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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Fifty Years *of the* CIA

Editors

Michael Warner and
Scott A. Koch

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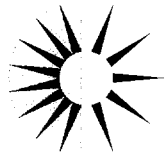
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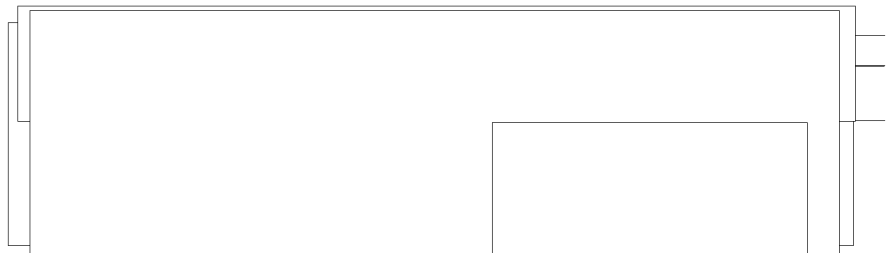
History Staff
Center for the Study of Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
1998

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Michael Warner

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Foreword (U)

This volume continues the effort of the CIA History Staff and the Center for the Study of Intelligence to make the history of the Central Intelligence Agency more accessible and understandable to Agency employees and other members of the Intelligence Community. The editors, both members of the History Staff, have compiled the first collection of classified, scholarly essays on CIA history to be published in book form. Scholars and journalists have tried to interpret the Agency's past without having access to its records. Some Agency officers with such access have also set down their reflections or penned chronicles of various offices and operations. This collection combines the best of both approaches; its essays meet academic standards of historical research and presentation, and were prepared from relevant CIA and US Government records. (U)

The editors have attempted to present a balanced picture of the Agency's functions and its performance in carrying out its essential missions. Successes and setbacks are described here to help the reader gain an appreciation of the full historical context in which the Agency aided the United States in winning the Cold War and then in adapting to new and uncertain international realities. The volume includes essays on the work of all four directorates and the major functional tasks of the Agency as a whole, spanning the five decades of the Agency's existence (but naturally weighted toward the earlier years because of the availability or sensitivity of sources). They touch on the Agency's presence in almost all of the main geographic areas of its work. Many of the essays show how the Agency's components worked alongside their counterparts in various parts of the Intelligence Community, the military, and other agencies of the US Government. The editors have also taken pains to show the many ways in which CIA has served the interests of and interacted with policymakers in the White House and Congress. (U)

The editors have included an explanatory introduction that ties the various essays together. It should be read carefully, as it can stand alone as a worthy contribution to the interpretive literature on the Agency's past. The introduction explains the dynamic tension between

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the Agency's several missions, from analysis to collection to covert operations, and highlights the ways in which the fourteen historical articles in this volume illustrate the problems and the advantages that have historically resulted from the combination of such varied responsibilities and capabilities in a single intelligence organization. (U)

Four of the essays have been previously published; all the rest are being made available to a wider readership for the first time here. Most were adapted from manuscript histories at various stages of preparation under the supervision of the CIA History Staff. Two articles were excerpted from limited-circulation histories prepared in the 1970s and now held in the History Staff's files. A note on the contributors and essays, which follows the introduction, explains the origin of each essay and summarizes the backgrounds and Agency careers of the respective authors. (U)

Gerald K. Haines
Chief Historian
October 1997

(This foreword is Unclassified.)

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Introduction (U)

Almost since its founding, the Central Intelligence Agency has attempted to preserve and interpret its past. As part of this effort, Agency officers and historians drafted several hundred historical studies of CIA offices and operations. Although concentrating on clandestine activities, those studies touch on every major field of Agency work. Most of these studies have tended to concentrate on the accomplishments of Agency leaders, on specific projects, or on individual offices. These early histories preserve a wealth of detail about CIA's origins and development, but they offer comparatively few insights into the functioning of the CIA as a whole and the Agency's role and place in the evolving intelligence, foreign policy, and security structures of the US Government. (U)

In recent years the Agency has sponsored a different way of studying its past. Using newly available files and benefiting from wider declassification of US and foreign records, scholars employed by CIA have adopted a more comprehensive approach, looking at Agency leaders, activities, and offices as part of US Government policies and operations and of America's role in the Cold War. The new approach examines what the Agency did or did not accomplish in its historical setting, instead of merely chronicling the activities of specific individuals or offices. (U)

What these new studies have shown is a tension between the Agency's major missions of strategic warning and clandestine activities. For half a century the Central Intelligence Agency has been the nation's primary agency for both missions. Strategic warning entails the concentration of information available to the US Government so that the discrete bits of publicly and covertly acquired data can be assessed for whatever they might reveal of an enemy's or potential adversary's intentions and capabilities. Clandestine activities are simply those actions that the US Government wishes, for reasons of national security, to undertake in ways that conceal an official US hand. America, and every other nation, has always had some requirement and capability to

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perform both missions. Before World War II, however, both functions were performed in the breach by the president himself and a few trusted advisers, with no controlling authority short of the Oval Office. (U)

The relationship between these two missions has formed the central dynamic in the Agency's unfolding history. No law of nature or intelligence practice dictates the same organization provide strategic warning and manage covert activities, and these two missions have not always fitted together comfortably, as several essays in this volume demonstrate. They are not mutually exclusive activities, but it takes a conscious effort to make them work harmoniously. Left to their own, they often go their separate ways. Nevertheless, conducting both missions from under the same organizational roof has occasionally given rise to opportunities and inspirations that might otherwise have been missed. (U)

These two missions actually came together in the same agency as much by accident as by design. The Agency began its statutory existence in September 1947, but this event in a sense merely ratified a series of decisions taken after the end of the Second World War. When President Truman dissolved the wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in September 1945, he had no clear idea how to proceed in building the modern peacetime intelligence structure that he and his advisers believed they needed in an atomic age. Over the course of 1946, the White House created a small staff—the Central Intelligence Group (CIG)—to collate intelligence reports from the armed services and civilian departments, and allowed CIG to absorb the espionage and counterintelligence offices left over from OSS (which had been preserved in the War Department). Initially these disparate components in the new CIG shared little in common except an interest in foreign secrets and a sense that both strategic warning and clandestine activities abroad required “central” coordination. (U)

Under a series of capable Directors of Central Intelligence, CIG and the Truman administration came to realize how strategic warning and clandestine activities complemented one another. This realization was codified in the National Security Act of 1947, which renamed CIG the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and gave it a statutory basis. The new CIA's performance in the worsening Cold War in Europe and East Asia would soon prove the flexibility and strength of the government's new intelligence arm. (U)

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President Truman's first mission for the Agency was to collate and analyze the pile of cables and reports that daily filled his inbox. Most of official Washington remembered all too vividly the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, and the President and many of his aides believed (with some justification) that that disaster could have been averted if the various departments had simply shared their intelligence. This view of intelligence analysis had to be modified when it encountered everyday reality. Woodrow Kuhns's essay on the Office of Reports and Estimates (ORE)—CIA's first analytic arm—explains how the new office spent its five-year existence interpreting the intelligence pouring into Washington. That was no easy task. The capability itself had to be built almost from the ground up (in part because the OSS's pioneering Research and Analysis Branch had been disbanded after the war), potential analysts were scarce, and the sources available to CIA were often, for various reasons, lacking. Dr. Kuhns shows how ORE, before DCI Walter Bedell Smith replaced it with a new Directorate of Intelligence, nonetheless built a credible analytic record, particularly in divining Stalin's unwillingness to risk war to secure Soviet ambitions in Europe and Asia. (U)

The Cold War also placed new demands on CIA's clandestine services. Nicholas Dujmovic separately illustrate the Agency's attempts under very different conditions to gather intelligence on the growing Communist threat. In Western China, Douglas Mackiernan reported on the deteriorating situation and opened contacts with anti-Communist forces before tragically losing his life in April 1950, the first CIA officer to die in the line of duty.

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Covert action for a time became perhaps the Agency's preeminent mission during the Korean war and throughout the tenure of DCI Allen Dulles (1953-61). As the ideological battlelines stabilized in Europe and the Korean war ended, the main stage of superpower contention began shifting to developing nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

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Bold CIA operations convinced President Eisenhower and Agency leaders that covert action offered a cheap, effective, and safe means of reversing Communist gains in what would come to be called the Third World. One of those operations, TPAJAX, is known to scholars and the public, but Scott Koch reveals important details of the project. (S)

Technological advances during the 1950s for the first time permitted Agency officers to surmount the Soviet Union's security systems and collect accurate information on deployments and capabilities. Soviet deception measures combined with incomplete intelligence, however, to convince many US Government officials that the USSR was outstripping the United States in the production of jet bombers and long-range missiles. This faulty intelligence produced the "bomber gap" and "missile gap" controversies. The missile gap in particular loomed large after the Soviets' 1957 launch of the Sputnik satellites, and even became an issue in the 1960 presidential campaign. According to Leonard Parkinson and Logan Potter, hard analytical labor using a variety of sources—from human agents to manned reconnaissance aircraft to the first imagery satellites—proved the missile gap illusory. Accurate data from these sources about the scope and pace of Soviet missile deployments may well have saved billions of dollars. From these sources President Kennedy soon received Intelligence Community information and assessments on the strategic balance that would prove invaluable a year later as he sought a peaceful solution to the Cuban Missile Crisis—the closest the superpowers ever came to nuclear war. (U)

The growing importance of satellites and other technological means prompted DCI John McCone to reorganize and enhance the Agency's scientific capabilities in the early 1960s. David Robarge shows how McCone ultimately recruited a brilliant young physicist, Albert (Bud) Wheelon, to run the new Directorate of Science and Technology (DST). Under Wheelon's leadership, the Directorate during the 1960s played a major role in the National Reconnaissance Program and the development of new collection technologies. Although full consolidation of Agency scientific and technical functions would not take place until the early 1970s, the DST took primary responsibility for collecting information vital to the Agency's strategic warning mission. (C)

The conflict in Vietnam consumed much of CIA's operational and analytic energies in the 1960s. Tom Ahern's description of the plots against President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam in 1963 demonstrates the importance that CIA's Saigon station played in the direction of the war—and the importance that an individual case officer could

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suddenly assume in the deliberations in Washington. Harold P. Ford's evaluation of the Intelligence Community's analysis of the warning indicators before the Communists' 1968 Tet offensive shows again how hard it has been for analysts to anticipate sudden shifts in an opponent's strategy. Some CIA and Community officers read the signs and predicted an attack, but the uncertain evidence and the debates among analysts—and policymakers themselves—prevented a clear warning from reaching the White House and commanders in the field. (U)

The nationwide debates over the Vietnam war fractured the political consensus that had long underlain bipartisan support for a strongly anti-Communist foreign policy and an activist Central Intelligence Agency. The Watergate scandal in the mid-1970s—itsself partly a product of President Nixon's response to criticism over Vietnam—briefly threatened to engulf the Agency. Revelations emerging in conjunction with Watergate and allegations of CIA wrongdoing prompted far-reaching Congressional probes of CIA and the entire Intelligence Community. Gerald Haines examines one of the most important of these investigations, led by Representative Otis Pike of New York. The Pike Committee investigation is not as well-known today as Senator Frank Church's Select Committee, but Dr. Haines shows that the House's effort was, despite its ultimate failure, actually the more insightful of the two probes. As such it heralded a new era of Congressional oversight for CIA, and a new legal climate for Agency operations. (U)

The revival of Cold War tensions after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 helped to refocus CIA efforts on "the main enemy." Under the Reagan administration, the Agency once again launched significant covert action programs on four continents.

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With the end of the Cold War in early 1990s, CIA found itself facing new challenges. Ironically, some of the problems analysts and operators faced in this new era look much like those confronting their predecessors two generations earlier. Michael Warner's essay on Agency analysis of Iraqi intentions and capabilities in the Gulf war argues that predicting sudden, dramatic shifts in opposition strategy is still as difficult as it had been in 1941 or 1968. Technological and political changes, however, have added new wrinkles to CIA's analytical mission. Dr. Warner explains that "smart weapons" and improved national reconnaissance capabilities opened new means of support to American military forces in the field, while Congress's growing role as a consumer of finished intelligence brought continued questions as well as opportunities for the Agency. (C)

Throughout its five decades of operation, the Agency's dedicated and sometimes gifted personnel have labored in strange and even dangerous conditions all over the world. Sacrifices were also made by employees who labored in safe but nevertheless cramped and uncomfortable temporary quarters scattered around downtown Washington during the Agency's early years, until the opening of a modern headquarters compound in Langley, Virginia, in September 1961. Peyton Anderson and Jack Pfeiffer explain how the Original Headquarters Building was built, and in the process they explain how and why much of the physical environment familiar to so many Agency veterans came to be. Their essay chronicles, in particular, the enormous contributions of the Directorate of Support (now the Directorate of Administration), and especially of its longtime chief, Col. Lawrence K. White. (U)

Few government departments so quickly have the opportunity to assess objectively how well they have performed their missions. The end of the Cold War provided just such a moment for the Central Intelligence Agency when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1997. Viewed from the present, the CIA made a palpable difference in bringing about the end of the Soviet empire. The Cold War was in many ways an intelligence struggle, drawing upon the Agency's expertise in foreign collection, analysis, covert action, counterintelligence, and technological innovation. CIA did not win every confrontation, or every battle, but it won often enough. The awkward fit between CIA's primary missions—strategic warning and clandestine operations abroad—sometimes caused problems. That same tension, however, also gave rise to inspirations and innovations that helped to provide the ultimate margin of victory in the Cold War. (U)

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Notes on the Essays and Contributors

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The Office of Reports and Estimates (U)

Woodrow J. Kuhns of the CIA History Staff wrote this article as the Preface for his collection of declassified documents, *Assessing the Soviet Threat: The Early Cold War Years*, published by CIA in 1997. A graduate of Kutztown State College in Pennsylvania, Dr. Kuhns received his M.A. and Ph.D. in political science from Pennsylvania State University. Before joining the Center for the Study of Intelligence in 1996, he was an analyst in the Directorate of Intelligence. He also served for three years as CIA's representative on the faculty of the Naval War College. (U)

The First Star: Charles Mackiernan in China and Tibet (C)

This account of the first CIA officer to die in the line of duty developed from a speech that Acting DCI George Tenet delivered at the annual ceremony at the Memorial Wall in the lobby of the Original Headquarters Building in May 1997. **Nicholas Dujmovic** received his Ph.D. in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Prior to coming to CIA in 1990, he served as a US Coast Guard officer and an instructor at the US Coast Guard Academy. He began his CIA career as a Directorate of Intelligence analyst [redacted]

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[redacted] Dr. Dujmovic has also served on rotation to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and was then-ADCI Tenet's speechwriter. He is currently an editor for the *President's Daily Brief*. (C)

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Closing the Missile Gap (U)

This article was adapted from "The Development of Strategic Research at CIA, 1947-1967," Office of Strategic Research (OSR-2), May 1974. A copy of the original history, which focuses on the Office of Research and Reports's (ORR) role in resolving the issue, resides in History Staff files. **Leonard F. Parkinson** was born in 1937 in Kansas. After graduating from the University of Kansas, he joined CIA's Foreign Broadcast Information Division. From the mid-1960s he worked as an industrial and economic analyst in the Directorate of Intelligence until his resignation in 1977. **Logan H. Potter** was born in 1920 in Seattle. He graduated from the US Merchant Marine Academy in 1944. Mr. Potter served as a junior officer in the US Navy at the end of World War II, attended Georgetown University, and held several jobs with the US Government before joining ORR in 1952. He worked as an industrial and economic analyst with the Directorate of Intelligence until his retirement in 1980. (U)

The Construction of the Original Headquarters Building (U)

This essay was adapted from a classified history by **Peyton F. Anderson** and **Jack B. Pfeiffer**, "Planning and Construction of the Agency Headquarters Building, January 1946-July 1963" (DCI-6), June 1973, in CIA History Staff files. Peyton F. Anderson was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1921. He served as a sergeant in the US Army Air Forces in World War II, and worked with the Veterans Administration after the war. Mr. Anderson joined the Agency in 1949. A longtime Office of Logistics officer, he was assigned to the Building Planning Staff during the construction of the Original Headquarters Building. After serving two tours supporting the CIA station in Saigon, Mr. Anderson resigned from CIA in 1973, and died in 1976. Jack B. Pfeiffer was born in 1920 in Peoria, Illinois. He earned a doctorate in History at the University of Chicago, and worked for several years as an intelligence analyst for the US Air Force before joining CIA's Office of Research and Reports in 1955. He transferred to the Historical Staff of the Office of the DCI in 1969; his chief project there was a multivolume official history of the Bay of Pigs operation. Dr. Pfeiffer resigned from the Agency in 1984, and died in 1997. (U)

John McCone, Bud Wheelon, and the Wizards of Langley: The Creation of the DS&T and the Battle Over Spy Satellites (U)

This article is part of a study-in-progress of John McCone's tenure as Director of Central Intelligence. **David Robarge** received bachelor's and master's degrees from George Mason University and a doctorate in history

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from Columbia University. He has taught on the adjunct history faculties of both schools. Dr. Robarge was a historian for the Rockefeller Family and a researcher at the Gannett Center for Media Studies before coming to the CIA in 1989. After serving briefly in the Office of Information Resources, he worked as an intelligence analyst in the Counterterrorism Center, the Office of Leadership Analysis, and the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. He joined the History Staff in 1996. (U)

The Demise of the House of Ngo (U)

This account of the closing episode in the Agency's relationship with the Ngo Dinh Diem government in South Vietnam is adapted from *The CIA and the House of Ngo*. That volume is the first of three History Staff studies on the CIA role in Vietnam. Drafted for the History Staff by **Thomas L. Ahern, Jr.**, it will be published in 1998. Mr. Ahern was educated at the University of Notre Dame and joined CIA in 1954. He became an officer in the Directorate of Plans in 1956. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Mr. Ahern retired from the Agency in 1989. The editors, with Mr. Ahern's cooperation, added material on DCI John A. McCone's role in the US Government's halting encouragement of the coup d'état against Ngo Dinh Diem. (U)

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The Shock of the Tet Offensive (U)

This account of the performance of US intelligence prior to the enemy's sudden Tet offensive of early 1968 is adapted from **Harold P. Ford's** *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers: Three Episodes, 1962-1968*. Drafted on contract for the CIA History Staff in 1995, it was published in June 1998. Dr. Ford was educated at the University of Redlands, served as a naval officer in the Pacific in World War II, and took a Ph.D. in History at the University of Chicago. In 1950 he joined CIA's Office of Policy Coordination, but soon transferred to the Directorate of Intelligence, where he served the bulk of his Agency career. After serving [REDACTED] Dr. Ford worked for the Office of National Estimates and participated in several Vietnam War analytical working groups. He retired from CIA in 1974 and worked for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Dr. Ford returned to the Agency's National Intelligence Council in 1980; he served as Acting Chief of the Council before retiring again in 1986. (S)

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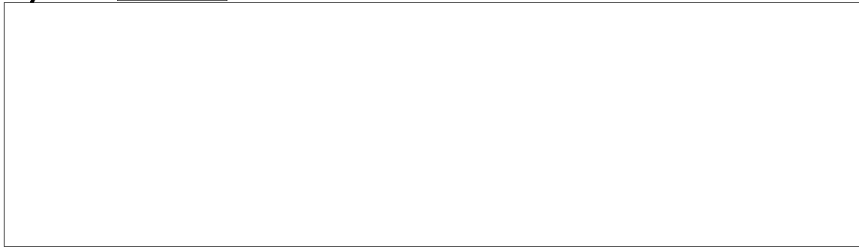
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Hunting the Rogue Elephant: The Pike Committee Investigation (U)

This account of the Congressional probe was excerpted from **Gerald K. Haines's** draft history of CIA relations with Congress.

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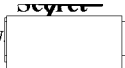
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Directors of Central Intelligence (U)

Sidney W. Souers	23 Jan 1946 – 10 Jun 1946
Hoyt S. Vandenberg	10 Jun 1946 – 1 May 1947
Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter	1 May 1947 – 7 Oct 1950
Walter B. Smith	7 Oct 1950 – 9 Feb 1953
Allen W. Dulles	26 Feb 1953 – 29 Nov 1961
John A. McCone	29 Nov 1961 – 28 Apr 1965
William F. Raborn, Jr.	28 Apr 1965 – 30 Jun 1966
Richard Helms	30 Jun 1966 – 2 Feb 1973
James R. Schlesinger	2 Feb 1973 – 2 Jul 1973
William E. Colby	4 Sep 1973 – 30 Jan 1976
George Bush	30 Jan 1976 – 20 Jan 1977
Stansfield Turner	9 Mar 1977 – 20 Jan 1981
William J. Casey	28 Jan 1981 – 29 Jan 1987
William H. Webster	26 May 1987 – 31 Aug 1991
Robert M. Gates	6 Nov 1991 – 20 Jan 1993
R. James Woolsey	5 Feb 1993 – 9 Jan 1995
John M. Deutch	10 May 1995 – 13 Dec 1996
George J. Tenet	11 July 1997 – present

(This chronology is Unclassified.)

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The Creation of the Central Intelligence Group (U)

Michael Warner

January 1996 marked the 50th anniversary of President Harry Truman's appointment of the first Director of Central Intelligence and the creation of the Central Intelligence Group (CIG), CIA's institutional predecessor. The office diary of the President's chief military adviser, Flt. Adm. William D. Leahy, records a rather unexpected event on 24 January 1946:

At lunch today in the White House, with only members of the Staff present, Rear Admiral Sidney Souers and I were presented [by President Truman] with black cloaks, black hats, and wooden daggers, and the President read an amusing directive to us outlining some of our duties in the Central Intelligence Agency [sic], "Cloak and Dagger Group of Snoopers."¹

With this whimsical ceremony, President Truman christened Sidney W. Souers as the first Director of Central Intelligence. (U)

The humor and symbolism of this inauguration must have been lost on many veterans of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the big intelligence and covert action agency that President Truman had suddenly dismantled at the end of World War II, only four months earlier. CIG inevitably suffered (and still suffers) from comparisons with OSS. The Group began its brief existence as a bureaucratic anomaly, with no independent budget, no statutory mandate, and staffers loaned from the permanent departments of the government. Nevertheless, CIG grew rapidly and soon gained a fair measure of organizational autonomy. The Truman administration vested it with two basic missions—strategic warning, and the collection of foreign intelligence—although interdepartmental rivalries prevented the Group from performing either

¹ Diary of William D. Leahy, 24 January 1946, Library of Congress. Admiral Leahy was simultaneously designated the President's representative to the new, four-member National Intelligence Authority (CIG's oversight body). The other members were the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy. (U)

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mission to the fullest. Strategic warning and clandestine collection are the two basic duties of today's CIA.² (U)

Historical accounts of President Truman's dissolution of OSS and creation of CIG have concentrated on assigning credit to certain actors and blame to their opponents and rivals.³ The passage of time and the gradually expanding availability of sources, however, promise to foster more holistic approaches to this subject. (U)

The problem for the Truman administration that autumn of 1945 was that no one, including the President, knew just what he wanted, while each department and intelligence service knew full well what sorts of results it wanted to avoid. With this context in mind, it is informative to view the gestation of Central Intelligence Group in the fall of 1945 with an eye toward the way in which Truman administration officials preserved certain essential functions of OSS and brought them together again in a centralized, peacetime foreign intelligence agency. Those decisions created a peacetime intelligence structure that, while still incomplete, preserved some of the most useful capabilities of the old OSS while resting on a firmer institutional foundation. (U)

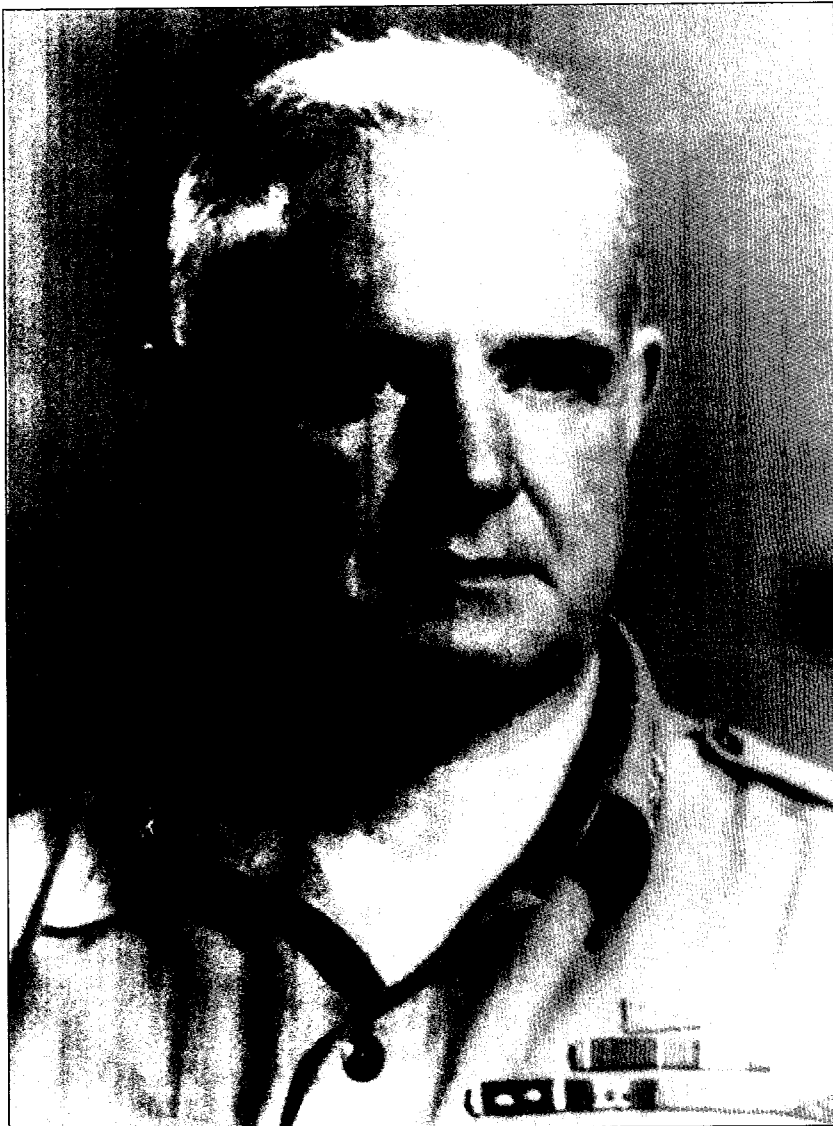
From War to Peace (U)

Before World War II, the US Government had not seen fit to centralize either strategic warning or clandestine activities, let alone combine both missions in a single organization. The exigencies of global conflict persuaded Washington to build a formidable intelligence apparatus in

² A recent unclassified statement to CIA employees entitled "Vision, Mission, and Values of the Central Intelligence Agency" identified the following as the CIA's basic missions: "We support the President, the National Security Council, and all who make and execute US national security policy by:

- Providing accurate, evidence-based comprehensive and timely foreign intelligence related to national security; and
- Conducting counterintelligence activities, special activities, and other functions related to foreign intelligence and national security as directed by the President." (U)

³ Several authors describe the founding and institutional arrangements of CIG. Three CIA officers had wide access to the relevant records in writing their accounts; see Arthur B. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency: An Instrument of Government, to 1950*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990); Thomas F. Troy, *Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency* (Washington DC: CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1981); and Ludwell Lee Montague, *General Walter Bedell Smith as Director of Central Intelligence: October 1950-February 1953* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), pp. 15-35. See also Bradley F. Smith, *The Shadow Warriors: OSS and the Origins of the CIA* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). B. Nelson MacPherson offers thoughtful commentary on this literature in "CIA Origins as Viewed from Within," *Intelligence and National Security* 10 (April 1995), pp. 353-359. (U)



Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan (U)

Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan's Office of Strategic Services. OSS's novelty was that it was America's first centralized and nondepartmental intelligence arm. As such, it encountered an enduring resentment from the established services like the Justice Department's Federal Bureau of

Investigation (FBI) and the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department General Staff (better known as the G-2). (U)

General Donovan advocated the creation of a permanent foreign intelligence service after victory, mentioning the idea at several points during the war.⁴ President Franklin D. Roosevelt made no promises, however, and after Roosevelt's death in April 1945 and the German surrender that May, President Truman felt no compulsion to keep OSS alive. Mr. Truman apparently disliked Donovan (perhaps fearing that Donovan's proposed intelligence establishment might one day be used against Americans).⁵ More importantly, the President and his top military advisers knew that America's wartime intelligence success had been based not on human sources but on cryptologic breakthroughs—in which OSS had played only a supporting role. Signals intelligence was the province of the Army and Navy, two jealous rivals that only barely cooperated; not even General Donovan contemplated centralized, civilian control of this field. (U)

President Truman could have tried to transform OSS into a central intelligence service conducting clandestine collection, analysis and operations abroad. He declined the opportunity and dismantled OSS instead. Within three years, however, Truman had overseen the creation of a central intelligence service conducting clandestine collection, analysis, and operations abroad. Several authors have concluded from the juxtaposition of these facts that Truman dissolved OSS out of ignorance, haste, and pique, and that he tacitly admitted his mistake when he endorsed the reassembly of many OSS functions in the new CIA. Even Presidential aide Clark Clifford has complained that Mr. Truman “prematurely, abruptly and unwisely disbanded the OSS.”⁶ (U)

A look at the mood in Washington, however, places President Truman's decision in a more favorable light. At the onset of the postwar era, the nation and Congress wanted demobilization—fast. OSS was already marked for huge reductions in any event because so many of its personnel served with guerrilla, commando, and propaganda units considered extraneous in peacetime. Congress regarded OSS as a temporary “war agency,” one of many bureaucratic hybrids raised for the

⁴ Donovan's “memorandum for the president,” dated 18 November 1944, is reprinted in Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, pp. 445-447. (U)

⁵ Richard Dunlop, *Donovan: America's Master Spy* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1982), pp. 467-468. See also Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, p. 267. (U)

⁶ Clark Clifford, it bears noting, played little if any role in the dissolution of OSS; see *Counsel to the President: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 165. William R. Corson calls the affair a “sorry display of presidential bad manners and shortsightedness”; *The Armies of Ignorance: The Rise of the American Intelligence Empire* (New York: Dial Press, 1977), p. 247. (U)

national emergency that would have to be weeded out after victory.⁷ Indeed, early in 1945 Congress passed a law requiring the White House to seek a specific Congressional appropriation for any new agency operating for longer than 12 months.⁸ This obstacle alone might have blocked a Presidential attempt to preserve OSS or to create a permanent peacetime intelligence agency along the lines of General Donovan's plan, especially given the wide circulation of innuendo, planted by Donovan's rivals, that the General was urging the creation of an "American Gestapo."⁹ (U)

Truman had barely moved into the Oval Office when he received a scathing report on OSS. (Indeed, this same report might well have been the primary source for the above-mentioned innuendo.) A few months before he died, President Roosevelt had asked an aide, Col. Richard Park, Jr., to conduct an informal investigation of OSS and General Donovan. Colonel Park completed his report in March, but apparently Roosevelt never read it. The day after Roosevelt's death, Park attended an Oval Office meeting with President Truman. Although no minutes of their discussion survived, Colonel Park probably summarized his findings for the new President; in any event, he sent Truman a copy of his report on OSS at about that time. That document castigated OSS for bumbling and lax security, and complained that Donovan's proposed intelligence reform had "all the earmarks of a Gestapo system." Colonel Park recommended abolishing OSS, although he conceded that some of the Office's personnel and activities were worth preserving in other agencies. OSS's Research and Analysis Branch, in particular, could be "salvaged" and given to the State Department.¹⁰ (U)

Donovan himself hardly helped his own cause. OSS was attached to the Executive Office of the President, but technically drew its orders and pay from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Donovan refused to compromise on his proposals with JCS representatives delegated to study postwar intelligence needs. The General insisted that a permanent intelligence arm ought to answer directly to the President and not to his

⁷ The Bureau of the Budget had warned Donovan in September 1944 that OSS would be treated as a war agency to be liquidated after the end of hostilities; Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, pp. 219-220. (U)

⁸ The legislation was titled the "Independent Offices Appropriation Act of 1945," Public Law 358, 78th Congress, Second Session. (U)

⁹ For an indication of the mixed Congressional attitudes toward OSS, see Smith, *The Shadow Warriors*, pp. 404-405. (U)

¹⁰ The Park report resides in the Rose A. Conway Files at the Harry S. Truman Library, "OSS/Donovan" folder; see especially pp. 1-3, and Appendix III. Thomas F. Troy noticed strong similarities between the Park report and the famous Walter Trohan "Gestapo" stories in the Chicago Tribune; see *Donovan and the CIA*, pp. 267, 282. (U)

advisers.¹¹ The Joint Chiefs had already rescued Donovan once, when the Army's G-2 had tried to subsume OSS in 1943. This time the White House did not ask the Joint Chiefs' opinion. The JCS stood aside and let the Office meet its fate. (U)

Taking the Initiative (U)

The White House evidently concluded that the problem was how to create a new peacetime intelligence organization without Donovan and his Office. Many senior advisers in the Roosevelt and Truman administrations believed that the nation needed some sort of permanent intelligence establishment; that it could not return to its pre-1941 ways. The White House's Bureau of the Budget took up this issue shortly before the death of President Roosevelt in April 1945, presenting itself to Roosevelt as a disinterested observer, and creating a small team to study the government's intelligence requirements and recommend possible reforms. Soon after he took office, President Truman endorsed the Budget Bureau's effort.¹² (U)

In August, the Budget Bureau began drafting liquidation plans for OSS and other war agencies, but initially the Bureau assumed that liquidation could be stretched over a period of time sufficient to preserve OSS's most valuable assets while the Office liquidated functions and released personnel no longer needed in peacetime. On 27 or 28 August, however, the President or his principal "reconversion" advisers (Budget Director Harold D. Smith, Special Counsel Samuel Rosenman, and Director of War Mobilization and Reconversion John W. Snyder) suddenly recommended dissolving OSS almost immediately.¹³ Bureau staffers had already conceived the idea of giving a part of OSS, the Research and Analysis Branch (R&A), to the State Department as "a going concern." The imminent dissolution of OSS meant that something had to be done quickly about the rest of the Office; someone in the

¹¹ Montague, *General Walter Bedell Smith*, pp. 19-21. For more on Donovan's refusal to compromise, see Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, pp. 270-271. (U)

¹² George F. Schwarzwalder, Division of Administrative Management, Bureau of the Budget, project completion report, "Intelligence and Internal Security Program of the Government" [Project 217], 28 November 1947, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 51 (Bureau of the Budget), Series 39.35, "Progress Reports," Box 181, p. 5. (U)

¹³ George Schwarzwalder recorded several years later that the Budget Bureau learned on 24 August that OSS would be dissolved; see his 1947 progress report on Project 217, cited above, p. 9. (U)

Budget Bureau (probably the Assistant Director for Administrative Management, Donald C. Stone) quickly decided that the War Department could receive the remainder of OSS "for salvage and liquidation."¹⁴ Stone told frustrated OSS officers on 29 August that important functions of the Office might survive:

Stone stated that he felt that the secret and counterintelligence activities of OSS should probably be continued at a fairly high level for probably another year. He said he would support such a program.¹⁵ (U)

The reconversion trio of Smith, Snyder and Rosenman endorsed the Budget Bureau's general plan for intelligence reorganization and passed it to President Truman on 4 September 1945.¹⁶ Donovan predictably exploded when he learned of the plan, but the President ignored Donovan's protests, telling Harold Smith on 13 September to "recommend the dissolution of Donovan's outfit even if Donovan did not like it."¹⁷ Within a week the Budget Bureau had the requisite papers ready for the President's signature. Executive Order 9621 on 20 September dissolved OSS as of 1 October 1945, sending R&A to State and everything else to the War Department. The Order also directed the Secretary of War to liquidate OSS activities "whenever he deems it compatible with the national interest."¹⁸ That same day, President Truman sent a letter of appreciation (drafted by Donald Stone) to General Donovan.¹⁹ The transfer of OSS's R&A Branch to the State Department, wrote the President, marked "the beginning of the development of a coordinated system of foreign intelligence within the permanent framework of the

¹⁴ Donald C. Stone, Assistant Director for Administrative Management, Bureau of the Budget, to Harold Smith, Director, "Termination of the Office of Strategic Services and the Transfer of its Activities to the State and War Departments," 27 August 1945, reproduced in Thomas Thorne, Jr., and David S. Patterson, editors, *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* series (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996), pp. 22-23. Hereinafter cited as *FRUS*. (U)

¹⁵ G.E. Ramsey, Jr., Bureau of the Budget, to Deputy Comptroller McCandless, "Conference on OSS with Don Stone and OSS representatives, Aug. 29," 29 August 1945, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 51 (Bureau of the Budget), Series 39.19, "OSS Organization and Functions," Box 67. (U)

¹⁶ Smith, Rosenman, and Snyder to Truman, "Termination of the Office of Strategic Services and the Transfer of its Activities to the State and War Departments," 4 September 1945, Official File, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri. (U)

¹⁷ The quoted phrase comes from the Harold Smith's office diary for 13 September 1945, in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York. (U)

¹⁸ Executive Order 9621, 20 September 1945, *FRUS*, pp. 44-46. (U)

¹⁹ Stone's authorship is noted in Corson, *Armies of Ignorance*, p. 246. (U)

Government.” The President also implicitly repeated Donald Stone’s earlier assurances to OSS, informing Donovan that the War Department would maintain certain OSS components providing “services of a military nature the need for which will continue for some time.”²⁰ (U)

OSS was through, but what would survive the wreck? The President probably gave little thought to those ostensibly necessary “services of a military nature” that would somehow continue under War Department auspices. Truman shared the widespread feeling that the government needed better intelligence, although he provided little positive guidance on the matter and said even less about intelligence collection (as opposed to its collation). He commented to Budget Director Harold Smith in September 1945 that he had in mind “a different kind of intelligence service from what this country has had in the past”; a “broad intelligence service attached to the President’s office.”²¹ Later remarks clarify these comments slightly. Speaking to an audience of CIA employees in 1952, President Truman reminisced that, when he first took office, there had been “no concentration of information for the benefit of the President. Each Department and each organization had its own information service, and that information service was walled off from every other service.”²² (U)

Mr. Truman’s memoirs subsequently expanded on this point, explaining what was at stake:

I have often thought that if there had been something like coordination of information in the government it would have been more difficult, if not impossible, for the Japanese to succeed in the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor. In those days [1941] the military did not know everything the State Department knew, and the diplomats did not have access to all the Army and Navy knew.²³

These comments suggest that President Truman viewed strategic warning—preserving the United States from another Pearl Harbor in a nuclear age—as the primary mission of his new intelligence establishment, and as a function that had to be handled centrally. His remarks also suggest that he viewed intelligence analysis as largely a matter of

²⁰ Harry S. Truman to William J. Donovan, 20 September 1945; Document 4 in Michael Warner, *The CIA under Harry Truman*, (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 1994) p. 15. See also Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, pp. 302-303. (U)

²¹ Harold Smith’s office diary entries for 13 and 20 September 1945, Roosevelt Library. (U)

²² Truman’s speech is reprinted as Document 81 in Warner, *The CIA under Harry Truman*, p. 471. (U)

²³ Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, Volume II, *Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1956), p. 56. (U)

collation; the facts would speak for themselves, if only they could be gathered in one place. That is what he wanted his new intelligence service to do. (U)

The Budget Bureau itself had not proposed anything that looked much clearer. Bureau staffers wanted the State Department to serve as the president's "principal staff agency" in developing "high-level intelligence," after taking the lead in establishing the "integrated Government-wide program."²⁴ At the same time, however, Budget Bureau officers wanted the departments to continue to conduct their own intelligence functions, rather than relegating this duty to "any single central agency." A small interagency group, "under the leadership of the State Department," would coordinate the departmental intelligence operations.²⁵ This proposed program rested on two assumptions that would soon be tested: that the State Department was ready to take the lead, and that the armed services were willing to follow. (U)

In the meantime, General Donovan fumed about the President's decision yet again to Budget Bureau staffers who met with him (on 22 September) to arrange the details of the Office's dissolution. An oversight in the drafting of EO 9621 had left the originally proposed termination date of 1 October unchanged in the final signed version, and now Donovan had less than two weeks to dismantle his sprawling agency. One official of the Budget Bureau subsequently suggested to Donald Stone that the War Department might ease the transition by keeping its portion of OSS functioning "for the time being," perhaps even with Donovan in charge. Stone preferred someone other than Donovan for this job, and promised to discuss the idea with Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy on 24 September.²⁶ (U)

Two days later, McCloy stepped into the breach. Where Donald Stone had simply ensured that pieces of OSS kept a temporary lease on life in the War Department, McCloy glimpsed an opportunity to do much more: to save these components as the nucleus of a peacetime intelligence service. McCloy was a friend of Donovan's and had long promoted an improved national intelligence capability.²⁷ He interpreted

²⁴ Quoted phrases are in Snyder, Rosenman, and Smith to Truman, 4 September 1945. (U)

²⁵ Harold D. Smith to Harry S. Truman, "Transfer of Functions of the Office of Strategic Services," 18 September 1945, Official File, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Harry S. Truman Library. (U)

²⁶ G.E. Ramsey, Jr., Bureau of the Budget, to the Assistant Director for Estimates, Bureau of the Budget, "Disposition of OSS," 24 September 1945, *FRUS*, pp. 51-52. (U)

²⁷ For McCloy's advocacy of a centralized intelligence capability, see Kai Bird, *The Chairman: John J. McCloy, the Making of the American Establishment* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), pp. 129-130. (U)

the President's directive as broadly as possible by ordering OSS's Deputy Director for Intelligence, Brig. Gen. John Magruder, to preserve his Secret Intelligence (SI) and counterespionage (X-2) Branches "as a going operation" in a new office that McCloy dubbed the "Strategic Services Unit" (SSU):

This assignment of the OSS activities...is a method of carrying out the desire of the President, as indicated by representatives of the Bureau of the Budget, that these facilities of OSS be examined over the next three months with a view to determining their appropriate disposition. Obviously this will demand close liaison with the Bureau of the Budget, the State Department and other agencies of the War Department, to insure that the facilities and assets of OSS are preserved for any possible future use.... The situation is one in which the facilities of an organization, normally shrinking in size as a result of the end of fighting, must be preserved so far as potentially of future usefulness to the country.²⁸ (U)

The following day, the new Secretary of War, Robert P. Patterson, confirmed this directive and implicitly endorsed Assistant Secretary McCloy's interpretation, formally ordering Magruder to report to McCloy and to "preserve *as a unit* such of these functions and facilities as are valuable for permanent peacetime purposes" [emphasis added].²⁹ With this order, Patterson postponed indefinitely the assimilation of OSS's records and personnel into the War Department's own intelligence arm, the G-2. (U)

General Magruder soon had to explain this unorthodox arrangement to sharp-eyed Congressmen and staff. Rep. Clarence Cannon, chairman of the powerful House Appropriations Committee, asked the General on 2 October about the OSS contingents sent to the State and War Departments and the plans for disposing of OSS's unspent funds (roughly \$4.5 million). Magruder explained that he did not quite know what State would do with R&A; when Cannon asked about the War Department's contingent (SSU), the General read aloud from the Secretary of War's order to preserve OSS's more valuable functions "as a unit."³⁰

²⁸ John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War, to John Magruder, OSS, "Transfer of OSS Personnel and Activities to the War Department and Creation of Strategic Services Unit," 26 September 1945, *FRUS*, pp. 235-236. (U)

²⁹ Robert P. Patterson to John Magruder, 27 September 1945, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 319 (Army Intelligence), Decimal File 1941-48, "334 OSS," box 649, "Strategic Services Unit" folder. (U)

³⁰ US House of Representatives, House Appropriations Committee, "First Supplemental Surplus Appropriation Recission Bill, 1946," 79th Cong., First Sess., 1945, p. 615-621. (U)

Two weeks later, staffers from the House Military Affairs Committee asked why the War Department suddenly needed both SSU and the G-2:

General Magruder explained that he had no orders to liquidate OSS (other than, of course, those functions without any peace time significance) and that only the Assistant Secretary of War [McCloy] could explain why OSS had been absorbed into the War Department on the basis indicated. He said he felt, however,... that the objective was to retain SSU intact until the Secretary of State had surveyed the intelligence field and made recommendations to the President.

Committee staff implicitly conceded that the arrangement made sense, but hinted that both SSU and the remnant of R&A in the State Department ought to be "considerably reduced in size."³¹ (U)

Reducing SSU is just what was occupying the Unit's new Executive Officer, Col. William W. Quinn:

The orders that General Magruder received from the Secretary of War were very simple. He was charged with preserving the intelligence assets created and held by OSS during its existence and the disbandment of paramilitary units, which included the 101 detachment in Burma and Southeast Asia, and other forms of intelligence units, like the Jedburgh teams, and morale operations, et cetera. My initial business was primarily liquidation. The main problem was the discharge of literally thousands of people. Consequently, the intelligence collection effort more-or-less came to a standstill.³² (U)

Magruder did his best to sustain morale in the Unit, keeping his deputies informed about high-level debates over "the holy cause of central intelligence," as he jocularly dubbed it. He suggested optimistically that SSU would survive its current exile:

In the meantime I can assure you there is a great deal of serious thinking in high places regarding the solution that will be made for OSS [SSU]. I hope it will prove fruitful. There is a very serious

³¹ John R. Schoemer, Jr., Acting General Counsel, Strategic Services Unit, memorandum for the record, "Conference with representatives of House Military Affairs Committee," 19 October 1945, CIA History Staff HS/CSG-1400, item 14. (U)

³² William W. Quinn, *Buffalo Bill Remembers: Truth and Courage* (Fowlerville, MI: Wilderness Adventure Books, 1991), p. 240. (U)

movement under way to reconstruct some of the more fortunate aspects of our work.³³ (U)

Despite Magruder's and Quinn's efforts, the House of Representatives on 17 October lopped \$2 million from the OSS terminal budget that SSU shared with the Interim Research and Intelligence Service (IRIS), its erstwhile sister branch now set in the Department of State. The cut directly threatened both SSU and IRIS. The Truman administration eventually convinced Congress to drop the House's recision and even increase funding for both pieces of OSS, but not until after several anxious weeks in SSU and the War Department.³⁴ (U)

Institutional enemies closer to hand also seemed to threaten SSU's independence that fall. Just before Thanksgiving, McCloy warned Secretary Patterson that only "close supervision" could prevent the Department from taking "the course of least resistance by merely putting [SSU] into what I think is a very unimaginative section of G-2 and thus los[ing] a very valuable and necessary military asset."³⁵ General Magruder told his lieutenants that SSU was quietly winning friends in high places, but repeatedly reminded staffers of the need for discretion, noting that "some people" did not like SSU "and the less said about [the Unit] the better."³⁶ (U)

Controversy and Compromise (U)

McCloy (with Stone's help) had precipitated an inspired bureaucratic initiative that would eventually expand the Truman administration's options in creating a new intelligence establishment. Amid all the subsequent interagency debates over the new intelligence agency's structure and authorities that autumn, SSU preserved OSS's foreign intelligence assets for eventual transfer to whichever agency received this

³³ SSU Staff Meeting Minutes, 23 October 1945, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 226 (OSS), Entry 190, WASH-DIR-OP-266 (microfilm roll M1642), roll 112, folder 1268. General Magruder made his "holy cause" quip at the 29 November meeting. (U)

³⁴ SSU Staff Meeting Minutes for 19 October, 30 October, and 20 December 1945. Harry S. Truman to Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House, 7 November 1945, reprinted in US House of Representatives, "House Miscellaneous Documents II," 79th Cong., 1st Sess., serial set volume 10970, document 372, with attached letter from Harold D. Smith to Truman, 6 November 1945. First Supplemental Surplus Appropriation Act, 1946, Public Law 79-301, Title 1, 60 Stat. 6, 7 (1946). (U)

³⁵ McCloy to Patterson, "Central Intelligence Agency," 13 November 1945, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 107 (Department of War), Entry 180, Files of the Assistant Secretary of War, box 5, "Intelligence" folder. (U)

³⁶ SSU Staff Meeting Minutes for 1 November, 6 November, and 29 November 1945. (U)

responsibility. The Truman administration waged a heated internal argument over which powers to give to the new intelligence service. The Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, who quickly agreed that they should oversee the proposed office, stood together against rival plans proposed by the Bureau of the Budget and the FBI. The Army and Navy, however, would not accept the State Department's insistence that the new office's director be selected by and accountable to the Secretary of State. The armed services instead preferred a plan outlined by the Joint Chiefs of Staff back in September, which proposed lifting the new intelligence agency outside the Cabinet departments by placing it under a proposed National Intelligence Authority.³⁷ (U)

This was the plan that would soon settle the question of where to place SSU. The JCS had been working on this plan for months, having been spurred to action by General Donovan's 1944 campaigning for a permanent peacetime intelligence agency. In September, JCS Chairman William Leahy had transmitted the plan (JCS 1181/5) to the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of War, who sent it on to the State Department, where it languished for several weeks. The plan proposed, among other things, that a new "Central Intelligence Agency" should, among its duties, perform "such services of common concern as the National Intelligence Authority determines can be more efficiently accomplished by a common agency, including the direct procurement of intelligence."³⁸ This artful ambiguity—"services of common concern"—meant espionage and liaison with foreign intelligence services, the core of clandestine foreign intelligence. Everyone involved knew this, but no one in the administration or the military wanted to say such things out loud; hence the obfuscation.³⁹ In any case, here was another function that the drafters of the JCS plan felt had to be performed, or at least coordinated, "centrally." (U)

In December 1945 an impatient President Truman asked to see both the State Department's and the Joint Chiefs' proposals and decided that the latter looked simpler and more workable. This decision dashed the Budget Bureau's original hope that the State Department would lead the government's foreign intelligence program. Early in the new year, Truman created the Central Intelligence Group, implementing what was

³⁷ Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, pp. 297-300, 315, 322. (U)

³⁸ JCS 1181/5 is attached to William D. Leahy, memorandum for the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Navy, "Establishment of a central intelligence service upon liquidation of OSS," 19 September 1945; Document 2 in Warner, *The CIA under Harry Truman*, p. 5. (U)

³⁹ The term "services of common concern" apparently originated with OSS' General Magruder and was adopted by a JCS study group; Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, p. 233. (U)

in essence a modification of the JCS 1181/5 proposal. President Truman persuaded Capt. (soon to be Rear Admiral) Sidney Souers, the Assistant Chief of Naval Intelligence and a friend of Navy Secretary Forrestal (and Presidential aide Clark Clifford) who had advised the White House on the intelligence debate, to serve for a few months as the first Director of Central Intelligence.⁴⁰ The CIG formally came into being with the President's directive of 22 January 1946. Cribbing text from JCS 1181/5, the President authorized CIG to "perform, for the benefit of said intelligence agencies, such services of common concern as the National Intelligence Authority determines can be more efficiently accomplished centrally."⁴¹ Here was the loaded phrase "services of common concern" again, only this time the telltale clause "including the direct procurement of intelligence" had discreetly disappeared. (With minor editing, the phrase would reappear again in the CIA's enabling legislation, the National Security Act of 1947.) (U)

Two days later, on 24 January, President Truman invited Sidney Souers to the White House to award him his black cape and wooden dagger. Thanks in part to McCloy's order to preserve OSS's SI and X-2 Branches, the "cloak and dagger" capability—the "services of common concern" mentioned in the President's directive—was waiting in the War Department for transfer to the new CIG. General Magruder quietly applauded Souers's appointment as DCI, explaining to his deputies that SSU might soon be moving:

With respect to SSU, we and the War Department are thinking along the same lines: that at such time as the Director [of Central Intelligence] is ready to start operating, this Unit, its activities, personnel, and facilities will become available to the Director, but as you know, the intent of the President's [22 January] directive was to avoid setting up an independent agency. Therefore, the Central Intelligence Group, purposely called the Group, will utilize the facilities of several Departments. This Unit will become something in the way of a contribution furnished by the War Department.⁴² (U)

Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy had saved the foreign intelligence core of OSS in the Strategic Services Unit; all that was required

⁴⁰ Truman, *Memoirs*, pp. 55-58. See also William Henhoeffler and James Hanrahan, "Notes on the Early DCIs," *Studies in Intelligence* 33 (Spring 1989), p. 29; also Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, p. 166. (U)

⁴¹ President Truman to the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, 22 January 1946; FRUS, pp. 178-179. (U)

⁴² SSU Staff Meeting Minutes, 29 January 1946; Magruder praised Souers's appointment at the 24 January meeting. (U)

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President Truman and Sidney Souers (U)

was for the new National Intelligence Authority to approve a method for transferring it. This the NIA did at its third meeting, on 2 April 1946.⁴³ The actual transfer of SSU personnel began after CIG had acquired a new Director of Central Intelligence, Lt. Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, in June 1946. Vandenberg, a month later, was able to report matter-of-factly to the National Intelligence Authority that the tiny CIG had begun to take over “all clandestine foreign intelligence activities,” meaning the much-larger SSU. At that same meeting, Admiral Leahy also reminded participants (in a different context) that “it was always understood that CIG eventually would broaden its scope.”⁴⁴ (U)

⁴³ National Intelligence Authority, minutes of the NIA’s 3rd meeting, 2 April 1946, CIA History Staff HS/HC-245, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 263 (CIA), History Staff Source Collection. (U)

⁴⁴ National Intelligence Authority, minutes of the NIA’s 4th meeting, 17 July 1946; Document 13 in Warner, *The CIA under Harry Truman*, pp. 56-59. (U)

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~~Secret~~**From Small Beginnings (U)**

An eminent historian once remarked that the crowning achievement of historical research is to attain an understanding of how things do not happen. To put it simply, history rarely offers up tidy events and clear motivations. President Truman did not follow a neat plan in founding the Central Intelligence Group. He implicitly imposed two broad requirements on his advisers and departments in the fall of 1945: to create a structure that could collate the best intelligence held by the various departments, and to make that structure operate, at least initially, on funds derived from the established agencies. Indeed, the friction and waste of the process that resulted from this vague guidance prompted the complaint that the President had acted rashly in dissolving OSS and ignoring the advice of intelligence professionals like William J. Donovan. (U)

In the fall of 1945, the President vaguely wanted a new kind of centralized intelligence service, but his Cabinet departments and existing services knew fairly specifically what kinds of central intelligence they did *not* want. Between these two realities lay the gray area in which the Central Intelligence Group was founded and grew in 1946. Truman always took credit for assigning CIG the task of providing timely strategic warning and guarding against another Pearl Harbor. CIG acquired its second mission—the conduct of clandestine activities abroad—in large part through the foresight of Donald Stone and John J. McCloy. These two appointees ensured that trained personnel stayed together as a unit ready to join the new peacetime intelligence service. Within months of its creation, CIG had become the nation's primary agency for strategic warning and the management of clandestine activities abroad, and within two years the Group would bequeath both missions to its successor, the Central Intelligence Agency. (U)

The relationship—and tension—between the two missions (strategic warning and clandestine activities) formed the central dynamic in unfolding early history of CIA. Many officials thought that the two should be handled “centrally,” although not necessarily by a single agency. That they ultimately were combined under one organization (CIG and then CIA) was due largely to the efforts of McCloy and Magruder. Nevertheless, it is clear from the history of the SSU that high-level Truman administration officials acted with the tacit assent of the White House in preserving OSS's most valuable components to become the nucleus of the nation's foreign intelligence capability. President Truman's actions do not deserve the charge of incompetence that

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The Creation

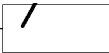
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has been leveled against them, but it does seem justified to conclude that Truman's military advisers deserve most of the credit for the creation of a CIG that collected as well as collated foreign intelligence. (U)

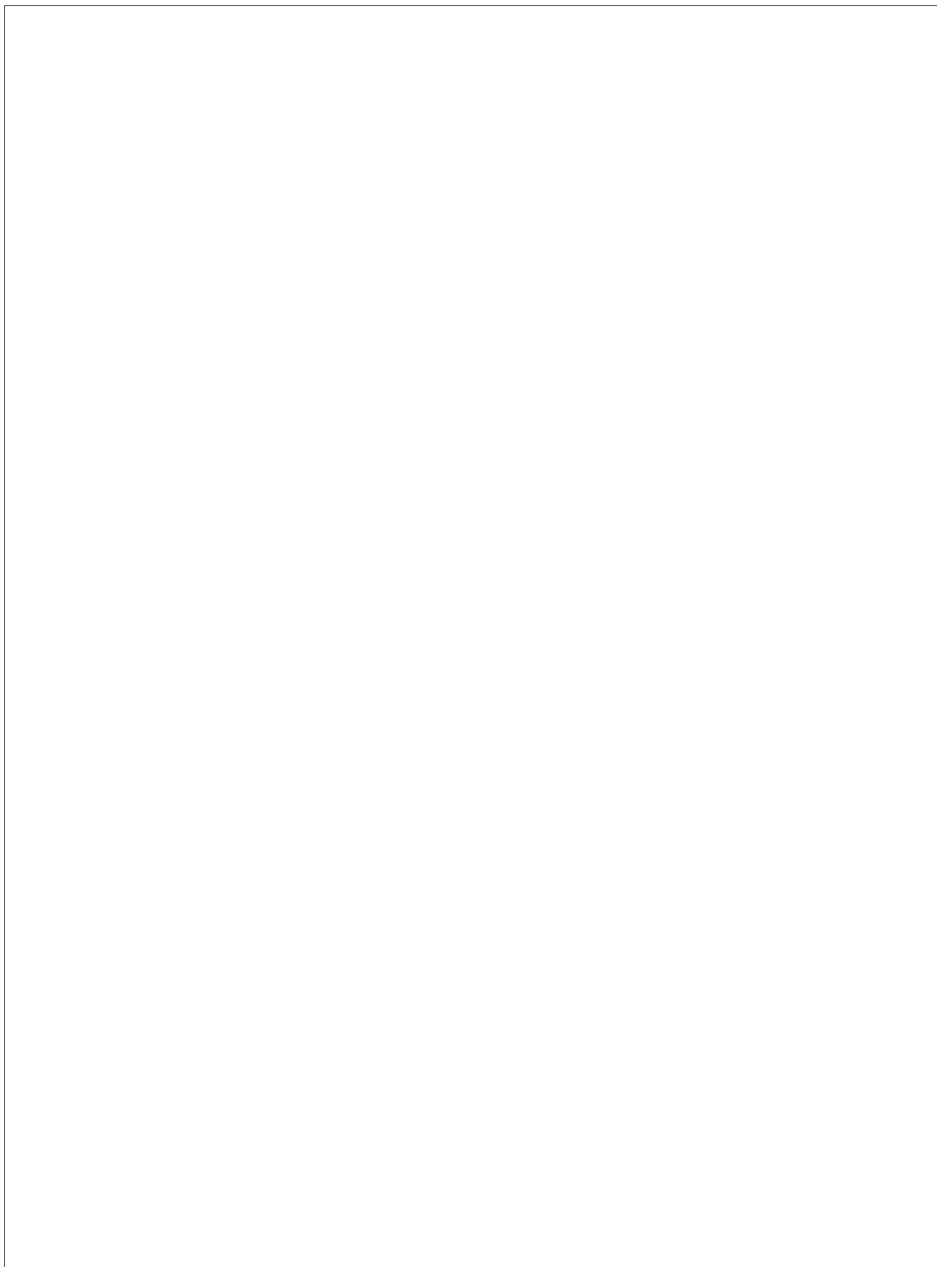
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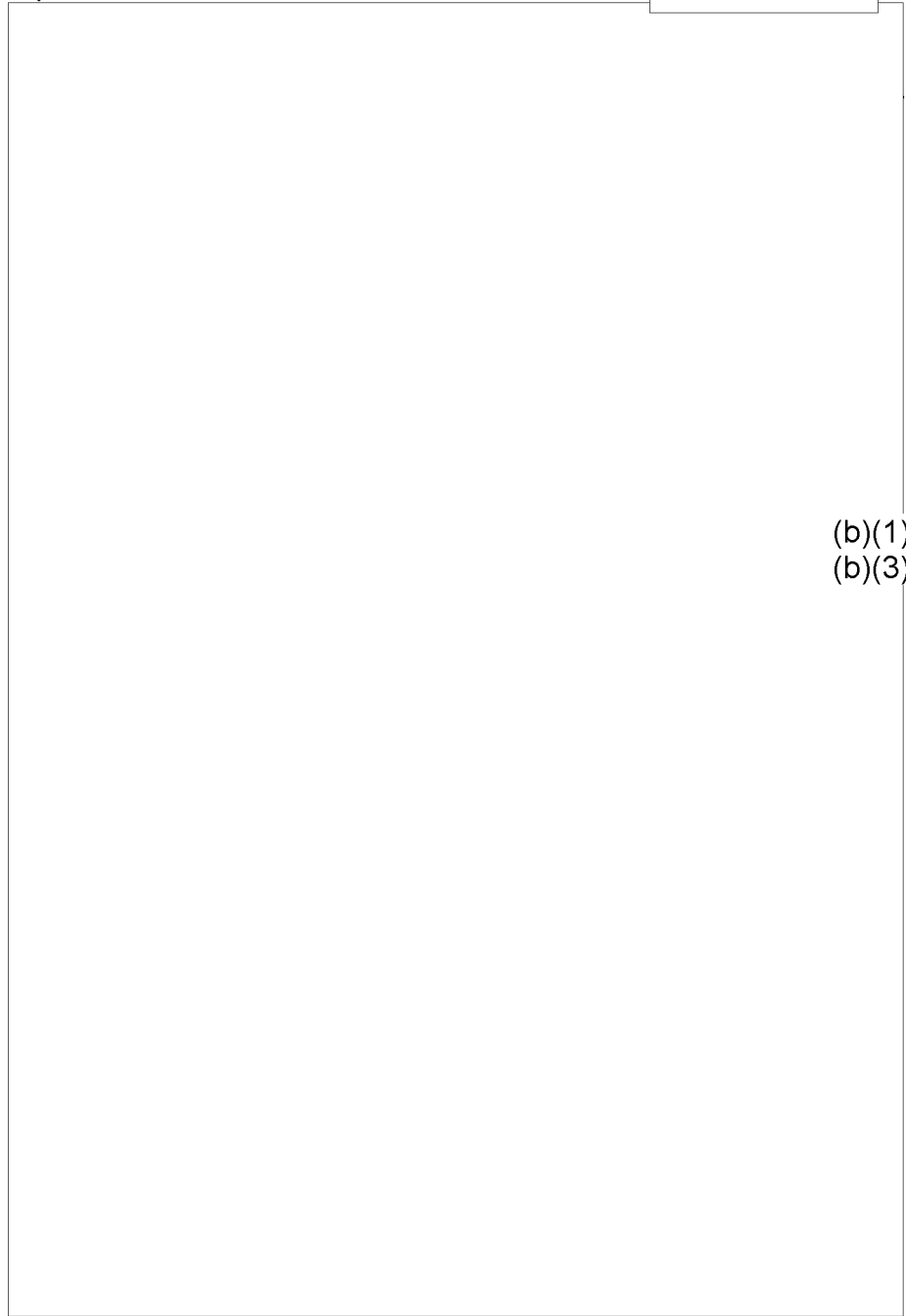
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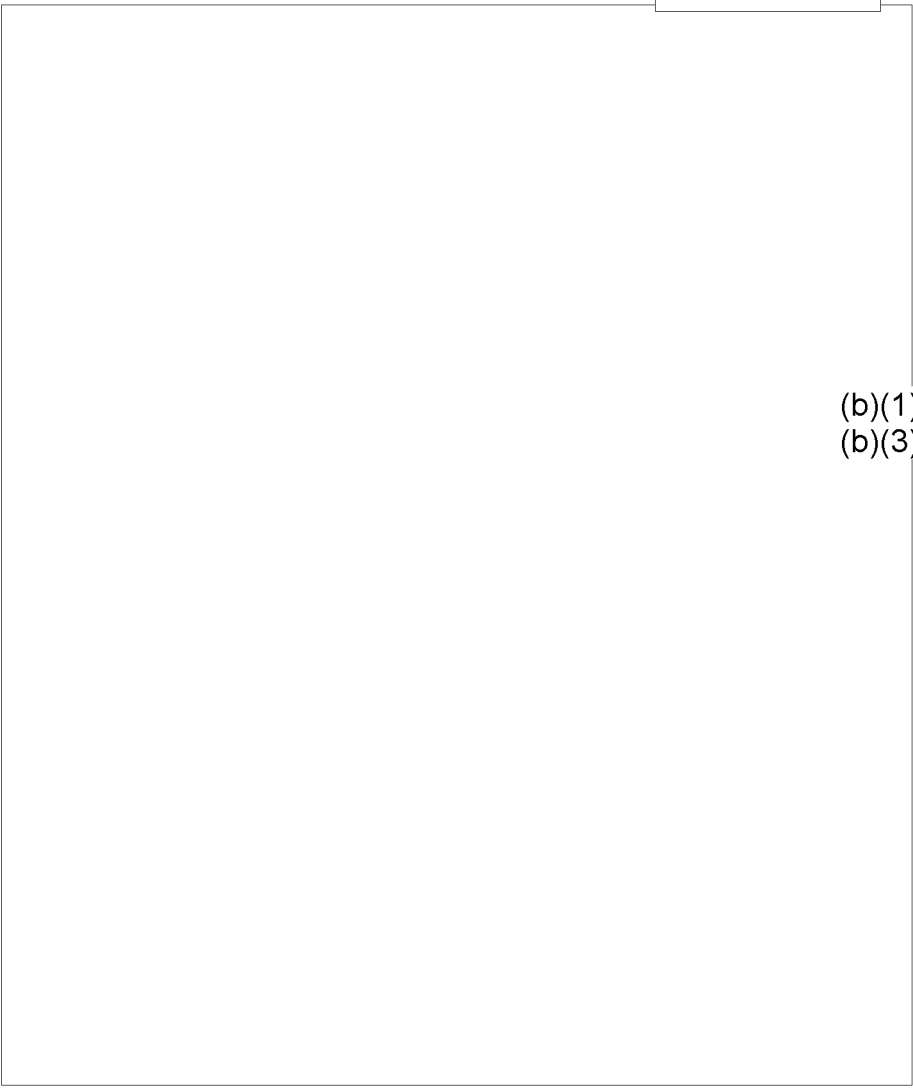
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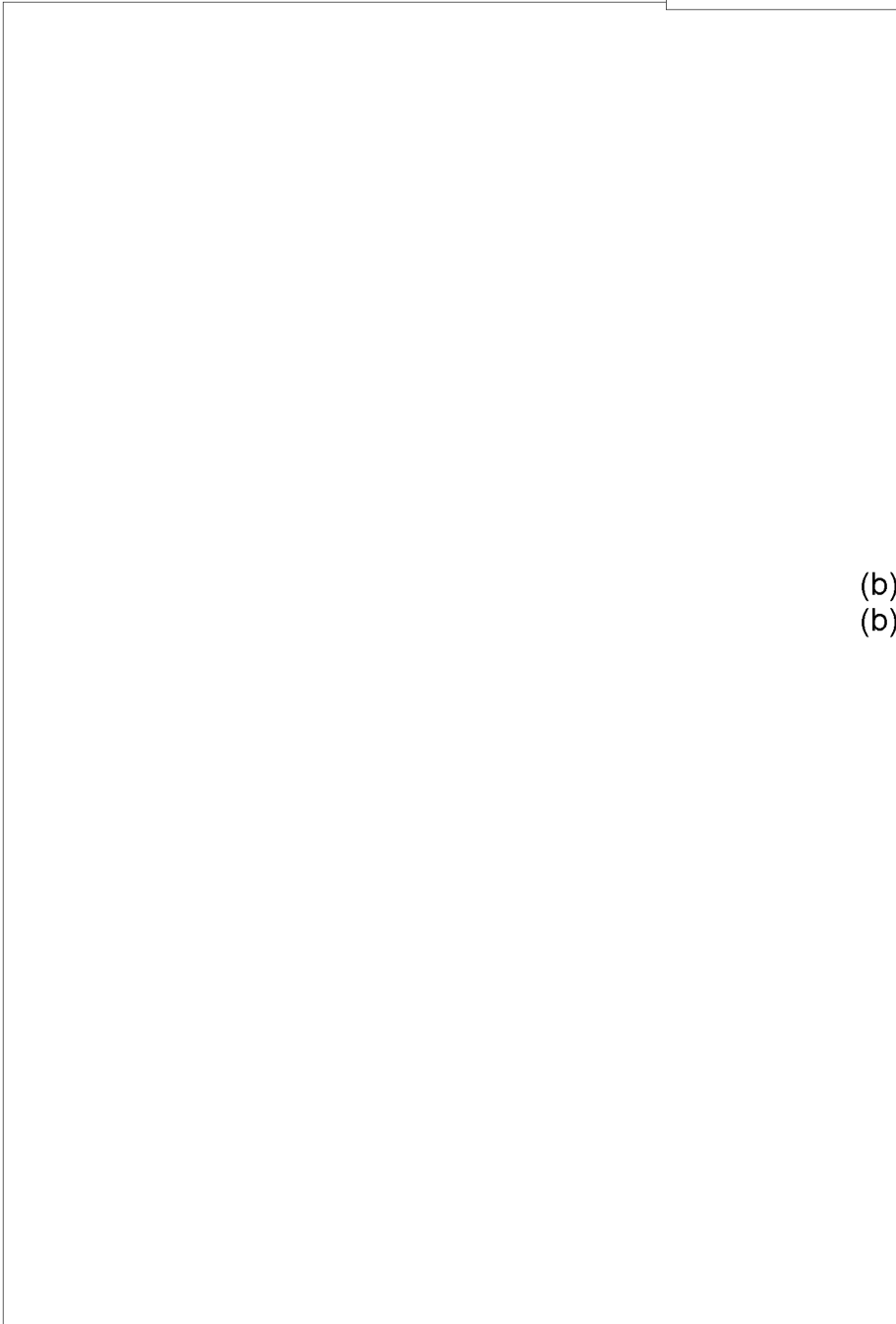
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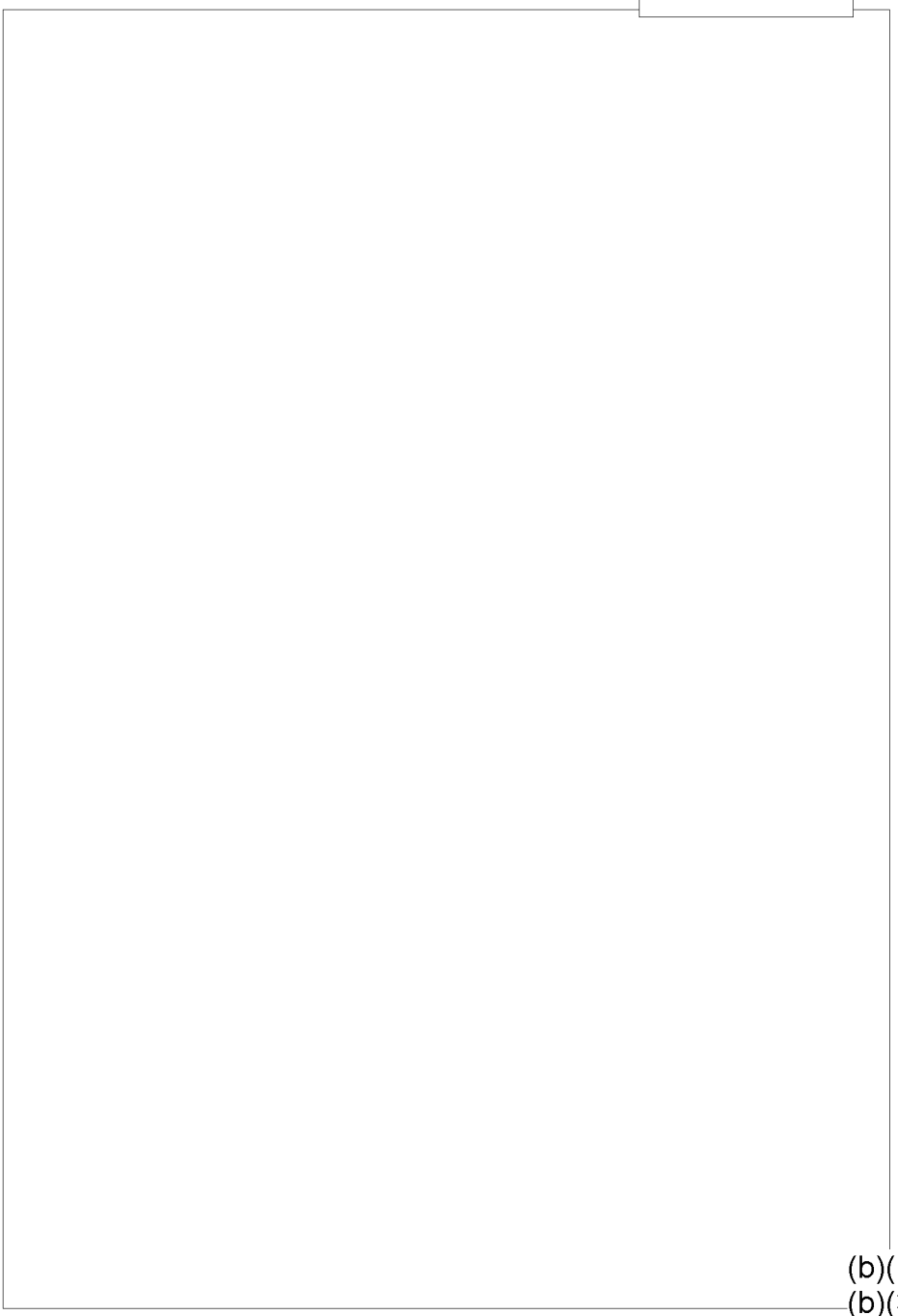
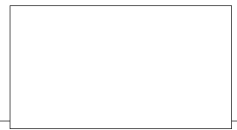
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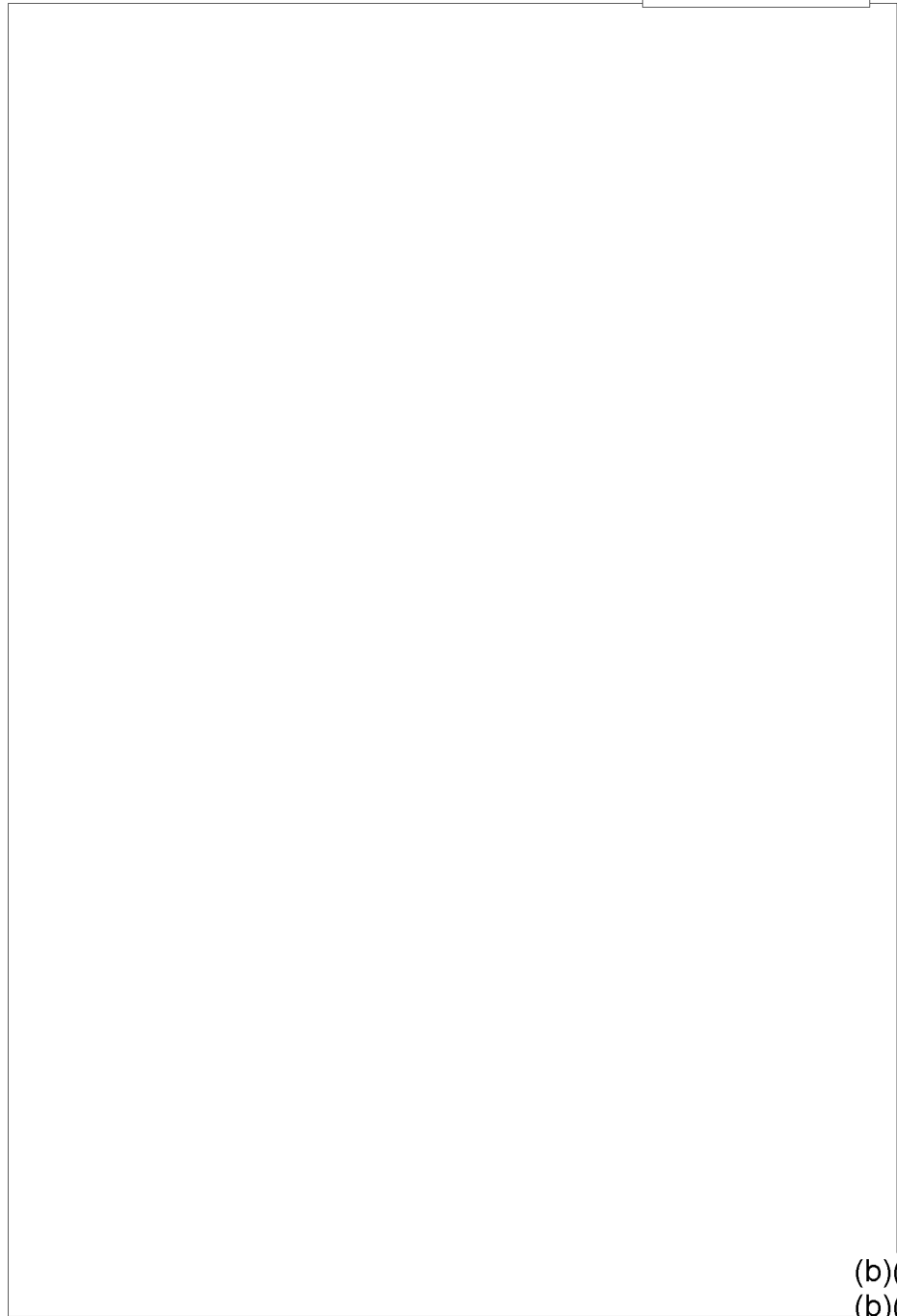
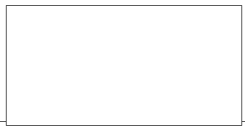
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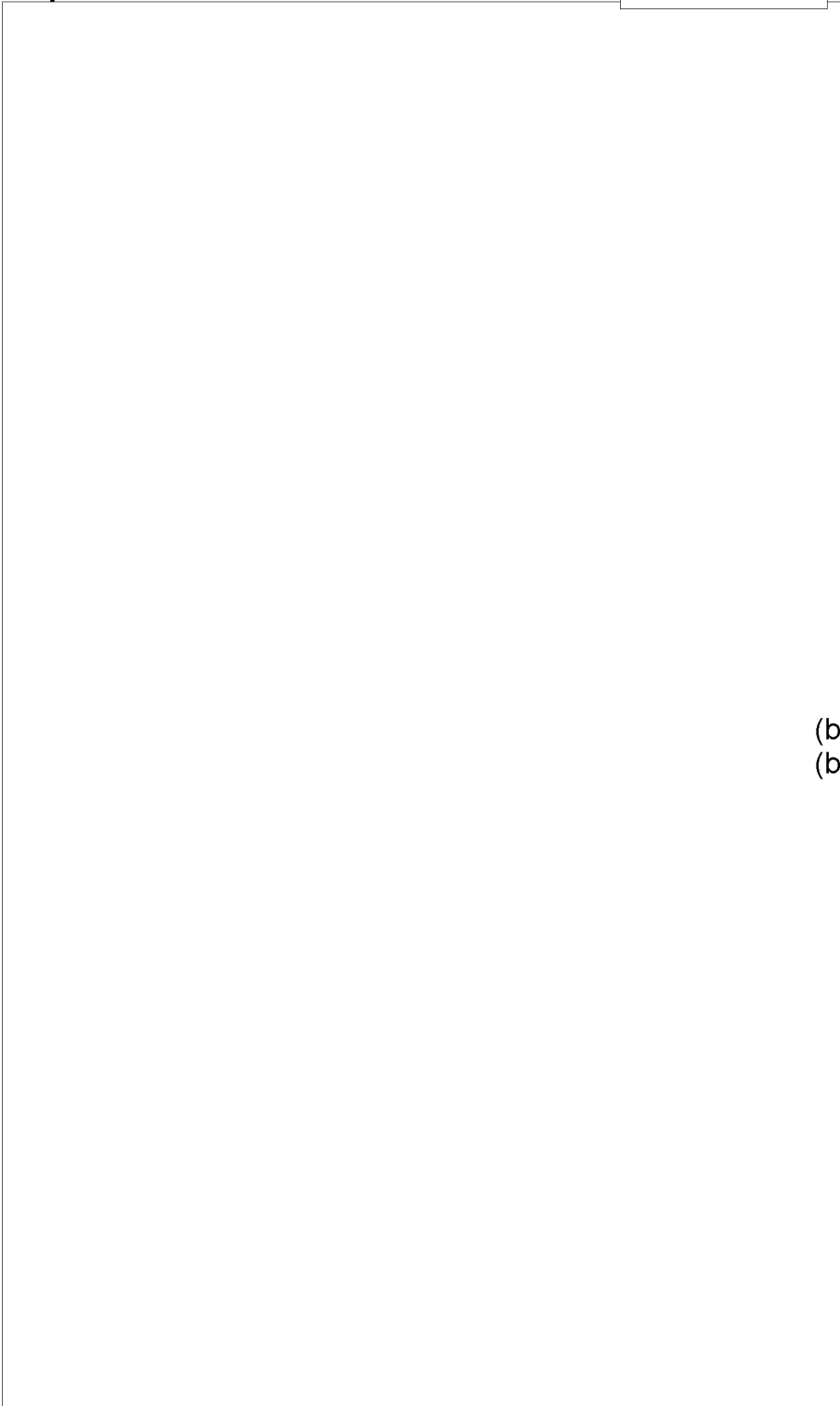
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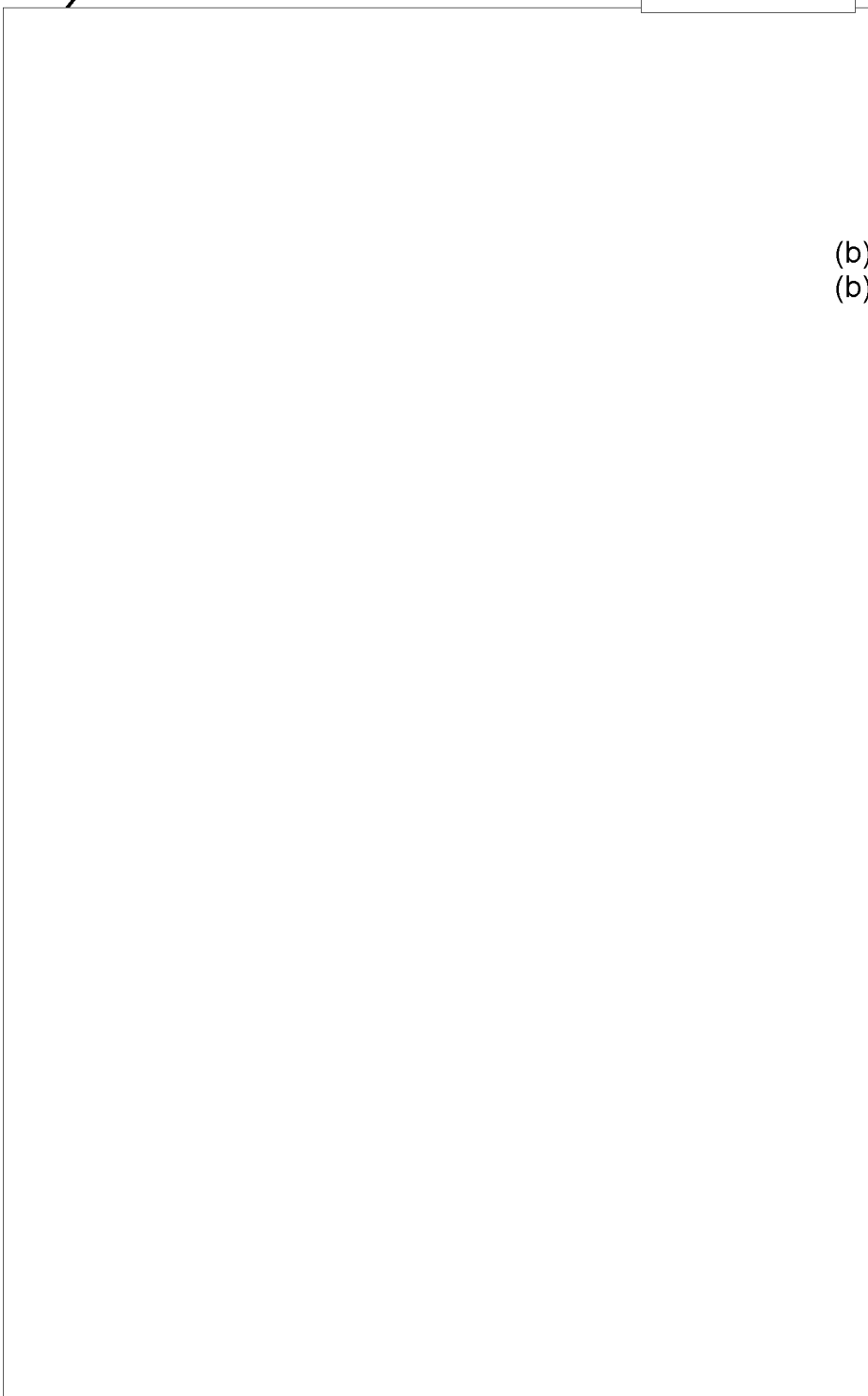


