

25 May 1982

BACKGROUND PAPER FOR PRESENTATION

INTELLIGENCE ON SOVIET STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES AND OBJECTIVES

I. Introduction

1. The purpose of intelligence is to assure that US leaders do not act in ignorance of foreign developments pertinent to their decisions. The organizations and procedures for producing intelligence, like the national intelligence structure itself, are not of rational design. They have evolved in response to the changing decisionmaking structure and the style of successive Administrations. Conceptually, all levels of organization--from the battalion to the National Security Council--responsible for independent decisionmaking require an independent intelligence component. In Washington, the apex of many decisionmaking organizations, supporting intelligence components are numerous and frequently in disagreement on key issues.

2. In response to my charge for this session, I hope to contribute to understanding of the organization and procedures for production of intelligence at the national level, and to your understanding some of the problems, methodologies and the track record of national intelligence on Soviet strategic nuclear forces and objectives.

II. Intelligence Organization and Procedures

3. The present national intelligence apparatus had its origins at Pearl Harbor and has its statutory basis in the National Security Act of 1947. The Act established the Central Intelligence Agency. The difference between

TOP SECRET

departmental and national intelligence was acknowledged and the DCI was called upon to produce national intelligence which gave due consideration to departmental intelligence positions. National intelligence estimates were envisioned as providing the top leadership with a common basis for decisionmaking and action, thus, avoiding the intelligence and decisionmaking failures that resulted in the 1941 disaster at Pearl Harbor.

4. The Departmental intelligence structure has undergone many changes since World War II; the present members of the so-called Intelligence Community are depicted here. It is like a community in that its member agencies have some aims and expertise in common, and, like a community, its head, the DCI, does not command all of the member elements. In this community, the Central Intelligence Agency is unique as the only intelligence organization not subordinate to a department of the government.

5. The intelligence structure the DCI does command in his role as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, is depicted on this viewgraph. (Explain) The DCI organization for producing intelligence is made up of the offices of the Deputy Director for Intelligence and the National Intelligence Council. The organization and procedures for producing National Intelligence Estimates has evolved over time in an effort to improve the quality of the product:

--Until 1973 when it was disestablished, the Office of National Estimates produced all NIEs. It consisted of a board of distinguished experts and later a staff to draft Estimates, using contributions from CIA and other agencies. Draft Estimates were approved by the Board, reviewed by representatives of Intelligence Community agencies and issued by the DCI after review by a Board composed of the Senior Intelligence Officers of the Intelligence Community.

TOP SECRET

- In the late 1960s, in part because of errors in estimates on Soviet strategic forces, the responsibility for drafting NIEs was shifted from the staff of the Office of National Estimates to production offices of the CIA.
- In 1973, National Intelligence Officers or NIOs replaced the Office of National Estimates. Each NIO was responsible directly to the DCI for production of national intelligence covering a given region, such as Latin America or the Far East, or in a given functional area such as economics or strategic nuclear programs. The NIOs were not given staffs, and were expected to rely on the CIA, DIA and other producing agencies to provide the draft input for NIEs. This arrangement was to make national intelligence more an interagency product and to assure the exposure of alternative and competing assessments in NIEs.
- The NIOs have been both military and civilian officers, drawn from various agencies, not only CIA. It was anticipated that unlike members of the Board of National Estimates, the NIOs would be replaced periodically--reducing the chances of institutionalizing a particular mind set.
- Since the inception of the NIO structure we have added groups of expert consultants drawn from outside intelligence to review draft NIEs, an internal Senior Review Panel, and an Analytic Group to provide staff assistance to some of the NIOs.

These changes in organization and procedures for producing NIEs has not altered the requirements for national intelligence, or the basic estimating problems, including maintaining the relationship which must exist between policymakers and defense planners on the one hand, and producers of national intelligence on the other.

