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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

7 December 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: IAC-D-50/3, National Intelligence Objectives

REFERENCES: A. IAC-M-115, 4 August 1953, item 7.  
B. IAC-M-171, 5 October 1954, item 4b.  
C. Memorandum from the Board, 6 December 1954.

BACKGROUND

1. IAC-D-50/3 was prepared by the Board in consultation with representatives of the IAC agencies and the IPC pursuant to IAC direction (IAC-M-115, 4 August 1953). Completion of the task was delayed by the necessity for a thorough re-examination of the subject, by the priority accorded to required estimates, and by difficulties in coordination discussed in Reference C. However, if IAC-D-50/3 is adopted, the proposed annual review of priority national intelligence objectives will not be so difficult and time-consuming a task.

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SUBSTANCE

2. The present text is fully agreed at the representatives level, except for the footnote on page 7. The issue presented is a matter of vital principle. Inasmuch as the text is that of a directive rather than an estimate, the issue must be resolved in one way or the other.

3. DCID-4/2 ensures priority for any military intelligence collection requirement related to the Soviet Bloc over any other objective, regardless of their relative importance considered from an over-all, NSC point of view. NSCID-4 requires that appropriate priority be accorded to the important nonmilitary intelligence requirements indicated in NSC 162/2 and other NSC documents. The Service representatives have finally consented to an expansion of DCID-4/2 as proposed in IAC-D-50/3, Appendix B. The effect of their footnote on page 7, however, would be to perpetuate the automatic priority for all matters of military interest over all other national security interests which is now derived from DCID-4/2.

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4. The Board holds that Category I (highest priority) should be reserved for the three most critical intelligence problems: the likelihood of war, the Soviet capability to deliver a "knockout blow" against the United States, and the Soviet capability to prevent the delivery of such a blow against the USSR. To generalize the last two into an all-inclusive reference to Soviet military capabilities, as is proposed by the Service representatives, would violate the general principle of discrimination between degrees of criticality in the determination of priorities. It would also violate the IAC's explicit instruction to the Board to formulate priority objectives in such a way as to enable the IAC to determine the priority of guided missiles in relation to other topics (IAC-M-171, 5 October 1954, item 4b).

5. The State Department representative supported the Board in this matter, but held that, if the Service representatives' proposal was adopted by the IAC, item II(b) should also be raised to Category I. The Service members of the IAC are likely to make this concession to State in order to enlist its support for their proposed amendment. The position which Mr. Armstrong would take in such circumstances is uncertain.

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6. The Board recommends that the Director adopt the Board's position as stated in paragraph 4 above, and that he carry the issue to the NSC, if necessary. The Deputy Director for Intelligence and the Assistant Directors for Current Intelligence, Research and Reports, and Scientific Intelligence concur in this recommendation.

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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
NATIONAL ESTIMATES

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

6 December 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: National Intelligence Objectives

REFERENCE: IAC-D-50/3, 30 November 1954

1. IAC-D-50/3, as submitted to the IAC, contains no analysis supporting its recommendations. The draft adopted by the Board and submitted to the IAC representatives did contain such an analysis (attached hereto as Tab A) and two additional recommendations derived therefrom:

- a. That the recommended annual review of priority national intelligence objectives be conducted by the Board of National Estimates in conjunction with IAC representatives.
- b. That your Special Assistant for Planning and Coordination, in conjunction with IAC representatives, be directed to review existing provisions for the

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development and coordination of specific information requirements and collection tasks in conformity with established priority objectives and to submit recommendations to the IAC.

2. The Board found it impossible to secure general concurrence in this analysis and these recommendations for reasons discussed in Tab B. However, the IAC representatives have stated that they anticipate no objection to the Director's adoption and implementation of the foregoing recommendations on the Board's recommendation and his own authority.

3. The Board believes the implementation of these two additional recommendations to be essential to the effective implementation of the recommendations in IAC-D-50/3. Accordingly, the Board recommends that, following the adoption of IAC-D-50/3, the Director:

- a. Inform the IAC that the Board of National Estimates will conduct the annual review of priority national estimates, in conjunction with IAC representatives.
- b. Request the IAC members to designate representatives to collaborate with the Special Assistant for Planning

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and Coordination in reviewing the existing provisions for the development and coordination of specific information requirements and collection tasks in conformity with established priority national intelligence objectives and in submitting recommendations to the IAC regarding their maintenance or improvement.

4. The Board further recommends that you impress upon individual members of the IAC the desirability of their being represented, in the review of priority national intelligence objectives, by persons broadly informed in substantive intelligence problems and deeply aware of the interests of the national intelligence community as a whole.

