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1 June 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Chairman, National Intelligence Council

SUBJECT : Hal Ford's Paper "The Future of National  
Estimates"

1. Let me start by citing those of Hal's observations with which I agree:

- The NIOs themselves probably need to do more in the way of marketing estimates, particularly to customers below the principal level. In this regard, we may wish to consider expanding the distribution of the separate key judgments of estimates down to the Assistant Secretary level in order to increase readership. People at that level do not have any more time than the principals to read full estimates and if we could put out a short version such as that and somehow keep the classification on as many as possible below codeword I believe we would vastly expand our readership.
- I also agree with Hal on more regular evaluations of estimates. I'm not sure that the SRP is the way to do that but perhaps a combination of the SRP, ad hoc committees of the NIOs themselves, and occasionally bringing in outsiders under contract to do it for us.
- I'm also sympathetic to the notion of less emphasis on predicting specific events and more on predicting forces and trends at work.
- I also strongly endorse more estimative emphasis on giving policymakers handles (opportunities) and in being less shy about providing those to policymakers.
- I certainly have no problem with more contact by NIOs with people outside the Intelligence Community. We've encouraged this to good effect in the Directorate and the NIOs can do more.

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-- Like the poor, the problem of getting and using US blue data will always be with us. I hear a good deal of this even from DoD and perhaps we should explore how we can make better use of blue data in the estimates within the constraints of the agreements you have reached with Secretary Weinberger.

2. Now let me go beyond Hal's comments with a few notions of my own of where we still have a problem on the estimates:

- As stated above for the senior policymakers, they are way too long.
- All too often there is not enough time spent at the outset of an estimate thinking about the problem, identifying the real questions that need to be asked, and structuring the paper in the best possible way. Too little time is spent at the front end of the process.
- The NIC still is insufficiently collegial. There are too many estimates on which other NIOs can make a contribution where they do not have the opportunity. I am taking steps to correct this.
- The estimates still do not adequately put forward alternative scenarios. These do not emerge in the coordination process and must be incorporated into the draft at the outset by the NIO or the drafter.
- There still could be greater involvement of other agencies in the preparation of estimates, for example, Army, Navy, Air Force and perhaps others.
- There is still a problem in representation at the working level Community coordination meetings. These people are still hesitant to speak out and take alternative views, are too often eager to submerge differences, and are rarely in direct contact with their principal.
- I still do not believe that NIE 11-3/8 on Soviet Strategic Forces needs to be done in its entirety every year.

3. All that said, and before addressing specifics of Hal's paper, it seems to me important to see how far we have come in three years and to return to first principles and look at the purpose of the NIC. With respect to how far we have come, I refer you to the two memos I did for you in the spring of 1981 on "Fixing the NIC." I think you will see in rereading those we have covered a great deal of ground.

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4. As I conceive it, the purpose of the NIC is to produce on behalf of the DCI interagency intelligence assessments (NIEs, SNIEs, IIMs, IIAs, etc.), to cultivate relationships with policy level counterparts to ensure that estimates are relevant and timely or at least are focused on issues of importance to the policy community, and finally for each NIO to serve as the DCI's senior substantive representative in his or her given area. The premium in this conception of the NIC is placed on the initiative and calibre of the individual NIO. More recently, an additional positive trait has been the NIO's ability to make the rest of the Intelligence Community feel a part of the process -- to involve other agencies in that process so they believe their views have received a fair hearing.

5. On all of these counts, it seems to me that over the last 2 1/2 years or so, the NIC has made strides in achieving these objectives. Production of NIEs has increased substantially; all of the evidence we have suggests that the estimates are being read and listened to to a degree unparalleled within the past dozen or more years; the NIOs are getting out and cultivating relationships with policy people; the calibre of the NIOs themselves has improved significantly in the past 2 1/2 years (look at the lists in my 1981 memos); and because the DCI cares about the estimates and gives them his attention, the rest of the Community (both intelligence and policy) gives them greater attention as well. Relationships among the Community principals are perhaps closer than ever before.

6. Before giving consideration to the major changes Hal suggests, it is worth examining whether the NIC is performing up to expectations or at least headed in that direction and whether or not it is successfully doing its job.

7. This can perhaps be done by addressing Hal's points:

-- I do not believe that the coordinated national estimate has become an outdated art form. The estimates still are far too long in my view for the busy consumer but we have made an important step forward in the production of separate key judgments and their delivery with the President's Daily Brief. More estimates are read now by senior policy people than at any time in the last twenty years. In a world where policymaking is increasingly affected by pressures of complexity, time and disorder, estimates since 1981 on important issues stand out as timely, relevant and, where appropriate, have forced policymakers to recognize a view independent of and often different from their own. I need cite only the estimates over the last year or so on Lebanon, Iran/Iraq, Soviet Response to INF, the Soviet Gas Pipeline, El Salvador and others as examples of estimates that have played a key role in policy deliberations. They were timely and they were read. The unanimity of the Intelligence Community on some of

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these controversial issues forced the policy community to sit up and take notice. An outdated art form? The estimate today plays a more influential role than it has in many, many years.

- Hal says that the NIC can better serve the policymaker by doing more national estimating that takes the form of less formal memos, think pieces, face to face encounters, new methods of communicating estimative judgments and so on. Hal forgets that just because the NIC produces something does not make it national intelligence -- when the NIC produces something it represents just the views of a handful of individuals many of whom may or may not be the best people in their field either in or out of government. What makes national intelligence is the involvement of a number of elements of the Intelligence Community. While that is an awkward and irritating and sometimes cumbersome process, it is what "National" intelligence is all about. Having a group of independent people with no long term responsibilities firing off think pieces and individual assessments (however useful these may be at times) is a sorry representation of what either an Office of National Estimates or National Intelligence Council should do for a living.
- I disagree that advocacy will always have the advantage of being simpler and more seductive as opposed to dispassionate estimates. A well done estimate will almost always be more persuasive and carry more weight than the role of the single advocate. Again, that is why the concept of "National" intelligence is so important. It represents not the views of a single individual nor even a single agency but the considered views of the whole professional intelligence corps of the United States. And while some of those estimates are not congenial to the policymakers or are not received with open arms, I submit there continues to be a ready market for them. The number of requests we get from policy people for estimates attests to this.
- The creation of Richard Beale's operation in the White House and other operation centers is essentially irrelevant to the NIC. They are tied to current and crisis related intelligence, an area in which the NIC essentially is not and should not be deeply involved. The NIC cannot keep itself current enough to support crisis management.
- I disagree that there will be more disorder in tomorrow's world and tomorrow's policymaking and that this is as inexorable process as Hal states. I have worked at the most senior levels of the US government now for more than ten years and if anything the process

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has become somewhat more rational and more orderly than before. I might point out that during the Nixon, Ford and Carter Administrations estimates played almost no role whatsoever in the policy process. Indeed, I believe I can attest that not more than a half dozen estimates made it to the President during the entire Carter Administration. On the other hand, there is no quarrel that tomorrow's estimates will have to be damn good in quality and utility.

