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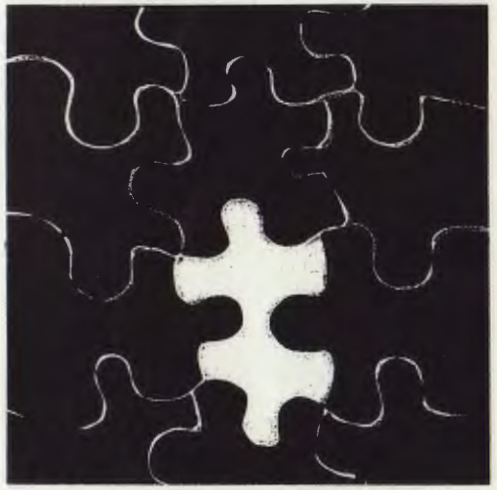
A Publication of

The Association of Former Intelligence Officers

ISBN 1-884314-09-0

FORD Estimative Intelligence AFIO No. 10

ESTIMATIVE INTELLIGENCE



HAROLD P. FORD

THE INTELLIGENCE PROFESSION SERIES
NUMBER TEN

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ESTIMATIVE INTELLIGENCE

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Published by

The Association of Former
Intelligence Officers

The Association of Former Intelligence Officers
6723 Whittier Avenue, Suite 303A
McLean, VA 22101

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ford, Harold P., 1921-
Estimative intelligence / Harold P. Ford.
p. cm. -- (The Intelligence profession series: no. 10)
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 1-884314-09-0 11.95
1. Intelligence service--United States.
2. Military intelligence--United States
3. National security--United States. I. Title.
II Series.
JK468.I6F66 1993b
327.1'273--dc20 93-33317
CIP

Printed in the United States of America

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of national intelligence estimating is to help policymakers better appreciate the true state of the world and the hazards and opportunities that face the nation. This is the theory that justifies the estimative process and has led every President since Harry Truman, who initiated National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs), to continue to seek them from CIA and the US Intelligence Community. Real life practice, however, often belies the theory that such estimates make our policymakers wiser. Hence national estimating is often a chancy, if necessary, business: many estimates, fortunately, have proved accurate and influential; but some have been wrong, some too cloudy to be useful, and some accurate – but did not find anyone listening.

This AFIO monograph examines the purposes and problems of the estimates business, the lessons to be learned from history to date, and the lessons to heed for tomorrow's challenges. It should be noted that this study (1) emphasizes *national intelligence estimating* -- that is, those definitive analyses and judgments (whether presented in formal or informal, face-to-face manner) produced by the Intelligence Community for policymakers at the national, or highest, level; and (2) does not hesitate to point out the weaknesses as well as the strengths of national intelligence estimating. This study also offers recommendations for helping the national estimating process to better fit the demands of the greatly changed world we now occupy, and to provide better support to tomorrow's decisionmakers.

This study is a distillate of the author's fuller work, *Estimative Intelligence: The Purposes and Problems of National Intelligence Estimating* (Defense Intelligence College, 1989). The author is indebted to many, but wishes especially to thank AFIO and the

Defense Intelligence College. Needless to say, the judgments made in this present study are solely those of the author, who takes full responsibility for whatever errors, omissions, or insights, if any, this study may contain.

WHAT IS NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATING?

A National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) is, in sum, the most authoritative analytic product prepared by the Intelligence Community. The subject matter of an NIE comprises large questions, principal world problems of concern to America's most senior policymakers. These NIEs represent:

> The bringing together of every scrap of evidence, from the most sensitively exotic to the most openly unclassified, that the US Intelligence Community has on the question at hand.
>
> The sharing of such data among all the participating intelligence agencies and offices.
>
> The coordinated examining of these data and the drawing of estimative judgments concerning them.
>
> The portraying of the principal forces at work in the given question under examination.
>
> The estimating of what trends seem likely for the future, and how those trends might be affected in the event certain contingent events should occur.
>
> The setting forth, where appropriate, of dissenting views.
>
> The creating of the formal estimating record, so that future officers may evaluate how well US estimating did or did not assist the policymakers.

> In sum, the pointing up of the significance of these estimates' data and judgments for the security and foreign policy interests of the United States.

The purpose, character, and significance of these courageous estimates of future unknowns has been recognized by many observers. One such testimony is that of the late Senator Frank Church (D., Idaho), an evaluation that is the more telling in that he was at the time (November 1975) one of the most outspoken critics of US intelligence: "NIEs form the building blocks of national security policy. . . . The value of national intelligence estimates to the decisionmakers in our Government should be immense."[1] Allen W. Dulles, a noted former Director of Central Intelligence, made a similar testimony in his book, *The Craft of Intelligence* (1963): "[In National Intelligence Estimates] we come to a most vital function of the entire work of intelligence, how to deal with the mass of information about future developments so as to make it useful to our policymakers and planners as they examine the critical problems of today and tomorrow."[2]

It must nonetheless be made clear at the outset that, in practice, despite the quality of NIEs and the substantial contribution they do make to decisionmakers, it cannot be said that US policy at any one time is directly based on national estimates. This varies from case to case, from time to time, and from particular question to particular question. This issue of the impact of national estimates is in fact probably *the* central question involved in the business of estimates. A later section of this present study examines this problem in detail.

Finally, it must also be made clear at the outset of this study that "national estimating" is a much broader concept and function that just the preparing of NIEs. As is spelled out in greater detail later in this study:

> "National estimating" encompasses the total contribution which senior intelligence officers make. Often

such contribution comes through less formal means than the NIEs: that is, through the personal contact of these officers with friends and colleagues who are senior policymaking officials; or in the formers' briefings of senior military, Executive, and Congressional officials; or in the participation of intelligence officers in inter-agency policymaking forums.

