

THE DIRECTOR OF
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

National Intelligence Council

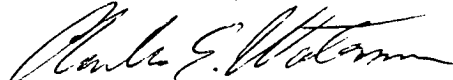
12 August 1983

Ambassador Stephen W. Bosworth
Chairman, Policy Planning Council
State Department

Dear Steve:

Per our discussion, I sent the attached
note to Don Fortier, Don Gregg, and Andy
Marshall.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Waterman
Vice Chairman

Attachment

The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

12 August 1983

Mr. Donald Gregg
Assistant to the Vice President
for National Security Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20506

Dear Don:

In pursuit of our attempt to induce serious deliberation within government on longer-range issues, I put together the attached list of tacit assumptions underlying the US world view on a variety of issues. The list is not inclusive, is not well prioritized, and contains some items which may border too closely on "current" issues. I do feel some of the assumptions bear examination.

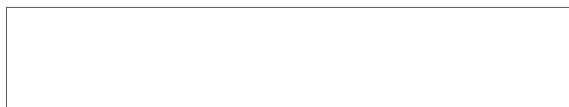
I also sent the list to Steve Bosworth, who is sympathetic to the concept that some of the categories would bear scrutiny by a group of pertinent, cleared, and interested individuals from policy, intelligence, and appropriate non-governmental organizations. We both agree careful structuring of the deliberations of any forum decided upon would be necessary to preclude irrelevant and time-wasting debate.

We would be interested in your reaction to the attached list. Any ideas on the desirability and methodology for instigating meaningful deliberation on the issues would be welcome. Incidentally, I sent a similar note to Andy Marshall and Don Fortier.



Charles E. Waterman
Vice Chairman

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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

12 August 1983

Mr. Andrew W. Marshall
Director, Net Assessment
Department of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Andy:

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

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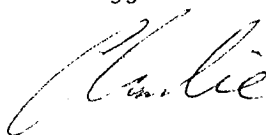
Mr. Donald Fortier
Senior Staff/Western Europe
National Security Council
Washington, D.C. 20506

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Vice Chairman

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Assumptions Underlying Major US Foreign Policies

All foreign policy decisions necessarily rest on assumptions--whether articulated or merely implicit--about the nature of the outside world and our ability to affect events. Many of these assumptions are well-founded, have stood the test of time, and still provide a sound basis for making policy judgments for the future. Others, however, may no longer be valid and will need to be changed.

There is value in periodically articulating and re-examining all key assumptions underlying major policy choices, if only to sharpen awareness of the bases of US policy and to stimulate thinking about developments in the world and in US capabilities. Indeed, the questions asked both by intelligence officers and by policymakers often themselves shape both the analysis and the policies that result.

This paper seeks to examine and to differentiate among underlying policy assumptions. Its central purposes are to help ensure that we do indeed understand and agree with assumptions underlying major foreign policies, and that those assumptions are grounded on the most accurate information available. Thus this paper proposes certain questions regarding some of the most significant areas of US foreign policy, followed (in capsule form) by what appear to be today's prevailing US assumptions. This is not to argue that prevailing assumptions are wrong; rather that looking at them anew could produce fresh insights.

At this point, the list of questions and prevailing assumptions is not meant to be comprehensive--either in regional/functional scope or in specific issues. Rather, by focussing on several key topics, it is designed to provide a basis for starting discussion. In each case, the

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time frame for discussion is "the next few years"; as discussion proceeds, the time frame could usefully be extended further into the future.

- I. The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe
- II. Western Europe
- III. The Middle East
- IV. East Asia
- V. Central America
- VI. Southern Africa
- VII. International Economics (including North-South relations)
- VIII. Non-Proliferation

I. The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe:

- A. Do Soviet actions to provide and test a strategic war-fighting capability indicate that, under certain circumstances, the Soviet leadership may be prepared to initiate a strategic war? Does Soviet doctrine necessarily require that any major war escalate promptly to the strategic nuclear level? (The prevailing US assumption has been that the Soviets would not risk everything in strategic war short of a direct threat on the homeland. There is no established US consensus on the practicalities of Soviet military doctrine.)
- B. Does Soviet perception of the prevailing "correlation of forces" mean that Moscow is now more willing to risk military conflict with the United States in non-central areas (e.g., over an Arab-Israeli conflict)? (The prevailing US assumption

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is that the Soviets will still shy away from any such direct engagements with the US, but beneath that threshold will be willing to push more than in the past.)