- To the degree that the tie between estimates and policymaking is "somewhat hit and miss with no systematic match up," the NIO has failed in his job. At the same time, I would contend that that is an overly pessimistic appraisal of our performance over the past two years: in fact, on the issues mentioned above and a number of others, the estimates have been timely, on the mark and directly relevant to key policy issues. That is one reason why we have done so many Memorandum for Holders and Special National Estimates, not to mention vulnerability studies and other national intelligence papers to serve the policymaker.
- I disagree that most principals at NFIB are essentially managers and that this fact will make the outcome of NFIB meetings a result driven by the DCI or the view of assertive, creative personalities rather than collective wisdom. Hal has sat in on few of the NFIB meetings in the last two years. I do not believe there has been in fifteen years a more substantive and creative group of NFIB principals. Ask the drafters of the estimates and the NIOs who have often had to go back and revise their estimates to reflect independent views and wisdom of the principals.
- I disagree that the most valuable inputs made by senior estimative officers over the years have been sharp ad hoc or inhouse studies breaking new ground, pointing out new developing world threats or opportunities, questioning conventional wisdom, etc. The variety of forms we now use -- NIEs, SNIEs, IIMs, IIAs, interagency intelligence assessments, vulnerability studies, dual-agency studies under NIO auspices, and others have made national intelligence a more responsive and well coordinated tool than it has been perhaps at any time in the past. We have broken new ground with the biological warfare/genetic engineering estimate, we have certainly questioned conventional wisdom on Lebanon and a number of other issues, we certainly have examined the consequence of contingent developments, we have looked at vulnerabilities and a variety of other approaches. I think that this present range of capabilities have made a unique contribution. I can't disagree with the dangers of overcoordination, but generally speaking I believe we have been responsive.

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- Where the initial concept of the paper is only so-so, I hold the NIO responsible, not the drafter.
  
- There is no guarantee that even with an expanded AG that the drafters will be top rate. There is a fairly significant failure rate in the AG itself. In my view, it is an important component of the effort to make the Community feel a part of the process, to have the agencies participate in the drafting of the estimate. With regard to drafters from the Directorate of Intelligence, I find it difficult to take NIO complaints of drafters seriously given the number of commendation letters from NIOs I see that speak so highly of the work performed by the DDI drafter. I think that the problem associated with "farming out" drafts to various agencies is balanced by the virtues of having the estimates drafted by people who are genuinely up to date substantive experts on the subject. A draft gone seriously wrong in my view is a draft that an NIO ignored too long.
  
- 8. Let me now turn to the two main thrusts of Hal's paper.
  
- The role of the AG: In 1981, I defended maintaining a relatively small AG as a place where the Community could send promising young officers and let them learn the skills of estimates drafting, how to do macroanalysis, and to learn at the elbow of some of the most senior substantive experts in the government in their particular area. I agree with Hal that estimates writing is a peculiar art form and that the second estimate anyone writes is always easier and usually better than the first. I believe the AG should spend its time drafting estimates and not doing individual think pieces. At the same time, as I mentioned above, it would be substantive suicide to isolate estimate writing from the work and workers in the rest of the Intelligence Community. It may be more difficult this way, it may impose a somewhat greater burden on the NIO, he might not have full control and a lot of other things, but the plusses of Community involvement and participation in the estimate drafting process far outweigh the convenience of the NIO in this instance. And, I would submit, that a review of the drafts over the past two years would support the view that by the end of the process the quality of the estimates is fairly even and at a high level. It is a process that the good NIOs like Gershwin, Gries and Fuller have used successfully and without great additional pain. It sounds like Hal simply wants to reestablish the old ONE and I believe that is marching to the past.

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-- Chairman, NIC: This is an awkward subject for me to address and it is basically your and John's call to make whether you continue the double-hatting. There is no doubt that carrying both jobs as presently structured is a burden. On the other hand, I sense that by and large you and John are essentially content with the way things are going. The NIC is continuing to turn out an ever larger number of Community assessments of various kinds and yet at the same time is essentially causing you no bureaucratic headaches. Perhaps without making an out and out recommendation of my own I can make several observations:

- The key to the quality of the estimates in my view is not a big thinker or a famous one as Chairman, NIC but rather an activist and interested DCI, exceptionally high-quality NIOs, involvement of the NFIB principals in the substance of the issues and a NIC Chairman who makes things run smoothly, who works day in and day out to maintain and improve quality, and who has a good working relationship with the other NFIB principals.
- It seems to me that the record of the last three years demonstrates that the NIC has in fact worked very well and made enormous strides in improving the estimates process. I believe most of this progress is due to the efforts of you, John and I, more recently Herb, the appointment of better NIOs, and the NFIB.
- I have come to believe (whether or not I stay in the job) that a prominent person has little impact in attracting high-quality staff to the NIC; a potential NIO is going to come to the organization principally based on his or her perception of access to you and role in the intelligence process -- not because of the high prestige Chairman, NIC. Similarly, the quality of the estimates generally speaking will depend more on the originality and creativity of the NIO and those on the outside the NIO works with as well as direct access to senior policymakers and knowledge of the issues and agenda.

9. With regard to continuing the double-hatted arrangement for me, there are pros and cons. The disadvantages include the wearing effect on me personally of doing both (which is tolerable), the degree to which holding both jobs takes some time from each that might be put to good use, the perception of a link between the two organizations by virtue of the double-hatting, and the degree to which I do not have time to get around the country talking to conferences and academics and so forth. On the "pro" side, the present arrangement brings considerable order to the potentially disruptive and factious relationship between

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CIA, the collectors and the NIOs. There is no longer quarreling over who attends meetings, feedback from the meetings, or the role the people should play in supporting you. Nor do we have NIOs independently getting involved with collectors and screwing up the interagency priorities process. There is also someone who as a career intelligence officer can deal with the NIOs on security and bureaucratic problems where they have a tendency to get into trouble. The other pro is that continuing the present arrangement may be the easiest route for everyone.

10. In sum, I disagree with Hal's recommendations for structural change in the NIC but endorse and applaud many of his suggestions for specific improvements that can be made. ONE failed because it became isolated from the analytic process and the estimates became decreasingly imaginative, provocative, timely and relevant. An estimator as in ONE without regular policy contacts in a concrete environment loses sight of the policy agenda and becomes irrelevant. An NIO who does nothing but deal with the policymaker and write think pieces while allowing a staff to do estimates makes for the worst of both worlds. The NIOs must remain engaged in the production of estimates and as inconvenient as it is the estimates process must involve the entire Intelligence Community from terms of reference to drafting to final approval. Separating the NIC from the Community by giving it the staff to do most estimates drafts itself, I think is extremely dangerous. As for whether to go forward with the original plan to choose a new Chairman of the NIC after the election, it is basically your call. I am willing to continue if you wish; I also will step aside quite willingly if you want to go ahead and appoint someone else after the election.