It is here, in such special settings as these, usually much less formal in character than the more cumbersome NIE process, that an able and articulate intelligence estimates officer can make his/her most telling impact, settings which provide face-to-face opportunities for dialogue, for deeper probing and understanding of the issues at hand than can written documents produced by authors who to the policymaking consumers are unknown commodities.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PEARL HARBOR FOR NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATING

The purposes of national estimating are many, but one of the principal reasons our present system of national estimating was fashioned was to prevent another Pearl Harbor-type surprise, this time a disaster of catastrophic proportions in an age of nuclear weapons. As capsuled by Gordon W. Prange (1986), one of the foremost experts on the Pearl Harbor attack: "Pearl Harbor drove the idea of surprise attack so deeply into the American psyche that 'Pearl Harbor' became almost a generic term for any sneak attack. The United States became surprise-attack conscious, and rightly so. After World War II, it was generally agreed that any future attack almost certainly would be in the nature of a surprise."[3]

Of key importance to us now is the relevance of Pearl Harbor's many questions for today's and tomorrow's estimating: that is, the admonition that we must remain alert to the fact that there is seldom if ever enough intelligence present to make absolute predictions or warnings. The reasons are many. Information almost always is scarce, ambiguous, full of gaps. The scene under scrutiny is in constant, shifting motion. Many of the powers or actors in the action change their intentions, priorities, and schedules. Preconceptions (or "mindset") and the proclivity to underestimate the capabilities or will of the adversary can seriously distort judgments of the adversary's course of action. Also, US moves are a part of the scene being examined – and some of the most sensitive such moves are often unknown to the

intelligence officers trying to estimate what's going on and whither the play will go.

Our present system of national estimating, sired in an underlying sense by Pearl Harbor and then by the USSR's post-war aggressions, was the direct product of America's second Pearl Harbor, Korea. There US intelligence did not clearly alert senior policymakers in June 1950 that Communist North Korea was about to invade the Republic of Korea; and then, a few months later, at a time when US armed forces were heavily deployed in Korea and were moving northward toward the Yalu River boundary of the Peoples Republic of China and Korea, US intelligence failed to warn that tens of thousands of Chinese Communist troops, which for some weeks had been quietly moving into North Korea, were about to launch massive attacks against the US and UN troops. As this study spells out below, our present national estimating system was basically formed at that time, the autumn of 1950. It has since been altered and improved in detail at various times, but has remained substantially unchanged to this day.

This continuity is both a strength and a weakness. It is a strength in that the services rendered have continued to be appreciated by policymakers. But this long continuity has at times created bureaucratic resistance to change that has prevented the system from always realizing its full potential.

> In all, US national estimating is in far better shape now than it was in 1950, or 1941, and the chances of a sudden massive Pearl Harbor-type surprise attack are now far less. But as this study outlines below, many of the primary challenges now facing US national estimating are not so much massive attack as they are avoiding significant surprise from other types of possible, if lesser, military attacks and a variety of political, economic and terrorist threats.

Such surprises may be less sudden and dramatic, but nonetheless capable of causing an unprepared United States severe harm. It is to the avoiding of such types of surprise, and to the pointing up for our policymakers of possible new opportunities to exploit world developments to common advantage, that a strengthened system of national estimating should be directed.

THE EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL ESTIMATING

Prior to the Korean War. As an intellectual process, estimating is doubtless as old as the gathering of intelligence – a process which certainly predates Moses, bearing in mind the story of the evidence (the olive branch) which one of the earliest collectors (the dove) brought back to the estimator and policymaking consumer (Noah). The technological and industrial developments of much later centuries demanded that estimates become formal, scientific documents. This came with the development of the staff system within modern armies beginning especially with Prussia's Frederick the Great in the mid-18th Century – and still later in the expanded analytic needs of armies fielded during and after the industrial revolution.

The United States came late into the field of intelligence estimates. The reasons were obvious. One was our long relative isolation from Europe's wars, and hence the lack of any felt compelling need for scientific intelligence estimates. A cause, as well, was a marked American innocence about intelligence in general, epitomized as late as 1919 by a statement of President Woodrow Wilson: "I not only did not know it until we got into this war, but did not believe it when I was told that it was true, that Germany was not the only country that maintained a secret service. Every country in Europe maintained it . . . and the only difference between the German secret service and the other secret services was that the German secret service found out more than the others did."[4]

Familiar to us are the astonishingly poor judgments General George McClellan's intelligence chief, Allan Pinkerton, made during the Civil War when (in 1861-1862) he grossly

overestimated the size of the Confederate forces facing the Army of the Potomac. Less familiar is the excellent record Pinkerton made in ferreting out Confederate spies, including the previously highly successful Washington hostess, Rose O'Neale Greenhow. The question was one of proper experience and casting: Pinkerton had been a city detective before the war, trained thus in matters akin to counterintelligence, but with little background for his new task of estimating enemy troop strength. Later, General Grenville M. Dodge (of subsequent Union Pacific fame) proved to be a much more effective director of intelligence assessments for General Ulysses S. Grant.

It was long after the Civil War, however, in fact into World War II, before systematic national intelligence estimative processes developed very far within US intelligence – and, as we will see, not too successfully even then. The first regularly organized US intelligence service was the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), formed in 1882, but it dealt only with data and capabilities and did no estimative work until 1937. The Army's Military Intelligence Division (MID) was formed in 1885, but as late as the outbreak of World War I in 1914 had only 11 officers. Once the US entered that war, MID grew to over 1,000 personnel, and by war's end had developed a system – albeit rather mechanical – for preparing "Current Estimates of the Strategic Situation." Once the war was over, however, MID shrank rapidly and severely.

