

The political, moral, or psychological compulsions which operate on a nation, or on its rulers, make the implementation of some of that nation's phsycial capabilities unlikely or even impossible. Thus, for example, it would probably be judged that the US is unlikely to undertake a strictly "preventive" war against the USSR because such an action, under any foreseeable US government, would be politically and morally unthinkable. It may similarly be true that the Soviet rulers are psychologically unable

to establish a genuine state of peaceful coexistence with capitalist states even though they may proclaim their desire to do so and may judge such a course of action conducive to the ultimate aims of Communism. There are some things that nations cannot do, despite the fact that they are physically capable of doing them and might serve their national objectives thereby.

To be sure, if a nation is politically, morally, or psychologically incapable of pursuing a given course of action that course of action is not a capability at all, and we need not worry about it. The trouble is, however, that while physical incapabilities can generally be pretty satisfactorily established the same is rarely true of political, moral, or psychological incapabilities. One must depend more on judgment and less upon demonstrable certainty for an estimate in the matter. Not many would have estimated, before the fact, that Tito would be psychologically capable of turning against Stalin, or that the Germans would be morally capable of supporting Hitler, or that the United States would be politically capable of abandoning isolationism. Experience warns us against undue confidence in our estimates of national character, and it will be safer to consider as capabilities all courses of action which a nation is physically able to carry through, rejecting many as improbable but none as impossible.

Finally, we reject from our estimate those capabilities which would, if implemented, lead to such adverse consequences as to be unprofitable. There are, curiously enough, very few foreign capabilities which will pass the tests already mentioned, and then have to be excluded on this ground. This is because most courses of action having indubitably dire consequences will by reason of that fact alone run counter to the objectives or to the political, moral, or psychological compulsions of the nation. Those few which are left are generally military in nature and are apt to be so important that we include them in the estimate anyway. Thus it is clear that general war with the US would be hazardous and perhaps disastrous for the USSR. It therefore seems highly improbable that the Soviets will deliberately run grave risks of involving themselves in such a war, yet no national estimate on the USSR would omit mention of the capabilities of that nation for conducting war with the US. The same holds true for the capabilities of the Nationalist Chinese to invade the mainland, or of the South Koreans to attack North Korea. We may judge such capabilities improbable of implementation, but we do not exclude them from our estimate.

By applying the tests of importance and of probability, as described above, the vast number of capabilities of any foreign nation will speedily be reduced to manageable proportions. The process of exclusion will at first be almost unconscious -- most capabilities will be rejected forthwith, without doubt or debate. When this stage has been accomplished, however, there will still remain a formidably long list which will require

more serious consideration. Exclusion becomes more difficult, and begins to require longer discussion and maturer judgment. The same criteria of choice continue valid, but are applied with more deliberation. This is the point at which preparation of the estimate gets interesting, for the choice of capabilities to include or exclude may prove to be the most crucial decision made during the estimating process.

Though we have departed from the military doctrine in allowing a rejection of capabilities judged unlikely of implementation, we may still return to it for an important lesson. Like the military commander, the high policy-maker is entitled to something more than intelligence's opinion of what foreign nations will probably do. He is entitled to be informed of various reasonable alternative possibilities, and to be given some discussion of these alternatives -- of their apparent advantages and disadvantages, and of the reasons why intelligence deems them respectively to be less or more likely of implementation. National estimates sometimes discuss only the particular foreign capabilities which the intelligence community in its wisdom believes will actually be carried through. This is going too far in exclusion. Intelligence must winnow the mass of capabilities down to two or three or half a dozen in each situation examined, but it is the responsibility of policy-makers, not of intelligence agencies, to decide which among these few last alternatives shall in fact constitute the intelligence basis for US policy.

IV

Looking back over old national estimates one is apt to feel that the borrowing of military terminology was sometimes a little over-enthusiastic. The world "capability," for example, offers an almost irrestible temptation to all of us who compose governmental gobbledegook. It is a long, abstract noun, of Latin derivation, and it has a pleasing air of technicality and precision. It will appear to lend portentousness to an otherwise simple statement. Perhaps this is why the word appears in estimates so frequently, unnecessarily, and sometimes even incorrectly.

One trouble is that the word has a perfectly good, nontechnical meaning, signifying a quality, capacity, or faculty capable of development. It is commoner in the plural, when it usually denotes in a general way the potentialities of the possessor, as when we say that a man "has good capabilities." This usage is frequent in estimates:

a. The air defense capabilities of the Bloc have increased substantially since 1945.

b. Chinese Communists and North Korean capabilities in North Korea have increased substantially.

c. The capabilities of the new fighter aircraft are superior to those of the old.

No valid objection can be taken to these examples. Indeed, the usage is virtually the same as that of the technical term, for the statements are about the things that the possessors of the capabilities can do.

One can find, however, a good many examples of slipshod usage:

a. Satellite capabilities for attack on Greece and particularly on Turkey are too limited for conquest of those countries.

b. The Tudeh Party's capabilities for gaining control of Iran by default are almost certain to increase if the oil dispute is not settled.

There is no good reason for using the word "capabilities" in either of these statements; in the first the word should probably be "resources," in the second, "chances" or "prospects." If one really insists on talking about capabilities then the statements ought to be rephrased: "The Satellites are not capable of conquering Greece or Turkey," and "If the oil dispute is not settled, conditions in Iran will be such that the Tudeh Party may acquire the capability to gain control of the country."

It will be perceived that the immediately foregoing examples are statements of net capabilities, and it is in connection with such statements that imprecise drafting most frequently occurs. It must be remembered that in a relationship between two nations (or other organizations) the gross capabilities of one side can be increased or decreased only by an increase or decrease in the strength, resources, skills, etc., of that side; what happens on the other side is irrelevant. The net capabilities of one side, however, may be altered either by a change in its own strengths and resources or by a change in those of the other side. For example, suppose that the strengths and resources of the United States and the USSR both increase in the same proportion. Then the gross capabilities of each side will have increased, but the net capabilities will have remained unchanged. But, if the USSR should grow weaker, while the United States made no change in its strength, then the net capabilities of the United States would have increased although its gross capabilities remained unchanged.

This is simple enough, but it needs to be understood if drafting is to be accurate and clear. Consider the following example:

> In South Korea and Taiwan where US commitments provide both physical security and political support of the established regimes, present Communist capabilities for political warfare are extremely small. If the US commitment and physical

protection were withdrawn for any reason, substantial and early Communist political warfare successes almost certainly would occur.

The first of the two sentences in this quotation can only be understood as a statement concerning gross capabilities, although to be sure the word is used in its non-technical sense. But the second sentence reveals that Communist gross capabilities, far from being "small," are in fact very considerable. The two sentences together constitute a statement of net capabilities, but the drafting is poor. Perhaps a rule to govern this problem may be formulated in this way: when the word "capability" or "capabilities" is used in its non-technical sense, signifying in a general way the qualities, faculties, or potential of the possessor, it must be used only to refer to gross, and never to net capabilities. If there is any question, doubt or difficulty, the word ought to be avoided and a synonym chosen.

Finally, even when using the word in its technical meaning of a specific course of action, the drafter ought always to make clear whether he is referring to gross or net capability. For example:

a. We estimate that the armed forces of the USSR have the capability of overrunning continental Europe with a relatively short period.

b. The Party almost certainly lacks the capability for seizing control of the Japanese government during the period of this estimate.

The first of these statements is unclear because the word "overrunning" does not indicate beyond doubt (as "conquer" or "defeat" do in some examples previously quoted) whether the statement is or is not one of net capability. Does the sentence mean that the armies of the USSR can overrun Europe against all the opposition that the West may put up? Or does it mean only that the USSR has enough men and logistical apparatus to spread into all of continental Europe within a relatively short period if unopposed? The second example is clearer, but still it does not indicate beyond doubt whether the Party is unable to seize power because the Japanese government is strong enough to prevent it, or whether the Party simply lacks the men and talent to take over the job of governing Japan even if no one opposed its doing so.

Apart from such suggestions for clarity in drafting as those given above, it would be premature to lay down rules for the statement of capabilities in a national intelligence estimate. Sometimes it may be desirable to list them seriatim, as the military generally do in their estimates of the enemy situation. This might be a wholesome exercise while drafting an estimate even if it were not retained in the final version, for it would tend to promote precision, to reveal inter-relationships and produce groupings of related capabilities, and thus to prevent the indiscriminate scattering

through an estimate of statements of capabilities in bits and pieces. On the other hand, the number and complexity of courses of action which have to be presented may often be so great that extensive listing would be tedious, and attempts at grouping misleading. A connected essay (in which, incidentally, the word capability or capabilities need never appear) may convey the material far more adequately.

These matters will be improved by experimentation, and by the talent of those who draft estimates. Improvement is worth trying for, in this as in other aspects of estimating capabilities. It is a great and responsible task to survey the whole political, economic, and military strengths of a nation, to ascertain its objectives and the moral and political compulsions that govern its conduct, to weigh all these matters in the light of that nation's relation to other nations, to perceive what that nation could do to affect the security interests of the United States, and to select from among these manifold courses of action those sufficiently important and feasible to be included in a national estimate. The techniques of this task are still in a formative stage. They will develop through experience, through trial and error, through discussion and argument, and perhaps, from time to time, through purely theoretical and doctrinal investigation.

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THE ROLE OF THE CONSULTANT IN INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES *

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Most consultants, at one time or another in their careers wonder what excuse there is for their existence. They do not have continuing access to all the sources of information available to the intelligence community. They can spend only a few hours in pondering the significance of events which require days or weeks for proper analysis. Yet they are asked for advice about the most complicated problems and are expected to give their opinion on five minutes' notice. They wonder if the ritual of consultation has any more value than other forms of divination. They fear that they often seem naive and ignorant and they know that they can correct these deficiencies only by using up the time of intelligence officers who presumably have something better to do.

These feelings of guilt are made worse by the fact that the work is interesting and enjoyable. The problems are important, even if the consultant's opinion is not. However ignorant the consultant may be at the start of his career, he will find himself enlightened during his period of service. The intelligence community has not solved all its problems of style and organization but it usually suceeds in presenting essential facts in a clear, logical and compact form. There is no better way to get an education in world affairs than to act as a consultant. But these benefits only deepen the consultant's doubts. What does he give one-half so precious as what he receives?

For some kinds of consultant the answer is fairly easy. These are the men who have dined with dictators or haggled with desert sheikhs, who understand the mysteries of international finance or the intricacies of oriental politics. Such men have specialized knowledge and technical proficiency, they add to the pool of information and skill available to

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* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 2, No. 4, Fall, 1958, pp. 1-5.

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the intelligence community instead of draining it. The need for this type of consultant is too obvious to require explanation; intelligence can always use expert knowledge of little-known areas or of highly technical problems.

But even these experts are often consulted on matters in which they have no special competence, and intelligence often recruits consultants who are not experts at all. They are ordinary, well-informed citizens, with some interest in foreign affairs. What special knowledge they may have is usually confined to Europe, an area on which practically everyone in Washington is an expert. It is to be hoped that they also have good sense and good judgment, but these qualities are certainly at least as common in the intelligence community as in any group of outsiders. What can such men contribute to the intelligence effort?

Since I belong to this group of consultants which has no particularly valuable expertise, my answer to this question may be somewhat self-serving. As far as I can see, the chief value of these consultants lies precisely in their lack of special knowledge. If nothing else, this makes them fairly representative of a large number of the consumers of intelligence products. Any text-book writer knows that it is fatal to ask an expert whether a particular chapter is clear and meaningful. Either he will read all his own knowledge into it and pass over loose organization and glaring omissions, or he will quarrel with every generalization and load it with unnecessary detail. The best critic of the first draft of a text-book is an intelligent person who has only a sophomore's knowledge in the field. In the same way, the best critic of an intelligence paper is probably the consultant who has only a general knowledge of the topic. If he misinterprets a key passage, if he is not convinced by the reasoning, if he feels that some essential information has been omitted, then the chances are that several consumers will have the same reactions.

For example, consultants have sometimes been troubled by the indiscriminate use of the terms "left" or "leftist." Since "leftist" can mean anything from a man who believes in universal suffrage to an ardent supporter of Communism it does not help very much to be told that the cabinet of country X has "four leftist members." Consultants have also been critical of the use of technical phrases in places where non-technical language would be just as effective. Why say "has optimum capability" when all that is meant is "works best?" The war against vagueness and jargon must be fought by all members of the intelligence community, but consultants can sometimes be used as shock troops in the struggle.

Lack of precision is not the only reason why a paper may fail to be convincing. Sometimes the argument seems too precise, it places too much weight on logic and reasonableness. Consultants may not be expert but they have usually had enough experience to realize that human

beings seldom solve their problems in a completely logical and sensible way. A nice example of this clash of logic and experience occurred a few years ago when the French Assembly was debating the ratification of the ill-fated EDC agreements. The first draft of a paper shown to a group of consultants predicted with some confidence that the agreements would be ratified. The arguments for this belief were strong. They were based on intensive investigation of the attitude of the government and the deputies and they were presented with impeccable logic. But some consultants distrusted the underlying assumption that the deputies would be reasonable and follow a policy of enlightened self-interest. They argued that these qualities are rare in any political group and especially in a French political group. Their opposition may have helped to make the final draft of the paper much less certain about ratification, even though it still leaned to the wrong side.

Criticism of style and logic is an essentially negative function. The consultant can also make some positive contributions. He should not hesitate to ask obvious and even silly questions. The greatest danger in intelligence work, as indeed in all intellectual activity, is that of falling into a repetitive routine. We all know of cases in which judgments have been repeated year after year simply because they were once sanctioned by the highest authority. It does no harm to reexamine what seems obvious or to question long-established generalizations. It was, I believe, a consultant who first queried the standard passage about the USSR being unwilling to conclude an Austrian State Treaty. It was another consultant who cast doubt on the cliche' that Mohammedanism and Communism are fundamentally incompatible. On the other hand, certain consultants were demonstrably wrong when they urged that there was a real possibility that the USSR would withdraw from East Germany in return for a neutralization of the reunited country. But their question at least forced the intelligence community to examine with greater care its basic assumptions about Soviet policy in Germany and so in the end to have greater confidence in its estimate that the USSR considered it essential to retain its hold on East Germany.

Most important of all, the consultant, simply because he stands a little farther away from the trees, can sometimes see the first signs of the storms which will destroy certain portions of the forest. The intelligence community, like any other group, must assume that there will be a certain amount of continuity in the phenomena with which it deals. If it did not do so, it could not function. If precedents mean nothing, if what a statesman does today has no bearing on what he does tomorrow, then it becomes impossible to make estimates. Some of the most valuable intelligence papers ever written -- those projecting the future economic growth of the USSR -- were based on the assumption that existing trends would continue. But, granting all this, quantum jumps do occur in human affairs. Sudden changes can overthrow precedents and distort trends. It is hard for anyone to foresee such changes; it is particularly hard for men who have spent years watching a certain pattern of conduct emerge

and apparently stabilize itself. The worst failures of intelligence in recent years have been caused by this inability to anticipate the possibility of drastic change.

I am not suggesting that greater reliance on consultants could have prevented many, or indeed any, of these failures. Like most educated men, consultants tend to overestimate the element of continuity. But sometimes consultants do not know very well what it is that is supposed to continue. Because they have fewer old facts in their minds they are more receptive to the scattered new facts which indicate that a change is coming. I can remember two incidents which illustrate this point. The first came after the death of Stalin. Certainly no one could then have predicted the exact nature of the changes which would occur. But there was a tendency on the part of some members of the intelligence community to deny that any change would take place. Certain consultants, on the other hand -- mostly those who knew little about the Soviet Union -- felt that drastic change was inevitable, that no one but Stalin could continue Stalin's system. Their arguments may have been weak, but their hunch was right. A little more willingness to look for signs of change in the months following Stalin's death might have prevented some poor estimates.

The other case was more recent. When the Gaillard government fell in France early this year, the generally accepted opinion was that this was merely another episode in the lamentable history of the Fourth Republic. Another weak government would be formed, which would limp along until replaced by an even weaker successor. Some consultants, however, felt that this was the last straw, that the French would no longer tolerate a system which made them politically impotent. In spite of their counsel, the possibility of a Gaullist regime was still being denied by some elements of the intelligence community almost up to the moment when de Gaulle took power.

One final moral: on both occasion the consultants deferred to the greater knowledge of the experts whom they were advising and did not press their point of view very strongly. This was an abnegation of their proper function. Dissent leads to questioning of established opinion, and only through questioning established opinion can we arrive at the imperfect knowledge which is all that intelligence can ever attain.

WORDS OF ESTIMATIVE PROBABILITY *

Sherman Kent **

The briefing officer was reporting a photo reconnaissance mission.[1] Pointing to the map, he made three statements:

1. "And at this location there is a new airfield. (He could have located it to the second on a larger map.) Its longest runway is 10,000 feet."

2. "It is almost certainly a military airfield."

3. "The terrain is such that the Blanks could easily lengthen the runways, otherwise improve the facilities, and incorporate this field into their system of strategic staging bases. It is possible that they will." Or, more daringly, "It would be logical for them to do this and sooner or later they probably will."

The above are typical of three kinds of statements which populate the literature of all substantive intelligence. The first is as close as one can come to a statement of indisputable fact. It describes something knowable and known with a high degree of certainty. The reconnaissance aircraft's position was known with precision and its camera reproduced almost exactly what was there.

Estimative Uncertainty

The second is a judgment or estimate. It describes something which is knowable in terms of the human understanding but not precisely known by the man who is talking about it. There is strong evidence to substain his judgment: the only aircraft on the field are military aircraft, many are parked in revetted hard-stands, the support area has all the characteristics of similar known military installations, and so on. Convincing

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* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 8, No. 4, Fall, 1964, pp. 49-65.

** Mr. Kent is Chairman of the Board of National Estimates and Director of the Office of National Estimates.

[1] This particular briefing officer was not the photo-interpreter.

as it is, this evidence is circumstantial. It makes the case, say, 90 percent of the way. And some sort of verbal qualifer is necessary to show that the case is a 90-percenter, not a 100. This is why the briefer said "almost certainly."

The third statement is another judgment or estimate, this one made almost without any evidence direct or indirect. It may be an estimate of something that no man alive can know, for the Blanks may not yet have made up their minds whether to lengthen the runways and build up the base. Still the logic of the situation as it appears to the briefer permits him to launch himself into the area of the literally unknowable and make this estimate. He can use possible to indicate that runway extension is neither certain nor impossible, or he can be bolder and use probably to designate more precisely a degree of liklihood, a lower one than he had attached to his estimate regarding the character of the airfield.

Generally speaking, the most important passages of the literature of substantive intelligence contain far more statements of the estimative types two and three than of the factual type one. This is the case because many of the things you most wish to know about the other man are the secrets of state he guards most jealously. To the extent his security measures work, to that extent your knowledge must be imperfect and your statements accordingly qualified by designators of your uncertainty. Simple prudence requires the qualifier in any type-three statement to show a decent reticence before the unknowable.

Concern over these qualifiers is most characteristic of that part of the intelligence production business known as estimates. This is no small recondite compartment; it extends to almost every corner of all intelligence research work, from the short appraisals or comments of a reports officer to the full-dress research study of the political or economic analyst. Practically all substantive intelligence people constantly make estimates. The remarks that follow are generally addressed to all these people and their readers, but most especially are they addressed to that particular institution of the estimating business known as the National Intelligence Estimate and its audience.

