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30 June 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR:

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FROM : Joe Zaring, NIO/WE

SUBJECT : Comments on Draft Memos on Relationships Among
NFAC Components

1. Both drafts would profit from a clear, once-and-for-all statement of what order of importance the Director and the D/NFAC attach to the interagency and community product. Until it is categorically established that such a product is wanted and that it is wanted for good reasons, we are going to go on suffering from unconscionable drafting delays, poor and inadequate inputs, superficial reviews, inattention, etc.

2. Far better than the NFAC draft, the NIC draft makes clearer the responsibility of all components for all products. But even the latter strikes me as watery -- and sometimes contradictory -- on this key point. Meanwhile, from my observation, signs of the old problems of elitism, competition, shirking of responsibility, doing-one's-own-thing, etc. are already beginning to crop up.

3. On the same point, I am not sure that either draft deals very effectively with the nitty-gritty of how you improve cooperation in the interest of improving the quality of the product.

-- Communication and consultation between the offices and the NIOs are not all that good (even among those of us who work at it).

-- How much responsibility do office chiefs -- more particularly, division and branch chiefs -- have for reviewing the quality of inputs to NIC projects?

-- If NIOs are tasked to review office production (and in the footnotes on assessments, are said to have done so), is it helpful to say publication will proceed if no response is received by the deadline (NFAC draft), or, to limit the NIO's interventions to matters of accuracy or egregious judgmental errors (NIC draft)? Time and time again we receive for coordination intelligence assessments of real importance that we cannot possibly review with any thoughtfulness before the

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publication deadline. And more often than not, it is not egregious errors that trouble us, but simply a general inadequacy of approach and analysis.

4. Though both drafts are apparently intended to deal primarily with roles with respect to finished intelligence, they go beyond that on at least a couple matters -- i.e., review of covert action proposals and consumer relations. If we get into these, why not also cover other important subjects, such as obligations with respect to warning, requirements, collection review, briefings, pumping up ambassadors, etc.?

5. Given these difficulties, I wonder whether written instructions of this sort can be made to serve the intended purposes as well as an oral statement from our leaders (including the DCI) on how they want the place to operate. Such instructions tend to err either on the side of "let us all be reasonable about this", or, of being too specific in misleading ways. (What does it really mean to say that "drafts will be coordinated as appropriate", or "NIOs should work hard to avoid tying up key analysts for lengthy periods of time unless the offices concerned are able to spare them"? What conclusions will be drawn if it is said that the NIOs "have only a minor role" in producing current intelligence assessments that are "national" while they are charged at the same time with reviewing PDBs, recommending them, and on occasion, even drafting them.) Or perhaps the answer is two presentations (written or oral) -- the one dealing with philosophy, concepts, and the future -- the other dealing more helpfully with do's and dont's.


Joe L. Zaring

cc: Hal Ford

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