Lagging years behind the European services, the first official moves toward a future national estimating system date from the late 1930's. In 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had had an active interest in intelligence while Assistant Secretary of the Navy during World War I, began urging the FBI, ONI, and the Army's MID to coordinate their intelligence activities and begin providing intelligence about the increasingly dangerous world. He met considerable resistance, especially from the FBI, which until then had dominated such US intelligence activities as existed. It was not until mid-1941, on the eve of America's entry

into World War II, that Roosevelt achieved a semi-breakthrough by creating a Coordinator of Information (COI), Colonel William J. ("Wild Bill") Donovan.

In addition to serving as a special investigator for FDR, in particular assuring the President in 1941 that Britain would survive Germany's then mastery of Europe, Donovan is the first senior official to have proposed that a US national intelligence estimative system be created. His proposal took the form of a "Memorandum of Establishment of Service of Strategic Information," which he gave FDR on 10 June 1941. Said Donovan's memorandum: "Strategy, without information upon which to rely, is helpless. Likewise, information is useless unless it is intelligently directed to the strategic purpose . . . Although we are facing imminent peril, we are lacking in an effective service for analyzing, comprehending, and appraising such information as we might obtain . . . relative to the intention of potential enemies and the limit of the economic and military resources of those enemies. . . . it is essential that we set up a central intelligence organization . . . The mechanism of this service to the various departments should be under the direction of a Coordinator of Strategic Information who would be responsible directly to the President."[5] As might be expected, the FBI, the Department of State, and the US military were not about to welcome such a rude intrusion into their intelligence turfs; moreover, these officials were uneasy about Donovan's extremely close relationships with the British at the time. Consequently, Donovan's scheme went nowhere until six months after Pearl Harbor, when on 13 June 1942 President Roosevelt converted Donovan's COI into the Office of Strategic Services, the OSS.

Lesser known than OSS's exploits abroad was a major analytic innovation OSS brought: its Office of Research and Analysis (R&A). A direct forerunner of the analytic offices of CIA, State, and DIA, R&A did not produce NIEs as such; these were still a thing of the future. But R&A did produce intelligence studies of various types (for various kinds of policymakers): e.g., foreign

states' economic resources, transportation systems, morale, geography, intelligence systems, and military capabilities and intentions. Most important was the extremely high quality of R&A's product and people, probably the finest group of analytic experts US intelligence has yet produced. R&A attracted the country's finest scholars: representatives from more than 35 universities, with facility in some 40 languages and specialties in history, political science, economics, sociology, psychology, cartography, and anthropology. Among these outstanding scholars were two particular thinker-doers to whom the country is chiefly indebted for having greatly advanced the science of strategic intelligence, and for later creating the Office of National Estimates and the NIEs. These were Drs. William L. Langer of Harvard, a national authority on European diplomatic history, R&A's chief, and O/NE's first boss (and a tough and demanding one); and Sherman Kent, a specialist on French history, the country's pioneer author in the field of strategic intelligence, O/NE's subsequent boss for some 15 years, and a delightful (and sometimes expletives deleted) intelligence leader.

OSS did not long survive the end of World War II. President Truman disbanded it on 20 September 1945, OSS having encountered considerable opposition from other offices in Washington, D.C. Some of OSS's R&A officers stayed on in various offices of the government, though most went back to civilian life. It is distressing that five years were to elapse – five momentous years that saw the Soviet absorption of Eastern Europe, the Berlin Blockade, the USSR's attainment of nuclear weapons status, Mao Tse-tung's conquest of China, and North Korea's invasion of the South – before national intelligence estimating finally came into being.

During those intervening years, 1945 to 1950, a number of insightful critiques of U.S. intelligence did presage the later establishing of our present estimative system. Specific critiques of World War II intelligence – made even after the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1947 – pointed out the continuing

absence of an ability to recognize trends, the lack of overall perspective, the need for a central coordinating of intelligence, the lack of centralized facilities to give the President objective and sophisticated analysis of foreign threats, the need for understanding a broader definition of intelligence than simply the nuts and bolts of military capabilities, and the debilitating effect of bureaucratic turf wrangling. Out of these critiques, but especially because of the Korean War, came the establishing of national intelligence estimating.

Estimates and the Korean War. In the course of 1950, US intelligence concerning Korea did rather poorly in two key instances. The first of these occurred in May-June, when the newly-created CIA and US military intelligence (in Washington and in General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo) all failed to provide clear warning to policymakers that the North Koreans were about to invade the South; and in October-November, when none of those intelligence entities sounded any clear alarms that the Chinese Communists had infiltrated large numbers of combat units into North Korea and were about to launch massive attacks against US and UN troops then moving northward in North Korea toward the Yalu River boundary of China. The consequences of these failures were virtually as disastrous in their way as those that had helped create Pearl Harbor.

Aside from current intelligence, CIA prepared only one analytical piece on the eve of North Korea's invasion of the Republic of Korea (ROK), an Office of Reports and Evaluations Memorandum, issued on 19 June: "Current Capabilities of the Northern Korean Regime." This document gave North Korean forces a capability only "for attaining limited objectives in short term military operations against southern Korea, including the capture of Seoul." Furthermore, over the objections of a handful of junior Washington intelligence analysts who wanted that study to include a serious warning of possible invasion, the CIA Memorandum confined itself to the issue of capabilities and did

not address the question of North Korean intentions.[6] The Department of State did not even do that well: Dean Rusk, at the time Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, told the House Committee on Foreign Affairs the next day, 20 June, that "We see no present indication that the people across the border [in North Korea] have any intention of fighting a major war" in an attempt to take over southern Korea.[7] Five days later, 25 June, North Korean forces invaded the ROK in force.