TOP SECRET

III. Estimating Methodology

6. Intelligence estimates can be categorized by organization level of use--national, departmental and tactical; by geographic regions; or by topics--military, political, economic and scientific. Indications and warning is a special category of intelligence estimates that will discuss with you today. For discussion of methods, the track record and problems in intelligence on Soviet strategic programs, military estimates should be envisioned as covering--

25X1

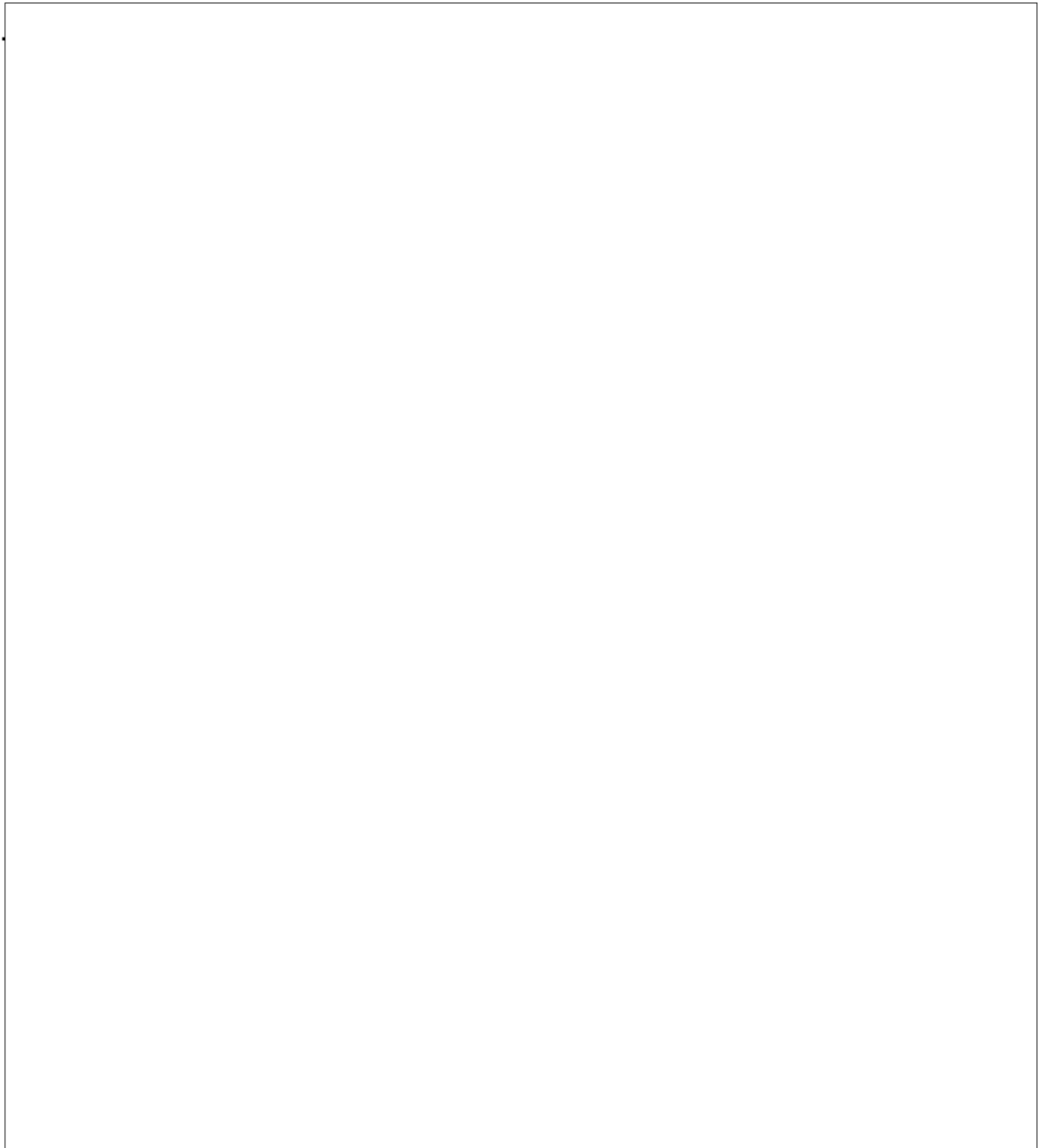
- Policies, objectives and strategy;
- Characteristics and performance of weapons and supporting systems;
- Size, composition and deployments of forces; and
- Tactics, employment concepts and capabilities.

Lying behind the conclusions in these estimates of present and future Soviet forces are virtually thousands of more detailed estimates, judgments and assumptions on personnel efficiency, hardware, production, research and development, science and technology, and in some cases, computerized simulations of the interaction of US and Soviet weapons.