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Assistant Director  
National Estimates

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TAB A

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS OMITTED FROM IAC-D-50/3

I. NSCID-4

6. NSCID-4, adopted by the NSC on 12 December 1947, requires the Director of Central Intelligence, in collaboration with the other agencies concerned, to:

- a. Prepare "a comprehensive outline of national intelligence objectives applicable to foreign countries and areas to serve as a guide for the coordinated collection and production of National Intelligence."
- b. Select, on a current basis, under the guidance of the NSC Staff (now the NSC Planning Board), the sections and items of this outline having priority interest, for the priority guidance of national intelligence production.

7. NSCID-4 was adopted seven years ago, when concepts of inter-departmental intelligence coordination were relatively undeveloped. It

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is faulty in that, instead of assigning a mission, it prescribes the technique whereby the mission is to be accomplished. An evident fallacy in the technique prescribed is the assumption that a catalog of all matters of intelligence interest is prerequisite to the identification of matters of priority interest.

8. There is no common understanding of the first requirement of NSCID-4, for a "comprehensive outline of national intelligence objectives." Reference to antecedent documents shows that the drafters of NSCID-4 intended that "outline" to be a detailed analytical listing of all subjects of intelligence interest, in fact a consolidation of the Army Index Guide, the Navy Monograph Guide, and other similar departmental collection and monograph production guides. Seen in this light, it is apparent that this requirement for a "comprehensive outline" has been met, not by DCID-4/1, which purports to serve that purpose, but by the NIS outline (NIS Standard Instructions, June 1951) prepared pursuant to detailed direction in NSCID-3 (13 January 1948). Inasmuch as the requirement for a "comprehensive outline" is adequately covered by the provisions of NSCID-3, the problem, as regards the implementation of NSCID-4, can be narrowed down to its second paragraph, that concerned with the determination of priority objectives.

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9. On the basis of the foregoing considerations, particularly in order to eliminate the awkward and unnecessary prescriptions of NSCID-4, the Board of National Estimates was inclined to recommend a revision of that Directive to provide general direction without prescribing a particular technique. There is, however, a counter-vailing consideration: it is undesirable to burden the National Security Council with this obscure matter which, in the light of NSCID-1, it is undoubtedly willing to leave to the discretion of the Intelligence Advisory Committee.

10. Conclusion. NSCID-4 is faulty, but, as a practical matter, it is unnecessary and inexpedient to recommend its revision at this time. In this case, however, NSCID-4 should not be strictly construed.

II. DCID-4/1

11. DCID-4/1, dated 5 February 1948, is an apparent evasion of the first requirement of NSCID-4. It lists 15 "national intelligence objectives" (i.e., general categories of information of intelligence interest) "generally applicable to all foreign areas." Of necessity these 15 "objectives" are stated in such abstract terms as to be of

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no practical utility as a basis for selecting critical or high priority objectives. Even as a guide to routine intelligence collection and research, DCID-4/1 is manifestly less "comprehensive" and useful than the NIS Standard Instructions.

12. As long as NSCID-4 remains unrevised there remains a formal requirement for a "comprehensive outline of national intelligence objectives." The Board of National Estimates considers that the NIS Standard Instructions satisfy this requirement and that the only remaining requirement is for a DCID on priority objectives. Certain representatives, however, maintain that nonpriority objectives cannot be given proper consideration without a DCID covering them, and for that purpose have offered, in substitution for DCID-4/1, generalized statements of objectives which they construe to be the required "comprehensive outline." The position of the Board is that, if a general DCID would indeed be useful, it should be adopted without argument as to whether it is in fact a "comprehensive outline" within the original intent of NSCID-4.

13. Conclusions: DCID-4/1 should be revised as in Appendix A.

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III. DCID-4/2

14. With evident regard to the second requirement of NSCID-4, DCID-4/1 contemplated the subsequent issuance of priority listings of national intelligence objectives by countries and subjects. DCID-4/2 was the only such listing ever to be issued as a DCID.

15. DCID-4/2 was based on JIC 542/7, "Critical Intelligence Objectives of the Department of Defense with Respect to the USSR," approved by the JIC on 22 May 1950. JIC 452/7 identified five priority intelligence objectives exclusively related to Soviet military capabilities. DCID-4/2, issued on 28 September 1950, was substantially identical except for general reference to Soviet intentions as well as capabilities and for the addition of two highly generalized references to political warfare. The order of listing was stated to be an internal order of priority, with the five military intelligence objectives listed first. On 12 June 1952 DCID-4/2 was amended to cover explicitly "the USSR and its Satellites (including Communist China)." The second revision, 4 August 1953, was the insertion of a reference to clandestine attack with weapons of mass destruction.

