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NFAC NOTICE  
NO. 50-7

NFAC N 50-7  
24 January 1980

GUIDELINES FOR ALERT MEMORANDUMS

ANIO/W

Rescission: NFAC N 50-5, dated 12 March 1979

1. The issuance of an Alert Memorandum should be considered when:

- Events are moving toward a development threatening to US interests and it is not clear that senior policy officers are fully aware of the implications of such a development; or,
- Events are moving toward a development so threatening to US interests that it is desirable for the DCI to forward his assessment to senior policy officers despite their general awareness of the problem.

2. Any element of the Intelligence Community may recommend that the DCI issue an Alert Memorandum. Such a recommendation should be made to the NIO/W, who, in consultation with the appropriate NIO, will decide whether to forward the recommendation to the DCI. The final decision whether to issue a memorandum will require consideration of probability, criticality, awareness and prior reaction of the US Government, and the danger of lessening the impact by alerting too often. The memorandum should be independent of other intelligence issuances, the existence of which cannot be the deciding argument against alerting.

3. The Alert Memorandum is not a prediction. An event need only be a reasonable possibility, although in such a case the memorandum should make this clear. Moreover, the more critical the potential event for the US, the lower the probability threshold required.

4. The Alert Memorandum is not an SNIE, nor is it a situation report. It is not necessary to rehearse the evidence, nor to develop all the arguments. Rather, emphasis should be given to implications; the reader should understand why these developments could lead to serious damage to US interests.

5. If Paragraph 4 is heeded, the Alert Memorandum can be kept brief; it should be no more than 1 1/2 - 2 pages. In most cases, it need contain only four paragraphs:



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- What new developments, in brief, have caused us to issue this memorandum?
- What potential development of an alarming nature do they suggest?
- What are the implications for the US policy-maker? With what pressing new problems must he cope?
- What, in brief, is the Community collection posture? What changes in tasking have been made or may be required? (To be prepared by NITC).

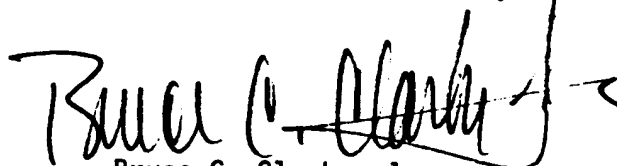
In addition to the Alert Memorandum proper, a one paragraph cover memorandum addressed to the NSC will be prepared for the DCI's signature. This should contain a succinct statement of the warning message. If the NITC collection statement is of a sensitive nature, it will be promulgated to a limited audience under a separate cover memorandum.

6. The Alert Memorandum should be, wherever possible, a Community paper, issued under the aegis of an NIO. The NIO should seek as much coordination as time permits. At least telephone consultation is mandatory. The degree of coordination should be indicated in the memorandum, and any major differences of opinion in the Community should be noted. It should be kept in mind that ultimately, the DCI is responsible for warning the President. The coordination process should not be allowed to delay an Alert Memorandum beyond its usefulness. Observance of the guidelines on brevity and purpose will greatly ease the coordination process.

7. A supplementary Alert Memorandum on a crisis should be produced whenever, in the view of the DCI, the crisis has greatly intensified or changed in some especially significant way. The NIO should issue an appropriate advisory to the recipients of an Alert Memorandum whenever, in his judgment, events indicate that the crisis at hand has abated or terminated (unless that fact is apparent to all).

8. The attachment contains detailed procedures. All personnel should be aware that Alert Memorandums normally take precedence over other production.

9. When time is of the essence, any of these procedures may be bypassed.



Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.  
Director

National Foreign Assessment Center

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Attachments:

1. Procedures for Preparing an Alert Memorandum
2. ~~Intelligence Community Standard Operating Procedures for Alert Memorandums~~

*Superseded*

*by NFIIS*

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## PROCEDURES FOR ALERT MEMORANDA

1. The Alert Memorandum (AM) is an interagency publication issued by the DCI on behalf of the Community. In it he warns explicitly of impending potential developments abroad that may have serious implications for US interests. The AM is not a prediction that events will occur. An event need be only a reasonable possibility; in fact, the more critical the potential impact on the US, the lower the required threshold of probability. An AM is neither a National Intelligence Estimate on the one hand, nor a situation report on the other. It is not necessary to rehearse the evidence and develop arguments in detail nor is it enough merely to report the facts. The message to the policymaker should be threefold:

- In brief, what new developments have caused an AM to be issued?
- What potential outcome do they suggest?
- If not obvious to the policymaker, what are the implications if the outcome occurs; i.e., with what pressing new problems might he have to cope?

2. An AM is signed by the DCI, addressed to the National Security Council, and disseminated to members of NFIB for further dissemination within their departments and agencies.