- C. Have increasing impediments to technical monitoring rendered impossible the conclusion of strategic arms limitations agreements that are both comprehensive and verifiable, or are alternative technologies on the horizon? To be verifiable, will future strategic arms control agreements have to be narrower in scope and less comprehensive? What about CBR? (The prevailing US assumptions are that adequate levels of monitoring will be feasible in the future, and that CBR threats are of second-order importance.)
- D. Are the Soviet Union's growing economic problems likely significantly to color its approach to defense spending, arms control agreements with the US, aggressiveness in the Third World, or the relative priorities of the Soviet leadership? (The prevailing US assumption is that, while economic factors are important, their impact will be at the margin and will not significantly alter Soviet objectives or tactics.)
- E. Are corruption, some attenuation of ideological belief, the slowing economy, increasing dependence on non-Russian nationalities, and demographic trends adverse to ethnic Russians creating a potentially volatile situation which threatens the foundation of the regime? (The prevailing US assumption is that Soviet society is in some trouble, but that the problems are manageable at least for the foreseeable future.)

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- F. Are there factors in Eastern Europe leading toward erosion of Soviet control and a weakening of military and economic cooperation within the bloc? Is East European reliability for the Soviets in a crisis at issue? Are there intra-East European developments (e.g., Hungarian-Romanian relations, the Macedonian question, Yugoslav national tensions) that could lead to a breakdown of the pattern of security? Can--and should--the United States or its allies exert any effective and significant influence on intra-bloc relationships? (Prevailing US assumptions are that the Soviets can always squelch disintegrating tendencies through a mixture of toughness and flexibility; and that any effort to exploit Soviet problems in Eastern Europe could lead to difficulties we could not--and would not want to--manage.)
- G. Is a security regime possible for Europe that could lead to peaceful evolution in Eastern Europe without a real reduction in the actual security of the USSR and in a form which the USSR might accept? (The prevailing US assumption is that the existing security system cannot be altered because Soviet strategic and ideological thinking, as reflected in the Brezhnev doctrine, demands a continuation of Communist Party control, plus Soviet military domination and occupation, regardless of the wishes of Eastern European peoples.)
- H. In general, is there an increase or decrease in the willingness of the Soviet Union to wage or support political-paramilitary warfare in the Third World? Will Soviet investments in military power-projection necessarily lead to intensified

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efforts to translate this into political influence in the Third World? (The prevailing US assumption is that no change has occurred in past Soviet policy; and that Moscow will continue to seek greater influence in the Third World, deriving from its military capabilities.)

- I. Could there be a major shift in USSR-China relations, either toward a rapprochement that would damage US interests or toward direct conflict? (The US assumption is that the status quo will endure, with minor variations, for the foreseeable future.)

II. Western Europe

- A. Are long-term trends underway that could seriously degrade the quality of US relations with Western Europe? In particular:
 - a) Could a general difference of view on East-West relations critically erode the ability of the alliance to coordinate on issues such as conventional defense preparedness, the role of nuclear weapons, East-West trade, and the Soviet role outside of Europe?
 - b) Will there be insuperable differences of view/interest on "outside of area" problems (e.g., the Middle East, Latin America) such as to prevent effective allied action (Middle East) or to undercut basic alliance cohesion (Central America)?
 - c) Will long-range systemic changes in the global economy lead progressively to economic competition across the Atlantic that will cut into political assumptions about Western security? (The prevailing US assumption is that problems in all three areas can be contained.)

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- B. Could a combination of Western European neutralism, pacifism, anti-nuclear movements, nationalism (e.g., in Germany) and the "successor generation" problem seriously erode the foundations of the alliance during the next few years? (Prevailing US assumptions are that the first three are essentially passing phenomena that can be dealt with through relatively minor shifts in policy; that the fourth is unlikely to become serious, and that the fifth can be dealt with through education.)
- C. Could long-term stagflation lead to a reversal of West European cohesion, an effective collapse of the European Community, and a challenge to Atlantic security arrangements? (The US assumption is that this could not happen.)