The first NIE on Korea was not produced until 8 November. In the intervening weeks, while US and UN forces were at first pushed back to the Pusan perimeter and then carried out their highly successful outflanking landing at Inchon, the question of possible Chinese Communist intervention in the war became the prime strategic intelligence target. On 12 October, five days after having been sworn in as the new Director of Central Intelligence, General Walter Bedell Smith gave President Truman an assessment of Soviet and Chinese intentions with respect to Korea. Prepared in response to a request from Mr. Truman to prepare him for his historic Wake Island meeting with General MacArthur, this CIA study judged that "While full-scale Chinese Communist intervention in Korea must be regarded as a continuing possibility, a consideration of all known factors leads to the conclusion that barring a Soviet decision for global war, such action is not probable in 1950. During this period intervention will probably be confined to continued covert assistance to the North Koreans."[8]

Nor did coordinated US intelligence get off to any much better start. Following the Intelligence Community's acceptance (on 20 October) of DCI Smith's recommendation that a new undertaking be created, the National Intelligence Estimate, the first such NIE on Korea appeared on 8 November. Titled *Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea*, that document estimated that there were some 30,000 to 40,000 Chinese troops lying doggo in North Korea at the time, and that their objective was to keep a Communist presence in being on Korean soil.[9] Twelve days later,

20 November, DCI Smith established the Office of National Estimates (O/NE): its officers, William Langer, Director; Sherman Kent, Deputy Director; and Ray Cline, Staff Chief. On 24 November this new office issued a second coordinated NIE on Korea, this time judging that the Chinese Communists would maintain Chinese-North Korean holding operations in North Korea, but stating that available evidence was not conclusive as to whether the Chinese Communists were as yet committed to a full-scale offensive.[10]

Clearly influencing these Washington assessments was the certainty of General MacArthur, the hero of Inchon, that Chinese Communist intervention in force was unlikely. On 17 November, for example, he told John Muccio, US Ambassador in Seoul, that US-UN forces were about to launch an all-out offensive that would clear the area of North Korean and Chinese troops within ten days.[11] On the 24th, on the eve of his planned offensive, MacArthur visited Korea and told US units there that the Chinese Communists were not coming into the war, and that the war would be over "in two weeks."[12] The next day, 25 November, some 30 divisions of Chinese troops launched a massive attack that finally resulted in US-UN forces being pushed back once again into a small perimeter area in southernmost Korea.

All in all, President Truman's efforts to strengthen the CIA and to at last bring coordinated national estimates into play did not get off to a fast start, certainly not with respect to America's second Pearl Harbor, Korea. Thereafter, however, national intelligence estimating did come into its own.

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATING, 1950-1980

There is much to be learned for today's challenges, and those of tomorrow, from the experience – the strengths and weaknesses – of the two different systems by which national intelligence estimating was performed in the three decades from 1950 to 1980.

The Office of National Estimates (O/NE), 1950-1973. After getting off to a rather poor start, at least on estimates concerning Chinese Communist intervention in the Korean War, O/NE proceeded to establish itself as an elite body that for some years generally enjoyed a fine reputation for producing wise judgments for policymaking consumers. This situation can be said to have obtained until about the latter part of 1962. Then – in consequence especially of missing the boat by estimating that Khrushchev was probably not emplacing nuclear weapons in Cuba, but also because of numerous other, accumulating problems – O/NE's stature and influence declined thereafter until DCI William Colby abolished O/NE in late 1973 and substituted another approach to national intelligence estimating, the NIOs. Nonetheless, even though O/NE was so abolished, many of the strengths of present day national estimating owe their origin to standards and procedures initiated by that office.

The strengths of O/NE were many, especially in its earlier years.

1. Its creator, DCI Walter Bedell (Beedle) Smith, was an officer of considerable talent, drive, and clout. Dwight Eisenhower's Chief of Staff in World War II, he believed strongly in the purposes of O/NE and the NIEs, staffed O/NE with excellent officers, insisted

upon highest standards and objectivity, and took a dim view of turf-protecting interference with the product of this new system of national intelligence estimating.

2. The leadership of O/NE was top-rate, substantively and bureaucratically.

3. In its early years the Estimates Board of O/NE contained a number of very able senior officers, certain of them of national reputation. Moreover, many of them were well known to the US policymakers of the 1950's, not only professionally but personally and socially.

4. One of O/NE's chief strengths was the generally excellent quality of its staff. Many of these officers later went on to very senior positions in government and public life.

5. The styles of O/NE and the NIEs fit the policymaking procedures of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations.

6. The coordinating machinery of the Intelligence Community worked rather well, lessening previous decades of self-defeating bureaucratic infighting. Moreover, as compared to pre-O/NE days, substantially more man-to-man contact took place among opposite number officers within the Intelligence Community.

7. Certain positive procedures and standards came to be generally accepted by the intelligence estimates community, especially at the working level. These strengths included a sense of common purpose, a slowly growing willingness to withstand departmental pressures and to insist upon objectivity and freedom

from dictate by policymakers, and a growth of knowledge and sophistication about world affairs, reflected in part in a certain narrowing of what had years before been extreme positions.

8. O/NE regularly tried out its judgments on an outside board of consultants that included some of the country's outstanding scholars and foreign affairs experts.

