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20 October 1950~~

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting held in Director's
Conference Room, Administration Building
Central Intelligence Agency, on 20 October 1950

*Declassified
4 Feb 92*

Director of Central Intelligence
Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith
Presiding



MEMBERS PRESENT

- Mr. W. Park Armstrong, Jr., Special Assistant,
Intelligence, Department of State
- Major General R. J. Canine, acting for Assistant
Chief of Staff, G-2, Department of the Army
- Rear Admiral Felix L. Johnson, Director of Naval
Intelligence
- Major General Charles P. Cabell, Director of
Intelligence, Headquarters, United States Air Force
- Dr. Walter F. Colby, Director of Intelligence, Atomic
Energy Commission
- Brigadier General Vernon E. Megee, Deputy Director for
Intelligence, The Joint Staff
- Mr. Meffert W. Kuhrtz, acting for Assistant to the
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

ALSO PRESENT

- Mr. William H. Jackson, Central Intelligence Agency
- Mr. Fisher Howe, Department of State
- Colonel Hamilton Howze, Department of the Army
- Captain John M. Ocker, USN, Department of the Navy
- Brigadier General E. Moore, Department of the Air Force
- Dr. Malcolm C. Henderson, Atomic Energy Commission
- Captain R. G. McCool, USN, The Joint Staff

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IAC-M-1
20 October 1950~~

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~~IAC M-1~~
~~20 October 1950~~

act under the authority and subject to the control of the Director of Central Intelligence, who, under NSC 10/2, was responsible for Mr. Wisner's operations.

Meetings of the IAC

5. In referring directly to the work of the Intelligence Advisory Committee in the future, General Smith expressed his opinion that this Committee should meet more often and for longer periods although, as chairman, he would make every effort to keep the meetings as brief as possible. He stated that the Intelligence Advisory Committee must be geared for rapid cooperative work.

National Intelligence Estimates

6. In opening the subject of national intelligence estimates, General Smith read from a memorandum written by Mr. William H. Jackson, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, as follows:

The Responsibility of the Central Intelligence Agency for National Intelligence Estimates.

One of the principal duties assigned to the Central Intelligence Agency "for the purpose of coordinating the intelligence activities of the several Government departments and agencies in the interest of national security" is "to correlate and evaluate intelligence relating to the national security, and provide for its appropriate dissemination." The Central Intelligence Agency is thus given the responsibility of seeing to it that the United States has adequate central machinery for the examination and interpretation of intelligence so that the national security will not be jeopardized by failure to coordinate the best intelligence opinion in the country, based on all available information.

Although the Act provides that "the departments and other agencies of the Government shall continue to collect, evaluate, correlate, and disseminate departmental intelligence," the statute does not limit the duties of the Central Intelligence Agency to correlate and evaluate intelligence, except by the standard of "national security."

The purport of the National Security Act can be understood and justified in the light of the history and general objectives of the Act. Behind the concept of a Central Intelligence Agency

~~SECRET~~
~~IAC M-1~~
~~20 October 1950~~

~~SECRET~~
~~IAC-M-1~~
20 October 1950

lay the necessity not only for the coordination of diversified intelligence activities, and for the performance by the central agency itself of certain services of common usefulness, but also for the coordination of intelligence opinion in the form of reports or estimates affecting generally the national security as a whole.

The Act apparently gives the Central Intelligence Agency the independent right of producing national intelligence. As a practical matter, such estimates can be written only with the collaboration of experts in many fields of intelligence and with the cooperation of several departments and agencies of the Government. A national intelligence report or estimate as assembled and produced by the Central Intelligence Agency should reflect the coordination of the best intelligence opinion, based on all available information. It should deal with topics of wide scope relevant to the determination of basic policy, such as the assessment of a country's war potential, its preparedness for war, its strategic capabilities and intentions, its vulnerability to various forms of direct attack or indirect pressures. An intelligence estimate of such scope would go beyond the competence of any single Department or Agency of the Government. A major objective, then, in establishing the Central Intelligence Agency was to provide the administrative machinery for the coordination of intelligence opinion, for its assembly and review, objectively and impartially, and for its expression in the form of estimates of national scope and importance.