The NIE, taking into account the high echelon of its initiators, producers, and consumers, should be the community's best effort to deal with the relevant evidence imaginatively and judiciously. It should set forth the community's findings in such a way as to make clear to the reader what is certain knowledge and what is reasoned judgment, and within this large realm of judgment what varying degrees of certitude lie behind each key statement. Ideally, once the community has made up its mind in this matter, it should be able to choose a word or a phrase which quite accurately describes the degree of its certainty; and ideally, exactly this message should get through to the reader.

It should not come as a surprise that the fact is far from the ideal, that considerable difficulty attends both the fitting of a phrase to the estimators' meaning and the extracting of that meaning by the consumer. Indeed, from the vantage point of almost fourteen years of experience, the difficulties seem practically insurmountable. The why and wherefore of this particular area of semantics is the subject of this essay.

Let me begin with a bit of history.[2]

Early Brush with Ambiguity

In March 1951 appeared NIE 20-51, "Probability of an Invasion of Yuggoslavia in 1951." The following was its key judgment, made in the final paragraph of the Conclusions: "Although it is impossible to determine which course the Kremlin is likely to adopt, we believe that the extent of Satellite military and propaganda preparations indicates that an attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 should be considered a serious possibility." (Emphasis added.) Clearly this statement is either of type two, a knowable thing of which our knowledge was very imperfect, or of type three, a thing literally unknowable for the reason that the Soviets themselves had not yet reached a binding decision. Whichever it was, our duty was to look hard at the situation, decide how likely or unlikely an attack might be, and having reached that decision, draft some language that would convey to the reader our exact judgment.

The process of producing NIEs then was almost identical to what it is today. This means that a draft had been prepared in the Office of National Estimates on the basis of written contributions from the IAC[3] agencies, that a score or so of Soviet, Satellite, and Yugoslav experts from the intelligence community labored over it, and that an all but final text presided over by the Board of National Estimates had gone to the Intelligence Advisory Committee. There the IAC members, with the DCI in the chair, gave it its final review, revision, and approval.

As is quite obvious from the sentence quoted above, Soviet and Satellite intentions with respect to Yugoslavia were a matter of grave concern in the high policy echelons of our government. The State Department's Policy Planning Staff was probably the most important group seized of the problem.

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[2] Harry H. Ransom's Central Intelligence and National Security (Cambridge, Mass., 1958) carries on pp. 196-7 a bob-tailed and somewhat garbled version of it.

[3] Intelligence Advisory Committee, USIB's predecessor.

Its chairman and members read NIE 29-51 with the sort of concentration intelligence producers can only hope their product will command.

A few days after the estimate appeared, I was in informal conversation with the Policy Planning Staff's chairman. We spoke of Yugolsavia and the estimate. Suddenly he said, "By the way, what did you people mean by the expression 'serious possibility'? What kind of odds did you have in mind?" I told him that my personal estimate was on the dark side, namely that the odds were around 65 to 35 in favor of an attack. He was somewhat jolted by this; he and his colleagues had read "serious possibility" to mean odds very considerably lower. Understandably troubled by this want of communication, I began asking my own colleagues on the Board of National Estimates what odds they had had in mind when they agreed to that wording. It was another jolt to find that each Board member had had somewhat different odds in mind and the low man was thinking of about 20 to 80, the high of 80 to 20. The rest ranged in between.

Of my colleagues on the Board at least one -- maybe more -- shared my concern. My most obvious co-worrier was [redacted] and I were shaken perhaps more by the realization that Board members who had worked over the estimate had failed to communicate with each other than by the Board's failure to communicate with its audience. This NIE was, after all, the twenty-ninth that had appeared since General Smith had established the Office of National Estimates. Had Board members been seeming to agree on five month's worth of estimative judgments with no real agreement at all? Was this the case with all others who participated -- ONE staffers and IAC representatives, and even IAC members themselves? Were the NIEs dotted with "serious possibilities" and other expressions that meant very different things to both producers and readers? What were we really trying to say when we wrote a sentence such as this?

25X1

What we were trying to do was just what my Policy Planning friend had assumed, namely to quote odds on this or that being the case or taking place in the future. There is a language for odds; in fact there are two -- the precise mathematical language of the actuary or the race track bookie and a less precise though useful verbal equivalent. We did not use the numbers, however, and it appeared that we were misusing the words.

25X1

[redacted]

The No-Odds Possible

25X1

Our gross error in the Yugoslav estimate, and perhaps in its predecessors, lay in our not having fully understood this particular part of our task. [redacted] I saw it the substantive stuff we had been dealing with had about it certain elements of dead certainty: Stalin was in charge in the USSR, for example. These, if relevant, we stated affirmatively or used impliedly as fact. There were also elements of sheer impossibility (Yugoslavia was not going to crack off along its borders and disappear physically from the face of the earth); these we did not bother to state at all. In between these matters of certainty and impossibility lay the large area of the possible. With respect to the elements herein we could perceive some that were more likely to happen than not, some less likely. These were the elements upon which we could make an estimate, choosing some word or phrase to convey our judgment that the odds were such and such for or against something coming to pass.

At the race track one might say:

> There are ten horses in the starting gate. It is possible that any one of them will win -- even the one with three legs.
>
> But the odds (or chances) against the three-legger are overwhelming.

Here, as in estimating Yugoslav developments, there is evidence to justify the citing of odds. But in the world that intelligence estimates try hardest to penetrate -- a world of closed convenants secretly arrived at, of all but impenetrable security, of skillfully planned deceptions, and so on -- such evidence is by no means invariably at hand. In a multitude of the most important circumstances -- situations you are duty bound to consider and report on -- about all you can say is that such and such is neither certain to happen nor is its happening an impossibility. The short and proper way out is to say that its happening is possible and stop there without any expression of odds. If you reserve the use of "possible" for this special purpose -- to signal something of high importance whose chances of being or happening you cannot estimate with greater precision -- hopefully you will alert your reader to some necessary contingency planning. (You may not if you have dulled him by citing a lot of "possibles" of little real consequence.)

If our gross error lay in not perceiving the correctness -- or at any rate the utility -- of the above formulation, our particular error lay in using the word "possibility" with the modifier "serious." Foster and I felt that it was going to be difficult enough for the estimators to communicate a sense of odds even if they stuck to a fairly rigorous vocabulary; it was going to be impossible if the vocabulary were permitted to become as sloppily imprecise as in normal speech. We had to have a

way of differentiating between those possible things about which we could make a statement of likelihood and the other possible things about which we could not. The first cardinal rule to emerge was thus, "The word 'possible' (and its cognates 5/) must not be modified." The urge to drop into ordinary usage and write "just possible," "barely possible," "a distinct (or good) possibility," and so must be suppressed. The whole concept of "possibility" as here developed must stand naked of verbal modifiers. [6]

An Odds Table

25X1

[redacted] I had decided upon this first cardinal rule we turned to the elements where likelihood could be estimated. We began to think in terms of a chart which would show the mathematical odds equivalent to words and phrases of probability. Our starter was a pretty complicated affair. We approached its construction from the wrong end. Namely we began with 11 words or phrases which seemed to convey a feeling of 11 different orders of probability and then attached numerical odds to them. At once we perceived our folly. In the first place, given the inexactness of the intelligence data we were working with, the distinctions we made between one set of odds and its fellows above and below were unjustificably sharp. And second, even if in rare cases you could arrive at such exact mathematical odds, the verbal equivalent could not possibly convey that exactness. The laudable precision would be lost on the reader.

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5 See page 59.

6 This usage is wholly in accord with the findings of the lexicographers, who almost invariably assign it the number one position. Further it is readily understood and generally employed by statisticians, scientists, and the like, who sometimes define it as "non-zero probability." This is much to my taste.

At the same time there can be no question of the existence of a second usage, especially in the ordinary spoken word. This meaning here is most emphatically not the broad range of "non-zero probability," but a variable low order of probability, say anywhere below 40 or 30 or 20 percent. Thus it would fall last in a series that named descending odds: certain, probable, possible. When people use it to signify very low odds, for example below 5 percent, they may say "remotely possible" or any of its many cognates. This of course is not to my liking, but the intended meaning is clear. The serious trouble comes when another group of users lifts the word out of its position in the cellar of odds and by the addition of augmenting adjectives makes it do duty upstairs: "serious possibility," "great possibility," "highly possible."

So we tried again, this time with only five gradations, and beginning with the numerical odds. The chart which emerged can be set down in its classical simplicity thus:

	100% Certainty		
The General	93%,	give or take about 6%	Almost certain
Area of	75%,	give or take about 12%	Probable
Possibility	50%,	give or take about 10%	Chances about even
	30%,	give or take about 10%	Probably not
	7%,	give or take about 5%	Almost certainly not
	0% Impossibility		

> Important note to consumers: You should be quite clear that when we say "such and such is unlikely" we mean that the chances of its NOT happening are in our judgment about three to one. Another, and to you critically important, way of saying the same thing is that the chances of its HAPPENING are about one in four. Thus if we were to write, "It is unlikely that Castro will attempt to shoot down a U-2 between now and November 1965," we mean there is in our view around a 25-percent chance that he will do just that. If the estimate were to read, "It is almost certain Castro will not...," we would mean there was still an appreciable chance, say five percent or less, that he would attempt the shoot-down.

We had some charts run up and had some discussions in the community. There were those who thought the concept and the chart a very fine thing. A retired intelligence professional thought well enough of it to put it into a book.[7] CIA officers, addressing War College

[7] Washington Platt, Strategic Intelligence Production (N.Y., 1957). The chart appears on the inside cover and again on page 208 -- not exactly as above but in full accord with my principles. The trouble comes on pp. 209-210, where General Platt departs widely, and to me regrettably, from my notion of legitimate synonyms.

audiences and the like, would sometimes flash a slide and talk about it. A few copies got pasted on the walls of estimates offices in the community. Some people were sufficiently taken that they advocated putting it on the inside back cover of every NIE as a sort of sure-fire handy glossary.

There were also those who did not think about the idea at all, and others in opposition to it. Some fairly important people who had a professional stake in this kind of thinking never took the trouble to learn what it was all about. A good many did take a little trouble and laughed. Still a third group found out all they needed to know and attacked the whole proposition from a hard semantic base point. Of these more later.

25X1 In the face of this inertia and opposition and with the early departure of my only solid ally, [redacted] I began backing away from bold forward positions. I did continue harassing actions and in the course of making a nuisance of myself to associates and colleagues did pick up some useful converts, but I dropped all thought of getting an agreed air-tight vocabulary of estimative expressions, let alone reproducing the chart in the rear of every NIE. With the passage of time it has appeared that the guerrilla strategy thrust upon me by circumstance was the only one holding any chance of success. In almost fourteen years this article is my first serious and systematic attempt to get the message across, and it probably would not have been written if [redacted] had not consulted me about his foray into the same semantic problem. 25X1

The Aesthetic Opposition

What slowed me up in the first instance was the firm and reasoned resistence of some of my colleagues. Quite figuratively I am going to call them the "poets" -- as opposed to the "mathematicians" -- in my circle of associates, and if the term conveys a modicum of disapprobation on my part, that is what I want it to do. Their attitude toward the problem of communication seems to be fundamentally defeatist. They appear to believe the most a writer can achieve when working in a speculative area of human affairs is communication in only the broadest general sense. If he gets the wrong message across or no message at all -- well, that is life.

Perhaps I overstate the poets' defeatism. In any case at least one of them feels quite strongly that my brief for the "mathematicians" is pretty much nonsense. He has said that my likening my side to the mathematician's is a phoney; that I am in fact one with the sociologists who try by artificial definitions to give language a bogus precision. He has gone on to stress the function of rhetoric and its importance. And he has been at some pains to point out how

handy it would be to use expressions like "just possible," "may well," and "doubtless" as they are loosely used in conversation. Could there not be an occasional relaxation of the rule?

Suppose one wrote a sentence: "Khrushchev may well have had in the back of his mind such and such, or indeed it is distinctly possible that somebody had just primed him..." Now suppose you delete the "well" and the "distinctly;" has anything been lost? There will be those who point out that "may well" and "distinctly possible" do convey a flavor which is missing without them. Of course the flavor in question is the flavor of odds, communicated without quoting them. The poets would probably argue that in a sentence of this sort the introduction of any of the terms for particular odds would make the writer look silly. Everybody knows that you could not have the evidence to sustain the use of, say, "probably" in these two instances. Hence you can only suggest odds by the use of the "may well" and "distinctly possible" and so say something without saying it, in short fudge it. The poets wounded when urged to delete the whole ambiguous sentence, arguing that this serves only to impoverish the product. They grow impatient when you advocate dropping only the "well" and the "distinctly." And as for your accusation of fudging, they generally counterattack, inviting you to write something that fudges nothing.

There is a point which the poets can make with telling effect. It is that there are probably just as many reading poets as there are writing poets, and these are going to be numb to the intended meaning of the "mathematician" writer. If you write to give no more than just the general idea or general feel you may get through with great success. Per contra, if you break your heart in an endeavor to make yourself fully precisely understood, you may not. I realize the truth in the above; I am not reconciled to it; I deplore it.

The Growth of Variants

Even if there had been no poets it would have been an impractical idea to print a chart on the inside of the back page of each NIE as a sort of glossary. To have used the one on page 55 and stuck to these words exclusively would have imposed intolerable restraints upon the prose. Even if it had been desirable it would have been impossible to enforce such rigidity. But this was really never at issue: from the start a number of perfectly legitimate synonyms for the concept of possibility and a number for each of the five orders

of likelihood were generally recognized.[8]

For example:

Possible [9] . . . . . conceivable / could [10] / may / might / perhaps [11]

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[8] Some of these synonymous meanings are expressed in verb forms. Thus it is syntactically possible to use them closely coupled to one of the adverbial expressions of odds, e.g., "we believe it likely that ..." or "we estimate it is almost certain that such and such will not ..." If we really mean to assign an odds value to these verb forms good usage would forbid this kind of doubling-up. Mathematically, the probabilities would have to undergo a quite ridiculous multiplication. Thus "we believe" (75 ± percent) multiplied by "likely" (75 ± percent) would yield odds worse than 3 to 2 instead of 3 to 1. If we are not assigning an odds value to "we believe" and "we estimate" the purist would say we should not use them. Yet on many occasions a writer will feel uncomfortable -- and justifiably so -- with a bare "It is likely that ..." Such a bald statement is seemingly more confident than the situation would warrant. The writer will feel something akin to a compulsion towards modesty and a drive to soften the "likely" by introducing it with a "we believe" or "we estimate." Almost invariably he does not intend to change the odds with "likely." If one could set himself up as the arbiter, one would, I believe, rule that the "likely," of odds and that its message was unaffected by the introducing verb.

Doubling up in the "possibly" category is a different matter. We should avoid "it might (or may) be possible for the Blanks to ..." The verb should be present or future indicative, normally "is" and "will be."

[9] These synonyms must not be modified; might well, could well, just could, barely conceivable, etc. are as inadmissible as the original sin.

[10] "Could" is included here because of many years' duty as a synonym for "possible." It has also served as a short way of noting a capability as in "The Soviets could develop / for "have the capability to develop"/ such and such a radar though we have no evidence that they are doing so." The two usages are close, to be sure, but not identical.

[11] As in, "It is almost certain that such and such will occur in the delta, perhaps in Saigon itself."

Almost certain	virtually certain all but certain highly probable highly likely odds [or chances] overwhelming
Probable	likely we believe we estimate
50-50	chances about even chances a little better [or less] than even
Probably not [12]	improbable unlikely we believe that ... not we estimate that ... not we doubt, doubtful
Almost certainly not	almost impossible virtually impossible some slight chance highly doubtful

If the chart were expanded to take care of these, it probably would not fit on the inside back cover of the NIE, and even if it could be made to, its complexity would probably exasperate gentle reader more than it would edify him. Still worse, he would be confused by changes that would have to be made in it from time to time, always to accommodate newcomers among the accepted expressions.

The table of synonyms above did not come into being all at once; it has grown to its present size by accretion. "We believe" came in rather early, and as I remember via General Smith himself. "We

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12 This group of words poses at least one very vexing problem. Suppose you wish to make a positive estimate that there is, say, about a 30-percent chance that such and such thing is the case. Assuming that the thing in question is important, a 30-percent chance of its being the case is highly significant. If you stick with the chart and write "it is improbable [or unlikely etc.] that such and such is the case" you will probably convey a much more negative attitude than you intend. There are many ways around the problem; they will, however, require a few more words.

estimate" was a bit later; "we think," "we expect," and "we judge" are part way in.[13] If they make it all the way I trust they will be used and understood in the "probably"/"we believe" bracket. "We doubt" has been accepted within the last few years as a legitimate equivalent of "probably not." There will be others -- I sincerely hope not very many. Keeping them out will take some doing. In the past, whatever the rigor insisted upon at the working and drafting level, who was there to tell a General Smith or a Mr. Dulles, as he presided over the IAC or USIB, that the revision he had just written out on a piece of yellow paper was not permissible?

Consistency in Usage

From my remarks about the poets, it should be clear that my sympathies lie with their mathematical opponents. But we mathematically-inclined are ourselves not in good array. You might almost say that some of us are talking in the decimal, others in the binary, and still others in the root five or seven systems.

25X1

Or consider the findings of a distinguished intelligence research project. The object was to identify certain military units with respect to the chances of their existence or non-existence. One group of units was called "firm," another "highly probable," a third "probable," and a fourth general group "possible." Except for one important thing, this kind of ordering was wholly to my taste. The word "firm" was unfortunately not used, as one might expect, to describe a condition of 100 percent certainty. Its begetters, upon cross-examination, owned that it was meant to indicate something like 90-95 percent -- roughly the equivalent of my "almost certain." This usage puts the lower categories slightly askew from the terminology of my chart -- "highly probable" and "probable" to my "chances better than even." "Possible," however, was used exactly as I have felt it should be used, to designate something in the range of chances between the absolute barriers of "certainty" and "impossibility" to which no numerical odds could be assigned.

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[13] "We anticipate," used regrettably as a synonym for "we expect," is also part way in. I hope it gets out.

There are other heresies among the mathematicians, if they can be so proclaimed. For example, look at the way in which photo-interpreters have defined their key evaluative words:

Suspect -- Evidence is insufficient to permit designation of a function with any degree of certainty, but photography or other information provides some indications of what the function may be.

Possible -- Evidence indicates that the designated function is reasonable and more likely than other functions considered.

Probable -- Evidence for the designated function is strong and other functions appear quite doubtful.

This kind of formulation shows that someone -- probably a number of people -- had spent a good amount of time striving for a set of rigorous definitions. If you pause long enough to realize that the photo-interpreter's first problem is identification and then take a hard look at his word "suspect," you will see that it parallels my usage for "possible." But the P/Is have preempted "possible" for other duty. Their "possible" fits nicely into the slot of "probable" in my scale of values and their "probable" into my "almost certain."

We are in disarray.

To Estimate or Not

The green language of ordinary conversation abounds with estimates given lightly and with a high order of confidence: "You're a shoo-in," "Not a Chinaman's chance," "A million to one." When you hear one of these expressions or read its more decorous counterpart you may realize that the matter at issue and the related judgment required little soul-searching on the part of the estimator. In the intelligence business, too, there are many occasions when the obscurities of the unknown are easily pierced and we can launch an estimative "probably" or an "almost certainly not" with speed and conviction.

