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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

**SUBJECT: Princeton Consultants' Recommendations
Concerning NIE's**

Attached is Charles Cremeans' memorandum of the Princeton consultants' discussion on the general subject of NIE's. This has been discussed by the Board, and we have the following comments:

1. Mr. Armstrong's suggestion that estimates should do more in the way of exploring alternative possibilities is a good one. We have frequently done this in the past and have tried something along this line in the redraft of the Yugoslav paper sent to you on 28 May. We will continue to look for occasions when this approach can usefully be followed in future estimates.

2. It seems doubtful whether, as a general rule, we should try to substitute a narrative summary of an estimate for the present shorter form of conclusions. The annual Soviet estimate, for example, would not lend itself to such treatment. However, there are cases where such

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a summary could be done and would be useful. We will try to give you a sample in the near future.

3. The suggestion that such a summary should not be coordinated, but rather issued as a DCI document, seems to us extremely dangerous. We believe that the agencies most likely riposte would be the preparation of their own uncoordinated summaries which they would put before their own most important consumers. If this happened there would be little sense in coordinating the body of the paper.

4. We agree that it is desirable to try for shorter estimates aimed at particular points of interest rather than serving as detailed country studies. We also agree that particular estimates would often gain in persuasiveness were we to include more data to document our conclusions. To meet these two often inconsistent goals, we have recently written several quite short papers, backed up with appendices providing corroborative detail. NIE 63.2-57: THE PROSPECTS FOR NORTH VIETNAM, and NIE 41-56: JAPAN'S INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. We would like to continue this technique.

5. We do not believe that dissents should be incorporated into the text of NIE's. We do believe that dissents should be clearly expressed to point up as sharply as possible critical differences of view. To this end we would like your authority to play more active part in helping to put into precise words any expressed disagreements of the contributing agencies.

6. We do not share Sontag's view that the Board is often handicapped by lack of knowledge of your position on specific estimative issues. We will of course continue to consult you as soon as possible when any such instances arise.

7. We have in the past repeatedly stressed in our estimates the importance that US policies and actions would have on the course of events. We have, however, deliberately refrained from basing estimates on assumed new initiatives in US policy, except in cases where these assumptions were given to us or approved by the NSC Planning Board or some other authority. In our opinion, this is the proper procedure. We have been most reluctant to postulate US policy on our

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own and then estimate probable consequences thereof.

We have felt that such a procedure, attractive as it might be, could easily open us to the charge of policy advocacy.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

**SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates**

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