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DCI/IC 74-2367

30 October 1974

DIA DECLASSIFICATION/RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS ON FILE

LETTER TO GENERAL GRAHAM

Dear Danny:

I have reviewed carefully DIA's views on revision of the Watch mechanism which General Tighe forwarded to me in your absence. In general outline, they coincide very closely with my own -- in fact, my only serious reservation concerning them is the propriety of my delegating to any one element of the community a responsibility that is clearly national in scope and of such critical importance. There is also the practical difficulty of my being able to provide strategic warning to WASG WSAG effectively if I am at one remove the mechanism designed to support me in this function.

At the same time, I fully agree with the proposition that the strategic warning mechanism should be intimately tied to the warning mechanisms and procedures of the Department of Defense.

It seems to me that both these requirements can be satisfied by my appointment of one of your deputies, and I have in mind specifically General Faurer, as Chairman of a small USIB Committee to act as the high level overview group referred to in General Tighe's letter. The Committee would ~~in-turn-be-supported-by~~ monitor the activities of a small, highly qualified analytic staff headed by a CIA representative.

who would ~~also serve on the committee as its vice-chairman~~ report directly to General Faurer. The DCI would, in addition, nominate a senior CIA officer to serve as General Faurer's vice-Chairman. The staff, composed of senior analysts representatives from DIA, CIA, NSA and the State Department, would be co-located with the NMIC, on which it would rely for communications and other support, including the 24-hour "watch" function currently being conducted within the NIC.

I think we are fully agreed that the mission of this big "W" warning mechanism should have a relatively narrow focus. The language I favor, and which I understand has been substantially agreed to by your representatives, is that the Strategic Warning Committee and staff "will be responsible for providing the earliest possible warning of military action against the U.S. or its allies, particularly by the USSR or the PRC. It will also be responsible for providing warning of military action in-developing-erisis-situations by a major adversary, in any area which ~~could~~ would involve U.S. forces." Warning of all other critical developments which should be brought to the attention of the WASG WSAG -- whether military technological, political or economic -- would be provided by Alert Memoranda produced under the direction of the NIOs and by normal current intelligence reporting.

Sincerely,

W. E. Colby



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CIA
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LTC Samuel V. Wilson
Deputy to Director of Central
Intelligence for the
Intelligence Community
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C. 20505

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Dear Sam:

#1 I have read the draft on Watch Committee revitalization which you furnished on 25 October and wish to advise you of the position my representatives will take when Mr. [redacted] working group continues to reconcile agency views on Thursday the 31st.

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#2 We have found significant common ground for agreement, sufficient, in fact, for me to anticipate early resolution. On the broad issues - refocusing upon the Soviet and Chinese threat, the elimination of the committee approach, a daily temperature reading vice weekly status report, NMIC support to the analysts preparing this daily product, and the reliance upon agency current intelligence staffs to warn of small "w" crises - I perceive that the DCI and Director, DIA, are thinking the same.

#3 We remain in disagreement with the proposal that a separate analytic staff need be organized under the DCI to prepare the daily temperature reading of the posture of the military forces of our major adversaries, and the indication that these forces may be bent upon hostile action. To further explain our position, let me refer to the second draft paper you furnished Friday, a memorandum for the Chairman, NSCIC, entitled "Intelligence Warning". Paragraphs 11 and 12 of this draft outline the proposed changes to the Watch Committee and NIC structure, noting the substitution of an oversight committee and "small" supporting staff. Paragraph 12 concludes, however, with the observation that this staff will contain such expertise that it would be unique to the community and overshadow any competition when assessing

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Soviet readiness posture, mobilization laws, war games and other similar subjects. I do not believe that any "small" staff could possibly compete with either the breadth or depth of coverage of these areas that now exists in the community, particularly within the Soviet division of the DIA. Our position was and remains based on this perception, and our concept of the staff required to prepare the "daily temperature reading" is one which taps and questions the existing community assets, rather than over shadows them. We believe that such a staff could truly be small and could function on behalf of the DCI while integrated into the DIA organization. I am sure that Danny Graham will wish to pursue this question.

#4 The resolution of this question, however, should not delay our advance towards effecting the major changes, because the administrative and NMIC watch team support to this group will be essentially the same no matter how they are organized. The DIA will be prepared by Thursday to outline both an interim support arrangement and the considerably more advanced arrangements available in a modernized NMIC in the late 1976 time frame.

#5 On the small "w" portion of your draft, I will only reiterate our support of your position; it is a function which we each pursue constantly, supporting our individual superiors and the NIO structure in the provision of timely warning.

#6 Finally, I would suggest that the words which attempt to define the large "W" function need more study. The sentence, "It will also be responsible for providing warning of military action in developing crisis situations, in any area, which involve U.S. forces," is an improvement over the past. It is sufficiently broad that time and differing interpretations might lead to the same situation in which we find the current Watch Committee. We must preclude the loss of focus on the USSR and PRC threat. Perhaps it would be better to say: "It will also be responsible for providing warning of military action by a major adversary, in any area, which would involve U.S. forces."

Again, let me say that I perceive fundamental agreement and we are ready to engage in implementation planning.

Sincerely,

SIGNED