ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRET/CODEWORD

Outside System

1355X

Information /Action

13 March 1973

MORI c00445278

MEMORANDUM FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM: A. W. MARSHALL

SUBJECT: Experimental Intelligence Products to Improve the Communication of Uncertainty

Some while ago I initiated a program of experimental intelligence products. The payoffs have been slim, but a few results are beginning to appear. The purpose of this memorandum is to show you some samples of one particular line of products.

They have been designed to respond to:

-- An expressed view of yours that top level policy making involves making complicated bets on the future, and that you wished intelligence estimates were designed to give you the betting odds.

-- Your saying that while you could not describe the kinds of intelligence products you want, you would immediately recognize them when you saw them.

Three products have been developed thus far. They are:

-- The probability of Sino-Soviet hostilities in the next twelve months. (See Tab A)

-- The outlook for hostilities to develop in Cyprus. (See Tab B)

-- A study of the possibilities of a Canal treaty with Panama in the next year. (See Tab C)

SECRET/CODEWORD (XGDS) - 2, 3

DECLAS - Impdet
BYAUTH - H. A. Kissinger

2

If you have time I recommend you look at these products as a first step in responding to your needs. The Sino-Soviet study (Tab A) is the best of the set.

The products:

-- Attempt to produce estimates of betting odds.

-- Are put forward as the beginning of a survey of the market; to obtain answers to questions such as: Do you find this new type of estimate useful? , etc.

The attached products are not fully developed. More time thus far has been spent in developing a mode of analysis that will produce estimates of numerical probabilities attached to various possible future outcomes, than in developing alternative ways in which such estimates might best be communicated to top level policymakers. I now have the intelligence people working on the latter problem.

I have tried the currently available products on other members of the NSC staff. They have:

-- Liked the idea of the numerical probability estimates.

-- Found the detailed probability trees intellectually indigestible.

Do you find these products of any interest?

Yes ___*AK*___   *Though still in*

No _____   *very elementary stage*

Comment_____

Have you any suggestions to make as to how to better display, or summarize the analysis results?

Comment_____