Not least, the estimative batting average of NIEs proved fairly good on a number of key issues. These included:

1. The basic character of the USSR and its likely conduct in the world. Here the service that the NIEs performed was to narrow the field of estimative debate and raise the quality of inquiry. In time, the prevailing view of the Intelligence Community came to be that Moscow did intend to expand its influence everywhere it could on every opportunity, skillfully exerting such pressures as the traffic would bear in each instance, but that in so doing the USSR would exercise care to avoid what it believed to be serious risks of provoking general war or of permitting local crises to escalate too far. Here the significance for US intelligence became just what risks the Soviet Union was likely to run in each particular instance; the significance for US policymaking: keep your guard up and your powder dry, but the sky is not about to fall. Through a sometimes maze of wishful thinking on the one hand and "worst case" over-insuring on the other, and in a setting of intense fears of domestic Communism here at home, the NIEs brought American policymakers a concerned and alert – but sane, and what proved to be generally accurate – picture of what to expect in the way of Soviet world behavior.

2. Likely Soviet weapons development. After initially over-estimating likely Soviet production of bombers and strategic missiles, for some years the NIEs accurately alerted US policymakers to coming weapons systems. As voiced by Senator Frank Church (D., ID) in 1975, at the time chairman of the Senate committee investigating the CIA, and no friend of the Agency: "In the last 25 years, no important new Soviet weapons system, from the H-bomb to the most recent missiles, has appeared which had not been heralded in advance by NIEs."[13]

3. The basic character of Communist and Nationalist China and their likely behavior in the world.

4. The Sino-Soviet estrangement. Here O/NE did fairly well in alerting policymakers after about 1960 to the causes and likely extent of the deepening rift between Moscow and Beijing. Although rather slow in coming to these alerts, O/NE nonetheless did a better job than most of the rest of the government in accepting growing evidence that these two giant Communist powers were animated primarily by national interests, not ideological unity.

5. Indochina. With some exceptions, discussed below, O/NE and the NIEs made a remarkably good record over the years in accurately estimating the outlook in Indochina. This record is all the more notable because much of the time the message which the NIEs presented was not congenial to policymaking consumers – who not only usually took a much more optimistic view of prospects, but at times put pressure on intelligence officers to shape up and get on the team. The admirable batting average of the O/NEs and the NIEs has been widely acknowledged. Two such examples: (1) General Bruce Palmer, Jr., formerly General Westmoreland's MACV Deputy in Vietnam and later Army Vice Chief of Staff: "On balance the Agency [CIA] did a good job in assessing the situation in Southeast Asia . . . . Its overall intelligence judgments were generally sound and its estimates were mostly on the mark. . . Our Vietnam experience should tell us that when the views of the Central Intelligence Agency – the preeminent national intelligence organization – are not given adequate consideration in the policy counsels of the government, flawed policy judgments are more likely to result and the chances of policy failure are raised accordingly."[14] (2) *The Pentagon Papers*: ". . . the American intelligence community repeatedly provided the policymakers with what proved to be accurate warnings that desired goals were either unattainable or likely to provoke costly reactions from the enemy."[15]

6. The character of nationalist-neutralism in the Third World.

7. The rising importance of world economic and scientific-technical developments for US security interests.

As stated above, however, O/NE's influence began to decline by the 1960s, necessitating some kind of major surgery to re-stimulate the estimative process. A number of developments caused O/NE's demise.

1. Beginning with the Kennedy presidency, the decisionmaking styles of US administrations changed. As compared to previous experience, the NIEs and their procedures did not fit in as well with policymaking procedures that were much more informal and fast-moving, and with policymakers who

were already much more sophisticated about world affairs – or at least thought they were – than had been their predecessors in the Truman and Eisenhower administrations.

2. O/NE's senior officers became progressively more separated from their principal policymaking consumers. By and large, the new breed of senior decisionmakers did not know who these senior estimators were. Hence the latter's pronouncements tended to become simply bureaucratic staff inputs which did not carry the added intangible weight among consumers of personal confidence in the particular authors of the NIEs.

3. The overall quality of the Board and Staff of O/NE declined over the years.

4. Later chiefs of O/NE, following Drs. Langer and Kent, were less able to protect O/NE bureaucratically. The waters surrounding O/NE now abounded in more sharks than ever, and in many ways the latter-day chiefs of O/NE, gifted much more substantively than procedurally, were upstaged by these competitors and denied the top recruits they wanted and needed.

5. O/NE got more set in its ways, less receptive to new ideas of substance and procedure.

6. Following its creation in 1961, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) brought new challenge to O/NE's judgments.

7. The NIEs never quite reached the paramount status DCI Bedell Smith originally intended for them because, for one reason, the estimates process tended to remain essentially a CIA, rather than a Community, process.

8. The impact of the NIEs was also dulled because they often too clearly bore the scars of the coordination process. Consumers often complained that they were receiving porridge.

9. In 1969 the incoming administration of President Richard Nixon and his chief foreign affairs advisor, Henry Kissinger, brought with it many severe criticisms of US intelligence, CIA and the NIEs.

10. The estimative batting average of O/NE and the Intelligence Community had slumped on several scores during the 1960s and the early 1970s. The chief such examples: (1) in 1962, doubting that the Soviets were emplacing nuclear weapons in Cuba; (2) substantially underestimating the flow of support going to the Viet Cong through Cambodia; (3) in 1973, failing to warn policymakers that Egypt and Syria were about to launch major attacks on Israel (the Yom Kippur War); and (4) perhaps most seriously, underestimating the goals and the pace of the USSR's strategic weapons program.