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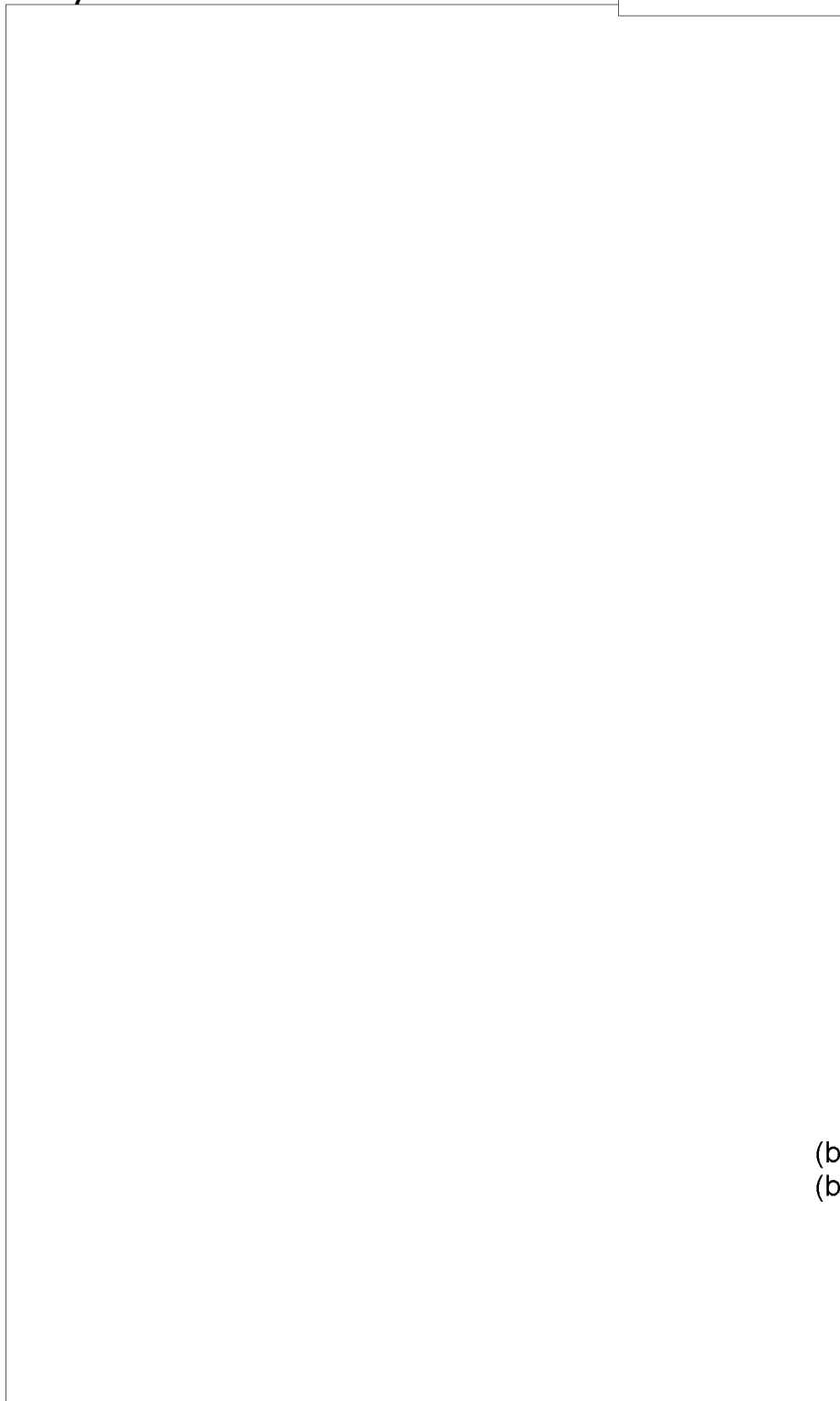


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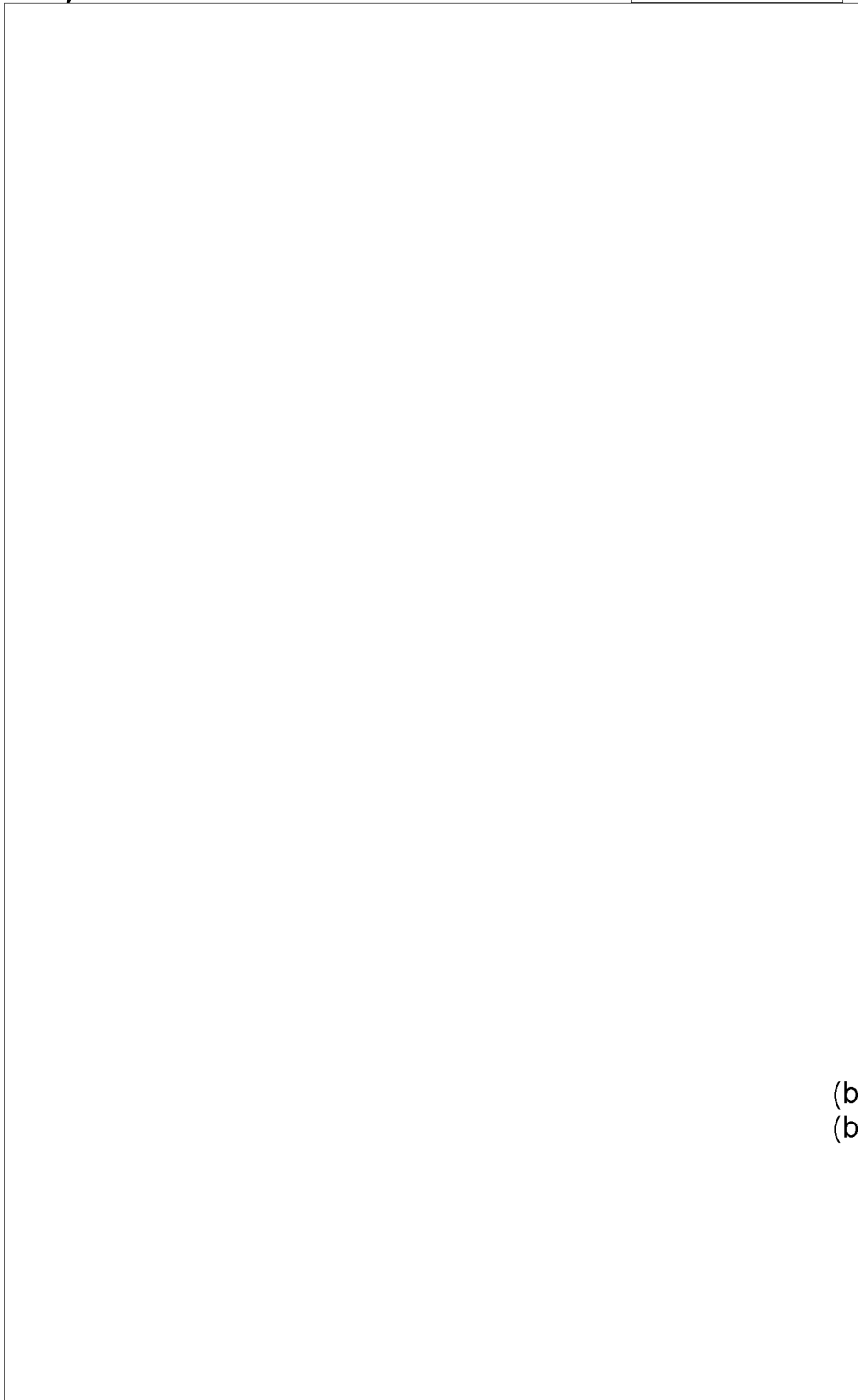
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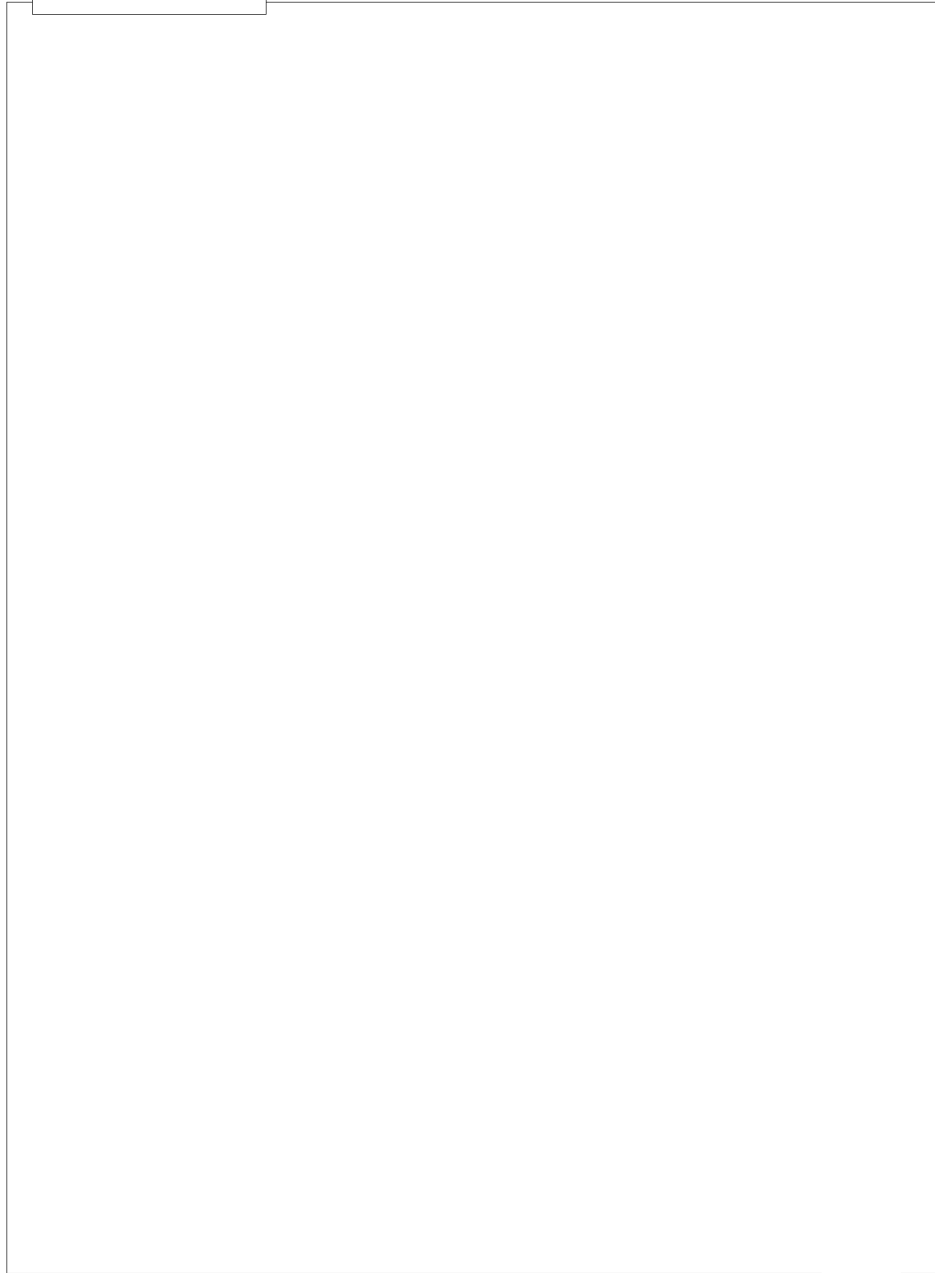
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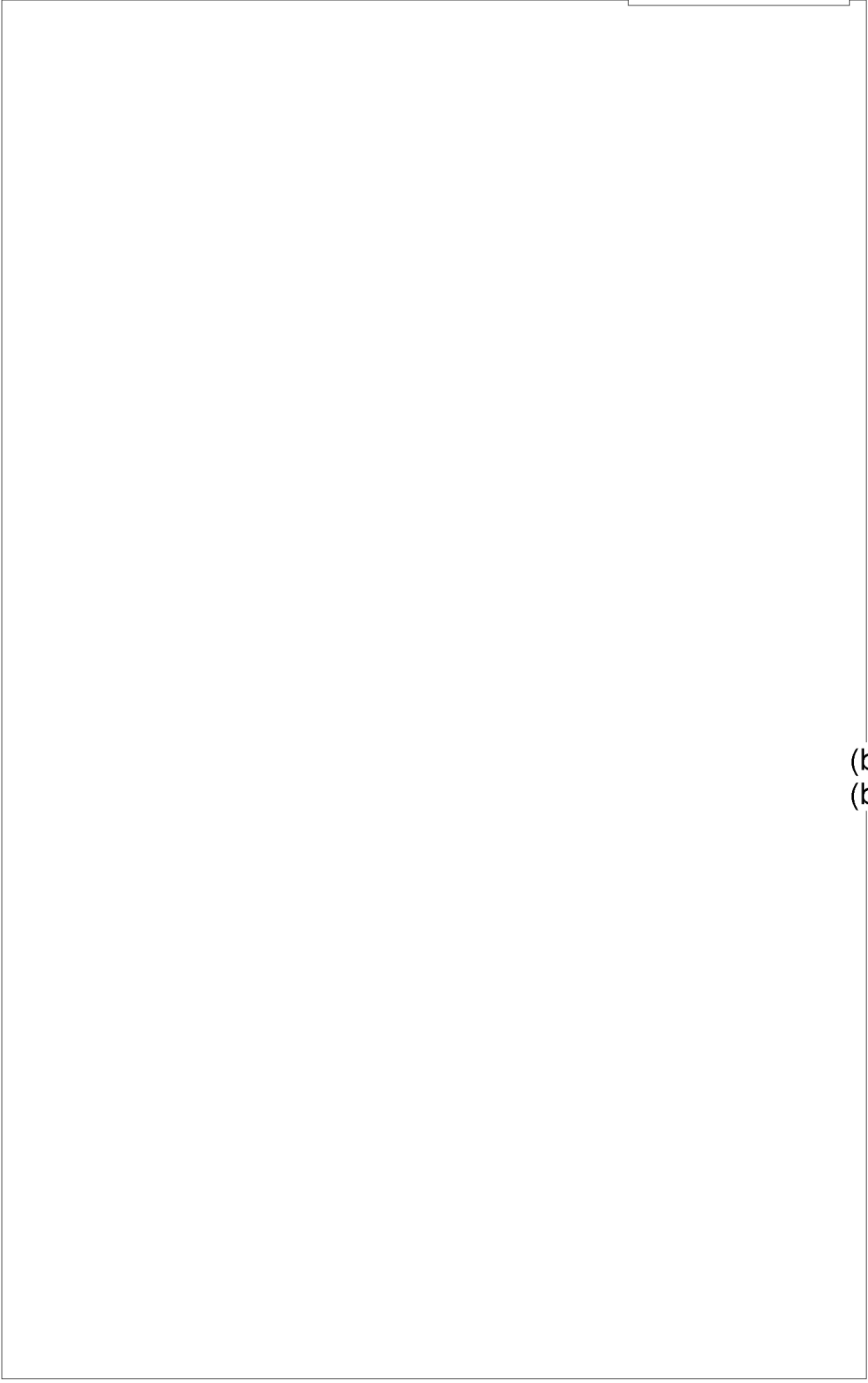
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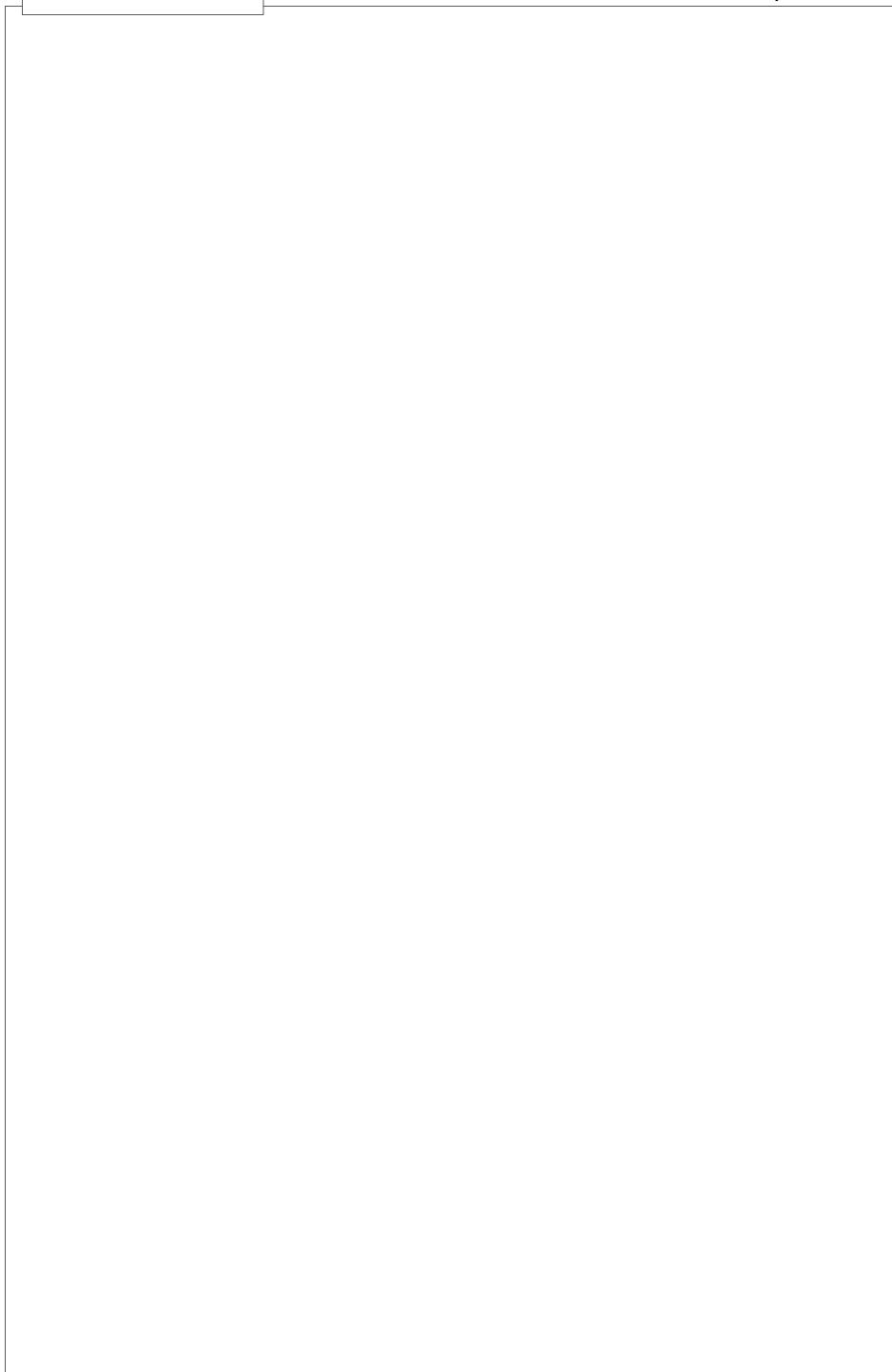
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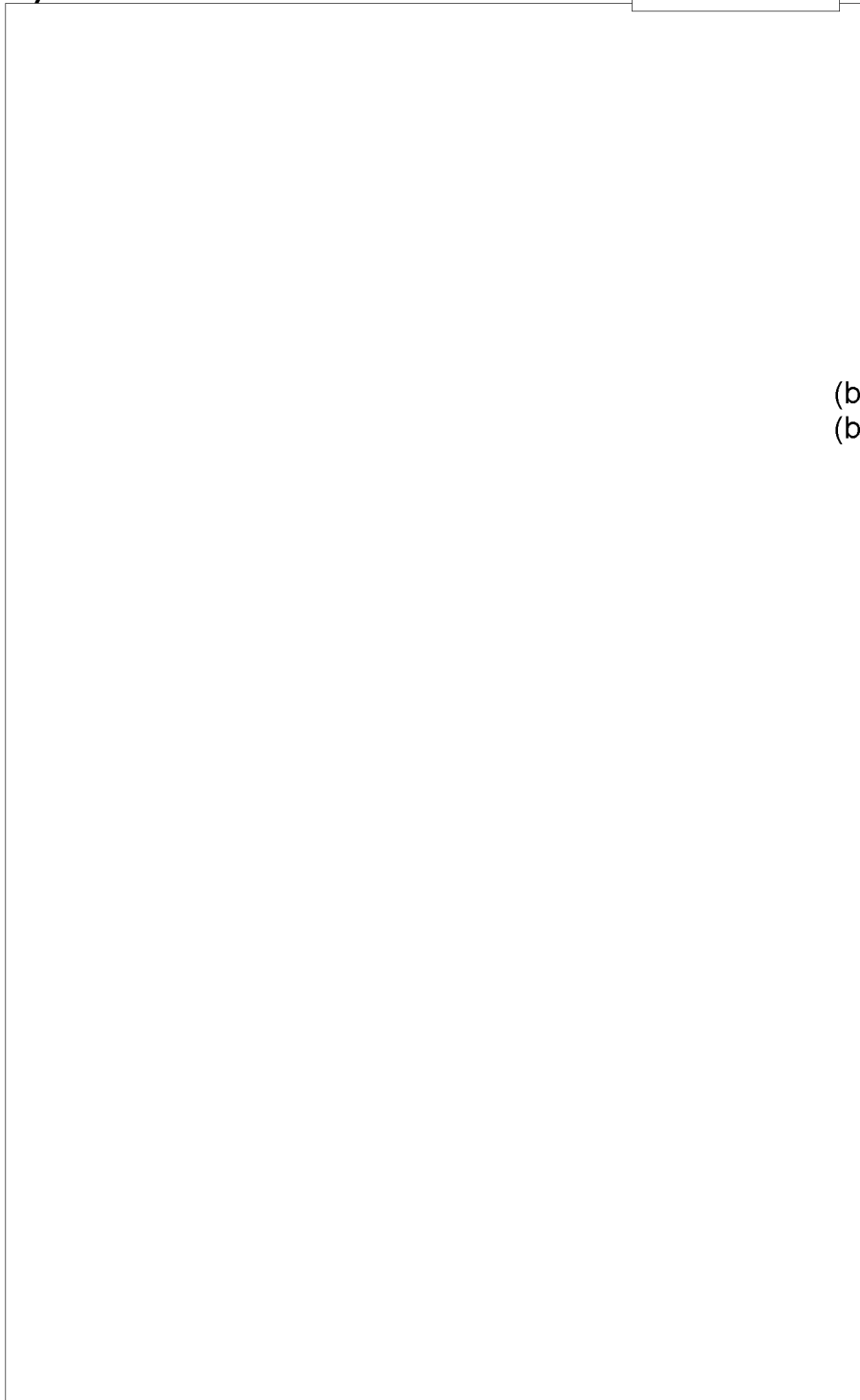
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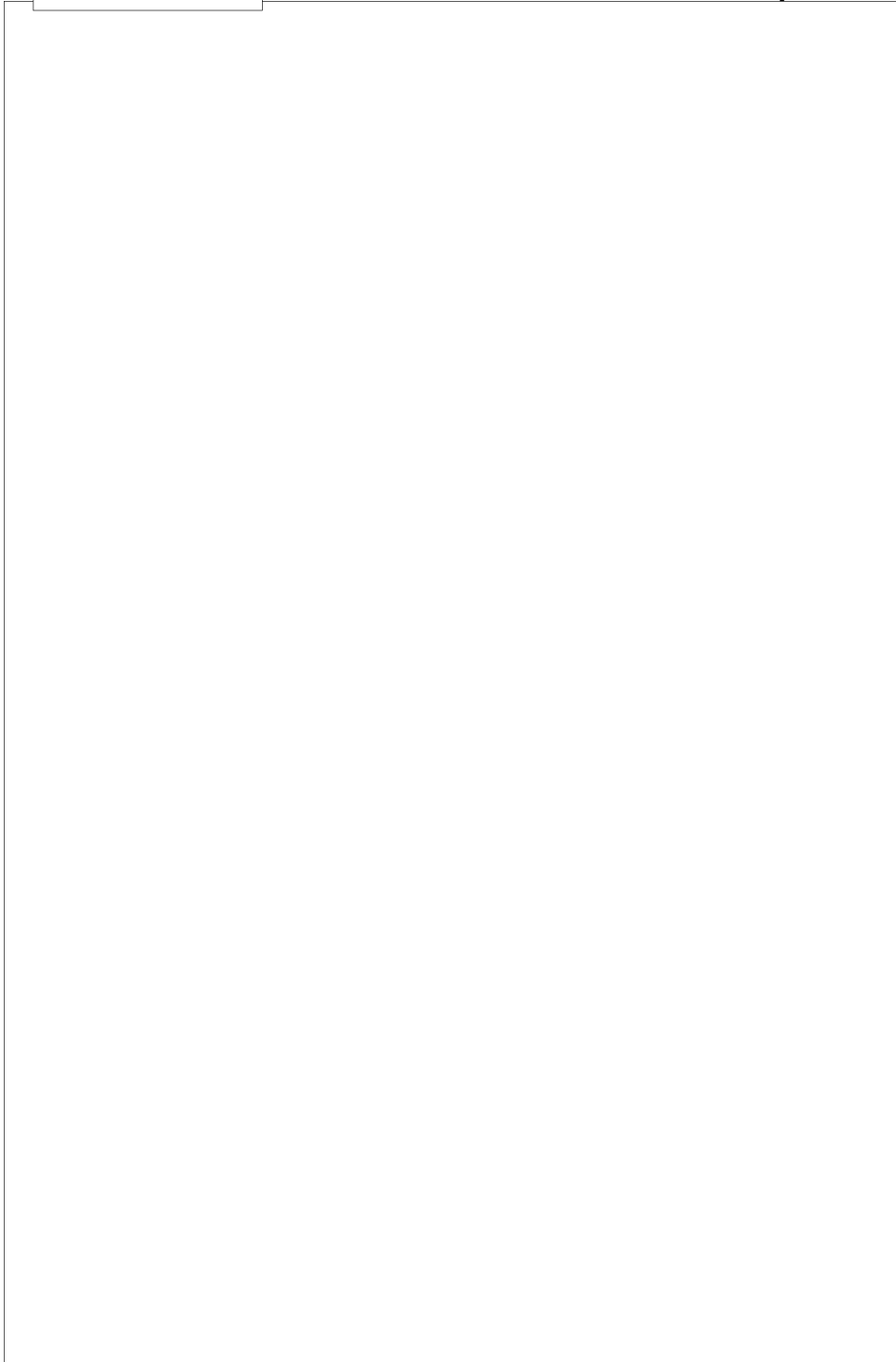
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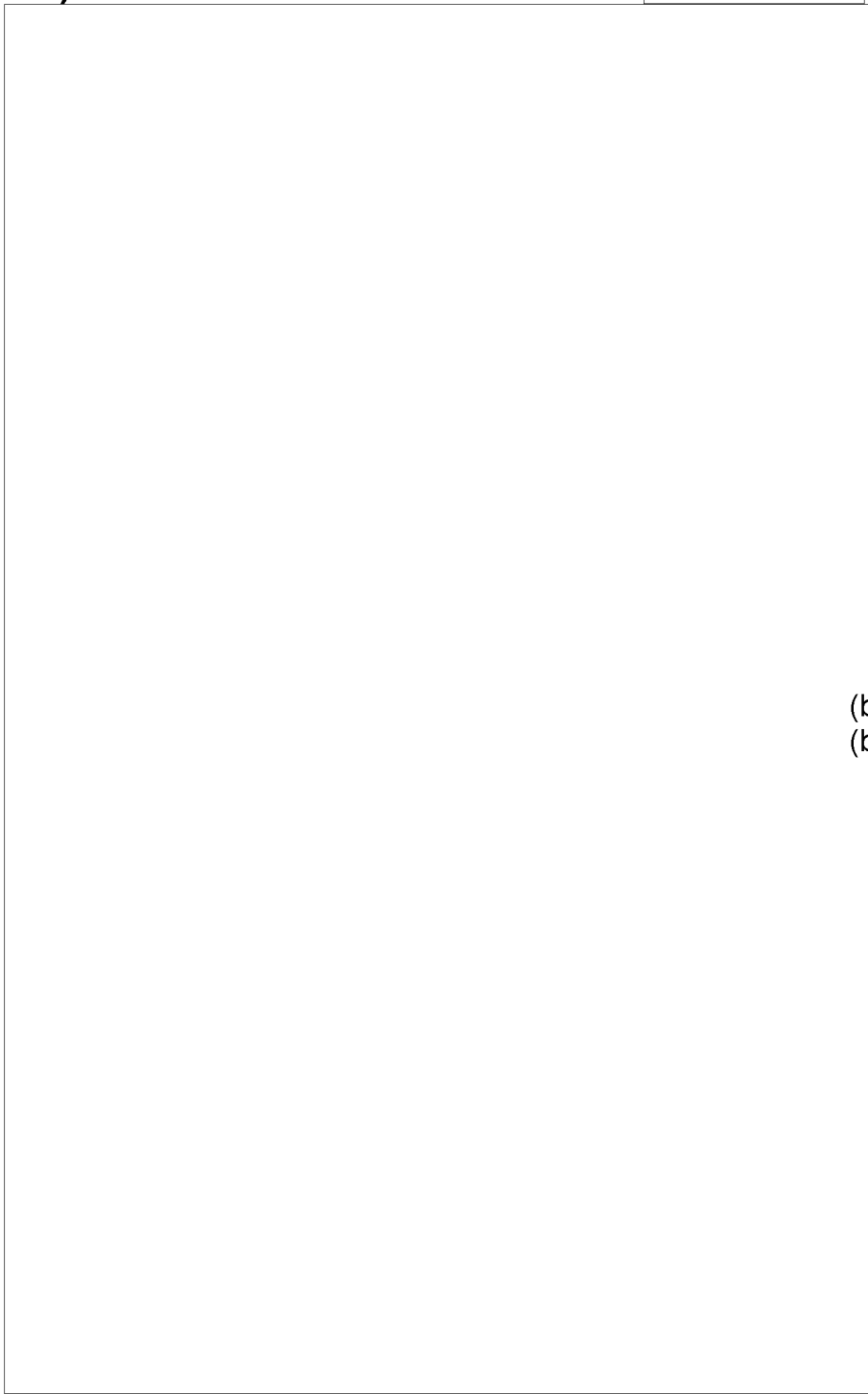
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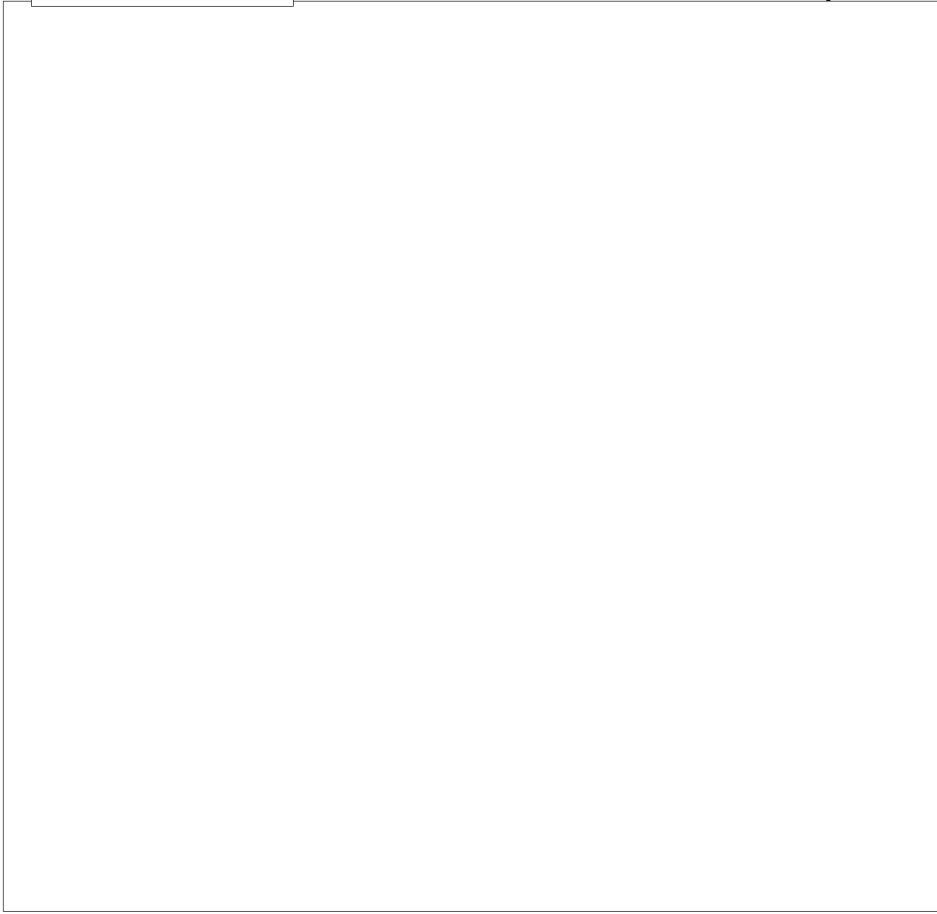
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The Office of Reports and Estimates (U)

Woodrow J. Kuhns

During World War II, the United States made one of its few original contributions to the craft of intelligence: the invention of multi-source, nondepartmental analysis. The Research and Analysis (R&A) Branch of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) assembled a talented cadre of analysts and experts to comb through publications and intelligence reports for clues to the capabilities and intentions of the Axis powers. R&A's contributions to the war effort impressed even the harshest critics of the soon-to-be dismantled OSS. President Truman paid implicit tribute to R&A in late 1945 when he directed that it be transplanted bodily into the State Department at a time when most of OSS was being demobilized. The transplant failed, however, and the independent analytical capability patiently constructed during the war had all but vanished when Truman moved to reorganize the nation's peacetime intelligence establishment at the beginning of 1946. (U)

Current Intelligence Versus National Intelligence (U)

The Central Reports Staff, home to the analysts in the Central Intelligence Group (CIG), was born under a cloud of confusion in January 1946.¹ Specifically, no consensus existed on what its mission was to be, although the President's concerns in creating CIG were clear enough. In the uncertain aftermath of the war, he wanted to be sure that all relevant information available to the US Government on any given issue of national security would be correlated and evaluated centrally so that the

¹ The name of the Central Reports Staff was changed in July 1946 to the Office of Research and Evaluations, and again in October 1946 to the Office of Reports and Estimates (ORE), by which name it was known until it was abolished in November 1950. CIA veterans typically use "ORE" as the shorthand name for the analytical office for the whole period 1946-1950. (U)

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country would never again have to suffer a devastating surprise attack as it had at Pearl Harbor.² (U)

How this was to be accomplished, however, was less clear. The President himself wanted a daily summary that would relieve him of the chore of reading the mounds of cables, reports, and other papers that constantly cascaded onto his desk. Some of these were important, but many were duplicative and even contradictory.³ In the jargon of intelligence analysis, Truman wanted CIG to produce a "current intelligence" daily publication that would contain all information of immediate interest to him.⁴ (U)

Truman's aides and advisers, however, either did not understand this or disagreed with him, for the presidential directive of 22 January 1946 authorizing the creation of CIG did not mention current intelligence. The directive ordered CIG to "accomplish the correlation and evaluation of intelligence relating to the national security, and the appropriate dissemination within the Government of the resulting strategic and national policy intelligence."⁵ Moreover, at the first meeting of the National Intelligence Authority (NIA) on 5 February, Secretary of State Byrnes objected to the President's idea of a current intelligence summary from CIG, claiming that it was his responsibility as Secretary of State to furnish the President with information on foreign affairs.⁶ (U)

² Truman wrote in his memoirs that he had "often thought that if there had been something like coordination of information in the government it would have been more difficult, if not impossible, for the Japanese to succeed in the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor." Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, *Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956), p. 56. (U)

³ See Arthur B. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency: An Instrument of Government to 1950* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 81. (U)

⁴ Current intelligence was defined in National Security Council Intelligence Directive No. 3, "Coordination of Intelligence Production," 13 January 1948, as "that spot information or intelligence of all types and forms of immediate interest and value to operating or policy staffs, which is used by them usually without the delays incident to complete evaluation or interpretation." See United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1996), p. 1110. Hereafter cited as *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*. (U)

⁵ "Presidential Directive on Coordination of Foreign Intelligence Activities," United States Department of State, *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, pp. 178, 179. Also reproduced in Michael Warner, ed., *The CIA under Harry Truman* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1994), pp. 29-32. (U)

⁶ "Minutes of the First Meeting of the National Intelligence Authority," United States Department of State, *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, p. 328. The National Intelligence Authority was composed of the Secretaries of State, War, Navy, and a representative of the President, Flt. Adm. William Leahy. (U)

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Byrnes apparently then went to Truman and asked him to reconsider. Adm. Sidney Souers, the first Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), told a CIA historian that Byrnes' argument:

ran along the line that such information was not intelligence within the jurisdiction of the Central Intelligence Group and the Director [of Central Intelligence]. President Truman conceded that it might not be generally considered intelligence, but it was information which he needed and therefore it was intelligence to him. The result was agreement that the daily summaries should be "factual statements." The Department of State prepared its own digest, and so the President had two summaries on his desk.⁷

This uneasy compromise was reflected in the NIA directives that outlined CIG's duties. Directive No. 1, issued on 8 February 1946, ordered CIG to "furnish strategic and national policy intelligence to the President and the State, War, and Navy Departments."⁸ National Intelligence Authority Directive No. 2, issued the same day, ordered the DCI to give "first priority" to the "production of daily summaries containing factual statements of the significant developments in the field of intelligence and operations related to the national security and to foreign events for the use of the President."⁹ (U)

In practice, this approach proved unworkable. Without any commentary to place a report in context, or to make a judgment on its likely veracity, the early *Daily Summaries* probably did little but confuse the

⁷ Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, pp. 81, 82. (U)

⁸ National Intelligence Authority Directive No. 1, "Policies and Procedures Governing the Central Intelligence Group," 8 February 1946, *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, pp. 329-331. After CIA was established, National Security Council Intelligence Directive No. 1, "Duties and Responsibilities," issued on 12 December 1947, again ordered the DCI to produce national intelligence, which the Directive stated should be "officially concurred in by the Intelligence Agencies or shall carry an agreed statement of substantial dissent." National Security Council Intelligence Directive No. 3, 13 January 1948, gave CIA the authority to produce current intelligence: "The CIA and the several agencies shall produce and disseminate such current intelligence as may be necessary to meet their own internal requirements or external responsibilities." See *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, pp. 1119-1122; 1109-1112. (U)

⁹ National Intelligence Authority Directive No. 2, "Organization and Functions of the Central Intelligence Group," 8 February 1946, *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, pp. 331-333. Interestingly, Souers, who drafted both NIA Directive 1 and Directive 2, continued to believe that CIG's principal responsibility was the production of strategic and national policy intelligence. In a memorandum to the NIA on 7 June 1946, Souers wrote that the "primary function of C.I.G. in the production of intelligence... will be the preparation and dissemination of definitive estimates of the capabilities and intentions of foreign countries as they affect the national security of the United States." "Memorandum From the Director of Central Intelligence to the National Intelligence Authority," 7 June 1946, *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, p. 361. (U)

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President. An alarming report one day on Soviet troop movements in Eastern Europe, for example, would be contradicted the next day by a report from another source. Everyone involved eventually realized the folly of this situation, and analytical commentaries began to appear in the *Daily Summaries* in December 1946—episodically at first, and then regularly during 1947. The *Weekly Summary*, first published in June 1946 on the initiative of the Central Reports Staff itself, was also supposed to avoid interpretative commentary, but its format made such a stricture difficult to enforce. From its inception, the *Weekly Summary* proved to be more analytical than its *Daily* counterpart. (U)

The Confusion Surrounding National Intelligence (U)

Similar disarray surrounded CIG's responsibilities in the production of "strategic and national policy intelligence." The members of the Intelligence Community simply could not agree on the policies and procedures that governed the production of this type of intelligence. Most of those involved seemed to believe that national intelligence should be coordinated among all the members of the Intelligence Community, that it should be based on all available information, that it should try to estimate the intentions and capabilities of other countries toward the United States, and that it should be of value to the highest policymaking bodies. (U)

The devil was in the details. High-ranking members of the intelligence and policy communities debated, without coming to a consensus, most aspects of the estimate production process, including who should write them, how other agencies should participate in the process if at all, and how dissents should be handled. Some of this reflected genuine disagreement over the best way to organize and run the Intelligence Community, but it also involved concerns about bureaucratic power and prerogatives, especially those of the DCI and his Office of Reports and Estimates (ORE), both newcomers to the Intelligence Community. Even the definition of "strategic and national intelligence" had implications for the authority of the DCI and thus was carefully argued over by others in the Community.¹⁰ (U)

DCI Vandenberg eventually got the NIA to agree to a definition in February 1947, but it was so general that it did little to solve the problems

¹⁰ *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, p. 367. (U)

that abounded at the working level.¹¹ Ray Cline, a participant in the process of producing the early estimates, wrote in his memoirs that:

It cannot honestly be said that it [ORE] coordinated either intelligence activities or intelligence judgments; these were guarded closely by Army, Navy, Air Force, State, and the FBI. When attempts were made to prepare agreed national estimates on the basis of intelligence available to all, the coordination process was interminable, dissents were the rule rather than the exception, and every policymaking official took his own agency's intelligence appreciations along to the White House to argue his case. The pre-war chaos was largely recreated with only a little more lip service to central coordination.¹² (U)

In practice, much of the intelligence produced by ORE was not coordinated with the other agencies; nor was it based on all information available to the US Government. The *Daily* and *Weekly Summaries* were not coordinated products, and, like the other publications produced by ORE, they did not contain information derived from

¹¹ The NIA agreed that "strategic and national policy intelligence is that composite intelligence, interdepartmental in character, which is required by the President and other high officers and staffs to assist them in determining policies with respect to national planning and security.... It is in that political-economic-military area of concern to more than one agency, must be objective, and must transcend the exclusive competence of any one department." "Minutes of the 9th Meeting of the National Intelligence Authority," 12 February 1947, *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, p. 492. After the establishment of CIA, National Security Council Intelligence Directive No. 3, 13 January 1948, similarly defined national intelligence as "integrated departmental intelligence that covers the broad aspects of national policy and national security, is of concern to more than one Department... and transcends the exclusive competence of a single department." See *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, p. 1111. (U)

¹² Ray S. Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars: Blueprint of the Essential CIA* (Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1976), pp. 91, 92. Cline rose to become Deputy Director for Intelligence (DDI) between 1962 and 1966. Another veteran of the period, R. Jack Smith, who edited the *Daily Summary*, made the same point in his memoirs, *The Unknown CIA* (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1989), p. 42: "We were not fulfilling our primary task of combining Pentagon, State Department, and CIA judgments into national intelligence estimates.... To say it succinctly, CIA lacked clout. The military and diplomatic people ignored our statutory authority in these matters, and the CIA leadership lacked the power to compel compliance." Smith also served as DDI, from 1966 to 1971. (U)

communications intelligence.¹³ The *Review of the World Situation*, which was distributed each month at meetings of the National Security Council, became a unilateral publication of ORE after the first two issues.¹⁴ The office's ad hoc publications, such as the Special Evaluations and Intelligence Memoranda, were rarely coordinated with the other agencies. By contrast, the ORE series of Special Estimates were coordinated, but critics nonetheless condemned many of them for containing trivial subjects that fell outside the realm of "strategic and national policy intelligence."¹⁵ (U)

Whatever CIG's written orders, in practice the President's interest in the *Daily Summaries*, coupled with the limited resources of the Central Reports Staff, meant that the production of current intelligence came to dominate the Staff and its culture. National estimative intelligence was reduced to also-ran status. An internal CIG memo stated frankly that "ORE Special Estimates are produced on specific subjects as the occasion arises and within the limits of ORE capabilities after current intelligence requirements are met." It went on to note, "Many significant developments worthy of ORE Special Estimates have not been covered...because of priority production of current intelligence, insufficient personnel, or inadequate information."¹⁶ This remained true even after the Central Reports Staff evolved into the Office of Reports and Estimates in CIA.¹⁷ (U)

If the analysts in CIG, and then CIA, had only to balance the competing demands of current and national intelligence, their performance might have benefited. As it happened, however, NIA Directive No. 5

¹³ Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, pp. 34, 35. ORE began receiving signals intelligence in 1946 and was able to use it as a check against the articles it included in the *Summaries*. Security concerns prevented its broader use. Signals intelligence was sent to the White House by the Army Security Agency (from 1949 on, the Armed Forces Security Agency) during this period. CIA did not begin including communications intelligence in the successor to the *Daily* until 1951. (U)

¹⁴ The delays involved in interagency coordination made it difficult to meet the publication deadline while still including the most recent events in its contents. George S. Jackson, *Office of Reports and Estimates, 1946-1951*, Miscellaneous Studies, HS MS-3, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1954), pp. 279-287. National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 263, History Staff Source Collection, NN3-263-95-003. (U)

¹⁵ See the discussion of the Dulles-Jackson-Correa Report below. (U)

¹⁶ Memo from Chief, Projects Division to Assistant Director, R&E, "Proposed Concept for Future CIG Production of Staff Intelligence," 1 July 1947. CIA History Staff Job 67-00059A, Box 2, Confidential. Nevertheless, during its existence ORE did produce over 125 estimates, 97 of which were declassified in 1993 and 1994 and deposited in the National Archives. (U)

¹⁷ This point is made repeatedly throughout George S. Jackson, *Office of Reports and Estimates, 1946-1951*. Jackson himself served in the office during the period of this study. (U)

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soon gave the analysts the additional responsibility of performing "such research and analysis activities" as might "be more efficiently or effectively accomplished centrally."¹⁸ In practice, this meant that the analysts became responsible for performing basic research as well as wide-ranging political and economic analysis. To accommodate this enhanced mission, functional analysis branches for economics, science, transportation, and map intelligence were established alongside the existing regional branches.¹⁹ (U)

A high-ranking ORE officer of the period, Ludwell Montague, wrote that this:

was a deliberate, but covert, attempt to transform ORE (or CRS, a staff designed expressly for the production of coordinated national intelligence) into an omnicompetent...central research agency. This attempt failed, leaving ORE neither the one thing nor the other. Since then, much ORE production has proceeded, not from any clear concept of mission, but from the mere existence of a nondescript contrivance for the production of nondescript intelligence. All our efforts to secure a clear definition of our mission have been in vain.²⁰ (U)

Another veteran of the period, George S. Jackson, agreed with Montague's assessment: "It would not be correct...to say that the Office...had failed utterly to do what it was designed to do; a more accurate statement would be that it had done not only what was planned for it but much that was not planned and need not have been done. In

¹⁸ National Intelligence Authority Directive No. 5, "Functions of the Director of Central Intelligence," 8 July 1946, *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, p. 392. (U)

¹⁹ The Scientific Intelligence Branch of ORE was established in January 1947 and shortly thereafter incorporated the Nuclear Energy Group, which had been in charge of atomic energy intelligence in the Manhattan Project, within its ranks. At the end of 1948, the branch was separated from ORE and elevated to office status, becoming the Office of Scientific Intelligence. (U)

²⁰ Montague to Babbitt, "Comment on the Dulles-Jackson Report," 11 February 1949. National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 263, History Staff Source Collection, HS/HC 450, NN3-263-94-010, Box 14. Montague's reference to a "deliberate but covert" attempt to increase the responsibility of ORE refers to the efforts of DCI Gen. Hoyt Vandenberg to boost himself, and CIG as a whole, into a dominant position in the Intelligence Community. Opposition from the other departments largely scuttled his attempts in this direction. See *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, p. 366. (U)

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consequence, the Office had unnecessarily dissipated its energies to the detriment of its main function."²¹ He noted that:

Requests [for studies] came frequently from many sources, not all of them of equal importance, but there seemed not to be anyone in authority [in ORE] who would probe beneath any of them to make sure that they merited a reply. Nor was there anyone who took it upon himself to decline requests—no matter from what source—when they were clearly for a type of material not called for under the responsibilities of the Office of Reports and Estimates.²² (U)

A Mixed Reception (U)

NIA Directive No. 5 opened the door to proliferation of various kinds of publications and, consequently, to a dilution of analysts' efforts in the fields of current and national intelligence.²³ Perhaps as a consequence of the confusion over the analytical mission, these products received mixed reviews. The President was happy with his *Daily Summary*, and that fact alone made it sacrosanct. Rear Adm. James H. Foskett, the President's Naval Aide, told ORE in 1947 that, "the President considers that he personally originated the *Daily*, that it is prepared in accordance with his own specifications, that it is well done, and that in its present form it satisfies his requirements."²⁴ President Truman's views on the *Weekly Summary* were less clear, but lack of criticism was construed as approval by ORE: "It appears that the *Weekly* in its present form is acceptable at the White House and is used to an undetermined extent without exciting comment indicative of a desire for any particular change."²⁵ (U)

Other policymakers were less impressed with the current intelligence publications. Secretary of State George Marshall stopped reading the *Daily Summary* after two weeks, and thereafter he had his aide flag only the most important items for him to read. The aide did this only two

²¹ Jackson, *Office of Reports and Estimates, 1946-1951*, vol. 1, p. 95. (U)

²² *Ibid.*, p. 98. (U)

²³ In addition to the publications mentioned above, ORE produced *Situation Reports* (exhaustive studies of individual countries and areas) and a variety of branch-level publications (daily summaries, weekly summaries, monthly summaries, branch "estimates," and reports of various types). (U)

²⁴ Montague to J. Klahr Huddle, Assistant Director, R&E, "Conversation with Admiral Foskett regarding the C.I.G. *Daily* and *Weekly Summaries*," 26 February 1947, in Warner, ed., *The CIA Under Harry Truman*, p. 123. (U)

²⁵ *Ibid.* (U)

or three times a week, telling a CIG interviewer that "most of the information in the *Dailies* is taken from State Department sources and is furnished the Secretary through State Department channels."²⁶ Marshall also stopped reading the *Weekly* after the first issue.²⁷ The Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, considered both *Summaries* "valuable but not... indispensable," according to one of his advisers.²⁸ By contrast, an aide to Secretary of War Robert Patterson reported that the Secretary read both the *Daily* and *Weekly Summaries* "avidly and regularly."²⁹ (U)

The analytical office's work came in for the most severe criticism in the so-called Dulles-Jackson-Correa Report of January 1949, which assessed both the performance of CIA and its role in the Intelligence Community.³⁰ This report, commissioned by the National Security Council in early 1948, was prepared by a trio of prominent intelligence veterans who had left government service after the war: Allen Dulles, William Jackson, and Mathias Correa. (U)

Their report candidly admitted that "There is confusion as to the proper role of the Central Intelligence Agency in the preparation of intelligence reports and estimates," and that "The principle of the authoritative national intelligence estimate does not yet have established acceptance in the Government."³¹ They nevertheless took ORE to task for failing to perform better in the production of national intelligence, noting that although ORE had been given responsibility for production of national estimates, "It has...been concerned with a wide variety of activities and with the production of miscellaneous reports and summaries which by no stretch of the imagination could be considered national estimates."³² (U)

The trio found unacceptable ORE's practice of drafting the estimates "on the basis of its own research and analysis" and then circulating them among the other intelligence agencies to obtain notes of dissent or concurrence.³³ "Under this procedure, none of the agencies

²⁶ Memo from Assistant Director, Office of Collection and Dissemination to Huddle, "Adequacy Survey of the CIG *Daily* and *Weekly Summaries*," 7 May 1947, History Staff Job 67-00059A, box 2, Secret. (U)

²⁷ *Ibid.* (U)

²⁸ *Ibid.* (U)

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5. (U)

³⁰ Allen W. Dulles, William H. Jackson, and Mathias F. Correa, "The Central Intelligence Agency and National Organization for Intelligence: A Report to the National Security Council," 1 January 1949. The summary of the report is reprinted in *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, pp. 903-911. The entire report is available at the National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Records of the Department of State, Records of the Executive Secretariat, NSC Files: Lot 66 D 148, Box 1555. (U)

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 69. (U)

³² *Ibid.*, p. 6. (U)

³³ *Ibid.* (U)

regards itself as a full participant contributing to a truly national estimate and accepting a share in the responsibility for it.”³⁴ They recommended that a “small group of specialists” be used “in lieu of the present Office of Reports and Estimates” to “review the intelligence products of other intelligence agencies and of the Central Intelligence Agency” and to “prepare drafts of national intelligence estimates for consideration by the Intelligence Advisory Committee.”³⁵ (U)

The three also were not impressed with ORE’s efforts in the field of current intelligence: “Approximately ninety per cent of the contents of the *Daily Summary* is derived from State Department sources.... There are occasional comments by the Central Intelligence Agency on portions of the *Summary*, but these, for the most part, appear gratuitous and lend little weight to the material itself.”³⁶ They concluded, “As both *Summaries* consume an inordinate amount of time and effort and appear to be outside of the domain of the Central Intelligence Agency, we believe that the *Daily*, and possibly the *Weekly, Summary* should be discontinued in their present form.”³⁷ (U)

The trio concluded disapprovingly that “the Central Intelligence Agency has tended to become just one more intelligence agency producing intelligence in competition with older established agencies of the Government departments.”³⁸ (U)

The Analysts (U)

The Dulles-Jackson-Correa Report was extremely, perhaps unfairly, critical of ORE’s production record. Intelligence analysis is not an easy job in the best of times—the available information on any given analytical problem is invariably incomplete, or contradictory, or flawed in some other important way—and these clearly were not the best of times. Signals intelligence, which had proven devastatingly effective against the Axis powers in the war, was less effective against the security-conscious Soviets, and, as noted above, in any event could not yet be cited directly in CIA publications, even in those sent to the

³⁴ Ibid. (U)

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 6, 7. (U)

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 84, 85. (U)

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 85, 86. (U)

³⁸ Ibid., p. 11. (U)

President.³⁹ The sophisticated aircraft and satellites that would one day open the whole interior of the USSR to surveillance were not yet on the drawing board, and the intelligence collection arm of the new CIA was finding it impossibly difficult to penetrate Stalin's paranoid police state with agents. In the end, the analysts had little to rely on but diplomatic and military attache reporting, media accounts, and their own judgment. (U)

The paucity of hard intelligence about the Soviet Union placed a premium on the recruitment of topnotch analysts. Unfortunately, CIG and CIA had trouble landing the best and the brightest. CIG was in a particularly difficult situation; it had little authority to hire its own staff employees and thus depended on the Departments of State, War, and Navy for both its funding and personnel.⁴⁰ Ludwell Montague complained to DCI Vandenberg in September 1946 that these departments were not cooperating: "From the beginning the crucial problem...has been the procurement of key personnel qualified by aptitude and experience to anticipate intelligence needs, to exercise critical judgment regarding the material at hand, and to discern emergent trends. Such persons are rare indeed and hard to come by, [and] the recruitment of them is necessarily slow."⁴¹ Montague was particularly bitter about Army intelligence's (G-2) efforts to fob off on CIG what he termed "low-grade personnel."⁴² (U)

The establishment of CIA in September 1947 ended the Office's dependence on other departments for personnel and funds. It permitted the rapid expansion of ORE from 60 employees in June 1946 to

³⁹ From unsecured Soviet communications, signals intelligence provided reliable information on such things as foreign trade, consumer goods policies, gold production, petroleum shipments, shipbuilding, aircraft production, and civil defense. A weekly all-source publication that did contain COMINT, the *Situation Summary*, was created in July 1950 and sent to the White House. The *Situation Summary's* purpose was to warn, in the wake of the North Korean invasion of South Korea, of other potential acts of aggression by Communist forces. See George S. Jackson and Martin P. Claussen, *Organizational History of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1950-1953*, Chapter VIII, *Current Intelligence and Hostility Indications*, The DCI Historical Series (Washington, D.C.: The Central Intelligence Agency, 1957), p. 21, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 263, History Staff Source Collection, NN3-263-92-004. (U)

⁴⁰ When the Central Reports Staff began operations, it consisted of [] people—[] assigned to it by State [] by War, and [] by Navy—all of whom immediately became preoccupied with preparing the *Daily Summaries* for President Truman, the first of which they published on February 15, 1946. The Staff published its first piece of national intelligence, ORE 1, "Soviet Foreign and Military Policy," at the end of July. (U)

⁴¹ Montague to Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Director of Central Intelligence, "Procurement of Key Personnel for ORE," 24 September 1946, in Warner, ed., *The CIA Under Harry Truman*, p. 85. (U)

⁴² Ibid. (U)

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[redacted] staff employees, [redacted] of whom were either analysts or managers of analysts, by the end of 1950.⁴³ Although this solved the quantity problem, quality remained an issue. (U)

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Hanson W. Baldwin of *The New York Times* in 1948 noted that:

personnel weaknesses undoubtedly are the clue to the history of frustration and disappointment, of friction and fiasco, which have been, too largely, the story of our intelligence services since the war. Present personnel, including many of those in the office of research and estimates [sic] of the Central Intelligence Agency, suffer from inexperience and inadequacy of background. Some of them do not possess the “global” objective mind needed to evaluate intelligence, coldly, logically and definitively.⁴⁴ (U)

A senior ORE officer, R. Jack Smith, shared Baldwin’s view, noting that:

We felt obliged to give the White House the best judgment we could command, and we continued to try as the years passed by. Eventually...the cumulative experience of this persistent effort, combined with the recruitment of some genuine specialists and scholars, produced a level of expertise that had no counterpart elsewhere in the government. But this was a decade or more away.⁴⁵ (U)

Ray Cline agreed with Smith’s views. Cline wrote that “the expansion under [DCI] Vandenberg made the agency a little bigger than before but not much better. It was filled largely with military men who did not want to leave the service at the end of the war but were not in great demand in the military services. The quality was mediocre.”⁴⁶ (U)

During the critical year of 1948—which saw, among other crises, the Berlin Blockade—[redacted] analysts worked in the [redacted] (b)(3)

[redacted] As a group, their strength was prior exposure to the Soviet Union: [redacted] (b)(3)

[redacted] Their backgrounds, however, were less impressive in other respects. [redacted]

⁴³ “Table of Organization,” 20 December 1950, Office of Transnational Issues Job 78-01617A, Box 55, Confidential. (U)

⁴⁴ Baldwin, “Intelligence—IV, Competent Personnel Held Key to Success—Reforms Suggested,” *The New York Times*, July 24, 1948. (U)

⁴⁵ Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, p. 36. (U)

⁴⁶ Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, p. 92. (U)

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[redacted] Of those with college experience, a surprising number majored in fields far removed from their work with CIG/CIA: civil engineering, agriculture, and library science, for example. Far from being stereotypical well-heeled graduates of the Ivy League, many had attended colleges that, at least in that period, were undistinguished. Although military experience was widespread, [redacted] had served in the OSS.⁴⁷ (U)

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

To be fair, the analysts faced a number of impediments that made it difficult for their work to match expectations. The information at their disposal was, for the most part, shared by others in the policy and intelligence communities. Moreover, the pace of the working day was hectic, and the analysts were under constant pressure. The pressure came from outside—from government officials who demanded immediate support—and within, from individuals who realized that career advancement rested on quantity of production. Consequently, analysts had precious little time for reflection. In perhaps the best-known example, Ludwell Montague in July 1946 was given only three days in which to research, write, and coordinate with the other agencies ORE-1, “Soviet Foreign and Military Policy,” the first estimate produced by CIG.⁴⁸ (U)

Nowhere was the pressure greater than in the production of the *Daily Summaries*. Each morning, at nine o’clock, couriers would arrive at CIA headquarters with the previous day’s cable traffic from State and the Pentagon. Between nine and 10, an editor would read the cables, write comments on those he thought worthy of using in the *Daily Summary*, and sort them according to ORE’s branch organization. The analysts had on average only one hour, between 10 and 11, to draft their articles. Between 11 and noon, the articles were edited, and at noon, the branch chiefs, editors, and office leadership met to decide which articles should be published. “By one o’clock, the *Daily* was usually dittoed, assembled, enclosed in blue folders, packaged, receipted for, and on its way by couriers to its approximately 15 official recipients.”⁴⁹ (U)

Because there were few contacts between the analysts and editors on the one hand and senior policymakers on the other, choosing which stories to include in the *Daily* was a shot in the dark. As R. Jack Smith, then editor of the *Daily* recalled:

The comic backdrop to this daily turmoil was that in actuality *nobody* knew what President Truman wanted to see or not see....

⁴⁷ Author’s survey of CIA personnel files. Another veteran of the period, James Hanrahan, recalls that pockets of greater academic expertise existed in other branches of ORE, such as the West European branch. Interview with James Hanrahan, 16 July 1997. (U)

⁴⁸ Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, p. 130. (U)

⁴⁹ Jackson, *Office of Reports and Estimates, 1946-1951*, vol. 5, p. 583. (U)

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How were we supposed to judge, sitting in a rundown temporary building on the edge of the Potomac, what was fit for the President's eyes?"

After gaining experience on the job, Smith decided that:

Intelligence of immediate value to the president falls essentially into two categories: developments impinging directly on the security of the United States; and developments bearing on major U.S. policy concerns. These cover possible military attacks, fluctuations in relationships among potential adversaries, or anything likely to threaten or enhance the success of major U.S. policy programs worldwide.⁵⁰ (U)

The combination of uncertainty over what the President needed to see and the analysts' need to publish as much as possible brought editors, analysts, and branch chiefs into frequent conflict. The analysts and their branch chiefs believed that they, as the substantive experts, should have the final say on the content of the *Summaries*, while the editors felt that the experts were too parochial in outlook to make such decisions.⁵¹ Neither side held command authority, so the disputes had to be settled through argument and compromise. The most intractable cases would be bucked up to the office leadership to decide. This situation remained a source of tension within the office throughout ORE's existence. (U)

The Threat of War in Europe... (U)

From the beginning, the current intelligence sent to the White House contained numerous alarming reports about Soviet behavior from nearly all corners of the globe: the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and Korea in particular. A policymaker reading the *Summaries*, or the original reports on which the *Summaries* were based, could easily have concluded that Soviet military aggression was an imminent possibility. (U)

The most consistent—and perhaps most important—theme of CIG/CIA analysis during this period, however, was that Soviet moves, no matter how menacing they might appear in isolation, were unlikely to lead to an attack against the West. This judgment looks even bolder

⁵⁰ Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, p. 34. (U)

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-33. (U)

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in light of President Truman's evident intention that ORE was to warn the US Government of another Pearl Harbor—that is, a sudden surprise attack on American forces or allies. Denied the ability to make comments in the *Summaries* for most of 1946, CIG's first opportunity to put these reports into perspective was ORE-1, "Soviet Foreign and Military Policy," published on 23 July 1946. It noted that although "the Soviet Government anticipates an inevitable conflict with the capitalist world," Moscow "needs to avoid such a conflict for an indefinite period."⁵² (U)

Similarly, a Special Study published a month later and sent to the President noted that "during the past two weeks there has been a series of developments which suggest that some consideration should be given to the possibility of near-term Soviet military action."⁵³ The authors judged, however, that:

The most plausible conclusion would appear to be that, until there is some specific evidence that the Soviets are making the necessary military preparations and dispositions for offensive operations, the recent disturbing developments can be interpreted as constituting no more than an intensive war of nerves. The purpose may be to test US determination to support its objectives at the [Paris] peace conference and to sustain its commitments in European affairs.⁵⁴ (U)

Subsequent crises did not shake this assessment. During the March 1948 "war scare," touched off when Gen. Lucius Clay, the US military governor in Germany, sent a message to the Pentagon warning of the likelihood of a sudden Soviet attack, CIA analysts bluntly

⁵² This and most of the studies cited in this essay are included in Woodrow J. Kuhns, Ed. *Assessing the Soviet Threat: The Early Years*, (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 1997.) See ORE 1, "Soviet Foreign and Military Policy," 23 July 1946. (U).

⁵³ On 9 February 1946, Stalin had given a harsh speech that convinced many leading Americans, including Secretary of the Navy Forrestal and Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, that war with the Soviet Union was becoming increasingly likely. See Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), pp. 134, 135. Other incidents of this period that caused particular concern were Soviet diplomatic pressure on Turkey over joint Soviet-Turkish control of the straits, Yugoslavia's destruction of two US aircraft, and a vicious Soviet propaganda campaign and internal crackdown (the *Zhdanovshchina*) against Western influences. On the *Zhdanovshchina*, see Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 123-125. (U)

⁵⁴ Special Study No. 3, "Current Soviet Intentions," 24 August 1946. (U)

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rejected the notion.⁵⁵ During the scare, the State Department reported, in separate cables, that senior members of the Czechoslovak and Turkish Governments also feared the Soviet Union was prepared to risk an imminent attack. In comments on these reports made in the *Daily Summary* on 16 March 1948, analysts said "CIA does not believe that the USSR is presently prepared to risk war in the pursuit of its aims in Europe." On the following day, they added that "CIA does not believe that the USSR plans a military venture in the immediate future in either Europe or the Middle East."⁵⁶ (U)

During the Berlin blockade, CIA's position remained the same. "The Soviet action...has two possible objectives: either to force the western powers to negotiate on Soviet terms regarding Germany, or failing that, to force a western power withdrawal from Berlin. The USSR does not seem ready to force a definite showdown."⁵⁷ The explosion of the Soviet Union's first atomic bomb, on 29 August 1949, similarly failed to change the analysts' judgment: "No immediate change in Soviet policy or tactics is expected" was the verdict in the *Weekly Summary*.⁵⁸ (U)

...and in the Far East (U)

ORE initially deemed the possibility of aggression by the Soviet client regime in North Korea as more likely.

