

24 June 1987

Summary of NFIB Agency Views on Procedures

Comments prepared for your 16 June meeting and for the NFIB session on "objectivity and integrity" demonstrate a broad consensus within the Community on seven principal areas:

I. The number of estimates should be reduced and more rigorous standards for both topics and quality should be adopted.

--The Director of INR urges that NFIB review production plans with the aim of producing fewer, more relevant and better products. He observes that "there appears to be considerable question as to whether the products serve any useful purpose."

--The DDI also contends that "We are clearly doing too many estimates, and too many of our estimates look more like research papers than estimates." He recommends that estimates address only critical intelligence questions on important policy issues and that they be "analytic and estimative in nature."

--DIA proposes that the number of estimates in the NIC Production Plan be reduced "to a reasonable number," allowing for ad hoc requests and a better balance between volume and resources. DIA would exclude drafts which are "largely background papers containing current/historical information but little if any estimative judgments geared to policy-maker needs."

--Air Force and Navy agree that estimates should meet the test of "utility to the policy arena" and that their "substantive thrust" should be estimative, not "factual."

--The Director of NSA points out that "the quality of TORs is not uniformly high. Yet that is where the issues should be framed, not after someone has provided a draft and community representatives are left with nothing to do but take petty swipes at details."

II. Estimates should be shorter, more concise and more easily grasped by busy readers.

--DIA, Army, Navy and Air Force all agree that "some estimates are too lengthy" and unwieldy. DIA particularly stresses a need to shorten the Key Judgments and suggested that Executive Summaries might be prepared for "those without time to read."

III. More careful attention should be given to defining the purpose and concept of estimates before drafting begins. Drafts should hold narratives of facts and events to a minimum. The main thrust should be analytic and estimative.

--The Director of INR suggests that estimate chairmen should consult

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NFIB representatives before TORs are drafted. Chairmen should convene pre-TOR meetings to discuss concepts and definitions of papers.

--DIA, Air Force and Navy agree that most estimates devote excessive space and attention to reciting facts and recent history, at the expense of thoughtful and carefully crafted projections of future trends, events, and alternatives.

IV. The NIOs, acting as estimate chairmen, should perform the role of manager, coordinator and "honest broker" in pulling together the views of NFIB agencies. They should not advocate any particular analytic line, nor should they coordinate or chair estimates they have drafted.

V. More time should be allowed for review and coordination.

--DIA recommends "Slow down the interagency process to allow more time for review by experts."

--INR suggests that "NIOs should be held to established coordination procedures."

--Navy proposes that "specific production timelines" be eliminated.

VI. Changes in a coordinated text either before or after NFIB consideration should be held to a minimum and should be reviewed and approved by NFIB representatives.

--INR proposes that if the DCI makes changes in a final draft, the paper should be remanded to the representatives for review and comment.

VII. NFIB Principals should be involved earlier and more deeply in the process.

--DIA counsels "Get the Principals involved early, especially on those estimates that promise to be controversial."

--The DDI expressed the view that NFIB should approve TORs "to ensure that only important topics are selected for NFIB consideration, and that the critical issues are being addressed in the estimative process."

--The Director of INR calls for interagency consultations prior to the drafting of TORs.

--The Director of NSA complains that "TORs are pulled out of the air. They arrive too late for me to review them."