The National Intelligence Officer system, 1973-1980. This change was initiated in early 1973 by DCI James Schlesinger and carried out later in the year by his successor, William Colby. Supplanting O/NE's Board of senior generalists, and based on the success DCIs had had in having one senior aide to whom they could turn for Vietnam chores and answers, the NIO system now comprised some 12 senior experts in various geographical and functional specialties: e.g., the USSR, the Middle East, strategic weapons, conventional forces, and so on. Not only were these NIOs to be the DCI's experts (or expert brokers) for their respective portfolios, as George Carver had been for Vietnam, but one of their principal responsibilities was to get away from their Langley desks and mix it up in the policymaking community. Here the aim was to learn what products would best fit policymakers'

needs and timing, and so lessen the gap that had opened up over the years between the producers and consumers of estimates. Schlesinger and Colby were confident that such added contact with decisionmakers could be carried out without the NIOs losing their objectivity and credibility as intelligence officers.

This new system continued to produce NIEs and other estimative products, the individual NIOs now serving as chairmen of each estimate. The new system did not continue O/NE's practice of having an expert drafting staff under the control of the chief estimator, the new philosophy being that the NIOs would choose drafters from many offices of CIA and the Intelligence Community. This new system also involved a greater effort to recruit non-CIA officers for tours as NIOs. In addition, the previous system of using outside consultants changed: where once O/NE had kept a stable of such experts, usually consulting them in plenary or panel sessions, the NIOs for the most part now used consultants individually, as, when, and how the NIO so chose.

This new NIO system produced many excellent products during its lifetime, 1973-1980, but nonetheless encountered considerable storm and stress. The reasons were many.

1. Soon after the new NIO system was founded in 1973, US intelligence – and especially the CIA – came under the harshest and fullest period of scrutiny that has obtained to date. In these years of the Rockefeller, Church, and Pike investigations the estimative process took some of the heat.

2. The NIO system also suffered from a certain turmoil that marked CIA's analytic organization and effort during the latter part of the 1970s. The many reorganizations of this period saddled CIA's Directorate of Intelligence with especial administrative ambiguity and confusion, although some of it increased the NIOs' problems as well.

3. Some estimative products suffered from the absence of the collective responsibility that had marked the predecessor O/NE. Too much sole analytic authority was sometimes placed in the hands of one officer, the NIO. Good products resulted from good NIOs, poor or so-so products from a few NIOs of lesser candlepower or effectiveness.

4. The chairman of the NIOs was given more responsibility than authority. In consequence, at times some NIOs went off in various directions without the knowledge of their colleagues or their nominal boss.

5. The new drafting system did not work well. In theory, the NIOs could call on the drafting skills of anyone in the Intelligence Community; but in practice, they often got only those drafters they could scrounge or wheedle from office chiefs, in and out of CIA, who at times made available only those drafters they wished to assign to these out-of-office chores. Also, with no drafting staff of their own, and no authority over drafters temporarily loaned to them from other offices, the NIOs faced particularly difficult problems in those instances where a poor or so-so estimative draft was handed them.

6. The new system did not yield greater impact on policymaking consumers. The White House continued to disdain the estimative process and product, and new competing analytic offices appeared.

7. Not least, the new NIO system did not prevent occasional poor estimative performance.

a. At White House urging, DCI George Bush approved an experiment in competitive analysis, the noted A Team - B Team exercise, the upshot of

which demonstrated that the Intelligence Community had indeed been underestimating the goals and the pace of the Soviet strategic weapons program.

> b. Following that episode, a major intelligence failure occurred in 1978-1979 when the NIO system and the Intelligence Community did not warn American decisionmakers that the Shah of Iran was about to fall, and that there was significant chance that a fundamentalist, radically anti-Western regime would come to power in Iran. It was not a case of an NIE or NIEs miscalling the Iranian situation and outlook; the NIO machinery simply was unable to produce an NIE or any meaningful estimative wisdom for our policymakers.

As a result especially of this Iran performance, President Jimmy Carter wrote Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, NSC Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, and DCI Stansfield Turner the following note, 11 November 1978: "I am not satisfied with the quality of our political intelligence. Assess our assets and as soon as possible give me a report concerning our abilities in the most important parts of the world. Make a joint recommendation on what we should do to improve your ability to give me political information and advice."[16]

One of the fallouts of this directive, carried out by Admiral Turner, was the reordering of the NIO system. The new estimative system created was the National Intelligence Council (NIC). It continued the NIOs but to some degree borrowed back some of the strengths of the old O/NE: that is, (1) the Chairman of the NIC would have greater authority over the individual NIOs than their chairman had previously enjoyed; (2) the NIC would foster a somewhat greater collegial responsibility for NIEs than had obtained since the demise of O/NE; and (3) the NIC would contain a new element, a small drafting staff of its own. The NIC came into being at the start of 1980.

THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ESTIMATING

The National Intelligence Council (NIC). The NIC is the topmost analytical entity of the Intelligence Community. Organizationally, it comes directly under the DCI, and although it has been housed in CIA Headquarters, it is a Community, not a CIA, endeavor. Legally and technically, the NIEs that the NIC produces are the DCI's Estimates; they are approved by the Community at the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB), which the DCI chairs, but they remain his estimates and his responsibility.

The DCI's principal agent for national intelligence estimating is the NIC. It is composed of the following elements:

> A Chairman (of two-star or civilian equivalent rank). Since the NIC's founding in 1980, this position has been held by a variety of officers: career CIA officials, ex-RAND Corporation experts, an ex-military officer, and a serving USAF Major General.

> Two Vice Chairmen of like rank and background, one of whom deals primarily with substance and production, the other with planning.