There are, however, estimates at the other end of the spectrum -- estimates which are patently impossible to make. The green language is equally rich in coping with these: "Search me," "I wouldn't have the foggiest," "Your guess is as good as mine," and so on.

It is unfortunate that intelligence estimators are not allowed this kind of freedom in brushing off requests for estimates of the totally impenetrable. Some way or another a convention has been established by which we may not write the sentence: "It is impossible to estimate such and such." If we

try this maneuver our masters will often rudely ask, "Why can't you; what are you paid for, anyway?" If they do not bludgeon us thus, they employ a combination of blackmail and flattery before which even the most righteous among us are likely to fall. The play goes like this: "You say you cannot estimate the number, type, and performance characteristics of Chinese Communist long-range missiles for mid-1970. This is data which is absolutely essential for my planning. Obviously no one expects you to be wholly accurate or very confident of your findings. But you people are after all the experts, and it would be too bad if I had to go to others for this stuff who know far less about it than you. And that is exactly what I will do if you refuse my request."

At this point we do not invite our would-be consumer to seek out his own crystal ball team. We accept his charge, but with grave reservations. Sometimes we try to stay honest by introducing contingencies. "This will probably continue to be the case but only if ..., if ..., and if ...." Then without closing out the contingencies with firm estimates (which we are plainly unable to make) we merely talk about "ifs." hoping that he will keep them in mind as time unfolds and that when sufficient returns are in he will himself make the estimate or ask us to have a second look.

At other times again, when it is the whole subject rather than one of its parts that cannot be estimated, we meet the impossible frontally. We scrupulously avoid the word "estimate" in describing the document and its findings. Rather, we proclaim these to be intelligence assumptions for planning. In our opening paragraphs we are likely to be quite specific as to where our evidence begins and ends, how we are speculating about quantities of things that the other man may produce without knowing whether he has yet made the decision to produce so many as one. We acknowledge our use of the crutch of U.S. analogy, and so on. We promise to speak, not in discrete figures, but in ranges of figures and ranges of our uncertainty regarding them.

25X1

Some years back we were obliged by force majeur to compose some tables setting forth [redacted] There were of course the appropriate passages of verbal warning, and then, on the chance that the numerical tables should become physically separated from the warning, the tables were over printed in red. "This table is based on assumptions stated in .... Moreover, it should not be used for any purpose whatever without inclusion, in full, of the cautionary material in ...." More recently we have issued a document which not only began with a fulsome caveat but was set off by a format and color of paper that were new departures.

The Lurking Weasel

Unhappily, making the easy estimate is not the commonplace of our trade; making the impossible one is happily equally rare. What is the commonplace is the difficult but not impossible estimate. And how we, along with all humanity, hate the task! How fertile the human mind in devising ways of delaying if not avoiding the moment of decision! How rich the spoken language in its vocabulary of issue-ducking! "I have a sneaker that ...," "I'd drop dead of surprise if ..." -- expressions with sound but upon reflection almost without meaning. How much conviction, for example, do you have to have before you become possessed of a sneaker; how much of the unexpected does it take to cause your heart to fail?

Even the well-disciplined intelligence brotherhood similarly quails before the difficult but not impossible estimate and all too often resorts to an expression of avoidance drawn from a more elegant lexicon. What we consciously or subconsciously seek is an expression which conveys a definite meaning but at the same time either absolves us completely of the responsibility or makes the estimate at enough removes from ourselves as not to implicate us. The "serious / or distinct / possibility" clan of expressions is a case in point.

Look at our use of "apparently" and "seemingly" and the verbal "appears" and "seems." We, the writers, are not the unique beings to whom such and such "appears" or "seems" to be the case; with these words we have become everybody or nobody at all. So also with "suggests" and "indicates." Perhaps the "to us" is implicit, but we do not so state; and far more importantly, we practically never say why our suggestibilities were aroused or assess the weight of the reason that aroused them. So still again with "presumably," "ostensibly," and -- most serious of all -- "reportedly" otherwise unmodified. The latter taken literally and by itself carries no evaluative weight whatsoever, and who should know this better than we ourselves who each day handle scores of "reports" whose credibility runs up and down the scale between almost certain truth and almost certain nonsense. It is a pleasure to report -- authoritatively -- that you will find very few unmodified "reportedlys" in the NIEs.

We say "the Soviets probably fear that such and such action will cause thus and so." What I think we mean is "The Soviets probably estimate that if they do such and such the reaction will be disadvantageous to them." If we say "they probably hope ..." we mean roughly the opposite. We talk of another country's willingness "to risk such and such." This is a shorthand, and probably an unconscious one, for the country's having estimated the odds against the unwanted thing's happening as well as how unacceptable the unwanted thing would be if it occured. Its "risking the danger" removes the critical judgment a step or two from our personal responsibility.

Words and expressions like these are far too much a part of us and our habits of communication to be banned by fiat. No matter what is said of their impreciseness or of the timidity of soul that attends their use, they will continue to play an important part in written expression. If use them we must in NIEs, let us try to use them sparingly and in places where they are least likely to obscure the thrust of our key estimative passages.

Here may I return to the group to which I have especially addressed the foregoing -- the brotherhood of the NIE. Let us meet these key estimates head on. Let us isolate and seize upon exactly the thing that needs estimating. Let us endeavor to make clear to the reader that the passage in question is of critical importance -- the gut estimate, as we call it among ourselves. Let us talk of it in terms of odds or chances, and when we have made our best judgment let us assign it a word or phrase that is chosen from one of the five rough categories of likelihood on the chart. Let the judgment be unmistakable and let it be unmistakably ours.

If the matter is important and cannot be assigned an order of likelihood, but is plainly something which is neither certain to come about nor impossible, let us use the word "possible" or one of its stand-ins -- and with no modifier.

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IS INTELLIGENCE OVER-COORDINATED? *

Ray S. Cline **

Being in favor of coordination in the US intelligence community has come to be like being against sin; everyone lines up on the right side of the question. In fact, coordination has become what Stephen Potter calls an "OK" word -- one which defies precise definition but sounds good and brings prestige to the user. Now I do not want to deny that coordination is a good thing, but I would like to suggest that there can be too much of a good thing. I am afraid the intelligence community is suffering from over-coordination.

Part of the trouble is that few who are zealous for coordination stop to define what it is. In one sense -- unfortunately not always understood -- coordination is the main business of the Director of Central Intelligence. The public law creating CIA establishes as its purpose "coordinating the intelligence activities" of the departments and agencies of the US Government, including the intelligence components of State, Army, Navy, and Air.

I am sure that in the absence of any technical definition by Congress the public statute employed the word "coordinate" in its normal Webster's dictionary meaning of "to regulate and combine in harmonious action." This kind of coordination is essential; I doubt that we have enough of it.

In the intelligence community, unfortunately, the "activity" that has been coordinated tirelessly has not been the operational conduct of business or the analytical procedures followed by the intelligence agencies, which the language of the law would imply to a layman, but purely their verbal product in the form of written reports and estimates. Regardless of how inharmoniously the intelligence agencies may engage in "action," they have all settled down to coordination in the

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* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 1, No. 4, Fall, 1957, pp. 11-18.

** Mr. Cline was formerly Deputy Director for Intelligence.

sense of prolonged and detailed joint examination of the words issuing forth from the national intelligence machinery. The apparent objective is to insure that every agency approves of all the language formulations employed in intelligence estimates.

Because coordination is felt to be automatically a good thing, the long and difficult path to unanimity on wording is pursued without regard for the time wasted or ideas lost. The search for the happy cliche, acceptable to all, shopworn but durable, frequently ambiguous but always defensible, goes endlessly on. It is this particular "coordination" process that is in a fair way of becoming a millstone around the neck of the Washington intelligence community.

It is ironic that the word "coordination" came into the government lexicon as the harbinger of a liberalizing and energizing influence at work in a ponderous bureaucratic machine. "Coordination" was the term hit upon by the Army to describe a system of staff consultation devised shortly before World War II in order to escape from the hidebound staff "concurrence" system then saddling the War Department General Staff with an almost unworkable consultative procedure. Under this post-World War I system, any Assistant Chief of Staff of the War Department General Staff was obliged to get the "concurrence" of the other Assistant Chiefs of Staff on any action affecting their mutual interests, whether the interests of the other Assistant Chiefs of Staff were of major or minor importance.

The difficulty of getting a fully concurred memorandum through the War Department General Staff in the emergency years of the late 1930's was so great that the more energetic staff officers began to despair of ever being ready or able to fight World War II. It was in this atmosphere that the coordination system developed and the formal concurrence concept was discarded.

The new procedure presumed that the officer proposing action was -- on behalf of his Staff Division -- entirely responsible for presenting information and making recommendations. He was obliged to show his study and proposals to appropriate officers in other Staff Divisions with overlapping interests to insure that they had no reasonable grounds, deriving from other actions they were taking, for dissenting from the proposed action. The ultimate objective was "harmonious action" and prompt decision. Quibbling over phrases and details became unpopular under the pressure of the need for speed.

The result was that officers consulted in this informal fashion could initial a paper as having been "coordinated" with them without feeling that they were taking full responsibility for the phrasing of the study or the recommended course of action. Coordination merely proved that

officers legitimately concerned had seen the paper and had interposed no objection that dissuaded the action officer from proceeding.

This War Department General Staff coordination system was so successful in World War II that it became a matter of doctrine. In the armed services it became a truism that a paper not carefully "coordinated" was not a good staff paper. There is much to be said for this point of view, and this kind of coordination is surely the responsibility legally placed on CIA in intelligence matters -- that is, the obligation to consult and discover the views of other interested parties in order to insure "harmonious action." I wish it carried with it the original connotation of performing this essential consultative task with reasonable speed and without sacrifice of individual responsibility for describing the situation requiring action.

The intelligence community does not recommend action, of course, but it does describe situations which ought to be meaningful in terms of actions policymaking officials are considering. A good intelligence estimate is not an abstract exercise in cerebration but is a pointed analysis of a situation relating to national security. It ought to be as effectively presented and phrased as a good staff action paper -- perhaps even better, because the subject matter is likely to be more abstract and the nuances and color in the author's choice of words is likely to be vital to a subtle understanding of the situation being described.

By some lower-level-of-consciousness reasoning, coordination in the intelligence business has in practice come to mean word-by-word concurrence of all the intelligence agencies.

This practice has not only slowed down the production of intelligence estimates at the national security level but also has insured that when fully coordinated estimates do emerge into the daylight they usually reflect the carefully considered, carefully phrased views of nobody in particular. They are the drab and soulless products of a bureaucratic system which seems to have a life and a limping gait of its own.

These harsh remarks are not intended to suggest that our national intelligence estimating machinery is of no value. To the contrary, I would like to make clear at the outset that I think the initial organization of this machinery in 1951 -- with which I am very proud to have helped -- is one of the major advances in the history of the US intelligence business. It is obviously desirable for the government officials making national security decisions to have available in written form the best composite judgments of the interagency intelligence community on the main strategic situations affecting US security.

Even with the deficiencies I have suggested, the coordinated national estimates provide a sort of floor of common knowledge and common agreement

under the policymaking process. At a minimum they serve the purpose of preventing wild ideas from carrying the day in the absence of effective confrontation with the agreed general view. In the old days it was perfectly possible for one agency to produce a little thinkpiece setting forth some preposterous theory about Soviet intentions and, through the agency staff channels, present it on the highest policy level without it occurring to anyone to question whether or not this represented the best intelligence views of equally well informed people in the intelligence community. I trust this does not happen now, or at least that there are a great many people who would stand up at some point during the policy consideration to say that such a proposal should be checked out against the national intelligence estimates. This is clearly a net gain of enormous worth.

What I am suggesting, however, is that we have won that net gain at the price of making our estimates much less timely, interesting, and useful than they could be. If we had not allowed ourselves to become so devoted to the concept of coordination of the written word at all costs and at all lengths, I feel we could do a better job of presenting the best views available in the intelligence community rather than the lowest common denominator of agreed doctrine.

The first great defect of our coordination technique is merely the staleness that passage of time brings to a long-disputed thesis. In principle, of course, the national intelligence machinery can bring out an estimate in short order. I believe that there are in history the recorded cases of estimates written and agreed in two or three days. These were very short estimates produced under circumstances of extraordinary urgency. It is enough to say that what is usually called a "crash" estimate is usually produced in about two weeks' time. A good solid national intelligence estimate runs anywhere from six weeks to six months. Perhaps we can afford the luxury of writing estimates at this pace, but I very much doubt that the estimates so produced are as useful as they could be if they were produced much more rapidly. In the present system, unhappily, the estimates are bound to contain very few surprises and very little of immediate interest to our policymakers.

Much worse than this out-of-date quality, however, is the second great defect of the coordinated estimate -- the flatness of ideas agreed by four or five contributing draftees. It is simply not true that the more people and the more views represented in the drafting of a paper, the better the paper is. Sometimes a brilliant paper slips relatively unmarred through drafting sessions in which a large number of people are involved. But too often papers which, although imperfectly phrased and controversially put, make a contribution to knowledge at the beginning of the coordination process emerge either so long afterward that all of the sparkle of the basic idea is lost or so much watered-down and flattened-out as to be virtually meaningless.

The reason for the delay, the watering-down, and the flattening-out is not hard to find. Any group of working-level government officers brought together to "coordinate" a paper are under an enormous obligation to their bureaucratic superiors to emasculate any sentence which suggests, or might suggest, the contrary of a view held in their particular part of the bureaucratic forest. This caution tends to bring on a process of horse-trading in which every interested party secures his privilege of excluding an objectionable phrase in return for permitting the exclusion of some sentence which is anathema to another representative, although it may not be at all objectionable to the rest of the group. Add up four or five or six of these representatives as parties to the proceedings -- and crank in the normal personal vagaries in reacting to someone else's prose -- and you speedily reduce a paper to its lowest common denominator of meaningfulness.

After all, we are all familiar with the phenomenon whereby most people feel that it is possible to express their own ideas only in their own words. This factor alone poses an almost impossible situation for anyone trying to draft a simple, cleancut view of a complex intelligence problem.

I, too, happen to like my own prose better than the words used so clumsily by other people. Unfortunately, I have discovered that my colleagues also seem to prefer their own, even over mine. My way of solving this problem, and the problem of many drafters representing multiple interests, is to determine, on the basis of subject matter, whether a paper is mainly my paper or my colleague's paper. If it is my paper I strongly believe that the best way to get the main ideas across is for me to draft it in my own words, presenting it in the way that seems to me to be most effective.

At that point in drafting I like to consult all of my colleagues, whoever they may be and whatever agency they may work for, who know something about the subject. Inevitably I get a considerable amount of comment, both on the main ideas and on the words in which they are expressed. This I think is healthy, and in many cases I am persuaded either that I am wrong in what I was trying to say -- in which case I want to change it by all means -- or that I have not presented it very effectively -- in which case I am anxious to rephrase it in the light of my failure to put it across. It may be that I think my colleagues are simply dense, but nevertheless I ought to adjust my verbal presentation of the problem to carry them along with me in understanding the subject and my view. All this consultation with the best minds of the community is desirable even essential. It is what I consider to be coordination properly understood.

In other words, coordination is ideally a process of consultation with knowledgeable and interested members of the intelligence community for

the purpose of getting new information, taking account of differing views, and insuring the most effective presentation of an intelligence analysis. I think it is true to say that in many cases a person drafting a paper on a broad and complex subject is obligated to accept the information supplied him and, in general, to adopt the interpretive views held by the most expert and responsible people, wherever they work. This sharing of knowledge is the whole reason for working as an intelligence community.

On the other hand, if there is any function for a central and coordinating group in the intelligence community, it is precisely in the sphere of subjecting to careful inquiry the views of all members in the community on situations cutting across specialized departmental interests, making a valid synthesis, and presenting the general truth of the matter in an effective manner, even though it may not fully please any single member of the group. If, when this purpose has been accomplished, a responsible member of the community still feels that the paper makes a major substantive error, as distinct from being badly expressed, then I think it would be most proper for the dissenting person to express himself as effectively as he can in language of his own choosing setting forth where he feels the basic paper has erred.

This last point -- the right of major dissent -- is an important one. I know from experience that in many complex intelligence problems the most effective way to discover the essential outlines of a tricky situation is to have an analyst present his case and then to listen to the views of any dissenting analyst. I submit that the net result of a strong view of this sort with a substantive dissent is much more helpful and meaningful to the person who actually needs to know something about the situation than is a compromise set of general cliches which do not indicate the difficulty and conflict of view inherent in the situation as seen through the evidence the intelligence community possesses.

The sum and substance of what I have been saying is that the US national security system would be better served if the intelligence community took a less vigorous view of the meaning of coordination and substituted more informal techniques of consultation. In this way the intelligence community could share knowledge and wisdom without delaying or weakening the product.

Such an arrangement would work like a consulting group of physicians, one a general practitioner and the others specialists. If the disease is complex and cuts across specialists' lines, the general practitioner (CIA in intelligence) should take responsibility for the diagnosis and treatment, consulting and using the skills of the specialists (State, Army, Navy, Air, et al.). In no case should the doctors confuse the diagnosis to disguise the fact that they could not agree among themselves nor, of course, should they let the patient die while they argue.

COORDINATION AND RESPONSIBILITY *

R. J. Smith **

In discussing the coordination of national intelligence it seems to me essential to recognize at the outset that coordination is certainly here to stay and probably will continue to be conducted pretty much along present lines. No amount of talk will either make it go away or alter its basic nature. This is so not because those people presently responsible for coordinating national intelligence are insensitive to visions of an ideal world where gentleman scholars would discuss world problems broadly and then retire to write individual appreciations. It is so primarily because national intelligence has become an integral part of the complex machinery for planning and policymaking of the US Government and has thereby acquired responsibilities not previously held by intelligence.

In the earlier and possibly more light-hearted years of CIA it was always a matter of some speculation as to who the users of national intelligence really were. We had a distribution list with names on it, but we had little evidence as to what happened once the estimates were delivered. We were in the position of shooting arrows into the air -- some of them elegantly shaped and still bearing the tool marks of individual craftsmen -- and having them land we knew not where. There was some fretting over this uncertainty, but it was balanced to a degree by an accompanying freedom in how we directed our effort. Coordination in those days varied in its difficulty and its intensiveness almost with the moods and states of health of the participants. On one occasion, a coordination meeting would become almost a pro forma operation. On another, it might be the scene of sharply personal bickering and bad feeling, illuminated with sparks of verbal wit and showered with forensic displays.

Over the past five years this has changed. The broadening development of the centralized planning and policymaking mechanism has brought sharp changes in all governmental activities involved with problems of national

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* Studies in Intelligence, Vol 1, No. 4, Fall, 1957, pp. 19-26.

** Mr. Smith is Deputy Director for Intelligence.

security. National intelligence has been affected along with the rest. At the same time, national intelligence has gained strikingly in prestige and authority, partly as a consequence of its new responsibilities in policy and planning but also as a result of growing maturity and technical improvement throughout the entire intelligence community.

We no longer are in any doubt as to what use is made of national estimates. In a majority of cases, the customer (the National Security Council, one of its major members such as the White House, or one of its subordinate components such as the Planning Board) has given us specifications for the task and has set a date for its completion. If our customer discovers new specifications to be included, alterations are made before the estimate is completed; if he discovers his need has greater or less urgency than originally thought, the timing is adjusted. In all those cases where the policy and planning mechanism has originated the request, we know from the outset that the finished estimate will become the basis for a review of US policy toward the area or problem under consideration. We know this will be true also of a substantial number of other estimates which have been initiated through other auspices, including our own.