7. Intelligence estimating on these topics does not involve merely the skillful application of academic disciplines. The specialized knowledge of academicians in regional or functional areas is an important asset, but most academic disciplines fail as estimative methodologies. Intelligence estimating is a form of predictive analysis. And like any type of forecasting, estimates are derived from analysis of the interaction of the many factors by which weapon performance, force capabilities or future decisions will be determined. Some intelligence estimates deal with SECRETS. They address questions, the answers to which are already known to

TOP SECRET

the Soviets, such as the characteristics and performance of existing weapons, the size and composition of deployed forces, and current objectives, strategy and operational plans. The notionalized methodology for these types of predictions is depicted here. The key elements of an analytical model which seeks, for example, to estimate the accuracy of a Soviet ICBM would include all the functions of the weapon contributing to errors in its accuracy.



25X1

TOP SECRET

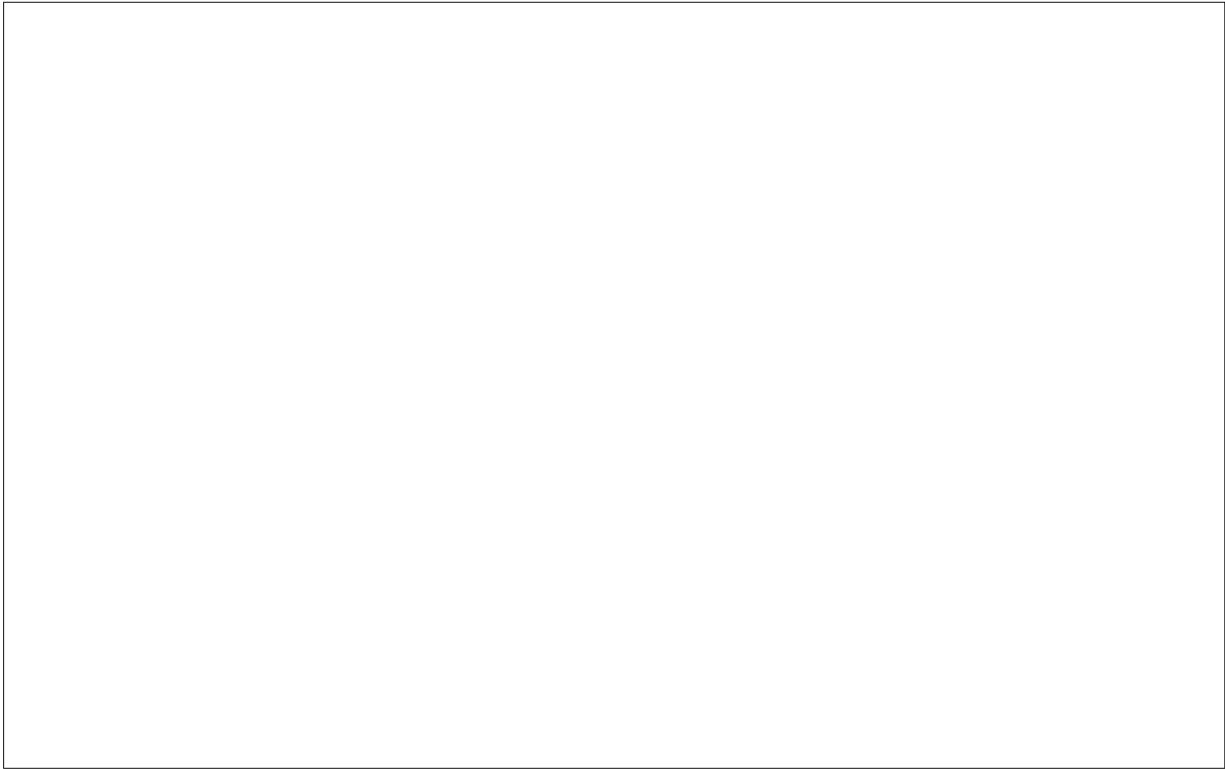
Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

8. Although, these analyses are difficult and many of them highly complex, with uncertain outcomes, they are far easier than those which address MYSTERIES--that is, those which seek to make predictions about capabilities not known to the Soviets or about developments and programs on which they have not yet decided--about Soviet intentions. Examples of mysteries are Soviet reactions to a given US program; the characteristics and performance of future weapons; the size and composition of future forces; and future objectives, strategy and operational plans, say three to ten years hence.

25X1

TOP SECRET



IV. The Track Record

10. Analytical methodologies always seem more orderly in concept than they are in practice. Misjudgment of one factor such as overall Soviet objectives can lead to a gross mistake in estimating overall force goals even in the presence of good evidence on current Soviet military programs.