III. The Middle East

A. In the Arab-Israeli conflict:

1. To what extent is the level of instability in the Middle East a function of the Arab-Israeli dispute? Specifically, would fundamentalist or leftist revolutions be less likely if there were a Palestinian "solution," or are they likely in any event? How does the state of Arab-Israeli relations affect the possibility of Soviet inroads? (US opinion is sharply divided on these issues.)
2. Is a "solution" or at least a substantial amelioration of the Palestinian problem essential to US interests, or will it gradually become less of a

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potent irritant if merely left to evolve? Will the Palestinian movement grow into a true insurgency without "settlement," or will a process of accommodation occur? (The prevailing US assumption is that the Palestinian question is central to US interests and will become more, not less of an irritant.)

3. Is there a degree of flexibility to be found anywhere in the Israeli body politic which realistically offers the likelihood of a compromise on the West Bank/Gaza/Jerusalem acceptable to even moderate Arabs? Is the basic trend in Israel toward greater or lesser flexibility? (The prevailing US assumption is that such flexibility exists in liberal Israeli circles, under certain circumstances.)
4. Would establishment of a Palestinian state in Jordan resolve the problem, or merely whet the appetite of Palestinians for military recovery of the West Bank? (While opinion is divided, the prevailing US assumption is that this development would not enhance the prospects for peace.)
5. With the passage of time and continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, under what kinds of conditions would the current Israeli military advantage be threatened? Would proliferation of nuclear weapons to the area (e.g., Iraq, Libya, or Pakistan) decisively change these

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calculations? (The prevailing US assumption is that the Israeli advantage will eventually erode.)

6. Is there serious risk that Egypt would turn away from the United States, toward the Soviet Union, and renounce the treaty with Israel? (The prevailing US assumption is that these problems can be avoided.)

B. In the Persian Gulf:

1. Is Soviet expansion toward the Persian Gulf area a realistic threat, or has fear of it largely resulted from the juxtaposition of two coincidental events: the Iranian revolution and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan? Does the risk of further Soviet expansion toward the Gulf rest on definite Soviet planning/timetables, or on willingness to seize opportunities? Is the threat primarily military or political? (Prevailing US current assumptions accept the validity of the Soviet threat, and that substantial military planning effort and resources must be devoted to countering this possibility. Opinion is divided on whether the Soviets have a grand design.)
2. Can local security efforts (e.g., the Gulf Cooperation Council) contain likely threats to the Persian Gulf, or will some form of US involvement and probably military "presence" be needed for the foreseeable future? Does the price of oil (and oil income) affect these calculations? (The prevailing US assumption is that our direct role,

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with or without West European allies, will be critical--
all the more so if regional oil income falls.)

3. Could US military involvement in the Persian Gulf stimulate either hostile reactions to our presence or internal revolt? (The US assumption is that the risk is worth taking and that, properly managed, the US presence will not have these effects.)
4. Is the Iranian revolution likely over time to moderate, adopt more pluralistic forms of government, and gradually subdue its more expansionist tendencies? Would this lead Iran to turn Westward and tend to negate Soviet opportunities? (The prevailing US assumption is that such a trend is inevitable although lengthy.)
5. Will "Khomeinism" prove to be exportable to other regional states, to the detriment of Western interests? (The prevailing US assumption is that differences in national circumstances are likely to outweigh similarities provided that Iran does not decisively defeat Iraq.)
7. Will post-Khomeini Iran be able to survive as a unified country? Could the Soviet Union gain control over Iran through political means? Would a splintered Iran be vulnerable to the Soviet Union? (US opinion is divided on these questions.)

IV. East Asia:

- A. Will a continuing US tendency to focus on Soviet/European affairs result in Japan's achieving preeminent influence in Pacific Basin affairs--and would this circumscribe future US

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options in the Basin? (The prevailing US assumption is that this will not occur.)