An armed invasion of South Korea by the North Korean Peoples' Army is not likely until US troops have been withdrawn from the area or before the Communists have attempted to "unify" Korea by some sort of coup. Eventual armed conflict between the North and South Korean governments appears probable, however, in the light of such recent events as Soviet withdrawal from North Korea, intensified improvement of North Korean roads leading south, Peoples' Army troop movements to areas nearer the 38th parallel and from Manchuria to North Korea, and combined maneuvers.⁵⁹ (U)

⁵⁵ Clay's message, sent on 5 March 1948, stated that "For many months... I have felt and held that war was unlikely for at least ten years. Within the last few weeks, I have felt a subtle change in Soviet attitude which I cannot define but which now gives me a feeling that it may come with dramatic suddenness." Quoted in Frank Kofsky, *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948: A Successful Campaign to Deceive the Nation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 104. (U)

⁵⁶ *Daily Summary*, 16 March 1948, *Daily Summary*, 17 March 1948. (U)

⁵⁷ *Weekly Summary*, 2 July 1948. (U)

⁵⁸ *Weekly Summary*, 30 September 1949. (U)

⁵⁹ *Weekly Summary*, 29 October 1948. (U)

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ORE earlier had predicted that Soviet withdrawal from North Korea would be followed by "renewed pressure for the withdrawal of all occupation forces. The Soviet aim will be to deprive the United States of an opportunity to establish a native security force in South Korea adequate to deal with aggression from the North Korean People's Army."⁶⁰ (U)

Unfortunately for ORE and the policymakers who read its analysis, this line was revised in early 1950. "The continuing southward movement of the expanding Korean People's Army toward the thirty-eighth parallel probably constitutes a defensive measure to offset the growing strength of the offensively minded South Korean Army," read the *Weekly Summary* of 13 January. ORE further stated that "an invasion of South Korea is unlikely unless North Korean forces can develop a clear-cut superiority over the increasingly efficient South Korean Army."⁶¹ Although this assessment appears naive in retrospect, it actually fit in well with the views held by senior American military officers, who believed the South Korean Army was sufficiently strong and no longer required US military aid. South Korean strongman Syngman Rhee, moreover, had begun making noises to American officials about reuniting Korea under his control; the possibility of South Korean provocation thus was not as remote at the time as it seems now.⁶² (U)

The day after the North Korean attack on 25 June 1950, the *Daily Summary* counseled that "successful aggression in Korea will encourage the USSR to launch similar ventures elsewhere in the Far East. In sponsoring the aggression in Korea, the Kremlin probably calculated that no firm or effective countermeasures would be taken by the West. However, the Kremlin is not willing to undertake a global war at this time."⁶³ (U)

After initially suggesting that "firm and effective countermeasures by the West would probably lead the Kremlin to permit a settlement to be negotiated between the North and South Koreans," the analysts within days concluded that "It is probable...that a concerted attempt will be

⁶⁰ *Weekly Summary*, 16 July 1948. ORE 3-49, "Consequences of US Troop Withdrawal from Korea in Spring, 1949," published 28 February 1949, similarly predicted that the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea "would probably in time be followed by an invasion." Reprinted in Warner, ed., *The CIA Under Harry Truman*, p. 265. (U)

⁶¹ *Weekly Summary*, 13 January 1950. (U)

⁶² Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 365. (U)

⁶³ *Daily Summary*, 26 June 1950. (U)

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made to make the US effort in Korea as difficult and costly as possible.”⁶⁴ A week later, the analysts amplified this theme:

All evidence available leads to the conclusion that the USSR is not ready for war. Nevertheless, the USSR has substantial capabilities, without directly involving Soviet troops, for prolonging the fighting in Korea, as well as for initiating hostilities elsewhere. Thus, although the USSR would prefer to confine the conflict to Korea, a reversal there might impel the USSR to take greater risks of starting a global war either by committing substantial Chinese Communist forces in Korea or by sanctioning aggressive actions by Satellite forces in other areas of the world.⁶⁵ (U)

ORE analysts quickly concluded, however, that Chinese intervention was not likely. They reasoned that, although a North Korean defeat would “have obvious disadvantages” for the Soviet Union, “the commitment of Chinese Communist forces would not necessarily prevent such a defeat and a defeat under these circumstances would be far more disastrous, not only because it would be a greater blow to Soviet prestige throughout the world, but because it would seriously threaten Soviet control over the Chinese Communist regime.” Moreover, if the Chinese were to emerge victorious, “the presence of Chinese Communist troops in Korea would complicate if not jeopardize Soviet direction of Korean affairs; Chinese Communist prestige, as opposed to that of the USSR, would be enhanced; and Peiping might be tempted as a result of success in Korea to challenge Soviet leadership in Asia.” Finally, the analysts believed that Chinese intervention was unlikely because “the use of Chinese Communist forces in Korea would increase the risk of global war, not only because of possible UN or US reaction but because the USSR itself would be under greater compulsion to assure a victory in Korea, possibly by committing Soviet troops.”⁶⁶ (U)

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*; *Weekly Summary*, 30 June 1950. (U)

⁶⁵ *Weekly Summary*, 7 July 1950. Three days after the war began, ORE analysts assured President Truman that “No evidence is available indicating Soviet preparations for military operations in the West European theater...” Nevertheless, the analysts cautioned, “Soviet military capabilities in Europe make it possible for the USSR to take aggressive action with a minimum of preparation or advance notice.” *Daily Summary*, 28 June 1950. (U)

⁶⁶ *Weekly Summary*, 14 July 1950. (U)

The *Weekly Summary* of 15 September 1950 briefly described the evidence that suggested Chinese intervention was likely but still concluded that Beijing would not risk war with the United States:

Numerous reports of Chinese Communist troop movements in Manchuria, coupled with Peiping's recent charges of US aggression and violations of Chinese territory, have increased speculation concerning both Chinese Communist intervention in Korea and disagreement between the USSR and China on matters of military policy. It is being argued that victory in Korea can only be achieved by using Chinese Communist (or Soviet) forces, that the USSR desires to weaken the US by involving it in a protracted struggle with China, and that the Chinese Communists are blaming the USSR for initiating the Korean venture and thus postponing the invasion of Taiwan. Despite the apparent logic of this reasoning, there is no evidence indicating a Chinese-Soviet disagreement, and cogent political and military considerations make it unlikely that Chinese Communist forces will be directly and openly committed in Korea.⁶⁷ (U)

The first Chinese warnings of intervention in the war if UN forces crossed the 38th parallel were published in the *Daily Summary* on 30 September without comment, perhaps because they were downplayed by the US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, to whom others in the Moscow diplomatic corps had passed the warnings.⁶⁸ On 3 October, the analysts drew on a similar report from the US Embassy in London to state that "CIA estimates... that the Chinese Communists would not consider it in their interests to intervene openly in Korea if, as now seems likely, they anticipate that war with the UN nations [sic] would result."⁶⁹ In the same article, the analysts warned, as they had before and would again, that "The Chinese Communists have long had the capability for military intervention in Korea on a scale sufficient to materially affect the course of events."⁷⁰ Nevertheless, in eight subsequent *Daily Summaries*, CIA analysts restated their belief that China would, first, not intervene, and then—as the intervention got under way—that it would not develop into a large scale attack. The last *Summary* containing this judgment came

⁶⁷ *Weekly Summary*, 15 September 1950. For the contemporary research on this issue, see, for example, John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 77-82. (U)

⁶⁸ *Daily Summary*, 30 September 1950. (U)

⁶⁹ *Daily Summary*, 3 October 1950. (U)

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* (U)

on 17 November, three weeks after the first Chinese troops, wearing Korean uniforms, entered combat in far northern Korea.⁷¹ (U)

The Danger of Subversion in Europe (U)

Throughout this period, ORE analysts were far more concerned about Soviet use of local Communist parties to subvert pro-Western governments than they were about the possibility of armed aggression by the USSR or one of its Communist allies. As ORE expressed it in September 1947, "The USSR is unlikely to resort to open military aggression in present circumstances. Its policy is to avoid war, to build up its war potential, and to extend its influence and control by political, economic, and psychological methods."⁷² (U)

CIG had reached a very similar conclusion about the first serious postwar confrontation with the Soviet Union—its refusal to withdraw its forces from northern Iran and its subsequent support for the break-away Iranian provinces of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.⁷³ After the worst of the Iran crisis had passed, the first *Weekly Summary* warned that the Soviets, having recognized that their policy toward Iran was "heavy-handed and over-hasty" would rely on "gradual penetration." It declared that "the Soviets clearly feel that 'time is on their side' in Iran and that the general economic backwardness of the country and the unpopular labor policy of the British oil companies will forward their cause."⁷⁴ "Their cause" was identified as "gaining control over Iranian oil and blocking closer military ties between Iran and the West."⁷⁵ (U)

ORE tracked the gradual but inexorable consolidation of Communist power across Eastern Europe, as brought about through a combination of political manipulation by local Communists and pressure from the Soviet occupation forces. The political and economic undermining of the prospects for democracy in Eastern Europe reinforced the analysts' conclusion that this type of subversion was the greatest danger from the Soviet Union. The analysts observed that Moscow's objective

⁷¹ *Daily Summaries*, 9 October 1950; 16 October 1950, 20 October 1950, 28 October 1950, 30 October 1950, 31 October 1950, 2 November 1950, 17 November 1950. (U)

⁷² *Review of the World Situation*, CIA 1, 26 September 1947, (U)

⁷³ In December 1945, Iranian rebels under the protection of Soviet forces proclaimed an independent Azerbaijan and an independent Kurdish People's Republic. The government of Iran protested this Soviet interference in its internal affairs before the UN Security Council in January 1946. (U)

⁷⁴ *Weekly Summary*, 14 June 1946. (U)

⁷⁵ *Weekly Summary*, 18 March 1949. (U)

in the region was to "establish permanent safeguards for their strategic, political, and economic interests, including...stable and subservient, or at least friendly, regime[s]." ⁷⁶ (U)

The analysts were most troubled by the consolidation of Communist power in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, judging that it would diminish:

the possibility of a compromise in Europe between the ideologies of the Kremlin and the principles of western democracy and individual freedom. Such a compromise had apparently been achieved in Czechoslovakia.... The coup...reflects the refusal of the Communists to settle for anything less than complete control and their conviction that such dominance could never have been achieved under a freely operating parliamentary form of government. ⁷⁷ (U)

On Germany, ORE anticipated that Stalin would use subversive tactics to try to create a unified German state from the occupied ruins of the Third Reich: "A German administration strongly centralized in Berlin will be much more susceptible than a loose federation to Soviet pressures.... Posing thus as the champions of German nationalism and rehabilitation, the Soviets can attempt to discredit the policy of the western powers and to facilitate the Communist penetration of their zones." ⁷⁸ The analysts warned that the removal of zonal barriers would place the Soviets in a "position to launch a vigorous campaign to communize the Western zone." ⁷⁹ (U)

After the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) conference in Moscow in the spring of 1947 failed to reach agreement on Germany's future, ORE analysts advised that the Soviets may be trying to (1) "prolong the unsettled conditions in Europe conducive to Communism; and (2) to encourage the US to expend its patience and energy in a vain quest for agreement until forced by its internal economic and political conditions to curtail its foreign commitments and to leave Europe to the USSR by default." ⁸⁰ (U)

⁷⁶ *Weekly Summary*, 5 July 1946. The quotation refers specifically to Bulgaria, but the same point was repeated about other East European countries as well. *Weekly Summary*, 19 July 1946, for example, contains a piece on Hungary that notes the "Soviet desire to establish the control of the minority Communist Party in anticipation of the peace settlement and the ultimate withdrawal of Soviet troops." (U)

⁷⁷ *Weekly Summary*, 27 February 1948. (U)

⁷⁸ *Weekly Summary*, 19 July 1946. (U)

⁷⁹ *Weekly Summary*, 2 August 1946. (U)

⁸⁰ *Weekly Summary*, 2 May 1947. (U)

ORE noted that Soviet efforts to penetrate the Western zones of Germany focused on attempts to "extend the SED [Socialist Unity Party, the Communist's stalking horse in the Eastern zone] political structure to the West, while, simultaneously, efforts are made to establish Communist front organizations, such as the Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ), and to penetrate Western Zone labor unions."⁸¹ ORE warned that if "Soviet efforts at the [November 1947] CFM fail to achieve a united Germany on Soviet terms, the USSR will attempt to blame the Western Powers for failure of the conference. At the same time, the Kremlin may announce the recognition of a 'German Republic' east of the Elbe and attempt to secure the removal of the Western allies from Berlin."⁸² (U)

Once the first signs of the Berlin blockade emerged in April 1948, ORE analysts advised that Stalin wanted "a negotiated settlement...on terms which would permit ultimate Soviet control of Berlin and Communist penetration of Western Germany."⁸³ After the blockade was lifted in the spring of 1949, CIA assessed that Soviet objectives in Germany remained unchanged: "Soviet agreement to lift the Berlin blockade and enter into four-power discussions on Germany does not represent any change in the Soviet objective to establish a Germany which will eventually fall under Soviet domination."⁸⁴ (U)

The analysts also highlighted the Communist threat in France and Italy. Both countries had emerged from the war with widespread devastation and strong Communist parties sharing power in coalition governments. After the French and Italian prime ministers expelled the Communist ministers from their governments in the spring of 1947, ORE predicted that:

The Kremlin apparently proposes for countries such as France and Italy: (1) intensive agitation against their present governments and against non-Communist liberals; and (2) the development of highly-disciplined Communist cores which, at the proper moment, could assume control. Such a program is well-adapted to the current situation in France where, [now] relieved of governmental responsibility, the Communists are in a position to threaten (by propaganda, subversion, and trade-union agitation) the stability of the present Government. Where Communism is less powerful, the Kremlin desires to concentrate on gaining control of trade unions and other liberal organizations.⁸⁵ (U)

⁸¹ *Weekly Summary*, 5 September 1947. (U)

⁸² *Ibid.* (U)

⁸³ *Weekly Summary*, 5 November 1948. (U)

⁸⁴ *Weekly Summary*, 6 May 1949. (U)

⁸⁵ *Weekly Summary*, 9 May 1947. (U)

ORE warned in September 1947 that "the sudden overthrow of the De Gasperi Government [in Italy] by Communist-sponsored armed force, following [the December 1947] withdrawal of Allied troops," was "within the realm of possibility" because of the Italian Army's weakness. But the analysts thought that outcome was unlikely. They wrote that "the USSR is unwilling to support directly such a step because it might involve war with the US" and because the potential failure of the much-anticipated European Recovery Program (better known today as the Marshall Plan) could deliver Italy into the hands of the Communists in the April 1948 elections. ORE worried more that a Communist-inspired general strike could paralyze the important northern Italian industrial area; such an event could "defeat the operation of the European recovery program and eventually throw not only Italy into the Soviet orbit, but possibly France as well."⁸⁶ (U)

A Special Evaluation published on 13 October 1947 concluded that Moscow's establishment of the Communist Information Bureau in September 1947:

suggests strongly that the USSR recognizes that it has reached a point of diminishing returns in the attempts of the Communist parties of Western Europe to rise to power through parliamentary means and that, consequently, it intends to revert to subversive activities, such as strikes and sabotage, in an effort to undermine the stability of Western European governments. This move likewise tends to substantiate the contention that the USSR considers international subversive and revolutionary action, rather than military aggression, as the primary instrument for obtaining its worldwide objectives.⁸⁷ (U)

ORE concluded that, "In its efforts to sabotage the European recovery program, which is the USSR's immediate and primary target, the Kremlin will be willing even to risk the sacrifice of the French and Italian Communist Parties" by ordering them to use sabotage and violence against the Marshall Plan. "If these Parties are defeated and driven underground, the USSR will have lost no more than it would lose by the success of the European recovery program. CIA believes that the unexpectedly rapid progress of the [proposed] Marshall program has upset

⁸⁶ *Weekly Summary*, 12 September 1947. (U)

⁸⁷ "Implications of the New Communist Information Bureau," *Special Evaluation 21*, 13 October 1947. (U)

the timetable of the Kremlin and forced this desperate action as the last available countermeasures.”⁸⁸ (U)

The unexpectedly severe defeat of the Italian Communists in the April 1948 national election considerably eased the concerns of ORE's analysts. Noting that the election results had “vastly improved the morale and confidence of the anti-Communists in both Italy and France,” the analysts predicted that “for the immediate future, Communist activities in western Europe are likely to be directed toward rebuilding the popular front rather than an early or determined bid for power.” Nevertheless, “the Communists are not expected to relax their efforts to prevent recovery in Europe.... Strikes and industrial sabotage...therefore can be expected.”⁸⁹ (U)

The civil war in Greece, which had begun in 1946, received relatively little attention in the current intelligence publications until the British Government announced in early 1947 that it would have to withdraw its forces from the country and significantly reduce its assistance to Greece's non-Communist government. The *Weekly Summary* of 28 February, published seven days after the British announcement, summarized the dire situation facing Greece:

Alone, Greece cannot save itself. Militarily, the country needs aid in the form of equipment and training. Politically, Greece's diehard politicians need to be convinced of the necessity of a housecleaning, and the prostrate Center...requires bolstering. Economically, it needs gifts or loans of commodities, food, foreign exchange, and gold to check inflation. Of these needs, the economic are the most vital.... Without immediate economic aid...there would appear to be imminent danger that the Soviet-dominated Left will seize control of the country, which would result in the loss of Greece as a democracy.⁹⁰ (U)

ORE analysts believed the chain of command for the Communist forces in Greece started in Moscow and ran through Yugoslav leader Josip Broz-Tito to Bulgaria and Albania before reaching the Greek

⁸⁸ *Daily Summary*, 4 December 1947. (U)

⁸⁹ *Weekly Summary*, 23 April 1948. (U)

⁹⁰ *Weekly Summary*, 28 February 1947. (U)

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Communists.⁹¹ Nevertheless, they rejected the possibility that armies of those countries would assist the Greek guerrillas, despite numerous rumors to the contrary:

CIG considers direct participation by the Albanian, Yugoslav, and Bulgarian armies unlikely. Such action would obviously have far-reaching international repercussions and might even involve the USSR in a world war for which it is unprepared. The likelihood of direct participation by Soviet troops in Greece or Turkey at this time is so remote that it need not seriously be considered.⁹² (U)

In July 1948, ORE advised the President that Tito's rift with Stalin, which appeared in March, would considerably lessen the pressure against Greece.⁹³ It soon followed with a report of slackening Bulgarian support for the guerrillas, although ORE was unable to specify the cause of the change.⁹⁴ (U)

The Threat From Revolution in the Far East (U)

In their coverage of the Chinese civil war in the late 1940s, ORE analysts noted that "the Soviet Union has scrupulously avoided identifying the Chinese Communist Party with Moscow, and it is highly improbable that the Soviet leaders would at this time jeopardize the Chinese Communist Party by acknowledging its connection with the world Communist movement."⁹⁵ They later affirmed that the USSR had "given renewed indications that it is not ready to abandon its 'correct' attitude toward the Nanking Government in favor of open aid to the Communists in China's civil war."⁹⁶ Moreover, "Because of the intensely nationalistic spirit of the Chinese people...the [Chinese] Communists are most anxious to protect themselves from the charge of Soviet dominance."⁹⁷ (U)

Not until the end of 1948 did ORE analysts begin to worry about what a Communist victory in China might mean for the global balance of power: "A tremendously increased Soviet war potential in the Far

⁹¹ *Weekly Summary*, 15 August 1947. (U)

⁹² *Daily Summary*, 5 September 1947. (U)

⁹³ *Weekly Summary*, 9 July 1948. (U)

⁹⁴ *Weekly Summary*, 23 July 1948. (U)

⁹⁵ *Weekly Summary*, 19 December 1947. (U)

⁹⁶ *Weekly Summary*, 9 January 1948. (U)

⁹⁷ *Weekly Summary*, 27 February 1948. (U)

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East may result eventually from Communist control of Manchuria and north China.”⁹⁸ At the same time, the analysts began warning that “Recent statements from authoritative Chinese Communist sources emphasize the strong ideological affinity existing between the USSR and the Chinese Communist party...and indicate that Soviet leadership, especially in foreign affairs, will probably be faithfully followed by any Communist-dominated government in China.”⁹⁹ (U)

After the Communists’ final victory over Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist regime in the autumn of 1949, the analysts doubted that Mao’s protracted stay in Moscow, which began in December 1949 and lasted for nine weeks, was a sign of potential trouble in the alliance: “Although the length of Mao’s visit may be the result of difficulties in reaching agreement on a revised Sino-Soviet treaty... it is unlikely that Mao is proving dangerously intractable. Mao is a genuine and orthodox Stalinist, [and] is in firm control of the Chinese Communist Party.”¹⁰⁰ The analysts believed that “The USSR can be expected to gradually strengthen its grip on the Chinese Communist Party apparatus, on the armed forces, on the secret police, and on communications and informational media.”¹⁰¹ (U)

ORE initially devoted little attention to the French struggle in Indochina against the Viet Minh independence movement led by Ho Chi Minh—in fact, the office devoted much more coverage to the problems the Dutch were having in their colony in Indonesia. Although most of ORE’s information came from French officials, the analysts were skeptical that Paris would be able to put down the rebellion.¹⁰² They concluded that “Any Vietnam government which does not include Ho Chi Minh or his more moderate followers will...be limited in scope of authority by the perimeters of French military control and will be open to widespread popular opposition and sabotage.”¹⁰³ (U)

Ho was not at first portrayed by ORE as either a Communist or a Soviet ally. The analysts referred to him as “President Ho.”¹⁰⁴ The first mention of a tie to Moscow, made in May 1948, was a grudging one: “Ho Chi Minh...is supported by 80% of the population and...is allegedly loyal to Soviet foreign policy.”¹⁰⁵ As late as September 1949,

⁹⁸ *Weekly Summary*, 12 November 1948. (U)

⁹⁹ *Weekly Summary*, 3 December 1948. (U)

¹⁰⁰ *Weekly Summary*, 13 January 1950. (U)

¹⁰¹ *Weekly Summary*, 17 February 1950. (U)

¹⁰² *Weekly Summary*, 10 January 1947. (U)

¹⁰³ *Weekly Summary*, 14 March 1947. (U)

¹⁰⁴ *Weekly Summary*, 24 October 1947. (U)

¹⁰⁵ *Weekly Summary*, 14 May 1948. (U)

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analysts wrote that "Ho's relationship with the Kremlin and the Chinese Communists remains obscure....Ho has stated his willingness to accept military equipment from the Chinese Communists. On the other hand, Ho still maintains that neutrality between the US and the USSR is both possible and desirable."¹⁰⁶ (U)

Moscow's recognition of Ho's government on 31 January 1950 prompted the analysts to change their stance dramatically, however.¹⁰⁷ They saw the likelihood of a series of regional governments falling in turn under Soviet influence:

If France is driven from Indochina, the resulting emergence of an indigenous Communist-dominated regime in Vietnam, together with pressures exerted by Peiping and Moscow, would probably bring about the orientation of adjacent Thailand and Burma toward the Communist orbit. Under these circumstances, other Asian states—Malaya and Indonesia, particularly—would become highly vulnerable to the extension of Communist influence.... Meanwhile, by recognizing the Ho regime, the USSR has revealed its determination to force France completely out of Indochina and to install a Communist government. Alone, France is incapable of preventing such a development.¹⁰⁸ (U)

The analysts concluded that, although only the United States could help France avoid defeat, the "Asian nations... would tend to interpret such US action as support of continued Western colonialism."¹⁰⁹ (U)

Soviet Aims in Israel (U)

Like many in the State Department and elsewhere in the US Government, ORE, worried by reports that the Soviets were funneling arms and money to Zionist guerrillas, suggested that the creation of Israel could give the USSR a client state in the Middle East.¹¹⁰

Formation of a Jewish state in Palestine will enable the USSR to intensify its efforts to expand Soviet influence in the Near East and to perpetuate a chaotic condition there.... In any event, the

¹⁰⁶ *Weekly Summary*, 9 September 1949. (U)

¹⁰⁷ Communist China had recognized Ho's government on 18 January 1950. (U)

¹⁰⁸ *Daily Summary*, 1 February 1950. (U)

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* (U)

¹¹⁰ *Daily Summary*, 25 June 1948. (U)

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flow of men and munitions to Palestine from the Soviet bloc can be expected to increase substantially. The USSR will undoubtedly take advantage of the removal of immigration restrictions to increase the influx of trained Soviet agents from eastern and central Europe into Palestine where they have already had considerable success penetrating the Stern Gang, Irgun, and, to a lesser extent, Haganah.¹¹¹ (U)

Not until November 1948, five months after Israel declared its independence and defeated a coalition of Arab opponents, did ORE suggest that events might turn out otherwise: "There is some evidence that Soviet...enthusiasm for the support of Israel is diminishing."¹¹² ORE later suggested that the change in attitude stemmed from a Soviet estimate "that the establishment of Israel as a disruptive force in the Arab world has now been accomplished and that further military aid to a country of basically pro-western sympathies would ultimately prove prejudicial to Soviet interests in the Near East."¹¹³ (U)

Conclusion (U)

ORE met its end shortly after Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith and William H. Jackson, of the Dulles-Jackson-Correa survey team, arrived in late 1950 as Director of Central Intelligence and Deputy Director, respectively. They abolished ORE that November and replaced it with three new units: the Office of National Estimates, the Office of Research and Reports, and the Office of Current Intelligence. These steps finally ended the confusion over the analytical mission, primarily by splitting the competing functions of national, current, and basic intelligence into three offices. (U)

Much maligned by insiders and outsiders alike, ORE's record is perhaps not as bad as its reputation. Its analysis holds up well when compared to both the views held by other agencies at the time and our current understanding of events in that period. Of course, ORE, like all intelligence organizations in all eras, had its failures. Dramatic, sweeping events, such as wars and revolutions, are far too complex to predict or analyze perfectly. Even with the benefit of unprecedented access to Russian and Chinese sources, for example, contemporary historians are

¹¹¹ *Weekly Summary*, 14 May 1948. (U)

¹¹² *Weekly Summary*, 12 November 1948. (U)

¹¹³ *Weekly Summary*, 17 December 1948. (U)

unable to conclusively pinpoint when and why Mao decided to intervene in the Korean War.¹¹⁴ (U)

Gaps also exist in our knowledge about what intelligence President Truman saw, understood, believed, and used. Judging the impact of intelligence on policy is difficult always, and especially so from a distance of fifty years. On many issues, such as the Communist threat to Italy, ORE's work tended to reinforce what many policymakers in the Administration and officials in the field already believed. (U)

It does seem fair to conclude, however, that ORE's repeated, correct assurances that a Soviet attack in Europe was unlikely must have had a steadying influence when tensions were high and some feared a Soviet onslaught. In this, the analysts of ORE served President Truman well, and their accurate assessment ultimately must be considered ORE's most important contribution in those early, fearful years of the Cold War. (U)

(This essay is Unclassified.)

¹¹⁴ The two sets of sources appear to be at least partially contradictory. See the discussion in Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, pp. 65-69, and in John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know*, pp. 77-80. (U)

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The First Star: Douglas Mackiernan in China and Tibet (C)

Nicholas Dujmovic

“Don’t shoot,” called Douglas Mackiernan, American vice consul. Moments later, he was dead, killed in a fusillade of bullets fired by nervous guards on the border between China and then independent Tibet. It was April, 1950. Mackiernan received posthumous honors from the Secretary of State, and his name would grace the State Department’s memorial to fallen Foreign Service officers. (U)

Forty seven years later and half a world away, Acting Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet stood in front of CIA’s Memorial Wall, with its seventy stars. He spoke before a large audience that had packed the lobby of CIA’s Original Headquarters Building for the annual Memorial Ceremony. To the hushed crowd, which included Mackiernan’s widow, Acting Director Tenet acknowledged Mackiernan as the first CIA officer to die in the line of duty: “He is the first star on that Wall, and the space in the book where his name should be is blank... but we claim Doug Mackiernan as one of our own...now, in a sense, we’ve brought him home.”¹ (S)

The story of Douglas (Mack) Mackiernan is the story of a brave and resourceful officer working for his country in a desolate, isolated foreign land undergoing a Communist revolution. It demonstrates the continuity of US foreign intelligence from the War Department’s Strategic Services Unit, through the Central Intelligence Group, to the

¹ The earliest account of Mackiernan’s death was told by the American who survived the attack, Frank Bessac, “This Was the Perilous Trek to Tragedy,” *Life*, 13 November 1950. Other well known sources include Heinrich Harrer, *Seven Years in Tibet* (London: Hart-Davis, 1953), pp 237-38; Godfrey Lias, *Kazak Exodus* (London: Evans, 1956), pp. 170-72; and Fred Donner, “Overland from China,” *Foreign Service Journal*, April 1985, pp. 38-41. All these accounts preserved cover for both Mackiernan and Bessac. Last year, however, a Tibet scholar published a history that exposes their CIA affiliation; see Warren W. Smith, Jr., *The Tibetan Nation* (Boulder: Westview, 1996), pp. 278-79. More recently, Mackiernan’s widow cooperated with a *Washington Post* reporter: Ted Gup’s article, “Star Agents: Covert Lives and Covert Deaths at the CIA” (*The Washington Post Magazine*, 7 September 1997), is replete with errors but tells the main part of Mackiernan’s story all too correctly—that he was a CIA officer operating under cover in far western China from 1947 through 1949. (U)

Central Intelligence Agency. It shows an early friction between the practice of intelligence and the world of diplomacy. It illuminates the fears held by US officials during the initial stages of the Cold War. Above all, it reminds us of the peculiar kind of secrecy demanded by intelligence, which insists that the heroic mission of Doug Mackiernan, who died in the service of this country far from home, should remain in a shroud of secrecy even after five decades. (S)

An Extremely Capable Operative (U)

Douglas Mackiernan was born in 1913, attended high school in Stoughton, Massachusetts and studied physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was an expert in both radio and meteorology; he was fluent in Spanish and had proficiency in French, German, and Russian. In April 1942, Mackiernan became a US Army meteorologist, which allowed him to serve his country while indulging his love of travel. He deployed to Greenland, Alaska, and then China. Mackiernan spent almost two and a half years with the US Army's 10th Weather Squadron in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang province in far western China, on the Soviet border.² In the spring of 1946, Mackiernan headed home for his discharge from the Army.³ (U)

But Mackiernan wanted to return to Urumqi. He found the Xinjiang province—with its extremes of desert and mountain, its volatile ethnic mix, and its frontier character—fascinating. The War Department's Strategic Services Unit (SSU—which housed remnants of the OSS) expressed an interest in Mackiernan's talents and knowledge.⁴ SSU was particularly interested in Xinjiang province because it was widely believed that local uprisings against Nationalist Chinese authority in the Sino-Soviet border region were instigated by Moscow.⁵ Soviet influence and inroads were believed to stem in part from a desire to control important mineral deposits of the region—especially uranium. It

² Names and spellings are problematic for this region. For this article I use the current Chinese "pinyin" usage for Urumqi and Xinjiang, rather than the older forms Urumchi and Sinkiang. Complicating matters is the fact that Mackiernan and his contemporaries called Urumqi, the ancient Uighur name for the provincial capital, by its Chinese name, Tihwa or Tihua. DO records reflect all these usages and more. (U)

⁵ See Linda Benson, *The Ili Rebellion: The Moslem Challenge to Chinese Authority in Xinjiang, 1944-1949* (London: Sharpe, 1990), passim. (U)

also made sense for Moscow to keep tabs on the nationalist and independence movements of Xinjiang, as these could affect minorities in neighboring Soviet Central Asia. All this was speculation; what was known for sure was that the Soviets had five consulates in the province. What American intelligence needed was an astute observer on the ground, and Mackiernan seemed ideal. (S)

SSU officers interviewed Mackiernan in China and judged him a trainable intelligence officer ideally suited to operations in Xinjiang. Besides his knowledge of radio, he knew a lot about photography. He already spoke Russian, and he was also studying Chinese and Mongolian.⁶ (S)

On his arrival in Washington, SSU made an employment offer, and Mackiernan accepted. After training, he joined SSU on 22 August 1946.

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Expectations regarding Mackiernan were high:

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Indeed, the highest intelligence priority [Redacted] concerned Soviet activities and influence in Xinjiang, especially intelligence related to Soviet efforts to construct an atomic bomb. Mackiernan was directed to discover where the Soviets might find uranium in the province, whether they were mining it, and whether any "atomic research" was being conducted on Chinese territory; [Redacted]

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[Redacted] He was

He was

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also to find out what he could regarding Soviet diplomatic, military, economic, and intelligence activities; Soviet military aid to various ethnic factions; and the spread of Communist propaganda [redacted]

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Almost as soon as he returned to China in October 1946, Mackiernan became one of the select number of SSU officers who made the transition to the Central Intelligence Group. [redacted]

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[redacted] on his own initiative got the State Department to hire him as a clerk for the US Consulate General (hereinafter referred to as the US Consulate) in Urumqi. [redacted]

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[redacted] He requested through CIG channels to be made vice consul. (DCI Hillenkoetter made the formal request to the State Department on 20 August 1947.)¹⁰ (S)

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[redacted] At that time, the Embassy in Nanking sent him Urumqi overland—a distance of 2,400 miles. Mackiernan and a young Foreign Service Officer named Edwin Martin (later Ambassador to Burma) took a jeep, an Army truck and trailer, and four tons of supplies. They barged their convoy across the Yangtze, spent ten days on freight trains to Xi'an in central China, then drove the remaining 1700 miles to Urumqi, arriving on 12 June.¹¹ (S)

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¹⁰ Edwin Martin, "Overland Again," *Foreign Service Journal*, September 1985, p. 8. I am indebted to Fred Donner for this reference. (U)

Mackiernan was immediately thrown into a fast-moving situation that provided a wealth of important intelligence. Border clashes between Nationalist border guards and troops of Soviet satellite Mongolia erupted into serious fighting in mid-June 1947.¹² Nationalist China publicly accused Moscow of supporting Mongolian raids into Xinjiang.

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¹² See *The New York Times* stories on the fighting, 11-13, 18, 19 June 1947. (U)

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In May of 1948, the State Department formally granted CIA's request for Mackiernan's appointment as vice consul in Urumai. [redacted]

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[redacted] Mackiernan was to focus his efforts on Xinjiang, especially what CIA's Office of Reports and Estimates called "the most difficult puzzle" in Xinjiang: Soviet intentions, capabilities, and activities in the province. Intelligence on Soviet mining, military and intelligence activities, and Soviet influence in the rebel

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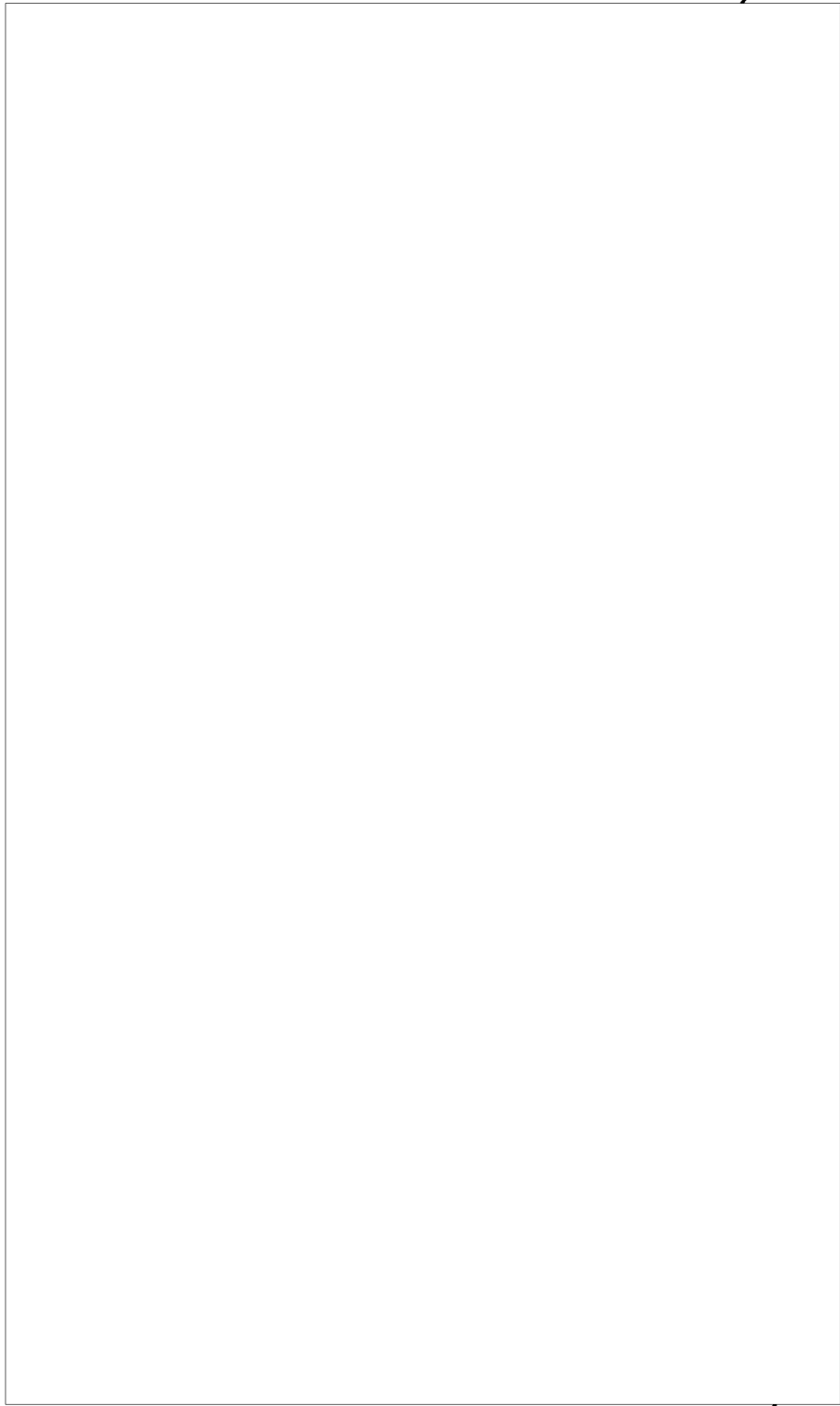
districts was especially sought after.

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the gathering of intelligence on Soviet development of an atomic bomb—received assistance and enhanced capability from the US Air Force. While still in Shanghai in September 1947, Mackiernan had been approached by the Air Force about setting up a station in Urumqi that would monitor signs of a Soviet nuclear explosion. The Air Force did not know Mackiernan was a CIA officer but apparently believed the Army meteorological experience of the young State Department employee made him ideal for this project. The initial phase of the plan, as further developed in Washington in mid-1948, was to place barographic, seismographic, and radiological equipment, provided by the Air Force and disguised as a weather station, under Mackiernan's supervision at the Urumqi consulate. Later, more sophisticated equipment would be sent. Mackiernan told CIA the Air Force wanted an immediate report, "should an unmistakable indication of an atomic explosion be recorded."²⁴ (S)

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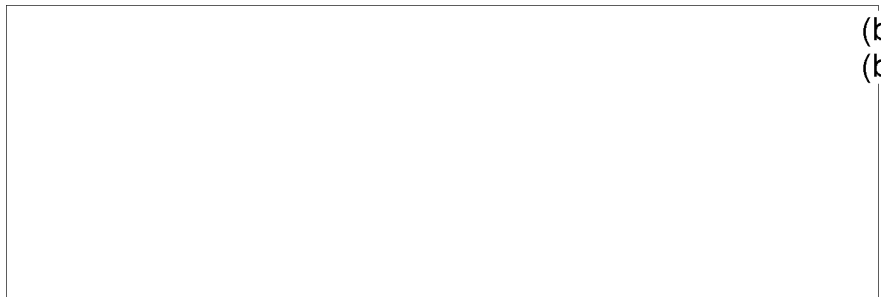


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The new provincial government was powerless to stabilize the now-chaotic economy or calm ethnic tensions; its incapacity further discredited the dying Nationalist Chinese regime. Rumors began to circulate in Urumqi that the province was prepared either to cede Xinjiang's mineral resources to the USSR or to surrender to the Chinese Communists. Mackiernan himself believed that Xinjiang would align itself with



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Mao's Communists in order to gain protection against Soviet hegemony, but that this realignment would take some time.³² (S)

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Flight From Urumqi (U)

The rapid advance of Mao Zedong's army toward northwest China led Secretary of State Acheson to decide in late July 1949 to close the Consulate in Urumqi.³⁴ CIA and State agreed to leave Mackiernan in place for approximately three months to continue intelligence gathering. Mackiernan cabled CIA that he was "willing [to] remain here [as] long as needed."

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³² Benson, *Ili Rebellion*, pp. 172-76. (U) The possibility that the USSR would actually annex portions of Xinjiang was raised in an April 1949 CIA estimate; CIA believed Moscow favored "the formation of an autonomous territory of Xinjiang, possibly with a view to creating a new Soviet Union Republic at some time in the future." ORE 29-49, "Prospects for Soviet Control of a Communist China," in Michael Warner, ed., *The CIA under Harry Truman* (Washington, D.C.: CIA History Staff, 1994), pp. 281-285.

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³⁴ See the dispatches from Washington, Canton, and Nanking, 22-29 July 1949, in *FRUS*, 1949, volume VIII, *The Far East: China*, pp. 1303-06. (U)

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The Air Force, for its part, made it known that it wanted Mackiernan to continue monitoring for signs of a Soviet atomic test. In response to a query from Headquarters, Mackiernan cabled on 11 August that his Air Force equipment was in operation and that his instructions were to make a report only for an "unusual event of which none so far."³⁶ (S)

On the morning of 16 August, Consul General Paxton, his wife, and several Consulate employees left Urumqi on an arduous journey that would take them west across Xinjiang and into India by late October; Paxton would make it back to the United States in mid-November.³⁷ As Vice Consul and the only American presence left in Urumqi, Mackiernan proceeded to destroy the Consulate's files and turn US property over to the British Consulate General.³⁸ (S)

The doors to Mackiernan's future began to shut. On 25 August, he cabled to Headquarters that the western route to India had been closed by the provincial government. On 3 September, Mackiernan reported that Nationalist Chinese forces were beginning to evacuate Urumqi, and the city was in a panic.³⁹ CIA cabled back, saying that under no circumstances should Mackiernan remain in Urumqi if a Communist takeover was imminent.⁴⁰ Mackiernan then heard that the main mountain passes from western Xinjiang into both India and Afghanistan had been sealed. For a possible return to Urumqi, Mackiernan spent many of his remaining days in the area caching equipment, cipher material, supplies, and gold reserves

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³⁷ On Paxton's journey, see Lisagor and Higgins, *Overtime in Heaven*, pp. 173-206. (U)

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[redacted] Amidst this activity, CIA sent Mackiernan the following cable: "Report priority all info and rumors on atomic explosion supposed to have occurred on Asiatic mainland last half August 1949. Handle with greatest discretion." (S)

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The Soviet Union, of course, had exploded its first atomic device in neighboring Kazakhstan, about 650 miles to the north west of Urumqi, on 29 August. For reasons unknown, the Air Force equipment had not registered anything unusual. It is likely that Mackiernan's equipment—which the Air Force had intended primarily for baseline barographic, seismic, and radiological readings for the region and which was supposed to be replaced with more sophisticated equipment—was not sufficiently sensitive to detect the changes produced by the Soviet explosion. Through no fault of his own, Mackiernan had missed his chance to become part of the history of the nuclear arms race. On 15 September he ceased monitoring and destroyed the equipment.⁴²
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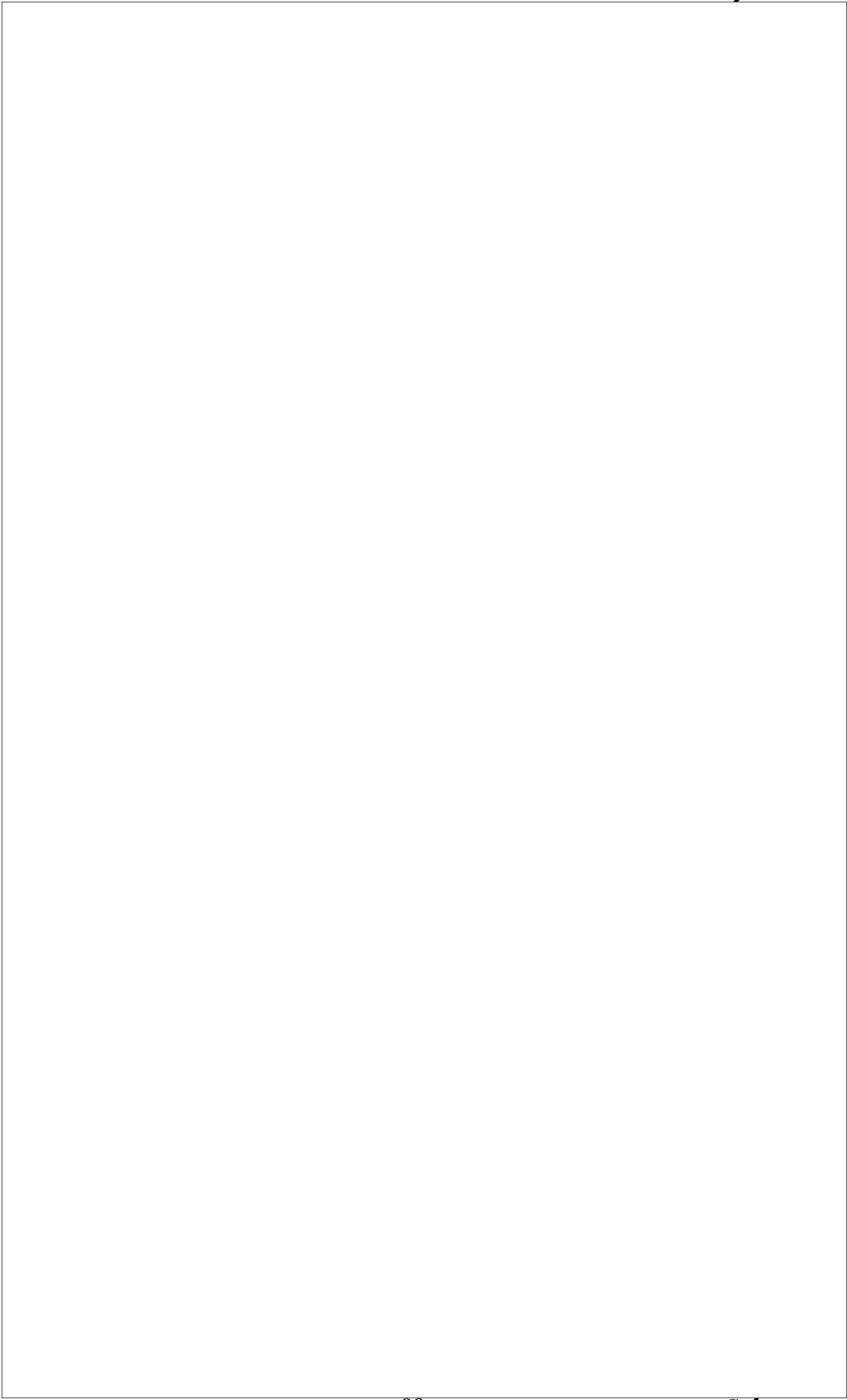
On 25 September, Mackiernan learned that the Xinjiang provincial government had decided to sever all ties with the Nationalists the following day and to accept the authority of the Communist government in Beijing.⁴⁴ Word reached Mackiernan that foreigners would be prevented from leaving Urumqi along the likely escape route southward. He cabled CIA on 27 September, "Am taking to hills (b)(1) (b)(3)

They would go on a route east and south, toward western Qinghai province, that the Communists probably would not expect them to use.⁴⁵ That was the last message from CIA's Urumqi station. (S)

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⁴⁴ Vice Consul at Tihwa [Urumqi] Mackiernan to Secretary of State of 25 September 1949. in *FRUS*, 1949, vol. IX, p. 1062. (U)

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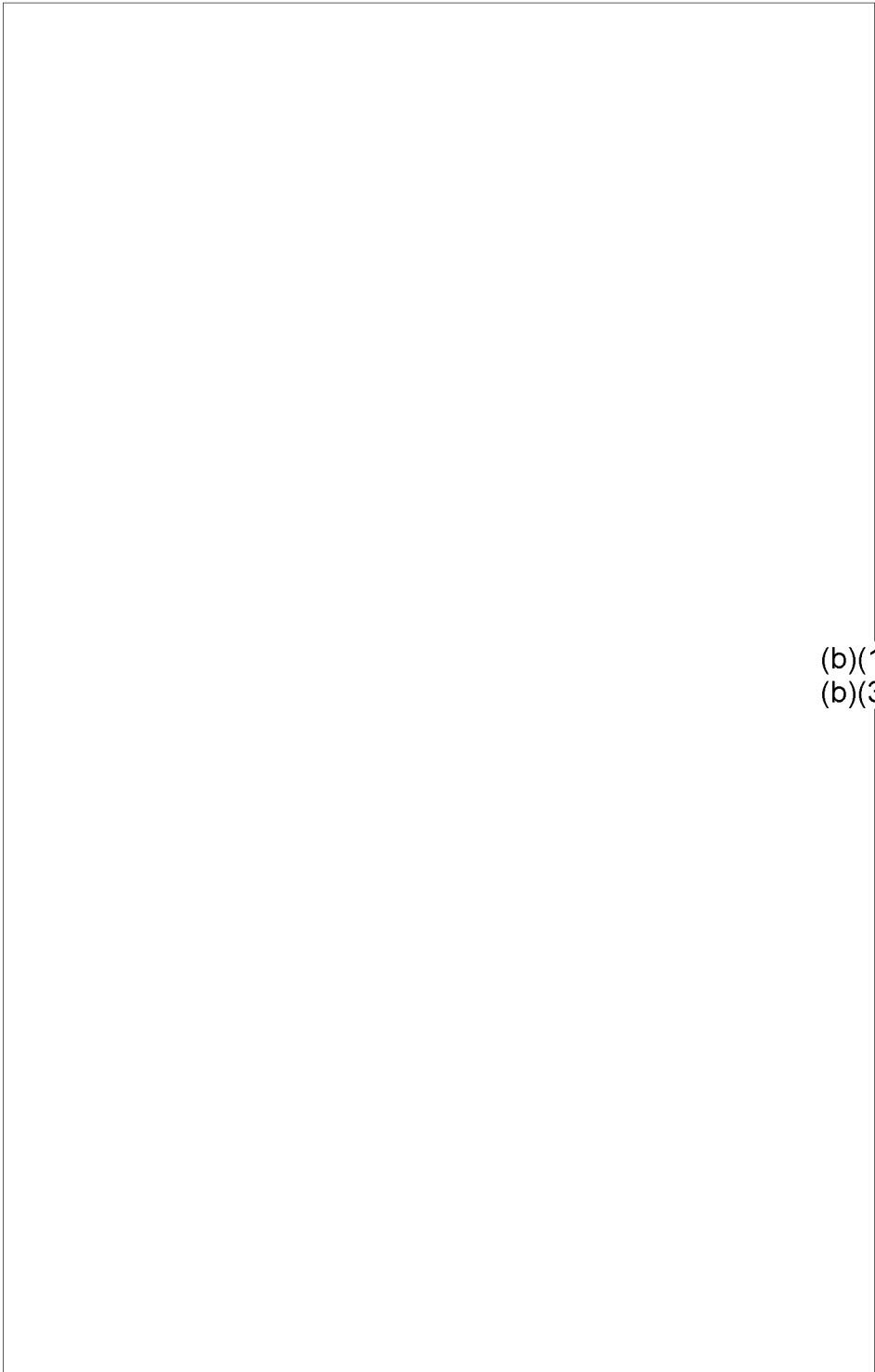


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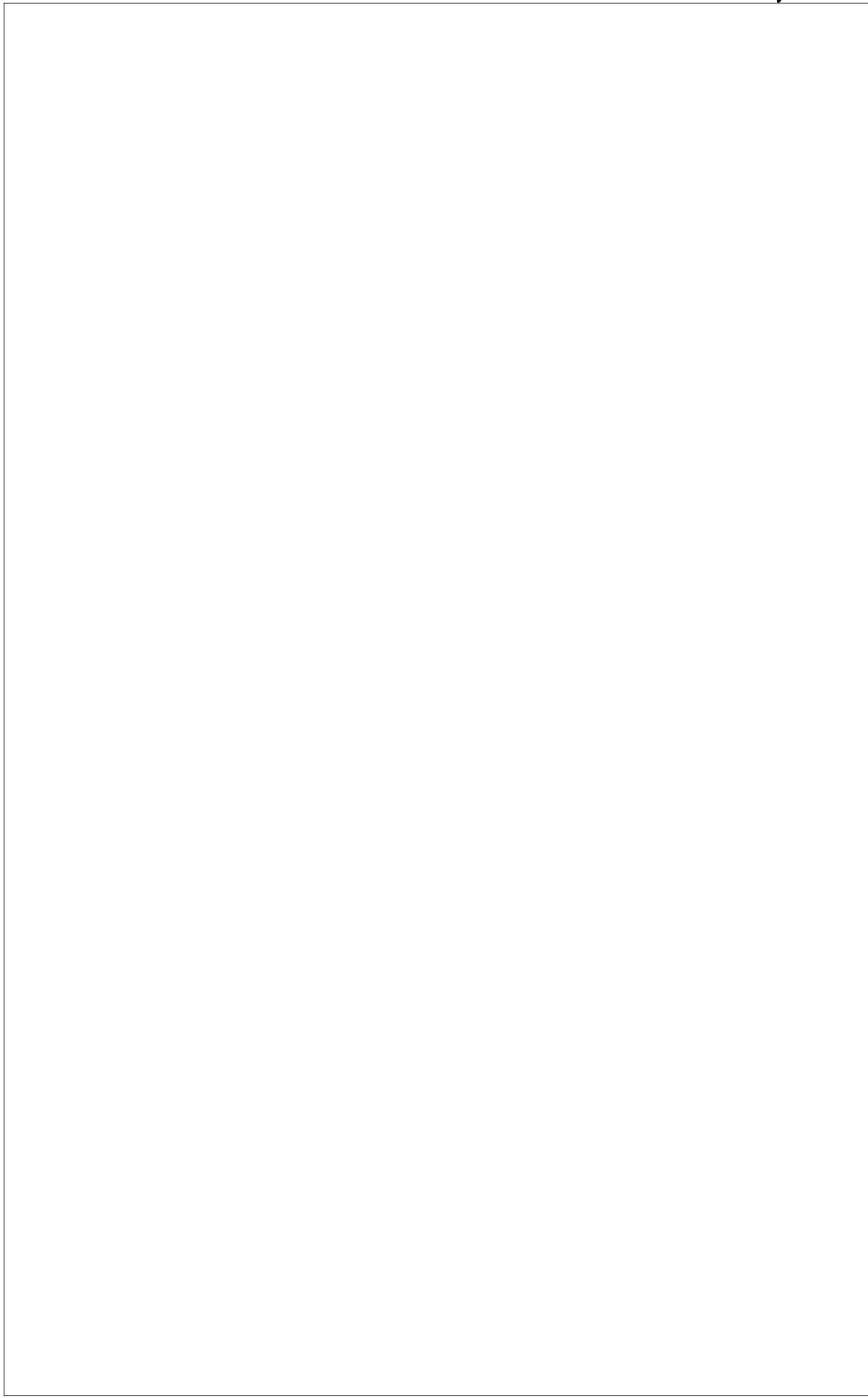
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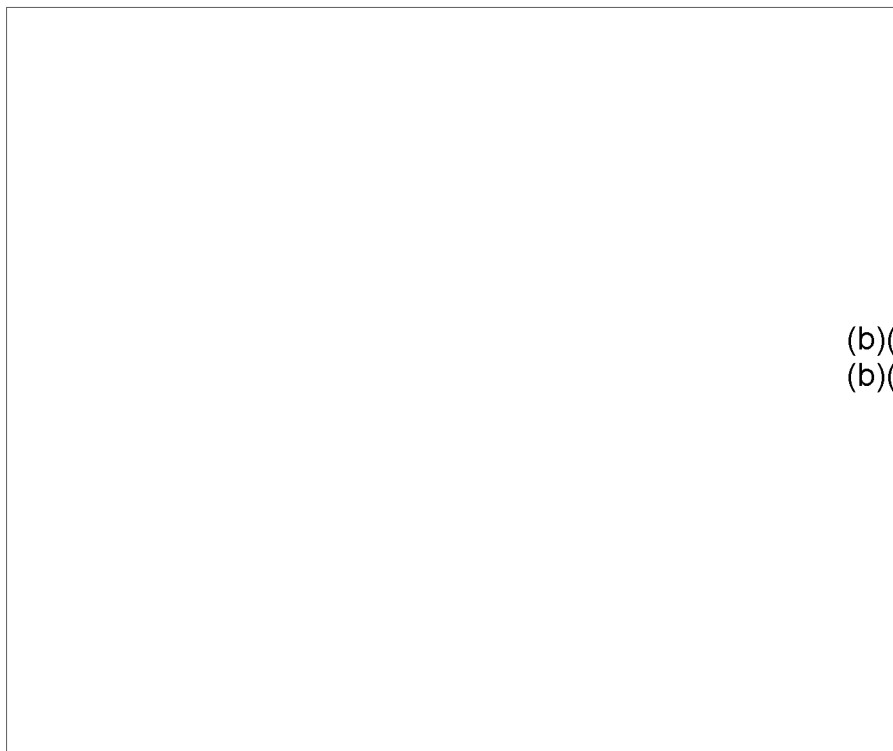


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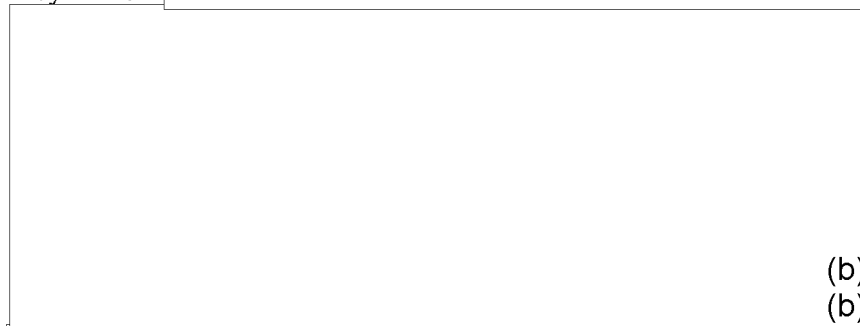
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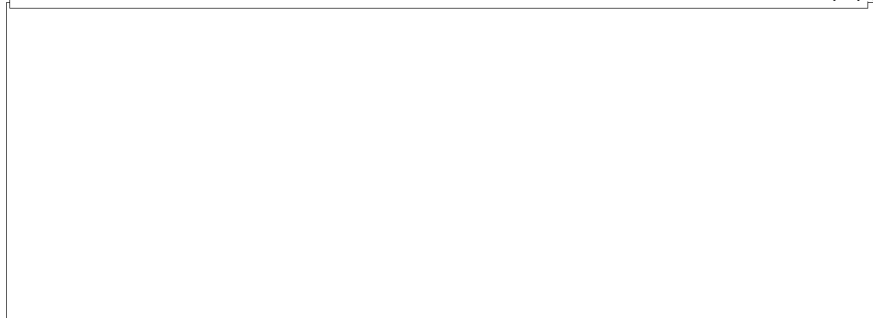


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The Mackiernan party in early March 1950 prepared for its journey to India.



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The Final Journey (U)

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[Redacted] through the mountain passes to Lake Ayyakum. From there, [Redacted] it was a relatively easy matter to navigate due south toward Tibet. Mackiernan carried a hand drawn map of the route [Redacted] On March 29th, CIA requested the State Department to get Tibet's clearance for the safe arrival of the Mackiernan party. State passed the information to the Embassy in New Delhi the following day, and the Indian Government was urged to get the necessary clearances in Lhasa. Between the second and fifth of April, Tibetan messengers left Lhasa for all border outposts to warn them of the imminent arrival of the Mackiernan party.⁶¹ (S)

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During these last weeks of Mackiernan's life, he and the party he led traversed some of the wildest, most beautiful and austere territory on earth. Today, the entire region is a nature preserve of the People's Republic of China. Then, it was known simply as the Tibetan Plateau, an area with altitudes of 15,000 to 22,000 feet, dotted with a myriad of lakes and rivers, snow-covered peaks and treacherous passes [Redacted]

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On the morning of 29 April 1950, at a place in northern Tibet called Shigarhung Lung, the Mackiernan party came upon a Tibetan nomad family tending their sheep. The nomads, who were armed, quickly retreated to a small rock shelter, ready to fire. Anxious to demonstrate that the newcomers were not Kazakhs intent on stealing sheep, Mackiernan ordered the party to pitch camp in the open near a small stream. Suddenly, a separate group of six armed Tibetans in what appeared to be uniforms appeared on horseback. [redacted]

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[redacted] The Tibetan patrol, which had fired from behind an embankment, got up and walked toward the unarmed party. Then, apparently, one of the Tibetans panicked and fired. [redacted] then all the Tibetans opened fire. Douglas Mackiernan, [redacted] were killed. [redacted] were taken prisoner. The Tibetans mutilated the bodies of the dead men and looted their belongings for two days before setting out for the town of Shentsa with their prisoners. On the journey, on May 4th, they met the government messenger from Lhasa on his way to inform the soldiers to welcome Mackiernan and his party. He was five days too late.⁶³ (S)

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It is clear that CIA had delayed initiating its request for Tibetan clearance. [redacted]

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[redacted] because CIA feared for the party's safety should Tibet defect to or be invaded by the Chinese

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Communists. What is less clear is whether this delay mattered in Mackiernan's death. In Lhasa, the Tibetan Government told [redacted] that all Tibetan outposts received the message about the party by mid-April—all except the outpost at Shigarhung Lung, due to the failure of one messenger to pass the information.⁶⁴ (S)

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A greater factor in the tragedy was probably Mackiernan's own misjudgment. Believing himself to be farther north than he actually was, he may have been less cautious about the endemic violence in the region—about which Headquarters had warned him.⁶⁵ Mackiernan was perhaps a victim of his own naivete about Tibetans, who are often viewed romantically by Westerners as peaceful and gentle, but who can be as brutal and capricious as any other people. Mackiernan, knowing he could shoot his way out of a difficult situation, gambled on a peaceful approach and lost. In the end, it was an accident, a tragic happenstance that took the life of the first CIA officer to die in the line of duty. (S)

The bodies of Mackiernan and his [redacted] companions were buried at Shigarhung Lung by a contrite Tibetan Government, horrified at the tragedy. [redacted] three crosses that were built in Lhasa and sent back to stand over their graves. A photograph of the site was supposed to be taken and provided to the US Embassy at New Delhi, but there is no record that this happened. Douglas Mackiernan's grave, for all we know, is unmarked as well as forgotten. (S)

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The question asks itself: could his remains be found? If so, does the Agency owe Doug Mackiernan the effort to locate his grave and bring his remains back to the United States? The US Government mounts extraordinary efforts to find and return the remains of US soldiers, sailors and airmen who are lost in the most distant lands. Though it would be difficult logistically, not to mention politically, to succeed in bringing Doug Mackiernan back home to the country he served so faithfully, the effort would seem appropriate for all he gave. (S)

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CIA and TPAJAX: The Tension Between Analysis and Operations (S)

Scott A. Koch

In the summer of 1953, the US Government saw what it thought were unmistakable signs that Iran was about to fall behind the Iron Curtain. Prime Minister Dr. Mohammed Mossadeq had broken off negotiations with Britain concerning compensation for the assets of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), which Iran nationalized in 1951. Mossadeq, having ridden to power on a wave of nationalism, exploited the anti-British sentiment of the population and made political and diplomatic overtures to the Soviet Union. To Washington's alarm, he considered taking members of the Tudeh (Iranian Communist Party) into his government. (U)

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Washington's view changed when Dwight Eisenhower took the Presidential oath of office in January 1953. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles did not think Mossadeq was a guarantor of political stability, and events bore him out. Mossadeq's popular political support was almost gone by the summer of 1953. His allies in the Iranian Parliament (the Majlis) had deserted him to protest his increasingly dictatorial behavior. The Iranian economy was in shambles as the effects of a British boycott on Iranian oil took hold. The Prime Minister seemed unwilling or unable to exert the authority of the central government against growing crowds of Tudeh-inspired demonstrators. The State Department thought Mossadeq vulnerable to Tudeh subversion or even

¹ Mossadeq's negotiating style baffled most Westerners. He frequently wept, fainted, and conducted business while in his pajamas. British author L.P. Elwell-Sutton captured the attitude of British foreign policy officials when he wrote, "Really, it seemed hardly fair that dignified and correct western statesmanship should be defeated by the antics of incomprehensible Orientals." L.P. Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil: A Study in Power Politics* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 1955), p. 258. (U)

a coup. No one in Washington was willing to watch Iran fall behind the Iron Curtain. (U)

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CIA's role in Mossadeq's fall quickly became an open secret and attracted the attention of the scholarly community.

[Redacted]

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The Office of National Estimates and TPAJAX (S)

The Board of National Estimates (BNE) in the Office of National Estimates (ONE) was CIA's analytical component responsible for producing long-range appraisals of world events. These appraisals, known as National Intelligence Estimates, ideally represented the Intelligence Community's best thinking on a particular topic. Under the leadership first of Harvard historian William Langer, and then Yale historian Sherman Kent, ONE took the long view and did not concern itself with day-to-day events or crises. Instead, it concentrated on trends and probable future courses of action of other nations. Primarily because the Soviet Union was the focus of its attention, ONE paid little attention to Iran. These priorities changed when Mossadeq's Iran became a critical issue in US foreign policy.³ (U)

² Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979). (U)

³ For a discussion of Sherman Kent and ONE, see Donald P. Steury, ed., *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates: Collected Essays* (Washington, DC: CIA History Staff, Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1994). (U)

ONE did not always have the cooperation of the clandestine services when drafting an estimate. In 1951, the year before DCI Walter Bedell Smith merged the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC, the office responsible for covert action) and the Office of Special Operations (OSO, the office responsible for espionage) into the new Directorate of Plans, Dr. William Langer, head of BNE, asked OSO for its views for an upcoming national intelligence estimate on Iran. OSO management resisted the request on several grounds: (1) OSO had too many similar requests from ONE, (2) OSO personnel "were not paid to 'estimate,' but to produce facts," and (3) OSO personnel could barely keep up with their assigned duties, much less help ONE do its job.⁴ OSO clearly was not interested in dialogue with analytical components for the purpose of producing a superior analytical product. (S)

ONE's ability to produce accurate national intelligence estimates on Iran in the early 1950s suffered because the office knew next to nothing about the Tudeh. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the OSO Iranian desk officer, admitted that his field people had only a handful of low-level contacts within the Tudeh Party

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[REDACTED] Hewitt did not think the absence of intelligence on the Tudeh reflected OSO's lack of interest; as he explained to Kent, that office had been preoccupied almost exclusively with the Soviet Union and could not divert scarce resources to working the Iranian problem. Even if OSO had turned immediately to Iran, the office faced significant obstacles recruiting Iranian informants who could provide the sort of high-level, reliable information ONE needed. [REDACTED]

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Yet in March 1953 it was clear that [redacted] had made giant strides in collecting information from Iranian sources. Acting Division Chief Miles Copeland assured Deputy Director (Plans) Frank Wisner that "when we report on the activities of an important individual such as Mossadegh or the Shah, we are in almost all cases getting our information directly from a dependable espionage agent in intimate contact with the individual reported upon."⁷ Copeland's memorandum noted that intelligence reporting on Iran had greatly improved but did not mention whether the analytical components were receiving these reports. In all likelihood the analysts never saw most of them, which helps explain why ONE found it difficult to draft satisfactory NIEs on Iran. (C)

The Office of Current Intelligence and TPAJAX (S)

The tension between ONE and the clandestine services was unfortunate but not potentially crippling to American policymakers during fast-breaking events. ONE concentrated on larger perspectives that were not sensitive to daily crises. The Office of Current Intelligence (OCI), on the other hand, analyzed events as they happened. OCI analysts could help shape policymakers' views and decisions during crises. Their writing could have an immediate impact. (U)

In the summer of 1953, OCI was responsible for keeping the President informed about daily events that might affect US foreign policy. Analysts [redacted] in OCI prepared "all-source current intelligence reports and items for OCI publications" and provided "briefing and other current intelligence support for other CIA components."⁸ (S)

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OCI initially conducted its analysis of the unfolding events in Iran ignorant of the developing American role. [redacted]

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[redacted] wrote that Mossadeq had been faced with many plots in the past but had always defeated them, and that there was no reason to believe that he would not do so again.⁹ (C)

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The day before DDP executed the operation someone finally called [redacted] (does not remember who), said that there was an imminent covert action, "and on this side of the house your analysts are saying there's no chance that it'll work." At this point [redacted] analysts finally received a briefing about the operation. "From an analytical point," [redacted] says, "this changed the situation completely. This was a major piece of information that we didn't have, and that if we had known it ahead of time, we would have phrased things differently, or maybe simply kept our mouth shut about it until it went off."¹⁰ (C)

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After TPAJAX [redacted] tried to develop closer personal ties with his counterparts in the DDP. He did not expect the operators in the Iran Branch to tell him what was going on all the time, but he wanted to develop a relationship so that "they would trust me enough that they might tell me things that otherwise wouldn't get on paper, and so on. And by the same token to demonstrate to them that we could help them."¹¹ (S)

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[redacted] gradually built a rapport with DDP officers that he says paid off for both sides. Nonetheless, he thinks that more cooperation could have improved the intelligence product immensely. When he transferred to the DDP in 1957 "and started clawing through the files, one thing that struck me was how much useful intelligence information was in the operational files but had never made it out into intelligence reports because the reports officer or whoever had just not spotted it as intelligence report material."¹² (C)

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[redacted] is philosophical about the limited contact that he and the other analysts in his branch had with the people on the Iranian desk in the Directorate of Plans. There was, he says, "indeed a very deep gulf, institutionally, and policywise," and he speculates that the reason lay in differences between overt and covert employees. He and his fellow analysts were overt; many DDP employees were covert. From the

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DDP's perspective, overt employees were not sufficiently sensitive to security issues. "There was a measure of distrust," [redacted] believes, "on the DDP side against these overt analysts who probably had loose tongues and if we [in DDP] talk too much they'll [OCI analysts] go blabbing around town."¹³ (C)

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John Waller [redacted] makes the same assessment of the relationship between the analysts and operators. In a July 1995 interview, Waller suggested two additional reasons for the unofficial separation between the two directorates. First, most Iranian specialists in the DDP were OSS veterans who had spent substantial amounts of time in the Middle East. They had acquired their knowledge from practical experience and thought that knowledge acquired this way was superior to the academic knowledge that Directorate of Intelligence (DI) analysts prized. Second, the DDP officers' relationships with the DI analysts were informal. "There was a lot of time," Waller said, "before you sort of had a wiring diagram that put us [DDP] together with the DI. It was all based on if you need their help, go get it, but you'd better know who you were talking to. There's no point in talking to a man who's only read the books you've read."¹⁴ (U)

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Bureaucratic differences probably played an important part in reinforcing the separation between the DDP and the DI. DDP officers may have thought that if the DI were included in covert action planning, analysts would begin to challenge DDP's preeminence in covert operations. Similarly, DI analysts may have feared that DDP operators would question their analytical preeminence and that close association with a covert action would raise questions about their objectivity. Philosophical, organizational, and physical separation ensured that these kinds of issues seldom touched off bureaucratic warfare. (U)

At least in the case of TPAJAX, the relationship between the DDP and the DI contrasted sharply with the relationship between DDP and the State Department. After the operation, John Stutesman, former Second Secretary of the American Embassy in Tehran, wrote to Roy Melbourne, First Secretary of the Embassy in Tehran, telling him of the close personal relationship he had developed with CIA's John Waller and [redacted] Roger Goiran. "John Waller and Roger Goiran are men," Stutesman wrote, "upon whose judgment we can all rely without qualification and Arthur Richards [Director of the

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Office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs, Department of State] and I have been happy to observe that they go out of their way to maintain friendly and close relations with us, asking our advice often upon subjects which their organization might not normally discuss with working levels in the Department.”¹⁵ (S)

Allen Dulles's Personal Directorate of Intelligence (U)

The highest levels of management in CIA did nothing to discourage the estrangement of the Directorate of Plans and the Directorate of Intelligence, and in fact reinforced it. Allen Dulles ignored the Agency's analytical arm during TPAJAX, preferring to use personal acquaintances as sources of information.¹⁶ He had numerous contacts across the world and throughout American society from his prewar days as an attorney and his wartime service in the Office of Strategic Services. Personal relationships were important to Dulles, and he tended to trust the information he got from people he knew. On Iran, much of this information came from Brig. Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Max Thornburg, an oil industry consultant. There is no evidence that Dulles ever passed on information from these sources to analysts in ONE or OCI. (S)

Schwarzkopf had spent considerable time in Iran, had trained the Iranian Gendarmerie during World War II, and knew the Shah well. Through his work with this police force, which maintained a presence in all the provinces, Schwarzkopf became a storehouse of knowledge about Iran and was happy to share it with Dulles.¹⁷ (U)

Max Thornburg ran Overseas Consultants, Inc., a firm that advised Middle Eastern governments on oil and economic questions. In 1950 he was in Iran as a consultant to the government, advising Iranian officials about the country's seven-year economic plan. [REDACTED]

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¹⁶ Peter Grose's biography of Dulles captures this characteristic well. "Institutional ties never inhibited Allen from nurturing his own private networks of diverse colleagues and friends, many dating back decades, upon whom he would call in his regular trips to Europe for civilized exchanges among men and, increasingly, women of the world." Peter Grose, *Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), p. 319. (U)

¹⁷ Waller interview. (C)

[REDACTED]

Thornburg gained unusual access to then-Deputy Director (Plans) Allen Dulles and key State Department officials. He maintained a steady correspondence with both CIA and State about events in the Middle East. Thornburg was not shy about telling "Allen" what he thought should be done, and consistently urged that the United States had to change the psychological climate in the Middle East. He also argued that the Shah was not weak, but only "young, beaten-down and understandably skeptical about any real support coming from the United States or Britain."¹⁹ Thornburg sat in on several sessions with Dulles and drafted some papers for CIA. (S)

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The Operation (U)

The initial plan depended upon a military coup to remove Mossadeq. Planners in CIA's Iran Branch in the Near East and Africa Division of the Directorate of Plans (DDP, the forerunner of the current Directorate of Operations), hoped that Mossadeq's arrest would lead to a bloodless change of leadership. After prompting from [REDACTED] Americans, such as Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf²⁰ and NEA Division Chief Kermit Roosevelt, the Shah signed orders dismissing Mossadeq and replacing him with Zahedi. With the Shah's signed decrees, or *fir-mans*, in hand, Col. Nematollah Nassiri of the Shah's Imperial Guard arrived at Mossadeq's Tehran home on the night of 15/16 August 1953. Mossadeq, however, had been tipped off that Nassiri was coming and

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¹⁹ Letter, Max W. Thornburg to Allen Dulles, 10 February 1953, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence Records, Job 80-R01731R, Box 13, ARC. (S)

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was prepared. When Nassiri attempted to deliver the papers, troops loyal to Mossadeq arrested him.²¹ (S)

Early in the morning of the 16th, Radio Tehran broadcast the news that a military plot against the government had been uncovered and foiled. It appeared that Mossadeq had triumphed, for the anti-Mossadeq officers' resolve melted as soon as Nassiri was arrested. They failed to seize their assigned objectives and many simply hid, hoping the whole thing would blow over. It did not. The Shah left his summer palace in the suburbs of Tehran and flew to Baghdad. The Iranian Communist Party took to the streets challenging the authority of Mossadeq's government, demanding the Shah's life, and toppling statues of the Shah's father. Mossadeq stood by and did nothing to suppress the Communist mobs.²² (U)

Kermit Roosevelt, who had arrived in Tehran to take field command of the operation, was momentarily at a loss. Nassiri's arrest forced him to improvise, and he began by getting in touch with his assets.

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On the night of 18 August 1953, Mossadeq finally ordered security forces to clear the streets of Tudeh demonstrators. Some did so with a will, and forced the bloodied Iranian Communists to shout pro-Shah slogans as they were being beaten. On Wednesday morning, 19 August, the tide began to turn irreversibly against Mossadeq. A small pro-Shah demonstration-

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[redacted] began at about 0900 in the bazaar of Tehran. The crowd milled aimlessly until several people went into a small print shop and returned with copies of the Shah's *firman*s. The *firman*s were the spark the crowd needed. Eager hands reached for copies and the supply soon ran out.²⁵ (S)

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At this point members of Iranian *Zuhrkaneh* (exercise clubs) appeared at the head of the crowd. Weightlifters, tumblers, and acrobats exercised in unison while shouting pro-Shah slogans. [redacted]

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[redacted] The enthusiasm was infectious, and spread quickly. The crowds surged toward the offices of the pro-Mossadeq and anti-American newspaper *Bakhtar Emruz* and destroyed them as security forces watched.²⁶ (S)

During this time the military had remained quiet. Although many members of the officer corps opposed Mossadeq, they hesitated to move against the Prime Minister until they saw which way public opinion would swing. By 1130 there was no longer any doubt about Tehran's pro-Shah sentiment, and truckloads of soldiers sped through the streets waving the monarch's picture. Radio Tehran fell into royalist hands and at 1530 was broadcasting what Roosevelt later called "deliriously pro-Zahedi" messages. Tanks from the Imperial Guard escorted Fazlollah Zahedi to Radio Tehran, where he declared that he was the legitimate Prime Minister. By the late afternoon of the 19th, Zahedi had consolidated his hold on the government, Mossadeq was under arrest, and forces loyal to the former leader were in jail or in hiding. The Shah returned to a tumultuous welcome in Tehran on 22 August 1953, where he remained until the Iranian revolution and establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979.²⁷ (U)

The Consequences of Analytical Exclusion (U)

TPAJAX illustrates the philosophical tension inherent in planning covert operations. Preparation must balance the need for fully informed decisionmaking with the need for strict operational security. The former requires that those with knowledge relevant to the operation be intimately involved from the start, while the latter requires that the number of people involved be kept to a minimum. (S)



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An ideal operation is at neither extreme and acknowledges the inevitability of tradeoffs. Covert actions might have to be planned on imperfect knowledge to ensure that they remain covert, and there may have to be compromises on absolute security in order to take advantage of relevant available expertise. How to balance these conflicting requirements has been a recurring issue throughout the history of CIA's covert operations. TPAJAX offers some clues on how this tension might be resolved in some cases. (S)

TPAJAX was planned and executed with far greater concern for operational security than for ensuring that the planners had all relevant information. There is no evidence that operators in the Iran Branch of Kermit Roosevelt's Near East and Africa Division consulted either ONE or OCI at any stage of the operation. ONE and OCI might not have been able to provide much help because they had chronic difficulty getting intelligence reporting from DDP (the component responsible for espionage and covert action)—a problem that itself reflects poor communication between the analysts and collectors. (S)

The consequences of the analysts' exclusion from TPAJAX can be examined from its effect on analysis itself (product and process), and on the preparation and execution of the operation. Exclusion damaged the analytical *product* because it prevented OCI analysts from basing their judgments on complete information. Exclusion harmed the analytical *process* because it impeded the creation of a valid framework for assessing future developments. (S)

Had they been apprised of the US role in deposing Mossadeq, analysts probably would have been more circumspect in concluding that, because the Iranian Prime Minister had turned back coup attempts in the past, he was likely to prevail again. Knowledge that this time the United States was supporting Mossadeq's opponents with extraordinary measures might have changed or tempered this judgment. Inclusion in TPAJAX planning might have made analysts more inclined to recognize the operation's potential for success. (S)

Whether the segregation of analysis from operational planning affected the conception and execution of TPAJAX is less certain. The analysis [redacted] was essentially incompatible with the planned covert political action, but [redacted] did not dissuade the President, the Secretary of State, and the DCI from executing TPAJAX. Under these circumstances, one can make a strong argument that analytical exclusion had negligible consequences for TPAJAX. (S)

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Fully informed analysis, nevertheless, might have enhanced the operation. The DI's more scholarly and detached perspective and its methodology for assessing a dynamic situation perhaps could have helped NEA clarify the assumptions upon which TPAJAX was based, and how changes in those assumptions might affect the operation. (S)

The operation's initial failure on 15 August 1953 provides the most conspicuous evidence that the absence of analytical expertise may have been detrimental. When Col. Nematollah Nassiri of the Shah's Imperial Guard arrived at Mossadeq's home to arrest him, Mossadeq arrested *him*. The Prime Minister had been informed that an attempt to depose him was underway, and had acted vigorously to head off the threat by calling on troops loyal to him. Col. Nassiri's arrest disheartened the other anti-Mossadeq officers, and the military challenge to Mossadeq melted away. Headquarters wanted to call off the operation. Had operational planning taken into account the possibility—even the likelihood—that segments of the Iranian military would react this way, DDP could have prepared contingency plans. (U)

Incorporating analytical products into the planning for TPAJAX might not have guaranteed success—which owed much to Kermit Roosevelt's flexibility and initiative—but it would have forced the operators to question their assumptions and recognize that things might go wrong. If someone other than Roosevelt had been on the scene, things might have gone differently. (S)

Advances in collection technology have given today's analysts access to an almost bewildering array of sources inconceivable to their colleagues of 44 years ago. The exponential growth of information from signals intelligence, imagery, and exotic collection platforms supplements but cannot replace clandestine reporting. Analytical products will be much richer if they add clandestine reporting to these sources; in turn, clandestine operators will have analysis that is fully informed and therefore more useful (U).

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Closing the Missile Gap (U)

Leonard F. Parkinson and Logan H. Potter

The search for information on the Soviet missile program became the most critical and elusive intelligence problem and the most demanding in terms of approach and management of the many substantive issues encountered in the first 20 years of strategic research at CIA. The Agency drafted its first national intelligence estimate on Soviet guided missile development in 1954. Nonetheless, it was not until 1957 that American policymakers, military planners, and intelligence analysts began to worry that the Soviet missile program had outstripped US development efforts. TASS' announcement of a successful flight test of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in August 1957, followed in the next few weeks by the launches of Sputniks I and II—the world's first artificial satellites—prompted the Intelligence Community to draft its fourth estimate of the Soviet missile program in as many years. Special National Intelligence Estimate 11-10-57 can be considered the beginning of the “missile gap” controversy; its judgment that the Soviet SS-6 ICBM flight test program had “an extremely high priority... if indeed it is not presently on a ‘crash’ basis,” would be reconsidered and hotly debated for several more years.¹ At the heart of the dispute was an information gap of major proportions that was closed in late 1961 by those sources that at the beginning were thought to have the greatest promise—clandestine, communications, and photographic intelligence. (S)

Soviet Missile Development (U)

At the end of World War II, the Soviets began to exploit Hitler's missile effort, including the removal of missiles, missile equipment, and

¹ Director of Central Intelligence, Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) 11-10-57, *The Soviet ICBM Program*, 10 December 1957, (declassified). All of the NIEs (as well as SNIEs and SEs) mentioned in this essay are declassified and available in Record Group 263 (Central Intelligence Agency) at the National Archives and Records Administration. Many of the NIEs cited are reprinted in Donald P. Steury, editor, *Intentions and Capabilities: Estimates on Soviet Strategic Forces, 1950-1983* (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 1996). (U)

400 German scientists and technicians to the USSR. Using this German base, the USSR created a large research and development program for rockets of all types, including ballistic missiles. Almost all of the industrial effort supporting this activity was obscured from the West by highly effective security procedures. (U)

On 5 February 1959 Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev announced to the world that the Soviet Union "now has the means to deliver a blow to aggressors in any part of the world. It is not just rhetoric when we say that we have organized the mass production of intercontinental ballistic missiles; nor do we say this as a threat to anyone, but to make clear the real situation."² US analysts had watched Soviet missile development for years, and this was not the first of Khrushchev's many boasts. Nonetheless, his new threat, along with others in the winter of 1958-59, had commanded the attention of DCI Allen Dulles and the new United States Intelligence Board (USIB) of the National Security Council. USIB assigned the drafting of an assessment for the DCI to the Guided Missiles Branch of the Directorate of Intelligence's Office of Research and Reports (ORR). The task of reevaluating the evidence fell to Roland Inlow, Chief of ORR's Guided Missiles Branch. His branch's report that winter noted that only limited new evidence on Soviet ICBM development had appeared, and was still being evaluated.³ (S)

Meanwhile, interest in Soviet ICBM statements continued at a high level through the first half of 1959, a period in which Khrushchev's first Berlin campaign withered away in the face of NATO's united response to his six-month deadline for a one-sided German peace treaty. In February or March, Inlow requested an analysis of Moscow's rocket claims from the DDI's Radio Propaganda Branch of the Foreign Broadcast Information Division (FBID). In June, at the request of DDI Robert Amory, Edward Proctor and Inlow collaborated on a paper assessing FBID's assessment of the Soviet statements. The June paper, like Inlow's January memorandum for the White House, accepted as fact the assertion that the USSR had commenced mass production of intercontinental ballistic missiles.⁴ (C)

² Quoted in NIE 11-5-59, *Soviet Capabilities in Guided Missiles and Space Vehicles*, 3 November 1959. (U)

³ Roland Inlow, Chief, Guided Missiles Branch, to Edward W. Proctor, Chief, Industrial Division, Office of Research and Reports, "Monthly Report, December 1958," 6 January 1959 (hereinafter cited as IDERA Monthly Reports), (S); Otto E. Guthe, Assistant Director for Research and Reports, to Robert Amory, Deputy Director for Intelligence, "Soviet ICBM Production Under Certain Assumptions," 29 June 1959; both documents reside in Office of Russian and European Analysis Job 79R01001A, Box 4, (S). It was not possible to locate accurate job and box numbers for every document cited in this study. All box citations, however, are to Job 79R01001A. (S)

⁴ IDERA Monthly Reports, June 1959, Box 4. (S)

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In response to White House and Congressional concern that deployment and series production were under way somewhere in the USSR, CIA scheduled three major estimates for late 1959 on the Soviet program. In retrospect, these stood as the crucial NIEs of the entire missile controversy; they established a realistic forecast for the beginning of deployment of the first operational missiles. Two estimates projected numbers of launchers, and, for the first time, subordinated total numbers of missiles to the militarily more important number of launchers. Finally, the same two NIEs marked the beginning of the Intelligence Community's internal controversy over the intended size and pace of the Soviet ICBM program. (U)

Controversy With the Air Force (U)

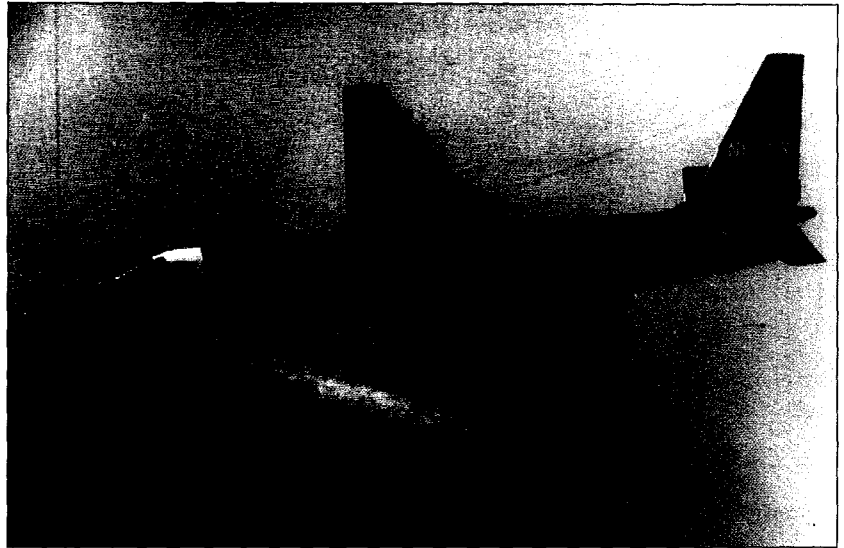
Sherman Kent, chairman of the Board of National Estimates, asked that Edward Proctor be made available to work full time on the three estimates. Proctor was detailed to the Office of National Estimates (ONE) in South Building that August. In the meantime, the interagency Guided Missile and Astronautics Intelligence Committee (GMAIC), the Office of Scientific Intelligence's (OSI) Guided Missile Division, and ORR's Guided Missiles Branch spent all of August preparing contributions. Supplementary contributions for the estimates and memoranda on ICBM production for senior officials in the Eisenhower administration and for DCI Allen Dulles took the rest of the year. (C)

To support this research and analysis, Dulles called on the "Hyland panel" to try to answer a more refined set of questions.⁵ The panel comprised Laurence Hyland of Hughes Aircraft, Charles R. Irvine of Advanced Research Projects Agency, and Brig. Gen. Osmond J. Ritland of the Air Force's Ballistic Missile Division. These holdovers from the previous year's three-day meeting were joined by Maj. Gen. John B. Medaris of the Army Ballistic Missile Agency, OSI's consultant Dr. W. H. Pickering of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Rear Adm. William F. Raborn, Jr., Director of Navy's Special Projects (Raborn, then working on the Polaris nuclear submarine program, would become DCI in 1965), Dr. Albert D. Wheelon of Space Technology Laboratory, and Dr. William J. Perry of Sylvania Electronics Defense Laboratory. (C)

The panel convened on 24 August 1959. After listening to briefings on Soviet strategic requirements, production and deployment, U-2

⁵ The Hyland Panel first convened in 1954 to critique NIE 11-6-54, *Soviet Capabilities and Probable Programs in the Guided Missile Field*, 5 October 1954. The Panel's membership varied at its several meetings in the 1950s and early 1960s. (C)

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The U-2 "spy plane." The U-2 was instrumental in proving the so-called "missile gap" did not exist. (U)

photographic coverage, range activities, and telemetry, the panel turned its attention to some critical questions:

- At what priority is the USSR developing an ICBM system and what progress toward development of an operational weapon system are the Soviets likely to have made to date from test activities at Tyura Tam?⁶ Is there evidence of support to this program in activities at Kapustin Yar?
- What is the likelihood that the program has already been successful enough to permit the USSR to establish an initial operational capability? What characteristics might an operational ICBM system have at present?
- What is the likelihood that the Soviets have or are now flight testing more than one generation of ICBM?
- Is there any evidence to support the present existence of or preparation for an operational ICBM capability in the USSR? Or a production program for ICBMs and system equipment? Would such evidence be detectable by current US collection capabilities?

