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30 September 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Foreign Intelligence Board Principals  
FROM: H. F. Hutchinson, Jr.  
Acting Chairman, National Intelligence Council  
SUBJECT: Guidelines for Interagency Intelligence Production

The Guidelines for Interagency Intelligence Production, as approved and amended at NFIB on 24 September 1987, are attached for your information. These Guidelines replace a similar document issued by DCI William Casey on 27 July 1981. Please disseminate to the appropriate elements of your organization.

  
H. F. Hutchinson, Jr.

Attachment:  
As stated

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GUIDELINES FOR INTERAGENCY INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTION

This Notice replaces the 27 July 1981 DCI guidelines for interagency production of national intelligence.

Purpose

These guidelines are intended to strengthen the Intelligence Community's capacity to support the DCI in producing national intelligence responsive to the needs of senior consumers while assuring the objectivity and integrity of the process. The system must be able to anticipate and respond quickly to foreign trends and developments that create new requirements for estimative intelligence products. These will be formulated primarily with a view to assisting senior policymakers at the NSC and Cabinet level, although they normally will have wider application and receive wider distribution. These products will be predominantly estimative and usually will address a limited number of policy relevant key questions. They should generally be short and focused; accordingly they should contain no more factual and historical detail than necessary to provide context for the findings, judgments, and projections.

Types of Interagency Intelligence ProductsNational Intelligence Estimate (NIE)

The NIE provides the most authoritative judgments of the Intelligence Community on subjects of highest policy concern to the United States. Judgments and projections will be derived from the most comprehensive intelligence data and research available but will be presented in a concise form. The main text will develop the analyses and estimative judgments over the period of the NIE, evaluating alternative scenarios where appropriate, and identifying indicators associated with alternative scenarios.

The time projection for a NIE usually will be in terms of years. For most NIEs the preferred length is in the range of 10 to 20 pages with background data and detailed discussion carried in annexes. The Key Judgments should be proportionately brief, in the range of one to four pages. An Executive Summary, following the Key Judgments, should be considered in the case of unusually complex or detailed papers. The time allocated for preparation of the NIE will generally be in terms of months although it may be required within weeks on occasion. The nomination of topics, the formulation of concept papers and terms of reference, and the review and coordination process through NFIB discussion will be more deliberate and thorough than for other interagency products.

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Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE)

While the SNIE shares many of the characteristics of the NIE, it differs from the latter in several significant ways. The SNIE addresses more specific and urgent problems; urgency is the dominant of these two criteria. The SNIE is an unscheduled interagency intelligence product while the NIE is scheduled and listed in the annual production plan. The time projection for a SNIE usually will be in terms of weeks or months. The preferred length of a SNIE is less than 10 pages, with very limited background data or description. Key Judgments of SNIEs should be very brief and normally not exceed two pages. The time allocated for preparation is days to weeks. The nomination of topics, the formulation of Concept Papers and Terms of Reference, and the coordination process will be accelerated.

Interagency Intelligence Memorandum (IIM)

The IIM will address problems of high policy concern to the United States, although not the highest concerns where the NIE is more appropriate. The IIM provides an Intelligence Community assessment of data and events, with a considerable amount of evidential or methodological detail, and usually will be estimative. It is the appropriate interagency product when the primary objective is a Community judgment on factual matter.

There is no set time horizon for the factual determinations or the estimates made in the IIM. There are no prescriptions for length or format beyond succinctness appropriate to the subject requiring Community judgments. The Key Judgments, and Executive Summary where appropriate, should be proportionately brief. An IIM usually will be prepared over a period of months. The process of nominating topics, formulating Concept Papers and Terms of Reference, and the review and coordination will be deliberate and thorough without sacrificing timeliness. The product usually will be coordinated at the senior working level and approved by the Chairman, National Intelligence Council.

Special Interagency Intelligence Memorandum (SIIM)

The SIIM has much the same relationship to the IIM that the SNIE has to the NIE. While the IIM usually is scheduled, the SIIM is an unscheduled interagency intelligence product. It provides an assessment of data and events and usually will provide a near term projection of the immediate situation. The preferred length of a SIIM usually is less than 10 pages; the key judgments should not exceed two pages. The time projection for a SIIM usually is weeks to months. The process for nomination of SIIM topics and the SIIM coordination process will be accelerated. The SIIM usually will be coordinated at the senior working level and approved by the Chairman, National Intelligence Council.

Memorandum to Holders (M/H)

Any of the interagency intelligence products may be amended by a M/H if changes in intelligence information or analysis justify a modification but the changes are not extensive enough to justify a new product. The procedures followed will be the same as for the basic documents they amend.

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### The Interagency Process

Topics for interagency intelligence products may be suggested by any senior officer in the intelligence or policy communities. A request may be made directly to the Director Central Intelligence or the appropriate National Intelligence Officer or to them through departmental channels.

The NIO is responsible for advising the DCI on the policy relevance, importance, and utility of the topics nominated for interagency production. The utility of the product for the policy community should be clearly demonstrated, the requirement for an Intelligence Community judgment should be justified. The NIO must assist the Intelligence Community in limiting its formal interagency intelligence production to a clearly articulated need-to-do basis vice a nice-to-do approach. Topics of general interest but not meeting NIE/SNIE criteria might be more suitable for an IIM or SIIM, or might better be addressed by single agency production. The NIO recommendation is critical in reducing the time demands on NFIB principals and focusing the resources of the interagency process on the most important topics.