The concept of national intelligence estimates underlying the statute is that of an authoritative interpretation and appraisal that will serve as a firm guide to policy-makers and planners. A national intelligence estimate should reflect the coordination of the best intelligence opinion, with notation of and reasons for dissent in the instances when there is not unanimity. It should be based on all available information and be prepared with full knowledge of our own plans and in the light of our own policy requirements. The estimate should be compiled and assembled centrally by an agency whose objectivity and disinterestedness are not open to question. Its ultimate approval should rest upon the collective judgment of the highest officials in the various intelligence agencies. Finally, it should command recognition and respect throughout the Government as the best available and presumably the most

~~SECRET~~
~~IAC-M-1~~
20 October 1950

~~SECRET~~
~~IAC-M-1~~
20 October 1950

authoritative intelligence estimate.

Although the task is made more difficult by a lack of general acceptance of the concept of national intelligence estimates in the Government, it is, nevertheless, the clear duty and responsibility of the Central Intelligence Agency under the statute to assemble and produce such coordinated and authoritative estimates.

7. There followed a discussion of the above excerpt from the memorandum and there was general assent at the meeting to its statement of the responsibility of the Central Intelligence Agency for national intelligence estimates. General Smith stated that, in order to discharge this responsibility, he proposed at the earliest possible time to set up in the Central Intelligence Agency an Office of National Estimates. This division, in his opinion, would become the heart of the Central Intelligence Agency and of the national intelligence machinery. Services of common concern, now performed in the present Office of Reports and Estimates but not including the production of political intelligence, would be placed in a separate office or division which might properly be called the Office of Research and Reports. The latter would confine its activities to the production of reports as a service of common concern in fields assigned specifically by directives of the National Security Council. It was pointed out by Mr. Jackson that the fact that the Office of Reports and Estimates has in the past produced both national estimates and miscellaneous reports in various fields, which could not possibly be construed as national estimates, had blurred and confused both the product and function of the Office of Reports and Estimates. There has been insufficient differentiation between the form and the coordination procedure in connection with the two products and in their methods of production.

8. General Smith said that, as to the matter of form, in the future intelligence estimates produced by the Central Intelligence Agency on the basis of intelligence contributions from the various intelligence agencies and concurred in or dissented from by the respective agencies would be published under a cover showing plainly that the estimate was a collective effort the result of which would be labeled as a national intelligence estimate.

Action

9. After discussion the following procedural steps were agreed upon in the production of national estimates:

~~SECRET~~
~~IAC-M-1~~
20 October 1950

~~SECRET~~
~~IAC-M-1~~
~~20 October 1950~~

a. The Intelligence Advisory Committee will adopt an intelligence plan, or more specifically, a list of required national estimates in an order of priority.

b. In the case of a particular estimate, a frame of reference and the assumptions on which the estimate is based will be discussed and approved by the Intelligence Advisory Committee.

c. Work on the estimate will be referred in the first instance to the Office of Reports and Estimates, or to the Office of National Estimates when it is established in the Central Intelligence Agency, and the several intelligence agencies will be consulted and a timetable fixed for contributions to the national estimate within the fields of their respective interests.

d. On the basis of these contributions, the Central Intelligence Agency will produce a first draft of the proposed national estimate.

e. This draft will be sent back to the agencies for comment and modification and for further discussion if required. On the basis of such comments and discussion, the Central Intelligence Agency will produce a second draft of the estimate.

f. This second, or later drafts if required, will be submitted to the Intelligence Advisory Committee for final discussion, resolution of differences and approval.

g. If differences cannot be resolved and approval obtained, the estimate will be published with notation of substantial dissent and reasons therefor.

It was made clear by General Smith that this procedure would not and could not be followed in the case of so-called "crisis estimates." In the event of need arising for a quick or crisis estimate, a procedure similar to that used in the recent instance when the President called for a series of estimates prior to his departure for the meeting with General MacArthur would be followed. That is, a special meeting of the Intelligence Advisory Committee will be called and representatives of the various intelligence agencies assigned at once to the production of a draft of the required estimate for immediate submission to the Intelligence Advisory Committee for discussion, revision and approval.

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~~IAC-M-1~~
~~20 October 1950~~

~~SECRET~~
~~IAC-M-1~~
20 October 1950

Agenda for the Next IAC Meeting

Action:

10. It was determined that at the next meeting of the Intelligence Advisory Committee there would be discussion of national estimates priorities and the frame of references and assumptions to form the basis of an intelligence estimate of the situation in Indo-China. It was also agreed that at a future date General Smith will produce a paper for submission to the Intelligence Advisory Committee indicating how the Central Intelligence Agency will function in the theater of operation in time of war. The next meeting of the Intelligence Advisory Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, 25 October, 3:00 P. M.

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~~IAC-M-1~~
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