It is not new for intelligence to serve as a basis for policy. To greater or less degree, this has always been so and has provided intelligence with its reason for being. What is new is that this relationship has been formalized and institutionalized in such fashion as to make the connection far more direct and effective than ever before. Recognition throughout the intelligence community of the immediacy of this connection has profoundly affected both the estimates themselves and their coordination.

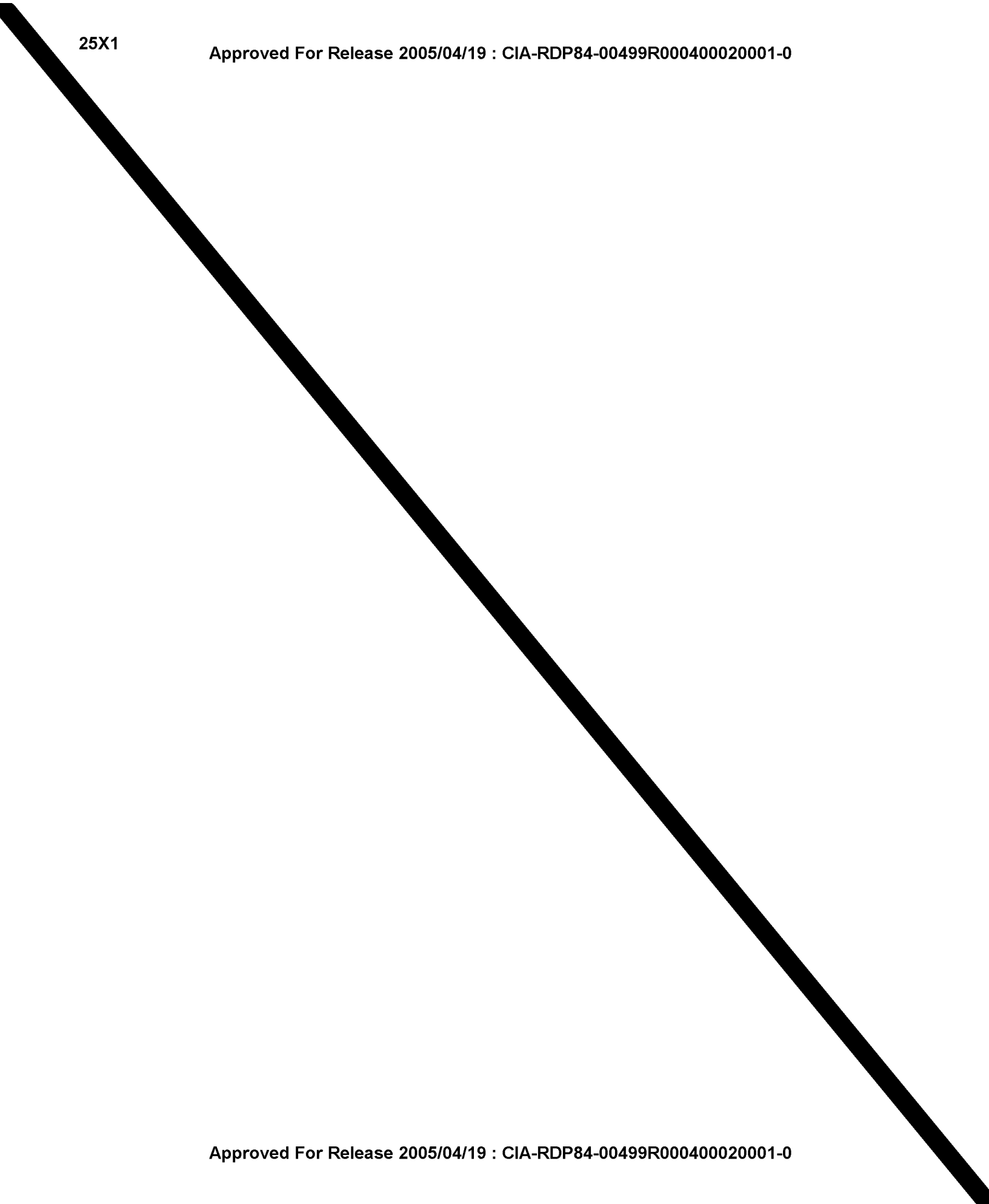
The present day national estimate bears only an indistinct resemblance to one of its remote ancestors, the literary or scholarly essay. In the days of our youth the resemblance was more apparent than it is today, and it continues to be considerably more apparent in British national intelligence papers, known as "appreciations." (It may not be significant but it is at least interesting that for us the word "appreciation" carries connotations of artistic endeavor and to the British the word "estimate" conveys a mechanical totting up, not unlike the estimate the plumber provides before beginning work.) It is inevitable and proper that some readers, bringing to bear primarily the standards for literary or scholarly essays, should criticize the national estimates for general lack of reader appeal. It is perhaps also inevitable but considerably less proper that they should simultaneously place the blame for this condition entirely on the process of coordination.

National estimates are not scholarly essays. They are primarily work papers for planners and policymakers. This does not mean that these papers need be unreadable, or that they cannot be more readable than

they sometimes are, but it does mean that they must be the embodiment of precise writing. Anyone who has ever tried to write really precisely -- so presisely that several different groups of planners can get exactly the same content from a statement of fact or a judgment -- knows that in order to reach such precision one must boil off nearly all the esters of personal flavor and strive for a flat objectivity. Also, in this connection, one must bear in mind that the planners and policymakers in question are high level and have neither the time nor the necessity to master enormous quantities of detail. They need only that amount of detail necessary to support the handful of key estimative judgments to be made about the situation before them.

Having said this much, let us look more narrowly at the impact of coordination upon these national estimates. First of all, let there be no mistake about the necessity for coordination. Many criticisms of the present coordinated estimates represent an attempt, in one guise or another, to squirm away from this necessity. It may be true that one individual, or a small group of talented individuals, could on many occasions, write estimates with sharper edges than coordinated estimates, but the difficulty is that such estimates would not meet the need of the White House and the National Security Council. What the highest levels of the national government most emphatically do not need is a batch of estimates on the same subject by separate intelligence organizations, each paper out of key with the other in exposition, emphasis, and conclusion. This situation would merely pass responsibility for the ultimate intelligence judgment on to the policymakers. What they require instead is a single document which contains the collective judgment of the intelligence community, an estimate which delineates the areas of general intelligence agreement and identifies where necessary the points of major substantive dissent, an estimate to which all the chief intelligence officers of the national government will concur. Looked at from this perspective, the coordination process becomes the heart of the matter, not an unnecessary evil. Its characteristic defects and its burdens become problems to be worked with and to be eased, not avoided. In fact, looked at from this angle, one can even recognize that the coordination process has benefits and merits in its own right.

Knowing as they do that the finsihed national estimate will become the basis for a policy which will vitally affect the mission and responsibilities of their department, the representatives of the various intelligence agencies take the coordinating sessions seriously. As their departments' spokesmen, they have a deep and responsible interest in seeing that the final estimate does not ignore information available to their department or does not arrive at judgments contrary to the views of their departmental intelligence specialists and chiefs. At the same time, they must avoid damaging the prestige and integrity of their department by pushing departmental views in defiance of contrary evidence or by failing to inform their department of the extent to which its view stands in isolation from the rest of the community.



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One must realize, however, that dissents are not easily contrived. First, the actual substantive difference must be isolated and the dissenter convinced that his is the dissenting and not the majority view. Then he must accustom himself to the notion of standing naked and alone in a footnote with his peers arrayed against him in the main text. Each of these stages is invariably accompanied by surges of new conviction on the part of the dissenter that his position is the right one, after all, and that one more try will convert the rest of the group. In short, the trickiest and most vexing problems in coordination revolve around the point at which the quest for agreement should be abandoned and a clearly defined dissent should be prepared. But to say it is hard is not to say it cannot be done. To prevent enforced coordination, statements of dissent are employed now as often as the skill of the CIA coordinators can bring them about. Growing maturity among the intelligence community will probably make this an easier result to obtain as time goes on.

Another common complaint about coordination is that it takes so much time the estimates are no longer fresh when they are produced. In actual fact, this criticism has less validity than almost any other. No one involved in producing national estimates would deny it takes time. Papers involving special research problems or new techniques have taken as long as ten months. Routine estimates commonly take six to eight weeks. On the other hand, the IAC machinery has produced a coordinated national estimate in five hours and has on several occasions produced them in 36,48, or 72 hours. At first glance, in a world where the daily newspaper is regularly scooped by television, six to eight weeks, let along ten months, seems an unconscionable amount of time. Even five or forty-eight hours seems long. Viewed from the perspective of operational or current intelligence, it probably is a long time. Viewed from the perspective of planning national strategy, it is not. A number of our estimates project forward five years because it is necessary for some kinds of policy planning to look five years ahead. Nearly all the estimates project at least a year ahead. Against this time span, the time taken to produce them does not seem long. To put it another way, an estimate which could not withstand the passing of a mere eight weeks could scarcely serve as the basis for planning a year or five years ahead.

But whatever view one has about the right length of time to spend producing a coordinated national estimate, the remarkable fact is that the coordination itself -- the time spent in meetings resolving differences in views and obtaining an agreed text -- takes only a small fraction of the total time spent. A study of twenty-four planned and routine national estimates, the longest taking 285 days to produce and the shortest 62 days, disclosed that the average time actually required for coordination meetings was under ten percent. The remainder was spent in the preparation of terms of reference, research, and preparation of agency contributions, and the writing and reviewing of the draft within CIA. Even this low percentage figure does not tell the full story because it includes estimates on such matters as Soviet gross capabilities, where weeks of meetings were held to work

over the complicated evidence underlying detailed strength figures and capabilities estimates. A more representative figure for coordination meetings would be between one and three days, most commonly two.

Is one led inevitably by this discussion to the conclusion that the necessary art of coordinating national estimates is in a perfect state? The answer is certainly no. As in all good-sized meetings, both within government and without, progress in coordination sessions is frequently slow and uncertain. Too frequently, those who know the least talk the most. Even worse, on some occasions one of the participants may be virtually devoid of substantive grasp. Sometimes, persons with a fair understanding of the substance under discussion come so rigidly instructed regarding a certain point that discussion of it is futile. Almost always, there is a tendency among the participants to commit that fundamental but all-too-human semantic error, that of identifying the word inexorably with the thought: Thought A can only be expressed by Word A.

What is the remedy for this state of affairs? What can be done, particularly when much of the difficulty is inherent in the method? Can we overcome the fundamental inefficiency of the committee meeting, that peculiarly American contribution to the arts of governing? Well, certainly not, but we can exploit fully our growing technique in running meetings, extracting from them their maximum value as the creators of new perspectives and holding to a minimum their nonproductive aspects. Can we elevate semantic understanding and sophistication to such a level as to remove this most frequent barrier to agreement? Again, no, at least not all at once, but we can recognize this shortcoming in ourselves and thus contribute to greater flexibility in achieving a solution.

In short, the path to improvement of the coordination process lies not through the imposition of ideal solutions but through gradual, slow advance by small adjustments here and there. We can obtain better quality of representation at the coordination meetings. There is, in fact, perceptible progress in this respect over the past several years. The advantages of sending representatives with substantive understanding and empowering them with a fair degree of latitude in negotiation are already apparent to most of the IAC agencies. We can achieve a higher degree of group responsibility and freedom from partisan attitudes as maturity increases. Moreover, we can adopt various innovations in procedure as they seem desirable. We could, just for example, ask the IAC agencies to send representatives to participate with us in the drafting sessions on certain occasions in order to speed the process and facilitate agreement. But whatever we do, we cannot -- as I hope I have made clear -- do away with the coordination process. It is the heart of national intelligence. To make it tick strongly and surely is our problem.

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THE INTELLIGENCE ARM: THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Fred Greene *

We are all aware, after two decades of cold war, that foreign policy poses difficult problems for the democratic process of government. Traditional concerns about the need for secrecy, speed of action, special information, and sensitivities of foreign governments place foreign policy in a special category of governmental affairs under any circumstances. These concerns apply with even greater emphasis to intelligence, which has become a special arm within the realm of American foreign policy in recent decades. This development has further magnified the problems of exercising responsible controls over the policy process, and bringing to bear adequate judgments concerning operational effectiveness.

Even the most straightforward categories of military intelligence, those that affect the national security directly and immediately, including estimates of an opponent's preparations for a surprise attack or a dangerous shift in the disposition of his strategic forces, raise issues that are far from simple and clearcut. We can all agree, for example, that information regarding Soviet missile deployments is of the highest importance. But verification usually takes considerable time, especially if previous information had been proven incorrect after painstaking review. Or the political price of collection might be very high, as was the case in the U-2 crisis of 1960. Someone must measure at the outset the relative costs of "not knowing" as against the price of finding out, all before an incident has occurred or a particular fear is confirmed. Similarly, it takes great wisdom to decide what degree of verification, short of certainty, can justify a grave retaliatory or preventive measure.

Still more complex and elusive is the field of political intelligence involving answers to such questions as: What policies and objectives

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are other states pursuing? Under given circumstances which of the particular options apparently open to them will they choose? And what would their reactions be to the specific policies or proposals put forward by the United States?

I

The Cuban missile crisis lends itself to detailed study of the complex intelligence craft because the crisis was of limited duration, the major events of the drama were sharply etched in detail, and intelligence played a central role in the formation of policy before and after the discovery of the Soviet strategic missiles in Cuba. From this incident, many general principles of the intelligence function may be derived; from it too we may see how intelligence serves (effectively or otherwise) as an instrument of foreign policy. For this confrontation required of intelligence a general estimate of a basic political situation: that of the Soviet-American power equation and of fundamental Soviet security policy. Intelligence also had to look for specific signals that would indicate important changes in Russian behavior patterns. The policy stakes involved in effective collection and accurate evaluation of evidence were high, but so were later decisions on how to sue and disseminate this hard-won information. Throughout the crisis, intelligence provided the decision makers greater leeway than otherwise would have been the case, in such crucial choices as the timing of their reaction, the diplomatic method and arena of response, and even the substance of the policy adopted.

The political roots of the missile crisis lay in the decision of the Castro government to throw Cuba into a deep socio-economic revolution along what its leaders held to be Marxist lines. This was combined with a diplomatic alignment with the Soviet Union, source of much aid and favorable trade agreements during 1960-61. Among the more important American reactions following the Bay of Pigs incident of April, 1961, was the determination to remove Cuba as a participant in the inter-American system, an effort that bore fruit after considerable debate at Punta del Este in January, 1962. There, by a bare two-thirds majority, the O.A.S. went beyond its 1960 condemnation of Communist intervention in hemispheric affairs to exclude, but not expel, Cuba from its system. During the months that followed, the Cubans apparently sought the protection of a Russian alliance and treaty of guarantee but instead received the Soviet offer to place surface-to-surface missiles (S.S.Ms.) on their soil. A treaty between the two states, announced on September 1, 1962, promised Cuba arms and technicians "to resist the imperialists' threats."

American intelligence operations by the beginning of September had already discovered the presence of various defensive dispositions, the most significant of which were anti-aircraft or surface-to-air missiles (S.A.Ms.), and the presence of at least 3,500 Russians in Cuba. During the first half of September, President Kennedy and other high officials reported in detail on defensive weapons entering Cuba, said that no offensive weapons (especially S.S.Ms. and bombers) had arrived, and repeatedly warned Moscow against placing such weapons in Cuba. The Soviet Union stated somewhat ambiguously on September 11 that all dispositions were defensive in purpose, stressing, that is, intent rather than type of weapon. In retrospect, it appears that after the mid-summer decision to place S.S.Ms. in Cuba, the Russians began to ship supportive materials there in early September and the missiles began to arrive in the middle or latter part of that month.

American responses in late September included a congressional authorization on September 24 for the President to call up 150,000 reservists and an effort by the U.S. Air Force to have its Tactical Command combat ready in one month.[1] Air reconnaissance was intensified though bad weather and the elaborate nature of the effort delayed total coverage for a while. However a U-2 flight on October 14 revealed the construction of S.S.M. sites and later photographs enabled intelligence officers to estimate the full scope of the Soviet effort. The week of October 16-22 was devoted to reaching a decision as to the basic American response and the following period, October 22-28, brought on the famous confrontation. The President revealed the crisis in a speech on October 22; the naval quarantine on missile shipments to Cuba took effect on October 24; Mr. Khrushchev's first letter arrived October 26; an American U-2 was destroyed October 27 in the only military engagement of the incident; and the Soviet Union agreed to a withdrawal of its strategic weapons on October 28.

Although a brilliant success in the end, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 also brought in its train many disagreeable surprises. The Russians did manage to ship strategic weapons across the ocean in secrecy. They also apparently operated with unexpected speed and efficiency. Comparisons with Pearl Harbor come to mind immediately: misreading the opponent's intentions, misjudging his technical capacity, not crediting him with sufficient audacity, and analyzing how he would act by imagining how we would act in such a situation. Still we suceeded in 1962 in contrast to the disaster of 1941, and end results still count importantly in evaluating an intelligence effort.

Nonetheless, within the United States, the aftermath brought considerable criticism of the intelligence community. This criticism, which placed

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[1] Henry M. Pachter, Collision Course (New York, 1963), p. 7.

in sharp relief many of the issues and lessons of the crisis, fell into two main categories -- those regarding basic concepts and those dealing with particulars. Among the former or more philosophical issues is the problem of weighing theory and fact as guides to an analytical effort. This involves the eternal need to develop some working hypothesis that enables an analyst to place masses of information in some meaningful pattern; against this is the requirement to guard incessantly against jumping prematurely to conclusions, by letting the facts speak for themselves, at least to a certain extent. A second conceptual issue concerns the intelligence official's approach -- should he emphasize the worst or most dangerous interpretation of the facts or possible evolution of a situation, if only to protect the harassed policy maker from experiencing unpleasant and critical surprises? And what stress should intelligence place upon intentions as against the capabilities of a given antagonist?

The second category of criticism underlines the specific inadequacies of intelligence as a given situation unfolds. This involves an ability to make accurate deductions from known facts -- in this case, for example, whether the presence of air defense missiles signified the presence of other, strategic missiles. In other words, were the analysts too optimistic in their interpretation of the facts on hand? Then there is the matter of timing: did intelligence officers overlook critical evidence regarding the presence of strategic missiles in the crucial twenty-four days between September 21 and October 14, 1962? On a point not squarely within the intelligence framework, can we distinguish between defensive and offensive weapons in this instance; or does the effort to do so mislead an opponent with regard to the nature of America's planned response? How can one estimate whether, and to what degree, an opponent was aware of the depth of America's emotional involvement in the Cuban issue?[2] In addition to this range of problems, we must also consider the effect of the existing bureaucratic structure upon the ability of the intelligence community to function properly.

II

I believe that our intelligence effort came out well with regard to those issues raised by such critics as Senators Keating and Stennis

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[2] Klaus Knorr places special emphasis on this point in "Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Cuban Missiles," World Politics, XVI (April, 1964), 464-65.

