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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

14 February 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR:   
Director, Office of Policy and Planning/IC

FROM : Richard Lehman  
Deputy to the DCI for National Intelligence

SUBJECT : The National Intelligence Staff and the  
Intelligence Community Planning System

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1. This memorandum is to confirm my understanding of our conversation last week about specifications of the proposed Intelligence Community Planning System and the role the National Intelligence staff would play in its implementation.

2. We agreed that the proposed system is thorough and orderly. It would, no doubt, be well received by such Executive managerial organizations as OMB and by such oversight bodies as the House Appropriations Committee. The system, nevertheless, presents the NI staff with a dilemma. On the one hand, the principle that substance governs requirements and priorities is a good one and should be observed. For the NI staff, on the other hand, to monitor and contribute to the planning system would tax its limited resources and threaten to divert its limited energies from its other, probably more important, missions. There exists, at the same time, no national-level organization other than the NI staff to provide the substantive contribution and supervision that the proposed planning system requires. The NI staff, therefore, regards the proposed system as a worthy undertaking that must be held down to essential, manageable proportions.

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3. The National Intelligence staff understands that the Current Outlook section in the current element of the proposed planning system is to be an explanatory preface to the KIQs, which are to be renamed Salient Questions. The NI staff will draft the Outlook section, which will explain the changes in the international or operational environment that have made these particular questions worthy of singling out for special attention by program managers. At the same time, the NI staff holds that it would be improper to include in this section an inventory of the principal concerns of the National Security Council and its staff, useful though such an inventory would be. The NI staff further does not believe this section would be a state-of-the-world roundup of the sort that is already prepared annually by other Executive branch organizations.

4. The NI staff agrees that Requirements Categories and Associated Priorities can be useful; the staff will provide substantive guidance to the ad hoc DCID 1/2 working group and otherwise assist this and subsequent like groups in their work.

5. The NI staff further agrees to produce Priority Requirements for Regional and Topical Areas, particularly when changed circumstances make a statement of refined needs especially useful to intelligence program managers.

6. Salient Questions (and SQ strategy reports) will continue to be produced by the NI staff.

7. The NI staff rather likes the new mid-range element of the planning system. The staff would continue to contribute Perspectives for Planning and Programming. The staff also likes the idea of an Intelligence Strategy if this Strategy is to focus on the likely operating environment of intelligence collectors, processors, and analysts in the years ahead and on drawing the resource implications from the anticipated changed environment. The NI staff would be happy to assist the IC Staff in validating the quality of the Strategy, but believes the Strategy itself should be written by the collection and production managers who would implement it, after these

managers have had Perspectives available to them. Experience with strategic planning systems in private industry has demonstrated convincingly that systems such as these are useful only if line managers do the planning with the assistance of staff elements, rather than if the planning is done by staff elements themselves; the process itself is more valuable than the particular strategy finally produced.

8. The NI staff continues to have deep-seated reservations about the long-range element of the planning system. These reservations stem from the experience of those who have, over the years, attempted to produce estimates looking out 15 years or more. If the staff remains doubtful that useful results can be produced, it does not, on the other hand, believe that it should veto an investigation of the work being done in futurology in the private academic world to see if that world is producing anything that might be of use to us.

9. The NI staff remains unconvinced of the need for a DCI Committee for Intelligence Community Planning. Its fear is that planning would become unnecessarily bureaucratized; the IC Staff, itself, is already in effect a DCI planning committee. We further see a considerable overlap between the work of such a committee and that of the extant DCI production and collection committees. If, nevertheless, the committee does come into being, the NI staff must insist that this committee confine itself to the broadest issues, such as tradeoffs in priorities between competing requirements. The staff must also insist that the committee have no responsibility for requirements and priority matters that have already been handled in an inter-agency forum. The staff has in mind, for example, regional and functional requirements that are prepared by an inter-agency group under the direction of a National Intelligence Officer.

[Redacted Signature]

Richard Lehman

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