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SPEAKER: [REDACTED]

Date: 20 September 1966

SUBJECT: The Requirements for Intelligence at the National Level

I find in reviewing the record of the last Intelligence Methods Conference that one speaker observed that intelligence officers are "chronically worried" whether their work is having an impact on policy. He felt the evidence for his view was obvious: "whenever intelligence men get together in conference," he said, "they always arrange to have at least one and sometimes two speakers on the subject of intelligence and policy making." And he concluded: "By now everything that can be said on the subject must certainly have been said!" He was wrong, of course.

The subject of intelligence and policy is inexhaustible. It is made up of all the dynamics that interplay as men strive to master the knowledge they must have to make the decisions they must make. The interaction of one country's policy objectives upon another's, the influence of personality and style upon leadership, the explosion in knowledge and the revolution in the speed and pervasiveness of worldwide communications-- all these diverse factors and many others influence the intelligence officer in how he deals with the policy maker and attempts to meet his needs.

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Yesterday's solutions rarely fit today's problems. And one thing is certain: there will be a need to discuss how intelligence contributes to the highest national policy levels at every Intelligence Methods Conference to come.

To serve the needs of those responsible for national policy decision-- this is why Intelligence exists.

This presentation will be in two parts. This morning I would like to start the discussion by talking about the requirements for intelligence at the national level from the perspective of the Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence in CIA. I will not attempt to speak for the other organizations that make up the Washington intelligence community, nor would I suggest that what I'm presenting is the whole picture. I hope this rather specific approach to the subject will be useful in facilitating subsequent discussion along specific lines.

When we return after lunch, I propose to speak in even more specific terms on preparing the intelligence product in ways that are most useful to the policy makers and responsive to their demands.

To begin my discussion on the requirements for intelligence at the national level, I think it would be useful to identify who these people are in the United States. This is not always the simple task it might appear to be.

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We start with the President, of course. But we must take into account certain members of his personal staff--full time, part time, and ad hoc and, in particular, his special assistant handling national security affairs and his staff. Next come the heads of departments, in particular State and Defense, the military chiefs, and the heads of independent agencies dealing with foreign affairs. Then there are the numerous statutory and ad hoc interagency bodies established for the purpose of recommending policy. (The Committee of Principals on Disarmament would be one example.) And at the senior level are also the regional pro-consuls such as Ambassador Lodge in Vietnam and Ambassador Bunker in Santo Domingo, who have been delegated additional authority.

But in the end the buck stops at the President's desk. The President is the one who has to pass on all important matters involving US relations with foreign countries. The advent of the nuclear age has greatly multiplied the number of things he must decide personally to the point where he has become, in Richard Neustadt's words, 'a decision machine.' His decisions in international affairs are of course shaped by the reports of many people and institutions but in particular those that I have just mentioned.

The requirements for intelligence at this national level are particularly fascinating because they are so kaleidoscopic. They change with

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the men, they change with the times, they change with the bureaucratic structure, they change with each policy decision. As a result, it is almost impossible to generalize on the needs of the senior policy maker. He certainly must be provided with what he thinks he needs to know, if this is possible. He sometimes must be provided with material that the intelligence authorities think he should know. Often he must be provided with material which in the beginning neither the policy maker nor the intelligence official realized would be needed--this is the material generated by the interaction between the policy maker and the intelligence officer as they work together over time.

A good deal of time and thought is spent by the intelligence officer in trying to figure out just what to send the policy maker and what not to send him. The more senior the officer the more time and thought that goes into it.

The most direct way of finding out what the senior policy maker needs is to ask him. Fortunately, except for one bleak period after the Bay of Pigs incident, all of the Agency directors have had frequent, direct access to the President and have not been reluctant to ask him what he wanted. The Director meets with the Chief Executive in person or talks with him by phone more often than most people, including Washington political insiders, realize. To cite some examples, Bedell Smith

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met with President Truman every Friday morning delivering to him a weekly situation report devoted to communist activities throughout the world. Allen Dulles met with President Eisenhower every Thursday morning at the National Security Council session and delivered a briefing on significant current developments. John McCone met every morning with President Johnson throughout the first few weeks of his administration to deliver an early morning intelligence brief. I can assure you that these men never came back from any of these meetings without some work for us to do generated by the President.

In sum, one way of determining what the President needs is to ask him or be told by him without asking in the course of frequent, periodic meetings. But there is of course a limit on access to the President and the time he has available. Different avenues of approach are necessary. We are in frequent touch with the other senior policy makers. They not only have a pretty good idea of their own needs but also those of the President himself. In addition, communication and rapport with the President's immediate staff are of great importance. These men are close to him and in the best position to make his needs known. These days the staffers usually do this by telephoning the Director or the Deputy Director for Intelligence. To take one example, Mr. Moyers called recently to say he felt that an article on what makes the Chinese Communist leaders tick would be of particular interest for

the President at this point.