⁶ "Tyuratam" was the subsequent spelling. (U)

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- What is the likelihood that the USSR is emphasizing space flight at the expense of ICBM development and that many of the tests, now evaluated as ICBMs, may in reality be development of space vehicle propulsion systems?
- What changes, if any, are required in the panel's November 1958 report regarding ICBM production quantities and timing?⁷ (S)

The panel came up with some tentative answers. The members correctly concluded that the SS-6 weighed about 500,000 pounds, and came close to the mark with an estimate of 750,000 pounds of initial thrust (its thrust was one million pounds). On the basis of continued SS-6 testing and the lack of evidence of the development of a second-generation ICBM, the panel members did not doubt that the SS-6 would be deployed. They had doubts, however, regarding the configuration of the missile, and could not choose between a "parallel stage" or a "one-and-a-half stage." Like the rest of the contemporary Intelligence Community, the panel was right in its estimation of a 6,000-pound warhead.⁸ (S)

The Hyland panel's conclusion that the pace of the Soviet program was "deliberate" was a sharp turn from the community's earlier belief in a crash program. This key conclusion was largely based on the small number of tests that the USSR had conducted since the panel's last meeting in November 1958. Up to that time, 10 tests had taken place at Tyuratam. The panel expected 20 to 30 more would be conducted by July 1959, but by the time the panel met in August, the Soviets had tested only 15 more. Thus, the total was 25, instead of the panel's anticipated 30 to 40. In light of this limited testing, the panel concluded that the only short-term development could be a deployment of 10 ICBMs. The operational site the panel picked was at Polyarnyy Ural in northern Russia. The Intelligence Community had detected construction activity at this site similar to that at Tyuratam.⁹ (S)

⁷ "Agenda, Director of Central Intelligence Ad Hoc Panel on Soviet ICBM Program, Barton Hall, Room 1521, 24, 25, 26 August 1959," (S). See also John A. White, Secretary, DCI Ad Hoc Panel on Soviet ICBM Program, "Meeting of Director of Central Intelligence Ad Hoc Panel on Soviet ICBM Status," 11 August 1959, (S). Both in Box 4. (S)

⁸ Charles M. Townsend, Deputy Executive Secretary, USIB, memorandum for the United States Intelligence Board, "Notes on Discussion Between the US Intelligence Board and the Hyland Panel," 8 September 1959, Box 4, (TS Daunt). (S)

⁹ Ibid. (TS Daunt). The Soviets may have intended to deploy an SS-6 ICBM complex at Polyarnyy Ural, but for reasons still obscure, construction activity was abandoned during 1959. The construction of the Plesetsk SS-6 complex also began in 1959, but it was not firmly identified as such until a satellite photographic mission in 1962. (S)

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The premise of a deliberate pace in the Soviet testing program led the panel to conclude that the Soviets would deploy no more than 400 to 500 missiles and that these could be operational by late 1962.¹⁰ This premise and conclusion had a major impact on the next three national intelligence estimates. The first was NIE 11-5-59, a reference aid designed to display all available intelligence data on the capabilities of Soviet missiles and space vehicles. The estimate formally endorsed the panel's premise—based on a smaller number of tests than had been anticipated—that the Soviet ICBM program was proceeding in an orderly fashion. Initial operational capability would be, the NIE assumed for planning purposes, 1 January 1960. But the estimate did not restate the panel's conclusion on operational ICBM levels; it made no effort to project force levels.¹¹ (S)

NIE 11-8-59 did and, in so doing, formally inaugurated the Intelligence Community controversy. For the first time, missiles on launchers became the central measure of force levels. But in the range of projections, the low side was directly keyed to the output of a single plant, the high side to two plants. Army and Navy opted for the low side; State, Air Force, and the Pentagon chose the high side out to mid-1961. Beyond that period, a formal dissent from the Air Force's Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Maj. Gen. James H. Walsh, provided still higher figures (see table below).

Soviet ICBMs Deployed as Projected in NIE 11-8-59			
	Intelligence Community	Air Force Footnote	Actual Number of Launchers^a
Jan 1960 (IOC)	10	10	—
Mid-1960	35	35	4
Mid-1961	140-200	185	4
Mid-1962	250-350	385	38
Mid-1963	350-450	640	91

^a Sources: NIE 11-8-59, *Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Attack Through Mid-1964*, 9 February 1960. Analysis of the entire Soviet ICBM program in the 1960s produced the actual number of launchers. (U)

This table is Unclassified.

¹⁰ Ibid., (TS Daunt). (S)

¹¹ NIE 11-5-59, *Soviet Capabilities in Guided Missiles and Space Vehicles*, 3 November 1959, and Annex A. (U)

The Air Force did not object to the community's new conclusion that the Soviet ICBM effort was "not a crash program." Rather, Walsh attacked the idea that "The goal of the [Soviet ICBM] program is probably an ICBM force as large as Soviet planners deem necessary to provide a substantial deterrent and preemptive attack capability." In his view, the Soviet Union was trying to attain decisive military superiority over the United States and would not be satisfied either with deterrence or a preemptive attack capability.¹² (U)

NIE 11-4-59 followed 11-8-59, although formal USIB concurrence for both came on 9 February 1960. NIE 11-4-59 differed sharply from the Air Force's belief that the Soviet program was aimed at all-out superiority. The estimate held that, while the USSR would build a "substantial long-range missile force," uncertainties, risks, and high economic costs would prevent it from constructing a force powerful enough to "permit them to plan attacks on Western retaliatory forces with the degree and certainty of success required to insure that the USSR could win a general war without incurring unacceptable damage."¹³ (U)

Of the three estimates, NIE 11-8-59 was by far the most important, because of the controversy surrounding its quantitative projections of ICBM force levels. Its major flaw was the lack of knowledge of the Soviet decision to limit deployment of SS-6 ICBMs, an analytical mistake that the Intelligence Community made on the basis of the strongest evidence available—the continued testing of the SS-6. NIE 11-8-59 was mainly Proctor's effort, and DDI Robert Amory and ONE's Sherman Kent commended him for it. Proctor briefed DCI Dulles in December on the draft estimate. The NIE became the basis for Dulles's testimony in the acrimonious joint Senate committee hearing on Friday, 29 January 1960.¹⁴ (C)

Allen Dulles Goes Before the Senate (U)

The January Senate hearing was the roughest "missile-gap" proceeding on record and underscored the problems of strategic research before satellite reconnaissance. The next two missile NIEs and an important (though temporary) consolidation of CIA's missile-intelligence expertise

¹² NIE 11-8-59, *Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Attack Through Mid-1964*. (U)

¹³ NIE 11-4-59, *Main Trends in Soviet Capabilities and Policies, 1959-64*, 9 February 1960. (U)

¹⁴ IDERA Monthly Reports, 1959. (S)

followed the hearing. DCI Dulles appeared as the prime witness before the Senate's Committee on Aeronautical and Space Sciences and the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, both chaired by Senator Lyndon B. Johnson (D-TX). (U)

Johnson called the committees to order and announced that its members intended to "interrogate (Allen Dulles) not only as to the nature and magnitude of the threat, but also to determine why the yardstick for measuring this threat was changed, and the extent to which it has been changed." Johnson noted that Secretary of Defense Neil H. McElroy had testified the previous year that the Soviets "could have a 3-to-1 missile superiority in the near future." In a January 1960 hearing only a week before Dulles's testimony, the new Secretary of Defense, Thomas S. Gates, Jr., said that there was no "missile gap" because the analytical assumptions had changed. According to Gates, the US Intelligence Community now looked at the issue from the perspective of what the Soviets intended to do rather than what they could do.¹⁵ (S)

In his testimony on 29 January, DCI Dulles repeatedly explained that the latest estimate did not rely exclusively on a "new yardstick," but that as more and more evidence on the Soviet ballistic-missile program came into CIA, Agency analysts were able to get a hold on Soviet programming decisions.¹⁶ (S)

Dulles used a chart to point out that 15 of the 21 successful Soviet ICBM firings to 3,500 nautical miles or more had taken place in 1959. "Somewhere in the range of 20 percent" of the tests failed after launch, but the CIA did not know the number of failures before launch.¹⁷ The DCI then discussed the more recent tests, and concluded that the Soviet Union had made "very real progress in ballistic missiles during 1959," with a measured and orderly test-firing program. "For planning purposes," he said, the USSR had an initial operating capability of "a few, say ten" operational ICBMs at completed launching facilities.¹⁸ (S)

¹⁵ US Senate, "Hearing Held before Committee on Aeronautical and Space Sciences and Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, Briefing by Allen Dulles, Director, Central Intelligence Agency," 29 January 1960, (TS). Hereafter cited as "Senate Hearing." Secretary Gates's testimony was in a closed session of the House Committee on Armed Services, "Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services," 22 January 1960. (S)

¹⁶ Senate Hearing, p. 73, (TS). (S)

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 14-15. Senator Symington asked: "Does that mean that you do know it, that you do not want to say it, or you just don't know it?" Dulles: "No, I meant that presentation about failures was sensitive. It is sensitive to distinguish the sources that are used to learn about failures. They are highly sensitive sources.... But we don't get enough intelligence with regard to (failures before launching). It is just (that) they never get off the pad at all. We never get much information." (S)

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 17-18, (TS). (S)

After a brief treatment of the community's reexamination of Soviet ICBM accuracy and reliability, Dulles turned to the projected ICBM force goals over the next two years, using another chart to explain the changes from the 1958 estimate. He observed that such deployments could be accomplished by the middle of the next year without appreciably hindering other Soviet military programs or civil programs relating to the goals of the USSR's Seven-Year Plan. At this point, Dulles acknowledged that there was a conflict with Air Force Intelligence, which "believes that the growth of the missile force, particularly after 1962, will be considerably greater than this."¹⁹ (S)

Dulles then spelled out the Intelligence Community's generally agreed position on Soviet strategic intentions. The figures he used assumed that the Soviets were not engaged in a "crash" ICBM development program and were not subordinating everything else to it. Dulles explained that Khrushchev was persuaded that he had the ability to take over the Free World without war, and "therefore he is straining his resources and his capabilities in many ways to promote his ability to take over the free world in this way."²⁰ (S)

Dulles had to endure a vigorous cross-examination from Special Counsel Edwin L. Weisl, lasting until the hearing recessed at 1735. The Senate's skeptical response to Dulles's testimony at this hearing would influence the next several national estimates as well as Edward Proctor's and Roland Inlow's work days (and nights) in ways that they and about 30 other CIA officers would long remember. (S)

The Guided Missile Task Force (U)

Angry over the course and tone of the Senate hearing, Dulles immediately intensified CIA's intelligence effort against Soviet ICBMs. He ordered a briefing to learn in detail the activities of each component in the Intelligence Community dealing with the enigma of Soviet ICBM deployment. (U)

Within CIA, the onus was initially on Inlow, who reported to Dulles by 5 February 1960 not only on ORR's but also on OSI's activities related to the problem of deployment. With time only to complete

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 22-23, (TS). (S)

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 37-38, 39. (TS). In the afternoon session, Senator Jackson appeared to take exception to Dulles's view of Khrushchev's plans. "Well, I think that Mr. Khrushchev, if he can get a war—get one going in which he can destroy the enemy and that is the only way he can do it and survive himself, he will do it." Ibid., p. 154. (S)

a rough draft, Inlow's defense emphasized that not a single Soviet ICBM launch site had yet been identified. He reported that NIE 11-8-59 was controversial mainly because USIB member agencies could not agree about their views on the Soviet ICBM goal: military superiority, a high level of deterrence, or a modest capability with the principal emphasis on space. Because of the paucity of data on intentions and capabilities, most of the DDI activity, Inlow wrote, "had been focused on stimulating and guiding collection activity."²¹ (S)

Inlow's briefing described the analytic effort of the past two years. He highlighted twelve major research areas, described their results, and noted the number of manhours committed to the projects thus far.²² The total DDI analytical manpower allocated directly or indirectly to the specific problem of ICBM deployment probably represented no more than 10-to-12 full-time research analysts. Moreover, it had only been since mid-1959 that ORR had as many as five or six analysts working exclusively on deployment of the 15 or so Soviet missile systems CIA believed operational. Resource limitations, extremely heavy demands for intelligence support of all kinds, and the complexity of the problem made it impossible to ensure systematic and comprehensive exploitation of all of the material already available in the community. On the other hand, doubling or tripling the analytical resources devoted to the problem probably would not materially improve the rate of progress in the next year or two. (S)

Dulles responded to Inlow's briefing by ordering USIB members to cooperate in a reexamination of deployment data and to resolve the differences between the Air Force and the rest of the community. In February, USIB once again directed the GMAIC to rework the evidence on production and deployment. To accomplish this "highest priority" task as quickly as possible, USIB approved temporary working groups on production and deployment. GMAIC appointed Inlow chairman of the Production Working Group, and assigned an Army officer the chair on the Deployment Working Group.²³ (S)

The specific question before GMAIC was whether NIE 11-8-59 had accurately estimated the pace of the Soviet ICBM program.

²¹ Memorandum for Assistant Director for Research and Reports, from Roland S. Inlow, Chief of the Guided Missiles Branch, "ORR-OSI Activities Concerning Soviet ICBM Deployment," 18 February 1960. (S)

²² Ibid. (S)

²³ IDERA Monthly Reports, 1959 and 1960, (Secret), Earl McFarland, Jr., Chairman, Guided Missiles and Astronautics Intelligence Committee [GMAIC], memorandum for Chairman, United States Intelligence Board, "Re-examination of NIE 11-8-59," 2 March 1960. (S)

GMAIC's two new working groups were to evaluate the evidence on every potential launch site and production facility, and each working-group member was required to divulge the evidence his intelligence component held. For the effort, Inlow committed about half of the analysts in his branch plus the support of three other branches in ORR.²⁴ (S)

At issue was a closely held, extensive Air Force list of suspected ICBM launch sites. A dispute arose when Air Force, probably in late February 1960, briefed USIB on its isolated position. Because data backing up this briefing had not been made available to GMAIC, Col. Earl F. McFarland, Jr., USAF, reported to USIB that he had served, in effect, a summons on his own career component: GMAIC requested a written version of the briefing, with graphics, that the Air Force gave USIB.²⁵ (S)

Air Force eventually supplied the list, and by 4 April 1960 the Deployment Working Group completed its report. Judging from a later GMAIC study, the group had evaluated about 95 potential launch locations and divided these into six categories: one confirmed site (Tyuratam), no probable sites, and four possible sites (Kapustin Yar, Plesetsk, Polyarnyy Ural, and Ust'-Ukhta). Twelve other locations were undetermined and the remainder fell into the doubtful or negative categories. Outside the test range, not a single operational ICBM could be conclusively identified.²⁶ (S)

For Proctor and Inlow the substantive problem was baffling. They had evidence of continuing testing, but no evidence on deployment. The latter could be (and was) explained away with the argument that large areas of the USSR still had not been covered by the U-2 program. The absence of telltale signs of a substantial program, however, could not be explained away. US contractors had informed Proctor, Inlow, and Clarence Baier of the numerous factors involved in US missile deployment, and these DDI officers had, in turn, used this information to determine the features of a substantial Soviet ICBM program (defined, as early as SNIE 11-10-57, as 500 operational missiles). The analogy suggested that the number of workers and telltale signals would have to be almost astronomical. Inlow assessed that hundreds of thousands—up to 500,000—construction workers and numerous manufacturing plants

²⁴ IDERA Monthly Reports, 1960, (Secret); McFarland, "Re-examination of NIE 11-8-59." (S)

²⁵ Ibid.; Amory to Dulles, "Memorandum to DCI Dated 16 February 1960, Subject: 'Intelligence Activities Directed Against ICBM Deployment,'" 8 July 1960, Box 4. (S)

²⁶ Report of the GMAIC Deployment Working Group, "Soviet Surface to Surface Missile Deployment," 1 September 1960, (TS Daunt Chess); Authors' interview of John G. Godaire, 3 June 1971, transcript in Box 8. (S)

would have to be involved in a support effort to acquire this substantial operational ICBM capability at the times projected in the NIEs.²⁷ (S)

For the Air Force, the substantive problem was simple: the Intelligence Community's collection efforts were missing critical evidence of a substantial Soviet ICBM program. Air Force generals, like Thomas S. Powers of the Strategic Air Command, publicly asserted that the USSR could destroy US retaliatory forces, frequently challenged the Eisenhower Administration's defense policy, and even more frequently received congressional support from influential Senators, including Stuart Symington, Henry Jackson, Lyndon Johnson, and John Kennedy. Thus, when new estimates would be made later in the year, the Air Force would increase its projections of deployed Soviet ICBM launchers while the rest of the community would make substantial reductions—although even these overestimated the scope of the Soviet deployment program.²⁸ (S)

To ensure that it had not missed something, CIA undertook the first DDI consolidation of missile research in the Agency's history. In February 1960, DDI Amory suggested the idea of establishing an ad hoc DDI Guided Missile Task Force (GMTF), and DCI Dulles promptly agreed to his proposal. A single temporary component with Proctor as chief and Inlow as his deputy included OSI and ORR expertise. Not only did this arrangement reflect Agency senior officials' confidence in Proctor and Inlow, it also gave de facto recognition to ORR that it had the primary responsibility for CIA intelligence analysis on the building and fielding of rockets (with OSI retaining responsibility for analysis of research and development).²⁹ (C)

The GMTF included about 30 analysts when it began operations in April 1960. The Task Force dispensed with standard administrative chores and occupied itself with substantive and methodological problems. Even the title of the group did not apparently concern its administrators. It was, for example, sometimes referred to in its own reports as the "DD/I Task Force on Long-Range Ballistic Missiles," or the "DD/I Task Force on Ballistic Missiles," or just the "DD/I Task Force." (C)

²⁷ Edward W. Proctor, Chief, Guided Missile Task Force, to Amory, "Status of Guided Missile Task Force Research," 15 October 1960, Box 4, (TS Daunt); Godaire interview, (S); see also SNIE 11-10-57, *The Soviet ICBM Program*, (declassified). (S)

²⁸ Godaire interview. (S)

²⁹ *Ibid.*, (S); Amory, "Memorandum to DCI Dated 16 February 1960, Subject: 'Intelligence Activities Directed Against ICBM Deployment,'" 8 July 1960, (S); IDERA Monthly Reports, 1960. (S)

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Proctor's and Inlow's GMTF produced detailed and comprehensive reports on both ICBM production and deployment. The principal objectives of the task force were spelled out in Proctor's first six-month status report the following October:

- The allocation of adequate personnel resources and their integration into an effective research team on the problems of production and deployment of long-range ballistic missiles.
- A more intensive focusing of the research effort on the substantive areas most likely to yield definite results.
- Assurance that all available evidence is being thoroughly and systematically exploited.
- Development of new approaches to both research and collection problems. (S)

His summation of the results of the first six months was honest, his forecast for a breakthrough (a view which apparently reflected his concern about the trouble-plagued CORONA project) was pessimistic, and his strategy was simply to try harder: "The fact that we have not achieved and cannot yet anticipate major breakthroughs," Proctor noted, "has further increased our sense of urgency in seeking solutions to this critical problem."³⁰ (S)

The "missile gap" controversy that Spring led directly to a spectacular failure—the Soviet shootdown of Francis Gary Powers's U-2 on 1 May 1960. The primary targets for the Powers mission were Tyuratam, Severodvinsk, and the suspect ICBM complexes at Plesetsk and Yur'ya. The planned mission would have identified launch facilities at Plesetsk and Yur'ya. More importantly, Yur'ya and Complex C at Tyuratam could have been identified with a second-generation ICBM, thereby questioning the basis of the NIEs that had opened the dispute in the first place. But the U-2's crash and Powers's capture marked the abrupt end of the U-2 program over the USSR, and contributed to Proctor's forecast that major breakthroughs could not be anticipated.³¹ (C)

The seemingly unpromising future of overhead photography prompted the task force and GMAIC's two working groups to reexamine all the evidence to ensure that the Intelligence Community had not

³⁰ Proctor, "Status of Guided Missile Task Force Research," 15 October 1960, (TS Daunt). (S)

³¹ National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC), NPIC/R-1/61, Photographic Interpretation Report, "Yur'ya ICBM Launch Complex," July 1961, (TS Chess); Proctor, "Status of Guided Missile Task Force Research," 15 October 1960, (TS Daunt). (S)

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overlooked anything. In June, GMAIC's ad hoc Production Working Group completed a 109-page supplement to its earlier evaluation of potential ICBM production plants.³² The supplement supported earlier findings that the Scientific Research Institute (NII 88) in Kaliningrad "probably" fabricated ICBMs for the test range (it did) and that Design Bureau (OKB) Plant 456 in Chimki "very probably" developed the engines used in the Soviet ICBMs (as it did as well). Four categories of missile production (airframe, production and final assembly, propulsion, and ground-rail transport) and some 50 individual plants had been evaluated in the process of preparing the group's supplement. The Deployment Working Group used this study as part of its review (which could confirm only Tyuratam as an ICBM launch area), completed in September.³³ (S)

The two GMAIC reports formed the base for the extensive support the GMTF provided on NIE 11-8-60. The task force took four major approaches. First, [redacted] GMTF Deployment Group attempted to determine the most likely Soviet concepts for ICBM deployment. (b)(3) In this endeavor, the group used data from the Soviet test ranges, information on missile characteristics, and (with support from Space Technology Laboratory) relevant analogies from the US missile business. Second, Baier's GMTF Production Group reviewed Soviet long-range missile programs to identify the kinds of activity taking place at various phases of each program and to determine the extent of interrelationships. Third, Baier's group tried to develop a methodology for estimating the production capacity of a final assembly plant. Finally, the same group prepared a detailed analysis of the major ballistic missile prototype production centers located in the Moscow area.³⁴ (S)

None of the GMTF studies was complete by the time the Intelligence Community published NIE 11-8-60, but then none was expected to improve the projection on ICBM deployment because U-2 photographs were no longer available.³⁵ Consequently, the community

³² GMAIC, Supplemental Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on ICBM Production, "Evaluation of Evidence on Soviet ICBM Production," 17 June 1960, (TS Daunt). (S)

³³ GMAIC, "Soviet Surface-to-Surface Missile Deployment," 1 September 1960, (TS Daunt Chess); NPIC, Photographic Interpretation Report, "Chronology of Moskva Missile and Space Propulsion Development Center Khimki 456, USSR," February 1968, (TS Chess); ATIC, "Kaliningrad Guided Missile Plant and Experimental Station NII-88 and Kaliningrad Arms Plant 88 (55°55'N-37°49'E)," June 1958. (S)

³⁴ Proctor, "Status of Guided Missile Task Force Research," 15 October 1960, (TS Daunt). (S)

³⁵ Ibid.; Authors' interview with Edward W. Proctor, 15 December 1970, transcript in Box 8, (TS Daunt); Interview with Roland Inlow, January 1971, transcript in Box 8, (TS Daunt). (S)

~~Secret~~*Closing the Missile Gap*

controversy over Soviet ICBMs got out of hand and the NIE of 1960 increased rather than reduced uncertainty. (U)

The End of the Dark Era (U)

With the circulation of NIE 11-8-60 on 1 August 1960, the controversy over Soviet ICBMs hit an historic level of acrimony. Unable to resolve any significant differences regarding projected force levels, the estimate illustrated individual departmental and agency positions in a chart. Program "A," estimating a Soviet force of 400 ICBMs by mid-1963, was the DCI's pick as the nearest approximation of the actual Soviet program. The Air Force's Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, argued for the more ambitious program "B," estimating a Soviet force of 700 ICBMs by mid-1963, and complained in a footnote that the rates of increase shown in its projection should be continued through 1965. The Director of Intelligence and Research of the State Department, the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, and the Director for Intelligence of the Joint Staff picked an undefined area within the "A-B" range. The Army's and Navy's intelligence services believed that program "C" (a Soviet force of 200 ICBMs by mid-1963) most nearly reflected the actual Soviet effort. Most participants agreed, however, that the Soviet Union had only "a few—say 10" deployed ICBMs.³⁶ (U)

Thirty-six dissenting departmental footnotes to the estimate supported the short-term interests of the individual services. The estimate's summary highlighted that the threat programs "A" and "B" posed was practically the same through the end of 1960; that is, before the year's end, either projection would give the Soviets the capability to destroy major US metropolitan areas. At the beginning of the next year, "A" or "B" would pose a threat to SAC's operational airbase system. By mid-1961, the Air Force's projection would give Soviet planners "high assurance" of being able to damage most of the SAC airbase system in an initial salvo, whereas CIA's projected program would reach this hypothetical capability late in the year. Navy's and Army's low projection for 1961 (which in fact was too high) gave the Soviets the capability to inflict massive destruction only on US urban areas. NIE 11-8-60

³⁶ NIE 11-8-60, *Soviet Capabilities For Long Range Attack Through Mid-1965*, 1 August 1960. (U)

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concluded, with objections only from the Air Force, that none of the above catastrophes was imminent.³⁷ (U)

Shortly after the dissemination of this extraordinarily dissent-ridden NIE, a series of closely spaced breakthroughs marked the beginning of the end of the "missile gap" controversy. The first involved CORONA. After months in a standdown, a successful diagnostic flight test of Discoverer XIII took place on 10 August 1960. Discoverer XIV, launched a week later, carried a camera and 20 pounds of film. This mission gave the Intelligence Community its first usable satellite photographic coverage of the USSR. Although the photographs did not provide direct evidence on ICBM deployment, the next mission, launched on 10 December, provided the first coverage of an ICBM site. The resolution was much lower than that obtained from the U-2's cameras, but the area of coverage was much greater and the interpretability of the product soon improved. This source of overhead reconnaissance would provide masses of highly classified information on Soviet development programs and deployments, but was modestly—and appropriately—codenamed "KEYHOLE."³⁸ Proctor and Inlow's task force prepared the first report based on KEYHOLE photography. "An Assessment of an Installation at Plesetsk, USSR, as an ICBM Site" represented the first of the all-source, in-depth studies that would become a standard item in the new era. (S)

The second break involved [redacted] (b)(1)

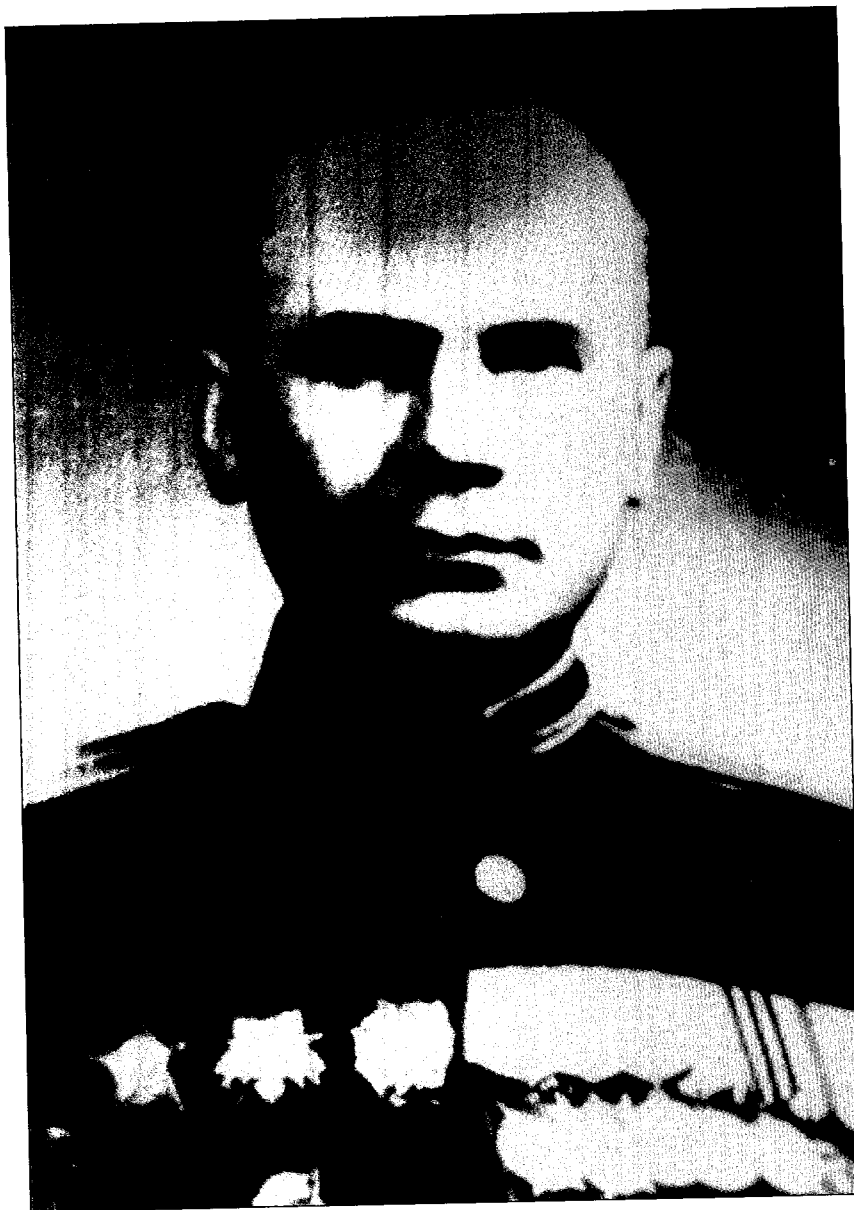
[redacted] a second (b)(3)
 generation Soviet ICBM exploding during its launch from Tyuratam. ICBM analysts knew almost immediately that something odd had happened, but could piece together only gradually the extent and significance of the tragedy. The Soviet press never mentioned the incident.³⁹ (S)

On 25 October 1960, Moscow Radio reported the death ("as the result of an air crash" on the 24th) of Marshal Mitrofan Nedelin, the Commander in Chief of the recently formed Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces. Later analysis in the GMTF confirmed that beginning on the 25th an unusually large number of aircraft from Moscow and Dnepropetrovsk had flown into the Tyuratam area. These flights could not be

³⁷ Ibid. (U)

³⁸ Kenneth E. Greer, "Corona," reprinted in Kevin C. Ruffner, editor, *CORONA: America's First Satellite Program* (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 1995), p. 26. (U)

³⁹ Proctor to Amory, "Major Soviet Missile Disaster in October 1960," 25 September 1961, Box 10, (TS Dinar). (S)



Col. Oleg Penkovsky, GRU (U)

logically associated with any subsequent test event because the range went into a standdown for a three-month period. In succeeding months, clandestine sources told of an explosion and of the death or injury of

hundreds of important officials and range personnel at the test center. The flights in late October were, most likely, filled with caskets, consultants, and medical personnel.⁴⁰ (S)

When all the data were assembled, the disaster appeared to result from a malfunction of a quite different ICBM undergoing its initial range test. Data on ICBM launches on 2 February and 3 March 1961 confirmed that a new missile, later designated the SS-7, had entered the test-range phase. Beginning in June 1961, improved KEYHOLE photography exposed the progress of SS-7 deployment. Then data from a launch on 9 April confirmed the arrival of another new missile, the SS-8. The Soviets had two second-generation ICBMs under development. (S)

The third breakthrough involved Soviet Col. Oleg Vladimirovich Penkovskiy. In August 1960, Penkovskiy, a high-ranking official in the Chief Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the Red Army General Staff, established contact with the CIA and the British. The case would cover the period of August 1960 through August 1962 and provide more than 8,000 pages of translated reporting, the bulk of which carried the code-name IRONBARK. Most of these reports constituted highly classified Soviet Ministry of Defense documents. During this period, three series of lengthy debriefing and briefing sessions were held with Colonel Penkovskiy. According to Richard Helms, then the Deputy Director for Plans, "Every Western intelligence requirement of any priority was covered with him during this time and all aspects of his knowledgeability and access were explored." Over 90 percent of the approximately 5,000 pages of Russian-language documentary information provided by Penkovskiy concerned military subjects. Roughly half of this information came from the Chief Intelligence Directorate library, while the remainder he photographed either in the missile and artillery headquarters of Marshal Varentsov or at the Dzerzhinskiy Academy.⁴¹ (S)

The IRONBARK documents gave strategic researchers their first comprehensive look into Soviet strategic thinking. They also provided a wealth of information on Soviet ballistic missiles. The top secret publication of the Soviet's newly formed Strategic Rocket Forces, *The Information Bulletin of the Missile Troops*, permitted Agency analysts to learn the organization and structure of the USSR's strategic missile units, the functions of the various staffs in each unit, how these units were linked to the military high command in Moscow, and the activities of missile units at different levels of combat readiness. Through three sessions with Colonel Penkovskiy in England and France, sessions

⁴⁰ Ibid., (TS Dinar). (S)

⁴¹ Richard Helms, Deputy Director for Plans, to John A. McCone, Director of Central Intelligence, "Essential Facts of the Penkovskiy Case," 31 May 1963. (S NF)

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which, when written up in clandestine reports, generally carried the innocent-sounding codename CHICKADEE, Agency analysts received detailed technical information on the missiles themselves, the yields of their warheads, targeting methods, and targets.⁴² (C)

In April 1961, Penkovskiy had his first face-to-face sessions with his British and American case officers. In an Information Report of 16 May 1961, Penkovskiy described the "missile gap" as a hoax. Khrushchev, he said, was more interested in fostering the impression that the Soviet Union already had a tremendous ICBM program when in fact it was practically nonexistent. Penkovskiy cautioned that the USSR would eventually have many missiles because "millions of men's efforts are directed to this work," and the "entire economy of a nation is directed by a one-party system to which all is subordinate."⁴³ (S)

Penkovskiy's testimony alone was not enough to close the "missile gap," but it tentatively supported the almost heretical argument for a limited Soviet ICBM program. Inlow's reaction to the first CHICKADEE report was to recognize that, after all the urgent collection efforts of the past three years, the evidence on ICBM production, deployment, and training "really hadn't been much."⁴⁴ (S)

Force projections in the previous estimates had been based on the empirically supported assumption that the Soviets would widely deploy the SS-6. Penkovskiy's report, following the tape of the SS-7 missile disaster, weakened this assumption.⁴⁵ (C)

The SS-6, though a good rocket, was in the later words of the Hyland Panel "a large and difficult-to-handle missile." The SS-6 used cryogenic fuel, which could not be stored in the missile for long. Built in Kalinin-grad's NII 881, the SS-6 system was reliable and no doubt met original design specifications, and it remained the prime booster for the Soviet space program. But from a technical standpoint, the inability to store fuel on the SS-6 (and the enormous amount of support facilities it required) made the cryogenic technology less desirable for military applications.

⁴² For a discussion of later uses of IRONBARK and CHICKADEE, see Leonard F. Parkinson, "Penkovskiy's Legacy and Strategic Research," *Studies in Intelligence* 16 (Spring 1972). This article has been declassified and can be found in Record Group 263 (Central Intelligence Agency), National Archives and Records Administration. (U)

⁴³ After Penkovskiy's apprehension in late 1962, the DDP circulated this report as CSDB No. 3/652, 800, "The Soviet ICBM Program," 21 February 1963, Box 5. (S)

⁴⁴ Godaire interview. (S)

⁴⁵ Except for the Air Force, which dissented from NIE 11-8/1-61, asserting that the Soviets would deploy the SS-6 as an interim measure until second-generation missiles became available. The Air Force also predicted that accelerated deployment would follow at a far faster pace and larger scale than did the majority of the Intelligence Community. NIE 11-8/1-61, *Strength and Deployment of Soviet Long Range Ballistic Missile Forces*, 21 September 1961. (U)

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(b)(3)

The smaller SS-7, built at the Dnepropetrovsk Missile Development and Production Center, used storable liquid fuel and did not require anywhere near the support facilities of the first-generation system.⁴⁶ (S)

With new information derived from virtually every area of the classic and modern intelligence collection spectrum, the majority USIB's NIE 11-8-61 of June 1961, *Soviet Capabilities For Long-Range Attack*, started to close the "gap" by substantially reducing projected force levels. But not all the revolutionary findings had been fully appreciated. Only hinting that fundamental improvements in collection were within grasp, the estimate cautiously concluded that the evidence at hand was not sufficient to "establish with certainty even the present strength of the ICBM force." Thus the range of projection remained wide, but most of the estimates (save the Air Force's) were reasonable, and the Army's and Navy's came close to the mark (see table below).

Soviet ICBMs Deployed as Projected in NIE 11-8-61				
	NIE 11-8-61	State's Footnote	Army's and Navy's Footnote	Air Force's Footnote
Mid-1961	50 to 100	75 to 125	"a few"	"at least 120"
Mid-1962	100 to 200	150 to 300	50 to 100	300
Mid-1963	150 to 300	200 to 450	100 to 200	550
Mid-1964	200 to 400	—	150 to 300	850
Mid-1965	—	—	—	1150
Mid-1966	—	—	—	1450

This table is Unclassified

The estimate, in a veiled reference to KEYHOLE photography of Plesetsk, noted that US intelligence, "through intensive collection efforts by all available means," had achieved partial coverage of the regions best suited to the deployment of Soviet ICBMs.⁴⁷ (U)

⁴⁶ USIB-D-33.8/7, "Working Notes on 6 June 1962 Meeting With USIB Ad Hoc Panel on Status of Soviet ICBM Program," 14 June 1962, Box 5, (TS Dinar); CIA, FMSAC-STIR/TCS/71-21, SR IR 71-16, "The SS-9 ICBM Program: Organizational Aspects of Soviet Decision Making," September 1971, (TS Umbra). (S)

⁴⁷ NIE 11-8-61, *Soviet Capabilities For Long-Range Attack*, 7 June 1961 (with later USIB action completed on 13 June 1961). State's footnote seemed to reject the "new yardstick" of estimating on the basis of programming information that DCI Dulles had defended before the two Senate committees on 29 January 1960. Thus the Director of Intelligence and Research Roger Hilsman argued in his footnote that the NIE "should include an estimate of the largest ICBM force which the USSR *could have* in mid-1961...and the probable Soviet force level in mid-1961. (Emphasis in original.) (U)

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Most importantly, NIE 11-8-61 formally opened up the case for limited near-term deployment. Its authors were not sure whether "The inadequacy of confirming evidence regarding deployment is attributable either to (a) the limitations of our coverage, combined with the success of Soviet security measures, or (b) the fact that deployment has been on a relatively small scale to date."⁴⁸ (U)

The Hyland Panel reconvened to try to clarify the uncertainty. The members for the panel's third meeting included Hyland and Perry (the only carryovers from the 1959 meeting); Dr. Hendrik W. Bode, the Vice President of Bell Telephone Laboratories; Lt. Gen. Howell M. Estes, the Deputy Commander of Air Force's Aerospace Systems; Dr. George B. Kistiakowsky from Harvard (by then a veteran in the missile controversy who, from July 1959 to January 1961, had succeeded Killian as the President's Special Assistant for Science and Technology); Arthur E. Raymond, RAND Corporation's Vice President and its Director of Research; and Navy's Special Projects Technical Director, Rear Adm. Levering Smith. In early September 1961 the members heard briefings on the new data leading up to the new estimate and on recent determinations that KEYHOLE photography of June and July 1961 had identified two ICBM complexes.⁴⁹ (S)

After considering all the evidence, the panel members decided that, while "there may be as many as 50 ICBM launch pads under construction or in use in the USSR," there were no more than 25 operational launching pads. The panel concluded that the threat to the United States from Soviet ICBMs should be materially downgraded, and that the missiles did not represent an adequate first strike capability.⁵⁰ (S)

The "missile-gap" issue was over, but it required an NIE to put it to final rest. NIE 11-8/1-61 of 21 September 1961 did just that in its two opening sentences. "New information, providing a much firmer base for estimates on Soviet long-range ballistic missiles, has caused a sharp downward revision in our estimate of present Soviet ICBM strength,"

⁴⁸ Ibid. (U)

⁴⁹ Harry J. Thompson, Acting Executive Secretary, USIB, "Report of USIB Ad Hoc Panel on Status of Soviet ICBM Progress," 8 September 1961, (TS); NPIC/R-1/61, "ICBM Complex Yur'ya, USSR," (TS Chess); NPIC/B-18/61, "Possible ICBM Launch Site Near Kostroma, USSR," August 1961 (TS Chess). (S)

⁵⁰ Thompson, "Report of USIB Ad Hoc Panel," (TS). Terms were soon needed to distinguish among the three ICBMs. The Intelligence Community adopted the designation "Category A" for the SS-6. Because it was not possible to tell which of the remaining ICBMs had come next, the panel could only describe the SS-7 as the "Category B or C" vehicle. The SS-8 was described, for a time, as the "Category C or B" missile. (S)

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the NIE said. "We now estimate that the present Soviet ICBM strength is in the range of 10-to-25 launchers from which missiles can be fired against the US, and that this force level will not increase markedly during the months immediately ahead." The "dark era" in strategic research was over, thanks to CORONA and KEYHOLE.⁵¹ (U)

⁵¹ NIE 11-8/1-61, *Strength and Deployment of Soviet Long-Range Ballistic Missile Forces*, 21 September 1961. Four days later, columnist Joseph Alsop (who had actively pushed the "missile gap") leaked the main thrust of NIE 11-8/1-61: "Prior to the recent recalculation the maximum number of ICBMs that the Soviets were thought to have at this time was on the order of 200—just about enough to permit the Soviets to consider a surprise attack on the United States. The maximum has now been drastically reduced, however, to less than a quarter of the former figure—well under 50 ICBMs and, therefore, not nearly enough to allow the Soviets to consider a surprise attack on this country"; "Facts About the Missile Balance," *The Washington Post*, 25 September 1961. (U)

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(b)(3)

The Construction of the Original Headquarters Building (U)

Peyton F. Anderson and Jack B. Pfeiffer

The Central Intelligence Agency inherited its original quarters from its wartime predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services. The effort to provide CIA with a headquarters building—acquisition, planning, construction, and occupancy—stretched over a period of about 15 years (1947-62), during which Agency components in the Washington area were stuffed, crammed, or otherwise deployed in a variety of structures that never quite became “home.” Congress appropriated money in 1951 for a headquarters facility, but it still took four more years to pick a site. By then the funds appropriated earlier were insufficient. In the Summer of 1955 Congress authorized \$51.5 million for the purchase of land in Langley, Virginia, for the extension of the George Washington Parkway, and the planning and construction of the new building. Once the architectural and engineering contractor was selected in July 1956, responsibility for the Agency’s new headquarters fell to the Real Estate and Construction Division (RECD) of the Office of Logistics in the Directorate of Support (now the Directorate of Administration). For much of the construction phase, RECD was succeeded in this task by the Building Planning Staff (BPS), an ad hoc group operating directly under James A. Garrison, Director of the Office of Logistics.¹ The entire planning, construction, and moving effort also benefited from the close attention of Deputy Director for Support Lawrence K. White. (S)

Construction Begins (U)

The first significant construction contract was for the clearing and grubbing of the site. This meant the removal of trees and brush from about half of the acreage and the clearing or removal of dead trees and underbrush from the rest of the tract. The contract bid opening date was 12 September 1957. Morrison and Johnson, Inc., of Bethesda,

¹ BPS—to which RECD contributed several key personnel—was subsumed back into RECD in July 1960. (S)

Maryland, had the low bid: \$31,450.² Work was started in October 1957 and completed in March 1958. By this time another contract had been let for grading the site to bring it to the proper elevations determined by the site planners and for the installation of site drainage structures to carry off the accumulation of surface water. Under this contract, preliminary roads, site parking, and storage areas were being graded and given a gravel-surface treatment to accommodate the building contractor's supplies and equipment. (C)

The summer and fall of 1957 were marked by long dry spells for construction work, but almost as soon as the clearing and grubbing operations started, heavy rains began to fall. The weather continued to be unfavorable through most of the winter of 1957-58, although perhaps not unfavorable enough to block completely the public relations ploy that the Deputy Director for Support Lawrence K. White had in mind:

I also told him [H. S. Chandler] that I wanted to make every possible effort not only to let the grading contract as soon as possible, but to have some grading actually done before Congress returns to town on the first of January.³ (U)

Although snowstorms were the worst for the Washington area in many years and the spring and summer rainfall in 1958 was well above normal, the grading and drainage contract was substantially finished by October 1958. The excavation and foundation contract, with a base bid of \$2,289,000, was opened on 9 October 1958; and on 21 October 1958, the notice to proceed was issued to the Roscoe Engineering Corporation and the Ajax Construction Co., Inc. of Washington, D.C., as a joint venture. (C)

Up to this point the contracting work had been performed on the site as a whole. Now the job of excavating and pouring the massive concrete foundations for the Headquarters Building itself was split into three separate contracts, saving perhaps nine months to a year. While the work was in progress, the chief architects and engineers at Harrison and Abramovitz (H&A) in New York worked with BPS to prepare the complex and detailed plans required for the main building. (U)

² The high bid was \$102,000! Col. Lawrence K. "Red" White, Deputy Director for Support, for many years kept a detailed log of his activities, which the authors relied on extensively in the preparation of this analysis. The relevant extracts from White's log, hereafter cited as *Diary Notes*, reside in History Staff Source Collection, HS/HC-849, History Staff Job 84-00499R, Box 1. The citation above is at *Diary Notes*, 12 September 57. (C)

³ The low and high bids for grading and drainage were \$460,000 and \$1,113,000, respectively. The low figure was less than half the amount (\$1,030,000) that had been allocated. *Ibid.*, 19 December 1957. (C)

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Even as the plans and work proceeded, Agency representatives were frequently harassed by Defense Department and civil defense officials about the need to incorporate expensive features intended to enhance protection from atomic blast and fallout. The Deputy Director of Support personally endured considerable badgering for his reluctance to take drastic steps to "harden" the facility against nuclear attack—such as the idea that the Agency should mine a deep shelter in the basalt bedrock beneath the foundation—but Colonel White held firm in his refusal to complicate the project any further. (U)⁴

Additional work began at about the same time in the area of the Langley compound. The new four-lane George Washington Memorial Parkway leading to the site's north gatehouse entrance had been completely graded. Piers for the several bridges on this parkway were completed. The entire parkway project was paved and ready for use early in 1960, well in advance of CIA's actual moving date; and as early as July 1958 construction work had been started to widen Virginia Route 123 leading to the south gatehouse entrance. (U)

The negotiations related to the access roadway situation—particularly the problems of the George Washington Parkway and the Cabin John bridge—were complex. The Agency was involved with the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Public Roads, the National Park Service, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the highway commissions and engineers of the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and Fairfax County.⁵ Some of the difficulties were ironed out by the "old school tie": Colonel White did not hesitate to draw on his broad net of military acquaintances to influence the various engineering contingents, many of which were headed by former Army officers. At other times he found opportunities for some *quid pro quo*. In March of 1961, for example, he noted:

General Clarke, the District Engineer, and Mr. Aitken, his Highway Supervisor, were over for lunch; however, General Clarke and Mr. Aitken are very much concerned about the traffic problem in connection with getting to and from our new building. They feel that the selection of Chantilly particularly is going to jam up the roads very much and that we may have some congestion. They are looking for some support to get the Chain Bridge double-decked and to get another bridge built at the Three Sisters Island

⁴ Ibid., 19 December 1961. (C)

⁵ Ibid., 17, 24 January 1955; 7-8 February 1955; 19, 21-25 November 1955; 23-26 July 1956; 2 February 1959. (S)

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location. I told them that we would certainly give them full support and that this was in our interest, but they should not put us in the position of not having made an adequate transportation study at the time we selected this site. Gen. Clarke and Mr. Aitken said they both fully appreciated this and that their emphasis would all be on developments since the site was selected.⁶ (S)

Fairfax County officials were proceeding with the plans for extending water and sewer lines, and the pumping stations required for these facilities were under construction. Plans for the electric power substation to supply the Headquarters Building were well along by the spring of 1959.⁷ (S)

The problems of physical security during the construction of the new building were complex. A contract had been let for the erection of the security fence in August 1958, and by the middle of November the site was under security patrol and badges had been issued to the contractors.⁸ Between the fall of 1958 and February 1961, *bona fides* were obtained for about 15,000 construction workers—this in addition to the requirements to plan building security, badging, guard force, and the host of other security projects with which the Office of Security was charged.⁹ (S)

The main building contract—that is, the superstructure contract—had been advertised on 18 December 1958, and bids were opened on 25 February 1959. Thirteen bids were received, and on 25 March the contract was awarded to the Charles H. Tompkins Co. and the J. A. Jones

⁶ In the fall of 1961 Clarke requested—and received—a letter from the Agency in support of his position on the need for a bridge at Three Sisters Island. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1961. (S)

⁷ In addition to the supply of electric power from the Virginia Electric and Power Co., Agency planners also modified the plans to include a diesel emergency generator. White authorized a change order in August 1960, noting that it would cost about \$50,000. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1960. (S)

⁸ Draft Outline, DDS Support Services Bulletin, 1 August 1958, (S). It was not possible to locate all of the authors' sources for this article. Several, including this one, were apparently held in files of the Building Planning Staff, Office of Logistics, and are hereafter sourced as "BPS/OL." (S)

⁹ It was not until after the building was occupied, however, that serious attention was paid to the potential security risk posed by the four privately owned tracts of land adjacent to the new building area. Shortly after he became DCI, John A. McCone ordered that a study of the feasibility of purchase be undertaken; *Diary Notes*, 15, 19 November, and 14, 21 December 1962, (S). Consequently, White appointed a committee to review this matter; and their findings disclosed that the building was vulnerable to penetration by surveillance. Photographs taken in the wooded area adjacent to the front of the building indicated the feasibility of identifying personnel, with the possibility of identifying documents. After considerable coordination by the DDS and the DCI—with Congressional committees, the Fairfax County Executive, and the Bureau of the Budget—acquisition of the perimeter property was accomplished by the mid-1960s at a cost of approximately half a million dollars. (S)

Construction Co. The low bid was \$33,287,600, somewhat less than had been expected. ~~(S)~~

The contract had gone on the construction market at an opportune time, in the midst of a nationwide economic recession. Business conditions were favorable to the Government and to the Agency. Indeed, the money saved was soon put to good use. Of the \$54,500,000 appropriated, \$8.5 million was transferred to the National Park Service for the extension of the George Washington Parkway to the site. The superstructure and site work contract (\$33,287,600), the contract with the Otis Elevator Co. (\$1,122,669), plus other fees and contingency requirements, approximated \$43 million, leaving an unobligated balance of approximately \$3 million. This amount was considered "no year funds," and used to purchase properties adjoining the site and to construct the new printing plant. ¹⁰ ~~(S)~~

Superstructure work started in May 1959. The contractor's first efforts were directed toward organizing his work forces and executing the numerous subcontracts required for the project. Shop drawings—completely detailed plans based on the contract drawings and used for fabricating and installing structural steel, duct work, plumbing, and electrical and mechanical facilities—were being prepared. The forms for the ground-floor concrete walls and for the first-floor slab of the north half of the building were nearly completed by midsummer. Government and H&A representatives were on the site every working day and checked each step in the construction. They also reviewed all shop drawings, along with samples of the materials to be used. ¹¹ ~~(S)~~

President Dwight D. Eisenhower visited the site in November 1959 for the ceremonial laying of the building's cornerstone. A US Air Force band and the Chaplain of the US Senate also graced the occasion, and DCI Allen Dulles made certain beforehand that a large contingent of the Agency's female employees had reserved seats "in order to highlight the vital role which women play in the Agency." Accompanied by Dulles and a host of Washington dignitaries, the President briefly wielded an engraved silver trowel to set the stone in place. ¹² Inside the

¹⁰ Walter Pforzheimer, Curator, Historical Intelligence Collection, to Jack B. Pfeiffer, Support Services Historical Officer, 10 February 1971, HS/HC-849. ~~(S)~~

¹¹ Draft Outline, DDS Support Services Bulletin, 7 August 1959, BPS/OL file. ~~(S)~~

¹² Before the event DCI Dulles had let Col. White know that he wanted to see "some of the women employees of the Agency in attendance [in the ceremony's reserved seating area]." See White to Executive Officer, Office of the DCI, "Reserved Seats for Cornerstone Ceremony," 27 October 1959, HS/HC-849. ~~(S)~~

cornerstone went a box containing various acts and executive orders authorizing the Agency and the new facility, along with speeches, microfilmed newspapers, a CIA seal, and an aerial photograph of the site—but no classified documents.¹³ (U)

Steady Progress (U)

The contract called for completion of the building by the middle of 1961, but a reasonable amount of delay—frequently caused by conditions beyond the contractor's control—was expected on a project such as this. For example, there was a strike in the steel industry in August 1959. Had this strike lasted much longer, it would have delayed construction. There was every reason to believe, however, that the building would be completed some time during the last half of 1961. Meanwhile, BPS was reviewing space layout plans for the purpose of adjusting them to fit changes in the Agency's requirements.¹⁴ (U)

As of 31 March 1960 the contractor was slightly behind schedule, even though the winter weather had been reasonably favorable. There had been a considerable number of relatively small change orders, and it did not appear that completion of the contract would be extended materially. In fact, such excellent progress was being made that a portion of the concrete roof of the north penthouse had been poured. As was customary when the highest point on the construction project was reached, the workmen held an impromptu flag-raising ceremony, and for a day or two a flag flew from this rooftop. (U)

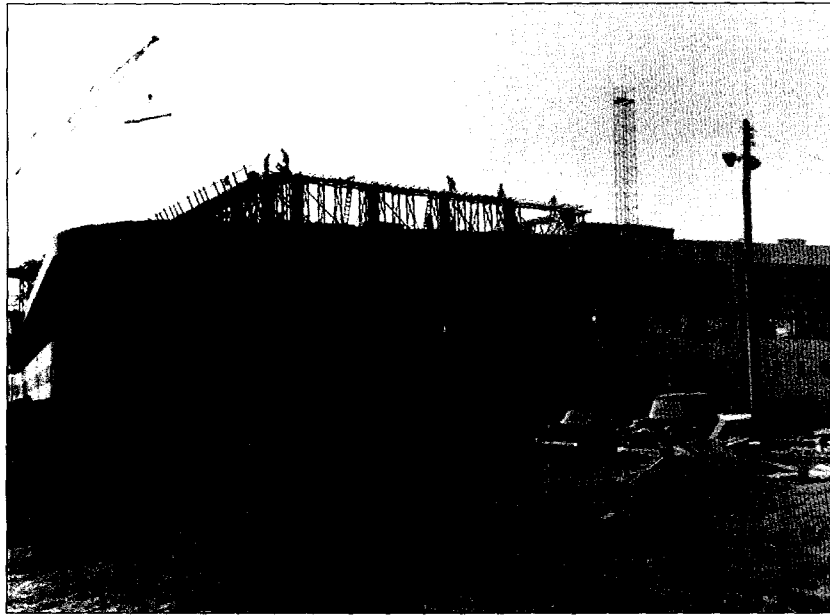
In May, progress was marred by the only serious accident that occurred during the entire course of the construction. In the words of Colonel White:

There was an accident today at Langley; apparently a cable broke allowing the scaffolding at the power building to fall. Ten people were hurt, seven of them very seriously. At this point one of the ten has died and another remains on the critical list. (U)

Workers had been removing wooden forms from the power plant's concrete ceiling when one of three cables suspending the scaffolding snapped, tumbling the men and the forms to the boiler room floor

¹³ The cornerstone and its "time capsule" were finally placed in their permanent locations on 2 November 1960; Diary Notes, 9 November 1960. (S)

¹⁴ C/BPS to C/PS/OL, 6 October 1959, sub: Killian Committee Report, BPS/OL files. (S)

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Original Headquarters Building under construction, 1950-60 (U)

25 feet below. Joseph A. Wood, 56, of Northeast Washington was dead on arrival at Arlington Hospital, but fortunately he was the only fatality.¹⁵ (U)

By spring, work had been started on the excavation for the auditorium building, which was a separate hemispheric structure near the front of the main building but connected to it by a tunnel. Structural steel had also been delivered to the site for the curved roof of the cafeteria building.¹⁶ Plantings for the three large and two small court areas enclosed by the building had been completed. This landscape and planting contract was undertaken early in the project so that all trees and shrubs requiring

¹⁵ *Diary Notes*, 4 May 1960, (S). "1 Killed, 8 Hurt as Staging Falls," *The Washington Post*, 5 May 1960. (U)

¹⁶ Walter Pforzheimer recalled:

The curved roof of the cafeteria...brings to mind an interesting highlight arising out of the *Washington Evening Star* sending periodic flights over the building to photograph the progress in its construction as a newsworthy item. In their issue of 13 June 1960, they printed one of these early views and caused us some laughing embarrassment by their caption, which noted, "The crescent-shaped objects at left are decorative waterfalls." Actually they were the curved steel girders, not yet installed, which hold up the roof of the cafeteria!

Pforzheimer to Pfeiffer, 10 February 1971. (S)

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large balls of dirt would be set in place before the courts were entirely enclosed.¹⁷ Throughout the construction Agency officers sought to preserve the campus-like feel of the grounds—to the point where in one instance it added \$60,000 to the bill.¹⁸ (C)

By the end of September 1960 the superstructure contractor had completed 54 percent of his work. The contractor was slightly behind schedule, but this was mainly a continuance of the earlier delays. The north half of the building was expected to be ready for occupancy by September 1961. It was almost completely enclosed, and plastering of the interior walls was progressing on the lower floors. Except for the seventh-floor roof of wings 1 and 2, and the penthouse roof, all of the structural slabs had been poured for the south half of the building, and precast concrete window panels had been installed up to the fourth-floor level. The structural steel covering for the cafeteria roof had been erected and installed. (X)

Plans were being developed with the telephone company to begin installing equipment for the north half of the building. Space layouts were being used by Agency components to plan requirements for unitized furniture, location of floor outlets, and determination of the necessary types of telephone service.¹⁹ Normal telephone installation was complicated by the additional requirements for a secure internal system and an intercom among the offices of the Director, the Deputy Directors, and the Office/Division Chiefs.²⁰ (X)

The superstructure contract was 78 percent complete as of 31 March 1961. The work had been delayed because of bad weather, but occupancy of the north half of the building would not be delayed appreciably. The entire building was now enclosed, and plastering had been completed in the north half. The dome for the auditorium had been

¹⁷ Draft Outline, DDS Support Services Bulletin, 25 May 1960, BPS/OL files. (S)

¹⁸ White recorded in his *Diary Notes*:

Met with Jim Garrison and H. S. Chandler to discuss landscaping changes at the new building. There are three large areas in which trees are growing in a considerable depression. Water collects to such an extent that drains are plugged up; consequently, the areas are not only unsightly but in all probability the trees are going to die before we move into the building. . . . It is now estimated that it will cost some \$60,000 to rectify it, especially in view of the fact that there is not sufficient dirt available to fill in all three of the holes. I authorized H. S. Chandler to go ahead and negotiate to fill in one of them—for which we do have ample dirt—and to contemplate, at least for the moment, on filling in the other two if and when we construct an auxiliary building, at which time we will again have plenty of “fill” available without buying it. (X)

Diary Notes, 3 May 1960. (S)

¹⁹ C/BPS to C/PS/OL, 3 October 1960, sub: Killian Committee Report, BPS/OL files. (S)

²⁰ *Diary Notes*, 20 October, 2 and 15 November, 14 and 20 December 1960; 4 January 1961. (S)

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erected, and the floor slab had been poured. BPS had revised contract drawings involving partition revisions, medical, X-ray, and projection equipment, and the instantaneous generator for the signal centers. The floorplans were retemplated from standard to unitized furniture. Telephone service orders and wiring diagrams were completed for 50 percent of the north half of the building.²¹ The building was ready for its first occupants. (S)

Moving Days (S)

The Headquarters Building was originally scheduled to be completed by the spring of 1962, but sufficient progress had been made on the north half of the building to permit the first phase of the move—that of some DDI elements—to begin on 19 September 1961. This permitted all components housed in Washington in the vicinity of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge to be moved by 21 October. Three separate Federal Works Agency contracts were let to accommodate the move of CIA furnishings and equipment to the new headquarters. Merchants Transfer and Storage Co. was awarded two, and the Roy M. Hamilton Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio, won the third. (S)

The planners must have breathed a collective sigh of relief once the DDI elements began to move into the new building. Beginning in 1957 and continuing even after the completion of the move, the Deputy Director for Intelligence Robert Amory engaged the planners in a series of disputes over the space allocations and floorplans for the DDI area. Amory had legitimate grounds for objecting to the location and the layout of the library, but he was less justified in his vacillating over decisions to include or exclude various other DDI components in the new building. Amory's indecision disrupted Colonel White's equanimity. White noted at one point:

Had a discussion both on the squawk box and later in the day with Bob Amory about the new building. Bob is, in my judgment, somewhat irrational about his desires to close up the library deal, put the Office of Basic Intelligence back into the building, etc. At his suggestion that we thrash the whole thing out with [DCI Dulles] I readily agreed, at which point he backed water considerably. I told him that I was fed up with his threatening to

²¹ Memo, AC/BPS for C/PS/OL, 4 April 1961, sub: Killian Report on FI Activities 1 October 1960-31 Mar 1961, (S). BPS/OL files. (S)

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go to the Director at any time he didn't get what he wanted in connection with the new building and that I wanted him to understand fully that I was prepared to meet with him and the Director at any hour of the day or night, without any advance notice, on his or any aspect of the building. I also told him that the DD/I area was slower than any other component in supplying the information that we needed to pass on to the architect and that unless we got his information very soon it would be necessary to stop work on the building again.²² (U)

Amory also complained to White—and in some cases even to DCI Dulles—about plans for ground floor windows, about the use of asphalt tile rather than more expensive flooring in the library, about the morning rush hour traffic pattern over Key Bridge, about the temperature in the new building, about the empty vending machines, and about the hours of the credit union.²³ (U)

Other directorates had their own complaints at the time of the planned move to the new building. The question of adequate space for the Directorate of Plans (DDP—now the Directorate of Operations) contingent was the subject of serious discussion from 1959 until the actual move. The basic problem was to determine the actual number of bodies that were to be accommodated and whether or not the entire DDP should be moved into the new building, even at the expense of space for the DDI or DDS.²⁴ DCI Dulles and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board decided in June 1961 that the Directorate of Plans would not, in fact, be moved in its entirety to the new building. (U)

As components moved into their new quarters, they found that new unitized furniture had replaced all Class C furniture, and had been pre-positioned with telephones in place ready to be cut over to the new numbers.²⁵ For mechanical and security reasons, certain facilities (principally the pneumatic tube and conveyor systems) were not available until the entire building was occupied. Although incinerator

²² *Diary Notes*, 15 April 1957. (S)

²³ *Ibid.*, 29 October 1957; 9, 21 November 1960; 6, 30 Mar, 3, 6, 20, 27 November 1961. (S)

²⁴ Perhaps because Colonel White was in charge of the overall planning for the Headquarters construction activity, space and other problems of the DDS components appear infrequently in the *Diary Notes*. In January of 1961 a request from General McClelland, Director of the Office of Communications, for additional space was rejected. *Ibid.*, 8 January 1961. (S)

²⁵ As a result of year-end savings during 1960 and 1961, these funds (totaling \$1,298,900) were applied along with \$340,000 obtained from the Director's Special Projects Fund (subject to DDS recommendation and DCI approval) for procurement of unitized furnishings. (S)

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chutes were being made available for depositing classified trash during the period of interim occupancy, the material could not be burned in the building until later.²⁶ (U)

Concurrent with the start of the move—on the night of 18 September 1961—the new headquarters telephone switchboard facility was put into service. The operators were instructed to answer incoming calls with “Central Intelligence Agency” instead of “Executive 3-6115.” This change in procedure attracted attention; extensive publicity was already being given by the news media to the CIA relocation, and this departure from secrecy was grist for the journalistic mills. The previous method of answering calls was resumed after a few weeks.²⁷ (U)

By 13 November 1961 the move into the north half of the building was completed, and by 15 May 1962 the entire move had been accomplished. Problems of winter weather, security escorts, communications, transportation, supplies and supply operations, had largely been overcome.²⁸ Decorating and decor, including the planned sculptures for the main entrance area, and office and hallway colors, hangings, and the like, were a continuing problem.²⁹ Heating, ventilating, and air conditioning also presented problems.³⁰ (U)

Mail and courier deliveries posed special difficulties because of widespread confusion over the address of the new Agency building. “Langley” was and is the local name for a part of Fairfax County and has no political or corporate identity. Some mail addressed to Langley, particularly when posted in the Washington Metropolitan area, would be sent by the Postal Service to McLean, Virginia—the nearest post office. The McLean postmaster reported, however, that most “Langley Mail” went first to Langley Air Force Base at Hampton Roads, Virginia, and was then forwarded to McLean. Relocation Bulletin No. 33 corrected the problem. (U)

The cafeteria was not completed until 28 February 1962, but in October 1961 necessary kitchen facilities, operated by Guest Services, Inc., were available to permit a limited operation in the table-service area. Vending machine rooms were put into operation on the floors being occupied, and the Virginia Society for the Blind was granted permission to operate two snack bars. The combination of ongoing

²⁶ Draft Outline, DDS Support Services Bulletin, 2 October 1961. BPS/OL files. (U)

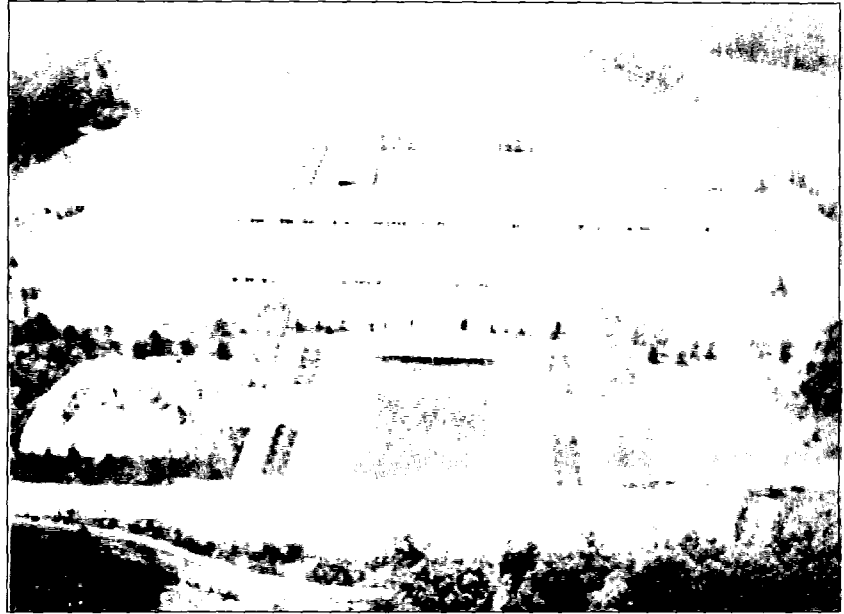
²⁷ Authors' conversation with the Chief, Telephone Facility Branch, 20 October 1970. (U)

²⁸ Project Officer to Deputy Chief, BPS/OL, 13 November 1961 to 15 May 1962, sub: Hq Move, BPS/OL files. (U)

²⁹ *Diary Notes*, 7 October, 4 November 1959; 22 January, 21 March, 8 June 1960; 9 January, 15 March, 5 April, 9 October 1961; 29 November 1962. (U)

³⁰ White to Garrison, 12 June 1962, sub: Hq Bldg. Heating, Ventilating, and A/C Systems. (U)

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Aerial view, Main Entrance, circa 1963 (U)

construction and ad hoc dining arrangements soon fathered an unforeseen problem. Walter Pforzheimer recalled:

At the time of the first move, I think the far end of the DDP part of the building was still partially open so that heavy equipment could be brought in.... As cold weather approached...the building became infested with the cutest collection of field mice you [will] ever see. In the course of serious dictation, soberminded DDI'ers would be interrupted by piercing shrieks [sic] from their secretaries which would herald the fact that another mouse had just appeared. In the Historical Intelligence Collection we were continually setting mousetraps with devastating effect, including the fact that the Curator's extremely squeamish secretaries would not empty them, and that task fell on the Curator himself. Not only was the building open at the far end, but the cafeteria was not yet open, and everyone was eating out of the vending machines or "brown bagging it." Thus the mice had a never-ending supply of food. The mice also had the habit of chewing through telephone

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wires and once chewed their way through the special gray [secure] phone wires, creating a security problem which resulted in having to have the mice cleared!³¹ (S)

When the move was in its initial stages, the presence of the DCI-designate John A. McCone—who was not noted as a particularly patient or tactful individual—provided an added fillip for the planners and movers. Reportedly “very well pleased with the building” on his first visit to the site, he began to throw his weight around even before his swearing in and taking over as DCI on 29 November 1961.³² Furniture had to be switched; he wanted a closed circuit television link with the White House; he asked for comparative construction costs with the new Atomic Energy Commission and Department of State headquarters buildings; and he complained that the movers were defacing the walls.³³ The new DCI and his staff moved to the new building on the day he was sworn in. He occupied temporary quarters on the third floor until his seventh-floor suite was ready in the first week of March 1962.³⁴ (U)

The H&A office at the building site was closed on 2 February 1962; the auditorium roof tile installation was finally completed during May 1963; and the final payment for architectural and engineering services was made to H&A on 24 October 1963. The total construction time for the project, including change orders, corrections, and omissions, was six years and one month, from October 1957 to November 1963. At a total cost of about \$43.7 million, the Agency had acquired a new, modern building with just over 1.3 million gross square feet of space, including some 837,000 net square feet of “office-type” space. In the spring of 1963, the new building housed nearly [] personnel, and at least [] more remained quartered in 13 other buildings in the Washington area.³⁵ (C)

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³¹ Pforzheimer to Pfeiffer, 10 February 1971. (S)

³² *Diary Notes*, 26 September 1961. (S)

³³ *Ibid.*, 18, 21, 28, 29 November 1961. (S)

³⁴ Project Officer Report, February 1962, BPS/OL files. (U)

³⁵ These figures were included in data provided to the authors by the Office of Logistics on 10 November 1972; the data are contained in HS/HC-849. (S)

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John A. McCone, Bud Wheelon, and the Wizards of Langley: The Creation of the DS&T and the Battle Over Spy Satellites (U)

David Robarge

CIA officers and intelligence scholars widely regard John A. McCone's tenure as Director of Central Intelligence during 1961-1965 as among the most effective in the Agency's history. His term is particularly notable for its two main achievements in science and technology: the creation of a directorate dedicated to those fields, and the protection of the CIA's role in satellite reconnaissance from takeover by the Defense Department. McCone's background as an engineer and manager of large technology, military, and energy organizations in the private and public sectors well suited him to reorganize the Agency's melange of scientific and technical offices. He believed strongly that to compete with an aggressive Air Force in the area of space reconnaissance, the CIA had to strengthen its scientific and technical capabilities. He and his first Deputy Director of Science and Technology (DDS&T), Albert Wheelon, gave the new Directorate of Science and Technology (DS&T) the personnel, budget, and mission to assert influence inside the Agency and the Intelligence Community. By successfully carrying out the largest rearrangement of human, financial, and material resources of his tenure, McCone—with Wheelon's indispensable help—went far toward regaining for the CIA the stature it had lost after the Bay of Pigs disaster. The two technically minded outsiders also initiated a change in the Agency's culture that diluted the influence of clandestine operators and Eastern-educated intellectuals and raised the profile of experts in esoteric disciplines who entered the secret world from outside the usual social and professional circles. (C)



Edwin H. Land (U)

The Seeds of the DS&T (U)

The idea that the CIA needed a separate science and technology component originated with a little known but influential study group called the Technological Capabilities Panel (TCP), convened in 1954 by President Dwight Eisenhower out of concern that the United States was vulnerable to a Soviet surprise nuclear attack. He authorized the president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, James R. Killian, to organize a group of experts to study the problem. One of the

group's subcommittees, headed by Polaroid's chairman Edwin Land, investigated the nation's intelligence capabilities. The TCP report, entitled "Meeting the Threat of Surprise Attack," declared up front that "We obtain little significant information from classical covert operations inside Russia.... We cannot hope to circumvent these elaborate [Soviet security] measures in an easy way. But we can use the ultimate in science and technology to improve our intelligence take." The TCP recommended "adoption of a vigorous program for the extensive use, in many intelligence procedures, of the most advanced knowledge in science and technology...a research program producing a stream of new intelligence tools and techniques." Land's subcommittee encouraged construction of a high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft, a proposal that soon led to the development of the U-2.¹ (S)

The CIA responded to the TCP's recommendation by forming a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) comprising mainly former members of the TCP. The board, which came to be called the Land Panel after its chairman, substantially influenced the Agency's scientific and technical activities, especially in the area of overhead reconnaissance. Administratively, the SAB was attached to the office of the DCI's Special Assistant for Planning and Coordination, Richard Bissell. Bissell ran the Development Projects Staff and oversaw the U-2, CORONA, and OXCART programs. He was the CIA's point man in exploiting science and technology for collection purposes and got along well with the SAB.² Nonetheless, the Agency did not have a distinct entity to coordinate scientific and technical intelligence activities that the three existing directorates were pursuing independently. DCI Allen Dulles did not act on a proposal made in 1957 to create a science and technology directorate—probably because it got no support from Bissell, who wanted to keep tight control over his projects and opposed any such consolidation as long as he remained at the Agency.³ (S)

When Bissell became Deputy Director of Plans (DDP) in 1958, he took the Development Projects Staff with him, renamed it the Development Projects Division, and used it—along with the Technical Services

¹ Donald E. Welzenbach, "Science and Technology: Origins of a Directorate," *Studies in Intelligence*, 30:2 (Summer 1986), pp. 13-16 (S); Helen H. Kleyla, "The Directorate for Science and Technology, 1962-1970," 5 vols., DDS&T Historical Series no. 1, 1972, 1:3-4 (TS; material used classified S). Even before the TCP's report was released in February 1955, Land privately urged DCI Allen Dulles to "assert your right to pioneer in scientific techniques for collecting intelligence." Land and Killian were also instrumental in promoting the joint CIA-Air Force reconnaissance satellite program, CORONA, a few years later. (S)

² Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," pp. 16, 22. (S)

³ Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 1:4-5. (S)



John A. McCone (U)

Staff—to support espionage and covert action operations. This rearrangement upset Land and Killian, who believed the CIA's technological research and development should stay separate from its clandestine activities. They were especially distressed to learn that Bissell had used the U-2 during the Bay of Pigs operation—to them a perilous extension of the aircraft's primary mission of gathering strategic and tactical military intelligence. In his final months as DDP, Bissell found himself in a tussle with Land and Killian—the two most influential members of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB), a panel of eminent private citizens that counseled the President on the performance and problems of the Intelligence Community. At Land's and

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Killian's urging, the PFIAB strongly advocated centralizing all CIA scientific and technical programs in one component and separating scientific collection from covert operations. Bissell resisted, but his position grew untenable after his chief ally, DCI Dulles, was forced to resign in December 1961 and was replaced by John A. McCone.⁴ (S)

The DCI With a Slide Rule Mind (U)

John A. McCone was better prepared than any previous DCI to lead the Agency fully into the realm of science and technology because he had experience managing large engineering and transportation enterprises and US military and energy bureaucracies. President John Kennedy chose McCone, a wealthy Republican from California, to be DCI because of his reputation as a decisive executive who could control farflung organizations, and his connections to the GOP that would help protect the CIA from attacks by the Administration's critics in Congress. McCone had graduated from the University of California's College of Engineering in 1922. Classmates regarded him as hard-working and humorless; one of them described him as "a man with a slide-rule mind." After working for the next 15 years in the steel industry, he and fellow California graduate Stephen Bechtel formed the engineering firm Bechtel-McCone and designed and built factories, refineries, and power plants. Astute investments in shipbuilding, lucrative war contracts, and hard-driving management made McCone a millionaire by 1945, and as of the late 1940s, he was one of the world's premiere shipping magnates.⁵ (U)

Nonetheless, McCone found himself, in his own words, "a little restless" and increasingly attracted to government work—particularly involving national security and technology. In 1947 he accepted an invitation to serve on the presidential Air Policy Commission, charged with devising ways to revive the moribund postwar aircraft industry. McCone wrote the military recommendations in the Commission's report, published in January 1948 with the attention-grabbing title

⁴ Gregory W. Pedlow and Donald E. Welzenbach, *The Central Intelligence Agency and Overhead Reconnaissance: The U-2 and OXCART Programs, 1954-1974* (Washington, D.C.: CIA History Staff, 1992), pp. 191-92; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," p. 22. (S)

⁵ Laton McCartney, *Friends in High Places: The Bechtel Story: The Most Secret Corporation and How It Engineered the World*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), p. 52; *Current Biography*, 1959, s.v. "McCone, John A(lex)," pp. 272-74; "Atomic Energy's McCone: A Private Dynamo in the Public Service," *Time*, 71 (16 June 1958), p. 16. (U)

“Survival in the Air Age.” He suggested that American aviation scrap the piston engine and convert to jet propulsion, and that the United States start stockpiling nuclear weapons.⁶ (U)