> A dozen or so National Intelligence Officers (NIOs). Like the Chairman, these officers, too, are usually of flag rank or civilian super-grade status. A wide variety of officials have served such tours of duty in the NIC: e.g., senior CIA analysts or managers, senior CIA operations officers, serving two-star Army or Navy officers, senior State Department officers,

senior officials from elsewhere in the Intelligence Community, experts from think tanks and academia, and experts from the business and financial world.

Assistant National Intelligence Officers (A/NIOs). Like the NIOs, these officers, too, have come from a wide range of backgrounds and prior experience. They have ranged in rank from (Army) captain to brigadier general, although most A/NIOs are at the colonel/lieutenant colonel level or civilian equivalent rank. Most NIOs have one A/NIO; a few have more, depending on that office's workload.

A small drafting staff, the Analytic Group (AG). Like the NIOs and A/NIOs, these officers have come from various backgrounds and offices, in and out of CIA and the Intelligence Community. They are usually of similar rank to the A/NIOs.

A small support staff.

The responsibilities of the NIOs are wide-ranging. An NIO is the DCI's chief substantive officer for the NIO's particular area of geographic or functional specialty; this responsibility applies not only to the CIA, but to the entire Intelligence Community. Within his/her particular area of responsibility, the NIO fields the DCI's questions, either directly or as assisted by whatever talent the NIO can draw upon throughout the Community. The NIO is thus chief expert/broker/expediter for his/her portfolio. The NIO chooses the drafter(s) for the NIEs; chairs the estimate throughout the planning, drafting, and coordinating processes; and then defends the estimate at NFIB. The NIO also does much of the marketing of an NIE, at times briefing top executive, Congressional, and military officers on those estimates (or other estimative questions) – sometimes in concert with the DCI, sometimes alone. One of the most important duties of an NIO is to alert the DCI to new problems or opportunities, of either

substance or procedure; to this end the NIO prepares a large number of briefing notes, think pieces, and the like, either in response to questions from the DCI, or on the NIO's own initiative. Another of the NIO's chief responsibilities, carrying on the original intent of DCIs Schlesinger and Colby, is that of spending much of his/her time with opposite numbers of the intelligence and policymaking communities. The NIO is also a key player in the planning and initiating of estimates, fielding requests that come from the DCI or laterally from other senior officers of the intelligence and decisionmaking communities. Moreover, the NIO is a head-hunter, calling the attention of the NIC's Chairman and the DCI to new talent. Finally, the NIO should not be a yes-man; rather, it is his/her job to tell it like it is, letting the Director know candidly just where intelligence collection and analysis have brought each estimative question, and then to stand his/her ground if and when a DCI differs with those judgments, and if and when the NIO has confidence in the data and judgments at hand.

The responsibilities accorded an A/NIO rest with the NIO, and have run the gamut from gofer to alter ego. In practice, most cases resemble the latter, the A/NIOs sitting in for absent NIOs, performing the same or similar tasks.

The officers of the Analytic Group draft a number of estimates, especially those that span geographic or functional boundaries. The AG also serves as a fix-it shop, the NIOs having found that it is often more rewarding to assign a needed repair job to an AG member (or an A/NIO) than to go back for desired reforms from a drafter in some other office whose ability to make major improvements in a poor or so-so draft is often more constrained. Like the NIOs and the A/NIOs, AG officers at times initiate think pieces or other special products. They also fill in on occasion for absent A/NIOs.

In the past the NIC's officers produced a rather wide range of estimative products. At present they tend to prepare just NIEs

and a few other types of estimative products, and they keep those estimates shorter and sharper than in the past – a great step forward. In most cases the subject matter of a given estimative product determines which NIO will direct its production. On some occasions, however, the NIC's Chairman will assign a given project to some other NIO, depending on the respective NIOs' particular strengths and workloads at the time. And in a few cases, dual chairmanship of an estimate is assigned. Also, the NIO usually chooses the drafter(s). In the past, most drafters have come from the CIA's DDI, although there have been many also from the NIC's AG, from other offices of the Intelligence Community, and on a few occasions from outside the Community. On certain of the larger, more complex military estimates, drafting teams are formed composed of NIC, CIA, and Community officers.

One procedure that has not changed too much over the years since NIEs were first produced in 1950 is the coordination process. Other officers of CIA and the Community have a say in the planning and substance of a given NIE before drafting begins. Once a draft has been prepared and checked out within CIA, working-level Community officers meet to coordinate the draft and present it to their seniors. The NIOs chair these meetings, assisted by the drafter(s). After each office of the Community has reviewed the estimate as revised by working-level coordination, the Community's principals meet at NFIB, where under the Chairmanship of the DCI they either approve, revise, or remand the estimate. In instances where a given principal differs with a text's language or judgments, he/she may record a dissent (either individually or in concert with other members of the NFIB) and incorporate desired alternative text in the body of the estimate.

The Role of Other (non-NIC) Offices. This takes many forms. Top-rate officers from elsewhere in the Community, or from outside the Community, have served as C/NIC, VC/NIC, NIOs, A/NIOs, or members of the AG. Similarly, many serve as drafters of estimates, consultants, and coordinators of Estimates.

The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) plays a major role in the estimative process. In addition to participating in the NIC and in the coordination process, as discussed above, the DIA produces a number of estimative products for the Secretary of Defense (SecDef), the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and Defense Department (DoD) components. Among the DIA's senior officers are Defense Intelligence Officers (DIOs),who serve as the principal substantive intelligence advisors to the Director of DIA within their respective geographical and functional areas of responsibility. They interface with the NIOs on matters of interest to the DoD and the JCS, and serve as personal agents of DIA's Director with the NSC, the Unified and Specified Commands, and the military services. DIOs also represent DIA in exchanges of intelligence with allies and international organizations.