(in his Preparedness Subcommittee report) and Mr. Hanson Baldwin. A major point in the entire controversy centers upon the fact that the United States intelligence community, because of its theoretical orientation, was surprised by the Soviet effort to put strategic missiles so far from its homeland. The Stennis Preparedness Subcommittee pointed out that there was a certain philosophical conviction in the intelligence community "that it would be incompatible with Soviet policy to introduce strategic missiles into Cuba."3 This fundamental assumption rested on the belief that the Soviet Union would not risk placing vulnerable and important weapons outside of the area in which it exercised direct physical control. It had never done this before and, save for the error of the Korean War -- a mistake that Khrushchev had acknowledged indirectly many times -- the Soviet Union cautiously refrained from risking a major and direct confrontation with the United States. Building on this analysis, both Mr. Baldwin and the Senate report came to the unwarranted conclusion that the intelligence community tried to make the facts fit its preconceptions and pet theories, and so failed to allow empirical evidence to call the tune.4

Actually, as of September, 1962, the intelligence analysis of Soviet behavior patterns rested squarely on the then available facts gathered with painstaking care. To assume a Russian strategic missile effort in Cuba as late as mid-September would have been the theoretical flight of fancy that the critics rightly consider so dangerous. The issue, then, does not center upon a misguided effort to force reality to comply with predetermined views. Rather, it is far more complex and agonizing, especially because the analysts based their reasoning on the solid foundation of prudence and experience. Since we know that nothing continues on the same course forever, the question emerges: when does a situation change and when do all precedents or existing patterns become dangerously out of date? That is, when must an intelligence officer decide that a foe is about to do something rash and novel, something that is quite dangerous, and something for which hard evidence is lacking? This problem more accurately reflects the issues that emerged in 1962 and deserves further consideration and research. Past experiences involving both

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3 U.S. Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, Preparedness Investigation Subcommittee, Investigation of Preparedness Program, 88th Cong., 1st Sess., 1963, S.R. 75. See the New York Times, May 10, 1963, for the report's "Summary of Major Findings."

4 Hanson Baldwin, "The Growing Risks of Bureaucratic Intelligence," The Reporter, Aug. 15, 1963, pp. 48-52. Mr Baldwin quotes approvingly the Senate report on this and other matters.

strategic suprise and anticipations that never became reality (possibly because of preventive measures) require careful investigation. This involves an examination of the estimates made, their degree of accuracy, and the significant patterns, if any, that emerged in those situations marked by drastic and unexpected actions.

A related problem is whether an intelligence officer should emphasize the worst situation that might develop in light of available evidence. The Stennis report holds that "there seems to have been a disinclination on the part of the intelligence community to accept and believe the ominous portent of the information which had been gathered. In addition the intelligence people apparently invariably adopted the most optimistic estimate possible with respect to the information available. This is in sharp contrast to the customary military practice of emphasizing the worst situation which might be established by the accumulation of evidence." As we shall soon note, there was absolutely no hard evidence before September 21, 1962, concerning strategic missiles, so that before that date it would have taken a clairvoyant to "accept and believe" anything of the sort. (One almost gets the impression from studying criticisms that evidence is of a secondary nature, almost a mere verifcation of overwhelming intuitive knowledge that the missiles were already there.)

When a situation is not clear-cut, and various interpretations are possible, it is indeed the duty and tradition of intelligence to point out the worst possibility. Yet this act does not suffice to guarantee security in a given situation, since officials responsible for actual plans and operations will discount a Cassandra who consistently emphasizes the greatest danger. Their own experience tells them that less dangerous and more likely developments in a spectrum of possibilities frequently come to pass. They will discount new and dire intelligence warnings in ambiguous situations if they have already had their fill of them. There is, at the same time, an opposite danger that those who wish to alter an existing policy radically will seize upon any anticipation of great danger, no matter how carefully qualified in an intelligence analysis, to argue for the adoption of their position as the only escape from impending disaster.

A third conceptual problem, one repeatedly stressed by Mr. Baldwin is that we must go by capabilities rather than by intentions. These words connote a sharp contrast between reliance on the facts (capabilities) as against trying to guess what is in the enemy's mind (intentions). To stress intentions, Mr. Baldwin feels, is to give intelligence control over policy makers, by compelling the latter to follow the single line of action that best reflects the analysis of intentions. This is an unfair criticism, if only because the alleged difference between capabilities (inference: facts) and intentions (inference: guesses) is a myth. Nor do calculations based on intentions necessarily put a nation's security

on more dangerous grounds than when we base estimates only on capabilities. For example, we assumed that the Russians had the capability of manufacturing X number of missiles in the late 1950's, based on our knowledge of their physical plant and their technical capacity. Is this a meaningful, hard fact if other information, a point argued vehemently by Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates, leads us to conclude that they intend to produce, say only $\frac{X}{Y}$ missiles?[5] Is one not derelict in his duty to stress only the larger sum if the other figure looks correct? If we always went by capabilities, how would we ever keep our own arms below our own maximum capability?

More fundamentally, evidence of an intention must rest on hard facts to a degree sufficient to make capability -- another set of hard facts -- an unsure basis of analysis. Otherwise the uncertainty would not appear in the first place. In short, we usually have two sets of competing hard facts, making an estimate in either direction somewhat of a guess. Analysts therefore follow the more convincing evidence or the more frequent or meaningful experience. Otherwise, to chain oneself to capabilities -- for example, the Russians can invade Iran or they can overturn the Finnish government -- could lead to a harmful diplomatic and military posture at a given moment, if other evidence regarding intentions indicates that these are unlikely events. Would not an exclusive stress on capability also mean control over policy makers by intelligence? Clearly, the problem of capabilities and intentions is too subtle to resolve simply by identifying either one with "the facts."

III

The intelligence community has also been subjected to the criticism that its thinking was influenced by wishful and optimistic interpretations of the facts, thereby making its evaluations and estimates far too sanguine. Thus, the Preparedness Subcommittee held that the intelligence community was inclined to accept only those things which bolstered an optimistic interpretation. Yet in the late summer of 1962 the intelligence community was considerably disturbed, even though it had patiently screened a tremendous amount of information without finding evidence that

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[5] See for example the Testimony of Secretary Gates in Department of Defense Appropriations for 1961, Part 1, esp. p. 23. Hearings, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, 86th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1960.

the Soviets had placed strategic missiles on the island.[6] Because they were worried, intelligence officials increased their efforts to make certain that nothing was amiss. The critics themselves in different contexts, have reported the considerable variety of efforts at intelligence collection undertaken that September. No one held that a strategic missile base on the island lay outside the realm of possibility; indeed, because of the dangers involved, intensive efforts were made, leading to the alert and rapid discovery of the missile emplacements.

Before September 21, as Mr. Baldwin has noted, there was no evidence that the Russians had strategic missiles in Cuba. Yet Mr. John McCone, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, felt that the Russians would install missiles of a strategic sort and he proved to be correct. He based his view on a deduction that the emplacements of S.A.Ms. indicated an intent to install S.S.Ms. on the island. Mr. McCone was proven correct in the Cuban case. However, the Russians have put S.A.Ms. in Indonesia; Iraq had them before the 1963 coup; the U.A.R. was reported in the press to have them in 1964; and India has been promised a sizable number of S.A.Ms. It is quite possible that the Soviet Union will give or promise surface to air missiles to other states since they bring large political dividends at little economic cost. Some states will reject these weapons as unnecessary or too expensive to maintain; others might find the offer attractive, for prestige and security reasons.

This is not to say that the establishment of S.A.M. sites in Cuba in mid-1962 was not of itself a politically and militarily serious development. But though significant, this did not allow a firm conclusion that S.S.Ms. were also present, without substantiating evidence. The existence of S.A.Ms. did arouse suspicions, thereby adding to the intelligence community's determination to intensify its surveillance. To go beyond such prudent responses and to argue that the presence of S.A.Ms. equals the presence of S.S.Ms. does not afford a reliable basis for analyzing the significance of S.A.M. emplacements in other parts of the world.

IV

There is also the question of <u>timing</u>. When was the evidence physically there? When did we learn about it? When did we actually believe it?

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6 See the letter by Congressman Samuel Stratton in <u>The Reporter</u>, Oct. 10, 1963, defending the intelligence officials, and the editor's response, quoting the Senate report, supporting the criticism made in the report and by Mr. Baldwin, pp. 8, 10.

Here we are dealing with what ultimately proved to be America's greatest triumph. Mr. Baldwin has noted that "irrefutable evidence becomes availaboe, commencing about September 21."[7] This statement contains an inference, albeit vague, that there was some degree of certainty in the evidence during the twenty-four days between September 21 and October 14. Senator Keating has stated that he was told early in October of evidence from sources other than aerial reconnaissance; the latter, he observed, did not "fully record the presence of strategic missile sites until October 14."[8]

Was irrefutable evidence obtained -- and overlooked -- in those twenty-four days? Was it new and strikingly different from the vast number of false alarms, such as those reported in the press, of the previous two years? Or are we again dealing with the clarity of 20-20 hindsight, which made the evidence both irrefutable and clearcut after the aircraft had done their job? Senator Keating himself has noted that via aviation we recieved "fully recorded" evidence on October 14. That date was about the earliest on which evidence of actual construction could have been perceived through this medium. This remarkable achievement does not mean that other evidence was not required or sought. But it does indicate that we learned through air photography what the Russians were doing just as they mounted a significant effort to build their missile delivery structure in Cuba.

Was the evidence that came in earlier through different sources sufficient to make a convincing case within the United States? Would it have enabled the government to take the diplomatic and strategic offensive? And how pressed were we for time? To take the last question first, we should note that even after October 14, the President wanted eight more days in which to prepare his program and his arguments, and then it took five additional days to settle the issue. Hence we still had time -- almost two weeks -- after the Russian missile construction effort reached a sufficiently advanced state on October 14 to be photographed.

Even more important was the relationship between the type of evidence and the diplomatic strategy that the President selected. Having decided on open diplomacy and a direct confrontation rather than a covert effort to force the Russians out, conclusive evidence presentable in an open forum became pivotal to his endeavor. With this as national policy, decided upon by the responsible officials (in accordance with the requirement that intelligence should not control or direct policy), it seems only

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[7] Baldwin, "The Growing Risks of Bureaucratic Intelligence."

[8] Letter by Senator Kenneth Keating in The Reporter, Sept. 12, 1963, p. 6.

reasonable to conclude that the evidence gathered by aerial reconnaissance was both essential and timely. It admirably suited the President's basic objective of getting the missiles out of Cuba.

To be valuable, intelligence cannot operate in a vacuum; rather it must help broaden the choices available to the prudent leader and make these options more meaningful. It is of greatest service when it enhances national policy in the diplomatic context within which it is employed. In the effort to convince the diplomatic and public opinion of the world, any evidence accumulated by the United States government by means other than aerial photography during the last week in September and the first two weeks in October, however important, would not have done this job. Nor, as we have seen, did the time span in this situation have a significant negative effect on our ability to respond. What does emerge is that other types of firm information are difficult to acquire, take time to verify, require the most careful evaluation, and present formidable problems as instruments of diplomacy. These handicaps will continue to beset intelligence as an arm of foreign policy in the foreseeable future.

V

There remains the issue of whether a distinction can be made between offensive and defensive weapons. The administration carefully distinguished between them in September, stressing that only the former were unacceptable. But did the administration's attitude, in accepting one type of missile, lead the Soviet Union to feel that the United States would take a less determined stand against the presence of strategic missiles? Mr. Baldwin avers that the distinction is impossible because defensive weapons (for example, S.A.Ms.) can protect offensive ones, thus making the context of employment rather than physical properties the key factors. Yet the administration did not appear confused on this score in 1962; nor did it believe as Senator Keating argues, that it had blurred the issue by drawing such a distinction. It was in fact issuing a last warning to the Russians against going beyond their significant defensive build-up in Cuba. During the first half of September, the President in his press conference on September 13 and Under Secretary Ball in his testimony before the Congress on October 3 both stressed the difference between offensive and defensive weapons in this vein.[9] Mr. Ball's testimony, detailing the presence of defensive weapons, was published in full. Mr. Walter Lippmann in a long follow-up analysis carefully went over this presentation, pointing out the distinctions between defensive and offensive weapons and warning about the consequences of

[9] The Washington Post and Times-Herald, Sept. 5 and 14, 1962.

the latter.[10] The effect of these public statements and writings was to clarify the differences between the two types of weapons and to underline the danger that would follow if the Russians placed strategic missiles or bombers in Cuba. It is difficult to see how any of this could have left the Russians confused, because, unlike other situations in the past, these signals from Washington came through quite distinctly.

The evidence thus reveals a fairly clear picture. The Russians simply chose to disbelieve what was said, or concluded that Washington did not mean what it said. Perhaps they felt that the United States would not act before the missiles were in position and then would be afraid to act, so that it did not matter what statements were made in September. Since their calculations were made long before September, it seems only fair to conclude that the Russians in their gamble were insensitive to all American statements, rather than encouraged or confused by them. If such is the case, then we should properly concentrate on how such a dangerous condition came to pass.[11] On the other hand, the Russians may well have acted rationally in recognizing the large risk involved but felt that it was worth taking because of the great benefits that success would bring. Once launched on this course, they may have convinced themselves that the risks were not so high, and so disregarded American warnings.

In the end, it was Russian thinking and analysis that was seriously mistaken and the Soviet Union had to pay a very high price as a consequence. We should recall that American intelligence credited Moscow with a desire, based on the record of the past, to operate in a prudent, non-provocative way. The intelligence community considered actions in violation of such precepts to be out of character and foolish, and in the end it was proven correct. Perhaps the critics who overlook this fail to recognize that many actions on the part of foreign governments are beyond our capacity to influence. Is this another variation of the "illusion of American omnipotence"?

Each side apparently made the mistake of identifying its opponent's mode of calculation with its own. Thus Russian estimates of American

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[10] Ibid., Oct 9, 1962.

[11] Knorr, in "Failures in National Intelligence Estimates," argues that the Soviet leaders failed to grasp the depth of American feeling against Cuba and so under-estimated the risks their action incurred. However, in light of the audacity of the move, it is difficult to assume that the Russians did not realize that this was a most risky enterprise. Moreover, it was not emotionalism over Cuba but concentration on the danger posed by Soviet power that sparked the American reaction, which emphasized the bipolar nature of the confrontation.

reactions to Russian initiatives were quite possibly colored by Moscow's knowledge of how it itself would react. After all, the Kremlin stood by while the United States ringed it with air and missile bases during the 1950's. Thus each side "plays all the roles" -- but calculates the other's initiatives or responses from its own perspective. Overcoming this inclination is a formidable task -- worthy of the most patient effort. Certainly, at the time, the argument that our acceptance of defensive weapons and our warnings against offensive ones blurred the issue would not have been credible. We need only remember the shocked response of the American public when the President spoke on October 22 in order to realize how sharply the country distinguished between the two.

VI

In addition to considering philosophic precepts, the question of timing and type of intelligence, and the nature of the weapons involved, we must also examine some comments made about the organizational setting of the intelligence operation in Washington. Mr. Baldwin has noted that it suffers from excessive bureaucratic centralization and from a predisposition to follow administration policy objectives in a way that prejudices its interpretation of data. Actually the component agencies that comprise the intelligence community are independent and autonomous bodies, somewhat removed from the policy effort. They come to their own conclusions based on their own efforts. The rise of the Defense Intelligence Agency (D.I.A.) as a centralizing body within the Defense Department may reduce the voices of the three services, but it is also possible that the Department of Defense will speak with four independent voices rather than three as in the past. Not only do the existnece of D.I.A. and C.I.A as potential rivals make it clear that we are a long way from centralized, monolithic control, but the other intelligence groups in Washington retain their independence because they are component parts of still other branches of the government involved in national security matters.

These different bodies have their own sources of intelligence and their own requirements, and each stresses differing aspects of this broad field. This means that richness of sources is not necessarily mere duplication, for different requirements elicit significantly different kinds of information. One great marginal advantage is the wide scope this allows for cross-checking. In any event, we must overcome the notion that duplication in government is the same "bad thing" as duplication in business. The question of profit-through-efficiency and singleness-of-effort are not necessarily the criteria by which one can judge success in an enterprise so dangerous and tricky as national security. We find considerable autonomy even within the defense establishment and C.I.A., let alone in the relations between these two components or between one of them and

other intelligence bodies. As in other forms of political and social organization, there are recurrent conflicts of view within an agency, and serious disagreements often produce alignments that cut across formal bureaucratic lines. All too often a finished product will suffer from compromises among the interested parties, who water down its content excessively. This is a far cry from the imposition of a single viewpoint from a higher political or administrative authority.

This raises the question of how to balance vigorous autonomous efforts in the research and evaluation field with a substantial final version that gains community-wide acceptance. All one can arrange institutionally is a framework that allows for diversity and some method of objective appraisal and judgment. Even so, those in opposition to an adopted position have every right and duty to take exception and they are quite willing to do so when issues of national security are involved. Thus intelligence is not made to fit a finished product or to coincide with presidential viewpoints or statements. To argue that intelligence officials dare not disagree once the President says there is a certain number of troops in Cuba is to ignore the fact that the statement is based on the findings of the intelligence community. If a minority of the intelligence officials holds a different view on this or any other point, what is the President to do? Is he simply to base his statement on the minority position, because it is more ominous or more reassuring? All this should not inhibit those in the minority from adhering to their position or trying to prove themselves correct.

Finally the power of outside forces to investigate and police the intelligence community is highly underrated. The Congress has great powers in this field and if it does not exercise them, it is not because the machinery of government prevents it from doing so. It may reflect an unwillingness to bear the burden of dealing with vast amounts of sensitive information. Yet when one looks at the performance of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, involving the most serious and horrendous matters, as concerns both security sensitivity and destructive capacity, it seems that the Congress could logically play as effective and constructive a role in the intelligence field as well. A joint committee on intelligence would doubtless have a salutary effect in both policy and administrative matters.

VII

In conclusion, the Cuban missile crisis indicates that, though the intelligence community was surprised at the start, it handled the situation fairly well. The careful nature of its effort in late summer and early fall, and the manner and speed with which it uncovered evidence

indicate that it was not entirely napping. At the same time, the critics, by raising issues in public perform a valuable service in requiring officials to re-examine and re-study their activities and calculations during a crisis. Much has been done to clarify the facts and illuminate problems in the public realm. All this is to the good. In the course of this intellectual encounter we have seen how certain basic principles of intelligence affect the formulation and conduct of foreign policy. We have also seen how an elemental objective of intelligence, to provide for a nation's strategic security, encounters numerous and unexpected difficulties. Research into earlier crises, evaluation of the impact of intelligence upon events for good and for bad, and explanations of unanticipated developments -- all admittedly with the aid of hindsight -- are essential for a broader understanding of the achievements and limitations of intelligence as an instrument of foreign policy.

CUBA AND PEARL HARBOR: HINDSIGHT AND FORESIGHT

Roberta Wohlstetter *

To recall the atmosphere of September and October 1962 now seems almost as difficult as to recreate the weeks, more than two decades earlier, before the attack on Pearl Harbor. But if we are to understand the onset of the Cuban missile crisis, it is worth the effort. Indeed we may learn something about the problems of foreseeing and forestalling or, at any rate, diminishing the severity of such crises by examining side by side the preludes to both these major turning points in American history. In juxtaposing these temporally separate events, our interest is in understanding rather than in drama. We would like to know not only how we felt, but what we did and what we might have done, and in particular what we knew or what we could have known before each crisis.