  
Robert M. Gates

Attachments:  
As Stated

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14 May 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Robert M. Gates

SUBJECT : Fixing the National Intelligence Council

1. Your apparatus for producing national intelligence estimates, other interagency papers and representing you in interagency forums is presently crippled. It is handicapped not only by a number of vacancies in NIO positions but also by a Chairman who has run out of ideas, energy, creativity and who does not manage. It also is handicapped by the very uneven quality of the drafting staff, called the Analytic Group, and by a clumsy, time consuming estimates process that almost assures mush.

The Chairman

2. Dick Lehman is a valuable resource for you, a man well experienced in the ways of Washington and intelligence and whose judgment and wisdom continue to be an important resource. At the same time, Dick simply has run out of steam. He does not manage the NIC at all except in a very superficial administrative sense. As a result, the NIC very much resembles an academic department at a fairly sleepy university. There is little sense of vigor, energy, urgency or purpose. There is little creative vitality. Some of the best NIOs--e.g. Holdridge, Ames--have left or are leaving.

3. You need to find a new Chairman. Whoever this person is, in my view he should not have NIO responsibilities (as Dick does for Warning) but should be solely responsible for running the NIC. His responsibilities should include the following:

- On his own, through you and via the NIOs, he should be current on policy issues of interest and concern to the Administration not only for today but also with respect to the future. Through his own aggressive contacts with analysts, academics and the private sector, he should be alerting you and through you the policymakers, his NIOs and his drafters about issues over the horizon that must be given attention. In short, the Chairman should be all over the map--in Washington, in the U.S. and abroad--in picking people's brains so that he can alert you and NFAC about problems that we should be addressing. He ought to be an intellectual sparkplug for the Community.

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- The Chairman not only should be the driving force in collaboration with you for identifying issues to be addressed in estimates and other interagency work, but also must be the whip hand to ensure that such papers are prepared in a timely manner. Discipline must be instilled in the NIC, in the Community and among the NIOs that estimates simply cannot be allowed to string out over months. Most estimates are relevant to issues and problems that face the Administration now or in the near future. We must give attention to the faster preparation of both NIEs and SNIEs. The Chairman must assume this responsibility.
- The Chairman also must be the first and most important level of quality control. In my view, it is unacceptable to have a situation in which your uncertainty about quality is so great that you believe you must review drafts even before they are circulated at the working level in the Community. The Chairman must take a critical view of papers being issued to ensure that they are not only responsive to a specific request or need but also that they address larger questions that may flow out of a specific request and that are important to policymakers. Beyond this, a Chairman ought to enforce standards about how evidence is treated as well as the quality of the writing and reasoning. Finally, it is up to the Chairman to take the lead in bringing alternative views into drafts and educating the Community that "wordsmithing" is a lazy and cowardly way to avoid the clear expression of dissenting views and that this can no longer be accepted.
- Additionally, the Chairman must ensure consistently high standards of performance by the NIOs and by their assistants. The old "live-and-let-live" attitude of NFAC toward those doing only satisfactory work cannot be tolerated in a small and important organization such as the NIC. Not everyone can write estimates well or adequately represent you in interagency forums. People who cannot do these things well should be returned to their component, if appropriate without prejudice to their careers. At the same time, the quality of the Analytic Group must be upgraded. There are a handful of absolutely first-rate people [redacted] who are being worked to death because of the high calibre of their work. Those who are not in this league should be returned from whence they came and others given an opportunity. It is in this Group, more than in any other single place in the Community, that the Director has the opportunity to develop a cadre of people with the broad perspective to write the kind of geostrategic/geopolitical analysis that is so lacking. Selection for this Group should be a high honor and should be appropriately rewarded when people are successful. It should be regarded among analysts as the plum job in CIA and in the Intelligence Community. It is the Chairman of the NIC, with your help, who must make this happen. 25X1
- Finally, of course, the Chairman must be responsible for the administrative functioning of the NIC.

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4. John McMahon and John Bross both feel very strongly that the NIC should continue to reside in CIA and not be subordinated to the Intelligence Community organization. They cite the 1947 law to the effect that CIA is responsible for preparing "national" intelligence; that any effort simply to change the plumbing chart will not make a dent in the Community conviction that the NIC belongs to you and that you are CIA; and that putting the NIC in the IC Staff would be an administrative nightmare. There is validity to these arguments. At the same time, they do not help answer whether the NIC should be directly subordinate to you or to the Director of NFAC.

-- The arguments in favor of subordinating the unit directly to you include increasing the independence of the NIC and eliminating the potential conflict of interest that will face the Director of NFAC whenever his NIOs and his line offices disagree on the substance of an estimate. Whenever he sides with the line offices, he will limit your flexibility and the independence of the estimating operation. The head of the NIOs under DCIs Colby and Bush reported directly to them. I was an Assistant NIO for a time under these arrangements and they seemed to work satisfactorily. The NIOs continued to depend on NFAC for most of their staff support, as they do now, and it generally was given willingly. After all, both NFAC and the NIC belong to the DCI, which ensures that any disputes can be resolved internally.

-- The arguments in favor of subordinating the unit to the Director of NFAC include recognition that the NIOs do depend heavily upon NFAC resources and therefore are more likely to get them if their own component head (i.e. D/NFAC) can order the allocation of such resources. Additionally, it might be noted that the old Office of National Estimates was subordinated administratively to the DDI, even though at times the head of the Office reported directly to the DCI. Further, John would argue that the conflict of interest problem is not a serious one and that where there was a serious disagreement between the NIOs and NFAC it is always possible for NFAC simply to take a footnote. The CIA member of the NFIB can then decide whether he wishes to vote NFAC's stock or NIO's stock on a particular estimate. Further, there is something to be said for the administrative simplicity of having the NIC inside NFAC. Adding the NIC to the DCI area would increase that complement by another 50 or 60 people, although that is basically a bookkeeping problem. Moreover, having the Chairman of the NIC report directly to you would increase your span of control (although the head of the NIC has direct access to you now even though he technically reports to D/NFAC). Last but not least, John is very concerned about the establishment of an independent production arm of the DCI apart from NFAC. He is worried that existence of two competitive centers will produce duplication of effort and generally complicate the production of high quality intelligence. (I have noted to him, however, that one produces interagency intelligence and the other produces CIA intelligence--two very different products which usually are not duplicative.)

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5. All things considered, and it is a close call, I am inclined to favor reestablishing the NIC as an independent entity under the DCI. I share John's views that placing the NIC even administratively under the Intelligence Community Staff would be very complicated, would raise questions about whether the Chairman reports through or to the Director of that Staff, and would not persuade anyone in the Community that the NIC was other than in your back pocket. Furthermore, if you bring in a high-powered outsider as Chairman of the NIC he will assume his mandate comes from you and will not hesitate to by-pass John, which could cause considerable tension; this will probably be true also of outsiders you hire as NIOs. The potential for conflict would be great. Additionally, leaving the NIC under NFAC--especially with the departure of Lehman--would make the NIC resemble simply another production office of NFAC, an inappropriate derogation of its role and responsibility. Also, I am persuaded that even the appearance of a conflict of interest on the part of D/NFAC between the NIC and the line offices is unhealthy and contributes to the sense that the views of NFAC predominate in interagency intelligence production.