McCone’s brief tenure as Under Secretary of the Air Force (1950-51) helped him learn how to run a public organization, but the bureaucratic controversy and personal tension he engendered demonstrated the limits of his brusque leadership style. His dealings as a defense contractor during World War II enabled him to exert some control over the Air Force’s byzantine procurement system and public works budget. He pushed for intensive research and development in missiles and wanted to reorganize the armed services’ separate missile programs according to a Manhattan Project model under the direction of a “missile czar.” McCone overreached with this proposal, however; interservice rivalries precluded it, and President Truman rejected it. Moreover, McCone, who saw his primary role as the Air Force Secretary’s general manager, ruffled Air Force officials and commanders when he tried to employ the same strict administrative techniques he used to run his own companies. According to one assistant secretary, McCone was guilty of “throwing his weight around,” and a senior member of the Air Staff regarded him as a “know-it-all” who treated high-ranking officers with contempt. McCone returned to the private sector after less than a year-and-a-half, ostensibly for personal reasons. Presumably he took with him some lessons about how, and how not, to shake up a federal bureaucracy.⁷ (U)

McCone’s technical background and conservative Republican credentials recommended him to the Eisenhower Administration for the post of Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), vacated by the controversial Lewis Strauss in early 1958. Strauss had battled continually with New Deal Democrats in Congress over issues ranging from public development of nuclear energy to a nuclear test ban. The Administration saw McCone as a strong-willed pacificator who would espouse the GOP’s pro-business policies without antagonizing congressional Democrats. Like Strauss, McCone preferred that the private sector take the lead in developing nuclear power, but he was not as doctrinaire or pugnacious as his predecessor. He viewed the Commission’s business largely in technical and economic terms, sought ideas from many sources, and successfully avoided most of the political and personal controversies that marked Strauss’s tenure. According to the definitive study of the AEC during the 1950s, McCone “made significant

⁶ Ibid.; McCartney, *Friends in High Places*, pp. 97-98; George M. Watson, Jr., *The Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, 1947-1965* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Air Force History, 1993), p. 106. (U)

⁷ Ibid., pp. 110-11, 114-15, 124-27. (U)

strides in bringing systematic evaluation and planning to bear on the Commission's amorphous and inflated programs." He also directed the AEC's scientists to conduct applied research that advanced the Commission's objectives instead of investigating pet ideas and projects. The AEC study notes that:

[a]s an engineer, McCone tended to take a jaundiced view of scientists...he understood the indispensable role that scientists played in establishing the base for technological innovation, but he did not quite accept the idea that turning scientists loose in the laboratory to pursue their own interests in basic research was always a good investment for the federal government.⁸ (U)

McCone's attitude would prove useful in ensuring that the CIA directed its scientific and technical efforts toward intelligence collection and operational support. By the time he became DCI, traditional forms of intelligence collection—covert agents and clandestine operations—were losing their primacy to technical means. The CIA's achievements with the U-2 and CORONA in targeting the Soviet Union and Cuba demonstrated the value of technical collection and underscored the limitations of HUMINT. McCone knew little about espionage and counter-intelligence, doubted the efficacy of covert action, and delegated more responsibility to his deputies in those areas than in any others. In contrast, he regarded technical systems as more vital to the Agency's mission and set out to overhaul the CIA's scientific and technical programs, which he regarded as inefficiently organized and suffering from poor management by Agency leaders captivated by clandestine operations. His preference for technical intelligence fit neatly with the White House's predisposition after the Cuban missile crisis to trust "hard intelligence," such as photographs and signals intelligence, more than human sources and experts' assessments.⁹ (U)

⁸ Corbin Allardice and Edward R. Trapnell, *The Atomic Energy Commission* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 176; Richard G. Hewlett and Jack M. Holl, *Atoms for Peace and War, 1953-1961: Eisenhower and the Atomic Energy Commission* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), ch. 18 passim, quotes at pp. 514, 522-23. (U)

⁹ John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), p. 415. (U)



James R. Killian (U)

Confronting Bureaucratic Resistance (U)

When McCone took office, pressure from the PFIAB to consolidate the CIA's scientific and technological capabilities had peaked. Killian and Land were particularly concerned that the post-Bay of Pigs shakeup would damage the Agency's technical collection programs.¹⁰ McCone's own agenda conformed closely with Land's and Killian's, and he had the White House's general endorsement to make major

¹⁰ Transcript of Albert Wheelon lecture at CIA Headquarters, 19 September 1984, p. 13, CIA History Staff. (s)

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changes at Langley. As an outsider taking over at a time of leadership disarray and low morale, however, he had to act with due deliberation. Land and Killian could remain above the fray, expressing dissatisfaction at the pace with which McCone implemented their ex cathedra recommendations, but the DCI knew he had to move cautiously to preserve his authority. (S)

McCone found the CIA's scientific and technological operations scattered among several offices. The reconnaissance program was in the Directorate of Plans (DDP) under the Development Projects Division (DPD). The Technical Services Division (TSD), [redacted]

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[redacted] was also part of the DDP, as was [redacted]. The Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI) in the Directorate of Intelligence (DDI) analyzed foreign research. Under McCone's original conception, a new directorate for scientific research would pull together all of these components in one place where the Agency's technical talent could exchange ideas and information, interact with private industry and other government agencies, and serve as a large organizational "magnet" to attract highly qualified personnel to careers in technical intelligence.¹¹ (S)

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In one of his first meetings with the PFIAB, McCone heard Killian and Land strongly express their concern that continued association with the DDP would harm the CIA's scientific and technical development programs. After this meeting, McCone set up the Working Group on Organization and Activities, chaired by Inspector General Lyman Kirkpatrick, to review the Agency's structure and activities. The Working Group gave special attention to the idea of setting up a new directorate of research and development. The DCI asked all deputy directors to comment on the idea. Bissell vehemently opposed it. Among other points, he argued that [redacted] the DDP [redacted]

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[redacted] by the DDP. Bissell might have felt emboldened to resist because McCone, depressed and uncertain whether he would remain as DCI after his wife of many years died in December

¹¹ McCone to McGeorge Bundy, 12 February 1962, National Security Files, Departments and Agencies, Box 27, "Central Intelligence Agency, General, 1/62-2/61," JFK Library (C); McCone, "Discussion with Attorney General Robert Kennedy," 27 December 1961, p. 1, DCI Files, Job 87-01032R, Box 2 (S); Walter Elder, "John McCone as Director of Central Intelligence," manuscript dated 1973, 1:173, DCI Files, Job 87-01032R, Box 4. (S)

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1961, had asked Bissell to delay resigning—indicating that the new DCI needed the veteran DDP's judgment and influence.¹² (S)

McCone soon decided to stay on, however, and in late January—unconvinced and undaunted by Bissell's dissent—he told PFIAB that he intended to appoint a new deputy director to supervise technical collection and consolidate CIA's scientific activities. Bissell sent the DCI additional objections in early February that, along with those he had raised earlier, presaged the internal opposition McCone would soon face. The DDP now criticized the proposed movement of the OSI and the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) from the DDI to the new directorate. He also contended that activities that appropriately could be taken from the DDP and DDI—aerial and space reconnaissance—could be assigned to a special assistant and did not require the attention of a deputy director. Responding to McCone's earlier request that he run the new directorate, Bissell now said that accepting the offer "would mean a long step backward," and he resigned from CIA in mid-February.¹³ (S)

On 16 February, McCone issued a Headquarters Notice creating the Directorate of Research (DDR), effective on the 19th. He appointed Herbert "Pete" Scoville, then Assistant Director of the OSI, as the first Deputy Director for Research. Before joining CIA in 1955, Scoville had been a senior scientist at Los Alamos and technical director of the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project; colleagues considered him one of the nation's leading experts on warheads. He lacked Bissell's forceful character and bureaucratic clout, however, and soon found himself in the middle of an organizational conflict without the means or support to wage it effectively.¹⁴ (S)

McCone's 16 February notice stated "other activities in Research and Development will be placed under DD/R as appropriate." What "as appropriate" meant soon became apparent when Scoville circulated a draft proposal describing the responsibilities and structure of the new directorate. He recommended placing three types of activity in the DDR: research and development on technical collection and data reduction systems, production of intelligence on foreign scientific and technical capabilities, and operations that used either technical collection

¹² Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," p. 22; Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 1:7. (S)

¹³ *Ibid.* (S)

¹⁴ HN 1-9, 16 February 1962, in Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 3: Appendix A, tab 2; biographic profile of Scoville in *ibid.*, 3: Appendix B, tab 26; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," p. 24. (S)

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methods or human assets collecting on science and technology targets. Scoville specifically wanted the DDR to take over the Special Projects Branch of the DDP's Development Projects Division; the research, development, and laboratory component of the DDP's Technical Services Division; the DDI's Office of Scientific Intelligence; all ELINT activities; and the Office of Communication's research and development work on COMINT and agent communications.¹⁵ (S)

McCone's notice establishing the DDR and Scoville's proposed restructuring evoked such intense reactions from several senior Agency managers that the DCI had to curtail the pace and scope of his plan. The most vigorous resistance came from DDI Robert Amory and his successor, Ray Cline. They opposed the transfer of the OSI, maintaining that jurisdiction for intelligence assessments of foreign countries—particularly the Soviet Union—should not be subdivided, and that another office would have to be created to replace the OSI's intelligence production and contributions to estimates. Cline, well known for his bluntness, contended later that McCone wanted to put the OSI in the DDR “to give some warm bodies and an appearance of bulk to the Directorate,” and that because of the shift, “CIA advocacy of its own scientific collection techniques became mixed up with its objective analysis of all scientific and technical developments. The appearance of objectivity was hard to maintain when analysis and collection were supervised by the same staff.” After the reorganization went into effect, Cline fought what he called a “rearguard action” to regain the OSI's analytic function. Kirkpatrick's Working Group also weighed in on the issue in its report in early April, recommending that the DDI keep the OSI but give up NPIC to the new directorate.¹⁶ (S)

McCone's new DDP, Richard Helms—known in the Agency as a calculating intellicrat—apparently saw early compromise as the best tactic. He agreed to relinquish elements of the TSD [redacted] but fought tenaciously to retain those that did. Helms may have figured that McCone—contrary to the Kirkpatrick

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¹⁵ HN 1-9, 16 February 1962, in Kleyla, “Directorate of Science and Technology,” 3: Appendix A, tab 2; *ibid.*, 1:10. (S)

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:11-13; Ray S. Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars: Blueprint of the Essential CIA* (Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1976), pp. 199-200; Ray S. Cline interview with Mary S. McAuliffe, tape recording, Washington, D.C., 30 June 1989, pp. 3-4, CIA History Staff. (S)

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Group's recommendation that the DDR be given some operational responsibilities—would defer to his judgment on this issue as on others related to clandestine activities.¹⁷ (S)

After three months of high-level opposition, Lyman Kirkpatrick, the new Executive Director, recommended to McCone that he accept less than a full measure of success. Kirkpatrick had spent several fruitless weeks working with Scoville on a draft Headquarters Notice setting forth the DDR's terms of reference. In the face of the Amory-Cline-Helms resistance, the Executive Director concluded that it was "preferable to allow the DD/R to grow by evolution and accretion rather than any drastic surgery on either DD/I or DD/P." Kirkpatrick's group regarded OXCART, the projected successor to the U-2, as the DDR's most important project and warned that the new directorate "must be restrained from taking on collateral activities so fast that OXCART will suffer."¹⁸ (S)

A few more weeks of piecemeal progress followed. McCone approved personnel allocations for the DDR staff and the appointment of an Assistant Director, Col. Edward B. Giller. Giller was trained as an engineer, worked on Air Force weapons projects in the 1950s, and most recently was deputy chief of TSD. McCone and Scoville may have selected Giller—his qualifications notwithstanding—as a way to placate the DDP.¹⁹ (S)

By this time, the DCI and the DDR wanted to get the new directorate up and running and deferred action on unresolved issues. McCone later wrote that forcing the DDI and DDP to turn over the OSI and TSD, respectively, "would incur great risk of impairing the [directorates'] fundamental missions." The long-awaited Headquarters Notice describing the DDR's mission and responsibilities came out in late July. The DDR would have authority over scientific and technical research and development that supported intelligence collection, but the DDP [redacted]

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The DDR would provide overall guidance of ELINT activities but would not delve into related operational matters. Three new components were

¹⁷ Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 1:10-11; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 29 March 1962, concerning Kirkpatrick Working Group report, Executive Registry Files, Job 80B01285A (hereafter referred to as McCone Papers), Box 2, folder 1, tab 36; HN 1-15, 16 April 1962, in Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 3: Appendix 1, tab 3. (S)

¹⁸ Ibid., 1:14-15; McCone, "Notes on Discussion...Review of Report of the Kirkpatrick Committee," 29 March 1962, p. 3, McCone Papers, Box 2. (S)

¹⁹ Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 2:15-17; biographic profile of Giller in *ibid.*, 3: Appendix B, tab 13. (S)

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created: the Offices of Research and Development (ORD), Electronic Collection (OEL), and Special Activities (OSA).²⁰ (S)

McCone's actions during the DDR's several months of gestation typified an important element of his leadership style. According to his executive assistant, Walter Elder, McCone was much less interested in the formal structure of the Agency than in the results it produced. As in most of his prior management positions, he was content to lay down general guidelines at the outset and leave administrative details—especially jurisdictional conflicts—to others. McCone regarded this detachment as consistent with his successful approach to running his sprawling corporate enterprises and more appropriate to his function as DCI. As an industrialist, he operated more in the manner of a chairman of the board than a chief executive officer, delegating administration to handpicked subordinates, and he adopted the same approach as DCI. He took his responsibilities as head of the Intelligence Community very seriously and made sure soon after his appointment that President Kennedy explicitly gave him all the authority he thought he needed to be a true coordinator of national intelligence. According to an informal time study conducted after he took office, McCone spent 80 percent of his workday on Intelligence Community matters and only 20 percent on subjects specific to the CIA. Consequently, he did not believe he should involve himself in day-to-day administration of the Agency, including the implementation of the DDR directive. Instead, as he told Kirkpatrick, one of his management objectives was “assigning responsibilities and then insisting that subordinates measure up.”²¹ (S)

McCone was willing to take bureaucratic risks, but in a way that helped contain potential damage. Creating the DDR inevitably would be controversial because, as Elder later put it, “you could do it only by carving it out of the flesh and blood of existing components.”²² By delegating turf battles to his DDCI, Gen. Marshall Carter, and Kirkpatrick, McCone gave the new directorate's critics, such as Cline and Helms, opportunities to obstruct implementation and mobilize allies. However,

²⁰ McCone personal memo, “Organization of DD/R,” 24 July 1963, quoted in *ibid.*, 1:17; HN 1-23, 30 July 1962, in *ibid.*, 3: Appendix A, tab 4. The directorate's new components are described in *ibid.*, 1:19-29. Ironically, considering the importance the DCI placed on the concept and the clamor it raised, the notice was issued under DDCI Marshall Carter's signature, not McCone's. The DCI probably was busy preparing for his upcoming wedding. (S)

²¹ Walter Elder interview with Mary S. McAuliffe, tape recording, Washington, D.C., 14 April 1989, p. 13, CIA History Staff; Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Jr., *The Real CIA* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 240; Lyman Kirkpatrick interview with Mary S. McAuliffe, tape recording, Middleburg, VA, 22 June 1989, p. 3, CIA History Staff. (S)

²² Elder interview, pp. 12-13. (S)

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the DCI—belying his reputation as a brusque, heavy-handed boss—appears in this case to have concluded that a major organizational change could best be achieved by letting bureaucratic politics and tempers run their course instead of imposing the new arrangement by fiat. McCone took a more guarded approach than in the management shuffle he quickly carried out during his first hundred days because far more serious and extensive equities now were at stake. (S)

Disarray, Distractions, and Disputes (U)

The new arrangement that McCone's deputies had worked out soon proved unsatisfactory. Even with its more limited mandate, the DDR as approved by McCone in July 1962 "never had a fighting chance," a former CIA historian and DS&T officer has concluded. "Pete Scoville's writ ran long on the tasks his new directorate was supposed to accomplish and short on the manpower needed to achieve such goals." Besides some officers in the OSA, which took responsibility for the old DPD's reconnaissance projects, most of the Agency's scientific and technical talent remained in the OSI. In addition, delays in securing enough space in the new Headquarters Building, transferring personnel from other components, and setting up a new career service with a special pay structure made the DDR seem like an organizational step-child.²³ (S)

Difficult, high-profile technical intelligence problems that arose during the DDR's first months diverted McCone's and Scoville's time and attention from building the new directorate. Most important was the discovery of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba in October 1962. The DCI, the DDR, and the ADDR—along with NPIC director Arthur Lundahl—were the primary Agency participants in numerous briefings and discussions with the Kennedy Administration on the fast-breaking crisis. A less well-known distraction was determining whether a newly discovered Soviet missile installation near Tallinn, Estonia was intended to shoot down aircraft or missiles.²⁴ (S)

²³ Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," pp. 23-24; Herbert Scoville, Jr., interview with Donald Welzenbach, tape recording, McLean, Va., 27 January 1989, p. 17, CIA History Staff (TS; material used classified S); Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 1:29-37. Years later, Scoville disparaged the OSA as an attempt "to try and bring together some of the cats and dogs." The DDR career service finally was instituted in February 1963. DDR Directive 20-1, 19 February 1963, in *ibid.*, 3: Appendix A, tab 5. (S)

²⁴ Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," p. 24. (S)

Moreover, throughout late 1962 and early 1963 McCone and Scoville continually clashed with the Defense Department over control of the recently created National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) and the nature of the satellite reconnaissance program. The high-level, informal collaboration between then-DDP Bissell and the Air Force—notably with Under Secretary Joseph Charyk—that had existed during the first years of the CORONA program ended with the establishment of the NRO in September 1961 and the leadership changes at the CIA soon after. The departure of Bissell, then-DDCI Charles Cabell, and other senior CIA officers removed the Agency's top representatives in the reconnaissance area. Combined with the CIA's low prestige after the Bay of Pigs, this situation gave the Air Force—which provided most resources for the satellite program—a chance to seize the NRO and direct space reconnaissance toward tactical military uses. McCone, however, saw the NRO as a national strategic asset, not just as a military tool, and he resolved to keep the CIA's hand in developing, tasking, and managing reconnaissance satellites and assessing their intelligence take. DDI Ray Cline recalls that “only a few people really understood what [satellite collection] was all about, but [McCone] understood it. He never lost sight of it.” Scoville, unaware of the personal involvement Bissell had enjoyed with the Air Force, delegated Agency representation to deputies who found themselves outmatched by their uniformed counterparts. In the short term, the development of the new directorate and Scoville's standing with McCone suffered from this steadily escalating conflict with the Defense Department.²⁵ (S)

High-level Frustrations (U)

By late 1962 the halting development of the DDR and Scoville's ineffectiveness plainly displeased McCone. He thought that the CIA's entire scientific effort was unimaginative and sluggish, and that Scoville was too passive in projecting the Agency's viewpoint in the Intelligence Community. He thought, for example, that the DDR's diffidence

²⁵ McCone, Memorandum for the File, 3 January 1962, concerning meeting with Gilpatric and Charyk about NRO on 28 December 1961, McCone Papers, Box 2, folder 1, tab 7; Cline interview, p. 4; Gerald K. Haines, *The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO): Its Origins, Creation, & Early Years* (Washington, D.C.: National Reconnaissance Office, 1997), pp. 17-22; Kleyla, “Directorate of Science and Technology,” 2: chap. 5 passim. McCone later claimed that the intractability of the CIA-NRO dispute caused Scoville nearly to have a nervous breakdown and prompted his resignation. Transcript of McCone-Clifford telephone conversation, 6 April 1964, McCone Papers, Box 10. (S)

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caused the White House to assign responsibility for evaluating Soviet nuclear tests to an outside group of experts, the Bethe Panel, instead of to Agency officers. The DDP's and DDI's footdragging over the reorganization also annoyed McCone, and he complained that the two deputy directors never raised scientific matters with him. He later said he had told Helms and Cline:

If you would only come in and talk to me just once about science I'd feel better about [the] scientific end of your business. But you come in and talk to me about clandestine operations, and about reports, and about studies, and about every other damn thing, but you never come in and talk to me about science.... Ray [Cline] will sit up all night and talk about history, but he won't talk about [science].

For his part, Scoville was frustrated at what he regarded as McCone's lack of support, and he was weary of all the turf battles. Some DDR staff members considered Scoville "too gentlemanly" to be assertive in his Agency and Intelligence Community roles, but he believed that McCone had undercut his position by failing to resolve the feud with the Air Force over the NRO. The DDR thought that he could not simultaneously represent the CIA's interests in governmentwide programs and administer its own scientific and technical activities without the full backing of the Agency's top managers, especially the DCI.²⁶ (S)

Killian and Land of the PFIAB were not satisfied with the DDR either and raised their concerns with McCone in January 1963. The DCI explained that under current circumstances, the massive organization Killian had in mind could not be brought about "unless by direct order from me against the objections from [DDCI] General Carter and virtually the entire organization within CIA." Two months later, the PFIAB issued a paper, "Recommendations on Technical Capabilities," which criticized the Intelligence Community for inadequately exploiting science and technology. Two of the board's many detailed proposals related directly to the new directorate's shortcomings. Establishing "an administrative arrangement in the CIA whereby the whole spectrum of modern science and technology can be brought into contact with major programs and projects of the Agency," would remedy "present fragmentation and

²⁶ Transcript of McCone-Wheelon meeting, 16 July 1963, p. 7, McCone Papers, Box 7; Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 1:38-39; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 24; Jeffrey T. Richelson, "The Wizards of Langley: The CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology," *Intelligence and International Security*, 12:1 (January 1997), 86. (S)

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compartmentation." The board also called for "clear vesting of these broadened responsibilities in the top technical official of the CIA, operating at the level of Deputy Director." In effect, Killian and Land were telling McCone how to overhaul the Agency's scientific and technical efforts. In April McCone responded to the PFIAB report through President Kennedy's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, McGeorge Bundy. He could only make some general claims of progress but declared that the "period of observation" of internal reaction "has now lapsed," and that he would "move ahead with additional changes" that included giving the DDR "expanded responsibilities."²⁷ (S)

Ten days after McCone replied to the PFIAB, Scoville resigned. At the time he cited the other deputy directors' intransigence and the DCI's indecisiveness. Years later, Scoville added that he left because McCone held him responsible for the performance of scientific and technical components over which he had no authority. "McCone would go around town saying I was responsible for all scientific activity in the Agency, and yet he refused to transfer to me the biggest scientific group, my old group of people with whom I had worked [the OSI]." The DDR asked that his resignation take effect 1 June (later extended to the 14th).²⁸ (S)

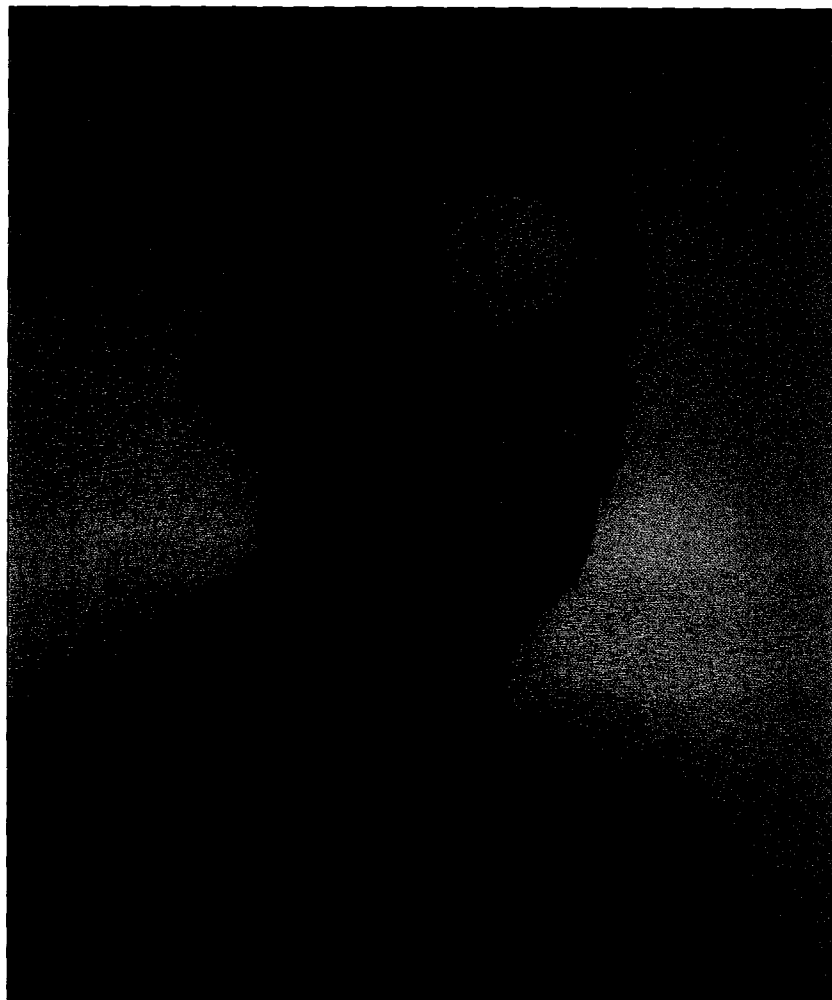
McCone's New Chief Wizard (U)

McCone earlier had said he did not care who ran the DDR as long as it was organized and managed properly, and after Scoville's resignation he moved to ensure that it was by asking Albert Wheelon, the acting director of the OSI, to take charge of it. Wheelon, a technical wunderkind who earned a doctorate in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at age 23, had worked as a space reconnaissance design engineer at TRW and as a consultant to US Government scientific boards before joining the Agency as the OSI's deputy director in June 1962. He had impressed the Agency's leadership with briefings on the nuclear test ban negotiations that he gave at morning staff meetings. When asked to become DDR, the brilliant and brash, 34-year-old

²⁷ McCone, "Discussion with Dr. Killian, January 21st," memorandum dated 22 January 1963, McCone Papers, Box 2, folder 4; Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 1:42-46; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," pp. 24-25. (S)

²⁸ Scoville interview, pp. 18-19; Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 1:46-47. At the time Scoville resigned, he also was serving as Deputy Director of the NRO. After he left the Agency, he became Deputy Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," p. 26; Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 2:213-15. (S)

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Albert Wheelon (U)

Wheelon told McCone that “we shouldn’t screw a good light bulb into a burned out socket”—i.e., he was not interested unless the directorate controlled all of the CIA’s scientific and technical efforts—and made several demands before he would agree to serve. He did not want the DDR to be a staff component, like the research and engineering component of the Defense Department, but “a real honest-to-God line organization to carry out assigned responsibilities.” He insisted on bringing the OSI with him, wanted full authority over research and development, and asked for a computer center and a missile intelligence center. Wheelon may have believed that he could drive a hard bargain because

the DCI's aide, Walter Elder, had already assured him that McCone would back him against the other deputy directors.²⁹(S)

McCone saw "great advantages" in Wheelon's general plan, which fit his own preference for centralizing Agency scientific and technical functions, but also "dangers...unless Cline, Helms, and [Deputy Director for Support Lawrence K.] White are all aboard 100%." The DCI again left the details and negotiations to the DDCI and the Executive Director—Cline once more proved the most implacable—but by the end of July an agreement was ready. Wheelon got most of what he initially wanted, and a few other things besides. At his insistence the DDR would be renamed the Directorate of Science and Technology, and the PFIAB's March 1963 recommendations would constitute its charter of operation. The reorganization went into effect on 5 August.³⁰ (S)

In Wheelon, McCone had the hard-driving, steely infighter he needed to make the new directorate work. Wheelon saw officials in the Intelligence Community either as colleagues with whom he could cooperate or as adversaries against whom he must compete, and during his rapid ascent through academe and the defense industry he had rarely experienced defeat. He consistently outmaneuvered his Agency rivals in internal empire building. One colleague recalled that "When you take on Bud Wheelon, you're taking on a bureaucratic master, and Bud Wheelon ripped Ray [Cline] to shreds" in the dispute over the OSI. Agency veterans viewed Wheelon as an upstart outsider, but he did not seem to care. Before he joined the Agency, he told McCone and Kirkpatrick that he did not plan to make a career at Langley and was not bothered at the prospect of antagonizing colleagues at the Agency and in the Intelligence Community. McCone, perhaps seeing some of his own traits reflected in his assertive new deputy director, must have judged that Wheelon's determination and intelligence outweighed his faults and helped the intelligence process produce the results that he and policymakers demanded—always the DCI's ultimate test of how well programs or personnel worked. Wheelon, in turn, thought McCone had

²⁹ Ibid., 1:40, 47-50, 58-59; biographic profile of Wheelon in *ibid.*, 3: Appendix B, tab 32; transcript of McCone-Wheelon meeting, 16 July 1963, pp. 4, McCone Papers, Box 7; Wheelon lecture, p. 16; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," p. 26; Elder interview, p. 12. (S) In 1956 Wheelon was selected to assess the results of a "major breakthrough of heretofore denied intelligence on the Soviet missile program"—U-2 photography of previously unknown facilities—for the NSC. Richelson, "Wizards of Langley," p. 88. (U)

³⁰ Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 1:50-57; HN 1-36 and HN 20-111, 5 August 1963, in *ibid.*, 3: Appendix. A, tabs 10 and 11. (S)

“the finest analytical mind I had ever seen” and regarded him less as a manager than as “an extraordinarily intelligent entrepreneur, accustomed to changing course rapidly as events and opportunities presented themselves.”³¹ (S)

Wheelon achieved several of McCone’s goals during nearly two years of service under him (McCone resigned in April 1965). Using the DS&T’s expanded charter and special pay scale, Wheelon fashioned what possibly was the nation’s most powerful development and engineering establishment, which by the end of the decade would design, build, and deploy technical collection systems that gave the United States a substantial intelligence advantage over its adversaries. During his first year, Wheelon integrated the DDI’s OSI and the DDS’s Office of Computer Support into his directorate; established a missile and space analysis center over the vituperative opposition of powerful Air Force commanders, including Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay; recruited senior personnel, mostly from industry; acquired sufficient space and budget during a period of fiscal stringency; organized a network of scientific boards and panels; and produced a new internal publication on current scientific intelligence, the *Daily Surveyor*. By 1964 the DS&T comprised six offices: Computer Services, ELINT (renamed SIGINT Operations in 1978), Research and Development, Special Activities (renamed Development and Engineering in 1973), Scientific Intelligence, and the Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center. (The two principal scientific and technical components still not included within the directorate were the DDP’s TSD and the DDI’s NPIC.) DS&T personnel respected Wheelon’s brilliance, drive, and watchful oversight, but his demanding and sometimes harsh management and zealous protection of directorate prerogatives alienated many subordinates, officers elsewhere in the Agency (especially in the DDI), and other Intelligence Community components. McCone supported Wheelon’s ends (in the same position he probably would have used most of the same means), backed his DDS&T in most internal disputes, and favorably represented Wheelon’s accomplishments to the PFIAB.³² (S)

³¹ Ibid., 1:60; Ranelagh, *The Agency*, p. 491; Wheelon lecture, pp. 13-14; Elder interview, p. 10. (S)

³² Welzenbach, “Science and Technology,” p. 26; Richelson, “Wizards of Langley,” pp. 88-89; Kleyla, “Directorate of Science and Technology,” 1:61-75, 84-87, 97-100, 107-23, 129-30; HN 20-115, HN 20-116, HN 1-39, and HN 20-125, dated 13 and 25 September and 7 and 13 November 1963, in *ibid.*, 3: Appendix A, tabs 12, 13, 16, and 18; Headquarters Regulation 20-24, 5 November 1964, in *ibid.*, 3: Appendix A, tab 26. (S)

The creation of the Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center (FMSAC) exemplifies McCone's resolute way of getting what he wanted. He was dissatisfied with the Intelligence Community's analysis of foreign missile and space activity and in late 1962 discussed forming a joint intelligence center with the Defense Department. The DCI particularly was irked because he first learned of a Soviet space event from a wire service, not Agency intelligence sources. The Pentagon raised jurisdictional objections, so after a few months McCone told Defense officials that the CIA would establish its own all-source analysis facility that would serve as a national component and not duplicate any other organization's activities. The FMSAC came into existence on 7 November 1963 under the direction of Carl Duckett, who came to the Agency from the Army's Redstone Arsenal. Not to be outdone, the DOD established the Defense Special Missile and Astronautics Center in April 1964, but McCone spurned McNamara's suggestion that the two agencies form a joint committee. By the following March, FMSAC operated 24 hours a day, and in 1965 it was elevated to Office status.³³ (s)

Fight for the Sky Spies (U)

McCone, with Wheelon's assistance, turned back the Air Force's attempt to take over space reconnaissance for tactical intelligence purposes. According to Walter Elder, no issue besides Cuba and Vietnam occupied more of McCone's time as DCI than the protracted dispute over managing the National Reconnaissance Program (NRP) and the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO). McCone regarded the CIA-Air Force conflict as one of the low points of his tenure as DCI; he once described the bureaucratic row as "confusing...and absolutely disgusting." McCone and Wheelon hewed to the principle that overhead reconnaissance is the responsibility of the DCI in the discharge of his statutory duties. Moreover, they believed the fate of satellite reconnaissance—widely viewed then as the future foundation of US intelligence collection—was at stake, and they were determined to overcome what McCone termed the Air Force's "almost unbelievable phobia over [its] position in space." The DCI was well-versed in the engineering arcana of the NRP, such as camera apertures and booster rocket thrust, and

³³ Ibid., 2:335-38. (s)

sought to enhance the program's technical accomplishments as well as its organizational protocols.³⁴ (S)

By the time McCone became DCI, the Air Force was developing its own reconnaissance satellite, the SAMOS, and working to establish itself as the primary player in the field.³⁵ From its perspective, the Air Force saw much more at stake in the NRO controversy than control of a single program: it was fighting for an essential primary mission. The manned bomber was losing its importance in the age of intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration had been assigned at least a coequal role in space. The Air Force was reluctant to have satellite reconnaissance taken away from it, especially by a civilian agency, and feared losing the ability to use satellites to gather targeting intelligence for its strategic bombers. As McCone later observed, "the Air Force, having suffered from being removed from any space activities except military [ones]...had to scoop up everything they could...and one of the things was to become a single instrument in this [overhead reconnaissance] field."³⁶ (S)

McCone's limited authority over the Intelligence Community complicated the Agency's standing. McCone did not have the final say over all intelligence matters, notwithstanding the power he believed President Kennedy had given him in early 1962. He shared responsibility for space reconnaissance with the Defense Department. Under the first NRP agreement in 1961, the Under Secretary of the Air Force and the DDP jointly managed the program—an arrangement that Bissell's

³⁴ Walter Elder, "John McCone as Director of Central Intelligence, 1961-1965," manuscript dated 1986, p. 95, CIA History Staff; Elder interview, p. 1; transcript of McCone meeting with PFIAB members on 2 March 1964, p. 2, McCone Papers, Box 7; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 27 November 1963, p. 10, McCone Papers, Box 7. (S)

³⁵ The Air Force's mission-building carried over from satellites into aircraft reconnaissance. Arguing that the CIA's cover for the U-2 Cuban overflight program was weak, it succeeded in taking over the flights in the days before the Cuban missile crisis. McCone kept CIA control of overflights of other denied areas. In late 1962 and early 1963, the Air Force pressed for surfacing a fighter version of the OXCART. At first the Agency believed doing so would compromise its own reconnaissance version, but by early 1963 McCone had come to accept the Air force's arguments. Pedlow and Welzenbach, *CIA and Overhead Reconnaissance*, pp. 292-94; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 8 January 1963, concerning meeting with McNamara on same date, McCone Papers, Box 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Files—Various Activities," 3 January 1963, McCone Papers, Box 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 4 June 1963, concerning various discussions with Gilpatric, and McCone letter to Gilpatric, 11 June 1963, both in Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 4: Appendix D; Marshall Carter letter to Eugene Fubini, 20 August 1963, in *ibid.* (S)

³⁶ Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, p. 19; William E. Burrows, *Deep Black: Space Espionage and National Security*, paperback ed. (New York: Berkeley Books, 1986), pp. 196, 201; Elder interview, p. 8; transcript of McCone-Land-Wheelon meeting on 25 June 1964, p.10, McCone Papers, Box 7. (S)

departure in early 1962 rendered moot. In May 1962, McCone and Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, who had known each other since McCone's stint at the Pentagon over a decade earlier, signed a second NRP agreement that more clearly enumerated the responsibilities of the NRO and established a single NRO director (DNRO) to be appointed by the Secretary of Defense and the DCI. McCone regarded Under Secretary of the Air Force Joseph Charyk as "unusually capable" and consented to have him as the first DNRO, but he was reluctant to let any successors come from the Defense Department. In exchange, McCone demanded assurances that the CIA would continue to control research, development, contracting, and targeting of the satellites. The new agreement did not provide for a deputy director, which McCone apparently thought would create a superfluous layer of management. Without that position, however, the CIA had no senior representative at the NRO. At first the Agency's position in the NRP seemed secure because of its successes with the U-2, CORONA, and OXCART, but the DCI soon recognized that the program's center of gravity was shifting toward the Pentagon. McCone suggested to McNamara that the only way to end the dispute was to remove the NRO from the purview of the Under Secretary of the Air Force and put it under either the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering or a new Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. McNamara responded positively, but nothing came of McCone's ideas at that time.³⁷ (S)

After DNRO Charyk set up several programs that appeared to limit the CIA, McCone and Wheelon questioned the ability of the Air Force and the NRO to run satellite reconnaissance. They pointed out that the Air Force was responsible for most launch mishaps in the CORONA program and had failed to develop the SAMOS. McCone accused McNamara and Gilpatric of being "entirely preoccupied" with defending weapons systems on Capitol Hill instead of managing the complex space intelligence program.³⁸ Longstanding animosity between

³⁷ Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 2: ch. 5; Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, pp. 21-22; McCone, "Memorandum for the File," 3 January 1962, concerning meeting with Gilpatric and Charyk on 28 December 1961, McCone Papers, Box 2, folder 1, tab 7; Walter Elder, "Memorandum for the Record," 2 July 1962, concerning CIA meeting with Bureau of the Budget on 29 June 1962, McCone Papers, Box 2, folder 2, tab 59; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 15 December 1962, concerning meeting with Gilpatric on 14 December 1962, McCone Papers, Box 2. (S)

³⁸ McCone had different working relationships with McNamara and Gilpatric. Gilpatric recalled that McNamara "didn't like to deal with McCone unless he had to, because McCone was another very strong-minded person who wasn't going to easily be overridden by the Secretary of Defense. But with McCone, McNamara just left it up to me. I'd worked for McCone, knew him very well, and we'd just, you know, sit down and negotiate...a *modus vivendi*." Gilpatric oral history interview, 1970, JFK Library, p. 91. (U)

Wheelon and Brockway McMillan, Charyk's successor as Under Secretary of the Air Force and DNRO, further roiled the waters. McMillan came to the Pentagon in March 1963 from Bell Telephone Laboratories determined to break the CIA's hold on designing and procuring satellites; ultimately, he wanted to take over all management of space reconnaissance. He proceeded to undercut DDR Herbert Scoville, with whom he had served on Killian's Technological Capabilities Panel in the mid-1950s, and then took on Wheelon after the embittered Scoville left. McMillan and Wheelon—both smart, strong-willed, prideful, and ambitious—let an old disagreement about a technical subject grow into a personal feud that distorted their perspective on the bureaucratic controversy. Richard Bissell recalled Wheelon's conflict with McMillan and the Air Force:

Bud Wheelon, essentially, was battling to maintain the [A]gency's influence in the reconnaissance programs, and also to have the [A]gency designated by the NRO as the procurement agency for a lot of the payloads. The Air Force was battling for the exact opposite. They wanted to do as much as possible of the procurement and have as much influence as possible on the technical decisions and operational matters. And that was really the essence of Bud's continuing battles. What kind of programs will receive what kind of funding? Who will be the procurement agency for this or that? And [the battles] went on, and on, and on....³⁹ (S)

McCone's relationship with McMillan became just as acrimonious as Wheelon's and hampered implementation of the third NRP agreement that McCone and Gilpatric had signed in March 1963. That accord established a deputy director position (with the expectation that a CIA officer would fill the slot)⁴⁰ and gave both the DCI and Secretary of Defense responsibility for managing the NRO, with the latter having

³⁹ Scoville memorandum to Carter, "Recent DD/R Problems with the DOD," 21 January 1963, in Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 4: Appendix D, tab 12; *ibid.*, 2:246-49; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 22 March 1963, concerning meeting with McNamara and Gilpatric on same date, McCone Papers, Box 2, Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, pp. 22-23; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 11 January 1963, concerning meeting with McGeorge Bundy on 10 January 1963, McCone Papers, Box 2; Elder interview, pp. 6-7, 10; Burrows, *Deep Black*, pp. 199-200. At first McCone did not know that the feud between Wheelon and McMillan went back so far or was so deeply personal. (S)

⁴⁰ Eugene Kiefer of the DS&T's Office of Special Activities became DD/NRO in July 1963 but never was a significant player in CIA-NRO affairs and asked to be reassigned after one year. Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 2:219, 266-67. (S)

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final authority over it. Personal and bureaucratic antagonism worsened—Elder recalled the DCI accusing the DNRO of “lying...deceit and fraud”—and caused disabling conflicts over contracting, funding, and delegating tasks. McCone chastised McMillan for being too obedient to the Defense Department, turning the program into a “handmaiden” of the Air Force, failing to include CIA in decisionmaking, and giving priority to development projects over intelligence collection. He asserted that McMillan could not properly manage the NRO while serving simultaneously as Air Force Under Secretary and called one of the DNRO’s management proposals “damned foolishness.” After months of futile infighting, McCone complained to the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, Eugene Fubini, that:

I never knew the first damn thing that’s going on. I have yet to see the [NRO’s] budget. [The NRP agreement] just isn’t functioning at all as I anticipated in any respect and as near as I can see the whole thing is moving ever and ever closer and closer into becoming an instrument of the Air Force.

McCone threatened to see Defense Secretary McNamara and the President about getting McMillan removed unless matters changed to his liking.⁴¹ (S)

The situation appeared to improve in January 1964 when McCone agreed to Fubini’s compromise proposal, under which CIA would have responsibility for research, development, engineering, and early flights of new reconnaissance payloads and then would turn over their operation to the Air Force. The DCI and the Secretary of Defense (through the DNRO) would share authority over the satellite program. It was soon evident, however, that the agreement was failing, largely because personal rancor kept the principals apart. McMillan and Wheelon continued to blame each other for communication lapses. McCone lost his temper in a phone conversation with Fubini, saying he was “just about

⁴¹ McCone, personal memorandum, 3 June 1963, in *ibid.*, 4: Appendix D; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 22 July 1963, p. 10, McCone Papers, Box 7; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 11 September 1963, McCone Papers, Box 7; transcript of McCone-McMillan telephone conversation on 7 June 1963, McCone Papers, Box 7; transcript of McCone-McMillan telephone conversation on 29 October 1963, McCone Papers, Box 10; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 27 November 1963, p. 37, McCone Papers, Box 7; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record,” 11 February 1964, concerning meeting with McMillan on same date, McCone Papers, Box 2; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 10 December 1963, p. 9, McCone Papers, box 7; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 17 August 1963, McCone Papers, Box 7; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 16 October 1963, McCone papers, Box 7; Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, pp. 23-24; Elder interview, pp. 10-11. (S)

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ready to tell the Secretary of Defense and the President [that] they can take NRO and shove it...my patience is gone!" In a contentious meeting with the DNRO, McCone called McMillan's failure to include Agency officers in his investigation of recent CORONA failures "criminal" and said the DNRO was "just grabbing for power...you don't want to work with people—all you want to do is say, 'Give it to me and the hell with you.'" ⁴² (s)

The PFIAB weighed into the controversy with an investigation, begun in March 1964 and completed the following June. McCone usually regarded the board's monitoring activities as a nuisance, and, much to his consternation, it did not reach the conclusions he had wanted.⁴³ Although the board acknowledged the need for the DCI to have a voice in NRO matters, it recommended that the Air Force receive substantially greater authority—relegating the DCI's role "maybe to be advised about something someplace along the line," as McCone deprecatingly put it. He thought that implementing PFIAB's conclusions would reduce the space reconnaissance program to "a single instrument resting with the Air Force." He countered with his own set of recommendations, assigning program decisions and the allocation of responsibility to the DCI and Secretary of Defense, and placing the DNRO organizationally under the Office of the Secretary of Defense. In June and July McCone discussed his ideas with Bundy, McNamara, and the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Cyrus Vance. They all supported his general position, but the latter two had reservations about the potential bureaucratic and political fallout of his proposals.⁴⁴ (s)

⁴² Transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting and Fubini's accompanying memorandum for the record, 13 January 1964, McCone Papers, Box 7, folder 7, tab 111; transcript of McCone-Fubini telephone conversation on 13 February 1964, McCone Papers, Box 10, folder 5; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 28 May 1964, pp. 12ff., McCone Papers, Box 7. (s)

⁴³ The previous June, the PFIAB had appeared more critical of the NRO. Edwin Land in particular was perturbed to learn that the NRO staff consisted almost entirely of Air Force personnel. Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 2: 227-28. (s)

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:263-64; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 19 June 1964, McCone Papers, Box 7; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 1 June 1964, concerning PFIAB report, McCone Papers, Box 8; McCone, "Evolution of the National Reconnaissance Organization and Certain Proposals," 17 June 1964, and "Memorandum for the Record," 18 June 1964, concerning meeting with McNamara, 17 June 1964, both in McCone Papers, Box 8; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 12 July 1964, concerning meeting with Bundy and Vance on 9 July 1964, McCone Papers, Box 2. McCone had known since at least late 1962 that Bundy agreed with his overall perspective vis-a-vis the NRO. McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 11 January 1963, concerning meeting with Bundy on 10 January 1963, McCone Papers, Box 2. The political fallout Vance had in mind was "a possible flare-up by [Secretary of the Air Force Eugene] Zuckert and [Air Force Chief of Staff, General Curtis] LeMay which would be somewhat embarrassing, and furthermore McMillan would quit." McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 12 July 1964, concerning meeting with Bundy and Vance on 9 July 1964, McCone Papers, Box 2. (s)

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Despite the policy-level concord on the need for change, nothing had improved by mid-1964. The CIA and the NRO—the latter echoing the Air Force's position—still differed fundamentally on the purpose of satellite reconnaissance. McCone and Wheelon were concerned with collecting strategic intelligence and husbanding the intelligence budget, so they stressed lower cost, lower resolution systems. The DCI told the DNRO that “left in the hands of the Air Force, [the space reconnaissance program] would not be taking a picture of the Soviet Union today.” McMillan and Fubini, less worried about funding and focused on the military's tactical mission, argued for more expensive, higher resolution satellites. They saw Wheelon's entry into developmental engineering—a field the Air Force had hitherto considered its own—as especially threatening, and so McMillan tried even harder to limit CIA involvement in space reconnaissance. The DCI became especially ruffled when he learned that the DNRO had obligated funds to meet the military's requirements without discussing the matter with him. To Land, he vented his frustration over his lack of authority to resolve these wearisome bureaucratic battles:

Hell! I was the Director of the Standard Oil of California and we had no problems of this type with that company. I was also Director of Caltex, which is owned jointly by the Standard Oil of California and the Texas Company, and there the Directors spent all their time on allocating responsibilities: who's going to be responsible for the sales in France.... Who's going to be responsible for the next group of tankers? [Now] I can tell you in the six companies when we built the Boulder Dam, this is what we had to do: who is going to be responsible for the gravel plant, is it going to be Kaiser, is it going to be Shay? This is the kind of thing that the Directors of the six companies had to deal with. Wherever you've got an integrated company you don't have that problem. Management can handle the problem.⁴⁵ (S)

McCone finally ran out of patience in late June 1964 when McMillan told him that he wanted to transfer CORONA's systems engineering contract from Lockheed to an NRO-managed research center

⁴⁵ Transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 11 February 1964, p. 39, McCone Papers, Box 7; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record,” 14 January 1964, concerning meeting with Gilpatric and Vance on same date, p. 1, and McCone, “Memorandum for the Record,” 11 February 1964, concerning meeting with McMillan on same date, both in McCone Papers, Box 2; Fubini, “Memorandum for the Record,” 13 January 1964, and transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on same date, both in McCone Papers, Box 7; transcript of McCone-McMillan-Fubini-Wheelon meeting on 26 June 1964, pp. 43-48, McCone Papers, Box 7; transcript of McCone-Land-Wheelon meeting on 25 June 1964, p. 11, McCone Papers, Box 7. (S)

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called Aerospace. Claiming he was through trying to work with Fubini and McMillan, the DCI went to McNamara and Vance to plead his case. He charged that the DNRO ignored intelligence considerations, did not communicate with the Agency or use the DDNRO meaningfully, “lacked integrity,” and exhibited “an element of dishonesty [that] made him totally unsatisfactory.” McNamara conceded that the DNRO’s behavior was “indefensible,” and at last agreed to McCone’s recommendation to take NRO out of the Air Force and make it a coordinating rather than a line organization. He told McCone, however, that he would do nothing until after the November elections. Meanwhile, McMillan temporarily backed down, suspending the transfer of the Lockheed contract.⁴⁶ (S)

Shortly afterward, in a last-ditch attempt to make the current arrangement work, McCone, Vance, Fubini, McMillan, and DDCI Carter began meeting weekly as an NRO Executive Committee—a format McCone supported but which, he commented to Vance, would not be necessary if “a properly oriented DNRO was running the show.” At the first meeting, it quickly became clear that McMillan and Fubini resented the DS&T’s aggressive personnel recruitment and overall dynamism under Wheelon; Fubini went so far as to insinuate that the CIA was “trying to create another NASA.” McCone tried to quell this suspicion, although he conceded later that the Agency’s growing in-house capability seemed to be “worrying a lot of people around town.” He informed the committee that much of the CIA’s recent effort responded to PFIAB’s recommendations after the Cuban missile crisis. The DCI, however, lost out on the transfer of the CORONA contract from Lockheed to Aerospace when Vance and Fubini sided with McMillan. At a later meeting, McCone—perhaps to highlight McMillan’s obstinacy—offered “any

⁴⁶ Transcript of McCone-McMillan telephone conversation on 27 June 1964; cable [redacted] 1423 [redacted] to Director, 27 June 1964; and McCone, “Memorandum for the Record,” 29 June 1964, concerning meeting with McNamara and Vance on 29 June 1964, all in McCone Papers, Box 2; John McCone interview with Mary McAuliffe, 16-18 May 1989, tape recording, Pebble Beach, CA, pp. 12-13, 47, CIA History Staff. Clarence “Kelly” Johnson of Lockheed appealed directly to McCone to work against the transfer. Johnson to McCone, 6 July 1964, McCone Papers, Box 8. (S)

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and all of CIA's technical capability," including Wheelon and his staff, to assist the DNRO in finding out why the failure rate of CORONA missions had increased recently. McMillan did not respond, as McCone presumably had expected.⁴⁷ (S)

Following the elections, McCone pushed for the idea, promised by McNamara in August, of putting the NRO under the Defense Secretary's office. Besides raising it with Vance, he also tried to gain support on Capitol Hill, particularly from Congressman Mendel Rivers, the new Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Vance was unresponsive, however, and Rivers did not commit himself. By this time, McCone had set a date for leaving the CIA and was preparing to turn the problem over to his successor. He nevertheless continued to complain about McMillan's actions to Vance and McNamara. In January 1965, for example, he told them that McMillan had released money to a contractor without informing him and had warned the contractor not to divulge the arrangement to the CIA. The DCI said this was the "last straw" and that if the top two officials in the Defense Department would not straighten out the NRO, he "intend[ed] to take it to higher authority."⁴⁸ (S)

McCone had hoped that McMillan would become frustrated with the infighting and leave, and, according to Walter Elder, did what he could to bring that day closer. (Elder has denied, however, that McCone and Vance agreed that Vance would fire McMillan if McCone fired Wheelon.) As it turned out, the DNRO outlasted the DCI on the job. McCone had most of the last word on the NRO, however, as his reorganization scheme became the basis for a fourth, and much longer lasting, NRP agreement signed in August 1965 by his successor, Vice Adm. William Raborn, and Vance. It established the NRO as a separate agency within the Defense Department; designated the Secretary of Defense as the executive branch agent of the space reconnaissance program; set up a new Executive Committee, to include the DCI, that would manage the program and report to the Secretary of Defense; and recognized the

⁴⁷ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 12 August 1964, concerning NRO ExCom meeting on 12 August 1964; McCone to Vance, 14 August 1964 (with penciled notation, "Not sent—discussed in meeting"), attached to McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 18 August 1964, concerning NRO ExCom meeting on same date, both in McCone Papers, Box 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 17 December 1964, concerning discussion with Vance on 16 December 1964, McCone Papers, Box 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 23 October 1964, concerning meeting with NRO ExCom meeting on same date, McCone Papers, Box 2. (S)

⁴⁸ McCone, "Discussion with Mr. Vance, 16 December 1964," 17 December 1964, p. 2, McCone Papers, Box 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record," 21 January 1965, concerning meeting with Vance on same date, McCone papers, Box 2. (S)

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DCI's right as head of the Intelligence Community to establish collection requirements for spy satellites. The DNRO and DDS&T were excluded as voting members of the Executive Committee, and two personnel changes eliminated much of the rancor: Wheelon, although still DDS&T, would no longer be the Agency's NRO representative, and McMillan stepped down as DNRO in September 1965. The agreement, a compromise between the CIA and the Air Force, led to their successful cooperation on several satellite collection projects and worked well as a decisionmaking structure. The two organizations still competed and occasionally overreacted to real or perceived slights, and the Agency still was underrepresented in the NRO. Despite the history of distrust, however, the CIA and the Air Force gradually smoothed out the roughest spots in their relationship and avoided the internecine fighting and personal clashes that had threatened to derail the US space reconnaissance effort.⁴⁹ (S)

McCone's and Wheelon's Legacy (U)

McCone resigned and returned to the private sector in 1965, and Wheelon did so the next year. The CIA's "chairman of the board" and his "chief technology officer" left it with a science and technology directorate much like what Killian and Land had called for more than a decade before: a bureaucratically formidable concentration of research, development, collection, and analysis that secured the Agency's international preeminence in technical espionage and strategic assessment. McCone's and Wheelon's organizational and administrative changes proved vital to the development of generations of satellites that enabled the Intelligence Community to monitor events in denied areas, provide warning to policymakers, watch unfolding crises, and oversee arms control. The styles and personalities of the DCI and the DDS&T—activist and determined to their allies, aggressive and intractable to their opponents—helped preserve the CIA's role in technical collection. It is not at all clear that a more conciliatory approach would have accomplished as much against the concerted effort of the NRO and the Air Force to take over the satellite reconnaissance program. (C)

⁴⁹ McCone interview, pp. 11-12; Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, p. 25; Elder interview, pp. 10-11. Wheelon advised Raborn not to sign the agreement. Kleyla, "Directorate of Science and Technology," 2: 254. (S)

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McCone and Wheelon, two technically minded outsiders, also effected a culture change at the Agency by diluting the influence of the "bold Easterners," "prudent professionals," and Ivy League intellectuals who dominated its clandestine and analytical components. With the emergence of the DS&T, "[n]ew men, with family names unfamiliar to the Eastern establishment, began to move into positions of prominence in the Agency," NPIC analyst Dino Brugioni has written. "They were experts in such disciplines as optics, electronics, chemistry, physics, engineering, and photography. Many were World War II veterans educated under the provisions of the GI Bill." OSS veterans, career spyhandlers, and graduates of elite liberal arts schools still set the social and intellectual tone at Langley, but the growing emphasis on technical collection ensured that the Agency would have a more diverse cadre of experts than ever before.⁵⁰ (C)

Looking back from the vantage point of nearly a quarter century, McCone expressed some reservations about selecting Wheelon as his head wizard: "I would have been more comfortable with a man that could be more reasonably adjusted to changes." The structure they developed for the new directorate worked inside and outside the Agency, however, and in 1973, when the DS&T acquired the TSD from the Directorate of Operations and NPIC from the DI, it finally assumed the shape its creators had envisioned years before.⁵¹ (S)

⁵⁰ Dino Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball: The Inside Story of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 65. (U)

⁵¹ McCone interview with McAuliffe, p. 44; *The Directorate of Science and Technology: The First 30 Years* (Washington, DC: Directorate of Science and Technology, 1992), pp. 2.7, 7.8. (S)

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The Demise of the House of Ngo (U)

Thomas L. Ahern, Jr.

During his nine years as Prime Minister and then President of the Republic of Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem could call for help on all the agencies of the US Government represented in Saigon. Although the scale of material aid from CIA was dwarfed by that furnished by the economic and military aid missions, it is fair to say that the Agency played a central role in preserving Diem in power, especially during his first year. No other arm of the US Government devoted as much effort to helping him prevail over his numerous enemies, and no other agency dedicated both advice and material support to a long-term effort to create popular government south of the 17th Parallel. (U)

Diem's sense of entitlement to his office, however, ruled out any sharing of either policymaking or executive power. CIA observers, even Diem advocates, recognized this authoritarian bent early on. Some, usually junior officers, concluded well before 1963 that Diem's governing style, unaccompanied by the pervasive controls of a totalitarian regime, must eventually lead to failure. But most CIA officials in Vietnam, however they might deplore Diem's failure to exploit his opportunities to win the consent of the governed, reacted to Diem's rigidities with the response that dominated US judgments until 1963: "there's nobody else." (U)

Like official Washington as a whole, they persisted in hoping that improved organizational efficiency, buttressed by US advice and material support, would suffice to contain the Viet Cong insurgency. The failure of this formula did not become obvious until 1963, when military setbacks and rising domestic opposition to Diem seemed to forebode a collapse of the South Vietnamese war effort—or the secret conclusion of a separate peace with Hanoi. Chief of Station John Richardson still believed that Diem was indispensable to preserving any chance to win the war. This led in 1963 to confrontation with President Kennedy's new ambassador to South Vietnam, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., who had precipitately concluded that Diem had to go. President Kennedy soon acceded to Lodge's urgings, and the Ambassador then exploited the Station's relationships of trust in the Vietnamese military to communicate

with the officers who staged the coup d'etat of 1 November 1963. The coup cost Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu their lives, to the shock of President Kennedy. (S)

During this crisis, Saigon Station assumed a role well beyond that of gathering intelligence and managing liaison contacts. CIA stations in many countries found themselves in similarly unexpected circumstances both before and after the 1960s, but few have felt so acutely the contradictions and ironies of an abrupt shift of US policy as Saigon Station officers encountered in the autumn of 1963, when American relations with the government of South Vietnam—and the course of the long war—reached a tragic turning point. Congressional probes in the mid-1970s examined and refuted accusations that CIA had somehow masterminded the Ngo brothers' murder, finding instead that the truth was less lurid. No one in the US Government, it turned out, wanted the Ngos dead. American officials in Washington and Saigon—and within CIA itself—hotly disputed the merits of condoning a military coup against President Diem. American policy drifted for more than two critical months, tugged in opposite directions by the strongly held but mutually contradictory views of President Kennedy's advisers.¹ When a policy finally emerged in late October, it bowed to Ambassador Lodge's insistence that Diem must go. (U)

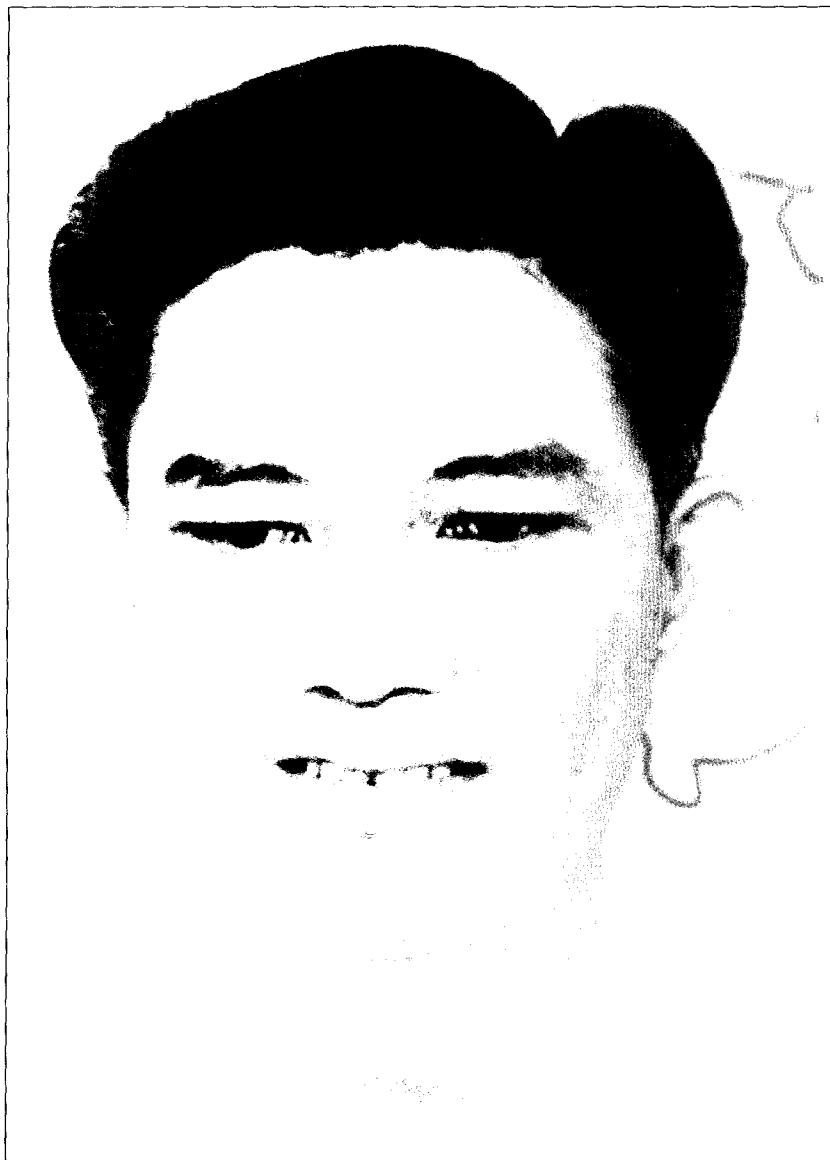
New Marching Orders (U)

Official persecution of Vietnam's Buddhist majority had already strained US relations with Diem by August 1963. Ngo Dinh Nhu's role in military raids against Buddhist temples on 21 August and declaration of martial law intensified Washington's outrage. Hundreds of monks had been arrested and some injured, and intimations from the Station's high-level contacts in the Vietnamese military made it clear over succeeding days that the raids had been ordered by Nhu, with Diem's at least tacit concurrence.

The custodians of America's Vietnam policy on that August weekend—Roger Hilsman, George Ball, and Averell Harriman at State,

¹ Congress's findings appeared in US Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities [the "Church Committee"], "Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders," 94th Cong., 1st Sess., 1975, pp. 217-224. Several scholars have examined the crisis in detail; see particularly George McT. Kahin, *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986); and John M. Newman, *JFK and Vietnam: Deception, Intrigue, and the Struggle for Power* (New York: Warner Books, 1992). (U)

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Ngo Dinh Nhu (FOUO)

and Michael Forrestal at the White House—collaborated on a cable that included an ultimatum to President Diem to dismiss Nhu, and notification to “key military leaders” of this demand.² The generals could also

² Ball served as Under Secretary of State, Harriman as Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and Hilsman as Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs; Forrestal, son of the late Secretary of Defense, worked on the National Security Council staff. (U)

be told that, failing Diem's compliance, the United States would cease supporting him. If this resulted in the paralysis of central government, Washington would give the generals direct support. Reached at the family home in Hyannisport, President Kennedy approved this message, which went out late that Saturday, 24 August, after notification to CIA and Defense. A subsequent cable from Hilsman to Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge (who had arrived in Saigon just two days earlier) referred to "agonizing at highest levels." Hilsman acknowledged that the "course outlined is dangerous but all agree that delaying [a] clearcut US stand is even more dangerous."³ (U)

Knowing of the new State guidance, but not having seen its text, CIA Far East Division (FE) chief William Colby cabled Chief of Station (COS) John H. Richardson on 25th August that he understood implementation was subject to the judgment of Ambassador Lodge, who would present his credentials to President Diem the following day.⁴ In this context, Colby noted the danger of discarding a bird in the hand before knowing the "birds in bush, or songs they may sing." Colby exhorted the COS to find some way of keeping the initiative in American hands, perhaps by getting Diem to transfer working authority to the Army leadership and retire. But Richardson should also look for someone to fill Diem's shoes, as the "trend of policy is toward emptying them."⁵ (S)

Both the Ambassador and Richardson objected—for different reasons—to some of the terms of Washington's de facto order to solicit a military coup. Lodge wanted to use CIA to take the American demands to the Army, and let the generals deal with Diem. Richardson agreed with Lodge about not going to Diem, but had reservations about serving as messenger to the generals. More importantly, he doubted the wisdom of the entire enterprise. The COS dismissed Colby's suggestion that he get Diem to retire, presciently contending that if the generals took over, "the Ngo family will be lucky to get out of the country alive."⁶ (S)

³ David Smith, interview by Thomas L. Ahern, Jr., Silver Spring, MD, tape recording, 6 October 1992, in CIA History Staff (S); Deptel 243, 24 August 1963, reprinted in Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-63, vol. III, Vietnam, January-August 1963* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1991), p. 628 [cited hereafter as *FRUS III*] (U); DIR 63854, 25 August 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

⁴ Lodge had been Richard Nixon's running mate in 1960 and had served from 1953 to 1960 as US Ambassador to the United Nations. Before his arrival in Saigon, he had never headed an overseas diplomatic mission. (U)

⁵ DIR 63855, 25 August 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

⁶ SAIG 0292, 0293, and 0296, 25 August 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

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Lodge convened the Country Team on the morning of Monday, 26 August to discuss the new marching orders. The question of notifying the generals particularly concerned COS Richardson at that session. Washington had deferred this question to Lodge, who, because he was concerned to keep the official American hand from showing, had decided to use CIA as his intermediary with the generals. The Country Team then turned to the substance of the new guidance, condensing it into nine points whose key provisions were the need to remove the Nhus and a disclaimer of any US intention to participate in a coup, accompanied by a promise of "direct support [to the generals] during any interim period of breakdown" of the central government.⁷ (S)

Two Agency case officers divided the contacts with the Vietnamese generals. Al Spera flew to Pleiku the same day to brief the commander of II Corps, Brig. Gen. Nguyen Khanh, while Lucien Conein approached Brig. Gen. Tran Thien Khiem, chief of staff of the Joint General Staff, in Saigon. Khiem said he and the other generals welcomed and shared Washington's views, and he asked Conein to stand by for a meeting with Maj. Gen. Duong Van "Big" Minh, Military Adviser to President Diem and apparently one of the ringleaders in the coalescing plot.⁸ (S)

General Khanh's reaction was very different. He emphasized that the generals were not ready to act, since they intended to wait for evidence of an approach by Nhu to the Communist regime in North Vietnam. When Spera emphasized that "Nhu must go," Khanh nodded, but pointed out that "if Diem yields and fires Nhu" there would be no need to revolt. Khanh cautioned against any approach to his unpredictable counterpart, III Corps commander Ton That Dinh, and he looked "disturbed" that the Station had briefed General Khiem without his prior approval. He also noted that a coup might fail and asked for a US guarantee of asylum and material support for coup leaders and their families.⁹ (S)

⁷ DIR 63862, 25 August 1963; SAIG 0304, 26 August 1963; and blind memorandum "Sequence of CAS Contacts with Vietnamese Generals, 23 August through 23 October 1963," 23 October 1963, all in East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1 (S); John H. Richardson, Chief of Station, Saigon, to John A. McCone, Director of Central Intelligence, "Chronology of Events, Contacts and Discussions Relating to the Saigon Station Coup d'Etat Activities of August 1963," 28 September 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00597R, Box 1 [cited hereafter as Richardson to McCone, "Chronology of Events," 28 September 1963]. (s)

⁸ SAIG 0305, 26 August 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (s)

⁹ SAIG 0330, 26 August 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1 (s); Richardson to McCone, "Chronology of Events," 28 September 1963. (s)

“This Coup is Finished” (U)

That same 26 August, two days after Washington's decision to force Nhu's departure, the rush of events unleashed by the new policy was beginning to escape its authors' control. Still using Agency communications, Ambassador Lodge complained to State that the Voice of America (VOA) was once again out of step when it announced that Washington might cut aid to Vietnam. In Lodge's view, VOA had eliminated any chance of a surprise move by the generals. Secretary Rusk himself drafted the cable of embarrassed apology, but he had a more fundamental question to deal with in a meeting the same day with President Kennedy. (U)

Back in Washington from Hyannisport, the President told the National Security Council that Diem and Nhu had accomplished a great deal, and the US Government should not let *The New York Times* pressure it into overthrowing the Diem regime. The President's doubts were echoed by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Maxwell Taylor, and the meeting eventually adjourned on an inconclusive note.¹⁰ (U)

Events in Saigon took an apparently decisive turn on 27 August when General Khiem identified for Conein the other principal coup planners, mostly general officers but including Vice President Nguyen Ngoc Tho. There was no discussion of compelling Diem to remove Nhu as a cost of winning his subordinates' renewed loyalty. Khiem promised Conein a coup d'etat within one week. Conein in turn promised assistance to the families of the plotters in the event of failure. Khiem displayed some anxiety about the security of the generals' contact with the Americans. He was also uncertain about US intentions and the authority of Conein and Spera to convey those intentions. Accordingly, he proposed to use an intermediary for further contact with him; meanwhile, he said, General Minh's position precluded any contact with the Americans at this time.¹¹ (S)

C/FE William Colby summarized this meeting for President Kennedy and the National Security Council later the same day. The President wondered whether a coup was either desirable or feasible, and found his doubts echoed by Secretary McNamara. Former Ambassador

¹⁰ Embassy Saigon cable in CIA channels [CAS 0329], 26 August 1963, *FRUS III*, pp. 636-641. (U)

¹¹ SAIG 0346, 27 August 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

to Saigon Frederick Nolting observed that CIA had already given the generals implicit US endorsement of a coup, but Kennedy thought there was still time to draw back. The President ended the session by “repeating Ambassador Nolting’s view that the generals interested in the coup were not good enough to bring it about.”¹² (U)

Despite these second thoughts, neither Kennedy nor any of his advisers withdrew the State guidance of 24 August. Instead, the President temporized by asking for more information. Accordingly, Secretary of State Dean Rusk cabled Lodge asking him to assess both the coup participants whom Khiem had named to Conein and the balance of coup and countercoup forces. Rusk gave Ambassador Lodge an opportunity to back away from confrontation, telling him that “highest authority” wanted to know if he and Gen. Paul Harkins, Commander of the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) and the senior American officer in country, presently favored the generals’ plan.¹³ (U)

The following day, both Lodge and Richardson confirmed their commitment to the removal of Ngo Dinh Nhu, even at the price of overthrowing Diem. In a cable to Washington, Lodge asserted his support for a coup, and claimed that General Harkins endorsed it, too. Richardson’s cable was couched in even more urgent terms, saying that things had reached the point of no return. Saigon was an armed camp, and the Ngo family appeared to have dug in for a “last ditch battle.” Conein’s 27 August meeting with General Khiem had persuaded Richardson of the generals’ unity of purpose. “If the Ngo family wins now, they and Vietnam will stagger on to final defeat at the hands of their own people and the Viet Cong.” Accordingly, Richardson proposed to have a Station officer “explore possibilities of our assistance” with General Khiem’s intermediary.¹⁴ (S)

Another NSC session, early that evening, was as inconclusive as earlier ones had been. Kennedy was now aware of General Harkins’s reply to Taylor and his lack of enthusiasm for US backing of a coup, and directed that Harkins and Lodge be given another chance to back off.

¹² Bromley Smith, Executive Secretary, National Security Council, “Memorandum of a Conference with the President, White House, Washington, August 27, 1963, 4 p.m.” 27 August 1963, *FRUS III*, 659–665. (U)

¹³ Deptel 256, 27 August 1963, *FRUS III*, pp. 667–668. (U)

¹⁴ Embassy Saigon 364, 28 August 1963, *FRUS III*, pp. 668–671 (U); SAIG 0363, 28 August 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

They should be enjoined against endorsing any action against the regime merely because of a perception that Washington favored it.¹⁵ (U)

In Saigon, General Minh reversed himself in the matter of contact with the Americans and, through General Khiem, set up a meeting for 0815 hours on 29 August. Preparing to leave that morning for Khiem's office, Conein and Spera got word that COS Richardson wanted them. The problem, said Richardson, was the 28 August cable from Taylor to Harkins asking him for his personal assessment of prospects for a successful coup. Just minutes earlier, Richardson had seen this cable, in which Taylor said that the State guidance of 24 August had been prepared without military participation, and added that "authorities are now having second thoughts."¹⁶ (S)

Faced with a possible change of heart in Washington, and with Lodge at the moment unavailable, Richardson decided to let Conein and Spera go on to their meeting with Minh, but the COS instructed them in emphatic terms to make no commitments. At Khiem's office, things got under way in reciprocally wary fashion. Refusing to discuss the state of their planning, the generals repeatedly alluded to "steadfast" US support of Ngo Dinh Nhu. Conein and Spera at first thought they might be caught in a government provocation, but eventually concluded that the generals feared an American trap on Diem's behalf. Finally getting down to business, General Minh called for the suspension of economic aid as a sign of US intentions and to "force Nhu to show his hand." But on the subject of a post-Diem political structure, Minh and Khiem offered as little as Khanh had a few days earlier: they wanted the "US to think what type political leadership should follow" the overthrow of the Ngo family.¹⁷ (S)

Returning to the Embassy that day, 29 August, Conein and Spera accompanied Richardson to the Ambassador's office, where they began briefing Deputy Chief of Mission William C. Trueheart. Ambassador

¹⁵ Bromley Smith, "Memorandum of a Conference with the President, White House, Washington, August 28, 1963, Noon," 28 August 1963, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-63, IV, Vietnam, August-December 1963* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1991) [cited hereafter as *FRUS IV*], pp. 1-6 (U); Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, "Memorandum of a Conversation, White House, Washington, August 28, 1963, 6 p.m.," *FRUS IV*, pp. 12-14. (U)

¹⁶ SAIG 0383, 28 August 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1 (S); Taylor's cable is JCS 3368-63, 28 August 1963, in *FRUS III*, p. 675. (U)

¹⁷ Richardson later recounted for DCI McCone his thinking that morning; see E. Henry Knoche, Executive Assistant to the DDCI, memorandum for the record, "Meeting in the DCI's Office—0800-0930—7 October 1963," 7 October 1963, Executive Registry Job 80B01285A, Box 3. (S) See also Lucien Conein, interview by the author, McLean, VA, tape recording, 19 February 1992, in CIA History Staff, (S); and SAIG 0406, 29 August 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

Lodge came in and asked about the meeting's results. Nothing definitive, Conein replied, because of the restrictions resulting from the "second thoughts" cable. Lodge demanded to know what that was and, on being told, exploded in anger at Richardson. The Ambassador complained that Richardson had failed to consult with him and accused the COS of having "destroyed" any chance to effect a coup—to which Richardson entered a firm dissent. Lodge had the last word; he reminded the COS that he worked for the ambassador, and the ambassador only.¹⁸ (S)

Frustrated by what he interpreted as Station obstructionism, Lodge got another chance later the same day to encourage the generals. Within hours of the Spera-Conein meeting with Minh and Khiem, two other oppositionists, politician Bui Diem and Brig. Gen. Le Van Kim, described the session to United States Operations Mission official Rufus Phillips. The generals, apparently put on their guard by the hesitancy of Spera and Conein, asked Kim to have his trusted friend Phillips get confirmation from Lodge that Spera and Conein were speaking for the Ambassador. Phillips returned that evening with an affirmative reply from Lodge, whereupon Kim said that Conein should see General Khiem the next day to discuss the mechanics of the operation and its support by the United States. Lodge promptly authorized this contact, telling the Station it could "volunteer" to help the generals with tactical planning.¹⁹ (S)

At the same time, Lodge moved to bring Washington into line with his determination to instigate a coup d'etat. Early in the evening of 29 August, he sent a cable which began, "We are launched on a course from which there is no respectable turning back: the overthrow of the Diem government." American prestige, already committed, and the impossibility of winning the war with Ngo Dinh Diem, required an "all-out effort" to get the generals to move without delay. Lodge asked for a Presidential order authorizing General Harkins to repeat to the Vietnamese generals what they had already heard from Spera and Conein,

¹⁸ Conein came to believe that this incident triggered Lodge's subsequent demand for Richardson's recall. As Conein saw it, wounded vanity prevented Lodge from seeing that he had reason to be grateful to Richardson for avoiding premature action. Conein thought Lodge was reacting to Washington's failure to advise him of its "second thoughts," and that Lodge was also irritated because he had sent Conein and Spera out to see that a coup took place, and they had supposedly failed him. Conein interview, 19 February 1992, (S); Richardson Memorandum to the DCI, 28 September 1963. (S) DCI McCone criticized Richardson in October 1963 for failing to consult with Lodge; see Knoche, "Meeting in the DCI's Office—0800-0930—7 October 1963," 7 October 1963, (S).