Afterthoughts come naturally following the first wave of relief and jubilation at having weathered the missile crisis and forced the withdrawal of the missiles. But it is good to keep in mind the obvious contrast with Pearl Harbor. At the least, Pearl Harbor was a catastrophe, a great failure of warning and decision. At the very worst, the missile crisis was a narrow escape. Taken as a whole, however, its outcome must be counted as a success both for the intelligence community and the decision-makers. But a comparison of the failure at Pearl Harbor and the Cuban success reveals a good deal about the basic uncertainties affecting the success and failure of intelligence.

It is true for both Pearl Harbor and Cuba that we had lots of information about the approaching crisis. In discussing this information it will perhaps be useful to distinguish again between signals and noise. By the "signal" of an action is meant a sign, a clue, a piece of evidence that points to the action or to an adversary's intention to undertake it, and by "noise" is meant the background of irrelevant or inconsistent signals, signs pointing in the wrong directions, that tend always to obscure the signs pointing the right way. Pearl Harbor,

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looked at closely and objectively, shows how hard it is to hear a signal against the prevailing noise, in particular when you are listening for the wrong signal, and even when you have a wealth of information. (Or perhaps especially then. There are clearly cases when riches can be embarrassing.)

After the event, of course, we know: like the detective-story reader who turns to the last page first, we find it easy to pick out the clues. And a close look at the historiography of Pearl Harbor suggests that in most accounts, memories of the noise and background confusion have faded quickly, leaving the actual signals of the crisis standing out in bold relief, stark and preternaturally clear.

After the crisis, memories fade and recriminations take their place. For a time the Cuban missile crisis figured as an outstanding triumph for the United States -- in the swift discovery of "hard evidence," in the retention of American initiative, in the strict security maintained and in the taut control of power by the Executive Committee. Today, some of these aspects of the Cuban crisis have been thrown into doubt, and in particular, critics talk of a significant intelligence failure in anticipating the crisis. In both Pearl Harbor and Cuba the notion of a conspiracy of silence has been raised, the suggestion that we knew all along and failed to act, that Kennedy, like Roosevelt, had some special information which he withheld, or that information was so obvious that even a layman could have interpreted it correctly.

New York's Senator Keating, for example, was explicit and articulate in insisting that he believed long-range or medium-range missiles and Soviet combat troops were in Cuba as early as August. On August 31 he said in the Senate that he had reliable information on landings between August 3 and August 15 at the Cuban port of Mariel of 1200 troops wearing Soviet fatigue uniforms. He also reported that "other observers" had noted "Soviet motor convoys moving on Cuban roads in military formation," the presence of landing craft, and of suspicious cylindrical objects that had to be transported on two flatcars, and so on. He claimed that his statements had been verified by official sources within the U.S. Government. Between August 31 and October 12 he made ten Senate speeches warning of the Soviet military build-up.

After the crisis, Congressmen naturally wondered why we had not listened to Senator Keating, why it was possible to have had these warnings and many others and still be surprised on October 15. But failures to foresee and to forestall catastrophes are by no means abnormal. Military men and statesmen have no monopoly on being taken by surprise. The example of the Dallas police department springs to mind, and the murder of Oswald which gave rise, like Pearl Harbor, to rumors of conspiracy in high places and in local governments. Nor are American businessmen and financiers immune. Witness the $150 million DeAngelis vegetable-oil scandal, where

normally cautious bankers suddenly found they were holding empty storage tanks as security for their loans.

Conspiracy with the culprit, however, is hardly a universal line of explanation, as is suggested by a recent natural catastrophe -- the earthquake in and near Alaska that sent a tidal wave to shatter the northern shore of California and caught some towns unprepared in spite of timely warnings. For the warnings sounded just like many others in the past that had not been followed by tidal waves. These are all American examples, but Singapore, "Barbarossa" (the German attack on Russia) and many others suggest that we are not dealing with a purely national susceptibility to surprise.

II

Defense departments and intelligence agencies, of course, continually estimate what an opponent can do, may do, intends to do. They try to gauge the technical limits within which he is operating, to determine his usual ways of behavior, under what conditions he will probe, push or withdraw. They try to measure what risks he will take, and how he might estimate the risks to us of countering him. Much of this work by American analysts is sound, thorough, intelligent, frequently ingenious and sometimes brilliant -- but not infallible. Unhappily, any of these estimates may be partly, but critically, wrong. A wealth of information is never enough.

To get a rapid idea of the mass of data available for predicting the Cuban crisis and the Pearl Harbor attack, let us run through the main intelligence sources. In the case of Cuba, there was first of all magnificent photographic coverage as well as visual reconnaissance. The Navy ran air reconnaissance of all ships going in and out of Cuba, especially ships originating in Soviet or satellite ports during the summer of 1962, and intensified this sort of coverage during September. High-level photographic reconnaissance by U-2s over the island of Cuba was taking place at the rate of one flight every two weeks until the month of September, when it increased to once a week.[1] Low-level photographic reconnaissance began only after the President's speech of October 22- the first being on October 23. In addition to photography, we had voluminous accounts from Cuban refugees who were leaving the island in

[1] Flights over the island took place on September 5, 17, 26, 29, October 5, 7 and 14. The irregularity is attributed to bad weather.

a steady stream. We had agents stationed on the island who were reporting, and we were listening to radio broadcasts from Cuba. The Cuban press, while carefully controlled, was making some announcements which are interesting in retrospect. A number of European correspondents stationed on the island were reporting to their newspapers, though the American press was not welcome.

Finally, but by no means least, we had Castro's pronouncements. His casual interviews with reporters, debates with students, interrogations of prisoners, and nearly interminable television speeches offer a rich fount of information. If you wait long enough, it seems, Castro will tell you everything. The only problem in a crisis is that you may not be able to wait that long. Castro is noted for his slyness, and he is perhaps better able than most Cubans to keep a secret. But sometimes he cannot resist hints that may reveal a trap before his victim falls into it. And often in real rather than calculated anger he will show his hand.

For predicting the Pearl Harbor attack, the United States Government had an equally impressive array of intelligence sources. Though aerial surveillance of the Japanese fleet was limited, the Navy had developed a system of pinpointing the location of ships and deducing their types by radio-traffic analysis. This was accomplished by analyzing the call signs of various ships, even though we could not read the content of the messages. Any change in call signs was in itself a cause for alarm, and it took usually several weeks of close listening to an enormous amount of traffic to re-identify the call signs. Call signs were changed on November 1, 1941, and again on December 1. We had not identified the new ones by December 7.

While we had not broken any military codes, we did have one superlative source that is perhaps comparable to the evidence provided by U-2 photography. That was the breaking of the top-priority Japanese diplomatic code, known as MAGIC, as well as some less complicated codes used by Japanese consular observers. We were listening in on diplomatic messages on all the major Tokyo circuits -- to Rome, Berlin, London, Washington and so on. Colonel Friedman, an Army cryptographer, had devised a machine for rapidly decoding these messages, so that, in general, we knew what a message said before its intended Japanese recipients. Our ground observers, stationed in key ports along the coast of China and Southeast Asia, were reporting in by radio.

Ambassador Grew and his Embassy staff in Tokyo were experienced observers of local economic and political activities. Grew himself had a very sound estimate of Japanese character and diplomacy, but as Japanese censorship closed in during the last few weeks before the attack, Grew had to warn Washington that he was unable to report accurately on any military preparations then under way. American newspaper correspondents in Japan were also quite well informed and shrewd in their reporting. In addition to our own sources, we exchanged

information with British intelligence. At that date, our own intelligence officers did not trust British intelligence fully. They expressed a certain amount of unease over British methods of picking up information, which they regarded as sophisticated but underhanded. As General Sherman Miles put it, U.S. intelligence preferred to be "above board." However, the British provided us with some good leads and lots of corroborative information. And there was, of course, the Japanese press, which proclaimed Japan's undying hostility to the American presence in Asia, and announced with increasing violence the Japanese intention to expand to the south.

In sum, for each of the two crises there was plenty of information suggesting its advent. Even though Cuba is a closed society, and even though Japan, in the last weeks, was under heavy censorship and tight security, the data provided by U.S. intelligence agencies were excellent. Once more, then, we come to the question, what went wrong? With all these data, why didn't we know that Japan would attack Pearl Harbor on December 7? Why, when it seems so clear in retrospect, didn't we anticipate that Khrushchev might put medium-range missiles into Cuba? Why didn't we seize the first indications that such installations were on the way? Weren't these early signs clear enough?

Unfortunately, they were not, and almost never are. Even with hindsight, we are not able to reconstruct the exact sequence of events that led to the Cuban missile crisis. Most of our sources are alive, and some of them are talking. But what can we say with certainty about Cuban and Soviet motives? Castro, for example, has spoken on many occasions about why missiles were put into Cuba. But he swings between the view that he requested them and the view that Khrushchev suggested the idea and that he, Castro, felt so indebted economically he had to accept. He has mentioned two motives -- one, defense against an American invasion that he believed was imminent, and the other, the need to advance the international cause of socialism, which implied that the missiles were for offense as well as defense. Khrushchev's story is more consistent, but also more "offical": he cites only the need to help Cuba prepare against an American invasion. But of course for active Cuban defense, long-range missiles are not necessary. Speculation on Soviet and Cuban motives still continues.

With hindsight, we can look back now and see that during the crisis there were naturally many confusions embedded in the mass of intelligence reports. A report of a "missile" might refer to a surface-to-air missile which is approximately 30 feet long, to the nose cone of a surface-to-surface missile which is about 14 feet long, to its body which is almost 60 feet long, or to a fuel storage tank. Or perhaps it might just represent the imagination of an excited Cuban refugee. Most of these objects were seen at night through closed shutters and in motion. Visual observation, except by a highly trained observer, was not likely to be accurate even as to the length of the object. And Senator Keating did not act altogether responsibly in perpetuating this confusion centering around the word "missile."

He was right when he described the total build-up as alarming, but he was proceeding beyond the evidence in suggesting, as he did, that he had positive proof of the presence of medium-range missiles,[2] and of the capability for rapid transformation of surface-to-air missiles into medium-range surface-to-surface missiles.

Or take the presence of Soviet combat troops. President Kennedy's critics noted after the crisis that in his October 22 speech he made no mention of combat troops in Cuba, although the American public was later informed of their presence. Actually, Soviet troops, organized into four regimental units, totaled approximately 5,000 men. They were located at four different spots, two near Havana, one in Central Cuba and one in Eastern Cuba. They were equipped with modern Soviet ground-force fighting equipment, including battlefield rocket launchers similar to the American "Honest John." This equipment, along with the accompanying barracks and tent installations, was not identifiable, or at least was not identified, until we started photographing at low level. For this reason, President Kennedy made no demand about removal of troops on October 22, but kept to the colorless term, "Soviet technicians." While U-2 photography is almost as magical as the MAGIC code at the time of Pearl Harbor, like the code, it is limited; it cannot reveal all.

III

For the layman, the feeling persists that there must be some marvelous source that will provide a single signal, a clear tip-off that will alert the American forces and tell them exactly what to do. Unfortunately, there is no instance where such a tip-off arrived in time, except perhaps in the Philippines in 1941, when General MacArthur had a minimum of nine hours' warning between his knowledge of the Pearl Harbor attack and the initial Japanese assault on his own forces. The news of the attack on Pearl Harbor clearly did not tell him what alert posture to take, since his planes were found by the Japanese attackers in formation, wing-tip to wing-tip on their bases.

Instead we must wait for a number of signals to converge in the formation of a single hypothesis about the intentions and actions of an opponent.

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[2] See testimony, September 17, 1962: United States Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations and Committee on Armed Services, Situation in Cuba, 87th Cong., 2d Sess., 1962, p. 7, 12; U.S. News and World Report, November 19, 1962 (distributed week of November 12), p. 87; and speech to the Senate, October 12, 1962.

This is a necessary but slow process. In 1962, for example, General Carroll, head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, became suspicious of Soviet activities on the basis of several pieces of data from different sources. According to Secretary McNamara's testimony,

> . . ./Carroll/ had had thousands of reports like this. What gradually formed in his mind was a hypothesis based on the integration of three or four pieces of evidence, one of which was not a report at all, one of which was a recognition through photographic analysis that a SAM (surface-to-air missile) site appeared to be in a rather unusual place. . . . Gradually over a period of time -- I do not know over what period of time -- but sometime between the 18th of September and the 14th of October, there was formulated in his mind a hypothesis specifically that there was the possibility of a Soviet ballistic missile installation in a particular area, a hypothesis that had been formulated previously and had been tested previously and found to be in error with respect to other locations.
>
> His only action here -- I think quite properly his only action here -- was to test that hypothesis, to submit it to the targeting group that targets the reconnaissance missions, and place that target on the track for the next reconnaissance mission, which was the October 14 mission.[3]

This period of time from September 18 to October 14 is not long for the crystallization of a hypothesis.[4] It is long only in relation to the speed of the missile installation. This sort of time difference is a perpetually agonizing aspect of intelligence interpretation. Collection, checking of sources and interpreting all take time. There is always delay between the intelligence source and the evaluation center, and between the center and the final report to the decision-maker. Even then, the decision-maker may merely request more information before taking action. In the meantime, the opponent moves forward.

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3 U.S., Congress, House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Department of Defense Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1964, 88th Cong., 1st Sess., 1963, p. 45-46. These hearings contain most of the intelligence data cited in this article.

4 According to Roger Hilsman, the request for a U-2 flight covering the western end of the island was made on October 4 -- ten days before the flight was actually made. "The Cuban Crisis: How Close We Were to War," Look, August 25, 1964, p. 18.

In the Cuban missile crisis, for example, there were delays in the identification of surface-to-air missiles. From July 29 to August 5, Cuban refugees reported that "an unusual number of ships" unloaded cargo and passengers at the ports of Havana and Mariel. All Cubans were excluded from the dock. By August 14 these reports reached U.S. intelligence agencies, which the next day requested U-2 photo coverage of the suspect areas. On August 29 the flight was made. From the first visual observation on July 29 to the over-flight on August 29 a full month passed.

This August 29 flight turned up the first hard evidence of surface-to-air missiles in Cuba. During September, surveillance flights seem to have been stepped up: the U-2 flew on September 5, 17, 26, 29, and on October 5, 7 and 14. On the September 5 flight, which took in the San Cristobal area a hundred miles east of Havana, the photographs showed no evidence of medium-range missiles. A flight scheduled for September 10 was canceled, perhaps because a U-2 had been shot down over Red China the previous day. According to the American press, all U-2 flights stopped while the United States waited for the world reaction.

Secretary McNamara testified that available evidence indicated the first landing of mobile M.R.B.M.s occurred on September 8, and that construction of the sites did not begin before September 15 to 20. It is possible that September 10 photography might have shown some activity at the San Cristobal site. The September 17 flight was of little use because cloud cover obscured the areas photographed. However, between September 18 and 21 further Cuban reports came to U.S. intelligence, and these were evaluated on September 27. They eventually led to the flight on October 14, again over San Cristobal. This flight produced the first reliable evidence of medium-range missiles on the island.

In spite of the frequency of the U-2 flights, there is a lag of 33 days from the first visual observation made by a Cuban exile on September 8, and reported on September 9, to October 14, the day that hard evidence was obtained. There is a lag of 39 days between September 5 and October 14, during which no flights covered the San Cristobal area. This gap in coverage was not apparent until some inquiring Congressmen pressed their cross-examination. When William Minshall of Ohio asserted that the U-2 flights had been covering the wrong end of the island, General Carroll pointed out that it was necessary to cover the eastern and central portions also. Secretary McNamara supported him by pointing out that the September 5 flight over San Cristobal "showed absolutely no activity whatsoever." He also recalled that this was the hurricane season, "and the weather in that part of the Caribbean is very bad. We had a number of flights canceled during that period." Mr. Minshall then produced the offical weather report showing clear days in the vicinity of Havana, and said

that "the weather from September 25 to October 2, at least at 7:00 in the morning, was generally clear." No one pointed out at that time that weather forecasts, not actual weather, determined the schedule of U-2 flights.

Photographic coverage, then, was apparently being scheduled on the assumption that any Soviet construction would proceed at a pace which might be considered rapid according to our own experience in installing similar equipment. Secretary McNamara repeated several times that there was no missile construction activity in the Havana area on September 5, as if this, coupled with the pressing need to get clear pictures of other parts of the island, were sufficient reason for not covering the area again until October 14. This judgment, with hindsight, may have been correct, but in the absence of the full intelligence picture the layman can only wonder why it was not possible to cover more than one section of the island on a single U-2 sortie, or why it was not possible to make several simultaneous sorties when good weather prevailed. Perhaps Secretary McNamara's statement, made under pressure of Mr. Minshall's criticism, to the effect that "we were facing surface-to-air missile systems that might be coming into operation," indicates that the flight schedule was sensitive to the political atmosphere. The fact is that there were increasing dangers to our pilots as the SAM sites became operational. With the Republicans now in opposition, it was easy for some of them to forget the extreme embarrassment of the Eisenhower regime at the shooting down of the U-2 over the Soviet Union in 1960 and the collapse of the Paris summit that followed. Certainly after the publicity given to the U-2 shot down over Red China on September 9, the United States would not want to lose such a plane over Cuba. U-2 planes are never armed; and the August 29 flight had showed surface-to-air missile installations in western Cuba.

Naval photography shows a somewhat similar gap. Photographs of the crates containing IL-28 bombers were taken on September 28 but not evaluated until October 9, and not disseminated until October 10. This identification of bombers capable of carrying a nuclear or non-nuclear payload of 6,000 pounds and with a combat radius of about 700 nautical miles5 came together with a report of October 15 evaluating the U-2 photographs of M.R.B.M.s.

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[5] According to U.U. Kaufmann, The McNamara Strategy, Harper & Row, 1964, p. 270. According to John Hughes, Special Assistant to General Carroll, "about 600 nautical miles," Hearings, p. 15.

This sort of delay can easily be paralleled in the Pearl Harbor intelligence picture. In the handling of the coded messages, there was inevitably a delay -- from interception of the message at the intercept station through transmission to the decoding center in Washington, determination of priority in handling, assignment for full decoding, assignment for translation and the actual translation, to final delivery to the approved list of recipients. The longest delay recorded in the Congressional hearings is 54 days between interception and translation. Part of the delay is a function of the time necessary for transmission. Part of the delay comes from checking the accuracy of the reports, which is necessary for responsible decision. But these delays in response must all be seen against the forward march of events.

In Cuba, the rapidity of the Russians' installation was in effect a logistical surprise comparable to the technological surprise at the time of Pearl Harbor. Before September 1962 we were scheduling U-2 flights approximately two weeks apart, because we couldn't believe that capabilities could change significantly within a shorter period. But Secretary McNamara testified in his first background briefing (October 22) that the medium-range mobile missiles were planned to have a capability to be de-activated, moved, reactivated on a new site and ready for operation within a period of about six days. The Stennis Report, which reviewed the entire intelligence operation, refers to "a matter of hours."[6] In one instance, between two sets of photographs separated by less than 24 hours, there was an increase of 50 percent in the amount of equipment visible. On the date of withdrawal, October 28, the medium-range missiles were fully operational. Intelligence estimates set December 15 as the outside date for the non-mobile I.R.B.M.s to be operational.