#### Improving Estimating

6. Once you have an intellectually creative and energetic new Chairman, have filled the NIO slots with great minds and bureaucratic wunderkinds, have developed a cadre of highly skilled hired pens, and have decided where to put the NIC organizationally, the problem of improving the estimates still will be unfinished. Times without number the coordination process in the Community itself has turned a silk purse into a sow's ear. It is a process in which middle-level, professional meeting-goers (often unaware of the positions of their principals) prefer to spend day-long meetings wordsmithing drafts to tone down forthright judgments in ways that produce bureaucratic oatmeal generally known as the "lowest common denominator." It is time for a change in the way estimates are produced in the Community. A process is needed that will move estimates quickly and permit the introduction of new information, the correction of factual errors, and above all, the identification of alternative views in clear terms and by agency.

- Representation at the working level Community coordination meetings needs to be upgraded. In interdepartmental forums, NIOs participate at the assistant secretary level. Yet, when they chair an NFIB representatives meeting they are confronted with GS-13s to 15s who are hesitant to speak for their agencies in any forthright manner. This contributes enormously to the tendency to obfuscate differences rather than clarify them. Few of these people want to take a stand and risk having their principal undercut them. Also, I believe the practice of each agency sending the same representative to meetings on all estimates is counter-productive. Middle-level representation (with professional meeting-goers) at these meetings is a shirking of an important responsibility by more senior officials. For example, it is ridiculous that CIA should be represented by a branch chief (GS-14 or 15) at such meetings. At minimum, the office chief or his deputy from the office most involved with the subject (e.g. OSR for the military estimates; OPA for political estimates; etc.) should attend. They would bring more wisdom, greater

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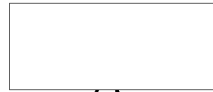
- perspective and more experience to the coordinating table. It would ensure that drafts are reviewed before the meetings at a more senior level than analysts and branch chiefs. And it surely would end these absurd, days-long coordination meetings. I think the kind of upgrading of NFAC's representation described above should apply to other agencies and that this would accelerate the coordination process and improve the quality of what comes out of that process.
- Another change in the process I recommend is to make estimates shorter. In recent years, few senior policymakers even have read NIEs. We can perhaps change that unhappy reality not only by improving quality but by making these papers more to the point and physically less staggering to see hit one's desk. No one at a senior level has time to read a 25-50 page printed document. Why not strive for 5-10 pages or thereabouts--except on the big military estimates. Longer papers encourage the inclusion of marginal material, beating around the bush, and flaccid logic. Short estimates also would diminish the present tendency to haggle endlessly over key judgments because everyone knows that is the only part of a paper anyone will read. We can even occasionally do away with key judgments if we make estimates brief, and thereby encourage senior people to read our entire case.
  - We should do fewer standard "country" estimates and focus more on SNIEs that are highly responsive to specific policy issues. These should be done generally with a two-week deadline and we should not always wait to be asked. (There has been some progress in this area, but more is needed.)
  - We need to get more facts and hard evidence into summaries and key judgments. Judgmental or "opinion" prose is never as persuasive as a hard fact or two. The key judgments/summaries too often sound like political science tutorials.
  - Something must be done about the two big military estimates. The draft of the analytical volume of NIE 11-14 (Warsaw Pact Forces) that came to you a month ago was 450 pages long. That's ridiculous. NIE 11-3/8 (Soviet Strategic Forces) takes four months to write and four to six months to coordinate. Both devour resources here and in other agencies. Do they really need to be done every year as 11-3/8 is? The claim that it is necessary to the DoD budget process is dubious--last year's NIE wasn't out until four months after the budget was submitted. I know Dave Brandwein has been looking into alternatives, but I do not believe his inquiry goes far enough.
  - Finally, we need to make greater use of the "NIC Memorandum." The "Soviet Policy in Africa" paper you liked was a NIC Memorandum--which meant we could write a coherent paper, offer it to others for corrections and comment, but were able to avoid the watering

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down so endemic to formal coordination. This vehicle is well suited for the kind of global view, geostrategic perspective we need and that is so hard to coordinate formally. It would be a good vehicle for highly speculative papers such as the one you have asked for on the implications of Poland absent a Soviet invasion. It also would be a good way to get before people our thoughts on possibly highly controversial "over-the-horizon" issues. In short, if you have a stable of very talented NIOs and analyst-drafters, their creativity and experience should be exploited fully--and beyond the confines of formal estimates.

7. The National Intelligence Council is a potentially valuable, yet largely untapped intelligence resource. Now that you have sorted out the DDO, I believe you should turn to revitalizing the NIC. The above suggestions, in my view, offer a start toward that objective.



Robert M. Gates

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29 May 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Robert M. Gates

SUBJECT : Revitalizing the NIC (Part 2)

1. You have asked me for further thoughts on how to revitalize the National Intelligence Council. It seems to me that this falls into two categories, people and process. First, the people.

NIC Personnel

2. You have the following people already on board:

- NIO/Africa: Grey Cowan. Grey is one of the better NIOs. He is here from Columbia University and has been an NIO for about two years. He travels widely in Africa, has a lot of contacts, knows most of the people in the academic community and in Washington dealing with African affairs. He has good common sense, is realistic and an important asset, in my view.
- NIO/Near East: Bob Ames. As you know, Ames is leaving later in the year, perhaps as early as the end of summer. He will be replaced by Charlie Waterman.
- NIO/Latin America: Jack Davis. Davis is a CIA careerist. You have some exposure to him as a result of the Cuban Estimate. I need not say more. You have mentioned Kemp and Sternfield as possible replacements.
- NIO/General Purpose Forces: Major General Ennis Whitehead. This position has traditionally been filled by a two-star military officer. Ennis seems competent in the position, although the nature of the large projects that this NIO traditionally has undertaken significantly limits his flexibility.
- NIO/Strategic Programs: David Brandwein. Brandwein is leaving as of 29 May.

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- NIO at Large. Hans Heymann. (Now acting as NIO for USSR/EE.) I think you have known Hans for some time. Hans is hard to get to the point and is generally discursive. He sounds erudite but seems to me a little fuzzy-headed. I have not seen Hans do a crisp piece of work in the seven or eight years I have known him in his present capacity.
- NIO at Large. Davis Bobrow has been recommended for employment, pending your approval.

3. The quality of the Assistant NIOs is mixed, with some--like [redacted] 25X1 being very good and several of the others being very average. In terms of upgrading the Assistants, it seems to me that this is primarily a responsibility of the individual NIOs, although they may need their courage bucked-up where there is an Assistant that is really not meeting the grade and has been permitted to linger too long.