We are constantly receiving requests for information and analysis from Mr. Rostow and his staff who handle national security affairs. In our contact with this group we are particularly fortunate in that some of our former officers have served or are serving on this staff. For example, when Mr. Komer received his special assignment to 25X1X4 concentrate on South Vietnamese problems we asked him how 25X1X4 he felt we could best meet his needs. His response was that he would like a periodic summary of significant economic and pacification developments in South Vietnam, important information that tends to get buried in the welter of military reporting on Vietnam. We now prepare a special weekly publication tailored especially for him.

Moving from the White House staff to the department heads, the Agency has an intelligence officer serving in the office of Secretary of Defense McNamara. He is attuned to the Secretary's needs and levies many requirements on us for the Secretary. Of course, requirements also come directly from Mr. McNamara as the result of frequent meetings between him and the Director.

Over at State we now have the newest mechanism in operation for making known the needs of the senior policy maker. It is called the

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Senior Interdepartmental Group (SIG) and is chaired by the Under Secretary of State, Mr. Ball, with representation at the same level from the other agencies of government dealing with foreign affairs, including the Director. The SIG is responsible for insuring that important foreign policy problems requiring interdepartmental attention receive full, prompt, and systematic consideration.

There has also been established a series of Interdepartmental Regional Groups chaired by the Assistant Secretary of State for each particular region. Intelligence is represented on each of these groups, too. The Chairman is responsible for the adequacy of US policy for the countries in his region and of the plans, programs, resources, and performance for implementing that policy. These groups usually meet weekly to thrash out new policy recommendations before they move on to the Senior Group and then to the Secretary. In essence, the new system attempts to apply the country team approach of a large American embassy abroad to regional planning in Washington. In time we expect to find these groups becoming particularly important in the slower moving policy problems. (The big, Class A type flaps tend to by-pass the set institutional framework and generate their own high level task force directly responsive to the President.)

Moving on from State, there are the several statutory or ad hoc committees that have been assigned special tasks in the field of foreign

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affairs. Intelligence is represented on many of these bodies. For example, we have a representative on the Economic Defense Advisory Committee which deals with US policy in the international economic arena and on the Advisory Committee on Export Policy which deals with US trade with individual foreign nations.

Last but by no means least, to discover the needs of the policy maker there is always the "old boy" net: people we have known, gone to school with, worked with, played with, fought with, people we are in constant contact with both on the policy level and in the intelligence components of State, Defense and elsewhere. To take one good example, 25X1A6d eight years ago at the first Intelligence Methods Conference [REDACTED] 25X1A9a one of our representatives was [REDACTED] who delivered a paper on "The Guiding of Intelligence Collection". At that time he was a member of the Board of National Estimates. [REDACTED] 25X1X4

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These people know us and we know them. From them we get a constant stream of suggestions as to the needs of the men above them and we usually hear quickly when we fail to produce something that meets those needs - so that we can try again.

So far we have been talking mainly about the needs of the senior policy maker, how we find out what questions he has, or how we help him to ask the right question. We have also spoken of the way in which

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these needs are made known through direct question, through participation in the interagency boards and committees, and through constant informal communication.

The question arises how do these so-called national requirements differ from departmental requirements. To my mind they can be distinguished in two ways: first, when they involve more than one department's interests and it is either too difficult or just plain impossible to separate these interests and give them to the departments having primary responsibility; second, when the policy maker's intelligence needs are so critical that the judgment of more than one department is desired.

Another way of looking at it would be to say when any of the people or groups we have been talking about so far asks you something, you know it is a national requirement because they are all involved--either individually or collectively -- in assisting the President make national policy, or in some cases making it for him. It is almost impossible today to identify a national policy matter that lies solely within the sphere of one governmental department.

What level of detail is required to supply the policy maker's requirements for intelligence? No clear cut answer can be given. In the Cuban missile crisis one did not have to be a clairvoyant to know the President

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was personally handling all the details of the naval quarantine and that he personally wanted to know the exact location of every Soviet merchant ship that might be bound for Cuba. We did not wait to be asked, we simply sent the information on as fast as we obtained it.

At certain points in the Laotian crisis in the Spring of 1961 it also became obvious that, in Ambassador Winthrop Brown's words, the President was the "Laotian desk officer." And everyone knows how greedy desk officers are for all the information they can get.

There are some other guidelines. Any time the lives of a country's nationals, civilian or military, are endangered in foreign countries the highest level wants to know about it quickly and in as much detail as possible. Communist kidnapings in Latin America, helicopter shoot-downs in the Berlin area, or for that matter shootdowns anywhere - in all these cases the President wants to get the complete word. These days the President must spend a great deal of time with the Vietnamese war and in this field we have found that it is wise to err on the side of giving too much rather than too little.