- B. Is there a point at which continuing US pressure on Japan to increase its military capabilities will result in such increasing negative reactions from other Asian countries (or from Japan itself) that the US will have to curtail its pressure and change its mutual security objectives vis-a-vis Japan? (The prevailing US assumption is that adequate Japanese military forces can be sustained without critical political cost.)
- C. Could US-Japanese economic/trade disputes undercut mutual security understandings? (The US assumption is that this will not happen.)
- D. Can Vietnamese/Soviet power in Southeast Asia be contained, or are there other "dominoes" yet to fall (e.g., Thailand?). The prevailing US assumption is that this can be contained.)
- E. Could failure of Chinese modernization effectively reduce its role in the region--and would this redound to Soviet benefit? Conversely, will China become more assertive in the region? What about China's role elsewhere in the Third World? Can the US influence the outcome? (The prevailing US assumptions are that a) we have only a marginal ability to influence China's course, internally or externally; and b) that China will play an increasingly important role, at least in East Asia.)

V. Central America:

- A. Does economic, propaganda, and implied military pressure on Cuba inevitably force the Soviet Union to escalate

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support to that country, or is there a realistic point when the costs to the Soviets would outweigh the advantages? If the latter is true, would meaningful Soviet pressures on the Cubans to eschew revolutionary pretensions and actions in the Third World be either likely or effective (i.e., would Castro continue to export revolution on his own)? (Prevailing US assumptions are that the Soviets might suggest tactical retreats to the Cubans, but not long-term substantial changes; and that Castro is totally dependent on the Soviet Union for Third World ventures.)

- B. Is Castro susceptible to some partial rapprochement with the United States, whereby he would reduce Third World activism and we would provide Cuba with economic incentives to do so? (The prevailing US assumption is that no change is possible--though this is disputed by some academics.)
- C. Can centrist forces in the Central America/Caribbean area carry out social reform or even moderate revolution without being overcome by leftwing subversion or becoming objects in the East-West struggle? Would the answer be different if these forces received some kind of external support, and if so, of what kind (economic, technical, intelligence, policy, military)? Is US involvement likely to exacerbate or ameliorate internal developments? (US assumptions are divided on these points.)

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- D. Is there a significant role for countries other than the US in Central America to prevent developments hostile to our interests (e.g., the Contadora group, Mexico on its own, Spain)? (The prevailing US assumption is that other countries might be helpful, but that our role will still be vital.)
- E. Can any externally-supported rightist counterinsurgency in Central America--with the region's tradition of US interference--succeed against a regime that is inspired by social injustice but that has become communist-supported? Can such movements ever be dissociated from discredited groups that are associated with past exploitation? Can an effective counter-insurgency be mounted on the basis of centrist forces akin to those now dominant in Venezuela and the Dominican Republic? (The prevailing US assumption is that such an effort is feasible.)
- F. Should El Salvador become leftist and Nicaragua maintain its current political complexion, how likely is a domino effect in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama or Mexico? (The prevailing US assumption is that these developments are likely to have consequences adverse for our interests in other countries of the region.)
- G. Can Mexico simultaneously maintain the stability of its system and make major policy concessions to the US (e.g., on Central America, immigration, petroleum)? Can Mexico remain stable in any event, and can the US affect

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the outcome? (The prevailing US assumption on the first question is "no"; views are divided on the second question.)

VI. Southern Africa:

- A. Are Apartheid and its policy consequences in southern Africa essentially immutable or is change possible through whatever means? Can the United States significantly influence internal developments in South Africa--either with carrots or sticks? (The US prevailing assumption is that some combination of US policies will, in time, secure changes in South Africa sufficient for us to protect our interests elsewhere in the region, e.g., in Namibia.)
- B. Would US withdrawal from active concern with southern African issues necessarily work against our interests there? Or would "benign neglect" be at worst neutral in terms of our interests/relations with black Africa? (The prevailing US assumption is that we have to be involved.)
- C. Would upheaval in southern African countries (including South Africa)--especially if violent--necessarily work against our interests and in favor of those of the Soviet Union? Would countries initially favoring the Soviet Union in time turn to the West because of economic problems? (Prevailing US assumptions are that we have much to lose and the Soviets much to gain; and that an

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evolution away from the Soviet Union could be either too uncertain or too slow to use as a basis for policy.)