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16. The preoccupation of DCID-4/2 with Soviet military capabilities and intentions was a natural consequence of its origin and of the circumstances of 1950. The determination of Soviet military capabilities and intentions must remain a matter of highest intelligence priority in any foreseeable circumstances. The military emphasis of DCID-4/2 (Second Revision), however, is not consonant with current estimates that the Kremlin is unlikely to resort to military action with identifiable Bloc forces, that the active threat to US security is likely to be a vigorous Communist political warfare campaign designed to undermine the Western Power position, and that there is danger of a weakening of the unity of the Free World.

17. DCID-4/2 is also not consonant with NSC 162/2, "Basic National Security Policy," approved by the President on 30 October 1953, which indicates a need for intelligence on Soviet vulnerabilities as well as Soviet capabilities. Moreover, NSC 162/2 expressly calls for intelligence on probable developments in the capabilities and intentions of friendly and neutral states as well as of the USSR.

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18. Any listing of priority national intelligence objectives should be reviewed, and possibly revised, at least annually. The most appropriate time for an annual review would be as soon as possible after the completion of the major annual Soviet Bloc estimates now scheduled for the second quarter. On a semiannual basis, such a listing might well be reviewed early in the first and third quarters.

19. Conclusion: DCID-4/2 (Second Revision) should be superseded by a new DCID setting forth an expanded list of priority intelligence objectives in consonance with NSC 162/2. Provision should be made for the periodic revision of this new DCID.

#### IV. DCID-3/5

20. Pursuant to DCID-3/5 (1 September 1953) the Board of National Estimates, in consultation with the NSC Planning Board and with IAC representatives, prepares quarterly a program of national intelligence estimates for the ensuing 12 months. The latest example of such a program is IAC-D-1/9 (7 October 1954). IAC approvals of these successive revisions and extensions of the

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estimates production program are in effect determinations regarding national intelligence objectives. They are not, however, identical with the determination of critical objectives contemplated in Section III above. For one thing, the estimates program will include some estimates scheduled on a basis of current interest or long-term significance rather than on a basis of immediate or continuing critical importance. For another, the estimates program itself will not identify the critical factors in the estimates scheduled. Nevertheless, the identification of critical national intelligence objectives and the programming of national intelligence estimates are closely related subjects.

21. The actual initiation of specific estimates is accomplished through terms of reference prepared by the Board of National Estimates in coordination with IAC representatives to serve as a basis for contributions. These terms of reference do analyze the information required for the particular estimate and consequently afford a basis for a priori identification of critical factors in the situation to be estimated.

22. The critical deficiencies in available intelligence which become apparent in the course of preparing an estimate are the subject

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of post-mortem vreview by the Board and IAC representatives in important cases (see IAC-D-57 and -65). It is now agreed that such a review shall be conducted semiannually (IAC-M-151). As an effective means of identifying intelligence deficiencies, post-mortem findings are an important contribution to the formulation of priority national intelligence objectives. They are not to be taken, however, as in themselves a statement of such objectives.

23. Conclusion: The Board of National Estimates, in consultation with the NSC Planning Board and in coordination with IAC representatives, is the appropriate body to develop and maintain the proposed DCID on priority national intelligence objectives, subject to DCI and IAC approval of each periodic revision.

V. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PRIORITY NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OBJECTIVES

(This section, as amended, was incorporated in IAC-D-50/3 as Appendix C.)

VI. SUPPLEMENTARY ACTION REQUIRED

31. IAC adoption of a statement of priority national intelligence objectives would not obviate the need for the estimates programming,

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terms of reference, and post-mortem procedures now in effect. These procedures should be continued, and the resultant estimates programs, terms of reference, and post-mortem findings should be regarded as supplementary guidance for intelligence collection and research.

32. The translation of priority national intelligence objectives into specific information requirements and the translation of such requirements into specific collection tasks requires action by research and collection personnel. Existing provisions for the accomplishment of these tasks, especially those for interdepartmental coordination with respect thereto, should be reviewed for the purpose of recommending improvements as necessary. Such a review is essential to ensure the full effectiveness of any system for determining priority national intelligence objectives, but is outside the scope of the present problem. Moreover, the Board of National Estimates is not the appropriate body to conduct such a review.

33. Conclusion: The Special Assistant to the DCI for Planning and Coordination, in collaboration with IAC representatives, should be directed to review existing provisions for the development and coordination of specific information requirements and of specific collection tasks, and to submit recommendations to the IAC.