4. With respect to NIO vacancies:

- NIO/Western Europe: My understanding is that you still are hoping to obtain the services of the fellow from the law firm who has spent a good deal of time in Europe.
- NIO/USSR-EE: [redacted] memo indicates that they are in the process of selecting and that it has been narrowed to two or three people. This comes as a surprise to me. If [redacted] is interested, he is obviously a possibility. I believe this NIO should come from outside the government. I can't help but wonder whether we might not obtain the services for a year or two of someone like [redacted] 25X1  
[redacted] Other alternatives that would be worth investigating would include Fritz Ermarth, possibly Sy Weiss, or maybe even Bill Stearman on the present NSC Staff--who has been an old Soviet hand around the government for a number of years. 25X1
- NIO/East Asia: [redacted] apparently is coming to see you next week. Should she not prove suitable, this is one place we might look to State for a detailee. I had in mind someone like Mike Armacost, but the paper this morning says he has been chosen Ambassador to Indonesia. There must be other good people at State though. 25X1
- NIO/Strategic Programs: Again, the [redacted] indicates the choice has been narrowed to two or three people. This also is news to me. I have just been informed of a potentially very satisfactory candidate who would seem to meet a lot of desirable criteria--Charles Henkin of the Department of State. Henkin is in the Bureau of Political/Military Affairs at State and is being edged out in a power play in which Chris Lehman (Secretary of the Navy's brother) is being given Henkin's job to cement political relations between Rick Burt, Lehman and the latter's 25X1



conservative sponsors. Henkin has a PhD in nuclear physics and has worked on SALT and SALT-related problems for nearly ten years. This apparently included a stint at the Department of Defense. I am told that he would come with the strong recommendation of Rick Burt, Paul Nitze and, in our own Agency, [redacted] and Evan Hineman. He is possibly being considered as Deputy Director of Program Analysis and Evaluation at the Pentagon. He has considerable knowledge of the blue-side data and also of the policy issues relating to strategic programs. He is already a supergrade in the SES, is 38, and is regarded as imaginative, thoughtful and sensible. We would need to move fairly quickly on him however.

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5. This leaves two NIO-at-Large positions of the present complement which could be filled by the likes of [redacted] or other senior people whom we might persuade to come in on a regular rotating basis for a one-year assignment to take on special projects for us, to troubleshoot, or generally serve as wise men who could consult on a broad range of estimates and serve as important resources. You could bring in two this year, replace them with two others in another year, and so on. There are a number of outstanding people in and out of government who might, it seems to me, be persuaded to come here and play this kind of role if they knew it was only for one year. Additionally, you have indicated an interest in hiring an NIO for Special Projects [redacted] and another for Science and Technology. The DDCI also has mentioned his interest in possibly appointing an NIO to run certain special collection projects, a position Barry Kelly held several years ago.

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6. On the present cast of NIOs, the two that I would recommend looking at closely with a view to easing them out in the next six months or so would be Jack Davis and Hans Heymann. With Hans gone you could then look to bring in an NIO for Economics, an area that is now not being covered by the NIC.

### Process

7. All concerned must recognize that revitalizing the NIC is intimately related to revitalizing estimates and the estimating process. The two go hand in hand. In addition to filling the vacant slots for NIOs, adding two or three NIO positions to cover territory not now receiving attention, and doing some weeding of Assistant NIOs and the Analytic Group, there are some steps that can be taken to revitalize the NIC and the estimates process:

-- The National Intelligence Council exists in name only. I believe that if you assemble 12-15 very talented people, the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts. All the NIOs should review all estimate drafts and meet together to discuss the substance before an estimate draft is sent out to the Community. For example, a [redacted] could offer useful insights on a Cuba estimate; a [redacted] on all estimates; an Ermarth on military as well as Soviet estimates; and so forth. The NIC is now simply 12 individuals, who do not have any collegial role or interrelationship. Greater use of them as a Council-- including occasional sessions with you and the DDCI either

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brainstorming or exploring new territory--would serve greatly to revitalize the NIC. Working together is bound to have a synergistic effect and bring greater insight to estimates. I think you both also would have greater confidence knowing that the NIC as a body--with its range of talents and perspectives--stood behind a draft.

- Separating the NIC from NFAC will be essential.
- Changing the estimates process also will be important, including upgrading the level of people who represent the NFIB principals at the working group meetings; closer collaboration between these people and their principals; doing more to obtain alternative views; and altering the coordinating process to put the emphasis on divergent views rather than wordsmithing will all help revitalize the process and through it the NIC itself.
- When the NIC is separated from NFAC, it will be important for the NIOs to remain your representatives in policy meetings. By the same token, it will be essential for the NIC to rely on staff support of the DDO and NFAC and in exchange to keep the two directorates well informed of what is going on. DDO would still represent you when covert action was the primary topic.
- It is essential that the NIC continue to provide staff support to you and the DDCI for NSC meetings and SIGs on substantive issues.
- Steps should be taken to upgrade the NIC and help build the pride of its members in it. While such pride should grow primarily out of performance, some bureaucratically important things need to be done as well to help bring the NIC out of the backwater. Lehman sits in a tiny office that conveys no sense of the importance of the NIC (or its Chairman) as having the leading role in preparing the premier work of the Community--a National Intelligence Estimate--or of serving as your principal substantive advisers. So, little things that have large bureaucratic impact need to be done: (1) an office for the Chairman that befits his role; (2) moving all NIOs to the 7th floor and present NIO assistants and NIC Staff now on the 7th floor to NIC space on the 5th floor (no more space is needed--just reshuffling what they have); (3) a larger role in substantive briefings on the Hill; (4) regular monthly meetings with you; and so on.

8. In sum, I think the key to revitalizing the NIC lies in both people and process. The whole estimates business has become very routine and the people involved in it very bureaucratic, not only in the NIC but in other agencies. Through the recruitment of special and very vigorous people the NIC must be seen

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to be a special place to serve. The NFIB must itself recognize the Council--the collective entity--as a source of realistic wisdom and insight. This, of course, will have to be earned. At the same time, the process must be elevated to convey that NFIB principals regard the estimates business--the substantive essence of national intelligence--as very high priority for them. This in turn will help revitalize the NIC.

9. A final thought. At the risk of repeating what you already must know, the task of revitalizing and rebuilding the NIC is not a short-term one, any more than is the improving of analysis in NFAC. The NIC needs sustained support from the DCI and DDCI and sustained direct leadership for several years in order to return to the competence and reputation for quality that the Office of National Estimates had many years ago under William Langer and the early years of Sherman Kent. Neither you nor anyone else should be led to expect immediate results, although you can justifiably expect the quality of individual estimates coming to you to begin to improve right away.

Robert M. Gates

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

National Intelligence Council

NIC 02989-84  
18 May 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence  
Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: Hal Ford  
National Intelligence Officer At Large

SUBJECT: The Future of National Estimates

1. As a practitioner, observer, and critic of the national estimates business since 1951, in and out of CIA, I believe strongly that certain fairly substantial additional changes have become necessary in this business if national estimating is to make the impact it deserves in tomorrow's world. This memo examines problems which will increasingly beset the estimate-policymaker relationship, and offers certain recommendations to meet that more troubled future environment.