¹⁹ Richardson to McCone, "Chronology of Events," 28 September 1963. (S)

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and for authority for himself to announce the suspension of US aid if this were demanded by the generals. Lodge acknowledged that Harkins still wanted an appeal to Diem to get rid of Nhu, but rejected this as futile.²⁰ (S)

Lodge's request reached Washington in time for consideration at an NSC meeting chaired by the President at noon, Washington time, on 29 August.²¹ Reserving the right to pull back at any time, Kennedy approved both of Lodge's requests. State's guidance to Lodge thus included instructions for General Harkins in his proposed new role as participant in coup preparations. The only hesitation in the orders from Washington appeared in a cable from Rusk that noted Lodge's treatment of Diem and Nhu "as a single package" and resurrected the perennial hope—this time, by the threatened withdrawal of US support—that Diem might be induced to remove his brother. But Rusk put this as a suggestion, not an order, and ended by speculating that any move to separate the Ngo brothers was perhaps best left to the generals.²² (U)

Armed with the President's approval, Ambassador Lodge met on 30 August with the Station and General Harkins to orchestrate the next move. He had previously noted that, once Harkins became directly involved in planning, the United States "might well have reached a point of no return." Richardson now felt constrained to give his judgment that the conspiring Vietnamese generals had no plan and were not ready to act. Lodge nevertheless "instructed Harkins to continue coup discussions with General Khiem." Wanting Harkins to understand the atmosphere at Joint General Staff (JGS) Headquarters, Richardson sent him an intelligence report that described—accurately, the COS thought—the backing and filling that still characterized the generals' efforts to mobilize for a coup.²³ (S)

Ignoring Richardson's doubts, Lodge was now ready to increase the pressure on the generals to move against Diem. But events conspired to frustrate him. First, Khiem signaled through his aide that he was "too busy" to meet that day, 30 August. Ambassador Lodge then instructed Harkins to see Khiem, but that overture was fended off as well. Meanwhile, the Station was dealing with Headquarters' anxiety about operational security. After conferring with Deputy Chief of Mission Trueheart, the Station rejected as impracticable a suggestion [redacted] (b)(1)

[redacted] (b)(3)

²⁰ Embassy Saigon 375, 29 August 1963, *FRUS IV*, pp. 20–22. (U)

²¹ Saigon was 13 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Saving Time. (U)

²² Deptels 272 and 279, 29 August 1963, *FRUS IV*, pp. 32–33. (U)

²³ Richardson to McCone, "Chronology of Events," 28 September 1963. (S)

²⁴ *Ibid.*; SAIG 0484, 30 August 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

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When General Harkins finally got an appointment with General Khiem, on the morning of 31 August, the results were anticlimactic. Khiem said that the generals lacked access to sufficient forces in and around Saigon, and simply "did not feel ready." Apparently despairing of any immediate prospect of persuading Diem to remove Ngo Dinh Nhu, the generals were now thinking of a compromise in which some of them would take positions in a Cabinet headed by Nhu in a prime ministerial role. In this atmosphere, Harkins decided not to affirm US support for a coup. Ambassador Lodge endorsed, at least for the record, Harkins's abstention from conveying US support and encouragement of a coup. Lodge's subsequent instructions to the Station prohibited active encouragement of further planning: the Station was to listen to the generals without displaying more than "an open-minded or sympathetic interest."²⁵ (U)

Richardson cabled Deputy Director for Plans Richard Helms that "this particular coup is finished," and turned to an assessment of damage to the Station's security, and possible effects on the liaison programs resulting from Station participation in the conspiracy. The COS saw no choice but to try to continue working with the regime: "We did our best and got licked." But while this coup might have failed, the dominant perception among US officials of a terminally ailing regime in Saigon continued to guide policy deliberations.²⁶ (S)

Return to the Drawing Board (U)

On 4 September, Conein was summoned by Brig. Gen. Ton That Dinh, commander of III Corps and Military Governor of Saigon under martial law, whose direct command of troops in the capital area made him indispensable to the success of a coup. Dinh had been the missing link in the coup plot; he had not lent his troops to the conspirators, who

²⁵ SAIG 0499, 31 August 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1, (S); Richardson to McCone, "Chronology of Events," 28 September 1963, (S) Harkins's on-the-spot decision not to reassure Khiem of US support for a coup created some controversy in Washington, as there was disagreement not only about Harkins's judgment but also as to whether he had been instructed or merely authorized to assure Khiem of US support; Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, "Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, August 31, 1963, 11 a.m.," 31 August 1963, in *FRUS IV*, pp. 70-71. (U)

²⁶ SAIG 0499. (S)

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thus had no forces in or near Saigon with which to surprise Diem's palace guard. Conein found Dinh in an "exultant, ranting, raving mood," flanked by bodyguards whose submachine guns pointed at Conein even during the luncheon phase of the four-hour session. General Dinh described himself as the man of the hour who would save Vietnam from Communism and who could kill or kidnap anyone in Saigon, including—should there be a move to accommodate the Communists—Diem himself. Dinh violently accused the USIS chief in Saigon of being a Communist, and rushed around the room, gesticulating wildly at maps on the wall and insisting that the city was surrounded by Communists. He then demanded to know whether Conein had been plotting against him; he grabbed the telephone, called Mrs. Conein, and complimented her on her opportunity to converse with the military governor of Saigon. Dropping the phone, he ordered an aide to rush flowers to the Conein home.²⁷ (U)

General Khiem complicated the Station's picture of the mercurial General Dinh still further when he reported to Al Spera that Dinh had reported to Nhu an offer of 20 million piasters by an American official to overthrow Diem. This sort of backbiting and miscommunication seems to have characterized the entire enterprise on the Vietnamese side. Acting Chief of the Joint General Staff Tran Van Don, one of the plotters and a Conein informant, disparaged Khiem as "flighty" and unreliable, while Khanh was "the complete opportunist...and highly deceitful." Dinh, according to Don, was one of the rebel group's "stalwarts." Conein would be continually startled over the next few weeks by the conspirators' ignorance of each other's activity.²⁸ (U)

As September wore on, some US officials came to share General Khiem's anxiety that Ngo Dinh Nhu might make some kind of accommodation with Hanoi. Probably seeking to intimidate his American critics, Nhu did speculate on that topic in an interview with the ubiquitous columnist Joseph Alsop. Indeed, it was widely believed by Americans that Southern gains against the Viet Cong could make a negotiated settlement attractive to Hanoi. At this point, some US officials in both Washington and Saigon, taking at face value inflated Vietnamese statistics, saw continued progress in the war in the countryside.²⁹ (U)

²⁷ SAIG 0618, 4 September 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

²⁸ SAIG 0940, 17 September 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1 (S); Tran Van Don, *Our Endless War* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1978), pp. 93-95 (U); Conein interview, 19 February 1992. (S)

²⁹ Ray Cline, Deputy Director for Intelligence, to John A. McCone, "Possible Rapprochement Between North and South Vietnam," 26 September 1963, *FRUS IV*, p. 295; Maxwell Taylor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, memorandum for the record, "Farewell Call on Major General Duong Van Minh (Big Minh), 1 October 1963," 1 October 1963, *FRUS IV*, p. 326. (U)

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John Richardson was one of these. Having dutifully responded to Colby's order to support a coup d'etat during the last week in August, he wrote in mid-September that the "shooting war was still going ahead well," and that the political crisis was affecting it less than might have been expected. This message apparently helped consolidate an impression among Diem's critics in Washington that Richardson uncritically shared General Harkins's perception of continuing military progress.³⁰ (S)

Headquarters' main concern during this interval was the Station's relationship with the Ambassador. A social gathering at Lou Conein's home provided the first indication of Lodge's intent to punish John Richardson for his perceived obstruction of the August coup plot. Conein was almost as well-connected with the press corps as with the Vietnamese military, and on 6 September he hosted a dinner attended by several foreign correspondents, including Joseph Alsop. Also present was Lodge aide Lt. Col. Michael Dunn, who during the course of the evening announced that Lodge had "chewed out" John Richardson for "disobeying orders," and would soon have him replaced. As Conein later recalled it, Richardson was not the only one about to leave; Dunn also named General Harkins and one or two others as on their way out.³¹ (S)

Lodge soon wrote to Secretary of State Dean Rusk asking him to get the President to approve dispatching former Chief of Station Edward Lansdale, now an assistant to Secretary of Defense McNamara, "to take charge, under my supervision, of all US relationships with a change of government here." Lansdale, he added, should replace Richardson as chief of the CIA Station. (S)

Director of Central Intelligence John A. McCone discussed the matter with the President and the NSC's Executive Committee (Ex-Comm) on 17 September, where a consensus emerged that Lodge's request for a new chief of station should be honored. But McCone drew the line at Lansdale, and National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy acknowledged CIA's "unalterable opposition." McCone argued that it

³⁰ SAIG 0998, 18 September 1963. (S)

³¹ John H. Richardson, memorandum for the record, "Conversation with Mr. Frank Wisner, 14 October 1963," East Asia Division Job 78-00597R, Box 1 (S); SAIG 1434, 5 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1 (S); Conein interview, 19 February 1992. (S)

was not merely Agency experience with Lansdale that made him unacceptable; rather, Lansdale's close association with Diem would make his return to Saigon positively detrimental to US interests unless the object were to seek an understanding with Diem and Nhu using Lansdale as a "friend in court." Inasmuch as the President had just authorized increasing Lodge's authority to give him more "leverage" over the Palace, no one defended using Lansdale in this way, and the proposal died.³² (S)

One thing certain in both capitals was that John Richardson was leaving. Richardson left Saigon for good on 5 October, ostensibly for consultations in Washington, and he carried with him a belated apology from Lodge for the Ambassador's angry remarks on the morning of 29 August.³³ Headquarters made Richardson's departure as chief of station official on 11 October. Lodge reacted by telling Acting Chief of Station (ACOS) David Smith that he wanted him to take over. (S)

When President Kennedy had ordered Defense Secretary McNamara and JCS Chairman Taylor to Saigon in late September for another attempt to determine Diem's prospects, DCI McCone arranged for Far East Division chief William Colby to accompany the delegation as its CIA liaison.³⁴ Colby initially hoped to see a wide range of Vietnamese, in the Palace and among the generals, in addition to various agents and Station liaison contacts. Colby's purposes were imprecise: "to exert influence, make possible openings, or give some assurances for future action, both on the Diem-Nhu side and among certain figures who might serve as alternatives." Lodge had already suspended Station contacts with Nhu, however, and he now vetoed this proposal; Colby would have no contacts with Vietnamese.³⁵ (U)

This ban on contacts with the regime increasingly worried McCone. The DCI began planning the replacement of the Station's more widely known officers, hoping both to lower CIA's visibility in Saigon and to improve access to information on Diem and his family. But

³² SAIG 0884, 13 September 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1 (S); John A. McCone, Director of Central Intelligence, memorandum for the record, "Discussion, Secretary Rusk's conference room, Tuesday evening, 6:00 p.m., 16 September 1963," 18 September 1963, Executive Registry Job 80B01285R, Box 6. (S) This memorandum also describes the meeting on 17 September 1963. (S)

³³ Knoche, "Meeting in the DCI's Office—0800-0930—7 October 1963," 7 October 1963. (S)

³⁴ McCone, "Discussion, Secretary Rusk's conference room, Tuesday evening, 6:00 p.m., 16 September 1963," 18 September 1963. (S)

³⁵ DIR 70280, 21 September 1963; SAIG 1290, 28 September 1963; both in East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S) Colby recalled his frustration over Lodge's edict in William Colby, with James McCargar, *Lost Victory: A Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989), pp. 144-145. (U)

Lodge's ban on all but "correct" contacts for the present curtailed any such access. McCone would complain repeatedly over the next few weeks to the President and his aides that Lodge had unilaterally stopped the flow of vital national intelligence at a critical juncture in American foreign policy.³⁶ Despite McCone's complaints, Lodge's order stuck. (U)

The Resumption of Active Conspiracy (U)

An accidental meeting between Conein and Maj. Gen. Tran Van Don at the Saigon airport on 2 October sparked the resumption of an active Station role in preparations for a coup. General Don, the Commander of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and Acting Chief of the Joint General Staff (JGS), asked Conein to come see him in Nha Trang, and after checking with the Station and DCM Trueheart, Conein flew there the same day. Upon his arrival, Don announced that the generals now had a plan for the overthrow of Diem that General Minh wanted to discuss with Conein.³⁷ (S)

Conein saw alone Minh on 5 October. The conspirators did not expect any American action to support a coup, Minh told Conein, but they needed assurances that the United States would not move to thwart them. Minh also wanted a promise of continued economic and military aid at the existing level, which he put at \$1.5 million per day. Conein was noncommittal, promising only to convey Minh's requests to his superiors, and Minh proceeded to outline three approaches to removing the Ngo family. One—"the easiest"—called for assassinating Diem's brother Ngo Dinh Nhu while keeping Diem in office. The others involved military action, or the threat of action, against the 5,500 troops in Saigon that Minh thought loyal to the Palace. Again, Conein made no comment, and Minh went on to voice his concerns about Khiem's

³⁶ On 20 September McCone had mentioned his plan to Bundy and took the opportunity to complain about Lodge's ban on contacts with the Ngos; the only surviving account of this meeting (apparently taken from a contemporaneous—but subsequently destroyed—memorandum for the record) is in Walter Elder's draft "John A. McCone: The Sixth Director of Central Intelligence," 1987 version, in CIA History Staff files as MISC-25, pp. 276-278. (S) McCone privately complained to President Kennedy as well about Lodge's ban; McCone, memorandum for the record, "Discussion with the President, October 21st, 6:00 p.m.," 22 October 1963, Executive Registry Job 80B01285A, Box 6. (S)

³⁷ SAIG 1385, 3 October 1963, *FRUS IV*, pp. 354-355 (U); SAIG 1389, 4 October 1963, and "Sequence of CAS Contacts," both in East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1 (S); Conein interview, 19 February 1992. (S)

loyalty and the danger of a "catastrophe" if regimental-grade officers attempted an unsuccessful coup on their own. Minh ended the meeting with assurances that he understood Conein's present inability to commit himself, and said he would be back in touch.³⁸ (U)

Lodge and Smith consulted immediately on General Minh's demands for an unequivocal US stand on the generals' plan to force a change in government even if it meant death for the Ngos. Ambassador Lodge wired State that he wanted to promise Minh that the US would "not attempt to thwart his plans" and would continue aid to a government capable of mobilizing its people against the Viet Cong. Lodge wanted to avoid dealing with the assassination option, proposing to State that Conein could offer to review Minh proposals "other than assassination plans."³⁹ Meanwhile, ACOS Smith cabled Headquarters that he had recommended to Lodge that "we not set ourselves irrevocably against the [generals' proposed] assassination plot, since the other two alternatives mean either a bloodbath in Saigon or a protracted struggle which could rip the Army and the country asunder."⁴⁰ (S)

DCI McCone promptly countermanded the suggestion that the Station not oppose assassination plotting, ordering the ACOS on 6 October to tell the Ambassador that he was withdrawing his recommendation because "we" (not further specified) could not actively condone assassination without "engaging our responsibility" for it.⁴¹ Lodge told Smith at the time that he shared McCone's position.⁴² (S)

Meanwhile, State had been coordinating a detailed list of new instructions for Lodge, based on the findings of the McNamara-Taylor delegation, when Conein's report of his meeting with Big Minh reached Washington.⁴³ In response, Bundy appended a separate cable informing Lodge that the President had approved the Ambassador's recommendation that "no initiative should now be taken to give any active covert encouragement to a coup." While holding aloof from coup plotting,

³⁸ Embassy Saigon [no serial number], 5 October 1963, *FRUS IV*, pp. 365-367. (U)

³⁹ Embassy Saigon [Lodge to Rusk; no serial number], 5 October 1963, *FRUS IV*, p. 367 (U). A copy of the original is filed as SAIG 1448, 5 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

⁴⁰ SAIG 1447, 5 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 77-00204R, Box 2. (S)

⁴¹ DIR 73661, 6 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 77-00204R, Box 2. (S)

⁴² ACOS Smith passed Lodge's view to Headquarters in a 7 October 1963 cable quoted by the Church Committee, "Alleged Assassination Reports Involving Foreign Leaders," p. 221. (U)

⁴³ The larger instructions were cabled to Lodge as Deptel 534, and were formally approved by the President as National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 263 on 11 October 1963; this was President Kennedy's famous plan to withdraw 1,000 US military advisers by yearend. Deptel 534, 5 October 1963, is in *FRUS IV*, pp. 371-379; NSAM-263 is on pp. 395-396. (U)

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however, Lodge should guide an "urgent covert effort with closest security... to identify and build contacts with possible alternative leadership." The Ambassador, Bundy ordered, should personally brief Acting Chief of Station David Smith and receive Smith's reports directly.⁴⁴ (S)

With his two meetings of 2 and 5 October, Lou Conein became the exclusive channel of communication between the US Government and the conspiring generals. The rebellious generals, for their part, made it clear that he was their interlocutor of choice. Perhaps they wanted to improve security by reducing the contact points, but Conein would in any case have been a natural for the role, as he had known some of the generals since 1945, when he joined the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) team in Hanoi after the Japanese surrender.⁴⁵ (U)

Conein had been born and raised in France and had served briefly in the Foreign Legion. Early in World War II, he moved to America, where he joined the US Army and was assigned to the OSS in 1943. When the OSS wanted to set up in Hanoi, Conein's native proficiency in French got him named to the team. The young lieutenant made friends among the junior Vietnamese officers serving the French (one of these was Tran Van Don).⁴⁶ In 1954, Conein returned as a member of Edward Lansdale's Saigon Military Station, and he began a third tour in Vietnam when then-DDP Richard Bissell sent him back in 1961 to reactivate his military contacts.⁴⁷ (U)

More action-oriented than reflective, Conein would not have been the Station's first choice to represent the US Government in negotiating something as consequential as bringing down the government of an allied country. But the generals had been explicit about their preference, and the Station proceeded to do what it could to prevent misunderstandings. Given the ambiguous attitude of both sides after the debacle of late

⁴⁴ CAP 63650, 5 October 1963, *FRUS IV*, p. 379. (U)

⁴⁵ Smith interview, 6 October 1992, (S); Lucien Conein, interview by author, tape recording, McLean, VA, 24 June 1992, CIA History Staff, (hereafter cited as Conein interview, 24 June 1992). (S)

⁴⁶ While in Hanoi, Conein met Vo Nguyen Giap and Ho Chi Minh. Giap once treated him to a five-hour disquisition on the theory and practice of revolution. Ho was at the time concentrating on winning the Americans away from their support of the French. In these efforts, he emanated an aura of sincerity and personal commitment that even the rough-spoken and somewhat cynical Conein found "mesmerizing." Conein interview, 24 June 1992. (S)

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* (S)

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August, this required meticulous supervision of the Conein channel, and Richardson before his departure had charged Dave Smith with keeping things on track. Smith began by briefing Conein before each contact, and then took his reports. Concerned that conviviality with old friends might interfere with accurate communication, Smith also instructed Conein to go on the wagon for the duration of the crisis.⁴⁸ (S)

Final Preparations (U)

A message from McGeorge Bundy on 9 October clarified Lodge's authority to tell the generals the United States would not try to defeat a change of government that promised more effective prosecution of the war. The message also poignantly illustrated the dilemma created by the desire to know the content of the conspirators' plans without becoming identified with their actions. Lodge should instruct Conein to tell General Minh that Washington needed "detailed information clearly indicating that Minh's plans offer a high prospect of success." But at the same time, the Mission should "avoid being drawn into reviewing or advising on operational plans," or in any way associating the United States with a change of government.⁴⁹ (U)

Two more weeks of secret maneuvering followed in Saigon. The conspiring generals played on General Dinh's over-developed ego by encouraging him to ask for the Interior Ministry as a reward for his role in the August raids on the Buddhist pagodas. As they expected, President Diem turned him down, and Dinh's wounded vanity brought him—and control of Saigon-based troops—into their hands. Dinh's change of allegiance took place just as Nhu was devising a counterfeit coup. As the Station later pieced it together, Nhu instructed Dinh to prepare a raid on Saigon by units based outside the city. The apparent insurrection, which was to include terrorist-style attacks on Americans, would then be put down by loyal forces commanded by Nhu and Dinh. The US would then see that the alternative to Diem was anarchy, and endorse the government's hard line against the Buddhists and other critics.⁵⁰ Nhu seems not to have ordered the execution of this ruse,

⁴⁸ Smith interview, 6 October 1992. (S)

⁴⁹ DIR 74228, 9 October 1963, *FRUS IV*, pp. 393–394 (U); SAIG 1572, 10 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

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which was in any case compromised from the start by Dinh's secret defection. (U)

Don summoned Conein to JGS for a 23 October meeting that revealed poor security on the Vietnamese side and crossed signals on the American. In an agitated state, Don described how General Harkins had the day before (22 October) given him "cease and desist" orders with respect to coup planning. A colonel on Don's staff, Nguyen Khuong, had just advised an American officer that the Army would move against Diem on or about 27 October. When word of this reached Harkins, he called in General Don to insist that, with the war going well, this was no time for a coup.⁵¹ (U)

Don told Conein at their 23 October session that word of Khuong's approach had reached the Palace, which had reacted by prolonging the current field operations of two units essential to the coup, the Fifth and Seventh Divisions. With the entire enterprise now in jeopardy, Don demanded an unequivocal statement of US intentions. Conein repeated his rather ambiguous guidance to the effect that the United States "would not thwart a change of government or deny economic and military assistance" to a new government capable of winning popular support and improving both the war effort and "working relationships with the United States." For his part, Don wanted Conein to assure Ambassador Lodge that Khuong had not spoken for the generals, and would soon be disciplined. Conein challenged Don to prove that a coup committee or any coup plans actually existed. Don insisted that preparations were well advanced and promised to ask the committee's authority to give Conein its political organization plan. Anticipating approval, he arranged to meet Conein the next evening in downtown Saigon.⁵² (U)

Lodge lost no time in getting Harkins's version of the cautionary advice that Don claimed to have received from him. Harkins admitted to the Ambassador that Conein had accurately reported Don's statements, adding that his intention was to discourage approaches to his officers on political matters, and to focus their attention on pursuing the war effort. Lodge finally briefed Harkins on the 9 October cable from Washington that had affirmed US willingness to acquiesce in a coup,

⁵⁰ David Smith, *The Vietnam Coup d'Etat of November 1963 and its Aftermath*, November 1966, Clandestine Services History Program (CSHP) number 57, CIA History Staff, pp. 16-17. (S) Kahin reports that Dinh switched loyalties around 21 October; *Intervention*, p. 175. (U)

⁵¹ SAIG 1896, 23 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (s)

⁵² Ibid. (s)

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and Lodge reminded the general that he had concurred, back on 5 October, when the Ambassador proposed recommending this stance to the Department of State. Harkins said he had thought the United States "was not now in favor of a coup," and Lodge repeated that he had instructions "from the highest levels" not to block a change of government. Harkins apologized for his interference and promised to withdraw his remarks to General Don.⁵³ (U)

Headquarters reacted to Conein's report with another exhortation to the Station to protect itself against entrapment. It also worried about the "fuzz and looseness" of Don's coup committee, and about his ambiguous role on behalf of the Diem government."⁵⁴ (U)

Meanwhile, Harkins had corrected the record with Don, who called Lou Conein to arrange a brief contact at Saigon airport at 0630 hours on 24 October. Don told Conein that Harkins had acknowledged inadvertently contravening a "presidential directive." Don volunteered to confirm personally to Lodge, when he saw the Ambassador that evening, the committee's desire to deal exclusively with Conein. Don then asked Conein to meet him later that day, in a dentist's office in downtown Saigon.⁵⁵ (U)

The Ambassador's appointment schedule included no meeting with General Don, and confusion on this point continued until that evening, when Don told Conein he had expected Lodge to be present at a session with MACV. With respect to coup preparations, Don said the committee had refused on security grounds to turn over the promised political organization plan to the Americans. It had, however, agreed to share with the Ambassador its entire political and military planning two days before the coup. Conein reminded Don that any US endorsement depended on a judgment of the generals' plans, and Don repeated his promise, saying that the committee would launch the coup no later than 2 November.⁵⁶ (U)

Don named some of the membership of the coup committee, including Duong Van Minh and Le Van Kim, but explicitly excluding II

⁵³ SAIG 1906, 23 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

⁵⁴ DIR 77878, 24 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

⁵⁵ SAIG 1925, 24 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S) The intensity of Washington's concern over the coup committee's authenticity and intentions is reflected in the personal attention of President Kennedy to Station cables such as this. Before Don could clarify the matter, McGeorge Bundy cabled the Mission, using this anomaly and Don's reference to a presidential directive to support his suspicion that the whole thing was a provocation by Nhu. Bundy seemed to overlook, in his anxiety, Harkins's confirmation of Don's account of their meeting, which included Harkins's reference to a presidential directive. (S)

⁵⁶ SAIG 1956, 25 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

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Corps commander Nguyen Khanh, who he said was cooperating with the committee but not a member of it, and would "take his orders like everybody else." As for III Corps commander Ton That Dinh, he was "surrounded by committee members" and would either "cooperate or be crushed." Conein then turned to the committee's intentions regarding a new government. Don said it would be entirely civilian. He expected it to free non-Communist political prisoners and hold "honest elections." Political and religious freedom would be guaranteed, and the new regime would be pro-Western, but "not a vassal of the United States." General Don promised to keep Conein fully informed, once the coup began, but cautioned against any American effort like the one in 1960 to restrain the generals from conclusive action. He assured Conein that the Ambassador would be in no danger when he traveled with Diem to the presidential villa at Dalat on 27 October, but added that the committee now believed the "the entire Ngo family had to be eliminated from the political scene in Vietnam."⁵⁷ (U)

Conein's meetings with General Don on 23 and 24 October suggested to US officials in Saigon and Washington that the conspiracy against Diem had regained the momentum of late August. DDP Richard Helms now sent Smith a worried query about Conein. In addition to the usual concerns about provocation and Station officers' personal safety, Helms said that "some doubts [are] being expressed re Conein suitability for present role." This probably reflected Bundy's concern over the authenticity of CIA's coup reporting, a question that Lodge was at that moment addressing in a cable to the White House. CIA was being "punctilious" in carrying out ambassadorial instructions, Lodge said, and while the Ambassador shared Bundy's concern about Conein's pre-eminent role, there was no suitable substitute. (S)

More generally, Lodge tried on 25 October to allay Bundy's fears of a Nhu provocation, saying that he believed the generals to be dealing with the United States in good faith. If not, CIA was "perfectly prepared to have me disavow Conein at any time it may serve the national interest." Smith also confirmed this in a cable to Headquarters, in which he also resisted Headquarters' earlier suggestion that the Station secretly tape Conein's meetings: this, if discovered by Diem's security forces, would confirm official US involvement in the conspiracy.⁵⁸ Smith replied separately to Helms with assurances that he recognized all the dangers. But, he insisted, Conein's ability to read Don's sincerity

⁵⁷ Ibid. (S).

⁵⁸ DIR 78169, SAIG 1964, and SAIG 1965, all 25 October 1963, all in East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

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constituted an irreplaceable asset, especially now, when action seemed imminent.⁵⁹ (S)

Lodge's telegram prompted another agonized Oval Office meeting, this time with only the President, his brother the Attorney General, McNamara, Bundy, and McCone in attendance. When McNamara and McCone disagreed over the accuracy of Conein's reporting, President Kennedy used the opening to ask his Director of Central Intelligence why he seemed unhappy with current policy. McCone was not one to miss this opportunity to predict that even a successful coup would likely lead to "an interregnum and a period of political confusion," perhaps even resulting in a second coup—or the chance that the war itself might be lost in the interim. President Kennedy heard McCone out and directed Bundy to draft another cable to Lodge expressing, as McCone recorded it, "our concern over the situation... [and] urging free and open talks with Diem."⁶⁰ Bundy's five-sentence cable as sent that evening read rather differently; it noted the President's concern that the United States would be blamed for a failed coup, and sought to reserve, if possible, the "option of judging and warning on any plan with poor prospects of success."⁶¹ (U)

On 27 October, General Don received Lodge's personal confirmation of Conein's "bona fides." The two met at Tan Son Nhut airport in Saigon, where ironically Lodge was about to fly with President Diem to Dalat for what would prove to be fruitless discussions. Don emphasized the need for full Vietnamese control of the affair, and declined to say when a coup might begin. Lodge asked Don to keep him informed, and in due course to furnish him the plans. Reporting all this to Washington, the Ambassador added that only he and Smith would have access to subsequent correspondence on the subject.⁶² (S)

Simultaneous visits to the same Saigon dentist on 28 October provided cover for the next meeting between Don and Conein. After pro forma ministrations, the dentist withdrew to another part of the suite, and coup talk resumed. Don acknowledged confirmation from Lodge of Conein's credentials and emphasized that all other dealings between Americans and Vietnamese on coup arrangements should cease. Unable to determine what other dealings Don had in mind, Conein turned to the

⁵⁹ SAIG 1979, 26 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

⁶⁰ McCone, memorandum for the record, "Meeting with the President, McNamara, Attorney General, Bundy, myself concerning South Viet Nam," 25 October 1963, Executive Registry Job 80B01285A, Box 6. (S)

⁶¹ [redacted] reprinted in *FRUS IV*, p. 437. (U)

⁶² SAIG 2003, 28 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1, (S); Embassy Saigon 805, 28 October 1963, *FRUS IV*, pp. 442-447. (U)

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US need for more information. Ostensibly on his own initiative, Conein asked Don to furnish him the committee's plans in time for Lodge to study them before his scheduled 31 October trip to Washington. Don provided some order-of-battle information on the coup forces and insisted that Lodge would eventually get the full plans—but not 48 hours in advance, as promised earlier. General Don could now offer only four hours' notice. Nothing would happen in the next two days, but Conein should wait at home starting in the evening on Wednesday, 30 October.⁶³ (U)

Conein did get Don's agreement to tighter communications security. The use of cutouts—Don's personal aide and a junior Station officer who lived in Conein's neighborhood—and radio would reduce the need for personal meetings between the two principals. Meetings would take place at prearranged sites, avoiding the participants' offices and homes.

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

C/FE William Colby briefed the NSC on the coup plans on the afternoon of 29 October. Colby's judgment that the pro- and anti-Diem forces were roughly equal in strength prompted more argument among the President's lieutenants about the wisdom of backing the plot. Secretary McNamara, General Taylor, and DCI McCone, now joined by Robert Kennedy, argued again that ousting Diem was too risky; McCone reiterated his prediction that one coup would lead to more coups in the resulting political unrest.⁶⁵ President Kennedy asked again for more information on the correlation of forces and the attitudes of Ambassador Lodge and his team in Saigon.⁶⁶ McGeorge Bundy wired Lodge that

⁶³ SAIG 2023, 29 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S) This is reprinted in sanitized form in *FRUS IV* at pp. 450-451. (U)

⁶⁴ SAIG 2042, 29 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1 (S); Stuart Methven, interview by the author, tape recording, Clifton, VA, 17 June 1995, CIA History Staff. (S)

⁶⁵ Bromley Smith, "Memorandum of a Conference With the President, White House, Washington, October 29, 1963, 4:20 p.m.," 29 October 1963, *FRUS*, pp. 468-471. (U) John A. McCone, memorandum for the record, "Notes on Meeting at 4:00, Cabinet Room, re South Viet Nam," 29 October 1963, Executive Registry Job 80B01285A, Box 6. (S)

⁶⁶ Bromley Smith, "Memorandum of a Conference With the President, White House, Washington, October 29, 1963, 6:00 p.m.," 29 October 1963, *FRUS IV*, pp. 472-473. (U)

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evening that the Station's reporting on contacts with Don and others had been "examined with care at highest levels," and that Washington did not yet believe that the "presently revealed plans give clear prospect of quick results." Lodge should now share the plotting with General Harkins (whom Kennedy wanted to become acting Chief of Mission if a coup erupted with the Ambassador absent), and Bundy sought Lodge's "combined assessment" once the Ambassador had consulted Harkins and ACOS Smith.⁶⁷ (S)

Lodge's reply did not object to sharing information, but took vigorous exception to the idea of putting Harkins in charge. To do this, he thought, "would probably be the end of any hope for a change of government here." Citing the new order-of-battle information provided by the Station, Lodge expressed confidence that the planned coup would succeed. He asserted that the US could not delay or discourage it [redacted]

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

(U)

While Headquarters and the Station struggled to identify pro-Diem and pro-coup forces, and determine the balance between them, Bundy used CIA communications to override Lodge's resistance to Harkins as contingent Acting Chief of Mission. Bundy also repudiated Lodge's assertion that the United States now lacked any capacity to prevent a coup even if its prospects looked poor. Indeed, Bundy positively ordered Lodge to obstruct a plot that had little chance of success.⁶⁹ He also instructed Lodge to keep Harkins fully informed and consult him, along with Smith, in framing standby guidance for Country Team officers in contact with coup forces. Lodge replied curtly, "Thanks your sagacious instruction. Will carry out to best of my ability."⁷⁰ (S)

While Lou Conein waited at the telephone, nothing happened to break the suspense on the evening of 30 October. The next day, Conein drew 5 million piasters (about \$40,000) from the Station's finance officer and stored the money in a safe at his home. But the Vietnamese did not move, and the Station could only resume its watch. As he waited, Conein pondered the Ambassador's recent remark that if nothing happened and Lodge were actually to make his scheduled trip to

⁶⁷ Bundy, cable to Lodge in CIA channels [cable number not declassified], 29 October 1963, *FRUS IV*, pp. 473-475. (U)

⁶⁸ SAIG 2063, 30 October 1963, East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1 (S); this is also in a sanitized version in *FRUS IV* at pp. 484-488. (U)

⁶⁹ Bundy, cable to Lodge in CIA channels [number not declassified], 30 October 1963, *FRUS IV*, p. 500. (U)

⁷⁰ DIR 79126, DIR 79235, and DIR 79407, all 30 October 1963; SAIG 2094, 31 October 1963; all in East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1. (S)

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Washington, he would see to it that Conein never worked another day for the US Government.⁷¹ (U)

Execution (U)

Ambassador Lodge saw President Diem for the last time on the morning of 1 November. At the end of a courtesy call at the Palace by a visiting American admiral, Diem asked Lodge to stay a little longer for a private chat. Knowing that Lodge planned an imminent trip to Washington, Diem begged him to ask Mr. Colby or Ambassador Nolting about Nhu. Diem insisted that although his younger brother had no interest in power, Nhu just so overflowed with solutions to difficult problems that everyone asked for his advice. As for himself, Diem wanted to be described to President Kennedy as a "good and frank ally" who would rather try to settle questions now than "after we have lost everything." Lodge thought that Diem, fearing a rebellion, might be signaling some willingness to meet US demands. With this in mind, and perhaps not taking it for granted that the generals would in fact move against Diem, he proposed to discuss a "package deal" when he arrived in Washington.⁷² (U)

Otherwise, the city was so quiet on 1 November 1963 that the Station reported that the morning had been "more nearly normal than at any time since May 8th [the date of the first Buddhist incident]." Then, at 1330 hours, the Station fired off a cable at flash precedence reporting "red neckerchief troops pouring in to Saigon from direction Bien Hoa, presumably marines." General Don had just sent his aide to inform Conein that the coup was under way, and to ask him to come to JGS Headquarters, the coup command post, [redacted]

[redacted] The dentist who had covered the 28 October meeting with Don also showed up, bearing the same message (Don had tried all morning to call, but Conein's telephone had failed). [redacted]

⁷¹ [redacted]
[redacted] Conein interview, 24 June 1992. (S)

⁷² Embassy Saigon 841, 1 November 1963, *FRUS IV*, pp. 516-517. (U)

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[REDACTED]

(U)

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

Conein stayed at JGS Headquarters until the next day, relaying by phone to the Station what Generals Don and Minh were telling him, and observing for himself the management of the coup. Other Station officers were on the street, describing the execution of the orders emanating from JGS. Together, Conein and these officers supplied nearly all of the authoritative information on the coup that Washington received in the next 24 hours. Conein, to begin with, reported the arrest of Diem loyalists in the military, including Special Forces chief Col. Le Quang Tung and the commanders of the Marines, Air Force, and Civil Guard; he added that the Navy chief had been killed that morning in a “premature action.”⁷⁴ (U)

Meanwhile, Station observers downtown reported a fire at the Palace. One of them risked a vantage point close enough to allow a rough count of the approximately 200 rebel troops at the Palace; another officer reported 35 armored vehicles headed that way. Conein advised that the generals were trying, so far unsuccessfully, to reach the Palace by telephone in order to offer Diem safe conduct in return for surrender. Determined to avoid a repetition of Diem’s manipulation of the 1960 mutineers, the generals did not intend to let him argue: “He will either say yes or no.” Meanwhile, they made preparations for an air attack and monitored a broadcast by the government radio claiming that the insurgents had been arrested.⁷⁵ (U)

Having neutralized Diem’s loyalists in the military, the committee felt confident enough by midafternoon to start talking to Conein about political arrangements. The principal civilian oppositionists had already assembled at JGS Headquarters, and Conein was now told that the new government would be exclusively civilian. But Diem and Nhu were still holed up at Gia Long Palace, and dislodging them took first priority. Minh spoke to Nhu—Diem was “allegedly not present”—and forced his prisoner Colonel Tung and other Diem loyalists to tell Nhu that they

⁷³ SAIG 2111 and SAIG 2130, 1 November 1963, in East Asia Division Job 78-0010R, Box 1 (S); [REDACTED] The following account of the coup is drawn, except where otherwise stated, from a series of cables—SAIG 2131 through 2152 [REDACTED]

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

[REDACTED] East Asia Division Job 78-00105R, Box 1 (hereafter cited as “Coup Chronology”). (S) For the situation report, see *History of the Vietnamese Generals’ Coup of 1–2 November 1963: Saigon Station Log and Analysis*, November 1966, Clandestine Services History Program (CSHP) number 9, CIA History Staff, p. 9. (S) Saigon Station officers assembled this paper. (S)

(b)(3)

⁷⁴ Coup Chronology. (S)

⁷⁵ Ibid. (S)

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were in rebel hands. Minh told Nhu that he had five minutes to surrender in order to avoid a "massive air bombardment."⁷⁶ (U)

General Dinh, a latecomer to the conspiracy, took the phone next, threatening and cursing Diem and Nhu. Another officer explained this display to Conein as designed to persuade Nhu that Dinh was no longer leading a phony coup, but had joined a genuine rebellion. Nhu had apparently wanted to believe that Dinh was still merely playing his part in the charade designed to persuade Washington of Diem's indispensability.⁷⁷ (U)

At 1630 hours Diem phoned Ambassador Lodge, explaining that some of his troops had rebelled and asking, "What is the attitude of the United States?" Lodge replied that a paucity of information and the absence of guidance from Washington prevented him from having a view. Diem persisted, reminding Lodge that he was, after all, a chief of state, and one who had always tried to do his duty. Lodge assured Diem of his great regard for the President's courage and for his service to his country. Now, Lodge said, he was concerned about Diem's safety. Had Diem heard that "those in charge of the current activity" were offering him and Nhu safe conduct out of the country if he resigned? Diem said no, and then, after a pause, added "You have my telephone number." Lodge begged to be advised of anything he could do to ensure the President's safety. Diem responded, "I am trying to reestablish order."⁷⁸ (U)

The night passed with Diem holding out at the Palace. Having failed to intimidate Diem with a barrage of 105-mm artillery fire, Minh ordered a battalion of infantry supported by armor to the assault. By 2200 hours, Station observers were reporting the advance on the Palace. During the ensuing impasse—the coup committee apparently wanted to avoid a bloody shootout—Station reporting gave renewed attention to personalities and politics. Either unaware of or repudiating Minh's guarantee of a civilian government, General Kim, the committee's liaison with the civilian politicians, had "decided" that a military junta would have to precede civilian rule. But Conein felt close enough to the proceedings at JGS Headquarters to be confident that General Minh was in fact in charge, with Tran Van Don firmly established in the second position, and Tran Thien Khiem serving as chief of operations.⁷⁹ (U)

At 0620 hours on 2 November, Diem called General Don at JGS Headquarters, offering to surrender if promised safe conduct out of the country. Generals Don and Khiem told Conein they would need a US

⁷⁶ Ibid. (S)

⁷⁷ Lucien Conein, interview by author, tape recording, McLean, VA, 3 February 1993 (cited hereafter as Conein interview, 3 February 1993). (S)

⁷⁸ Embassy Saigon 860, 1 November 1963, *FRUS IV*, p. 513. (U)

⁷⁹ Coup Chronology. (S)



President Ngo Dinh Diem (FOUO)

aircraft for this, and Conein called the Embassy, where David Smith said that France seemed the country most likely to promise asylum, but that it would take 24 hours to bring in an aircraft with enough range to avoid any intermediate stops between Saigon and Paris. Conein relayed this to the generals, including General Minh, who looked unhappy about the delay. At this point, Diem had ordered his forces to cease fire, and Minh now left JGS Headquarters headed for the Palace.⁸⁰ (S)

⁸⁰ Ibid. (S); Blind memorandum, "The Anti-Diem Coup," n.d., prepared by Lucien Conein, National Archives - Nixon Project, copy in History Staff files; Lucien Conein, interview by Edward Keefer, Department of State, 19 April 1984, copy in CIA History Staff files, (cited hereafter as Conein interview, 19 April 1984). (S)

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When General Minh left JGS Headquarters, Conein returned to the Embassy. There he got instructions to get back to the generals to pursue the question of Diem's well-being, and to urge the generals not to arrest opposition labor leader Tran Quoc Buu. Conein returned to JGS around 1100 hours to find Minh now back from his trip to the palace. The question of safe-conduct for Diem and Nhu now became moot; Minh acknowledged that both were dead. He alleged that the brothers had committed suicide in a Catholic church, to which Conein responded that someone had better construct a more plausible story.⁸¹ (U)

But if the Ngo brothers could no longer be helped, the Mission would still like Buu to be left alone. Conein conveyed this to Minh, provoking a complaint that the Americans were already giving orders. Despite Conein's representations, Buu was subsequently arrested and briefly detained.⁸² (U)

At noon on 2 November, still lacking any facts beyond Minh's statement to Conein, the Station told Headquarters it thought Diem and Nhu were probably dead. Whatever the brothers' whereabouts and their personal welfare, Smith added, it was now clear that their regime had fallen, and people had "poured into the streets in exhilarated mood," giving fruit to soldiers and burning down the headquarters of Madame Nhu's Women's Solidarity Movement. Then, in the afternoon, Generals Minh, Don, and Kim separately offered to let Conein view the bodies of Diem and Nhu. Conein declined, fearing the "generals would think he was taking grisly relish in his part" in the coup. Conein now accepted as fact, however, that the President of South Vietnam and his brother were dead.⁸³ (S)

Conclusion (U)

The ignominious demise of Diem and Nhu shocked and dismayed President Kennedy, who according to Maxwell Taylor's account leaped to his feet and rushed from the meeting that adviser Michael Forrestal had interrupted to announce their deaths. John Richardson and David Smith had earlier warned Lodge and Headquarters of the high risk that Diem would not survive a military coup. But the event shocked Washington, to the extent that Smith thought Headquarters' reaction almost

⁸¹ Conein interview, 7 December 1989 (S); "The Anti-Diem Coup." (s)

⁸² Ibid. (s)

⁸³ Coup Chronology. (s)

hysterical.⁸⁴ Three weeks later President Kennedy was also dead at an assassin's hand, and Vietnam policy would turn a fateful corner, with new governments in both Washington and Saigon. (S)

Not only the Viet Cong but a variety of non-Communist opponents had always denied the legitimacy of the Ngo Dinh Diem regime. Less a juridical question than one of moral and political authority, it was finally decided in the negative when Washington concluded that Diem's repression of Buddhist dissent had irrevocably alienated too many of the people he needed to fight the Communists. Planning for the coup thus concentrated on his removal, leaving the shape of new political arrangements for the future. But the military junta that the United States encouraged to install itself in his place had even less claim than Diem to any popular mandate. With the rest of the US Government, the CIA thus found itself starting again from the beginning in the perennial effort to instill in the Vietnamese leadership and in the Southern population at large a sense of common purpose. The increasing militarization of the conflict complicated matters, but in its political aspect the problem remained identical to the one first confronted by the Agency's dual Saigon Stations in July 1954. (U)

As it turned out, the generals who overthrew Diem first tried to cut the Gordian knot by abdicating the "political part" to their CIA advisers. But this led to a confrontation on the very day of Diem's death, when General Minh discovered that deferring to the Americans on political matters meant doing things he didn't want to do. In the sequel to this story of Diem family rule, the CIA, and particularly the Saigon Station, continued to be centrally involved in this question of "leverage" as the United States pursued its efforts to shape the policies and programs of a client but sovereign state. (U)

⁸⁴ Maxwell Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares* (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 301 (U); Smith interview, 6 October 1992. (S)

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(b)(3)

The Shock of the Tet Offensive (U)

Harold P. Ford

These same [enemy] documents call for all-out, coordinated attacks throughout South Vietnam utilizing both military and political means to achieve "ultimate victory" in the near future.... VC/NVA strategy toward the war appears to have reached a crucial phase in which changes in the tempo and scale of the war are envisioned.... In sum, the one conclusion that can be drawn from all of this is that the war is probably nearing a turning point and that the outcome of the 1967-1968 winter-spring offensive will in all likelihood determine the future direction of the war.

CIA Saigon Station Despatch, 8 December 1967¹ (s)

[This field study of 8 December quoted above] should not be read as the considered view of this Agency....[the Station's assessment has been] predicated on certain assumptions whose validity seems questionable from our perspective here in Washington.

*George Carver, Memorandum to the White House's
Walt Rostow, 15 December 1967² (s)*

We will see (1) that three intelligence components, only, rang fairly sharp alerts prior to the Tet Offensive—the Army communications intelligence group supporting Maj. Gen. Frederick C. Weyand's III Corps, the National Security Agency, and CIA's Saigon Station; (2) that their alerts barely registered outside of the immediate tactical scene in Vietnam; and (3) that the rest of US intelligence, CIA Headquarters included, did little to prepare policymakers for the fact, scope, or significance of the Tet Offensive. This sudden, countrywide enemy attack stunned the Johnson administration and the American public and left an unbridgeable credibility gap between them. (U)

¹ FVSA-24242, East Asia Division Job 80-00088A, Box 1. (s).

² Carver, (Cover) Memorandum for the Hon. Walt W. Rostow, "Papers on Viet Cong Strategy," 15 December 1967, Executive Registry Job 80R01589R, Box 15. (s)

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Some postmortem judgments of the pre-Tet intelligence performance have been harsh, as witness the evaluation in a West Point textbook published a year later: "The first thing to understand about Giap's Tet Offensive is that it was an allied intelligence failure ranking with Pearl Harbor in 1941 or the Ardennes Offensive in 1944."³ Or the judgment of former Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford: "The fact is that three months before the offensive both Westmoreland and Ellsworth Bunker...loudly proclaimed that enemy strength was decreasing.... [Their] telegrams contained not one word of warning about the possibility of large-scale, coordinated attacks in the future. On the contrary, they...must rank among the most erroneous assessments ever sent by field commanders."⁴ (S)

There were significant external influences on the failure of US intelligence, Comander-in-Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), the Saigon Embassy, and the White House to anticipate the 1968 Tet Offensive. Among them were the distractions of near-simultaneous foreign incidents that demanded the attention of intelligence analysts, diplomatic and military officers, national security strategists, and the President: notable were North Korea's seizure of the *USS Pueblo*; a North Korean penetration of South Korean President Park Chung Hee's residence; Seoul's subsequent pressures on Washington to permit South Korea to withdraw some of its military units from Vietnam; the communist capture of a vital outpost in easternmost Laos; serious new pressures on the West Berlin air corridor by Soviet aircraft; and the crash of a US B-52 laden with nuclear weapons. Nonetheless, a pervasive and more important contribution to the failure was Lyndon Johnson's preoccupation, as the presidential election year approached, with demonstrating success in Vietnam in the face of the sharply rising tide of public opposition to the war. (U)

But a still more important cause of American surprise was the deliberately optimistic mindsets key policymakers had adopted and continued to project in the runup to Tet. President Johnson, National Security Assistant Walt Rostow, Secretary of State Rusk, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Chairman Gen. Earle G. Wheeler (USA), CINCPAC Adm. Ulysses S. Grant Sharp, Ambassador Bunker, and Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV) General

³ Lt. Col. Dave Richard Palmer (USA), *Readings in Current Military History* (West Point, NY: Department of Military Art and Engineering, US Military Academy, 1969), pp. 103-104. (U)

⁴ Clark Clifford and Richard Holbrooke, "Annals of Government (The Vietnam Years, Part I)," *The New Yorker*, 13 May 1991, p. 50. (U)

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Westmoreland all appeared confident that American ground and air operations were so grinding down communist forces in Vietnam that they would not be able to maintain anything more than a limited war of attrition. The pronounced gulf between their beliefs and reality deserves representative highlighting:

Robert Komer, March 1967: Mr. Komer opened [the White House meeting] by exuding optimism on the current trend in Vietnam.... [He] expressed considerable disdain for MACV J-2, and particularly what he believes to be its *over-all estimate of enemy strength*.... Concluding, Mr. Komer recognized the possible trip-ups in the overall situation but anticipated that unless they occur, major military operations might gradually fade as the enemy began to fade away or put his emphasis on a protracted guerrilla level war. In either case, he said, the size of the problem in Vietnam will diminish, and fewer US resources will be needed.⁵

Walt Rostow, mid-1967: Chaired by Mr. Rostow...the [concern of this White House] group...was with opinion manipulation and political persuasion, with the aim of altering perceptions to make them coincide with specific notions, whether those notions were supportable by evidence or not.⁶

Gen. Earle Wheeler, August 1967: In his prepared testimony, General Wheeler stated that the air campaign against North Vietnam is going well.... In some instances where he did present intelligence estimates, he made it clear he did not agree with the conclusions of the Intelligence Community.⁷

Walt Rostow, September 1967: Mr. Rostow...commented that he was "outraged" at the intellectual prudishness of the Intelligence Community [concerning its evaluation of the lack of progress in pacification].⁸

⁵ William E. Colby, Memorandum for the Record, "VIC Meeting, 1 March 1967," 3 March 1967 East Asia Division Job 78-646, Box 1 (emphasis added). (S)

⁶ As described by participant George Allen, *The Indochina Wars*, pp. 299, 300. *The Indochina Wars* is an unpublished manuscript in the possession of the CIA History Staff. (U)

⁷ CIA memorandum (TS, unsigned), commenting on General Wheeler's closed-door testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 16 August 1967, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 787S02149R, Box 3. (S)

⁸ William E. Colby, Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting with Mr. Walt W. Rostow, 21 September 1967," 23 September 1967, East Asia Division Job 78-646, Box 1. (S)

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Gen. W. C. Westmoreland, November 1967: Infiltration will slow; the Communist infrastructure will be cut up and near collapse; the Vietnamese Government will prove its stability, and the Vietnamese army will show that it can handle the Vietcong; United States units can begin to phase down.⁹

Walt Rostow, January 1968: [Mr. Rostow criticized CIA for being “fixed on certain positions” and urged it to develop new analyses based on] certain totally hypothetical key facts, e.g.,...that the gentlemen in Hanoi see the equation...as tending to indicate that one year from now, they will be in a considerably worse bargaining position than they are today; so that settlement now might be to their advantage.¹⁰

General Westmoreland, January 1968: The year [1967] ended with the enemy increasingly resorting to desperation tactics in attempting to achieve military/psychological victory; and he has experienced only failure in these attempts.... The friendly picture gives rise to optimism for increased successes in 1968.¹¹ (S)

A “we are winning” consensus pretty much permeated the Saigon-Washington command circuit; intelligence reports and analyses that deviated from it tended to be discounted. The growing uneasiness about the course of the war expressed sporadically by a handful of senior statesmen¹² had little dampening impact on the pre-Tet convictions and pronouncements of the dominant administration officials. (U)

Intelligence Assessments (U)

Prior to the 1968 Tet Offensive, the quality of CIA officers’ assessments of the situation in Vietnam was mixed. On certain questions

⁹ General William C. Westmoreland (USA), Remarks to the National Press Club, Washington DC, 20 November 1967. *The New York Times*, 21 November 1967. (U)

¹⁰ William E. Colby, Memorandum for the Record, “Meeting with Mr. Rostow, 6 January 1968” East Asia Division Job 78-646, Box 1. (S Eyes Only) (S)

¹¹ From Westmoreland’s year-end report, as cited in Senator Mike Gravel, ed., *Pentagon Papers; the Defense Department history of United States decisionmaking on Vietnam*, vol. IV, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), pp. 538, 539 [hereafter cited as *Pentagon Papers*, Gravel ed.]. (U)

¹² The most significant such critic was now Robert McNamara, formerly a staunch supporter and key architect of the Johnson war effort, who was about to be replaced as Secretary of Defense. Among other senior critics at this time were Vice President Humphrey, George Ball, Clark Clifford, McGeorge Bundy, Robert Kennedy, Eugene McCarthy, some senior DoD civilians, and a scattering of doubters in the Congress. (U)

their judgments were more accurate, overall, than those of the dominant policymakers. Those judgments have won kudos from a wide spectrum of observers. Notable among these is Gen. Bruce Palmer, Jr., who later wrote glowingly of "the extraordinarily good performance of the CIA" in its Vietnam analyses.¹³ (S)

One of the principal causes of the generally poor intelligence warning of Tet was the outcome of the slam-bang controversy that had occurred during the latter months of 1967 concerning the size and strength of the enemy's forces—the Order of Battle (O/B) controversy. From the beginning, CIA officers, field and Headquarters, had had it right: that the enemy had in fact far more men in arms than MACV accepted in its estimated O/Bs. But after prolonged, heated debate with MACV, CIA not only backed down and more-or-less accepted the MACV position, but in November enshrined that serious underestimation of enemy strength in a Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE). That outcome fed the sense of overoptimism that pervaded official thinking as the new year 1968 dawned. (U)

Despite the Agency's formal backdowns on this issue, in subsequent weeks most CIA analysts working on Vietnam continued to judge that the true totals of enemy forces were much higher than MACV had accepted and that local VC self-defense and irregular forces constituted a significant source of the enemy's effective strength. A representative example, contrasting sharply with the agreed language of the just-completed SNIE, was a December 1967 CIA study which stressed that over and above the accepted enemy O/B, "the Communists make a strong effort to organize much of the total manpower under their control into various work forces and semimilitary organizations. Among the most significant of these organizations are the local 'self-defense' forces."¹⁴ (S)

Another area where CIA's assessments looked good was in the evaluation of allied bombing efforts. Here the themes stressed in studies prepared in 1967-68 for the President, Walt Rostow, and Secretary

¹³ Gen. Bruce Palmer (USA), Memorandum for DD/NFAC, "A Look at US Intelligence Assessments re SE Asia, 1965-1975," 5 October 1975. (S). Copy on file in History Staff. In this document General Palmer recommended that CIA should "commission a special historical effort that would describe and objectively evaluate the Agency's performance (analytical side, not operational) during the Viet-nam war." In his view, such an undertaking would "not only enhance the reputation of the Agency but also boost the pride and esprit of CIA personnel." The desired result, he wrote, "would be a fairly short publication, well documented, and if at all possible, unclassified." (S, emphasis in the original). (S)

¹⁴ CIA Memorandum (unsigned), "A Revision of the Situation in Vietnam," 8 December 1967, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80R01720R, Box 5. (S)

McNamara were (1) that although ROLLING THUNDER and other bombing programs were seriously complicating the enemy's war effort, the level of supplies getting through to the Viet Cong was continuing to rise; (2) that US bombing of North Vietnam was not proving a significant limiting factor on enemy operations in South Vietnam; and (3) that the DRV's ability to recuperate from the air attacks was of a high order.¹⁵ CIA's good batting average on these bombing questions has been acknowledged by a wide range of commentators. Among them is David Halberstam, not notably a booster of the Agency, whose judgment is that Secretary McNamara "pushed the CIA very hard for judgments on how effective the bombing had been and received in return what were considered some of the best reports ever done by the Agency."¹⁶ In 1970, George Carver, still the DCI's Special Assistant for Vietnam, judged that these earlier CIA bombing studies were probably the Agency's "most important contribution" to President Johnson's post-Tet decision (of 31 March 1968) to curtail US bombings of the North.¹⁷ (S)

In the months before Tet, as they had consistently held since mid-1963, CIA officers continued to judge that bombing (no matter how unrestricted) could not render North Vietnam physically incapable of carrying on the struggle and that the communists would almost certainly try to match any US escalation of the war. And Agency assessments persisted in the view, although not as consistently or clearly, that the enemy was not really interested in negotiating a settlement of the war and would use negotiating tactics only to provide breathers for the next round of warfare and to gain concessions from the US/Government of Vietnam (GVN) side. (U)

Meanwhile, despite their routine ignoring of the Agency's negative judgments, and in the midst of the Intelligence Community's embroilment with the SNIE on enemy military capabilities, the President and his advisers in 1967 continued to enlist CIA's help and participation

¹⁵ On 21 April 1967 Secretary McNamara had asked CIA to give him periodic assessments of the effectiveness of US air operations, as well as of the enemy's O/B and the progress of pacification. By mid-1967 the Agency and DIA were jointly preparing monthly bombing assessments. A few weeks before Tet, one of the customers of these reports, the JASON division of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, issued its own, similarly pessimistic assessment of the bombing programs, an assessment the authors of *The Pentagon Papers* later termed "probably the most categorical rejection of bombing as a tool of our policy in Southeast Asia to be made before or since by an official or semi-official group." *Pentagon Papers*, Gravel ed., vol. IV, p. 222. (U)

¹⁶ David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (NY: Random House, 1969), p. 644. (U)

¹⁷ George Carver, Memorandum for the Director, "The Bombing Decisions—31 March and 1 November 1968," 31 March 1970, (S Sensitive). Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80R01720R, Box 3. (S)

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on a wide range of Vietnam projects. The White House repeatedly asked Agency offices to estimate probable enemy reactions to various theoretical US courses of action. Policymakers involved the Agency in programs to help Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS) develop more accurate technical systems for quantifying success in Vietnam, and CIA officers led an NSC interagency task force seeking better ways to judge Vietnam data and trend indicators. In September and October 1967, George Carver and Richard Lehman (Deputy Chief of the DDI's Office of Current Intelligence [OCI]) helped the Pentagon's Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs and his deputy (Morton Halperin) do a private study of Vietnam policy alternatives for Secretary McNamara. Carver later realized that in this study the Pentagon staffers planted the seeds that blossomed into President Johnson's switch to a negotiating strategy in March 1968 (below). Also in October, DCI Helms received a request from Under Secretary of State Katzenbach for an Agency assessment of what GVN reactions might be to various kinds of discussions between Washington and Hanoi.¹⁸ The workload of outside requests in November 1967 was equally heavy: Secretary McNamara asked the Agency to give him "a comprehensive review of where we now stand in Vietnam" to help him prepare for a national television interview.¹⁹ And President Johnson asked for a CIA estimate of Viet Cong losses and casualties, a task that George Carver fielded in concert with Secretary McNamara.²⁰ (S)

Some of the White House demands on CIA went far beyond usual intelligence matters. One such example was that of roping the Agency into the Johnson administration's wide-ranging effort, begun in the summer of 1967, to stimulate public support of the President's policies and programs in Vietnam. George Carver usually represented CIA in these White House meetings chaired by Walt Rostow, with his deputy,

¹⁸ Nicholas Katzenbach, letter to Richard Helms, 16 October 1967. (TS Sensitive). DDI prepared CIA's response: Memorandum, "The South Vietnamese View of Negotiations: Problems and Prospects," 27 October 1967, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80B01721R, Box 2. (TS Sensitive) (S)

¹⁹ George Carver, Memorandum for R. J. Smith, et al., "Request from Secretary McNamara," 21 November 1967; attachment to Phil G. Goulding (Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs), Memorandum for George Carver, 21 November 1967, Executive Registry Job 80R01580R, Box 15. (S) CIA's response to McNamara's 67 specific questions took the form of an Intelligence Report, "Questions and Answers Relating to Vietnam," 8 December 1967, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 82S00205R, Box 3. (TS Codeword NF) (S)

²⁰ George Carver, Memorandum for The Director and R.J. Smith, "Memo Requested by the President," 21 November 1967, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80R01720R, Box 5. (U)

George Allen, subbing for him when he was absent. Allen terms CIA's participation in those gatherings on domestic opinion manipulation "the most distasteful and depressing meetings of my bureaucratic career."²¹ (U)

A second example of White House pressures: in September 1967, Rostow told the Agency that because President Johnson wanted some "useful intelligence on Vietnam for a change," the CIA should prepare a list of positive (only) developments in the war effort. According to George Allen, SAVA refused to prepare such a study; but, at Helms's request, the DDI did prepare one. Helms sent it to Rostow with a cover note protesting the exercise and pointing out that this special, limited study was not a true picture of the war; but Rostow pulled off that cover note and so was finally able to give the President a "good news" study from the CIA.²² It was also at this time that President Johnson asked CIA to prepare a questionable (and therefore super-sensitive) study on "The International Connections of the US Peace Movement."²³ (U)

Even though CIA's judgments were contributing to Secretary McNamara's change of heart, as we have seen, the White House found many of them so uncongenial that the President, Walt Rostow, and others occasionally growled at CIA officers during these months for not being "members of the team." For example, according to George Allen, Walt Rostow more than once assailed him with questions like "Didn't I want to win the war? Whose side was I on, anyway? Why didn't I join the team?"²⁴ (U)

Not all of CIA's judgments were displeasing to the White House, nor did they all prove accurate, nor do they justify any ringing endorsement of CIA's overall analytical performance in the months leading up to the Tet Offensive. One issue on which the Agency's performance can

²¹ George Allen later wrote that he was outraged by Rostow's "dishonesty" in misleading the President, and that the exercise "was an element of the public opinion campaign which was designed to peak with the visits to Washington in November [1967] of Ambassador Bunker and General Westmoreland, who were to pull out all stops... in beating the drum for the 'light at the end of the tunnel.'" Allen, *The Indochina Wars*, pp. 302-304. (U)

²² *Ibid.*, p. 304. (U)

²³ On 15 November DCI Richard Helms replied that the CIA could find no evidence linking the peace movement to foreign support. See Helms cover memorandum, Executive Registry Job 80B01285A, Box 11. (S Eyes Only, later declassified and given to Congressional investigative groups in 1975). (U)

²⁴ Allen, p. 301. The same went for newsmen. Following the Tet Offensive, when asked by John Scali whether there had been an intelligence failure, Secretary of State Rusk is reported as having exploded, "There gets to be a point when the question is whose side are you on." Marvin Kalb and Elie Abel, *Roots of Involvement: The US in Asia—1784-1971* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), pp. 206-207. (U)

be questioned was the stability of the Government of Vietnam. In December 1966, an NIE commissioned to forecast the GVN's performance had simply catalogued Saigon's areas of strength and weakness, without providing a clear overall message or bottom-line assessment.²⁵ Three months later, George Carver wrote Rostow that even though there were still many soft spots and weak areas in the GVN's situation, "the overall progress made in the last twenty-odd months is inescapable and overwhelming."²⁶ Spurred by Saigon Station reports, Carver modified this optimism in mid-January 1968, however, asking the Station to inform State's Philip Habib, then visiting Vietnam, that concern was rapidly mounting in Washington over the "disquieting air of malaise and lassitude permeating the GVN."²⁷ (s)

CIA's assessments of the military balance in Vietnam during this period can also be questioned. On 13 January 1967, Carver had recommended that Congress be told that the buildup of friendly forces in Vietnam was proceeding well, that the relative advantage over enemy forces had reached about four to one, and that in terms of combat potential the rate of growth was "even more favorable."²⁸ Two months later, Carver privately assured Rostow that "there is a considerably better than even chance that within a reasonable time frame, say eighteen months, the total situation in Vietnam will have improved...to the point where all but the willfully obtuse will be able to recognize that the Communist insurgency is failing."²⁹ According to Clark Clifford (chairman of PFIAB in 1967, later Secretary of Defense), in the spring of 1967 "the CIA's top Vietnam expert, George Carver, told the PFIAB that by the fall of 1968 the situation should be dramatically improved."³⁰ In July 1967, Helms gave President Johnson an evaluation by Chief of the Far East Division's (C/FE) Bill Colby, following an inspection trip to Vietnam, which concluded that even though there were fragile elements present, "it is very clear that my Soviet and Chinese counterparts' reports must exhibit great concern over the Viet Cong's mounting problems and the

²⁵ NIE 53-66, *Problems of Political Development in South Vietnam Over the Next Year or So*, 15 December 1966 [redacted] declassified in November 1975). (U)

²⁶ George Carver, letter to [Walt] Rostow, 2 March 1967, attachment to Carver, Memorandum for the Director, "Rostow-requested Memorandum," 3 March 1967, Executive Registry Job 80R01580R, Box 15. (S Sensitive) (s)

²⁷ (George Carver-drafted) DIR 66478 to Saigon, 13 January 1968, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80R01720R, Box 5. (s)

²⁸ George Carver, Memorandum for the Deputy Director, "Possible Congressional Questions," 9 January 1967, Executive Registry Job 80R01580R, Box 15. (s)

²⁹ George Carver, letter to [Walt] Rostow, 2 March 1967, Executive Registry Job 80R01580R, Box 15. (s)

³⁰ Clifford, "Annals of Government (The Vietnam Years, Part I)," p. 73. (U)

(b)(3)

steady improvement in the ability of both the South Vietnamese and the Americans to fight a people's war."³¹ According to Clark Clifford, briefings given by George Carver and JCS Chief Gen. Earle Wheeler to the President's panel of "Wise Men" on 2 November 1967 "set an upbeat and optimistic tone."³² And a few days later, DDCI Rufus Taylor wrote Helms that he felt strongly that the "great" progress made in the past year "could be emphasized in press interviews and comment by public officials," and that this "might be of considerable help in countering the peaceniks."³³ (S)

As for giving warning that a major enemy offensive was in the making, the best that could be said of CIA was that it sounded a distant trumpet from the field that came to be muted at Headquarters. But, except for the National Security Agency, no other components of the Intelligence Community did any better. (U)

South Vietnamese Intelligence (U)

The government of South Vietnam collected a few indications, beginning about October 1967, that the enemy might launch an unprecedented winter offensive; and just hours before the Tet Offensive, the South Vietnamese produced at least two reports that proved extraordinarily accurate. The first was an intelligence report transmitted on 29 January 1968 to alert South Vietnamese tactical zone commanders that the Viet Cong would take advantage of the Tet Holiday in order to attack a number of provincial cities.³⁴ The second stemmed from the capture of an enemy soldier at 2100 hours on 30 January. He stated that communist troops were going to attack central Saigon, Tan Son Nhut Airbase, and other installations in the capital city beginning at 0300 hours the next day—exactly the moment those attacks did start.³⁵ (S)

³¹ William E. Colby, Memorandum, "Review of the Activities of the CIA's Vietnam Station," 25 July 1967, attachment to Richard Helms, Memorandum for the President, "Transmittal of Vietnam Report," 27 July 1967, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80R01720R, Box 5. (S Sensitive) (S)

³² Clifford, "Annals of Government (The Vietnam Years, Part I)," p. 77. (U)

³³ Rufus Taylor, Memorandum for the Director, "Understanding the War in Vietnam," 7 November 1967, Executive Registry Job 80R01580R, Box 15. (U)

³⁴ CAS Saigon R 310742Z, East Asia Division Job 80-00088A, Box 1. (TS Codeword) (S)

³⁵ As cited by GVN Col. Hoang Ngoc Lung, in his monograph, *General Offensives of 1968-1969* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1978), p. 37. (U)

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These reports came much too late in the game, however, to help very much. For the most part GVN intelligence on enemy intentions prior to Tet was scattered, incomplete, and ambiguous. On the very eve of the enemy's offensive, CIA's Saigon Station Chief observed that the GVN police had a few scattered reports of upcoming enemy operations but nothing that appeared to be very hard.³⁶ Moreover, according to South Vietnamese security chief Colonel Lung, most GVN commanders believed that the enemy was incapable of launching a major nationwide offensive in the near future; and most GVN units did not even share their intelligence take with one another.³⁷ Nor, according to MACV's J-2 at the time, Maj. Gen. Phillip B. Davidson, did they pass on their reports to MACV. GVN officials were clearly not prepared for this attack on the opening day of Tet, when large numbers of them were celebrating with their families.³⁸ (S)

MACV Intelligence (U)

MACV—and virtually everyone else—greatly underestimated the scope and intensity of the coming offensive and remained generally unaware of the enemy's overall intentions and timing, even though North Vietnamese newspapers were speaking rather freely of a coming campaign of "historic dimension." Nonetheless, by January 1968, MACV headquarters was persuaded by captured documents and other indicators that major shifts were occurring among many VC units. One of the clearest forecasts they had of a coming offensive was a VC document captured by US forces shortly before Tet that proclaimed that "the opportunity for a general offensive and general uprising is within reach," and that Viet Cong forces should undertake "very strong military attacks in coordination with the uprisings of the local population to take over towns and cities; troops should...move toward liberating the capital city, take power and try to rally enemy brigades and regiments to our side one by one."³⁹ (U)

³⁶ As cited in George Carver, Memorandum for the Honorable Walt W. Rostow, "31 January Tele-phone Conversation with Saigon Station," 31 January 1968, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80R01720R, Box 5. (S Sensitive) (s)

³⁷ Lung, *General Offensives of 1968-1969*, pp. 40-41. (U)

³⁸ Phillip B. Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988), p. 480. (U)

³⁹ As cited in Lt. Col. Dave Richard Palmer, *Summons of the Trumpet: U.S.-Vietnam in Perspective* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1978), pp.178-179. See also Clark Clifford, "Annals of Government (The Vietnam Years, Part I)," p. 48. (U)

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Enough such indicators reached General Westmoreland to prompt some concern and, almost at the last moment, some precautionary steps. On 25 January he cabled CINCPAC that that date seemed to be "shaping up as a D-Day for widespread pre-Tet offensive action on the part of VC/NVA forces."⁴⁰ On 30 January Westmoreland cancelled a previous Tet ceasefire for US troops and ordered that "effective immediately all forces will resume intensified operations, and troops will be placed on maximum alert."⁴¹ Finally, convinced by intelligence alerts given him by his III Corps commander, Maj. Gen. Frederick C. Weyand, Westmoreland reversed the orders he had just given Weyand's 25th Division to undertake offensive sweeps in the countryside: instead, some of its units were brought into and around Saigon, increasing the number of US maneuver battalions protecting the capital to some 27. These precautionary moves doubtless saved Saigon and the US presence there from disaster. (U)

General Weyand called his alerts largely on the basis of his analysis of enemy radio traffic and his professional belief that MACV was greatly underestimating the number and military significance of local VC forces.⁴² An experienced intelligence officer, Weyand respected CIA officers and thought they were "focused on one of the right ways to defeat the enemy"; but in the case of the Tet offensive he felt that CIA and MACV did not provide any warning intelligence "worth a damn."⁴³

⁴⁰ COMUSMACV cable to CINCPAC, info to General Wheeler and Ambassador Bunker, 25 January 1968. Attachment to "Intelligence Warning of the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam," April 1968. (initially classified, this postmortem was declassified and released to the House of Representatives' Pike Committee in 1975). Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80R01720R, Box 1. (U)

⁴¹ MACV cable 300325Z Jan 1968, "Cancellation of TET Ceasefire," (initially Confidential, subsequently declassified and released to the Pike Committee). Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80R01720R, Box 1. (U)

⁴² General Weyand, to author, 17 April 1991. The officer commanding Weyand's communications battalion at the time, former Lt. Col. Norman Campbell, supports Weyand's accounts. Campbell, to author, 18 May 1992. For additional accounts of General Weyand's prescience, see Dave Richard Palmer *Summons of the Trumpet*, p. 184; Don Oberdorfer, *Tet* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), pp. 137-141; and Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*, pp. 701-709. (U) As of January 1968, Vann was attached to General Weyand's command. Weyand, who had previously held numerous military intelligence assignments, based his certainty of a coming major offensive largely on traffic analysis and radio direction finding; former Lt. Col. Campbell claims that their communications units were also reading some of the enemy's traffic. In March 1968, USMC Lt. Gen. Robert Cushman, then I Corps commander (and later DDCI), told visiting OCI officer Richard Lehman that the Marines in I Corps had had "ample forewarning" of the Tet Offensive, even though the enemy's specific targets had remained unknown. SAIG 0191 (IN 733895), 20 March 1968, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80B01721R, Box 2. (S)

⁴³ Weyand, to author, 17 April 1991. (U)

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Former CORDS Ambassador Robert Komer is similarly critical: “neither CIA nor MACV provided any warning at all of the magnitude or the targets of the enemy’s Tet Offensive; we were all completely surprised.”⁴⁴ (S)

National Security Agency (U)

NSA stood alone in issuing the kind of warnings the US Intelligence Community was designed to provide. The first SIGINT indicators of impending major enemy activity began to appear in the second week of January 1968. In following days, NSA issued a number of alerts, culminating in a major warning it disseminated widely in communications intelligence channels on 25 January, titled “Coordinated Vietnamese Communist Offensive Evidenced in South Vietnam.”⁴⁵ (S)

In the period 25-30 January, NSA issued a number of followup alerts for specific areas of Vietnam. Even so, as NSA stated later in its review of Tet reporting, SIGINT was unable to provide advance warning of the true nature, size, and targets of the coming offensive. This was due in large measure to the fact that the enemy’s local and irregular forces, which played such a large role in the offensive, made only limited use of radio communications. (U)

CIA Field Reports (U)

Beginning in October 1967, CIA’s Directorate of Plans made some 15 disseminations prior to Tet that, in hindsight, provided scattered indications that preparations might be under way in individual provinces for possible major enemy offensives of some kind before, during, or after Tet. These disparate reports, by themselves, did not add up to a sharp alert that an unprecedented nationwide attack was in the offing.⁴⁶ When the Intelligence Community later conducted a post mortem on its pre-Tet reporting for the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, it concluded that CIA field reporting “did not...reflect the massive character of the preparations under way all over South Vietnam for simultaneous invasions of nearly all major cities and towns. Nor did

⁴⁴ Komer, to author, 21 May 1990. (U)

⁴⁵ Classified NSA Historical Files, VIII, Box 19, “Tet Offensive, Jan/Feb 1968.” (S)

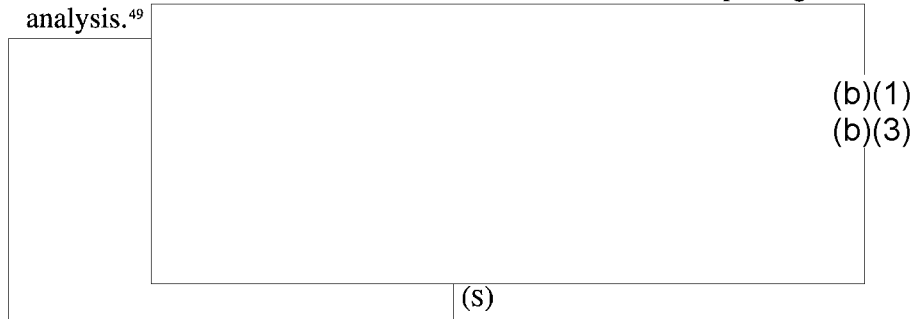
⁴⁶ The author’s review of Far East Division reporting for this period. (U)

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this reporting impart a sense that 'all hell' was about to break loose."⁴⁷ This was still the conclusion in 1975 when a DO/Vietnam branch officer did a new survey of the CIA field reports prepared prior to Tet; in his view, the warning they had given was "zilch."⁴⁸ (S)

CIA Headquarters Publications (U)

In the current intelligence publications of CIA's Directorate of Intelligence distributed in the two months before Tet there were occasional intimations of impending communist operations in the contested areas of northern South Vietnam, but no sharp warnings of a country-wide offensive. The treatment of East Asian matters by the Agency's premier publication, the *President's Daily Brief* (PDB), focused principally on South Vietnamese political developments; North Vietnamese and Communist Bloc attention to antiwar sentiment in the United States; the buildup of North Vietnamese military units just north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ); and especially the growing threat to the United States outpost at Khe Sanh. From 23 January onward, North Korea's seizure of the *USS Pueblo* dominated the PDB's reporting and analysis.⁴⁹



These analyses of individual, localized indicators carried little if any hint that a nationwide enemy offensive was in the making and that major attacks would occur within Saigon itself. Not until 30 January

⁴⁷ "Intelligence Warning of the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam," Section VII-1, "Indications Received in CIA," 15-30 January 1968, p.1. Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80R01720R, Box 1. (S, later declassified and provided the Pike Committee in 1975) CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence, R. Jack Smith, chaired this Intelligence Community postmortem. (S)


⁴⁸ Handwritten comment by the Acting Deputy Chief, Vietnam Operations branch of East Asia Division in a Memorandum for Deputy Chief, East Asia Division, "Vietnam Reporting Prior to Tet 1968 Offensive," 18 September 1975, East Asia Division Job 80-00088A, Box 1 (S)

⁴⁹ The author's review of the PDBs of the eight months preceding Tet. CIA files, Directorate of Intelligence Job 79T00936A, Boxes 53 to 58 (26 June 1967-20 February 1968) (TS Codeword). (S)



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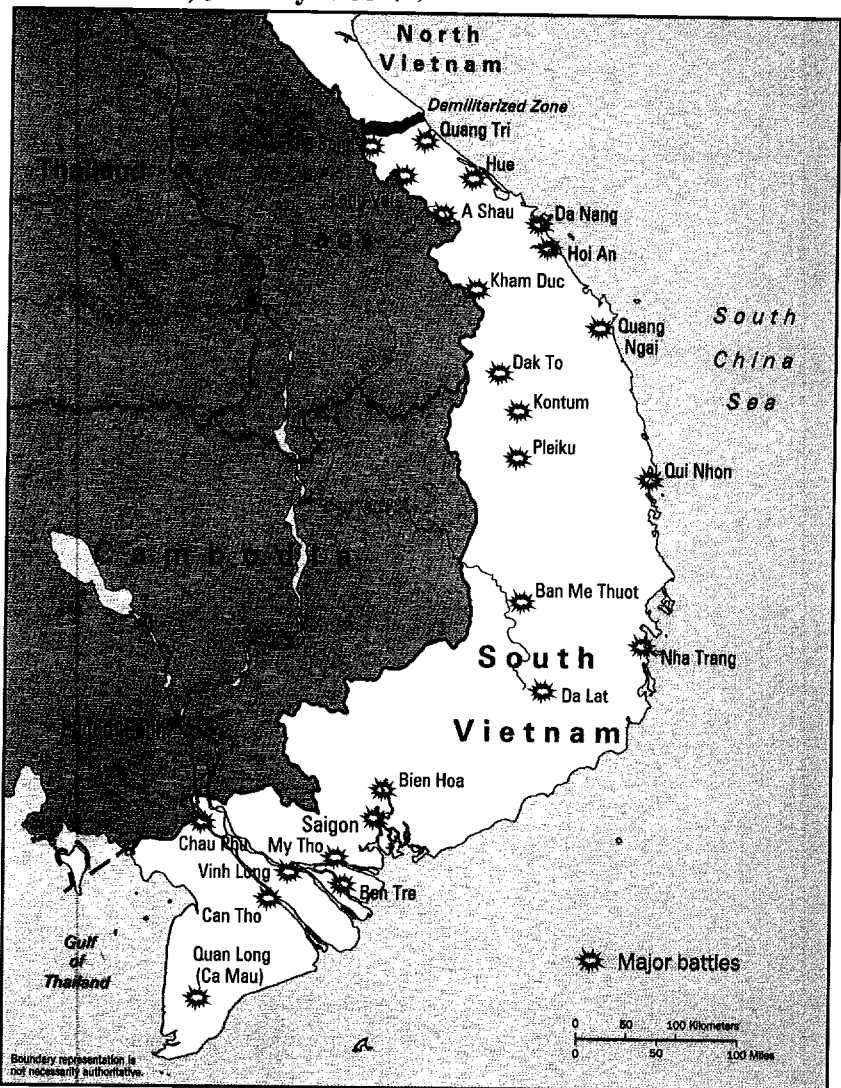
The PDB at that time was primarily a vehicle for summarizing sensitive or late-breaking reports for the White House; lower-level White House officials and other consumers received the more inclusive *Current Intelligence Bulletin* (CIB) which, between 11 and 24 January, contained some eight reports on enemy activity, all confined to indications of scattered VC and NVA buildups in this and that local area, especially in the northernmost regions of South Vietnam. As Tet drew nearer, current intelligence publications did begin to focus on the possibilities of a large-scale enemy offensive. On 27 and 28 January the CIB replayed NSA's alerting memorandum of 25 January, reporting that communications intelligence "has provided evidence of a widespread coordinated series of attacks to be launched by the Communists in the near future." The January 28 CIB undercut that warning, however, by judging that "the Communists intend to launch large-scale attacks on one or more fronts soon after Tet," and that "it is not yet possible to determine if the enemy is indeed planning an all-out, country-wide offensive during, or just following, the Tet holiday period."⁵⁰ (U)

The CIB for 29 January reported that North Vietnamese main force units were completing battle preparations in the western highlands of Pleiku and Kontum Provinces; 

(b)(1)
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⁵⁰ As cited in the Intelligence Community's postmortem, "Intelligence Warning of the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam," *passim*. (emphasis added). (U)