This kind of technological or logistical surprise may be either a secret so carefully guarded that it doesn't reach our intelligence agencies until after the event; or it may happen too swiftly, too near the outbreak of the crisis, to be transmitted and evaluated in time. In the case of Pearl Harbor, there were two technological changes that failed to reach either the intelligence agencies or the commanding officers who needed the information: (1) that the Japanese had fitted fins to their torpedoes which would permit bombing in the shallow waters of Pearl Harbor; and (2) that the combat radius of the Zero fighter plane had been stretched to 500 statute miles, making possible aerial attack on the Philippines from Formosa. Both of these developments came to fruition only a few weeks before Pearl Harbor.

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6 U.S., Congress, Committee on Armed Services, Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, Investigations of the Preparedness Program, Interim Report on Cuban Military Build-Up, 88th Cong., 1st Sess., 1963, p. 3.

IV

Besides technological surprise and the inevitable physical delays involved in transmission and checking, there are more subtle obstacles to accurate perception of signals. First, there is the "cry-wolf" phenomenon. Admiral Stark actually used this phrase in deciding not to send Admiral Kimmel any further warnings about the Japanese. An excess of warnings which turn out to be false alarms always induces a kind of fatigue, a lessening of sensitivity. Admiral Kimmel and his staff were tired of checking out Japanese submarine reports in the vicinity of Pearl Harbor. In the week preceding the attack they had checked out seven, all of which were false.

General Carroll had the same problem with missiles in Cuba. Refugee reports of missiles had been coming in for a year and a half and the first San Cristobal report of September 9 describing that suspect area, later confirmed as harboring medium-range missiles, was "comparable to many other reports ... similarly recieved and checked out," and found to reveal not surface-to-surface missiles, but surface-to-air or nothing at all. This history of mistaken observations by the refugees tended to reinforce the feelings of fatigue and disbelief. There was also a justifiable reaction to the fact that refugee exaggerations of anti-Castro ferment in Cuba had not been properly discounted at the time of the Bay of Pigs, and that their self-interest in wanting to return to Cuba had not been properly weighed. This background increased the reluctance of the intelligence agencies to credit their reports without careful verification. Besides the refugees, members of the Congressional opposition were also using exaggeration and pressure, because they had an interest in overstating provocation in order to indicate laxness on the Administration's part. Senator Keating claimed to have hard evidence at a time when it seems, such evidence did not exist. Opposition pressure tended to evoke a natural counter-pressure from the Administration, which responded by charging irresponsibility in its critics, and which insisted on caution and the necessity for special evidence before entering on such serious action. In this way the opposition served in some respects as rein rather than simply as spur.

Another obstacle to objective evaluation is the human tendency to see what we want to see or expect to see. The Administration did not want open conflict with the Soviet Union. It was working on a program of trying to relax tensions, of which a test-ban agreement was one important though distant goal. It most definitely did not want an offensive Soviet base in Cuba, in the same way that Zermatt, the famous Swiss ski resort, did not want typhoid fever and refused to acknowledge its existence until epidemic proportions had been reached. Just as President Roosevelt wanted no war in the Far East -- no war on two fronts -- and didn't want to believe that it could happen, so we didn't want to believe that the Soviets were doing what they were doing.

When this is the background of expectation, it is only natural to ignore small clues that might, in a review of the whole or on a simple count, add up to something significant. For example, the large ships that turned out to be the villains in the Cuban case had especially large covered hatches. They were unloaded at night by Soviet personnel, and all Cubans were excluded from docks. The contents, whatever they were, were moved at night. The decks were loaded with 2½- and 5-ton trucks and cars. But these ships, in transit, had been noted to be riding high in the water. If intelligence analysts in the American community had been more ready to suspect the introduction of strategic missiles, would this information have led them to surmise, before as well as after October 14, that these ships carried "space-consuming (i.e. large volume, low density) cargo such as an M.R.B.M."[7] rather than a bulk cargo? Roger Hilsman points out that these vessels had been specially designed for carrying lumber, and "our shipping intelligence experts presumably deduced that lumbering ships could be more easily spared than others." "We knew," Hilsman writes, "that the Soviets had had some trouble finding the ships they needed to send their aid to Cuba."[8] This is a good illustration of the way we can adjust (without doing violence to the facts) a disturbing or unusual observation to "save" a theory -- in this case that the Soviets would not send strategic missiles to Cuba.

Our estimate of Soviet behavior included, of course, some expectation of how the Russians would react to what we were telling them, to our warnings in words and acts. However, we overestimated the clarity of our signals. General Maxwell Taylor had visited Florida bases on August 25 with a great deal of publicity. Naval reconnaissance of ships approaching Cuba had been stepped up to the point where U.S. planes were shot at by nervous Cubans on September 2. Castro reacted with great restraint in commenting on this incident -- a fact which might in itself have been thought suspicious. But above all, on September 4, President Kennedy announced the installation of surface-to-air missiles in Cuba which had been confirmed by the photographs of August 29. He said with the greatest care that we would not tolerate an offensive base or the installation of missiles capable of reaching U.S. territory. He made the distinction between offensive and defensive weapons, and he did this publicly in a way that put him on the spot. To anyone familiar with the workings of the American political system, this should have indicated that we were "contracting-in." The President was deliberately engaging his own prestige

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[7] "Department of Defense, Special Cuba Briefing by the Honorable Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, State Department Auditorium, 5:00 p.m., February 6, 1963." A verbatim transcript of a presentation actually made by General Carroll's assistant, John Hughes.

[8] Op. cit., p. 18.

and that of the country. He was reacting to the Republicans as well as to Castro. He was justifying not acting up to a certain point, but making it more likely that he would act beyond that point. In other words, he was drawing a line, and he was making it extremely unlikely that we would back down if that line were crossed. Again on September 13, the President called attention to the firmness of his commitment.

To the official Administration statements, we must add the formal announcements by the opposition party. Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois and Charles Halleck of Indiana, the Republican Congressional leaders, both issued statements on Cuba on September 7. Halleck warned that the increases in armaments and numbers of military technicians supplied by the Soviet Union to Cuba made the situation there "worse from the point of view of our own vital interests and the security of this country." Senator Dirksen invoked the Monroe Doctrine and defined current Soviet military aid to Cuba as a violation of that doctrine. He pointed out that, in view of our treaty commitments, either the Organization of American States should immediately agree on a course of action or, quoting President Kennedy's speech of April 20, 1961, the United States should act on its own, "if the nations of this hemisphere should fail to meet their commitments against outside Communist penetration."

American elections and their accompanying distractions have been the subject of world-wide speculation and concern. Yet they are not always easy for an outsider to understand. These protests from the opposition were taking place in a setting of pre-election debate, and Khrushchev may have hoped to exploit that fact. He may not have been aware that the alarm expressed by the Republicans was something President Kennedy could not ignore. In addition to explicit proposals and resolutions about the Monroe Doctrine, there was the President's request for Congressional authorization to call up 150,000 reserves. This action too should have been a warning signal; it did trigger a Soviet reassurance that Moscow had no need for an offensive base in Cuba. However, the Soviets did not find these warnings weighty enough to reverse their plans for installation.

V

Another major barrier to an objective U.S. evaluation of the data was our own estimate of Soviet behavior. The Stennis Report isolated as one "substantial" error in evaluation "the predisposition of the intelligence community to the philosophical conviction that it would be incompatible with Soviet policy to introduce strategic missiles into Cuba."[9]

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[9] Op. cit., p. 3.

Khrushchev had never put medium- or long-range missiles in any satellite country and therefore, it was reasoned, he certainly would not put them on an island 9,000 miles away from the Soviet Union, and only 90 miles away from the United States, when this was bound to provoke a sharp American reaction.

In considering this estimate of Soviet behavior, let us remember that the intelligence community was not alone. It had plenty of support from Soviet experts, inside and outside the Government. At any rate, no articulate expert now claims the role of Cassandra. Once a predisposition about the opponent's behavior becomes settled, it is very hard to shake. In this case, it was reinforced not only by expert authority but also by the knowledge both conscious and unconscious that the White House had set down a policy for relaxation of tension with the East. This policy background was much more subtle in its influence than documents or diplomatic experience. For when an official policy or hypothesis is laid down, it tends to obscure alternative hypotheses, and to lead to overemphasis of the data that support it, particularly in a situation of increasing tension, when it is important not to "rock the boat."

In the case of Pearl Harbor, there was a concentration on Atlantic and European affairs, which led to a kind of neglect of, or tendency to ignore, Far Eastern signals, and to a policy of staving off the outbreak of a Pacific war as long as possible. In the last months especially, this tendency was combined with a desire to avoid incidents. The wording of the final warning messages to the Army and Navy reflected this concern:

> If hostilities cannot repeat not be avoided the United States desires that Japan commit the first overt act. This policy should not repeat not be construed as restricting you to a course of action that might jeopardize your defense. Prior to hostile Japanese action you are directed to undertake such reconnaissance and other measures as you deem necessary but these measures should be carried out so as not repeat not to alarm civil population or disclose intent . . . Undertake no offensive action until Japan has committed an overt act.[10]

These directives have been frequently characterized as "do-don't."

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10 U.S., Congress, Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, Pearl Harbor Attack, 79th Cong., 2d Sess., 1946, Part 14, p. 1407.

Another attempt to avoid incidents was the Navy order of October 17 to re-route all trans-Pacific shipping to and from the Far East through the Torres Straits (between New Guinea and Australia), thus clearing the sea lanes to the north and northwest of the Hawaiian Islands. This order followed a warning of possible hostile action by Japan against U.S. merchant shipping. We avoided any incidents in these sea lanes, and at the same time we cut off the possibility of visual observation of the Japanese task force bound for Pearl Harbor.

In the autumn of 1962, pursuing a policy of reducing tension, the Kennedy Administration made very little allowance for deception in Soviet statements, for false reassurances that would quiet justifiable American fears. On September 2, TASS published a joint communique on Soviet military aid to Cuba, referring to the August 27 visit to Moscow of Che Guevara and Emilio Aragones. The Soviet Government announced assistance in metallurgical work and the sending of technical specialists in agriculture to Cuba. They added that

> views were also exchanged in connection with threats of aggressive imperialist quarters with regard to Cuba. In view of these threats the government of the Cuban Republic addressed the Soviet government with a request for help by delivering armaments and sending technical specialists for training Cuban servicemen.
>
> The Soviet government tentatively considered this request of the government of Cuba. An agreement was reached on this question. As long as the above-mentioned quarters continue threatening Cuba, the Cuban Republic has every justification for taking necessary measures to insure its security and safeguard its sovereignty and independence, while all Cuba's true friends have every right to respond to this legitimate request.[11]

This was reassuring in a negative understated way: it limited military aid to vague "armaments" and "technical specialists." On September 11, in response to the President's request to call up reserves, a higher-keyed, if not hysterical, pronouncement was issued by TASS. This started with an attack on "bellicose-minded reactionary elements" and "the provocations the United States Government is now staging, provocations which might plunge the world into disaster of a universal world war with the use of thermonuclear weapons." In the U.S. Congress and in the American press, the Soviet Government claimed, an unbridled propaganda campaign

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[11] The New York Times, September 3, 1962.

was calling for an attack on Cuba and on Soviet ships "carrying the necessary commodities and food to the Cuban people." "Little heroic Cuba" was pictured as at the mercy of American imperialists, who were alarmed by the failure of their economic blockade and calling for measures to strangle her. Particularly serious was the President's action in asking Congress' permission to call up 150,000 reservists. The statement then embarked on a series of jeers at the ridiculous fears of the American imperialists. The peace-loving Soviet Union was sending agronomists, machine-operators, tractor-drivers and livestock experts to Cuba to share their experience and knowledge and to help the Cubans master Soviet farm machinery.

> What could have alarmed the American leaders? What is the reason for this Devil's Sabbath? . . . Gentlemen, you are evidently so frightened you're afraid of your own shadow . . . It seems to you some hordes are moving to Cuba when potatoes or oil, tractors, harvesters, combines, and other farming industrial machinery are carried to Cuba to maintain the Cuban economy. We can say to these people that these are our ships and that what we carry in them is no business of theirs . . . We can say, quoting a popular saying: "Don't butt your noses where you oughtn't." But we do not hide from the world public that we really are supplying Cuba with industrial equipment and goods which are helping to strengthen her economy.[12]

A bit farther on, having had its fun, TASS recalled that "a certain amount of armaments is also being shipped from the Soviet Union to Cuba" and that Soviet military specialists had also been requested by the Government of Cuba. However, the number of Soviet military specialists sent to Cuba "can in no way be compared to the number of workers in agriculture and industry sent there. The armaments and military equipment sent to Cuba are designed exclusively for defensive purposes and the President of the United States and the American military just [like] the military of any country know what means of defense are." The statement went on to imply that any threat to the United States was a figment of the American imagination. The major reassurance then followed:

> The Government of the Soviet Union also authorized TASS to state that there is no need for the Soviet Union to shift its weapons for the repulsion of aggression, for a retaliatory blow, to any other country, for instance Cuba. Our nuclear weapons are so powerful in their explosive force and the Soviet Union has so powerful rockets to carry these nuclear warheads,

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[12] Text of Soviet statement, The New York Times, September 12, 1962.

> that there is no need to search for sites for them beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union. We have said and we do repeat that if war is unleashed, if the aggressor makes an attack on one state or another and this state asks for assistance, the Soviet Union has the possibility from its own territory to render assistance to any peace-loving state and not only to Cuba. And let no one doubt that the Soviet Union will render such assistance just as it was ready in 1956 to render military assistance to Egypt at the time of the Anglo-French-Israeli aggression in the Suez Canal region.

This sort of reassurance had also been privately delivered to the President, and the misuse of the private channel apparently shocked President Kennedy as much as the creation of the strategic base in Cuba.

President Kennedy and his staff had believed the Soviet reassurances. Their reaction to what they regarded as deception was one of genuine outrage, for one of the President's basic tenets had been that a state of mutual trust between the great powers was an important part of the problem of relaxing tension. And there is a considerable body of literature which goes farther and isolates the attitude of mutual suspicion itself as the central danger today in international relations.

It is a permanent problem of diplomacy to know where to draw the line in extending trust to unfriendly states. A certain amount of healthy suspicion of the opponent's public statements is in order. The President deliberately tested the willingness of Gromyko to lie, after the President knew the truth, but before the Russians knew that he knew. The trap set by the President aroused the indignation of some of those very Americans who urge mutual trust. But the President of the United States would be simple indeed if he did not build trust cautiously on the basis of many such probings. The Russian performance in the fall and winter of 1962 made it perfectly clear that we cannot take at face value Russian statements -- even those made only to the top American leadership in privacy and without those constraints that might be imposed by having the Chinese or other Communist powers or the non-aligned or our own allies listening.

In periods of high tension it is commonly accepted that deception will be an enemy tactic. Before the Pearl Harbor attack Japanese deception was very refined and ingenious. It involved, among other things, giving shore leave to large numbers of Japanese sailors, reinforcing garrisons on the northern border of Manchuria to give an impression of a thrust to the north, issuing false war plans to Japanese commanders and substituting true ones only days before the attack, and on the diplomatic side continuing the appearance of negotiation. For deception is not confined to statements, but must also be translated into actions.

It is important for the enemy's security that he keep his signals quiet. On the Soviet side this meant that all movement on the island of Cuba

must take place at night. The Cubans were excluded from the docks and from many of the missile construction areas. Troops were kept below decks, and unloaded equipment was camouflaged or hidden under the trees. On our own side, in the period before October 22, tight security was important to preserve the initiative. And this tight security was maintained through the next few weeks. The members of the group close to the President, known as the Executive Committee or EXCOM, were directly supervising decisions normally left to lower command levels and were doing paper work normally handled by their staffs. This sort of procedure is fine for a couple of weeks, but it means the neglect of other areas of government and, in particular, other areas of foreign policy.13 Richard Neustadt, a keen observer, reminds us that the Sino-Indian conflict was in progress at the same time, and offers a "lay impression" that "at least one side effect of Cuba" was to tighten the time and narrow the frame of reference of the decision-- then in the making -- on Skybolt.14 Under conditions of tight security, there is also a danger that we may keep signals not only from the enemy but also from ourselves. There are a good many who feel that careful study by a wider range of experts might have been useful at the time and would be useful now, particularly with regard to the Kennedy-Khrushchev communications. These, like MAGIC, were very closely held during the crisis and had to be read and interpreted swiftly at the time.

Another set of signs we may have misread or missed were those appearing in official Cuban statements. Castro is so verbose and temperamental that we tend not to listen carefully to his speeches. And his controlled press is so dull that we are equally careless about that. In addition, the policy of embargo and explicit isolation of the island tends to carry over in a curious way to ignoring the voice of Cuban officialdom.

It is interesting now to review the Cuban press of 1962 for clues we might have picked up. After Raul Castro's July visit to Moscow, the warmth of the references to the Soviet Union increased noticeably. Thanks and praise became the order of the day. On September 11, the day of the falsely reassuring TASS statement, the Cuban newspaper Revolucion underlined the threat of thermonuclear war invoked by TASS. The front page was printed

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13 According to Secretary Rusk, "Senior officers did their own typing; some of my own basic papers were done in my own handwriting, in order to limit the possibility of further spread . . . ." C.B.S. Reports, televised interview of Secretary Rusk by David Schoenbrun, November 28, 1962.

14 U.S. Congress, Senate Subcommittee on National Security Staffing and Operations of the Committee on Government Operations, Administration of National Security, 88th Congress, 1st Session, 1963, Part I, p. 97, testimony of March 25, 1963.

with a single white headline on a black background, and it said: "Rockets Over the United States if Cuba is Invaded." Forcing the Soviet Union's hand in this way had been Cuban policy for some time, so that it was natural for our experts to take this as another instance of Cuban wishful thinking.

Finally, in intelligence work the role of chance, accident and bad luck is always with us. It was bad luck that September-October is the hurricane season in the Caribbean, so that some reconnaissance photography was unclear and certain flights were canceled. It was bad luck that the Red Chinese shot down a U-2 on September 9. In 1941 it was bad luck that we had cut all traffic on the Northwest Passage to Russia, and thereby made visual observation of the Pearl Harbor task force impossible. It was bad luck that there was a radio blackout in the Hawaiian Islands on the morning of December 7, and that Colonel French of the Communications Room then decided to use commercial wire instead of recommending the scrambler telephone for the last alert message.

VI

To sum up then, in both the Pearl Harbor and Cuban crises there was lots of information. But in both cases, regardless of what the Monday morning quarterbacks have to say, the data were ambiguous and incomplete. There was never a single, definitive signal that said, "Get ready, get set, go!" but rather a number of signals which, when put together, tended to crystallize suspicion. The true signals were always embedded in the noise or irrelevance of false ones. Some of this noise was created deliberately by our adversaries, some by chance and some we made ourselves. In addition, our adversary was interested in suppressing the signs of his intent and did what he could to keep his movements quiet. In both cases the element of time also played against us. There were delays between the time information came in, was checked for accuracy, evaluated for its meaning, and made the basis for appropriate action. Many of these delays were only prudent, given the ambiguities and risks of response.

The interpretation of data depends on a lot of things, including our estimate of the adversary and of his willingness to take risks. To make our lives more complicated, this depends on what he thinks the risks are, which in turn depends on his interpretation of us. We underestimated the risks that the Japanese were willing to take in 1941, and the risks that Khrushchev was willing to take in the summer and fall of 1962. Both the Japanese and the Russians, in turn, underestimated our ultimate willingness to respond.