2. My chief observations/recommendations, as spelled out in the body of this memo, are in brief:

- That in some respects the coordinated national estimate has become an outdated artform in the heavy competition for consumers' attention -- in a world and a policymaking milieu increasingly affected by pressures of complexity, time, and disorder.
- That certain types of coordinated national estimates remain highly necessary and should be produced, but that the NIOs, the A/NIOs, and the NIC's Analytic Group (AG) can better serve the interests of policymakers by continuing to increase that proportion of national estimating which takes the form of less formal memos, think-pieces, face-to-face encounters, new methods of communicating estimative judgments, and so on.
- That the key to the quality of written estimates is -- and will continue to be -- the quality of the drafters; that the practice of

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borrowing drafters on an ad hoc basis from other offices has proved a mixed blessing; that the best system yet devised for producing the bulk of estimates is a cadre of elite, experienced estimates officers concentrated in the estimates office staff (NIC, at present); and that to these ends something like the present AG should be substantially upgraded in size, stature, and recruitment base.

- With no disrespect to Bob Gates' heroic dual performance, that the production and impact of estimates can be best maximized where the chief estimates officer (C/NIC, or however titled) holds that position as a full-time job, and is himself/herself a figure of national reputation who is a hard-headed thinker/doer.
- That many additional changes -- spelled out below -- are also needed to improve the utility of future national estimating. These encompass matters of purpose, format, procedure, media, and marketing.

3. An increasingly difficult future market for national estimates:

- The always difficult market for estimates is going to get worse. The producers of estimates, up and down the chain of command, must recognize more clearly that their efforts will face heavy competition indeed for the time and attention of senior policymaking consumers. These key targets of ours are the very officers who have the least time and energy to absorb our wisdom. They carry their own NIEs around in their heads. They often feel that they do not need us, especially in fields where general knowledge is plentiful, but unique augmenting intelligence is thin.
- There is going to be no automatic market of expectant consumers, just waiting for our estimative insights before they proceed to policy decision. Dispassionate estimates are going to be up against advocacy, with the latter having the advantage of always being simpler and more seductive. And in particular, our estimates will not encounter a ready market on those occasions where their portraits of the world are not congenial with policymakers' own images or commitments.
- The expanding hazards to estimates' impact will be both foreign and home-grown. Tomorrow's world will bring not only the growing weight of the Soviet global challenge, but increasingly more volatile threats to US interests from instabilities in the Third World and elsewhere. Such rising disorder will create a more difficult policymaking milieu. The demands of meeting pressing crises has always produced what past evaluations have correctly termed a "stranglehold" by current intelligence, to the detriment

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of sufficient consumer or producer attention to longer-term -- and often more serious -- problems. This situation will intensify as policymakers are beset by a rise in the number, complexity, insistence, and time-squeeze of world problems.

*Wiel. to me*  
 -- Accompanying this trend will be certain new hazards to estimates arising from improved White House and other operations centers such as that of Richard Beal's. These efforts will be good/bad: they will tie intelligence to policy on a more immediate basis, but at the same time may damage decision making by surrounding senior policy officers with facts and judgments which in some instances are more high-impact than accurate or meaningful.

*disagree* →  
 -- For many reasons, hence, there will be more disorder in tomorrow's world and tomorrow's policymaking -- and, consequently, a greater gap between the very rational purposed theory of national estimating on the one hand, and the more haphazard practice of policymaking on the other. This means that tomorrow's national estimating will have to be damn good in quality and utility, on and beyond recent improvements, if it is to justify the time, talent, energy, and taxpayers' money spent on its preparation.

4. The case for fewer interagency national estimates and more national estimating:

-- The case still exists -- more than three decades since the creation of the NIE art form -- for the traditional purposes of certain national estimates. Those purposes, as expressed by then DCI Bedell Smith,\* sought in the national estimates an authoritative interpretation and appraisal that would serve as a firm guide to policymakers and planners, a disinterestedness above question, the collective judgment of the highest officials in the various intelligence agencies -- hence commanding respect throughout the government as the best available and most authoritative body of estimative judgments. These considerations still apply for many of the basic studies, such as the NIE 11-3/8 series, where an NIE serves as an agreed reference point for key planning; and for evaluations of certain other crisis or troubling situations of pressing importance to the United States where authoritative, dispassionate basic assessments may be in short supply.

*I don't believe it*  
 -- But in the case of many of other types of national estimates, the institutions of orderly policymaking for which estimates were designed originally to serve have long since disappeared. Apart largely from long-range military planning, policymaking takes place much more on the run. The best step the estimates business has taken to meet this changed circumstance is the creation and

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\*IAC-M-1, 30 October 1950.

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*designer* | strengthening of the NIO system. Well and good: through various means the NIOs have moved out smartly into this policymaking scene. But the ties of estimates and policymaking are still somewhat hit-and-miss, with no systematic match-up, and with the time and talent of senior NIC officers overly drained off in often feckless coordination.

-- There continues to be a sizable gap between the theory and the practice of the coordination process. At the representatives' level there is often a lack of individual candlepower, genuine expertise, and actual authority to represent the Principal. With some exceptions, representatives tend to defend prior established positions, or just insure that nothing too objectionable gets in the text, or just pass the buck along to the Principals. There is strong reluctance at many representatives' meetings to take clear dissents, or to undertake new kinds of inquiry or lines of march, or to venture out beyond demonstrated intelligence at hand, or to judge the possible consequences of possible future developments. These drawbacks are reduced, the better and stronger the texts, and the stronger and better the NIO Chairman. Often the coordination process improves an estimate's precision and introduces new subtleties into the text. Drawbacks nonetheless persist, and so create many other situations where the final coordinated draft that emerges is essentially that which entered the reps' arena, only less sharp, less clear, of less utility -- and much delayed.

*designer* | -- There have been worthwhile efforts to increase the participation of Principals in the estimative process. Again, well and good, and the more such continuing pressure on them the better. But, realistically speaking, the fact that most Principals are essentially managers is always going to make the outcome of NFIB meetings largely the result of given DCI's and whatever assorted creative personalities happen to attend the particular session, rather than the collective wisdom foreseen by General Beedle Smith and his original IAC.

*don't* | -- Given all these limitations on national estimates, there is a strong case to be made that the NIC (and future central estimative offices, whatever their title) can best serve policymakers by conceiving of themselves more as national estimators rather than as just the producers of national estimates. This means (1) that the NIC and the AG can and should be manned by the most sophisticated, broadly experienced officers that can be gathered together; and (2) that these NIC officers not dilute their contribution to national estimating by having to spend too great a proportion of their time grinding out coordinated NIE packages.