Tet Offensive, January 1968 (U)



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that "well-coordinated large-scale attacks may be imminent" there; and that [redacted] "the often mentioned 'N-Day' may be set for as soon as 30 January." The following day's current intelligence publications carried no reports or assessments of enemy intentions in Vietnam. On the 31st, as communist assaults began to erupt all over the country, the DDI's published wrap-up of the situation termed the enemy's attacks on US targets "harassments," and concluded that the enemy's operations to date might be preparatory to or intended to support further attacks in the Khe Sanh/DMZ/northern Quang Tri areas.⁵¹ (S)

The Intelligence Community's later postmortem described Washington's pre-Tet warning performance, overall, in these terms:

The urgency felt in Saigon was not, however, fully felt in Washington in the immediate pre-attack period. As a result, finished intelligence disseminated in Washington did not contain the atmosphere of crisis prevalent in Saigon. We do not believe this represents a failure on anyone's part. The information available was transmitted and fully analyzed, but atmosphere is not readily passed over a teletype circuit. Although senior officials in Washington received warnings in the period 25-30 January, they did not receive the full sense of immediacy and intensity which was present in Saigon. On the other hand, with Saigon alerted, virtually nothing further could be done in Washington that late in the game which could affect the outcome.⁵² (U)

True, little could have been done in Washington to affect the outcome in Saigon and elsewhere in Vietnam, but an alerted Johnson administration could at least have prepared the public for the sudden turn of events and better eluded the charge that it and the GVN had been taken by surprise. The sum of the Intelligence Community's pre-Tet

⁵¹ DDI Intelligence Memorandum, "The Communist Tet Offensive," 31 January 1968, (TS Codeword). On file in OIR Document Library, CIA Hqs. (S)

⁵² "Intelligence Warning of the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam," pp. 5-6. This postmortem conclusion is less critical of the US intelligence performance than seems warranted, at least in hindsight. Its muted tone doubtless can be explained by an understandable reluctance to dramatize the shortcomings in the Intelligence Community's own record or to probe deeply the intelligence operations of a military command that was still fighting its way out of the consequences of its errors. When the postmortem evaluators formed a team to examine the performance of CIA, State and military officers in the field, DCI Helms told the examiners that they should not "rock the boat"; they could be "critical but not inflammatory" in their report. From the recollection of the team's chairman, Richard Lehman, to the author, 14 March 1995. (U)

assessments was clearly insufficient to alert policymakers or the public to what proved to be a devastating political upset.⁵³ (U)

CIA Alerting Appraisals From the Field (U)

The CIA's field intelligence analysis prior to Tet was extremely good, but its alerting performance went largely for naught. In November and December 1967, Saigon Station sent in three major assessments, each of which warned that a powerful, nationwide enemy offensive was coming. The second and most substantial of these studies predicted that the impending offensive "would in all likelihood determine the future direction of the war," a judgment Gen. Bruce Palmer later termed "an uncannily accurate forecast!"⁵⁴ That assessment and its two companions stand out as the finest predictive performance by any CIA entity in the weeks leading up to Tet. Untainted by the packaged optimism of the MACV reporting channel, and arriving in Washington far ahead of the disturbing but too-late tactical intelligence reports of enemy troop movements, the judgments in these assessments could have made a profound difference—if only in bracing the administration for the Tet shock and giving it time to prepare the public. But the Saigon Station's assessments failed to shake the personal preconceptions of senior CIA and White House officials. (U)

The three Saigon studies were the work of the Station's small assessments group headed by Bobby Layton, an O/NE officer detailed to Saigon in mid-1967. The first two assessments (21 November and 8 December 1967) were produced as something like an overresponse to a request from the White House's Walt Rostow that the Station simply send in a list of its previous reports dealing with North Vietnamese/VC intentions. The first (November) study included the requested wrap-up, but Layton and his colleagues added their own analytical estimate of the

⁵³ A prime reflection of surprise is this incident related by CIA's George Allen. At CIA Headquarters he was in the process of giving a Vietnam briefing to State's Philip Habib and Nicholas Katzenbach when a CIA officer rushed in to tell them that the Embassy in Saigon was under attack. "Habib chuckled, suggesting that I have my troops knock off their horsing around.... The officer earnestly persisted, exclaiming in his best 'Pearl Harbor' tones, 'This is no drill, sir; the wire tickers report that the embassy is under attack and the VC have penetrated the compound.'... Habib's jaw fell, and he turned ashen gray; he realized immediately the significance of this development; that the wind had been taken out of the administration's sails, the 'light at the end of the tunnel' had been turned off, the administration's policies had been derailed from 'the right track.'" Allen, *The Indochina Wars*, pp. 323-324. (U)

⁵⁴ Gen. Bruce Palmer, Jr. "US Intelligence and Vietnam," 28 *Studies in Intelligence* (special issue 1984) p. 55. (S, subsequently declassified) (U)

enemy's intentions in 1968 and promised a more thorough assessment in two weeks.⁵⁵ (U)

Drawing heavily on prisoner interrogations and captured documents, this first field assessment concluded that the enemy seemed to be preparing an all-out effort to inflict a psychologically crippling defeat on allied forces some time in 1968. The Station's analytic group called particular attention to numerous reports that enemy "special action units" had been directed to engage in widespread terrorism and sabotage in South Vietnam's major cities, "coordinated with military attacks on the cities from without."⁵⁶ The communists appeared to believe the time was ripe for such an effort, the message explained, because the GVN was perceived to be "corrupt, unpopular, and incapable of gaining the allegiance of the bulk of South Vietnam's population" and because the GVN's armed forces are "suffering from serious morale problems and are incapable of advancing or protecting the pacification program"; at the same time, the US administration was becoming increasingly isolated internationally, was facing rising internal dissension and thus will "want to end the war before the fall of 1968." (S)

The Station's follow-up assessment of 8 December pondered the recent evidence of communist exhortations for an all-out offensive against US/GVN forces and bases and decided that this represented a deliberate departure from the existing strategy of a patient war of mutual attrition. This thinkpiece began with a careful sifting of the increasing references in North Vietnamese and Viet Cong documents to the necessity to launch "an all-out military and political offensive during the 1967-1968 winter-spring campaign [the period beginning around Tet] designed to gain decisive victory." As described in captured enemy documents and in accounts by prisoners of troop indoctrination sessions, the offensive would include both "large-scale continuous coordinated attacks by main force units, primarily in mountainous areas close to border sanctuaries"—a strategy subsequently reflected in the enemy's major attacks on Khe Sanh—and "widespread guerrilla attacks on large US/GVN units in rural and heavily populated areas." All-out attacks by both regular and irregular forces would be launched throughout South Vietnam, designed to occupy some urban centers and isolate others. (U)

Layton concluded that "the VC/NVN...appear to have committed themselves to unattainable ends within a very specific and short period of time," which included "a serious effort to inflict unacceptable military and political losses on the Allies regardless of VC casualties during

⁵⁵ Layton to author, 18 February 1992. (U)

⁵⁶ SAIG 4956 (IN 99377). Copy given CIA History Staff by Layton and on file there. (S)

a US election year, in the hope that the United States will be forced to yield to resulting domestic and international pressure and withdraw from South Vietnam." The approaching winter-spring campaign was shaping up as a maximum effort, Layton judged, using all current VC/NVN resources "to place maximum pressure on the Allies" for a settlement favorable to the communists. And if, as was likely, they failed to achieve this maximum goal, Layton reasoned, they would at least have hurt the US/GVN forces, knocked them off balance, and "placed themselves in a better position to continue a long-range struggle with a reduced force." He continued: "If the VC/NVN view the situation in this light, it is probably to their advantage to use their current apparatus to the fullest extent in hopes of fundamentally reversing current trends before attrition renders such an attempt impossible." "In sum," the study's final sentence read, "the one conclusion that can be drawn from all of this is that the war is probably nearing a turning point and that the outcome of the 1967-68 winter-spring campaign will in all likelihood determine the future direction of the war."⁵⁷ (U)

The Station's third alerting assessment (19 December) reiterated, with additional evidence, that available indicators showed that Viet Cong/North Vietnamese forces were going to undertake "something very much like an all-out push." Layton's group conceded (as Headquarters analysts had argued) that these enemy themes might be only propaganda designed to sustain VC/VNA morale, but "we think not." And though the projected offensive would cost "staggering losses," the enemy was nonetheless prepared to accept them in order to accelerate what Hanoi believed was a sharp decline in the American will to continue the war.⁵⁸ (S)

Conclusion (U)

These remarkably prescient alerts, with their postulation of the enemy's reasoning and probable actions, met an unfortunate fate. Special Assistant George Carver, the senior CIA official in closest constant touch with the White House on Vietnam matters, administered a coup de grace to Layton's warnings. On 15 December Carver sent the Station's second (8 December) warning study to the White House's Walt Rostow but distanced himself and CIA from it. In his cover note Carver told Rostow that the attached field assessment "should not be read as

⁵⁷ Saigon telepouch FVSA 24242, 8 December 1967, Executive Registry Job 80R01580R, Box 15. (S, subsequently declassified). (U)

⁵⁸ SAIG 5624 (IN 69402), 19 December 1967, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80B01721R, Box 2. (S)

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the considered opinion of this Agency;" that it omitted reference to "other [unstated] materials" bearing on the subject; and that the Station's assessment was "predicated on certain assumptions whose validity seems questionable from our perspective here in Washington." Carver questioned the assessment's thesis that the enemy was about to make crucial new decisions on the course of the war, and he told Rostow in effect that the communists would continue their strategy of a limited war of attrition.⁵⁹ It is difficult not to agree with Gen. Bruce Palmer's later conclusion that Carver's throwing of "cold water on the [field's] studies...no doubt contributed to the unprepared state of mind in Washington when Tet 1968 hit."⁶⁰ (U)

Worse still, Layton and his colleagues were contending against the judgments not only of the influential Carver, but of virtually all the Vietnam analysts then at CIA Headquarters. On 2 December, two weeks before Carver sent his dissenting cover note to Rostow, the Directorate of Intelligence had prepared a quick critique of Layton's preliminary (November) assessment, its analysts holding that captured enemy documents did not indicate that the enemy was about to radically change his tactics, and "do not suggest that the Communist [sic] think they can really mount a decisive campaign."⁶¹ (S)

Doubly unfortunate for Layton and his colleagues was the timing of a second Headquarters product, for on the very day that these field officers sent off their second (and most substantial) warning assessment, 8 December, CIA Headquarters had just produced and distributed a major study—coordinated with all the Headquarter's analytical offices—that differed sharply with Layton's conclusions. The 8 December Headquarters study told policymakers (1) because the war was not going well for the Communist forces their present strategy was "to hang on militarily and politically"; and (2) the evidence suggested that for the present the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong "feel under no compulsion to abandon their basic objectives in the south or the means by which they are seeking to attain them."⁶² (S)

So when Carver advised Walt Rostow on 15 December that, contrary to Saigon Station's warnings, the enemy was not likely to launch

⁵⁹ George Carver (cover) Memorandum for the Hon. Walt W. Rostow, "Papers on Viet Cong Strategy," 15 December 1967, Executive Registry Job 80R01589R, Box 15. (S)

⁶⁰ Palmer, "US Intelligence and Vietnam," p. 55. (U)

⁶¹ DDI (blind) memorandum, "Comments on SAIG 4956," 2 December 1967, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80B01721R, Box 2. (S)

⁶² CIA Memorandum, "A Review of the Situation in Vietnam," 8 December 1967, prepared jointly by the Office of Current Intelligence, the Office of Economic Research, O/NE, and SAVA. Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 78T02095R, Box 1. (TS Compartmented) (S)

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a sudden nationwide major offensive, he was speaking not only for himself but for CIA Headquarters—whose analysts of North Vietnamese strategy preferred their in-house expectations of rational behavior by Hanoi to radically new assessments from outside their ranks. (U)

There was irony as well in the reception given Layton's warnings before and after Tet. At the beginning of 1968 no one exuded more confidence and less concern about the course of the war than President Johnson and his head cheerleader, Walt Rostow. Both men, however, later cited Layton's 8 December assessment as specific evidence that they had known all along the enemy's nationwide offensive was coming. In his memoirs published in 1971, ex-President Johnson claimed that he had "agreed heartily with one prophetic report from our Embassy in Saigon [that the war was probably nearing a turning point and the outcome of the 1967-68 winter-spring campaign would in all likelihood determine the future direction of the war]. I was increasingly concerned by reports that the Communists were preparing a maximum military effort and were going to try for a significant tactical victory."⁶³ Similarly, writing in 1972, Walt Rostow quoted Layton's 8 December thinkpiece at some length, claiming that it indicated both the extent to which the structure of the Tet Offensive "was appreciated as early as December 8 and the kind of data available to Johnson at that time," and the fact that the President "had been receiving regularly and following closely the piecemeal evidence on which this summation was based."⁶⁴ (U)

Though CIA's alerting record prior to Tet had been mixed, the nature of that offensive validated the views most CIA officers had held: that the enemy's O/B was substantially greater than MACV and the misleading November 1967 SNIE had been willing to admit; and that the enemy's irregular forces were unilaterally significant and justifiably part of the total O/B. And in the crucial weeks following Tet, Headquarters officers played prominent roles contributing to President Johnson's

⁶³ Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), pp. 371-372. According to Robert Johnson, who had been a colleague of Walt Rostow's in State's Policy Planning Staff, Rostow wrote much of the former President's autobiography. Robert Johnson, to author, 13 June 1992. (U)

⁶⁴ Walt W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power: An Essay in Recent History* (New York: MacMillan, 1972), pp. 464-465. (U)

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ultimate policy decisions concerning the war. In particular, in the end the usually upbeat George Carver leveled with the President, explaining that the true situation in Vietnam was considerably less rosy than the White House had previously been told.⁶⁵ (U)

⁶⁵ Vice President Hubert Humphrey subsequently congratulated Carver for holding your ground and telling us about the situation as you saw it in Vietnam. It was a brutally frank and forthright analysis. The President's speech of March 31 [in which he announced he would not run for reelection] indicated that your briefing had a profound effect on the course of US policy in Vietnam. A copy of Humphrey's letter to Carver is in Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Job 80R01720R, Box 1. (U)

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Hunting the Rogue Elephant: The Pike Committee Investigation (U)

Gerald K. Haines

A storm broke over the CIA on 22 December 1974 when reporter Seymour Hersh published a front page article in *The New York Times*. Headlined "Huge C.I.A. Operation Reported in U.S. Against Anti-War Forces," Hersh's article put forth a number of allegations charging that the Agency had been engaged in massive domestic spying activities.¹ The charges stunned the White House and Congress. In response, President Gerald R. Ford established a blue ribbon panel chaired by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller to investigate CIA activities within the United States. Not long afterward, Ford further complicated the already delicate issue by hinting at the involvement of the CIA in assassination attempts against foreign leaders. The charges galvanized the Congress into action. Congress now demanded its own investigation of the entire Intelligence Community. On 27 January 1975 the US Senate established the Senate Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (better known today as the Church Committee). On 19 February 1975 the House voted to create its own Select Intelligence Committee. These congressional investigations eventually delved into all aspects of the CIA and the Intelligence Community. For the first time since the origins of the Agency, CIA officials faced hostile congressional committees bent on the exposure of intelligence activities. The old congressional seniority system and its leadership—which had deferred to the executive branch on intelligence issues—was giving way in the wake of the Watergate scandal and a huge turnover of seats in the subsequent 1974 elections. With the new investigations, the CIA became the focal point in the ongoing battle between the Congress and the executive branch over foreign policy issues and the "imperial presidency." (U)

The Pike Committee and its investigations of the CIA, although lesser known than the efforts of the Senate's Church Committee, paralleled those of its Senate counterpart. While the Church Committee

¹ Seymour Hersh, "Huge C.I.A. Operation Reported in U.S. Against Anti-War Forces," *The New York Times*, 22 December 1974, p. 1. (U)

focused on the more sensational charges of illegal activities by the CIA and the rest of the Intelligence Community, the Pike Committee set about to examine the harder—and perhaps more important—issues regarding the CIA: was it effective, and how much did it cost the taxpayer? (U)

Unfortunately for the Pike Committee and its promising mission, the panel was soon at odds with the Agency and the White House over questions of access to information and declassification of documents. Relations between the Agency and the Pike Committee became bitter and confrontational. Agency officials came to detest the Committee. (U)

From Nedzi to Pike (U)

Following the lead of the Ford administration with its Rockefeller Commission investigation and the US Senate with its Church Committee inquiry, the House of Representatives also established a special committee to investigate the Intelligence Community.² On 16 January 1975, Rep. Michael Harrington (D-MA) introduced a resolution to create a select investigation committee. Even Lucien Nedzi (D-MI)—chairman of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence and a strong supporter of the Agency—concurred in the need for a broadly representative panel to look into US intelligence activities. Minority Leader John J. Rhodes (R-AZ) also endorsed the proposal; indeed, few members of the House disagreed. On 19 February 1975 the House passed House Resolution 138 by a vote of 286 to 120, creating a House Select Committee on Intelligence.³ (U)

The committee consisted of ten members—seven Democrats and three Republicans. Since it was a select committee, the House leadership, Speaker of the House Carl Albert (D-OK) and Majority Leader Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill, Jr. (D-MA), appointed the majority members. Unlike its Senate counterpart, which was carefully balanced politically, the new committee would be strongly liberal in its outlook. All Democratic members of the committee broadly opposed Ford administration policies and had strong feelings about the Intelligence Community.

² Frank J. Smist, Jr., *Congress Oversees the United States Intelligence Community 1947-1989* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), p. 134. (U)

³ “House Approves Investigation of CIA, FBI,” *Congressional Quarterly*, 19 February 1975, p. 240. The Democratic members were Robert Giaimo (D-CN), Don Edwards (D-CA), James V. Stanton (D-OH), Michael Harrington (D-MS), Ronald Dellums (D-CA), and Morgan Murphy (D-IL). (U)

Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA), for example, stated even before the select committee's creation that the committee "ought to come down hard and clear on the side of stopping any intelligence agency in this country from utilizing, corrupting, and prostituting the media, the church, and our educational system."⁴ The party ratio on the new Committee upset Minority Leader Rhodes and his Republicans. Rhodes tried to right the imbalance as best he could by appointing three conservatives, all strong supporters of the Intelligence Community and the White House, to the committee.⁵ (U)

Representatives Albert and O'Neill selected Lucien Nedzi for chairman. A 14-year veteran of the House, Nedzi's liberal credentials were as strong as those of his fellow Democrats on the panel. He had opposed the Vietnam war, the development of the B-1 bomber, and the Anti-Ballistic Missile system. He also had a strong intelligence background, having since 1971 chaired the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence. Nedzi had conducted a thorough investigation into the CIA's alleged role in the Watergate scandal.⁶ Ironically, although CIA officials viewed Nedzi as a solid choice, other Democrats in the House and on the Committee had reservations about him. Rep. Harrington, in particular, felt that Nedzi had been "co-opted" by the Intelligence Committee while chairing the subcommittee on intelligence. "How could he investigate himself?" Harrington rhetorically asked.⁷ (U)

Nedzi attempted to set an agenda for the Committee investigations, but did not get far. He wanted the Committee to focus on the Agency's "Family Jewels," a closely held list of CIA improprieties compiled by former DCI James Schlesinger two years earlier. Before the Committee could meet to map its inquiry, however, *The New York Times* divulged the existence of the "Family Jewels" and revealed that DCI William Colby had briefed Nedzi about them in 1973.⁸ Nedzi had said nothing of this briefing to his subcommittee at the time—or to his colleagues on the Select Committee. Confronted with this apparent confirmation of their concerns about a "co-opted" chairman, Nedzi's fellow

⁴ Smist, p. 161. Dellums is quoted in House Select Committee on Intelligence, *U.S. Intelligence Agencies and Activities: Committee Proceedings*, 2 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1976), p. 2163. (U)

⁵ Rhodes appointed Robert McClory (R-IL), David Treen (R-LA), and Robert Kasten (R-WI) to the committee. Smist, pp. 137-45, 161. (U)

⁶ Smist, pp. 147-150. (U)

⁷ George Cary, memorandum, "New House Select Committee on Intelligence," 2 March 1975, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 82M00546R, Box 2 (C), and Smist, p. 151. (U)

⁸ The *Times*'s front page story ran on 5 June 1975. (U)

Democrats, led by Harrington, rebelled. Nedzi resigned as chairman of the Committee on 12 June 1975. Fearing a plot by the House leadership to use Nedzi's resignation as an excuse to abolish the Select Committee and scotch the House's investigation of the Intelligence Community, the panel's remaining Democrats tried to take matters into their own hands the following day.⁹ With a rump caucus chaired by James Stanton (D-OH), the Democrats attempted to hold a hearing on intelligence with DCI William Colby as the first witness. The committee's Republicans heeded Nedzi's last-minute advice, however, and refused to attend, thus preventing an official meeting. The whole episode disgusted Colby as the investigation ground to a halt.¹⁰ The circus-like atmosphere continued when on 16 June the House voted to reject Nedzi's resignation. Nedzi, however, refused to continue as chair of the committee. (U)

The House waited a month before returning to the matter, and then debated two more days before finally establishing a new Select Committee on Intelligence to investigate allegations of improprieties within the Intelligence Community and to recommend ways in which the House could improve Congressional oversight.¹¹ The new committee differed but little from the old one under Nedzi. The Democratic leadership enlarged the panel to 13 members, but maintained a solid liberal Democrat majority, minus Nedzi and Harrington. The Committee thus remained ideologically split, with a majority hostile to the CIA and the White House.¹² The panel's new chairman, Otis Pike (D-NY), would have no mandate to develop an effective investigation.¹³ (U)

Determined to complete his investigation by 31 January 1976, the expiration date for the Committee, Pike moved quickly in hiring a staff. He retained chief of staff Searle Field from the Nedzi Committee and brought in Aaron Donner from New York to serve as counsel. They

⁹ Office of Legislative Counsel (OLC), Journal Entry, 8 July 1975, Office of Congressional Affairs Job, 77M00144R, Box 4 (S). See also News Release from the Office of Mike Harrington, 8 July 1975, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 77M00144R, Box 4. (U)

¹⁰ William Colby, interview with Ralph Weber, CIA History Staff Collection. (S) See also Smist, pp. 152-53. (U)

¹¹ "House Establishes New Select Community on Intelligence," *Congressional Quarterly*, 18 July 1975, p. 230 (U); and OLC, Journal Entry, 16 July 1975, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 77M00144R, Box 4. (S)

¹² Smist, pp. 161-65 and 139. New Democratic members included Les Aspin (D-WI), Dale Milford (D-TX), Philip Hays (D-IN), and William Lehman (D-FL). All the original Republicans remained on the new committee and they added James Johnson (R-CO). (U)

¹³ Pike, a World War II Marine Corps captain, was a close friend of Nedzi. Both had served in the House for seven terms and both had been on the House Armed Services Committee. Pike had also conducted the House investigation of the North Korean seizure of the *USS Pueblo* in 1968. (U)



DCI William E. Colby (U)

soon assembled a staff to carry out the actual investigative research. Unlike the Church Committee, which had balanced younger staff with Hill professionals and ex-Intelligence Community members, Field and Donner selected a predominantly young staff with little experience either on the Hill or in the Intelligence Community.¹⁴ This would cause problems in dealing with the Agency and the White House. (U)

¹⁴ Smist, p. 176. (U)

Degrees of Cooperation (U)

DCI Colby promised his full cooperation to the new Pike Committee. Colby, accompanied by Special Counsel Mitchell Rogovin and aide Enno H. Knoche, met with Pike and ranking GOP member Robert McClory (R-IL) on 24 July 1975. The DCI expressed his continuing belief that the Committee would find that the main thrust of US intelligence was “good, solid, and trustworthy.” Pike responded that he had no intention of destroying US intelligence. What he wanted, he told Colby, was to build public and Congressional understanding and support for intelligence by “exposing” as much as possible of its nature without harming proper intelligence activities.¹⁵ Encouragingly, Pike related to Colby that he knew the investigation would cause “occasional conflict between us, but that a constructive approach by both sides should resolve it.”¹⁶ (U)

Colby then sought an agreement with Pike and McClory on procedural matters much like the one the Agency had negotiated with the Church Committee. Colby outlined his responsibility for protecting sources and methods and explained the complexity posed in meeting “far-flung requests for all documents and files” relating to a given topic.¹⁷ Pike would have none of Colby’s reasoning. He assured Colby that the Committee had its own security standards, and refused to allow the CIA—or the executive branch, for that matter—to stipulate the terms under which the Committee would receive or review classified information. Pike also insisted that the Committee had the authority to declassify intelligence documents unilaterally.¹⁸ He appeared bent on asserting the Constitutional prerogatives of the legislative branch over the executive branch, and the CIA was caught in the middle. Given Pike’s position, the relationship between the Committee and the Agency and the White House deteriorated. Colby believed that the Pike Committee “got totally in a hostile position” very rapidly.¹⁹ (U)

Confrontation would be the hallmark of CIA and White House relationships with the Pike Committee and its staff. Committee member

¹⁵ Knoche, memorandum, “House Select Committee,” 24 July 1975, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000R, Box 2 (C). See also Colby, letter to Pike, 28 July 1975, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000R, Box 2 and Donald Chamberlain, Inspector General, memorandum, “Re System for Handling Requirements levied on CIA by SSC and HSC,” 30 July 1975, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000R, Box 2. (C)

¹⁶ Knoche, memorandum, “House Select Committee,” 24 July 1975. (C)

¹⁷ Ibid. (C)

¹⁸ Smist, pp. 176, 208, 290. (U)

¹⁹ William Colby, interview with Ralph Weber, 15 March 1988, CIA History Staff Collection. (S)

James Johnson (R-CO) early on warned Seymour Bolten, Chief of the CIA Review Staff, that the Pike Committee regarded "You, the CIA" as "the enemy."²⁰ Colby came to consider Representative Pike a "jackass" and his staff "a ragtag, immature and publicity-seeking group."²¹ Rogovin also saw Pike as "a real prickly guy and a pain in the ass to deal with"; Pike was not really wrong in his position, but nonetheless "He just made it so goddamn difficult."²² (U)

The CIA Review Staff, which worked closely with both the Church Committee and Pike Committee staffs, never developed the same cooperative relationship with the Pike Committee staffers as it did with their Church Committee counterparts. The Review Staff saw the Pike staffers as "flower children, very young and irresponsible and naive."²³ According to CIA officer Richard Lehman, then head of the Office of Current Intelligence, the Pike Committee staffers were "absolutely convinced that they were dealing with the devil incarnate." For Lehman, the Pike staff "came in loaded for bear."²⁴ Walter Elder, the Review Staff's deputy chief, later recalled "you couldn't cooperate with the Pike Committee because they wouldn't have it. They didn't want it."²⁵ Donald Gregg, the Review Staff officer responsible for coordinating Agency responses to the Pike Committee, remembered: "The months I spent with the Pike Committee made my tour in Vietnam seem like a picnic. I would vastly prefer to fight the Viet Cong than deal with a polemical investigation by a Congressional committee, which is what the Pike Committee was."²⁶ (U)

Even members of the Church Committee were taken aback by the hostile, aggressive attitude of the Pike Committee and its staff. Fritz Schwarz, the Church Committee's counsel, thought the Pike Committee exhibited an attitude that, "They and they alone possessed virtue."²⁷ (U)

The White House viewed Pike as "unscrupulous and roguish." Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, while appearing to cooperate with the Committee, worked hard to undermine its investigations and to stonewall the release of documents to it.²⁸ (U)

²⁰ Smist, p. 290. (U)

²¹ Colby, interview with Weber, (S) and William Colby and Peter Forbath, *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), pp. 431-32. (U)

²² Rogovin, interview with Weber, 21 December 1987. (S)

²³ Elder, interview with Weber, 17 September 1987. (S)

²⁴ Richard Lehman, interview with Weber, 16 December 1987. (S)

²⁵ Elder, interview with Weber, p. 43. (S) See also Knoche, interview with Weber, 18 January 1988, p. 32. (S)

²⁶ Gregg, interview with Weber, 17 December 1987. (S)

²⁷ There was relatively little contact between the House and Senate intelligence committees during the investigations of 1975-76 and even some ill feelings. Smist, p. 53. (U)

²⁸ Smist, p. 157 and 189. (U)

Pike and the Committee members, for their part, were just as frustrated. On 4 August 1975, Pike aired his frustration in a Committee hearing: "What we have found thus far is a great deal of the language of cooperation and a great deal of the activity of noncooperation."²⁹ Other Committee members felt that attempting to get information from the Agency or the White House was like "pulling teeth."³⁰ (U)

By September the relationship was even worse. The Review Staff found the Pike Committee requests for documents silly and the deadlines impossible to meet. For example, the Committee on 22 September 1975 issued a request for "any and all documents" relating to a series of covert operations. The deadline for response was "Today, if possible."³¹ (U)

The Pike Committee's draft report reflected the panel's sense of frustration with the Agency and the executive branch. Devoting an entire section of the report to describing its experience, the Committee characterized Agency and White House cooperation as "virtually non-existent." According to the report, the executive branch practiced "foot-dragging, stonewalling, and deception" in response to Committee requests for information. The executive branch told the Committee only what it wanted the Committee to know. It restricted the dissemination of the information and ducked penetrating questions.³² (U)

The Agency did not allow the draft report to pass unchallenged. CIA officials believed that, to a great extent, the Committee's troubles with regard to access were of its own making. Accountability was a two-way street and the Committee staff was "self-righteous and blind," according to Robert Chin, Associate Legislative Counsel.³³ Searle Field did admit later that the Committee had far more trouble with the State Department, the White House, and the Defense Department, than with the Agency with regard to access to sensitive documents.³⁴ (U)

²⁹ House Select Committee on Intelligence, *U.S. Intelligence Agencies and Activities: Intelligence Costs*, (Washington, DC, GPO, 1975), p. 169. (U)

³⁰ Smist, p. 178. (U)

³¹ Bolten, memorandum, "Material for Intelligence Coordinating Group," 22 September 1975 Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000A, Box 2 (S); Gregory G. Rushford, Pike Committee Staff, letter to Bolten, 9 September 1975, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000A, Box 2; and Harold P. Ford, *William E. Colby As Director of Central Intelligence September 1973-January 1976* (Washington, DC: CIA History Staff, 1991) DCI Historical Series, p. 291. (S)

³² *CIA, The Pike Report* (Nottingham, England: Spokesman Books, 1977), pp. 26-94. (U)

³³ Robert Chin, memorandum for George Cary, "House Select Committee Report," 20 January 1976, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000A, Box 2. (S)

³⁴ Gregg, memorandum, "Conversation with Searle Field on HSC Final Report," 2 January 1976, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000A, Box 2. (C)

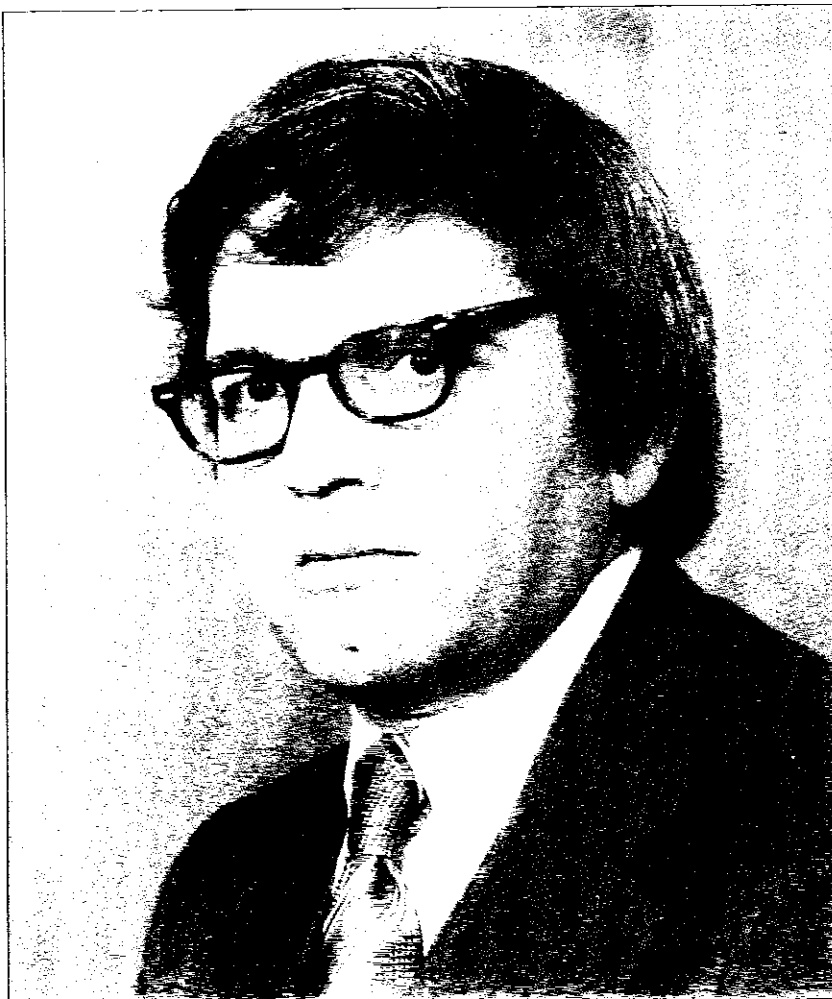
Budget Investigation (U)

Pike set the agenda for the House investigations. Unlike the Church Committee or the Rockefeller Commission, which allowed the executive branch to set their agendas, Pike refused to get caught up in sensationalist press charges of domestic abuses. Initially convinced that the Intelligence Community was out of control, Pike focused his Committee's investigations on the Community's budget, effectiveness, and accountability. In his first meeting with Colby (on 24 July 1975) Pike indicated his Committee would begin its investigation by concentrating on intelligence budgets. He told Colby that he believed knowledge of intelligence expenditures should be open and widespread.³⁵ (U)

The relationship between the Agency and the Pike Committee quickly soured. Illustrative is a sarcastic letter Pike addressed to Colby on 28 July 1975, informing the DCI that the Committee would be investigating the budget of the Intelligence Community. Pike wrote, "First of all, it's a delight to receive two letters from you not stamped 'Secret' on every page." He then attacked the content of Colby's letters—which had summarized the laws undergirding the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, the duties of the Director of Central Intelligence, and explained the compartmentation issue in developing the atomic bomb and the U-2—as not "particularly pertinent to the present issue." Pike insisted he needed information on the Intelligence Community's budget. He was not, he said, interested in history, sources and methods, or the names of agents; "I am seeking to obtain information on how much of the taxpayer's dollars you spend each year and the basic purposes for which it is spent." He justified this request with a reference from Article I, Section 9 of the US Constitution: "No money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in consequence of appropriations made by law; and a regular statement and account of the receipts and expenditures of public money be published from time to time." The Congressman complained that he could not find this information:

I would assume that a reasonable place to look for that statement of account would be in the Budget of the United States Government and while it may be in there, I can't find it. I hope that Mr. [James] Lynn [Director of the Office of Management and Budget] may be able to help me. The Index of the Budget for fiscal year 1976 under the "C's" moves from Center for Disease Control to

³⁵ Knoche, memorandum, "House Select Committee," 24 July 1975. (C) According to Knoche, as if to illustrate the deep divisions within the Committee itself, McClory then told the Director directly that he felt Colby had been "too free to impart secrets in recent months." (C)



Special Counsel Mitchell Rogovin (U)

Chamizal Settlement and to a little old country lawyer, it would seem to me that between those two might have been an appropriate place to find the Central Intelligence Agency but it is not there. It's possibly in there somewhere but I submit that it is not there in the manner which the founding fathers intended and the Constitution requires.³⁶ (U)

³⁶ Pike, letter to Colby, 28 July 1975, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 77M00144R, Box 4. (U)

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Pike believed that "by following the dollars," the Committee could "locate activities and priorities of our intelligence services." Accordingly, on 31 July 1975, the Pike Committee convened a hearing on the CIA budget, calling Elmer B. Staats, the Comptroller General of the General Accounting Office (GAO), as its first witness. Staats testified that the GAO had no idea how much money the CIA spent or whether its management of that money was effective or wasteful since his agency had no access to CIA budgetary information.³⁷ (U)

When Colby appeared before the Committee on 4 August, he refused to testify publicly on the intelligence budget. The next day, however, he appeared in executive session and outlined the expenditures of the Agency in some detail, stressing that the largest portion of the budget was justifiably devoted to the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, the primary US intelligence targets.³⁸ (U)

The DCI argued that divulging even the budget total would harm the US intelligence effort. According to Colby, it would enable foreign intelligence services to improve considerably their estimates of US capabilities. Turning the argument around, Colby reasoned that the US Government would benefit considerably from access to this same information with respect to the Soviet intelligence effort. "To the best of my knowledge," he stated, "no other intelligence service in the world publicizes its intelligence budget."³⁹ (U)

Colby contended that public knowledge of the CIA budget would not significantly increase the public's or Congress's ability to make any judgment about CIA programs. Without further detail and understanding of the programs themselves, neither the public nor Congress could reach significant conclusions. Rogovin and other CIA officials believed Colby had presented a very strong case before the Committee for maintaining secrecy in the budgetary process. They believed he had effectively deflected all major criticisms.⁴⁰ (U)

The Committee's assessment differed. Its final report concluded that the foreign intelligence budget was three or four times more costly than Congress had been told; that money appropriated for the Intelligence Community was hidden throughout the entire Federal budget;

³⁷ House Select Committee on Intelligence, *U.S. Intelligence Agencies and Activities: Intelligence Costs*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1975), p. 126. (U) See also Ford, *Colby*, p. 288. (S)

³⁸ Rogovin, letter to Pike, 26 August 1975 (U) and the classified attachments (S), Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000A, Box 2. (S)

³⁹ Rogovin, letter to Pike, 26 August 1975 (U) and classified attachments, especially "The Legal Basis for the Secret Funding Authorities Established Under Title 50, Sections 403f and 403j, in Furtherance of the Central Intelligence Agency Mission and Functions," Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000A, Box 2. (S)

⁴⁰ Rogovin, interview with Weber. (S)

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that the total amount of funds expended on intelligence was extremely difficult to determine; and that Congressional and executive scrutiny of the budget ranged between “cursory and nonexistent.” The report described the GAO, the auditing arm of Congress, as “no arm at all” in dealing with the Intelligence Community since it was barred from looking carefully into intelligence budgets. The result was insufficient executive and legislative oversight.⁴¹ Moreover, the report found that the DCI, who was nominally in charge of the entire community budget, controlled only 15 percent of the total intelligence budget. The Secretary of Defense had much greater power and control over a greater portion of the intelligence budget than the DCI.⁴² (U)

The report also tackled the issue of secrecy. It noted that “taxpayers and most of Congress did not know and cannot find out, how much they spend on spy activities” and saw this as a conflict with the Constitution’s requirement for a regular and public accounting of all Federal Government spending.⁴³ Colby’s argument that the Soviets would benefit enormously from disclosure was unpersuasive, since the Soviets probably already had a detailed account of US intelligence spending, far more than just the budget total. “In all likelihood, the only people who care to know and do not know these costs are the American taxpayers,” the report concluded.⁴⁴ (U)

CIA officials criticized the draft report as a distorted view of the budget.⁴⁵ Agency officials felt that any disclosure of budget figures permitted “the camel to put his nose under the tent.”⁴⁶ They thought that disclosure would grossly misrepresent the actual figures and could lead to public pressure for reductions that might damage CIA’s ability to support US foreign and defense policies. They also thought the draft would create the erroneous impression that the CIA did not conduct

⁴¹ *Pike Report*, pp. 96-110. (U)

⁴² *Pike Report*, pp. 115-120. The report also noted that the military intelligence budget did not include expenditures for tactical military intelligence and this greatly distorted the intelligence budgets of the services. See also House Select Committee on Intelligence, *Intelligence Costs*, pp. 109-224. (U)

⁴³ *Pike Report*, pp. 110-113. (U)

⁴⁴ *Pike Report*, pp. 113-116. (U)

⁴⁵ Rogovin, letter to Pike, 20 January 1976, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000A, Box 4 and Gregg, memorandum, “Conversation with Searle Field on HSC Final Report,” 2 January 1976, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000A, Box 4. (C)

⁴⁶ Gregg, memorandum, “CIA Budget and the HSC,” 13 January 1976, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 89B00552R, Box 1. (C)

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thorough budget reviews. CIA recommended deleting almost all of the budget references from the report.⁴⁷ (U)

Agency comments and protests had little impact on the final report. It recommended that all intelligence-related items be included as intelligence expenditures in the President's budget and that there be disclosure of the total single sum budgeted for each agency involved in intelligence. It also recommended that Congress draft appropriate legislation to prohibit any significant transfer of funds for intelligence activities without specific approval by the Congressional intelligence committees. Finally, the Committee recommended that the GAO be authorized to conduct management and financial audits of all intelligence agencies.⁴⁸ (U)

Evaluating US Intelligence Performance (U)

The budget issue was only one major concern the Pike Committee raised. It also wanted to know just how effective the CIA and US intelligence had been over the last decade. On 9 September 1975, after submitting informal requests for information, the Pike Committee formally requested "all CIA estimates, current intelligence reports and summaries, situation reports, and other pertinent documents" related to the US Intelligence Community's ability to predict "the 1973 Mideast war; the 1974 overthrow of Makarios in Greece and the Cyprus crisis; the 1974 coup in Portugal; the 1974 nuclear explosion by India; the 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam; the 1972 declaration of martial law in the Philippines and Korea; and the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia."⁴⁹ The Committee wanted all of this within 24 hours.⁵⁰ (U)

The Pike Committee's hearings on the 1973 Middle East war began on 11 September 1975, and almost immediately degenerated into open warfare with the executive branch. Pike released part of a classified CIA summary of the situation in the Middle East (dated 6 October 1973) that had misjudged Arab intentions toward Israel. CIA and the

⁴⁷ Rogovin, letter to Pike, 20 January 1976, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000R, Box 2 (U) and attachments of CIA and Intelligence Community comments. (S) See also Gregg, memorandum, "Principles and Standards for Review of HSC and SSC Draft Papers, 6 December 1975, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000A, Box 2. (S)

⁴⁸ *Pike Report*, pp. 259-60 and House Select Committee on Intelligence, *Intelligence Costs*, pp. 109-224. (U)

⁴⁹ For the Pike Committee evaluations of US intelligence relating to the Mideast war see *Pike Report*, pp. 141-48; for Tet offensive pp. 130-38; on Portugal pp. 149-54; on India pp. 155-57; on Cyprus pp. 158-68; and on Czechoslovakia pp. 139-40. (U)

⁵⁰ Rushford, letter to Bolten, 9 September 1975. (S)

White House angrily protested that the unilateral release compromised sources and national security (although one example of such damage cited by executive branch officials—regarding US monitoring capabilities—had already been leaked by Secretary of State Kissinger).⁵¹ (U)

The following day, Pike subpoenaed Agency records on the Tet offensive in Vietnam in 1968, touching off another confrontation with the White House. President Ford immediately forbade administration officials from testifying before the Pike Committee and decreed that the Committee would receive no more classified documents. Despite Ford's edict, neither the executive branch nor congressional leaders wanted a court confrontation over the issue. The Pike Committee offered what it considered an olive branch, promising to give the executive branch a 24-hour's notice prior to releasing information in order to provide for consultation.⁵² (U)

President Ford met with Representatives Pike and McClory at the White House on 26 September 1975 to try to reach a compromise. Ford agreed to lift his ban on the release of classified materials to the Pike Committee. In return, Pike and McClory agreed to let the President be the ultimate judge in any future disputes over the public release of classified materials.⁵³ (U)

The resolution of the dispute over declassification did not prevent the Committee from issuing some harsh judgments about the Intelligence Community's analytical and warning efforts over the preceding decade. Using the Agency's own postmortems on its analytical performance during 1973 Arab-Israeli war, for example, the Committee found that the "principal conclusions concerning the commencement of hostilities...were—quite simply, obviously, and starkly—wrong."⁵⁴ In earlier testimony before the Committee, Colby himself had admitted that "we did not cover ourselves with glory. We predicted the day before the war broke out that it wasn't going to break out."⁵⁵ (U)

Despite Colby's forthright admission, the Agency reacted defensively to the draft report's conclusions on intelligence analysis. Even though their own postmortems basically supported the Committee's

⁵¹ Daniel Schorr, *Clearing the Air* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p. 188, Smist pp. 185-186. For more on Kissinger's leak, see Marvin and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger* (Boston: Little Brown, 1974), p. 454. (U)

⁵² Colby, letter to Rumsfeld, 18 September 1975. (S)

⁵³ Smist, p. 186. Pike later maintained that this agreement did not extend to the Committee's final report. (U)

⁵⁴ *Pike Report*, p. 141. (U)

⁵⁵ Colby, statement before the Committee, 4 August 1975, House Select Committee on Intelligence, *U.S. Intelligence Agencies and Activities: Risks and Control*, pp. 1771-73. See also Colby, "Budget Inquiry on Intelligence Activities," (TS) Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000A, Box 2. (S)

findings, Agency officials fought to delete most of the section on the Mideast war. The section was skewed, they said, and passages portraying the weakness of Arab militaries would "confirm Arab belief that the U.S. view of them was degrading, thereby exacerbating relations." The Agency also worried that the report provided too much detail on US technical collection capabilities. Unlike the give and take brokering that characterized CIA-Church Committee relations, positions on both sides of the Pike Committee-Agency relationship tended to be uncompromising. Pike Committee staffers removed names and sources, but kept most of the material to which the Agency objected. They reasoned that to comply with the Agency recommendations would leave nothing.⁵⁶ (U)

The Committee Reviews Covert Actions (U)

The Agency, with White House support, continued its assault on the Pike Committee investigations and findings when the Committee announced its intention to investigate ten years of covert action, with specific attention to operations in the 1972 Italian elections, covert aid to the Kurds in Iraq from 1972 to 1975, and recent activities in Angola. Under orders from the White House, CIA officials refused to testify in open session before the Committee on these operations, declaring that such hearings would only benefit foreign intelligence services.⁵⁷ (U)

The Committee, instead, heard from Rep. Michael Harrington and Harvard Law Professor Roger Fisher, both of whom advocated outlawing all covert action; former National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, who opposed covert action in peacetime; and historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who claimed that the CIA was indeed "a rogue elephant" and suggested that the only remedy was to impose strict executive and legislative oversight and drastically cut the intelligence budget.⁵⁸ (U)

The Pike Committee followed these hearings with a detailed examination of the role of the National Security Council (NSC) and its covert action review panel, the "40 Committee." The key question for the Committee was whether the CIA was indeed a rogue elephant, or rather simply following the orders of the President and the executive branch.⁵⁹ (U)

⁵⁶ Rogovin, letter to Pike, 20 January 1976 with attachments (S), Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000R, Box 4. (S)

⁵⁷ House Select Committee on Intelligence, *Risks and Control*, pp. 1575-76. (U)

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 1729-70, 1848-50, 1858. (U)

⁵⁹ House Select Committee on Intelligence, *Performance of the Intelligence Community*, pp. 777-78 and 827-28. The Committee was forced to issue a subpoena for 40 Committee records on 6 November 1975. (U)

The Committee concluded that covert actions “were irregularly approved, sloppily implemented, and at times, had been forced on a reluctant CIA by the President and his national security advisors.” Nonetheless, the Committee did not recommend banning covert action but merely sought tighter controls. With tighter controls in mind, it also recommended that the DCI notify the Committee in writing with a detailed explanation of the nature, extent, purpose, and cost of each covert operation within 48 hours of its implementation. The panel also proposed that the President certify in writing that such a covert action operation was required to protect national security.⁶⁰ (U)

CIA officers did not expect the Committee’s findings in this area. The report made clear that CIA was not out of control, and that the Agency did not conduct operations without approval from higher authority. Pike himself stated publicly that “the CIA does not go galloping off conducting operations by itself.... The major things which are done are not done unilaterally by the CIA without approval from higher up the line.”⁶¹ The Committee’s report stated “all evidence in hand suggests that the CIA, far from being out of control, has been utterly responsive to the instructions of the President and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.”⁶² Even Pike concluded:

I wound up the hearings with a higher regard for the CIA than when I started. We did find evidence, upon evidence, upon evidence where the CIA said: “No, don’t do it.” The State Department or the White House said: “We’re going to do it.” The CIA was much more professional and had a far deeper reading on the down-the-road implications of some immediately popular act than the executive branch or administration officials. One thing I really disagreed with [Senator Frank] Church on was his characterization of the CIA as a “rogue elephant.” The CIA never did anything the White House didn’t want. Sometimes they didn’t want to do what they did.⁶³ (U)

Approving the Final Report (U)

Determined to finish his work by 31 January 1976, Pike pushed his Committee for a final report. Staff chief Searle Field hired Stanley

⁶⁰ Pike Report, p. 258. (U)

⁶¹ House Select Committee on Intelligence, *Performance of the Intelligence Community*, p. 813. (U) See also John Waller, “The Myth of the Rogue Elephant Interred,” *Studies in Intelligence* 22 (Summer 1978): 2. (S)

⁶² *Pike Report*, p. 189. (U)

⁶³ Pike as quoted in Smist, p. 197. (U)

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Bach, a political scientist with some Hill experience, to draft findings and recommendations. Working primarily from the transcripts of the Committee's hearings, Bach produced a well-balanced report that still was by no means uncritical of the Intelligence Community. Bach's report called for the establishment of a joint Congressional intelligence oversight committee along the lines of the Joint Atomic Energy Committee.⁶⁴ (U)

Pike rejected the draft and assigned the responsibility for producing a satisfactory final report to Field and Aaron Donner. By early January, Field and Donner had a draft.⁶⁵ (U)

On 19 January, Field gave Agency reviewers a copy of the 338-page report, insisting that he needed their comments by the close of business the following day. Mitchell Rogovin, Special Counsel to the Director, responded with an indignant letter to Congressman Pike criticizing the ludicrous coordination deadline and complaining that the draft was an "unrelenting indictment couched in biased, pejorative and factually erroneous terms." For Rogovin and most of the Agency, the report dwelled on failures and flaws, giving the American public a distorted view of US intelligence; the draft report would only undermine the "impact, credibility and the important work of your Committee."⁶⁶ (U)

Despite Rogovin's protest, on 23 January 1976 the Committee voted 9 to 7 to release its report with no substantial changes.⁶⁷ The Republicans on the Committee, strongly supported by the Agency and the White House, now led the fight to suppress the report. Rep. Robert Kasten (R-WI), for example, informed the Agency that the Republicans felt the vote to adopt the report did not reflect the will of the entire House and that he and other Committee members—including at least one Democrat—planned to carry the fight to the floor of the House in order to get the report suppressed. Kasten asked that the Agency brief himself and like-minded Committee members on the report's potential to harm national security. His colleague David Treen (R-LA) told Agency officials that he doubted that the report could be stopped, but nevertheless indicated that, if the Agency felt the report was a "complete disaster,"

⁶⁴ Smist, p. 207. (U)

⁶⁵ Gregg, memorandum, "Conversation with Searle Field on HSC Final Report," 2 January 1976. (S)

⁶⁶ Rogovin, letter to Pike, 20 January 1976. (U)

⁶⁷ Smist, p. 297. (U) See also Gregg, memorandum, "Conversation with Bob Kasten of the HSC," 23 January 1976, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000R, Box 2. (C)

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he would consider mounting all-out opposition on the House floor.⁶⁸ At the same time, DCI Colby, fearing an imminent release of the report, called a press conference to denounce the Committee and called its report "totally biased and a disservice to our nation."⁶⁹ (U)

Minority Leader McClory and the Republicans, informally supported by the Agency and the White House, took the fight to the House floor on 26 January 1976. McClory argued forcefully that the release of the report would endanger the national security.⁷⁰ That same day *The New York Times* printed large sections of the draft report.⁷¹ Ironically, this new disclosure may have influenced some Congressmen to vote against the report. (U)

On 29 January 1976 the House voted 246 to 124 to direct the Pike Committee not to release its report until it "has been certified by the president as not containing information which would adversely affect the intelligence activities of the CIA."⁷² Representative Wayne Hays (D-OH) seemed to reflect a majority opinion when he commented just before the vote:

I will probably vote not to release it, because I do not know what is in it. On the other hand, let me say it has been leaked page by page, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph to *The New York Times*, but I suspect, and I do not know and this is what disturbs me, that when this report comes out it is going to be the biggest non-event since Brigitte Bardot, after 40 years and four husbands and numerous lovers, held a press conference to announce that she was no longer a virgin.⁷³ (U)

Pike was bitter over the vote, complaining to his assembled colleagues that "the House just voted not to release a document it had not read. Our committee voted to release a document it had read."⁷⁴ So upset was Pike that he threatened not to file a report at all with the House since "a report on the CIA in which the CIA would do the final rewrite would

⁶⁸ Gregg, memorandum, "Conversation with David Treen of the HSC," 23 January 1976 and Gregg, memorandum, "Conversation with Bob Kasten of the HSC," 23 January 1976, Office of Congressional Affairs Job 79B01000R. (C)

⁶⁹ *The New York Times*, 26 January 1976, p. 1 (U) and Ford, *Colby*, p. 297. (S)

⁷⁰ Smist, p. 169. (U)

⁷¹ *The New York Times*, 26 January 1976, p. 1. (U)

⁷² Smist, p. 170 and Ford, *Colby*, p. 296. (S)

⁷³ *Congressional Record - House*, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, 29 January 1976, p. 1639. (U)

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 1639. (U)

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be a lie.”⁷⁵ Later Pike reflected that “they, the White House, wanted to pre-censor our final report. This was unacceptable.”⁷⁶ (U)

In an attempt to mollify Pike, McClory on 3 February made a motion in Committee “that Speaker Carl Albert be asked to submit the final report to President Ford so that it might be sanitized and released.” The Committee rejected this last effort at compromise by a vote of 7 to 4.⁷⁷ CBS correspondent Daniel Schorr then gave a copy of the draft report to *The Village Voice*, which published it in full on 16 February 1976 under the title “The Report on the CIA that President Ford Doesn’t Want You to Read.”⁷⁸ When Schorr admitted that he leaked the report to *The Village Voice*, the House voted to have its Committee on Standard of Official Conduct investigate the leak to Schorr. After an extensive inquiry, it failed to find who leaked the report. So ended the House investigation of the Intelligence Community.⁷⁹ (U)

Recommendations (U)

Overlooked in all the commotion surrounding the leaking of the Pike Committee report to the press were the solid recommendations the Committee made for improving Congressional and executive oversight of the Intelligence Community and for strengthening the authorities of the Director of Central Intelligence. The Pike Committee’s foremost recommendation was the establishment of a standing committee on intelligence. The proposed House committee, unlike its Senate counterpart, would have jurisdiction over all legislation and oversight functions relating to all US agencies and departments engaged in foreign or domestic intelligence. It would have exclusive jurisdiction over budget authorizations for all intelligence activities and for all covert actions. The Pike Committee also proposed to vest this committee with subpoena power and the right to declassify information and documents in its possession. Coupled with this last recommendation was an additional section that

⁷⁵ David E. Rosenbaum, “House Prevents Release of Report,” *The New York Times*, 30 January 1976, p. 2. (U)

⁷⁶ Quoted in Smist, *Congress Oversees the United States Intelligence Community*, p. 162. (U)

⁷⁷ Smist, *Congress Oversees the United States Intelligence Community*, p. 163. (U)

⁷⁸ *The Village Voice*, 16 February 1976, p. 1. *The Village Voice* version of the Pike Report with an introduction by Philip Agee was published in Great Britain in 1977 by Spokesman Books. (U)

⁷⁹ Smist, *Congress Oversees the United States Intelligence Community*, p. 171. (U)

recommended criminal sanctions for the unauthorized disclosure of information tending to identify any US intelligence officer.⁸⁰ (U)

All of its recommendations were logical and responsible, and might have improved the organization, performance, and control of the Intelligence Community. In the controversy over the release of the report, however, Agency and executive branch officials ignored, forgot, or misunderstood the recommendations as “outrageous and missing all the points.”⁸¹ Not until July 1977, almost a year and a half later, did the House vote to create a permanent intelligence oversight committee. Pike himself, reflecting on the investigation later, saw the leaks and fights over disclosure as “distracting from the committee’s findings and recommendations.”⁸² (U)

The Pike Committee, under a severe but self-imposed deadline and with a less than adequate staff, nevertheless conducted a comprehensive investigation of the Intelligence Community and raised many substantive issues. It asked the important questions: What was the cost of US intelligence? Was the money being spent wisely? How effective was the performance? Even DCI Colby and his aide Mitchell Rogovin later conceded that Pike had created an important agenda that was much more significant than the Church Committee’s investigation, and that Pike had asked the right questions.⁸³ Pike did not allow the executive branch, and the latest headlines, to set the agenda for his investigation, as both the Rockefeller Commission and the Church Committee had. Pike himself characterized the major difference between the two Congressional committees. He saw the Church Committee as “focused on aberrations and blowguns” while “we went after standard operating procedures.”⁸⁴ (U)

Despite its failures, the Pike Committee inquiry was a new and dramatic break with the past. It was the first significant House investigation of the Intelligence Community since the creation of the CIA in 1947. A clearer understanding of the importance of an effective CIA and Intelligence Community and the need for closer oversight emerged from the Committee’s investigations. Both CIA and the Committee were caught up in the greater power struggle between the legislative and

⁸⁰ *Pike Report*, pp. 257-58. Under the Church Committee recommendations and the subsequent establishment of a Senate Select Committee on Intelligence responsibility for tactical military intelligence remained solely within the jurisdiction of the Senate Armed Services Committee. (U)

⁸¹ Colby, interview with Weber, p. 69 (S). Even Hal Ford, in his book on Colby, ignored the solid recommendation of the Pike Committee. Ford believed that the Pike Committee Report clearly damaged US intelligence. Ford, *Colby*, p. 301. (s)

⁸² *The New York Times*, 10 October, 1976, p. 6. (U)

⁸³ Colby, interview with Weber, p. 12 (S) and Rogovin, interview with Weber, p. 18. (s)

⁸⁴ Pike quoted in Smist, p. 54. (U)

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executive branches in which the Congress in the late 1970s attempted to regain control over not only US intelligence activities but over US foreign policy as well. The investigations were part of this overall struggle, and foreshadowed the day when Congress would become an important intelligence consumer. (U)

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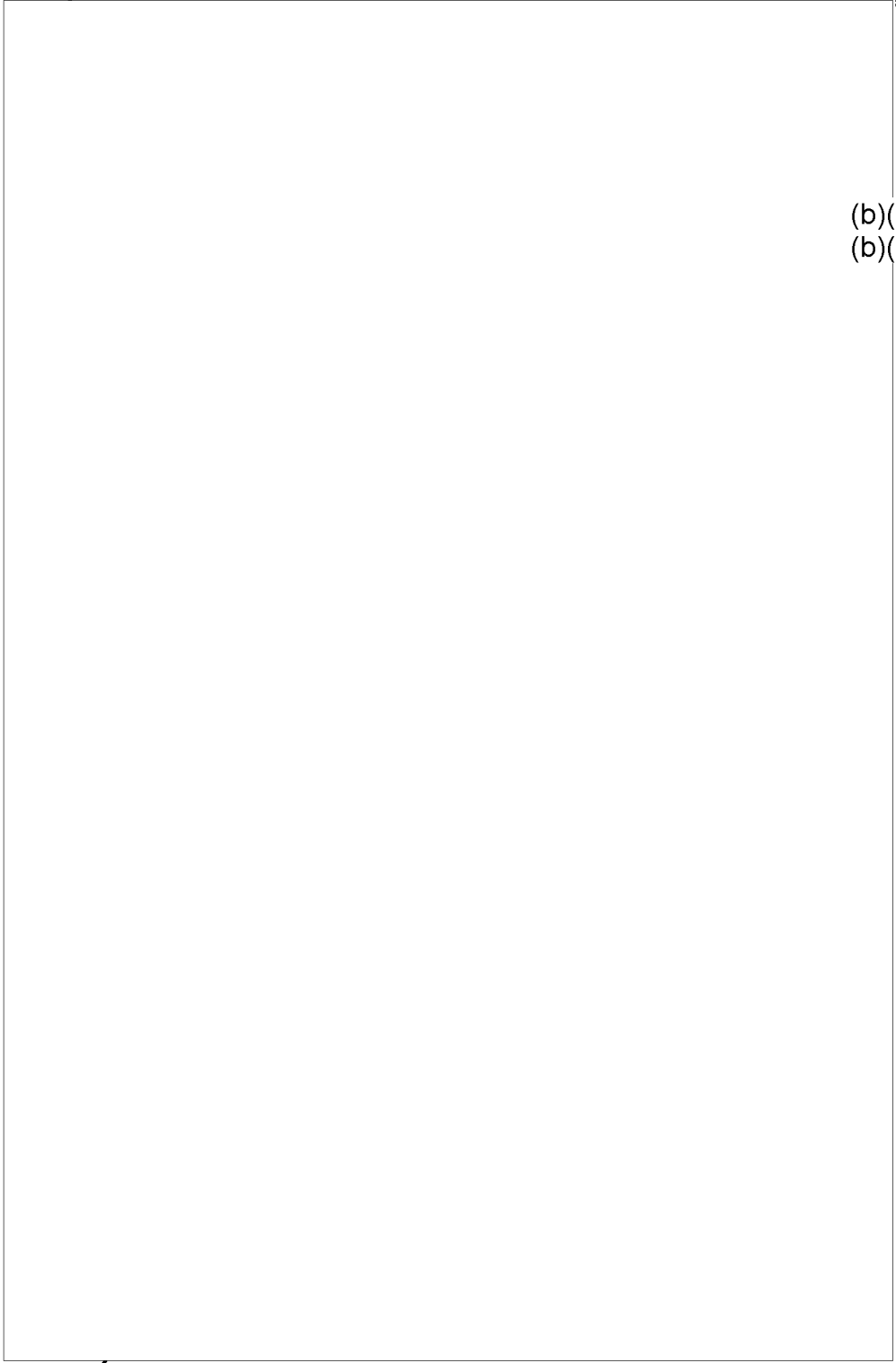
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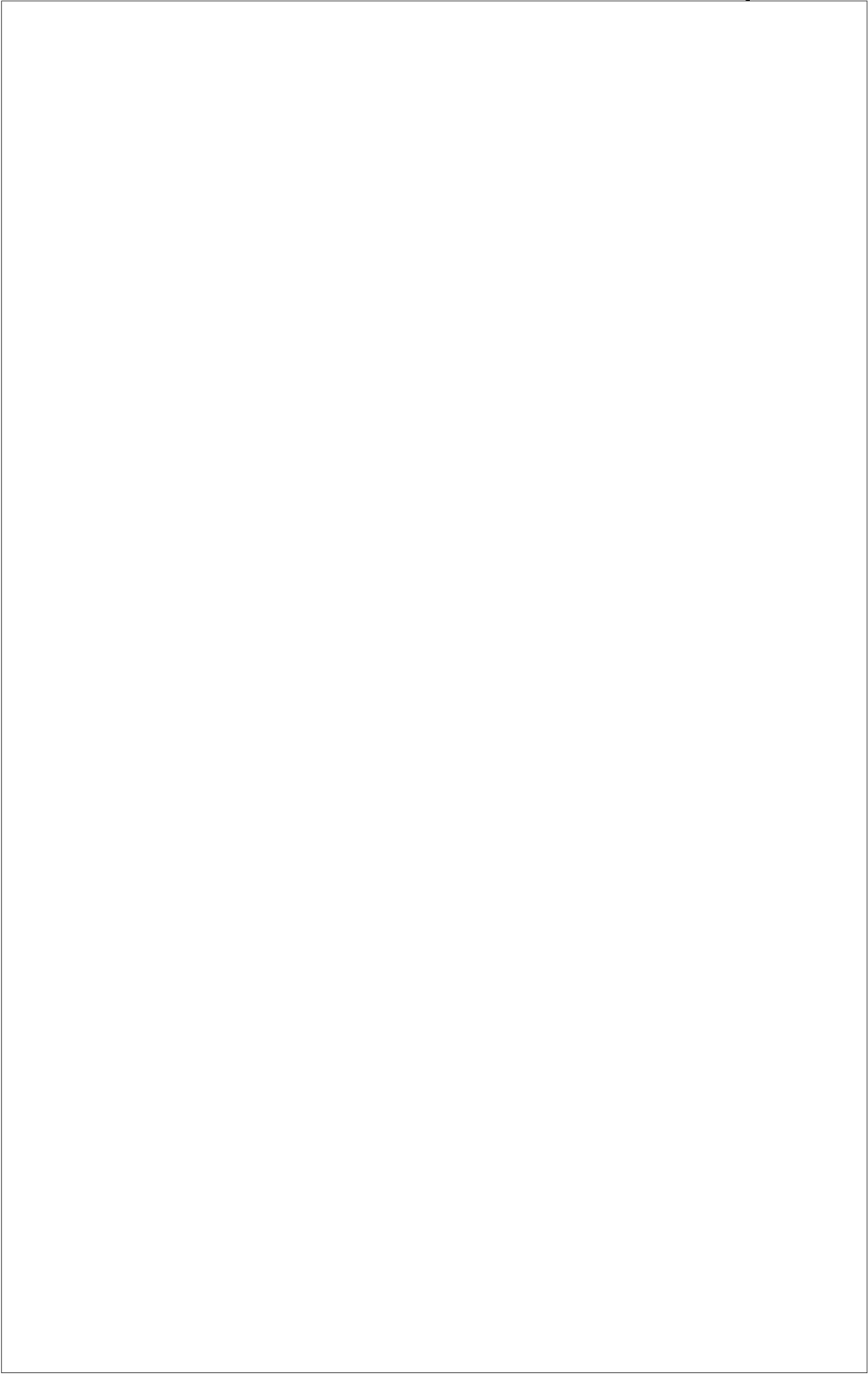
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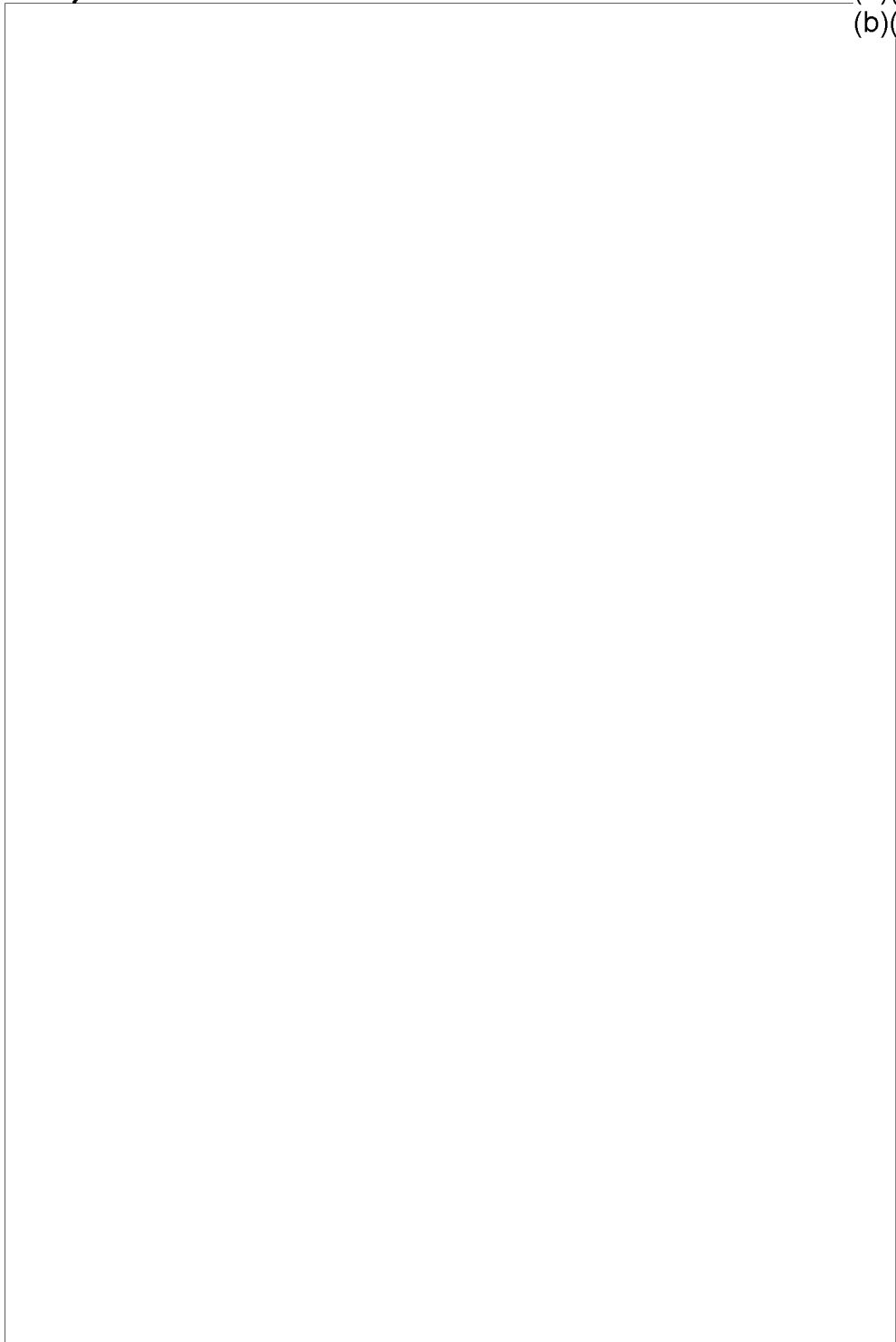


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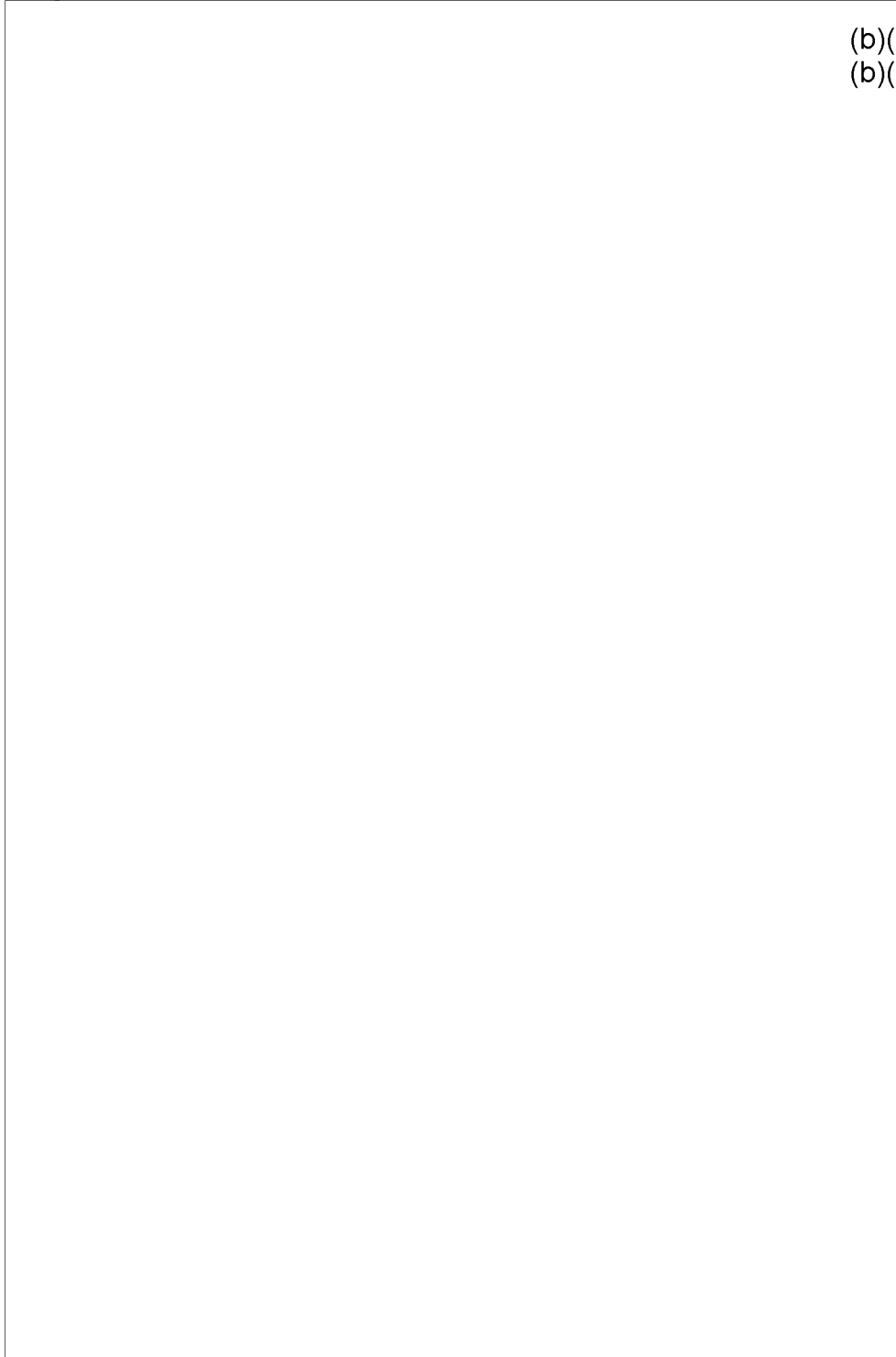