The DCI is the approving authority for initiating interagency intelligence products. Some topics will be approved following NFIB consultation on the annual interagency production plan. Others will be proposed as the need arises and approved following such formal or informal NFIB consultation as appropriate.

The appropriate National Intelligence Officer will manage the production of the interagency product on behalf of the DCI. The NIO is responsible to the DCI to ensure maximum Intelligence Community participation in the production, balancing the requirements for timeliness and thoroughness. The NIO, in consultation with the representatives of the NFIB principals, will modify the attached production checklist to fit the circumstances.

The NIO will as a rule prepare a draft Concept Paper and Terms of Reference in consultation with NFIB representatives and policy officers. Policy community participation is especially important here to ensure relevance of the final product. The Concept Paper, incorporating Key Questions, and the Terms of Reference then will be approved in draft by the DCI and will be the basis to proceed.

The draft Concept Papers and TORs for scheduled NIEs and IIMs then should be furnished to NFIB principals for their review and subsequent coordination by their representatives. For SNIE's and SIIMs, this review and coordination will be accelerated, depending on the urgency of the paper.

The NIO will consult with NFIB representatives on designating drafters and contributors. The NFIB principals should relieve drafters of regular duties to the maximum extent possible until their special assignments to the estimate have been fulfilled. Participants in developing and coordinating the draft should be aware of policy community concerns, drawing upon its expertise when appropriate, but NFIB principals must ensure that the integrity and objectivity of the intelligence process are maintained. To

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this end, the NIO and the NFIB representatives must ensure Intelligence Community independence from policy community pressures or participation in the drafting and coordination processes. The DCI usually will review draft texts of estimates at the time they are submitted to NFIB representatives for coordination to confirm that the paper and its Key Judgments meet the criteria established by the Concept Paper and Terms of Reference. He will reserve his decision on the estimate until after he receives recommendations from NFIB.

The NFIB representatives should have sufficient delegated authority to agree to changes in the text at the coordination meeting such that, except in the most unusual circumstances, they will be supported by their agencies. Changes submitted after coordination usually will be reviewed by the representatives before sending the text to the NFIB principals. For scheduled NIEs, NFIB agencies should have 10 working days to review final drafts prior to the NFIB meeting. For SNIEs, agencies should have five working days to review final drafts, except for the most time-sensitive estimates. Final coordination by NFIB principals may be by telephone vote, without benefit of an NFIB meeting whenever timeliness dictates or other factors indicate this as a preferable option.

Alternative views usually should be succinctly stated in the body of the estimate with a concise statement of the reason for the views, but the NIO must not let the discussion of alternative views distract from the logical flow of the estimate.

Attachment: Summary Production Checklist

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## SUMMARY PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

## I. TOPIC INITIATION

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|--|----|--|
| <p>A. SCHEDULED ANNUAL PRODUCTION (most NIEs and IIMs, no SNIEs or SIIMs)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NIO annually solicits or anticipates requirements from intelligence and policy communities</li> <li>2. NIC incorporates requirement(s) in production plan and seeks NFIB review and DCI approval</li> <li>3. NIO initiates work to meet projected completion date</li> </ol> | OR | <p>B. OUT-OF-CYCLE PROPOSAL (all SNIEs and SIIMs, some NIEs and IIMs)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NIO continually receives or anticipates new requirements from intelligence and policy communities</li> <li>2. NIO reviews new requirements with NIC and community contacts on an accelerated basis for proposed SNIEs and SIIMs</li> <li>3. To seek approval for NIE or IIM, go to step I.A.2. For SNIE or SIIM, go to step II.B.1.</li> </ol> |
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## II. CONCEPT PAPER (CP) and TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) DEVELOPMENT

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| <p>A. NORMAL TRACK (all NIEs and IIMs)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NIO develops CP and TOR in consultation with Community</li> <li>2. NIO seeks DCI endorsement on CP and TOR</li> <li>3. NIO seeks NFIB rep coordination on CP and TOR</li> <li>4. NIO distributes coordinated CP and TOR to DCI and NFIB</li> </ol> | OR | <p>B. FAST TRACK (all SNIEs and SIIMs)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NIO develops CP (and time permitting TOR) in consultation with Community on accelerated basis</li> <li>2. NIO seeks accelerated DCI endorsement of CP (and TOR)</li> <li>3. NIO seeks accelerated NFIB rep coordination on CP (and TOR)</li> <li>4. NIO distributes coordinated CP (and TOR) to DCI and NFIB</li> </ol> |
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III. DRAFT DEVELOPMENT

A. NORMAL TRACK

OR

B. FAST TRACK

1. NIO works with drafter to produce pre-coordination draft
2. NIO provides draft to DCI while simultaneously seeking NFIB rep coordination on draft

1. NIO works with drafter to produce pre-coordination draft on an accelerated basis
2. NIO provides draft to DCI while simultaneously seeking accelerated NFIB rep coordination on draft

IV. APPROVAL AND PUBLICATION

A. NORMAL TRACK

OR

B. FAST TRACK

1. NIO distributes coordinated draft to DCI and NFIB principals for consideration
2. IIMs approved and published by C/NIC unless DCI calls NFIB meeting
3. NIEs discussed and approved at NFIB meeting unless telephone vote is called

1. NIO distributes coordinated draft to DCI and NFIB principals for consideration
2. SIIM approved and published by C/NIC unless DCI calls NFIB meeting
3. SNIEs discussed and approved at NFIB meeting unless telephone vote is called

END OF TRANSMISSION