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- cut/bw*
- Constructive critics have long warned estimators of the dangers of over-coordination.\* What have been often the most valuable inputs made by senior estimative officers over the years have been sharp ad hoc or in-house studies which break new ground, point out new developing world threats or opportunities, question conventional wisdom, examine the consequences of contingent developments, or otherwise give policymakers more direct, focussed assistance than can the necessarily more ponderous estimates -- even the recently improved fast-track variety. NIOs, A/NIOs, and AG members are in the best possible spot to contribute such insights, and should be encouraged to continue to enlarge the proportion of such efforts, checking carefully in each instance with DDI or other appropriate specialists, and indicating clearly to the readers the status of the views being presented.
  - Policymakers would be well served also if, on occasion, memos of comment were offered on such think pieces by individual NFIB Principals or other senior intelligence and policymaking officers.
  - NIOs, A/NIOs, and AG officers, if freed somewhat from the sizable paper-shuffling demands of coordinating and producing formal estimates, would have more time also to assist other senior intelligence officers in guiding collection and in devising new means of communicating estimative findings, in addition to that of the printed page. Impact on the faster-moving policymaking world will require much more in the way of video, graphics, face-to-face, and other measures. Also more emphasis, see below, on marketing and follow-up.
  - In all such cases of estimating by means additional to national estimates, the payoff must of course remain on the quality and utility of estimative assistance to policymakers, not on the quantity of NIEs or other estimative pieces being produced.

5. The key importance of an estimate's drafter:

- N/O*
- Another clear fact which three decades of US estimates experience has demonstrated is the absolutely primary importance of the particular drafter to that finished estimate's quality and usefulness. Where initial concept and drafts are only so-so, or worse, they not only clog up the estimates schedule but often

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\*For example, this ancient but still apt recommendation, from a senior CIA officer, 1957: "The sum and substance of what I have been saying is that the US national security system would be better served if the Intelligence Community took a less vigorous view of the meaning of coordination and substituted more informal techniques of consultation."



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remain relatively impervious to subsequent tinkering and re-drafting.

- Where drafters are top-rate there is no problem. But the record is not one of unblemished success, now or in the past. Traditionally the toughest cases exist where the drafter proves mediocre or poor. It is not always easy to know in advance whether an untested drafter will do a good job of preparing an estimate: some good current intelligence officers, for example, have put facts and chronology together in an "estimate," but one which to the consumer has no so-what. The writing of estimates calls for distinctive experience and breadth, as well as distinctive skills in conceptualizing, organizing, and presenting an estimate's findings.
- The 1974-1980 experiment which required NIOs to scrounge estimates drafters as best they could proved a failure -- one recognized in the decision to reorganize the NIOs into a NIC, supported by its own AG. Since that time the drafting situation has improved somewhat, but because of the AG's small size and the many demands on the time of the NIOs and A/NIOs, the majority of estimates still has to be farmed out to other offices.\*
- This farming out of drafting assignments involves various problems. Outside drafters do not belong to the NIOs. They are not answerable to NIC discipline or standards. They are sometimes physically separated from the NIO chairman, even across town. NIOs don't always get the drafting stars they seek, but have to settle for those the parent offices make available. In some host offices the drafting of national estimates is not treated as part of a career-enhancing pattern, but an external chore. Drafters are caught between the demands and views of their own offices and those of the NIO. In result, enthusiasm, priority, quality, and an estimate's usefulness all suffer.
- Some farming out of estimates must of course continue. This certainly applies for many of the complex military estimates where outside-the-NIC analytic offices have produced many good drafting teams. The same applies for those particular occasions where the dimensions of a given estimative chore happen to fit the analytic culture well, and where the host offices do ante up first-team drafting talent. But there are limits to such practice, including distinct limits on how much burden NIC projects should exert especially on DDI production offices' own responsibilities.
- The answer: an increasing proportion of coordinated estimates and in-house pieces can best be done by an experienced AG of

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\*The 1983 record: 32 interagency estimates were drafted by DDI officers; 24 by NIC; 9, DIA; 5, INR; and 8, joint. -

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strengthened proportions, the best type of system yet devised for developing creative estimates drafters. A group encompassing such breadth, intellectual leadership, and skills can also constitute a high-class drafting pool for special ad hoc DCI and C/NIC chores.

- This cannot be done well, however, by the present AG. As initially organized by D/NFAC in early 1980,\* this group was to consist "of about 20 officers;" those officers were to draft "the bulk" of coordinated estimates; they were in addition to "initiate ad hoc estimative memoranda for NIC discussion and further disposition;" and rotational tours in the AG were to be an "important element in the career planning of NFAC offices." None of these situations exists at the present time. The AG now has only 11 professional slots. Its members draft only coordinated estimates, not think papers as well. CIA chiefs do not willingly provide the AG their best officers for rotation tours but understandably husband them for their own offices' purposes. Nor, except for military hardware questions, is there much sophisticated drafting talent available in the Intelligence Community -- we have had one such tour in the AG which was successful (NSA), one which proved mis-cast, and one (DIA) up-coming. The record has also been mixed in drawing top talent into the AG from academia, etc., where this path also entails special bureaucratic hazards.
- In short, if intelligence is to offer the maximum possible support to policymaking, it must have an estimates cadre of the best brains and effectiveness in town. This did obtain at certain times in the past, witness the wealth of talent represented by such former estimates staffers as Hyland, Billington, Komer, Maury, Cline, W. Bundy, Carver, Byrnes, R. J. Smith, A. Smith, D. Graham, Huizenga, Clarke, Whitman, Chet Cooper, and many others. The principal reason such talent had been made available was that the estimates office was initially conceived to be "the heart of the CIA and of the national intelligence machinery,"\* and early DCI's made sure that the estimates office got assigned the elite drafters it required. I submit that something like this concept of an estimates drafting group is required, or at least something approaching the AG as initially envisaged in early 1980, if the estimates business is not to continue bumping along, doing a fairly good job, but not living up to the potential it could contribute.

6. The need for a full-time C/NIC:

- The C/NIC is a more than full-time job in itself. The Chairman must furnish intellectual leadership, get the most out of his/her

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\*NFAC Notice No. 1-19, "Responsibilities and Structure of the NIC Analytic Group," of 30 January 1980.

\*IAC-M-1, 20 October 1950.

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officers, administer the office, and relate actively to senior members of the intelligence and policymaking communities. This latter requirement is of paramount importance inasmuch as estimates, being somewhat free-will offerings, will always have greater impact the more the estimators are known commodities to the policymakers, not faceless officers somewhere across town. To important degree the regard in which given estimates are held rests on the personal respect in which their producers are held. This applies of course to all the members of the NIC, but in particular to C/NIC. He/she must have the opportunity to spend needed time with senior officers around town (and with the country's best brains, wherever) before, during, and following the preparation of estimative support -- and so multiply the impact of the estimates effort.

*Role?  
NIO?*

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-- Although there have been excellent chiefs of the estimates office who came there from CIA careers, there will generally be an edge in stature, contacts, and impact -- all other things being equal -- where C/NIC is a scholar or official of national reputation. In short, future NIC's can be most effective when they have something like latter-day Bill Langer's in charge.

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in a day  
years*

7. Additional recommendations for improving the quality and impact of estimative products. Here I purposely avoid familiar criticisms many others have made, and confine my points to capsule presentations. In brief, there is need for the DCI to direct that much greater attention be devoted to:

-- The marketing of estimates -- by the DCI, C/NIC, and NIOs alike. The most rewarding measures involve personalized intervention at various stages of key exercises, before and after their production. There is some of this now, from time to time, but unless pressed much more, our finished products will continue to tend just to pile up, undifferentiated from other mail, on the desks of special assistants and other filters. There needs to be much greater consciousness that our work is not completed at NFIB. Otherwise we short-circuit the process and the purpose of estimating.