It is important to understand that the difficulties described are intrinsic. By focusing on misestimated capabilities, disposition and intentions, we obscure the fact that, without a very large and complex body of assumptions and estimates, the data collected would not speak to us at all. If there were no technological constraints whatsoever -- if, for example, a large missile installation could be put in place in an instant -- no reconnaissance, no matter how frequent, could provide assurance that we would not at any moment face a massive new adversary. The complex inferences involved in the act of interpreting photographs are made possible only by a large body of assumptions of varying degrees of uncertainty, ranging from principles of optics and Euclidean geometry through technological, economic and political judgments. The inferences from the interpretations themselves in turn are based on an even wider range of uncertain beliefs. But just because a very large body of partially confirmed beliefs and guesses is involved in interpreting a reconnaissance photograph or the observations of a Cuban refugee or intelligence agent, it is possible to interpret the photograph or observations in many differing ways. Our beliefs, as Willard Van Orman Quine has put it, are "underdetermined" by our experience, and they do not face experience separately, statement by statement, but always in mass, as a collection. We have a good deal of freedom as to what statements to adjust in the light of any new and seemingly disturbing report.

An observation or its report does not seize us, then, and force any specific interpretation. This relatively free situation of hypotheses in intelligence is no different in kind from that of hypotheses in the more exact sciences such as physics. A more naive empiricism once suggested that statements in physics could be refuted definitively by observation, by the result of a crucial experiment. But a great many physicists and students of the logic of science, at least since Pierre Duhem, have shown that even the interpretation of the simplest experiment depends implicitly on comprehensive theories about the measuring instruments and a great deal else. It is always possible therefore to "save" a theory or hypothesis by altering some other one of the large set of our beliefs that connects it with any given observation.

If this is true in the more exact sciences it is most obviously true for the role of observations and their interpretation in such spheres of practical activity as the operation of an intelligence agency, and the inferences and decisions of an executive. Here the assumptions that shape interpretation are likely to be more multifarious and also less explicit and therefore often less tentatively held. This puts it midly. Some of the relevant assumptions may be held passionately. They are likely to include wishful or self-flattering beliefs, items of national pride or claims at issue in partisan debate. In the case of Japan, some of the critical assumptions concerned technology -- the range, speed and manoeuvrability of the Zero plane, the supposed inability of the

Japanese to do any better than the Americans in launching torpedoes in shallow water. In the case of Cuba again some critical assumptions were technological; for example, the minimum time required to put into place and make operational a medium-range ballistic missile. Others concerned the politics and character of the Soviet, Cuban and American leadership and their estimates of each other's willingness to take a chance. Our expectations and prior hypotheses guide our observations and affect their interpretation. It is this prior frame of mind, now changed, that we forget most easily in retrospect. And it is this above all that makes every past surprise nearly unintelligible -- and inexplicable except perhaps as criminal folly or conspiracy.

The genuine analogies between Pearl Harbor and Cuba should not obscure the important differences. A study of the Pearl Harbor case makes clear that the problem of getting warning of an impending nuclear raid today is much harder than the problem of detecting the Japanese attack some 20 years ago. It is against this increased difficulty that we must balance improvements in intelligence techniques and organization. But the missile crisis illustrates something else, namely that there are other acts very much short of nuclear war of which we want to be apprised, and here our improved techniques and organization can put us ahead of the game. Action was taken during the missile crisis and taken in time to forestall Soviet plans. For while we can never ensure the complete elimination of ambiguity in the signals that come our way, we can energetically take action to reduce their ambiguity, by acquiring information as we did with the U-2. And we can tailor our response to the uncertainties and dangers that remain.

In the Cuban missile crisis action could be taken on ambiguous warning because the action was sliced very thin. After reconnaissance reduced the ambiguity, the response chosen kept to a minimum the actual contact with Russian forces, but a minimum compatible with assuring Khrushchev that we meant business: quarantine, the threat of boarding, the actual boarding of one Lebanese vessel chartered to the Soviet Union. Further, it was a response planned in great detail as the first in a sequence of graded actions that ranged from a build-up of U.S. Army, Marine and Tactical Air Forces in Florida and our southeastern bases to a world-wide alert of the Strategic Air Command. We had been partially prepared for such sequences of action short of nuclear war by the Berlin contingency planning, and this put us in a position to use the warning we had accumulated. If we had had to choose only among much more drastic actions, our hesitation would have been greater.

The problem of warning, then, is inseparable from the problem of decision. We cannot guarantee foresight. But we can improve the chance of acting on signals in time to avert or moderate a disaster. We can do this by a more thorough and sophisticated analysis of observers' reports, by making more explicit and tentative the framework of assumptions into which we must fit

any new observations, and by refining, subdividing and making more selective the range of responses we prepare, so that our response may fit the ambiguities of our information and minimize the risks both of error and of inaction. Since the future doubtless holds many shocks and attempts at surprise, it is comforting to know that we do learn from one crisis to the next.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL INTELLIGENCE

DIRECTIVE NO. 1[1]

BASIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(Revised 4 March 1964)

The intelligence effort of the United States is a national responsibility, and must be so organized and managed as to exploit to the maximum the available resources of the Government and to satisfy the intelligence requirements of the National Security Council and of the departments and agencies of the Government. For the purpose of coordinating the intelligence activities of the several Government departments and agencies in the interest of national security and pursuant to the provisions of Section 102 of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, the National Security Council hereby authorizes and directs that:

1. Over-all Coordination

The Director of Central Intelligence shall coordinate the foreign intelligence activities of the United States in accordance with existing law and applicable National Security Council directives. Such coordination shall include both special and other forms of intelligence which together constitute the foreign intelligence activities of the United States.

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1 This Directive supersedes NSCID No. 1, dated 18 January 1961.

2. The United States Intelligence Board (USIB)

a. To maintain the relationship necessary for a fully coordinated intelligence community,[2] and to provide for a more effective integration of and guidance to the national intelligence effort, a United States Intelligence Board (USIB) is hereby established under the directives of the National Security Council and under the chairmanship of the Director of Central Intelligence. The Board shall advise and assist the Director of Central Intelligence as he may require in the discharge of his statutory responsibilities and pursuant to paragraph 1 above. Subject to other established responsibilities under existing law and to the provisions of National Security Council directives, the Board shall also:

(1) Establish policies and develop programs for the guidance of all departments and agencies concerned.

(2) Establish appropriate intelligence objectives, requirements and priorities.

(3) Review and report to the National Security Council on the national foreign-intelligence effort as a whole.

(4) Make recommendations on foreign-intelligence matters to appropriate United States officials, including particularly recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on intelligence matters within the jurisdiction of the Director of the National Security Agency.

(5) Develop and review security standards and practices as they relate to the protection of intelligence and of intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure.

(6) Formulate, as appropriate, policies with respect to arrangements with foreign governments on intelligence matters.

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[2] The intelligence community includes the Central Intelligence Agency, the intelligence components of the Departments of State, Defense (Defense Intelligence Agency, Army, Navy, and Air Force), National Security Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Atomic Energy Commission. Other components of the departments and agencies of the Government are included to the extent of their agreed participation in regularly established interdepartmental intelligence activities.

b. The membership of the U.S. Intelligence Board shall consist of the following:

(1) The Director of Central Intelligence, Chairman.

(2) The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency.

(3) The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

(4) The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency.

(5) The Director, National Security Agency.

(6) A representative of the Atomic Energy Commission.

(7) A representative of the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The Director of Central Intelligence, as Chairman, shall invite the chief of any other department or agency having functions related to the national security to sit with the U.S. Intelligence Board whenever matters within the purview of his department or agency are to be discussed.

c. The Board shall determine its own procedures and shall establish subordinate committees and working groups, as appropriate. It shall be provided with a Secretariat staff, which shall be under the direction of an Executive Secretary appointed by the Director of Central Intelligence in consultation with the members of the Board.

d. The U.S. Intelligence Board shall reach its decisions by agreement. When the Chairman determines that a given position on a matter under consideration represents the consensus of the Board it shall be considered as agreed unless a dissenting member requests that the issue be referred to the National Security Council. Upon such request, the Director of Central Intelligence, as Chairman, shall refer the matter, together with the dissenting brief, to the National Security Council for decision.

Provided: That such appeals to the National Security Council by the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency or the Director, National Security Agency, shall be taken only after review by the Secretary of Defense.

Whenever matters of concern to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and/or the Atomic Energy Commission are referred to the National Security Council, the Attorney General and/or the Chairman of the

Atomic Energy Commission respectively, shall sit with the Council. The Board may recommend through its Chairman that a sensitive intelligence matter requiring the attention of higher authority be dealt with by the Council in a restricted meeting, including only those officials who have substantive interest in the matter, or directly by the President.

e. Decisions and recommendations of the Board shall, as appropriate, be transmitted by the Director of Central Intelligence, as Chairman, to the departments or agencies concerned, or to the National Security Council when higher approval is required, or for information.

f. In making recommendations to the National Security Council in matters concerning such intelligence activities of the departments and agencies of the Government as relate to the national security, the Director of Central Intelligence, as Chairman, shall transmit therewith a statement indicating the concurrence or non-concurring views of those members of the U.S. Intelligence Board concerned. Such recommendations when approved by the National Security Council shall, as appropriate, be issued as National Security Council Intelligence Directives or as other Council directives and, as applicable, shall be promulgated and implemented by the departments and agencies of the Government.

g. Decisions of the Board arrived at under the authority and procedures of this paragraph shall be binding, as applicable, on all departments and agencies of the Government.

3. The Director of Central Intelligence

a. The Director of Central Intelligence shall act for the National Security Council to provide for detailed implementation of National Security Council Intelligence Directives by issuing with the concurrence of the U.S. Intelligence Board such supplementary Director of Central Intelligence Directives as may be required (see par. 2d above). Such directives shall, as applicable, be promulgated and implemented within the normal command channels of the departments and agencies concerned.

b. Director of Central Intelligence Directives to be issued in accordance with the provisions of sub-paragraph a above shall include:

(1) General guidance and the establishment of specific priorities for the production of national and other intelligence and for collection and other activities in support thereof, including: (a) establishment of comprehensive National Intelligence Objectives generally applicable to foreign countries and areas; (b) identification from time to time, and on a current basis of Priority

National Intelligence Objectives with reference to specific countries and subjects; and (c) issuance of such comprehensive and priority objectives, for general intelligence guidance, and their formal transmission to the National Security Counci.

(2) Establishment of policy, procedures and practices for the maintenance, by the individual components of the intelligence community, of a continuing interchange of intelligence, intelligence information, and other information with utility for intelligence purposes.

(3) Establishment of policy, procedures and practices for the production or procurement, by the individual components of the intelligence community within the limits of their capabilities, of such intelligence, intelligence information and other information with utility for intelligence purposes relating to the national security, as may be requested by one of the departments or agencies.

c. The Director of Central Intelligence, or representatives designated by him, in consultation with the head of the intelligence or other appropriate component of the department or agency concerned, shall make such surveys of departmental intelligence activities of the various departments and agencies as he may deem necessary in connection with his duty to advise the National Security Council and to coordinate the intelligence effort of the United States.

4. National Intelligence

a. National intelligence is that intelligence which is required for the formulation of national security policy, concerns more than one department or agency, and transcends the exclusive competence of a single department or agency. The Director of Central Intelligence shall produce[3] national intelligence with the support of the U.S. Intelligence Board. Intelligence so produced shall have the concurrence, as appropriate, of the members of the U.S. Intelligence Board or shall carry a statement of any substantially differing opinion of such a member or of the Intelligence Chief of a Military Department.

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[3] By "produce" is meant "to correlate and evaluate intelligence relating to the national security" as provided in the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, Section 102 (d) (3).

b. Departmental intelligence is that intelligence which any department or agency requires to execute its own mission.

c. Interdepartmental intelligence is integrated departmental intelligence which is required by departments and agencies of the Government for the execution of their missions, but which transcends the exclusive competence of a single department or agency to produce. The subcommittee structure of the U.S. Intelligence Board may be utilized for the production and dissemination of interdepartmental intelligence.

d. The Director of Central Intelligence shall disseminate national intelligence to the President, members of the National Security Council, as appropriate, members of the U.S. Intelligence Board and, subject to existing statutes, to such other components of the Government as the National Security Council may from time to time designate or the U.S. Intelligence Board may recommend. He is further authorized to disseminate national intelligence and interdepartmental intelligence produced within the U.S. Intelligence Board structure on a strictly controlled basis to foreign governments and international bodies upon his determination, with the concurrence of the U.S. Intelligence Board, that such action would substantially promote the security of the United States: Provided, That such dissemination is consistent with existing statutes and Presidental policy including that reflected in international agreements; and provided further that any disclosure of FBI intelligence information shall be cleared with that agency prior to dissemination. Departmental intelligence and interdepartmental intelligence produced outside the U.S. Intelligence Board subcommittee structure may be disseminated in accordance with existing statutes and Presidential policy including that reflected in international agreements.

e. Whenever any member of the U.S. Intelligence Board obtains information which indicates an impending crisis situation which affects the security of the United States to such an extent that immediate action or decision by the President or the National Security Council may be required, he shall immediately transmit the information to the Director of Central Intelligence and the other members of the U.S. Intelligence Board as well as to the National Indications Center and to other officials or agencies as may be indicated by the circumstances. The Director of Central Intelligence shall, in consultation with the U.S. Intelligence Board, immediately prepare and disseminate as appropriate the national intelligence estimate of the situation, in accordance with the procedures outlined above.

5. Protection of Intelligence and of Intelligence Sources and Methods

The Director of Central Intelligence, with the assistance and support of the members of the U.S. Intelligence Board, shall ensure the development of policies and procedures for the protection of intelligence and of intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure. Each department and agency, however, shall remain responsible for the protection of intelligence and of intelligence sources and methods within its own organization. Each shall also establish appropriate internal policies and procedures to prevent the unauthorized disclosure from within that agency of intelligence information or activity. The Director of Central Intelligence shall call upon the departments and agencies as appropriate, to investigate within their department or agency any unauthorized disclosure of intelligence or of intelligence sources or methods. A report of these investigations, including corrective measures taken or recommended within the departments and agencies involved, shall be transmitted to the Director of Central Intelligence for review and such further action as may be appropriate, including reports to the National Security Council or the President.

6. Community Responsibilities

a. In implementation of, and in conformity with, approved National Security Council policy, the Director of Central Intelligence in consultation with and supported by the other members of the U.S. Intelligence Board and by other appropriate offices, shall:

(1) Call upon the other departments and agencies as appropriate to ensure that on intelligence matters affecting the national security the intelligence community is supported by the full knowledge and technical talent available in or to the Government;

(2) Ensure that the pertinence, extent and quality of the available foreign intelligence and intelligence information relating to the national security is continually reviewed as a basis for improving the quality of intelligence and the correction of deficiencies;

(3) Take appropriate measures to facilitate the coordinated development of compatible referencing systems within the departments and agencies engaged in foreign intelligence activities. Central reference facilities as a service of common concern shall be provided by the Central Intelligence Agency and/or other departments and agencies, as appropriate; and

(4) Make arrangements with the departments and agencies for the assignment to, or exchange with, the Central Intelligence Agency of such experienced and qualified personnel as may be of

advantage for advisory, operational, or other purposes. In order to facilitate the performance of their respective intelligence missions, the departments and agencies concerned shall, by agreement, provide each other with such mutual assistance as may be within their capabilities and as may be required in the interests of the intelligence community for reasons of economy, efficiency, or operational necessity. In this connection primary departmental interests shall be recognized and shall receive mutual cooperation and support.

b. In so far as practicable, in the fulfillment of their respective responsibilities for the production of intelligence, the several departments and agencies shall not duplicate the intelligence activities and research of other departments and agencies and shall make full use of existing capabilities of the other elements of the intelligence community.

c. The departments and agencies of the Government shall establish appropriate policies and procedures to control and limit undesirable publicity relating to intelligence activities.

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APPENDIX C

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTIVE NO. 1/1 [1]

PRODUCTION OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES

(Effective 5 August 1959)

Pursuant to the provisions of paragraphs 3 and 4, NSCID No. 1, and in order to facilitate department participation in the production of national intelligence estimates, the following operating procedures are established:

1. Programming

Periodically, but not less than quarterly, the Board of National Estimates, Central Intelligence Agency, will present to the United States Intelligence Board (Intelligence Board) for approval a program of National Intelligence Estimates and Special National Intelligence Estimates (NIE's and SNIE's) for production during the following six months. In preparing this program, the Board of National Estimates will consult with the NSC Planning Board and appropriate committees of the Intelligence Board, and will coordinate with the Intelligence Board agencies.

2. Initiation

Requests for estimates other than those programmed will be transmitted to the Intelligence Board via the Board of National Estimates. This Board will take such action as is indicated by the circumstances prior to transmitting the request to the Intelligence Board for action; e.g., comment, initiate immediate action subject to subsequent Intelligence Board ratification, or attach draft terms of reference to its recommendation that the estimate be approved for production.

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[1] This Directive supersedes DCID No. 1/1, effective 21 April 1958, which in turn had superseded DCID No. 3/5, of 1 September 1953.

3. Normal Preparation

Estimates will normally be prepared in four stages:

a. Terms of Reference and Contributions -- The Board of National Estimates, after consultation with the Intelligence Board agencies, will circulate terms of reference indicating the scope of the estimate and the intelligence material needed. The Agencies, or an Intelligence Board Subcommittee or other appropriate group, will then prepare contributions and submit them to the Board of National Estimates.

b. Drafting and Board of National Estimates Consideration -- After considering the contributions, and such consultation with any contributing agency which may be appropriate, the Board of National Estimates will prepare a draft.

c. Consideration by Representatives of the Intelligence Board Agencies -- Representatives of the Intelligence Board agencies will meet with the Board of National Estimates to review, comment on, and revise the draft as necessary.

d. Intelligence Board Consideration -- The final draft will then be submitted to the Intelligence Board for approval.

4. Preparation under Exceptional Circumstances

Any of the steps listed in 3a, b, and c above may be omitted under exceptional or unusually urgent circumstances.

5. Dissents

Any agency may dissent to any feature of an estimate. Such dissents identify the dissenter and will state the dissenter's position on the matter.

6. Publication and Dissemination

Finished estimates will be published by CIA and disseminated by the DCI according to established procedures. Published estimates will carry a note indicating the extent of coordination within the intelligence community.

ALLEN W. DULLES

Director of Central Intelligence

APPENDIX D

NIE CODE DESIGNATIONS *

25X1

[redacted]

World Wide

World Situation
Special Political Problems
Special Economic Problems
Special Military Problems
Special Scientific Problems
Others

Communist States

USSR **

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* When an estimate is revised in part, successive editions are shown thus: NIE 10-3/1-65, NIE 10-3/2-65, etc.

** In addition to the geographic code, the following breakdown has been in use for the USSR and Communist China (13) since the Fall of 1964.

25X1

[redacted]

General
Space
Atomic Energy
Air Defense
Main Trends in Military
Economic
Not assigned
Political

[redacted]

Strategic Attack
Not assigned
Not assigned
Not assigned
Not assigned
Not assigned
General Purpose Forces

25X1

25X1

It should also be noted that where more than one geographic area is involved, for example USSR trade [redacted] both country numbers are used thus: NIE 11-5/24-65.

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