Uncertainty about a single technical factor,



25X1

25X1



can make a big difference in estimated missile accuracy. But the reasons for errors in past Estimates have been various. The most important of which, in estimates of Soviet strategic nuclear capabilities over the years, have been--

25X1

- A lack of evidence on Soviet activities.
- Misjudgment of overall Soviet objectives, strategy and force priorities.

TOP SECRET

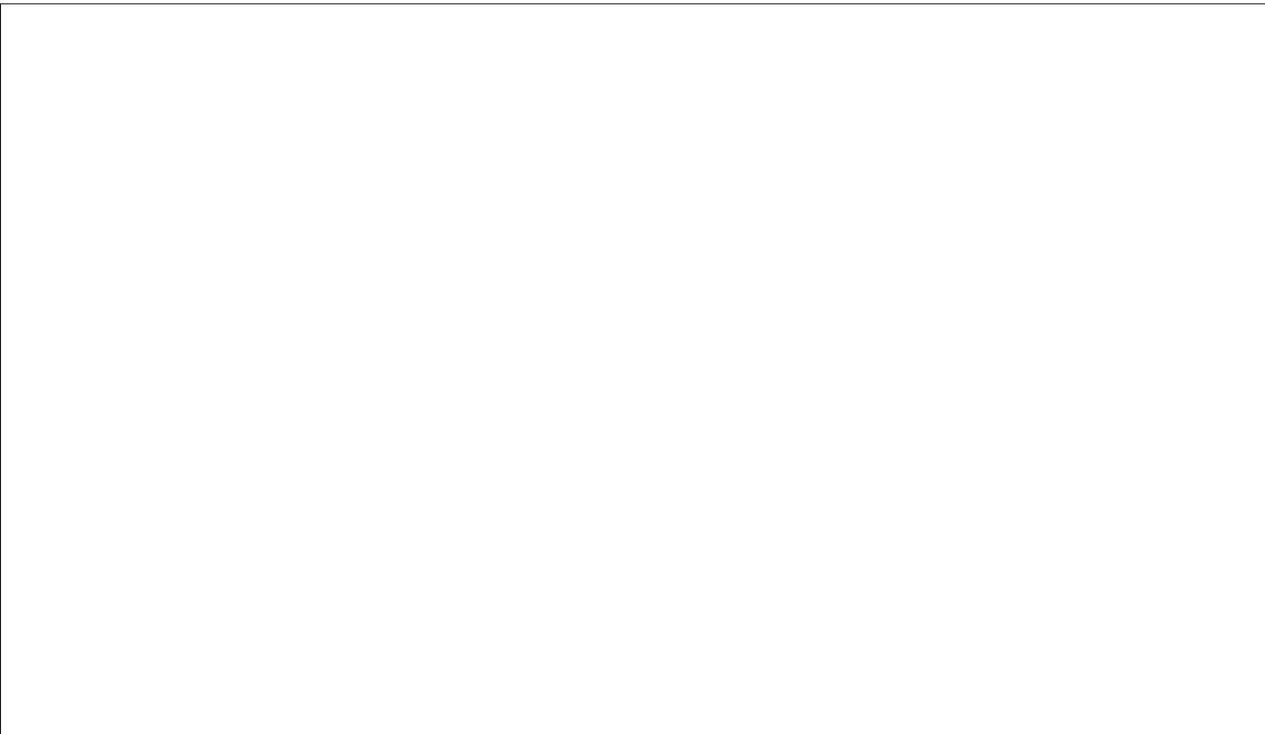
--Allied to these types of misjudgments is "mirror imaging," that is believing that the Soviets would share some US perceived tenets about nuclear war.

--Misjudgment about the pace of Soviet technological improvements in weapon systems.

--You will note that I did not include the influence of policy officials as one of the reasons for error. The charge that policy officials have dictated the substantive judgments in NIEs, made by some speakers at Air University schools, and in the media, is patently false.

--Of these reasons, the most significant from the standpoint of its impact on US security was the misjudgment about Soviet objectives and strategy, especially in the 1960s.

The NIE track record on important Soviet developments is summarized on this viewgraph.