-- More regularized evaluation of estimates. To date this has been confined to sporadic ad hoc efforts, aimed generally at examining "failures." Fuller and more regular evaluations, conducted by senior, objective groups, could transmit back much-needed guidance as to what has and has not been accurate, useful, etc. This cannot be done by just reading stacks of old papers, but must involve considerable interviewing, the building of personal contacts with consumers, and demonstrated evidence to them of the worth of such inquiry. Some estimates could benefit by making a review of previous judgments on the same topic an explicit part of their content.

*agree.*

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- More attention to collection re Third World developments. Here is where most of the action is, and where the prime detonators to world peace are. The Intelligence Community (especially State) must be prodded from on high to get US missions out of their cocktail cocoons and into their host societies, so that blindsided analyses and estimates do not inflict more self-harm on US policymaking.
- More attention in estimates to factoring out the respective indigenous - external Communist ingredients in Third World hot spots. Such crises are of course of enormously greater danger to US interests where Soviet or other hostile elements are at work in the picture. But US policymakers have paid dearly in the past for their relative ignorance of those basic forces in certain world settings which create the local pro-Communist and without whose remedy many US well-intentioned policies will go unavailing.
- Less emphasis on predicting events, more on depicting forces and trends at work in given estimative situations.
- More estimative emphasis on giving policymakers handles: that is, pointing up opportunities as well as threats, and differentiating between those forces in a given picture which seem inexorable, and those others that may to x degree be amenable to US or other friendly remedy.
- Being less shy, in estimates, in suggesting opportunity handles to policymakers. Not trying to make policy, but not stopping either with just telling the consumer that he/she faces a hell of a situation in Ruritania.
- More contact by estimators with the country's best brains outside of professional intelligence ranks. Contact with outside experts and consultants remains sporadic. More is needed, and on a fuller, more systematic basis, to avoid certain stultifying effects Washington localitis can involve.
- Much more effort by and on behalf of the estimators to know the US Blue element much better -- and making sure that such knowledge of the US ingredient is ground into analyses and estimates of foreign situations.
- Better appreciation among analysts and estimators that they, too, not only the policymakers, must keep alert to the distorting influences of prior belief.

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-- Finally, applicable in relation to all the above, a fierce determination by estimators to tell it like it is: that is, the necessity to give our consumers the fullest and most objective analysis/judgment possible -- without regard to the policymakers' particular preconceptions, commitments, or sensibilities. It is the job of estimators to tell the truth, not to make our customers happy. Otherwise we will just be spending taxpayers' money to help policymakers deceive themselves, on occasion, about how well things are going in Vietnam, or Iran, or Lebanon, or wherever.

8. I will be pleased to learn your reactions to this memo's observations/recommendations, and to discuss these matters further.



Hal Ford

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**SUBJECT: The Future of National Estimates**

DCI/NIC/NIO/AL/HFord:  (18 May 84)

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

30 May 1984

NOTE FOR: DCI

SUBJECT: Hal Ford's Paper, "The Future of National Estimates"

Bill:

Some points have merit.

Most of it is outrageous and is tantamount to establishing the NIC as an independent agency. This is something I feared all along and reflects an undercurrent in the NIC. On the whole I take issue with most of Hal's comments.

It is outrageous to say that the coordination of national estimates is an outdated art form. This is a key, basic charter of the Central Intelligence Agency and although it is complex, we should not abandon it.

As far as the NIC's Analytic Group (AG) goes, I have always feared the establishment of this entity within the NIC. It provides an independence without data base and sows the seed of developing an independent organization. That organization can run contrary, counter and independent of the DDI. Frankly it is an abortion and we can best serve our intelligence process by reducing it dramatically or doing away with it completely. There is no need to upgrade the size, stature and recruitment base of the AG but rather we ought to look to the DDI and other organizations of the Intelligence Community to improve the quality of their intelligence.

It should come as no surprise to you that I believe there is considerable merit in the DDI and Chairman/NIC being one and the same.

To say that there is going to be no automatic market of expectant consumers of our estimates runs completely counter to recent history. The policymakers have never been better served by our estimative process nor have they been timid themselves in expressing their requirements to satisfy their insatiable needs.

The reference to the White House and Richard Beal's operation to me are not an added argument in favor of what Hal proposes but an argument of what I feared from Beal's operation to start with. That it is the intent of some quarters in the White House to set up an independent analytical capability within the White House, something again which my gut says will produce half-assed information to the White House as well as step on DCI responsibilities and prerogatives.

The suggestion that because there will be more disorder in tomorrow's world should cause us to bifurcate our present in-house intelligence process makes no sense at all.

If there is any gap between theory and practices of the coordination process then that fault rests with the NIOs doing their basic job. And that is an individual responsibility of each NIO. Enlarging the AG will not solve that obvious deficiency. The suggestion that the NIC serve the policymakers by conceiving themselves as national estimators and increasing their sophistication and size is what was done in 1947 and they called the organization at that time CIA.

The farming out of drafts is just what was intended in trying to develop Community participation in the national estimate process. To look upon this as a problem as opposed to an accomplishment just boggles my mind.

In short, I can give no truck to any of Hal's rationale for expanding the AG. It would be nice simply to see the NIC function as it ought to.

As far as a full-time Chairman/NIC, again I differ with Hal. The thought that a scholar or an official of national reputation will bring substance to the job as opposed to awe is without merit. A good many scholars have their own bag and their own view of life. What we are trying to produce here is unbiased intelligence and not a mechanism for someone with their own agenda to take advantage of. I also feel that the responsibility for scholarship and national reputation shall rest with the DCI and not some subordinate. Unless, of course, we want to fashion a DCI who will abandon his role as the President's principal advisor.

As far as evaluation of estimates, the SRP seems to be doing that job quite well and Helene Boatner's work in evaluating the overall DDI product has been extremely helpful.

Collection of the Third World has been a large item now for the last two years. Obviously more is to be done but the problem of getting State and other embassy officials to play an intelligence role has been very much on the front burner of the HUMINT Committee; the "Focus Reports" as well as the collection plans which the IC Staff circulates in your behalf. Larry Eagleburger's message to all embassies a few months ago was a gig to prompt the embassies into more reporting.



The complaint to have the estimators receive more U.S. Blue information is old hat and it's a problem that is not going to be solved with or without the NIC. It's inherent in operators to not want to provide anyone operational information. That goes for submarine ops, destroyer ops and DDO ops.

The final paragraph which suggests that the estimators tell the truth and tell it like it is is a lousy and bum rap. The identification of Vietnam, Iran or Lebanon as examples of where we spent taxpayer's money to help policymakers deceive themselves is not only factually incorrect but outrageous in the inference.

Needless to say my emotion runs high with this lousy piece of paper.

  
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