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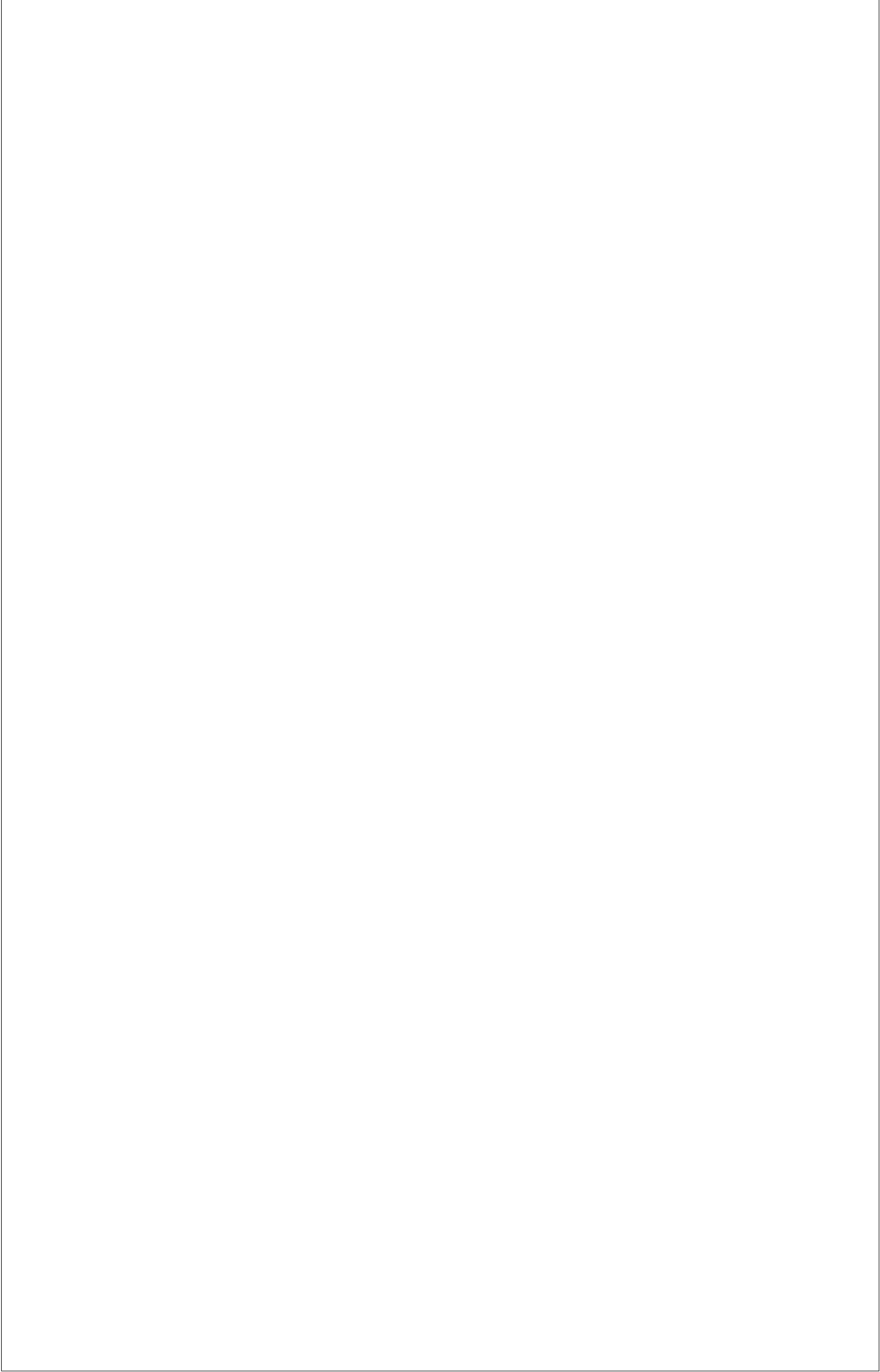
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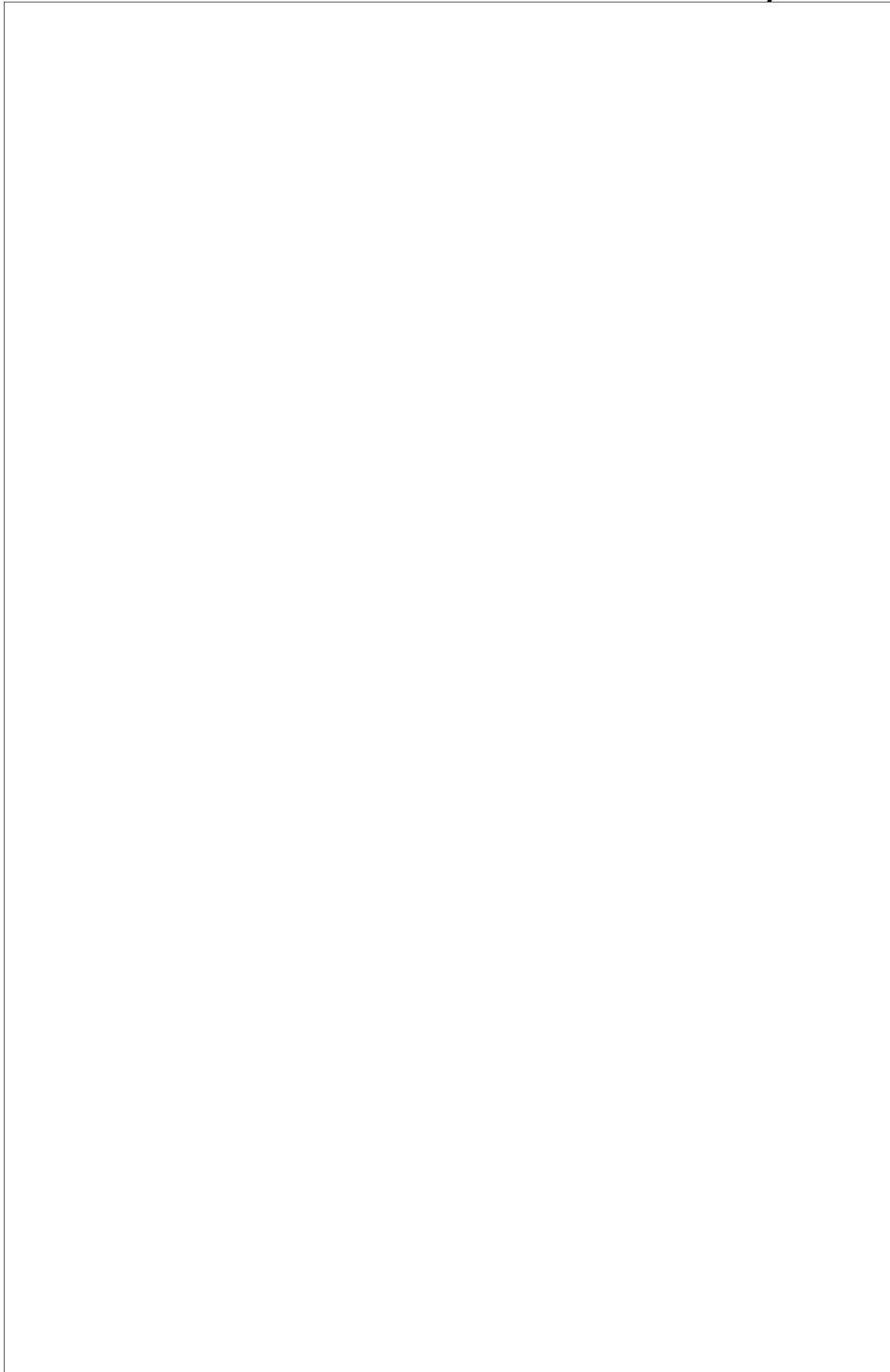
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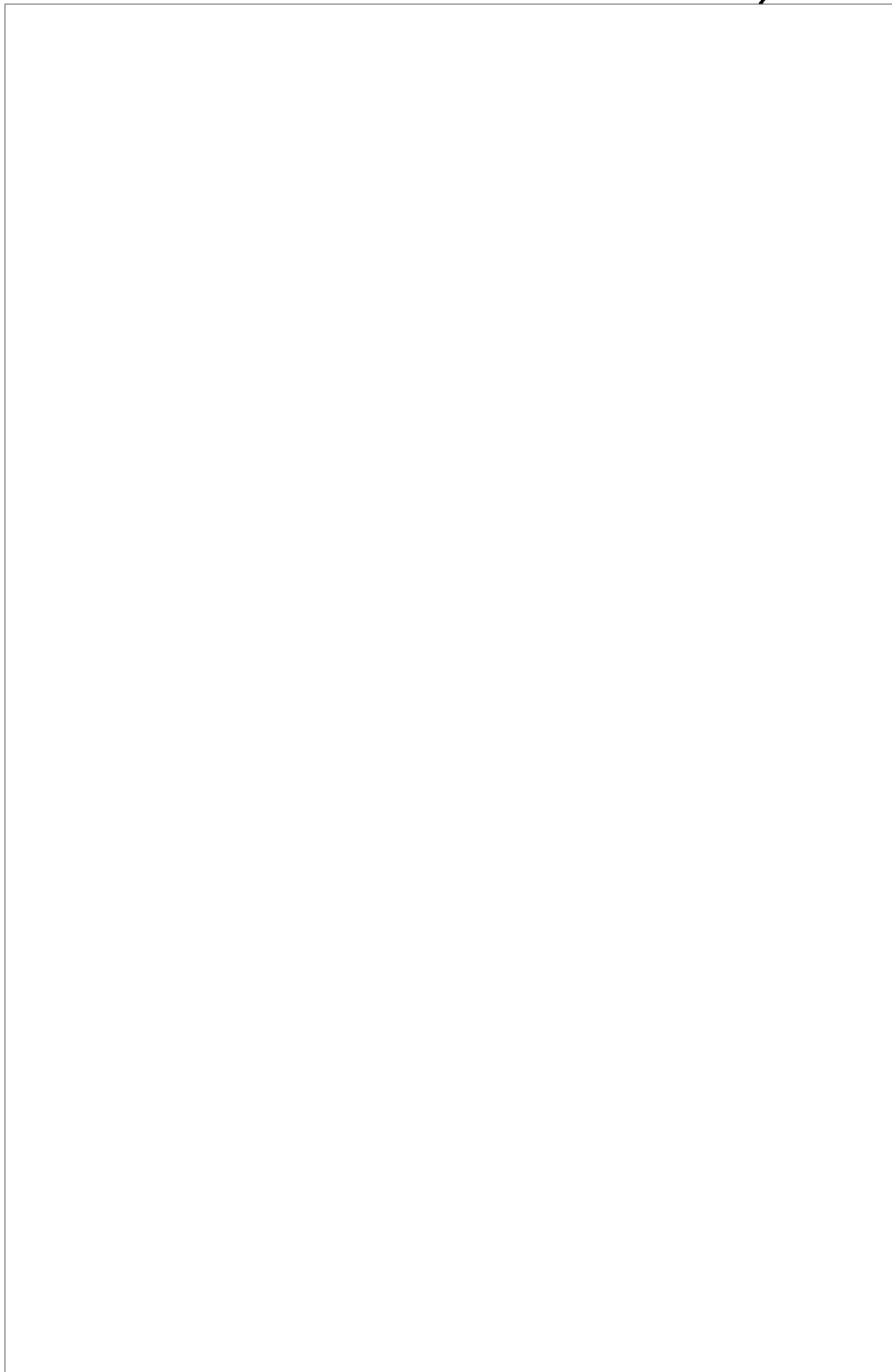
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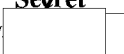
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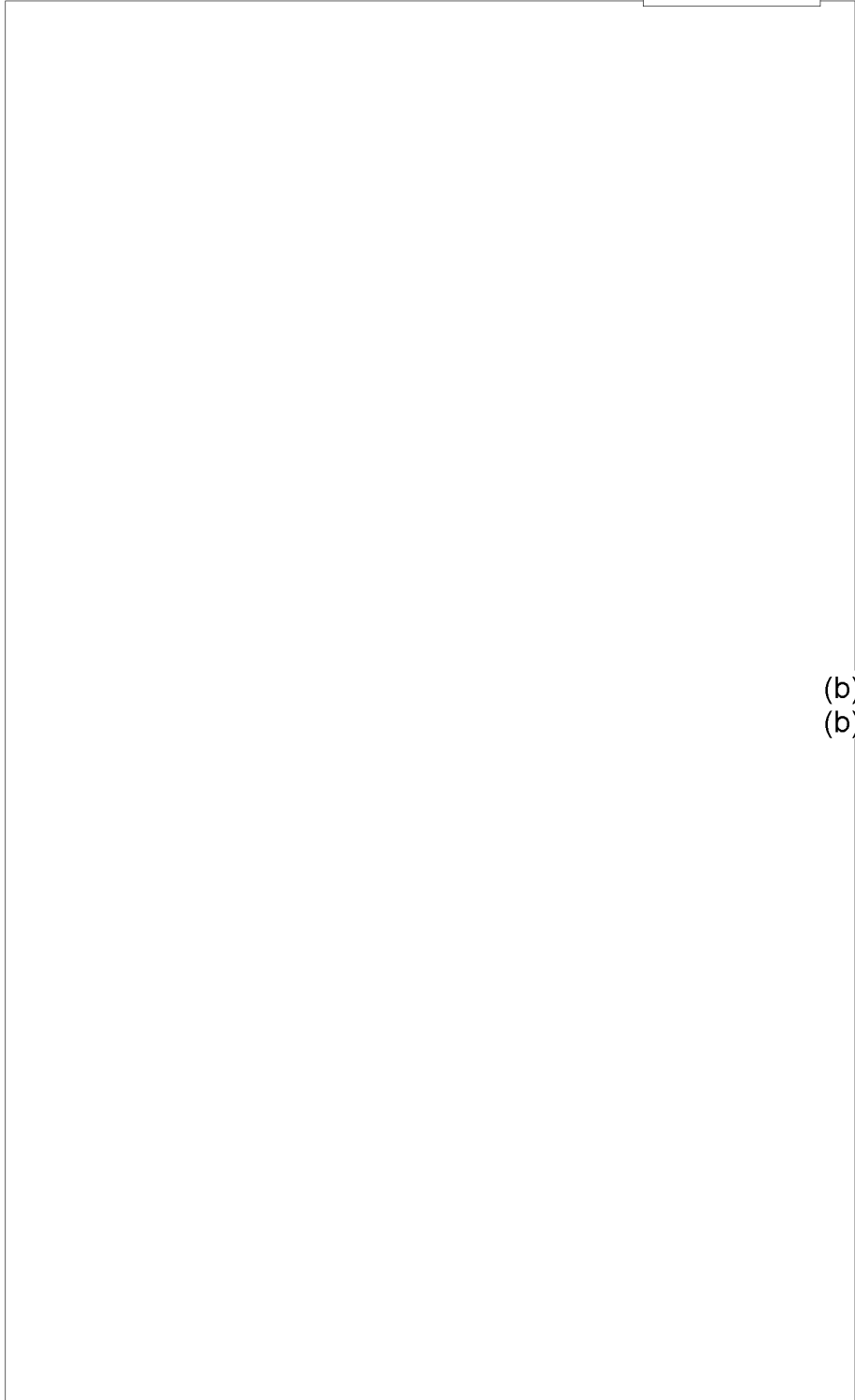


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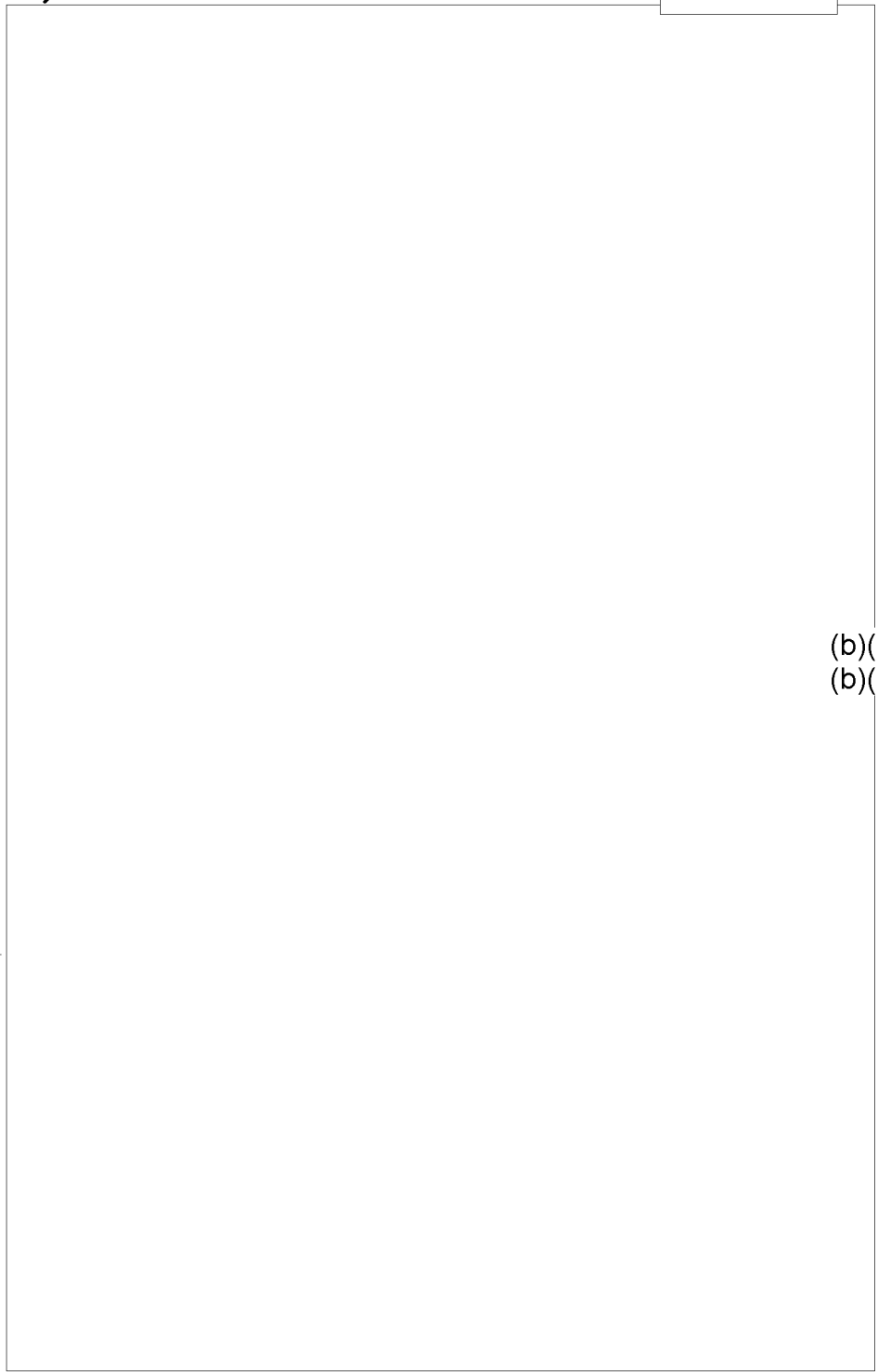
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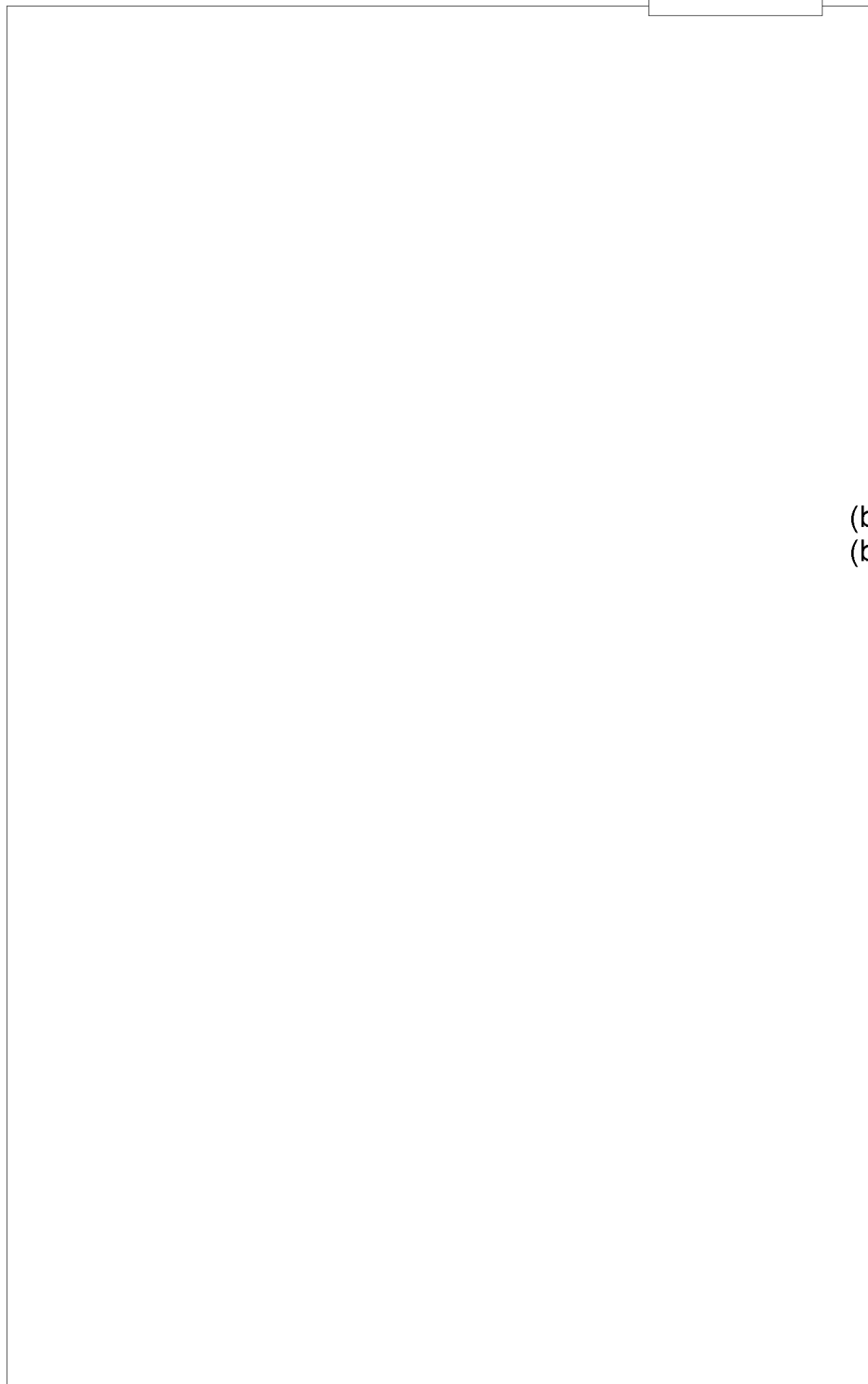


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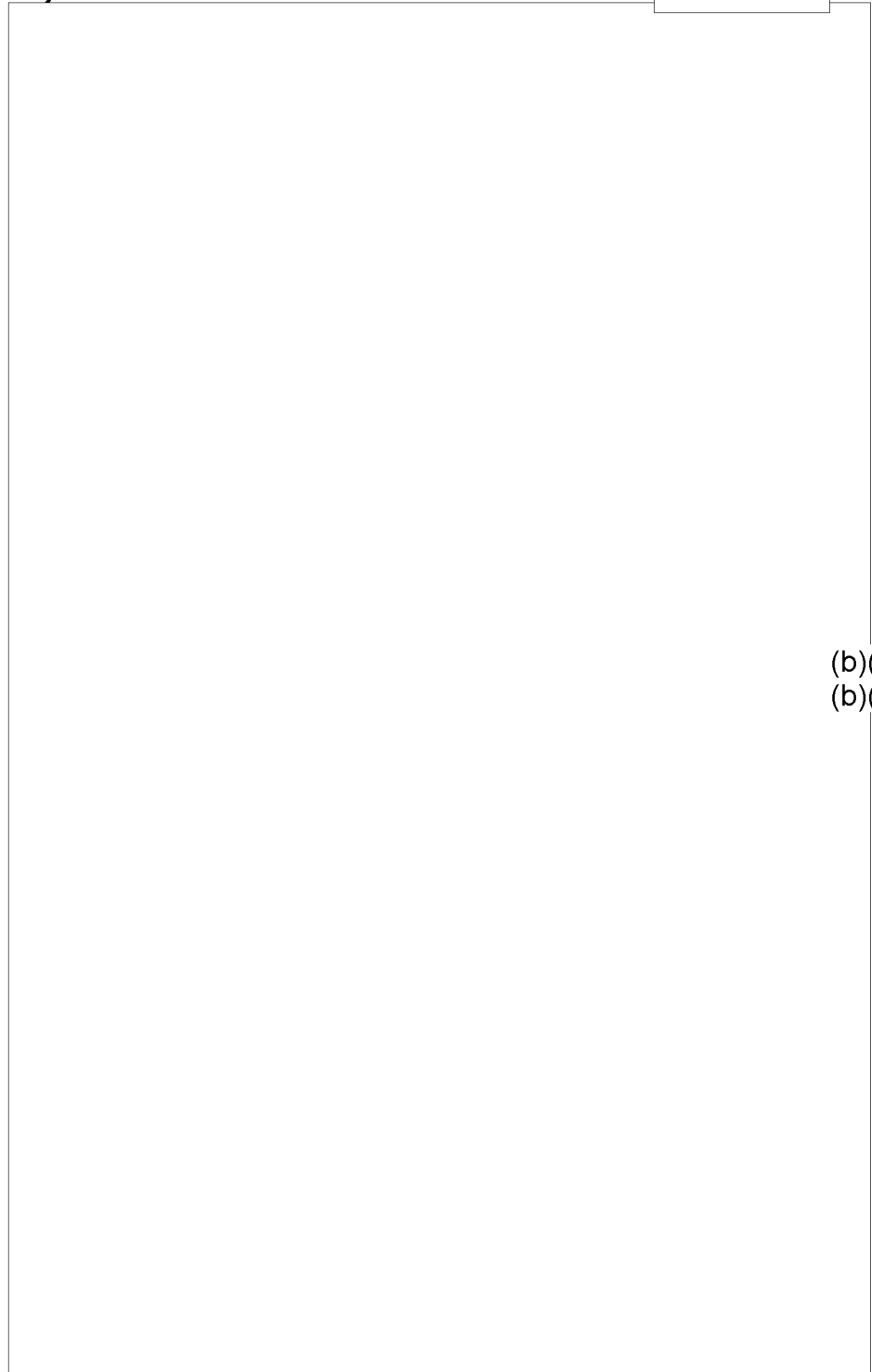
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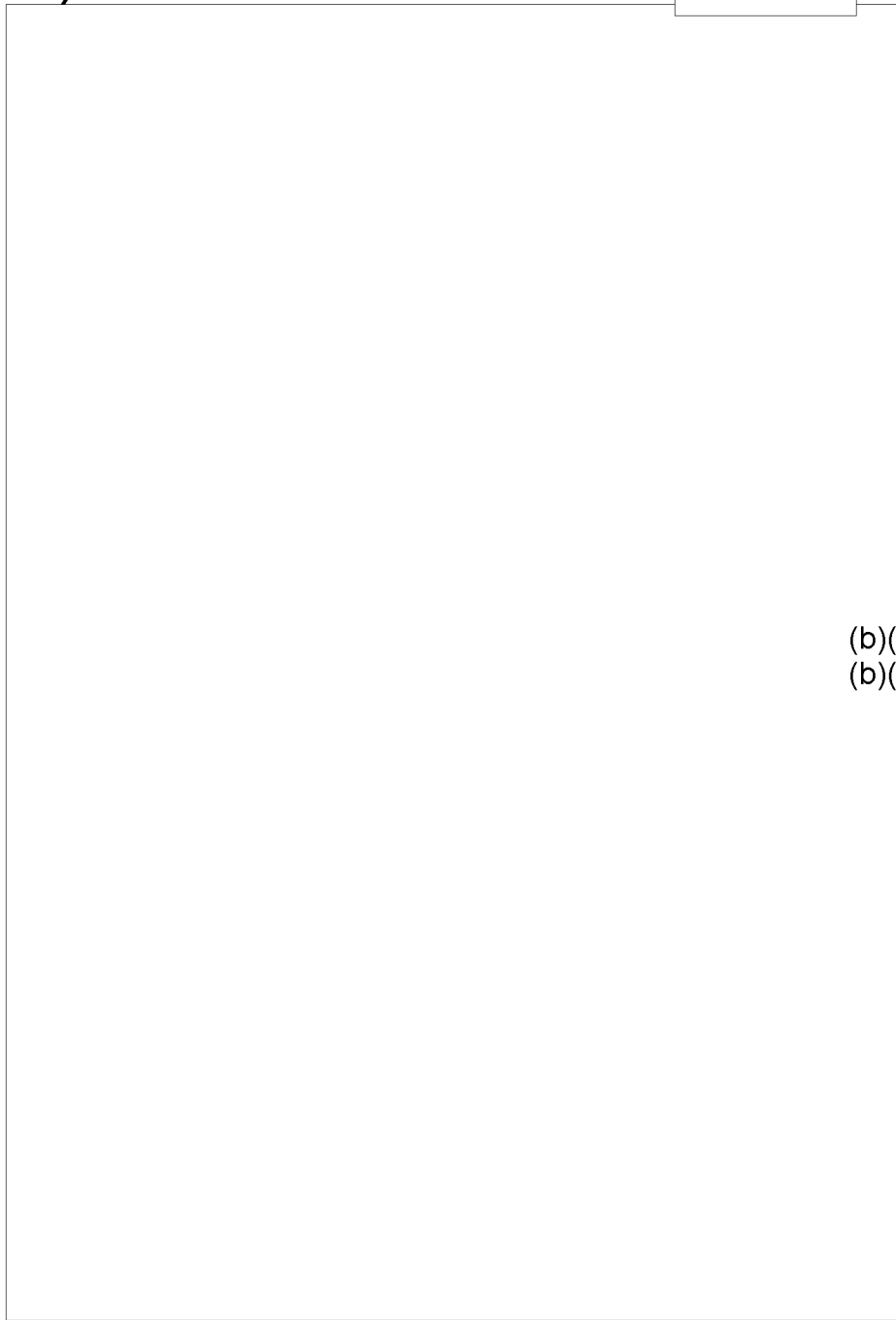
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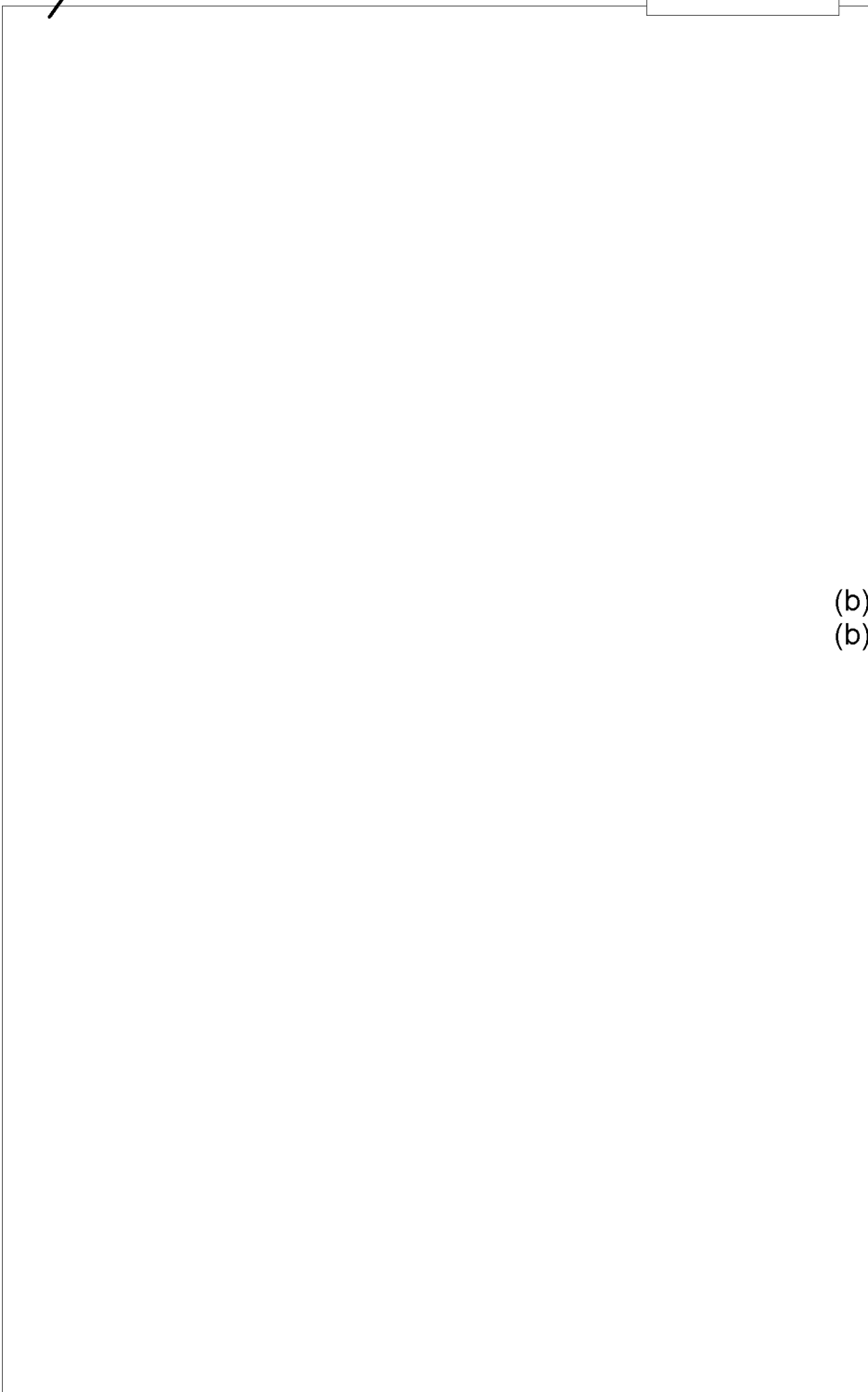


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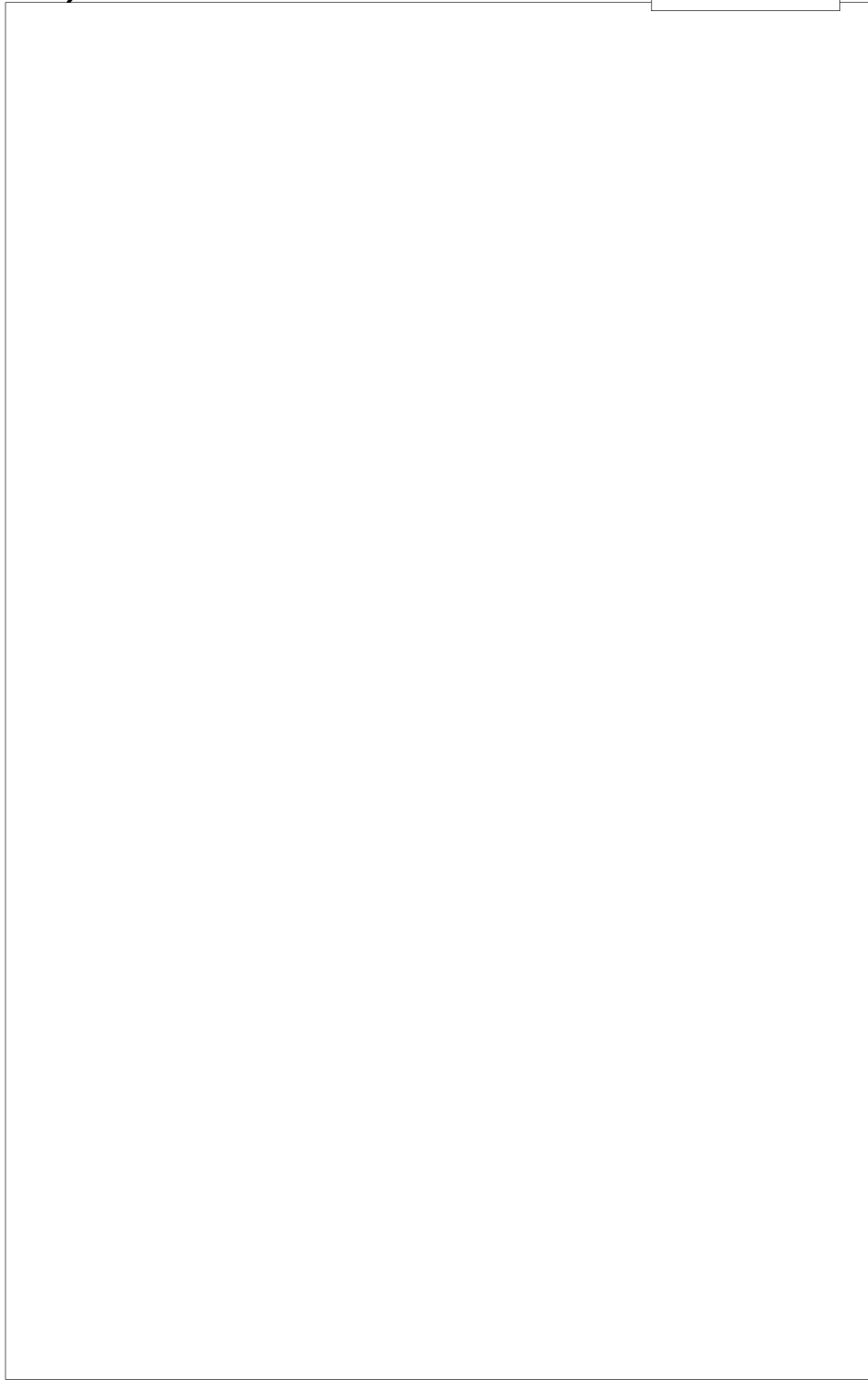
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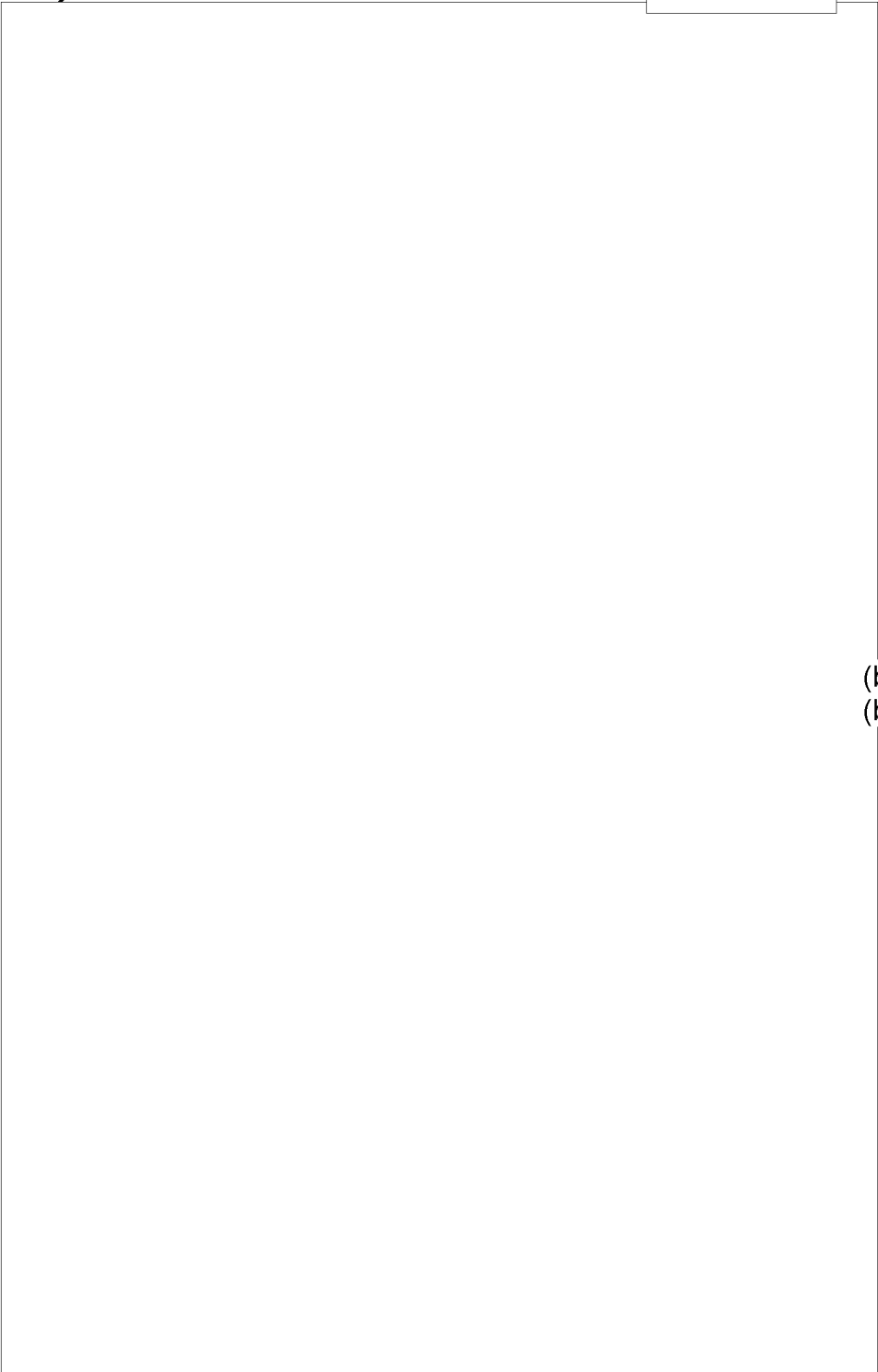
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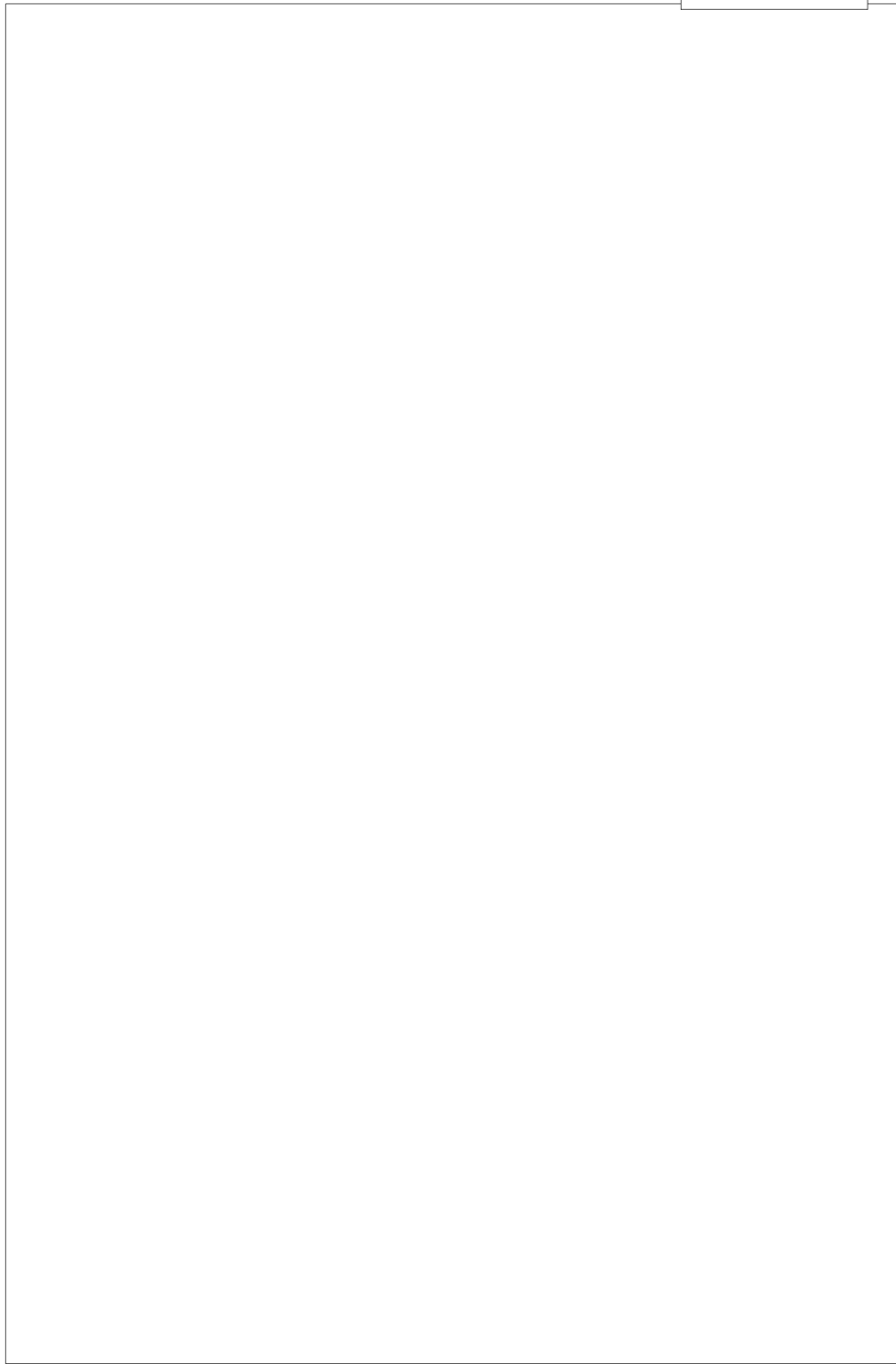
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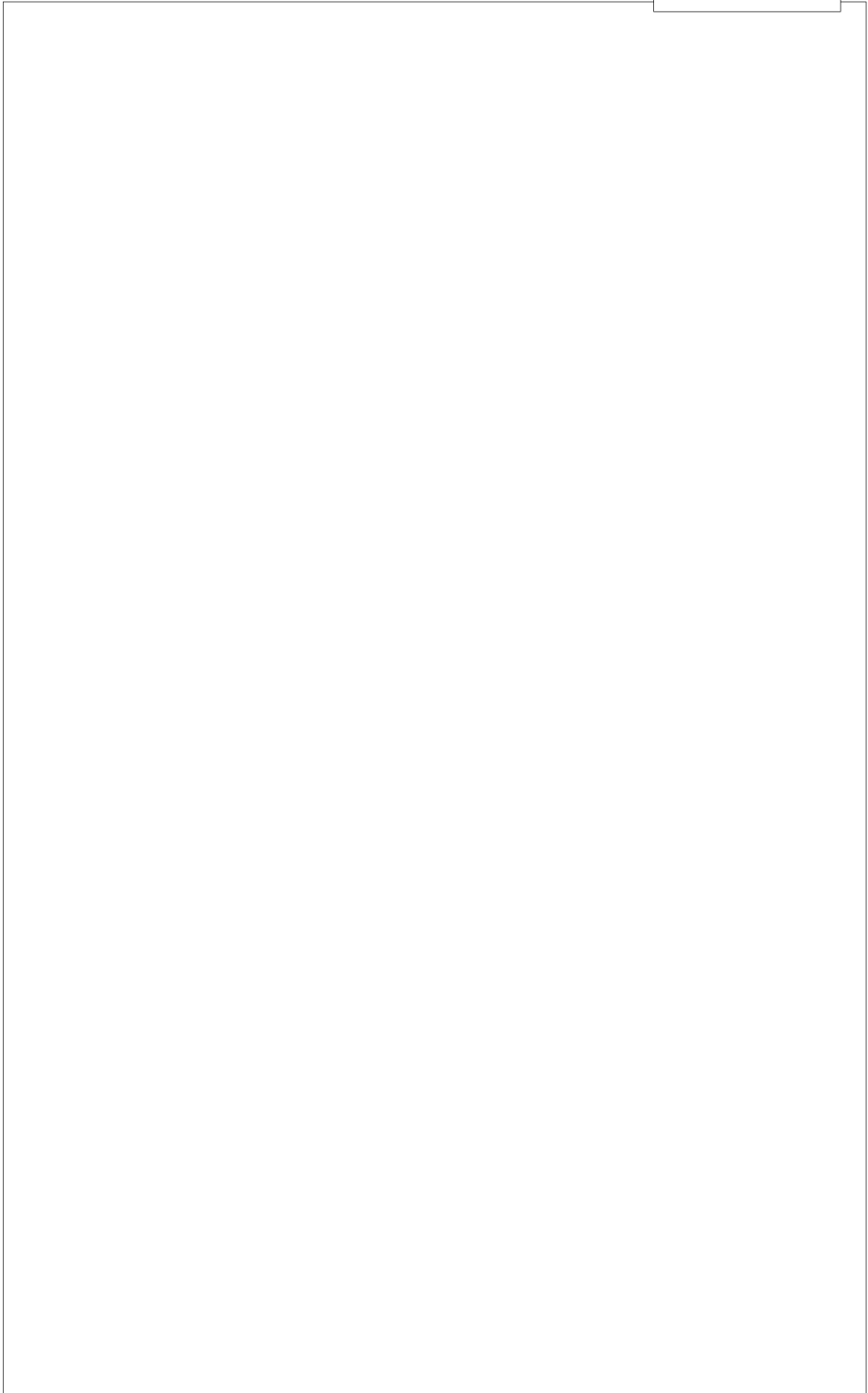
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Hard Targets: Reviewing the Attacks on CIA's Gulf War Analysis (U)

Michael Warner

The Central Intelligence Agency provided an unprecedented variety of analyses to policymakers and commanders during the crisis that followed Iraq's seizure of Kuwait in August 1990. The contribution that CIA and Intelligence Community analysts made to the victory of Operation Desert Storm in 1991 has been applauded by decisionmakers from President George Bush to the working levels of virtually every department and service. Nevertheless, critics have accused the Agency of (among other things) neglecting to warn policymakers that Iraq was about to invade Kuwait, of politicizing its assessment of Baghdad's ability to hold Kuwait in the face of global economic sanctions, and of overestimating the residual strength of the Iraqi army on the eve of the coalition's ground offensive to liberate Kuwait.¹ The full history of CIA analysis in the crisis has not been written, but a fairer examination of the Agency's performance in these three instances is possible and perhaps overdue. Such a review shows that in all three cases the Directorate of Intelligence provided accurate, timely, and objective information to policymakers. Closer looks at two of the cases, however, show how even accurate analyses can be resented by consumers faced with urgent and momentous decisions. (C NF)

Sudden Crisis (U)

The cliché that the origins of the next war tend to be found in the last one hardly helped CIA analysts in 1990 to predict the behavior of Iraq and its volatile strongman, Saddam Husayn. Iraq had spent most of the last decade at war with neighboring Iran, and many observers

¹ See, for instance, Angelo Codevilla, "Get Smart—Eliminate the CIA," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 January 1995. (U)

believed that Saddam would lie quiet for some time to come. Saddam— if he did go looking for military adventures—seemed unlikely to lash out at his Arab neighbors (who had more or less assisted his fight against Iran). (C NF)

In the meantime, US policymakers hoped to moderate Saddam's behavior. The Bush administration's cautiously optimistic policy toward Iraq, secretly outlined in National Security Directive 26 (October 1989), received support a month later from the Intelligence Community in the form of a new National Intelligence Estimate, NIE 36.2-89, which had been several months in drafting. "Over the next three years Iraq will pursue largely restrained foreign policies that will not seriously threaten US interests and allies in the region," predicted the estimate's Key Judgments. Saddam's projected good behavior, however, would not represent a change of heart, but rather a tactical bow to "political and economic realities." Saddam still wanted to improve Iraq's strategic position vis-a-vis its neighbors. Baghdad would accelerate its development of weapons of mass destruction and perhaps even try to gain control—although probably not by force—of the Kuwaiti islands of Warbah and Bubiyan, which stood astride Iraq's access to the Persian Gulf. In addition, "Increased [Iraqi] oil exports will increase tensions with Saudi Arabia and other key OPEC oil producers," NIE 36.2-89 predicted.² This particular prediction would soon come true. (S NF)

Iraqi actions in early 1990 soon made analysts in the Directorate of Intelligence's Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis (NE-SA) wonder if NIE 36.2-89 had not been too optimistic. Saddam took no steps to demobilize his million-man army, the world's fourth-largest. (b)(1)

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The implicit threat became explicit a few weeks later when Saddam, announcing that Baghdad possessed binary chemical weapons, [redacted] (b)(1)
[redacted] (S NF) (b)(3)

Despite these developments, however, Iraqi-Kuwaiti tensions seemed only a little higher. DI analysts later concluded that Saddam had decided in early 1990 to prepare for an invasion of Kuwait. Republican Guard troops captured in the war claimed that they began training for a large operation that May, although they were not told where they would be sent. [redacted] (b)(3)

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[redacted]

[redacted] In June, Iraqi officials visited Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates—both members, with Iraq, of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)—to badger both principalities to stop overfilling their oil production quotas.⁴ Baghdad needed higher prices for its own oil in order to maintain its huge military and to keep its economy on the path of recovery, and consistent over-quota sales by Kuwait and several other OPEC states had contributed to a fall in the average price from \$20 a barrel in January 1990 to \$14 a barrel the following June. (S NF [redacted])

(b)(3)

The Kuwaitis felt pressured but not threatened by Iraq until 17 July, when Saddam used the anniversary of Iraq's Ba'ath revolution to threaten unspecified Arab countries with retaliation if they did not cut their oil production back to their OPEC quotas. To ensure that Kuwait understood Saddam, Iraqi diplomats passed around a lengthy indictment at the Arab League meeting then in progress in Tunis. The note accused Kuwait of "direct aggression against Iraq." Kuwait had driven down oil prices, encroached on Iraqi territory during the recent war, and even stolen Iraqi oil from fields that stretched into Kuwaiti territory. This last claim surprised everyone; Baghdad had never before made such an accusation, which American diplomats judged "egregious in its tone and substance." Nevertheless, the US Embassy in Baghdad told Washington, the prospect of war was still "implausible." Saddam merely wanted debt forgiveness and perhaps Bubiyan and Warbah Islands as well, the Embassy believed; his demands were limited, despite his clumsy rhetoric.⁵ Kuwaiti authorities nevertheless took Saddam's threats seriously, quietly putting the kingdom's small defense force on alert.⁶ (S NF)

The Directorate of Intelligence published its first analysis of the crisis in the 19 July edition of the National Intelligence Daily (NID).

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[redacted] NESAs (b)(1)
 analysts summarized the cables from US diplomats in Baghdad and Kuwait (b)(3) and commented that Saddam probably intended to increase the pressure on Kuwait to reduce oil production before the semiannual OPEC ministerial scheduled to meet in Geneva the following week. Kuwait had resisted Iraqi intimidation in the past, noted the NID Brief, and the Kuwaitis would almost certainly do so again.⁷ (S NF)

Saddam's threats looked more ominous on 20 July, when [redacted] (b)(1)

[redacted] tanks and artillery of his elite Republican Guard were massing in southern Iraq.⁸ For the next few days (b)(1)
 CIA officers and analysts strained to discern Saddam's plans while tensions (b)(3) escalated and the Iraqi army deployed along the Kuwaiti border. (S NF)

The Iraqi deployments compelled DI offices to move the dispute to the top of their already crowded analytical agendas. [redacted] (b)(1)

[redacted] (b)(3)
 On 24 July, the NID reported that infantry and support units were moving to support the two armored divisions already near the border; CIA analysts predicted that Saddam was likely to take some sort of military action if the Kuwaitis resisted pressure to cut oil production and provide financial aid to Iraq at the upcoming OPEC ministerial.⁹ (S NF)

The DI reached a psychological watershed on the following day, 25 July, when the NID's by now daily article on the crisis concluded "Iraq probably is not bluffing; to accept less than satisfaction of its demands for reduced oil production and cash... would be a humiliating retreat." An Iraqi attack would probably be limited in its nature and objectives, but "the force Iraq is building along the Kuwaiti border, however, will be able to carry out any military operation Saddam decides to undertake."¹⁰ (S NF)

Despite this timely judgment, the central question for CIA analysts remained that of Saddam's intent. [redacted] (b)(1)

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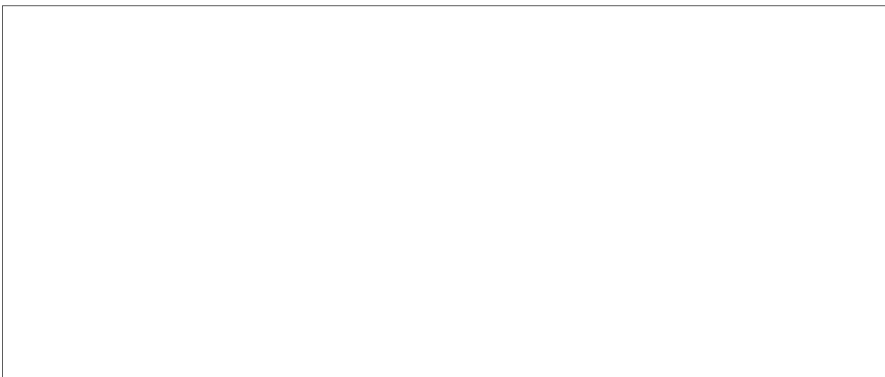
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Arab leaders and diplomats offered the same interpretation to the White House. King Hussein of Jordan and President Mubarak of Egypt told the Bush administration there was little danger of war and hence little need for an American response.¹⁴ For about a week the Kuwaitis and everyone else had operated on this assumption. Kuwait enlisted Mubarak and Saudi King Fahd to mediate the dispute. Mubarak promptly flew



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¹⁴ Caryle Murphy, "Mubarak Says Iraq, Kuwait Will Begin Talks This Weekend," *The Washington Post*, 26 July 1990. (U)

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to Baghdad and announced on 22 July that he had elicited a pledge from Saddam not to attack Kuwait. The Kuwaitis lowered the alert status of their defense force in response to this news. (U)

Kuwait pledged on 26 July to cut its oil production and support OPEC efforts to drive the world price of oil to \$21 per barrel. This concession suggested to many observers that Saddam had won his point and would ease his pressure on Kuwait.¹⁵ CIA analysis briefly reflected the worldwide hope for a negotiated solution. Kuwait had offered Baghdad \$1 billion in "compensation" for supposedly pumping oil from Iraq's portion of the Rumalyah field, and the NID for 26 July commented that Saddam probably believed he would soon win additional economic concessions. The Kuwaitis had gained scant sympathy in the Arab world during the crisis and knew there was little chance of getting quick military help from outside if Iraq should attack.¹⁶ (S NF)

For the next few days CIA analysts tracked Iraq's deployments and waited for the start of the repeatedly delayed Iraq-Kuwait negotiations. On July 30 Saddam's entire Republican Guard was deployed; seven divisions comprising more than 750 tanks and 700 artillery pieces with nearly complete logistical and operational support. All they needed was the order to go.¹⁷ (S NF)

Iraqi and Kuwaiti diplomats finally convened in Jeddah late on 31 July in preparation for bilateral talks the following morning.

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By the morning of 1 August, it became clear to CIA analysts that Saddam had ordered an invasion. An armored force was rumbling right up to the border, and combat aircraft were staging at forward airbases.¹⁹

¹⁵ Edward Cody, "OPEC, in Harmony Again, Nears Price-Rise Accord," *The Washington Post*, 27 July 1990. (U)

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A press report subsequently claimed that DCI Webster and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell became convinced on 28 July that Iraq would invade. KH-11 imagery of that date, according to *Newsday*, showed trucks stockpiling supplies with the Republican Guard divisions on the Kuwaiti border; Patrick J. Sloyan, "Caught Short: How US Misread Hussein's Intention," *Newsday*, 20 September 1990. (U).

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Director of Central Intelligence William Webster briefed President Bush that morning and told him that Saddam was about to attack. Although Webster passed along his analysts' judgment that it was still not certain just what sort of incursion Saddam intended, the DCI also told the President that the National Intelligence Officer for Warning, Charles Allen, was predicting Saddam would seize and hold all of Kuwait. Deputy Director for Central Intelligence Richard Kerr reiterated Webster's warning at an emergency meeting of the National Security Council's (NSC) Deputies Committee that morning.²⁰ Afterward the President convened an NSC meeting to discuss the situation and US options, and the State Department made what would be its final remonstrations with Iraqi officials in Baghdad and Washington. Another Deputies Committee conference took place around 1800 that evening. By this point, no one questioned the prediction of an imminent attack. For the next few hours, there was nothing to do but wait. (S NF)

CIA analysts did as well as they could have in predicting Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. After Baghdad had publicly threatened Kuwait in mid-July, the Directorate of Intelligence issued clear warnings that Saddam could and might well invade his neighbor. Indeed, the DI's estimation of Saddam's plans proved better than the predictions shared with US officials by Iraq's Arab neighbors. The DI's warnings were as timely as possible,

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Marching to War (U)

Saddam's lightning invasion and subsequent annexation of Kuwait prompted the United States to organize a multinational coalition of states determined to prevent an Iraqi attack on Saudi Arabia and, if possible, to persuade Saddam to quit his ill-gotten "19th province." On 8 November 1990, President Bush publicly vowed to double the size of the American deployment in the Gulf and ordered VII Corps, which for many years had guarded West Germany, to proceed to Saudi Arabia. The import of these steps was obvious to Saddam and all the world; they meant that the coalition was preparing to make war on Iraq to reclaim Kuwait. President Bush's decision also raised, with greater urgency, the Constitutional issue that Congress and the White House had left unsettled since the initial Desert Shield deployments the previous August.

²⁰ US News & World Report, *Triumph Without Victory: The History of the Persian Gulf War* (New York: Times Books, 1993 [1992]), p. 33. (U)

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Judge William H. Webster (U)

Although both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue agreed that the President, by virtue of his power as commander in chief, could put Americans in harm's way even in the absence of a declaration of war, the White House still needed and wanted Congress to endorse its expensive and potentially dangerous policy. Congressmen thus debated not only the merits of the President's aims in the Gulf, but also the extent of his Constitutional obligation to consult with Congress before committing the

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flag abroad. Both Congress and the administration needed the best available intelligence while assessing alternative strategies for dealing with Saddam. At the same time, the sharp disagreements among members on both sides of the debate meant that CIA analysts had to work hard to keep their products free of any hint of policy advocacy. (U)

The growing possibility of a ground war in Kuwait soon focused Congressional attention on the intelligence about Saddam's intentions and staying power. At the behest of Les Aspin, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, DCI Webster assessed in open session the effects of the UN-mandated economic sanctions on Iraq in early December. The embargo had damaged the Iraqi economy, Webster testified, but Iraq's military and vital industries, so far, appeared unscathed. Webster offered "no assurance or guarantee that economic hardships [would] compel Saddam to change his policies." Webster's testimony seemed to fit with Chairman Aspin's hawkish line on Iraq; in a summary of the hearings later prepared by Aspin, the Chairman cited the DCI repeatedly to support his (Aspin's) argument that sanctions alone could not force Saddam out of Kuwait.²¹ (U)

A Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE 36.2-90) tried in December to answer the crucial question of the moment: Could Saddam be induced to leave Kuwait without a war? SNIE 36.2-90 concluded that Saddam was "not yet convinced" that he faced a devastating attack if he did not quit Kuwait. Analysts from the various agencies disagreed over what it would take to convince him. The intelligence representatives of all four armed services, joined by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), argued in a footnote that Saddam could not be convinced "short of war itself."²² (S NF)

The Intelligence Community's internal disagreement spilled over into the press even before the new SNIE had been briefed to the National Security Council. DCI Webster, in a 15 December session with editors of *The Washington Post*, predicted Saddam would not quit Kuwait unless he was convinced he was "in peril of imminent military attack."²³

²¹ United States Congress, House of Representatives, "Crisis in the Persian Gulf: Sanctions, Diplomacy and War," Committee on Armed Services, 101st Congress, 2d Session, 1990, pp. 112-115. Aspin's comment on the testimony was titled "The Role of Sanctions in Securing US Interests in the Persian Gulf," 21 December 1990, *Ibid.*, pp. 851-869. Bob Woodward claims Aspin had decided America would have to fight by the time he wrote his report; *The Commanders* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1991), p. 345. (U)

²³ George Lardner, Jr., "No Iraq Move Seen Until Attack Near," *The Washington Post*, 15 December 1990. (U)

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Subsequent news stories based on the Webster interview changed the emphasis of the DCI's assessment, making it sound as if Webster had said Saddam would withdraw once he knew an attack was coming. This bit of "CIA analysis" elicited a harsh reaction from anonymous Pentagon and administration sources, who told reporters there was no sign of any Iraqi willingness to withdraw and that the CIA had based its conclusion on secondhand analysis performed by desk-bound analysts.²⁴ (U)

The internal Intelligence Community misunderstandings over SNIE 36.2-90 gave Webster and the DI a preview of what was to come just a few weeks later, when both houses of Congress debated resolutions of support for committing US troops to compel Saddam to obey the United Nations' demand that he withdraw from Kuwait by 15 January 1991. On 6 January Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole and Speaker of the House Thomas Foley publicly predicted that their respective houses would authorize force if formally asked to do so by the President. With this and other assurances of ultimate success, President Bush on 8 January submitted his request that the House and Senate pass resolutions backing the use of force. Both houses opened passionate debates over the President's request. The arguments generally fell into two camps; one side urged patience while economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure weakened Baghdad's resolve, and the Administration's allies claimed that sanctions and diplomacy had already failed and that the coalition's will to fight would erode if the liberation of Kuwait were delayed. (U)

CIA analysis became the focus of Congressional debate on 10 January. House Armed Services Committee Chairman Les Aspin, that afternoon, released the text of a note signed by DCI Webster. (It had been prepared by the Directorate of Intelligence, at Aspin's behest, on the night of 9 January.) "The ability of Iraqi ground forces to defend Kuwait and southern Iraq is unlikely to be substantially eroded over the next six- to 12-months even if effective sanctions can be maintained," Webster explained. In light of this assumption, "[o]ur judgment remains that, even if the sanctions continue to be enforced for another six

²⁴ John Cassidy and Marie Colvin, "Accusations fly as Iraq cancels White House meeting with Bush," *Sunday Times*, 16 December 1990. (U)

months to 12 months, economic hardship alone is unlikely to compel Saddam Husayn to retreat from Kuwait or cause regime-threatening popular discontent in Iraq.”²⁵ (U)

Webster's letter essentially reiterated and updated his December testimony, but several members of Congress reacted angrily to the unwelcome message by publicly accusing Webster of trimming Agency analysis to fit the Administration's war policy. The members' ire seemed prompted more by Rep. Aspin's immediate publicizing of the 10 January letter than by its contents, but that was small consolation for Webster and CIA. Supporters of the use of force waved the Webster letter as proof that sanctions would not work. More than a few opponents resented the DCI's message, which seemed to fit with the Administration's apparent strategy of daring Congress to take the politically risky course of forcing the United States to back away from its commitments in the Gulf. Webster's critics included some formidable Senators: Select Intelligence Committee Chairman David Boren said the Agency seemed to be trying not to "undermine" the Bush Administration, and Majority Leader George Mitchell said the DCI's conclusions had run "directly contrary to the facts [he] presented." Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) responded to the flap by introducing a short-lived but much-publicized "End of the Cold War Act of 1991," which would have (among other things) abolished CIA and transferred its functions to the State Department.²⁶ (U)

Some of the controversy over the Director's letter doubtless arose from a misunderstanding about the questions to be answered in the two CIA judgments. In December DCI Webster had been asked by the Armed Services Committee to assess the overall effects of sanctions and to predict their influence on Baghdad's decisionmaking. The Director stated that sanctions were hurting Iraq, but probably not enough to force Saddam out of Kuwait. In January, Chairman Aspin asked a similar but significantly different set of questions, in effect soliciting an Agency judgment on whether the Iraqis could offset the erosion of their military readiness under economic sanctions by using the extra time to strengthen their fortifications in Kuwait. The DCI's answer was yes, they could: "On balance, the marginal decline of combat power in Baghdad's

²⁵ William Webster, Director of Central Intelligence to Rep. Les Aspin, 10 January 1991, (U). See also Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict, 1990-1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 293. (U)

²⁶ Sam Vincent Meddis, "Critics Charge CIA Analysis is Politically Biased," *USA Today*, 14 January 1991. Peter Ridell, "Middle East in Crisis," *Financial Times*, 15 January 1991. (U)

armored units probably would be offset by the simultaneous improvement of its defensive preparations."²⁷ In the heat of the moment, with Congressional nerves edgy from two days of emotional debate, some members apparently did not notice the subtle but important differences in the questions posed to CIA and the answers returned. (U)

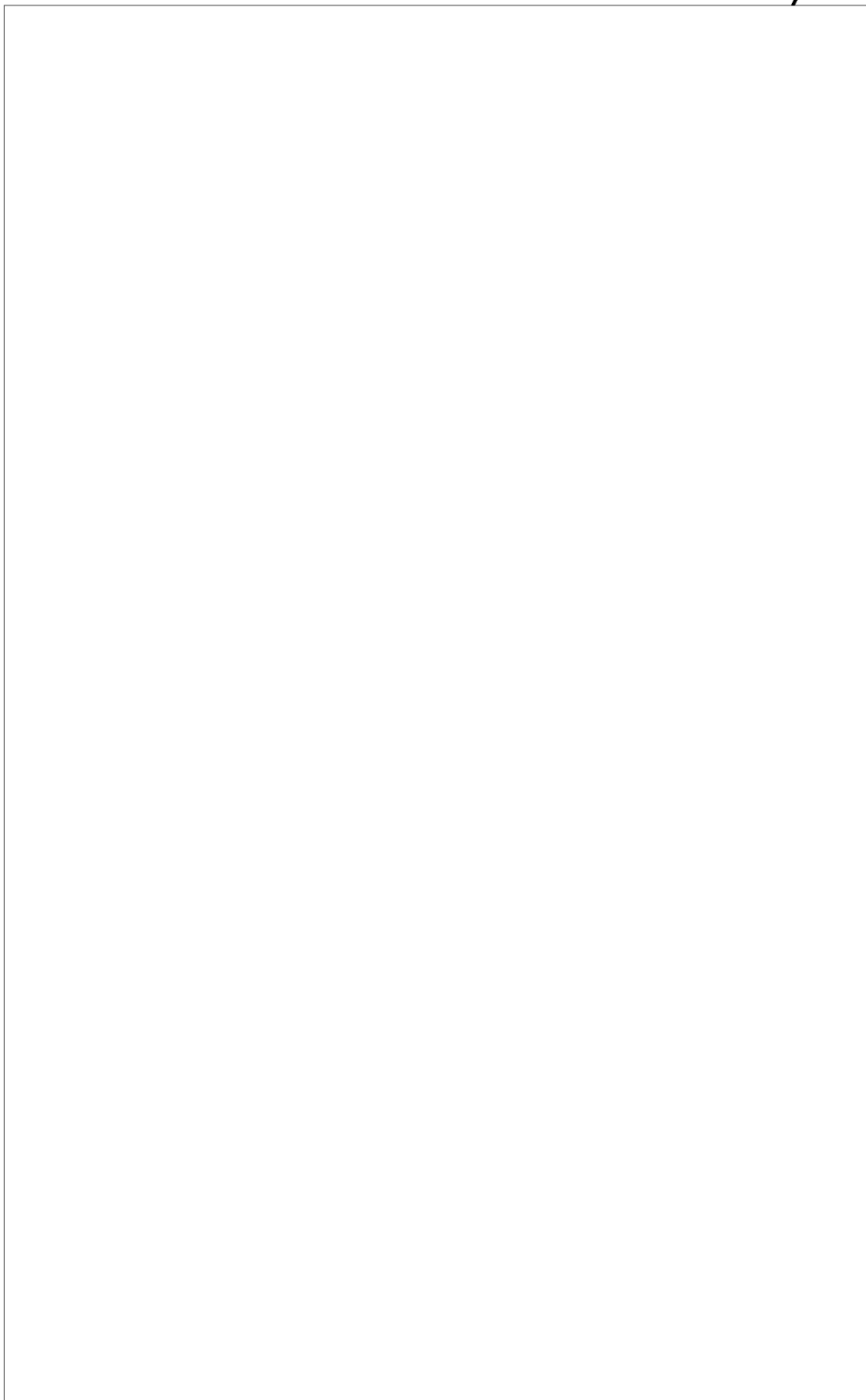
The storm passed almost as quickly as it had risen. On the afternoon of 12 January, both houses passed resolutions endorsing the Administration's policy. Speaker of the House Thomas Foley—who had opposed the resolution—announced the result with a plea: "Let us come together after this vote without recrimination... We are all Americans here—not Democrats, not Republicans."²⁸ (U)

The flap in Congress over the "politicization" of CIA assessments was hardly the first time that CIA analysis on a disputed policy matter had itself become controversial. Before the 1990s, however, the disputes had been internal executive-branch arguments related to the wisdom of competing alternative policies; the interagency dispute over SNIE 36.2-90 that December marked a classic example. Indeed, the fact that that argument grew so heated suggests in hindsight that there was no way for the Director of Central Intelligence to avoid further controversy once the debate over the necessity of using force moved to Capitol Hill. One Congressional side or the other would have resented the Agency's judgment, whether that judgment had been seen as supportive or unsupportive of President Bush's determination to fight if Iraq ignored the UN's withdrawal deadline. (U)

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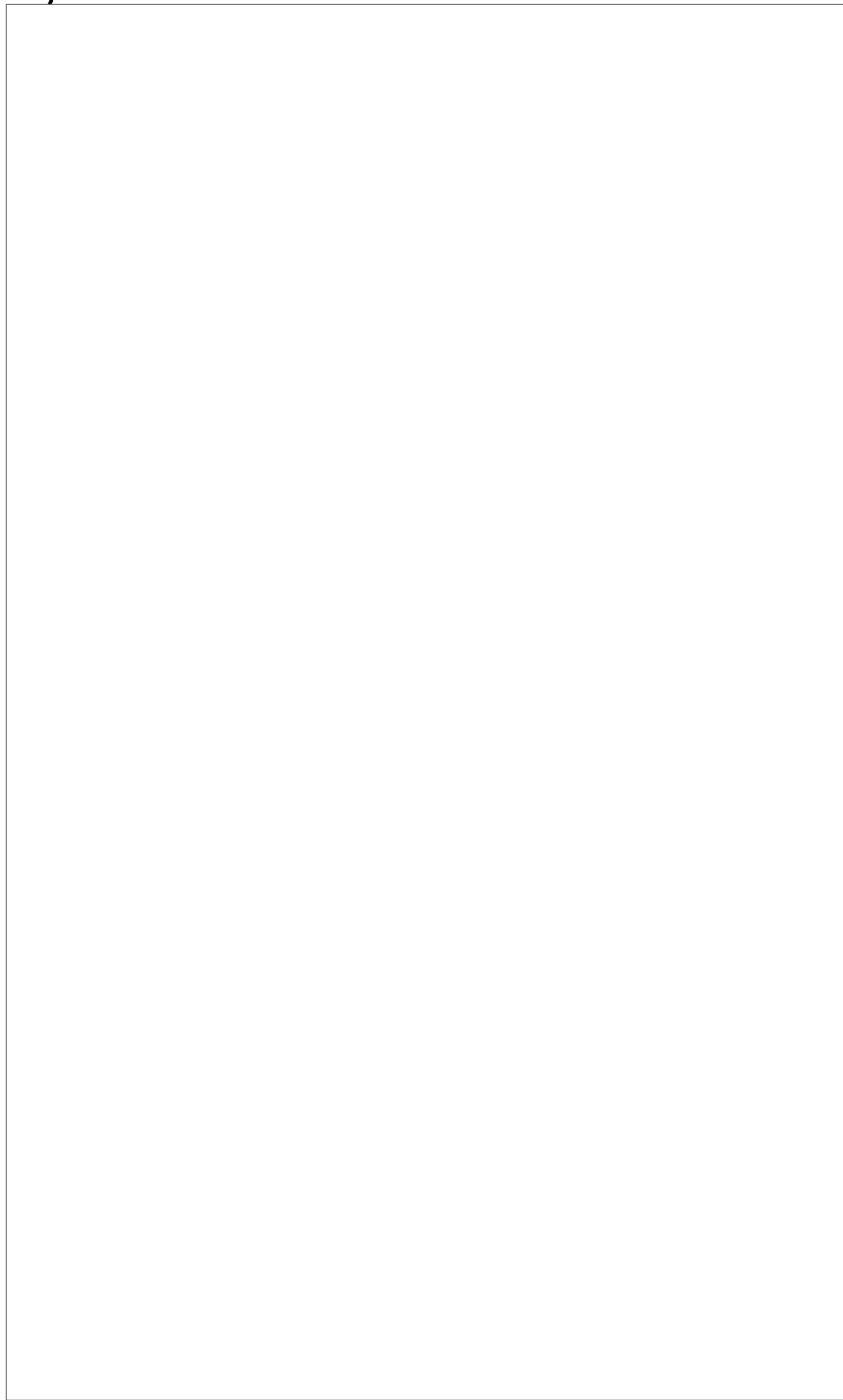
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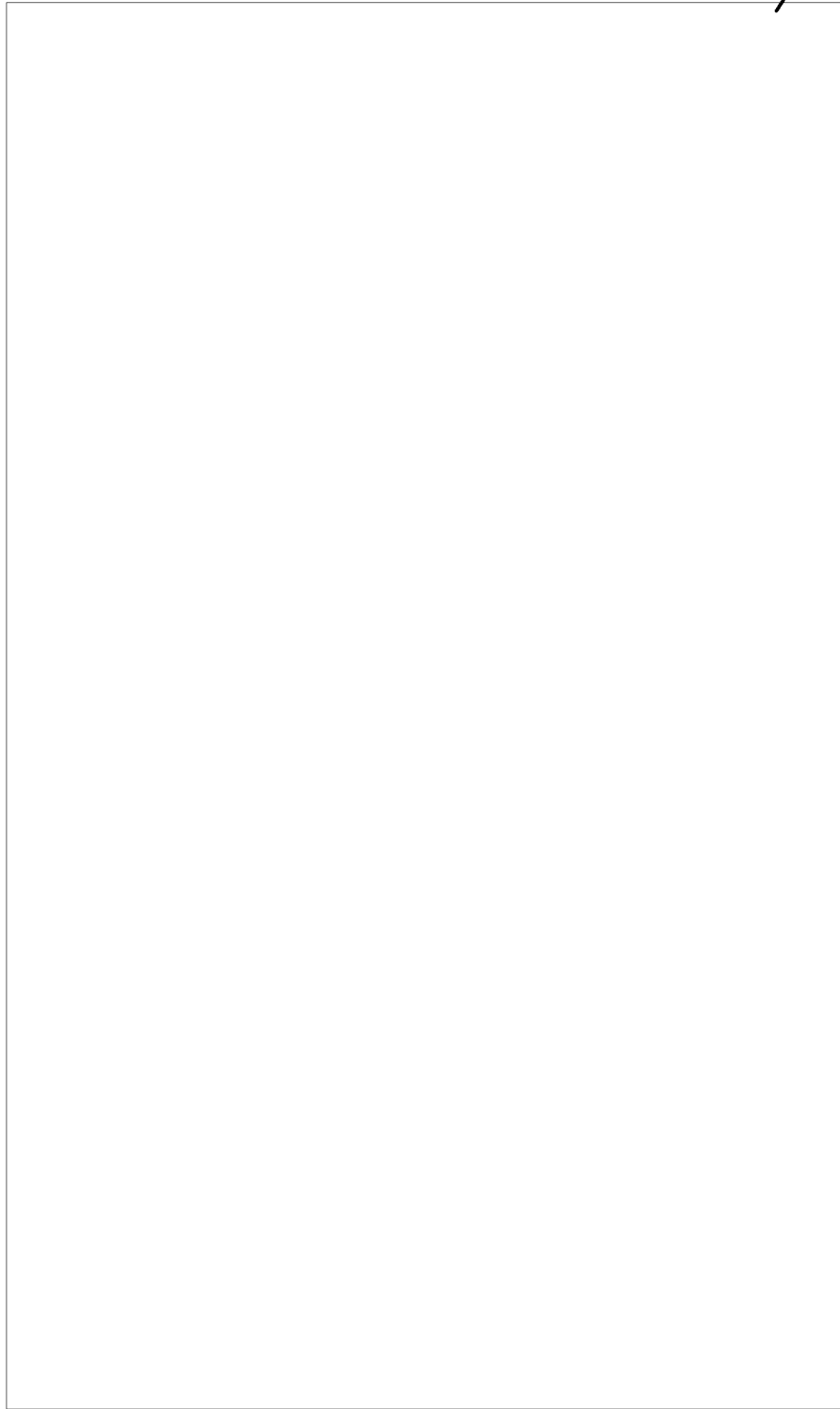
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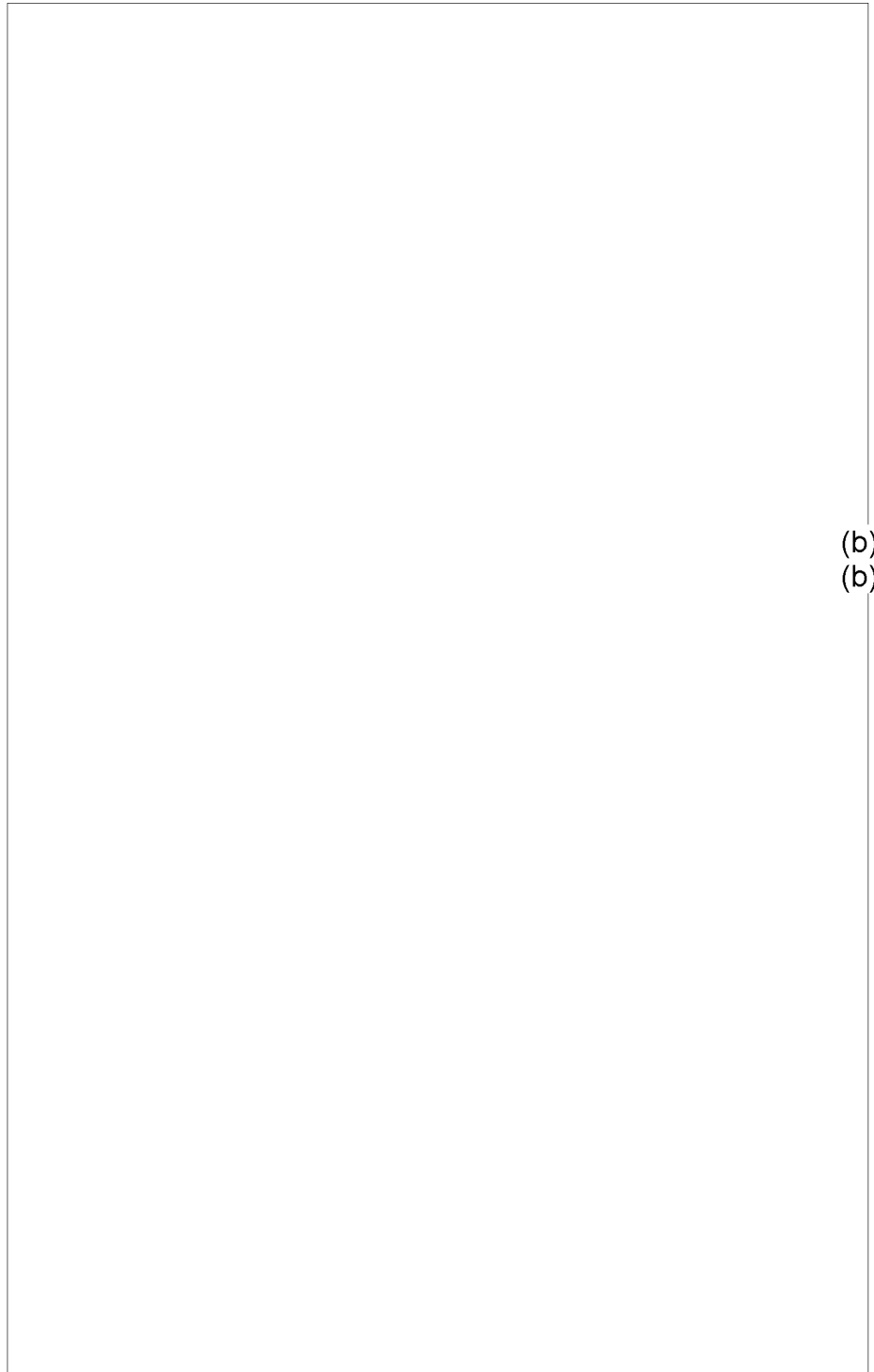


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Conclusion (U)

The three examples of Gulf War analysis in this essay have ample precedents in the Agency's history but, nonetheless, portend new political realities for CIA. Criticism of the Agency for not predicting Saddam's invasion of Kuwait echoed complaints from earlier crises. Many of those earlier complaints were equally misplaced, in part because no intelligence service has yet found a reliable way to divine the short-term intentions of hard-target regimes. Intelligence Community disputes over Iraq's staying power [redacted] also echoed earlier controversies. DCI Webster found that policymakers welcome analysis that supports their policies but resent being second-guessed when a decision has already been made. (C NF)

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If the history of CIA intelligence analysis suggests anything it suggests that analysts in the future will have their own opportunities to learn these lessons at firsthand. The stakes for some future DCI might be much higher than in the past, however, thanks to two trends that emerged in the Gulf War: CIA's new, technologically driven mandate to provide national intelligence to battlefield commanders, and the emergence of Congress as a primary consumer of CIA analyses. (C NF)

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Fifty Years of the CIA

This volume represents the first collection of classified, scholarly essays on CIA history to be published in book form. Its essays present a balanced picture of the Agency's functions and performance in carrying out essential missions over five decades.

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The Editors

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