3. An AM may be initiated by the DCI or may be proposed by an NFIB Principal, by a National Intelligence Officer (NIO), or by (or through) any other senior officer of the intelligence or foreign affairs communities. A proposal for an AM will be addressed to the DCI, the appropriate NIO, or the NIO for Warning, but the decision to issue an AM will in all instances rest with the DCI. Should the DCI decide that an AM is inappropriate having received a legitimate request to issue one, the NIO for Warning will provide the requester with an explanation.

4. Responsibility for the production of an AM will normally rest with the appropriate NIO, and he may call on any element of the Intelligence Community for support. Whenever possible, the NIO will coordinate a draft of the AM with appropriate NFIB agencies, and dissenting views, if any, will be described in the Memorandum. The DCI, however, may authorize the NIO to limit or forego coordination when time is of the essence. All AMs will note the extent of coordination within the Community.

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5. An AM will clearly indicate what special actions are being taken by the Community to ensure effective coverage of the situation, the initiation of special collection efforts, the establishment of crisis task forces, etc.

6. A supplementary AM on a crisis should be produced whenever, in the view of the DCI, the crisis has greatly intensified or changed in some specially significant way. The NIO/W should issue an appropriate advisory to the recipients of an AM whenever, in his judgment, events indicate that the crisis at hand has abated or terminated (unless that fact is apparent to all). Collection efforts arising from the issuance of the alert should also be modified or cancelled as appropriate.

7. Detailed procedures for preparation and issuance of Alert Memoranda are attached.



-2-

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## Intelligence Community Standing Operating Procedures for Alert Memoranda

Purpose: To establish procedures for quickly notifying the Washington Community that an Alert Memorandum (AM) is in draft; for effecting coordination, and for disseminating the final produce.

Background: The AM is an interagency publication issued by the DCI in behalf of the Intelligence Community. It provides explicit warning of possible developments of major concern to the United States. It may be initiated by the DCI or may be proposed by an NFIB Principal, by a National Intelligence Officer, or by any other senior officer of the intelligence or foreign affairs communities. Responsibility for its production will normally rest with the appropriate NIO, who may call on any element of the Intelligence Community for support. Whenever possible, the NIO will coordinate a draft of the AM with the appropriate NFIB agencies.

Procedures: Once the DCI has decided to issue an AM, the process consists of three distinct segments.

- Notification to the Community that the decision has been made and drafting is in progress.
- Coordination of the draft.
- Dissemination of the final AM.

Each of the segments is described in some detail in the following sections.

Notification: Once the DCI has decided to issue an AM, the appropriate NIO will:

- Initiate the drafting process.
- Direct the CIA Office of Current Operations to convene a NOI/WON conference. Conferees will be informed of the decision to issue an AM, the subject, the responsible NIO, the source of information leading to the decision, extent of coordination being sought, assistance required, and likely time of issuance.

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-- Notify Treasury, DoE and FBI separately  
via secure telephone.

At this point the agencies concerned should set in motion those internal procedures necessary to support the NIO and advise the CIA Operations Center of the name of each respective point of contact. The Operations Center will then provide the list of contacts to the NIO. Should the point of contact not be immediately apparent, one should be identified as soon as possible and the responsible NIO informed. If field or embassy participation is thought to be necessary, the NIO should be informed at this time.

Coordination: When the draft is ready for coordination, it will be transmitted via WASHFAX and the Community will be informed via a second NOIWON conference. Participating agencies should then contact the responsible NIO directly to effect coordination. If necessary, subsequent drafts of the AM will also be transmitted via WASHFAX and notification will be made via the NOIWON. The NIO may, of course, convene a face to face coordination meeting if required.

Dissemination: When coordination has been completed and the DCI has signed the final AM, it will be disseminated by WASHFAX and a final NOIWON conference will be convened to advise all participants. Further distribution, including reproducing and controlling copies and maintenance of adequate distribution lists, will be the responsibility of each agency listed herein and will be accomplished as follows:

<u>Responsible Organization</u>		<u>Customers</u>
WHSR	:	White House NSC
State	:	State Department Embassies as desired
DIA	:	DIA OSD JCS Military Services SWS <del>NSA, NSA/CSS</del> Other DoD as desired U&S Commands as desired
NSA	:	NSA Field representatives as desired

-2-

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~~NSA~~

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~~Field Rep. representatives as desired~~

CIA :

CIA  
DCI  
~~DD/AFSA~~ DDI  
~~DD/CT~~  
DD/SM/IGS  
Treasury\* } WASH fax  
DOE\*  
FBI\*  
NFAC overseas representatives and  
Allied intelligence reps as appropriate

DIA, State, and NSA are authorized to disseminate the Alert Memorandum to field activities except as restricted by classification.

Termination: The NIO/Warning will ensure that appropriate action is taken to notify the Community when, in his judgment, events indicate that the crisis at hand has abated or terminated. He will also request that collection efforts arising from the issuance of the alert be modified or cancelled as appropriate.