25X1

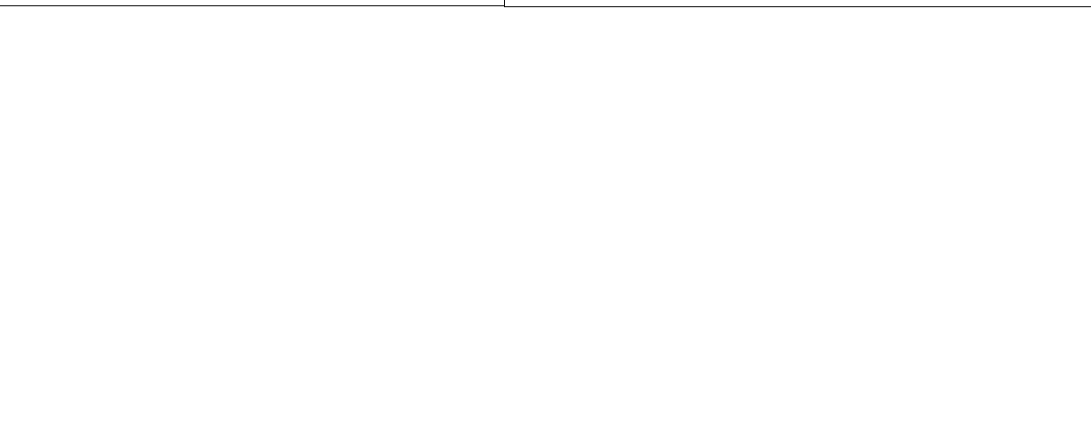
TOP SECRET

12. This summary of the track record covers the period through about the mid- to late 1970s. Noting the good news first, Intelligence has identified and forecast prior to deployment, virtually every new major Soviet military weapon system, and made accurate assessments of most air defenses, and of submarine defenses and space capabilities. The jury is still out on the accuracy of many of the estimates made in the late 1970s and beyond. However, as pointed out in Les Aspin's article which was in your reading material, since 1973 the SALT I and later SALT II agreements reduced the difficulties in making estimates on some aspects of Soviet strategic programs. Most of the overestimates and underestimates shown, were also mentioned in Les Aspin's article. Some of his explanations for the errors are correct; others are not.

--Les Aspin's article is better than most. But like most of those who have written in the public media about the track record, Les Aspin has a thesis. His concern is about the impact of not ratifying the SALT II Treaty

25X1

25X1



--Other commentators on the track record had other theses to convey: to show that NIEs consistently overestimated or that they consistently underestimated, to reorganize the CIA, or the national intelligence production element or to eliminate policy influences on NIEs. Some, like Bill Lee and the Presidents Foreign

TOP SECRET

Page Denied

Next 3 Page(s) In Document Denied

characteristic which is most worrisome is the fact that the underlying assumptions for the estimates have been drawn from a perception of the world and its principal threats commonly shared by the national leadership and those responsible for intelligence production. Estimates which are at odds with the basic perceptions of an Administration cannot get fair hearing. Were it faced with National Intelligence Estimates that consistently and substantially undermined the basic tenets and policies of an Administration, the leadership would either have to alter its policies or get a new DCI.

21. This tendency for intelligence officials and the leadership to have a common view of the world has been recognized as a problem by the present and previous DCIs. At least in part, this problem stimulated the A Team-B Team experiment in competitive analyses. It has probably prompted Mr. Casey's special emphasis on alternative views and encouragement of competing estimates. Mr. Casey also insists that all NIEs contain explicit statements of uncertainties and that all or most of them include a section specifically addressing the implications of the findings of an Estimate on the US. He wants the policymaking consumers not to miss the significance of estimated foreign developments--even if the implications do challenge the propriety of an existing policy. It is not enough to be right! The intelligence process is not ended until the significance of an estimate is appreciated by those responsible for US policies and defense planning decisions.

22. The functions of Air Force officers at the Washington, D.C. level are intimately involved with intelligence of all types--from overall Soviet strategic nuclear objectives and strategy to the signal parameters of Soviet radars. In your new position, I recommend you determine what you need to know from intelligence about the USSR or other foreign military forces. You have efficient and professional Air Force intelligence staffs to assist you in

TOP SECRET

acquiring intelligence from NIEs, from Defense Intelligence Agency issuances and from USAF departmental intelligence estimates. Whatever intelligence you require, as a consumer you are entitled and obligated to know more about intelligence than just a bottom line judgment or set of numbers served up to you. You should know whose estimate it is; its purpose and scope; analytically how it was derived; and its uncertainties. You should not believe that intelligence can provide firm answers for your planning problem; intelligence can often bound a problem and help you identify US alternatives. You must keep in mind that the defense planning and policymaking process is always one of choosing between competing risks to the United States' interests and security. Intelligence can help in making those choices.

TOP SECRET

Page Denied

Next 5 Page(s) In Document Denied