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TAB B

FACTORS AFFECTING THE COORDINATION OF IAC-D-50/3

1. The problem presented in IAC-D-50/3 is, essentially, how to provide long-term guidance from policy planners (the NSC Planning Board) and intelligence estimators (the Board of National Estimates and the IAC representatives with whom it normally collaborates) to intelligence collection and research. It is axiomatic that collection and research personnel need such guidance and are not in a position to supply it to themselves. For years it has been their complaint that no effective means have been devised to provide it for them, despite occasional earnest efforts on the part of several full-time intelligence planning staffs. Reference of the problem to the Board of National Estimates implied an IAC desire for a radically new approach from a more comprehensive point of view than that of those who had hitherto failed to solve it.

2. The Board reviewed the history of the subject since 1946, and, although not eager to add to its own burdens, concluded that estimates personnel (itself and its colleagues in the departmental

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agencies) were in the best position to translate planners' intelligence requirements into priority national intelligence objectives through the identification of the critical substantive intelligence problems. At the same time, the Board recognized that intelligence objectives, as thus determined, could not serve as the final formulation of specific collection requirements. In the Board's concept, it would be the function of estimates personnel to translate planners' requirements into intelligence objectives, the function of research personnel to translate such objectives into specific information requirements, and the function of collection personnel to translate such requirements into specific tasks of collection. Thus each would have his appropriate function in the over-all plan -- but it was essential to the concept to recognize that the formulation of intelligence objectives is not a proper function of collection personnel.

3. The Service agencies, however, treated the formulation of national intelligence objectives as though it were primarily a collectors' problem. Although the Board communicated with them through their respective estimates staffs (its normal channel), the matter was referred internally to their chiefs of collection,

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who initially appeared as agency representatives. Subsequently certain of these representatives were replaced by front office personnel, but the collection element continued to dominate consideration of the subject in the Service agencies. This circumstance had a severely adverse effect upon coordination.

4. None of the IAC representatives with whom the Board had to deal in this matter had ever acted with it before in the preparation of a paper for IAC consideration. At the first meeting with them it became apparent that the confidence in mutual good faith which has been developed among estimators since 1950 was altogether lacking at the collectors' level. The atmosphere was like that which prevailed generally before 1950: the Service representatives frankly assumed that any proposal by an element of CIA must ipso facto be designed to entrap them. The tone of discussion improved materially when front office personnel replaced certain of the collectors as IAC representatives -- that change alone made possible such progress as was achieved with respect to the subject -- but by that time the Service agencies' position had been strongly prejudiced, so that it was never possible to secure candid consideration of the Board's draft in its entirety.

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5. DCID-4/2, in effect, assured priority to any collection requirement proposed by a Service agency, regardless of its actual importance in relation to national security considered from an NSC point of view. Service collection personnel were naturally loath to impair the monopolistic position which they thus enjoyed. However, any review of DCID-4/2 in the light of NSCID-4, and consequently of NSC 162/2, necessarily entailed an expansion of priority national intelligence objectives to assure appropriate consideration for non-military matters of major importance in the broader view of national security. The Board understood that that was precisely what the IAC had directed it to do. The original Service representatives, however, emphatically refused to make any significant change whatever in DCID-4/2. The front office personnel who replaced them withdrew from that untenable position and accepted the Board's draft of Appendix B as a basis for coordination, but their footnote on item I(c) is a manifest attempt to maintain the advantage enjoyed under DCID-4/2 while acknowledging that other matters not mentioned in DCID-4/2 are worthy of some secondary consideration.

6. The Service representatives were not well qualified to discuss the relative importance of the items listed in Appendix B as substantive intelligence problems within the context of over-all

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national security interest. Consequently their consideration of relative priority was governed almost entirely by calculation of procedural advantage or disadvantage for their respective agencies, and the over-all national interest when by default except insofar as it could be maintained by the Board with some support from State.

7. The Service representatives, in effect, refused to act on the analysis presented by the Board in support of its recommendations, except that they accepted a portion of it as Appendix C. Their objections to the remainder took the form of flat denial of demonstrable historical fact and of questioning the relevance of matters which the Board supposed the IAC would wish to know about in acting on the subject. The underlying objection, however, was probably to the tendency of the analysis to demonstrate that the previous directives had been grossly inadequate, that estimates of personnel are best qualified to formulate priority national intelligence objectives, and that procedures for the application of established priority objectives should be thoroughly reviewed. The Board considers the specific objections raised to have been ill-informed and invalid, but deemed it expedient not to prejudice such constructive action as was possible by prolonging a hopeless argument.

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8. Although it may cover corresponding substantive objections, the position taken by the Service representatives with respect to the additional recommendations presented in the covering memorandum was strictly legalistic: that it was inappropriate for IAC representatives to make recommendations involving the assignment of tasks to component elements of CIA. Having taken this position, they could not object to the Board's direct submission of these recommendations to the Director. They anticipated no IAC objection to the Director's adoption and implementation of them on his own authority.

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