VII. International Economics (including North-South Relations)

- A. Will sustained economic recovery in the West fairly rapidly end the LDC debt crisis? In the meantime, can the debt crisis be managed so as to minimize risks, such as rising political opposition to austerity policy and the chances of changes in policy orientation in a more nationalistic, inward-looking, and confrontational direction? (The prevailing US assumption is that the debt problem will quickly go away with sustained economic recovery.)
- B. In the longer term, is the Third World likely to achieve adequate rates of economic growth? If net bank lending remains low, is it essential to develop alternative sources of foreign capital for LDCs, e.g., official aid, private direct investment? Under what circumstances might such flows be forthcoming, and with what effects? Is an expansion of export opportunities a reasonable substitute for capital flows? (The US government has not yet addressed this problem, so it is not clear what is being assumed.)
- C. Will world trade continue to be a major dynamic factor in the world economy during the remainder of the 1980s? Or will trade become severely constrained by protectionism and market controls? If the latter, what would be the

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- implications for industrial countries and developing countries, especially the NICs? (The prevailing US assumption is that rapid growth of trade will continue.)
- D. Can developed countries retain an essential monopoly of global economic decisionmaking, or must other countries, e.g., "newly-industrialized countries," become more deeply engaged? (the prevailing US assumption is that the developed countries will retain most authority for economic decisionmaking, although a few other countries might become involved at the margins.)
- E. Is the global energy crisis "over," or merely in remission? (The prevailing US assumption is the latter.)
- F. Is another "food crisis" likely during the next 5-10 years? Under what conditions might such a crisis occur, and with what effect? (The prevailing US assumption is that a food crisis is unlikely.)
- G. Is there any longer something called the "Third World," or has differentiation among developing countries reached the point that this is now (and increasingly will be) a misnomer? Will institutions like the Non-Aligned Movement thus wither away, or will political factors continue to promote cohesion among the "Southern" countries? (Prevailing US assumptions are that talking about developed vs. developing countries, in general, still provides a useful distinction; and that solidarity within the "South" will still need to be reckoned with at

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least economically, although groups like the NAM have seen their day politically.)

- H. Can there be actual or potential regional leaders in the Third World ("regional influentia[is]") through which we can work to encourage stability in those areas because of interests they share with us? Or did the Iranian revolution explode that theory? (The prevailing US assumption is that there are such countries and we should seek to strengthen them.)

VIII. Non-Proliferation

- A. Is the proliferation of nuclear weapons inherently destabilizing, or does this depend on a) where it happens; b) the nature of regional rivalries; and c) the character of individual governments? (The prevailing US assumption is that nuclear proliferation, in general, is destabilizing, although there is a minority view that stable regional balances could emerge.)
- B. Is the risk of nuclear proliferation overblown, in view of the low rate of development and testing of nuclear explosives relative to the capacity of governments to do so? Will this trend continue? (The US assumption is that policies pursued during the past several years have helped produce this trend, yet may not sustain it.)
- C. If a country is determined to "go nuclear," are there incentives or disincentives that can still be effective? Are violent measures effacious? (US

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assumptions are that incentives/disincentives can work where a government is in doubt about "going nuclear"; and that violent measures cannot be effective permanently, and may only exacerbate proliferation trends.)

- D. Has the global non-proliferation regime (the NPT, the IAEA and its safeguards systems, and nuclear supplier guidelines) been decisive in preventing the spread of the bomb? Or has this regime been more or less incidental to national decisions taken for other reasons, e.g., national technical difficulties, fears of reaction by neighbors and superpowers, vulnerability to preemption, or the ability to achieve national objectives by other means (military or political)? The US assumption is that the non-proliferation regime has been the more important disincentive.)
- E. Will the Soviet Union continue to view proliferation as not being in its interests? Is this view changing, and-- if so--where? (The prevailing US assumption is that the Soviet Union essentially opposes proliferation.)

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