Beyond these cases where it is obvious that you shoot the works, there are only rules of thumb. We have come, fortunately or unfortunately, a long way from the good old days of the one-page precis so favored by General Marshall. If we are specifically asked for something by a senior policy maker and no length is mentioned, we write as

much as we think required to do the job - no more. Then we ask someone to review it and cut it in half for us. If this cannot be done-or even if it can - we still put a comprehensive summary up front.

If we have not been asked specifically by the senior policy maker for something but feel a desperate need to get some information or analysis across to him, brevity is the over-riding virtue. Conclusions and judgments are the objective; argumentation can come later. If his appetite is whetted, if he wants to know more, or if he violently disagrees, we expect to pick up some feedback somewhere along the line so that we can follow through with more detail if required.

It is here that the role of the regularly scheduled publication -- the daily or the weekly -- comes into play. By and large we find that such publications prepared for senior policy makers should take a fairly broad approach. It is not necessary that they should put forward all the classified news that is fit to print. Rather, they are designed primarily to alert the national policy maker to developments across the board in international affairs which might affect the nation's security, directly or indirectly. These publications take such soundings at regular intervals. In the course of preparing them every bit of information that the intelligence officer can get his hands on is reviewed and then put through a very fine sieve. If the policy maker wants more on a given subject or if the

intelligence officer thinks the policy maker needs more, a separate memorandum or paper is written.

There are of course always difficulties in maintaining contact with the policy maker. One difficulty arises when a senior policy maker is on the road - how do you get to him in an emergency, how do you keep up his continuity on his area. We have partly solved this through a system of briefing cables tailored specifically for the high-level traveler. They consist in the main of a synopsis of material appearing in our daily publication supplemented by material in which the traveler may have a special interest because of the area he is visiting or the people he is meeting.

Sooner or later, the time seems to come when the demands on the time of the senior policy maker are just so enormous as to preclude our getting through to him in any way, shape, or form. In these cases we can only wait for an opening and hope he may be able to give a quick scan to our regularly scheduled intelligence publications. In these we note the things that he really should not let go by even if he is spending 100% of his time on the Vietnamese war or the Dominican Republic.

Then there is that really crushing occasion when a senior policy maker or the senior policy maker loses his confidence in intelligence either because of a monumental gaffe or because the circumstantial

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evidence seems to point that way.

I doubt if I am revealing secrets out of school when I note that this was the case with the President and the Agency immediately after the Bay of Pigs tragedy. The primary daily publication at that time was the Central Intelligence Bulletin. This had been expressly asked for by President Truman. Then it was specially adapted to meet President Eisenhower's needs, and it had been altered further to meet President Kennedy's style. President Kennedy relegated it to the dust bin.

For the first time in eleven years contact had been broken. We were without a daily link or any periodic link with the President in which to carry out the critical alerting function. We bent every effort to restore it. Finally we did so through the medium of a new publication different in style, classification, format and length but not different in fundamental concept - a device whereby we can present to the President in the tersest possible form what he should know about the play of the world for that day, particularly as it impinges on US national security interests.

There remains one other basic problem involving contact with the policy maker. That is that the desk level analyst, the fellow at the heart of the intelligence process, is never going to have all the clues as to what is making the high-level world go round. He does not sit

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in on the National Security Council sessions. The Director does, but for various reasons - security or the "need-to-know" problem, the sheer physical impossibility of spreading the correct word and feel down far enough -- the analyst is never made fully aware. I submit, however, that the intelligence analyst is not thereby relieved of his responsibility to be alert to developments in national policy. The daily press and the favored columnists are excellent sources. If the President or the Secretary of State delivers a speech on foreign policy, that speech is fully reported and should be read. My feeling is that the percentage of intelligence analysts who read such speeches is still far from 100%. One hears the argument that the less one knows about policy, the more objective his analysis is. However, the counter-argument that you cannot produce intelligence in a vacuum, you cannot recognize threats to your policy interests unless you know what those interests are, seems to me over-riding.

These then are some thoughts on the questions of requirements for intelligence at the national level. Some conclusions that we can state in brief are these: In large and complex governments, there are no simple ways to determine the full range of the policy maker's needs for intelligence. His needs are changing as situations emerge, develop, and subside. Communication -- free and easy contact in an atmosphere

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of confidence -- is essential to the smooth workings of the intelligence-policy relationship. Mechanisms can be established to speed the flow of intelligence up and requirements down, and these mechanisms are essential. But nothing is so valuable as an effective person-to-person relationship. In each of our countries, all policy authority and decision comes to rest ultimately in one man. It is he that intelligence must serve.

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