Although not as pronounced at present as in the past, DIA operates under certain constraints. It has to serve many different bosses. The individual military services have been known to husband their own strong officers at times and to be hesitant to let them serve tours of duty in DIA. Also, although DIA officers now play a larger role than previously in the NIC and in the estimative process, they still operate under certain disadvantages. One of these might be called the tyranny of an estimate's draft text; these are always presented to the coordination meetings by the NIC, and a given draft then dominates discussion, no matter how that particular text may read. Furthermore, though not as much as in the past, the CIA still dominates the estimative process in certain other ways: the coordination meetings are usually not held at DIA or other offices of military intelligence; many more CIA officers act as drafters than do DIA or other military personnel; at NFIB, its Chairman, the DCI, is the direct boss of one of its member agencies, the CIA, as well as being a sort of chairman of the board of the Intelligence Community; and, lastly, the CIA owns the estimates' printing presses and graphics shops.

Other than DIA, the individual military services are themselves

not formal members of the NFIB; DIA is a member, they are associates. Furthermore, these services do not themselves produce national estimates. On occasion, nonetheless, they furnish officers for tours of duty with the NIC, they furnish drafters for estimates, they participate actively in the estimates process and at NFIB, they register dissents when they so choose, and they perform there as de facto full members. Each of these military intelligence services is organized differently with respect to the production of estimates.

A body of key importance to the military intelligence agencies (and DIA) in the production of national estimates, as well as other intelligence matters, is the Military Intelligence Board (MIB). Before each estimate goes to NFIB, the MIB meets (chaired by the Director of DIA) to compare notes on how their respective offices see the given estimates. These meetings of the MIB are not designed to produce a coordinated military intelligence view. Rather, the MIB's purposes are to insure that analysis has been thorough, to guard against any military office's special pleading, and to get a pre-NFIB idea of the positions each military service will take with respect to given estimates. Overall, in recent years the MIB has been progressively moving toward fuller discussions and broader subjects of mutual concern.

The Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) also plays a major role in the NIC and the Intelligence Community's estimative processes – even though this takes the form of departmental, rather than national, estimating. INR is far smaller than CIA or DIA, but makes up for that difference with certain other advantages. One is physical location, its geographic propinquity to two of the most important players in the policymaking process, the Secretary of State and the White House. INR's officers also often enjoy a greater awareness of the US policy ingredients in the estimative question at hand than do CIA or military intelligence officers. This has for years resulted in INR often being given high marks by policymaking consumers for its current intelligence and estimative products. At the same time, however, the primary recipient of INR's products is its chief

customer, the Secretary of State. Here INR supplies the SecState a steady stream of informal estimative pieces of all types, as well as constant face-to-face national estimating.

Although they are full, active members of and participants at the NFIB, the other members of the Intelligence Community (Commerce, Treasury, et al) generally play important, but lesser, roles in the estimative process than do the above-discussed offices.

THE IMPACT -- OR NOT -- OF ESTIMATES ON POLICYMAKERS

In a thoughtful *Foreign Affairs* article (1987/1988) on "The CIA and American Foreign Policy," Robert Gates wrote: "The fact is that, over the years, the policymaker and the intelligence officer have consistently (and with frighteningly few exceptions) come together hugely ignorant of the realities and complexities of each other's worlds – process, technique, form and culture."[17] At the national level at least, the concepts of a regularly functioning intelligence cycle and of a resulting impact of its final product on its policymaking consumers have indeed often been less fact than articles of faith. And given tomorrow's even more demanding world, the actual impact of estimates on their prime customers must be heightened if all the tedium, talent, time, and taxpayers' money expended on intelligence is to be fully justified.

As Sherman Kent described the situation years ago, the realities of the producer-consumer relationship could be likened to viewing a great pyramid at Giza – not merely as a great creation of stone, but as a representation of our national estimating structure. At the base of this imposing pyramid are intelligence requirements and collection. Nearer the top, collation and analysis. Still farther up, the national estimating process. Finally, almost at the very crown of intelligence purpose, the DCI. Unfortunately, however, at that altitude we often find prevailing mists which obscure whether the whole structure breaks off about there without a true apex, that is, without an impact on higher policymaking authority that is truly commensurate with all the heaving around of building blocks that has gone on down below. That is to say, does the DCI's national estimating process really

connect with and instruct national decisionmaking? Is the DCI's chief service truly that of heightening the wisdom with which the President and his principal; policymaking colleagues tackle the world's problems and opportunities? Or, at the exalted top levels, is there often a disconnect between the DCI and the most senior policymakers? Is the DCI really the court's principal seer? Or is he more just an overseer, a manager of a vast bureaucratic army? And do all we analysts and national estimators down below make a real impact on the gods, or occasionally so? And is all our collective wisdom truly appreciated as helping create something great and lasting, or do we mostly just shove around building blocks for successive pharaohs?

As many hazards prevented the effective alerting of higher authority in the case of Pearl Harbor and other past crises, so many hazards continue inherently to complicate intelligence producers' full impact on consumers in virtually all situations and at virtually all times. The primary such hazards – physical, bureaucratic, psychological – can be said to be these:

1. Estimates often do not rank high on the list of the types of intelligence digested by senior consumers. Time and again over the years, polls taken among decisionmakers have shown that they value current intelligence reports the most, estimates less so. Why? The great majority of policymakers have to concern themselves with fairly immediate, pressing problems. More distant and more uncertain crisis-avoidance issues have a lesser constituency and fewer advocates. Many senior policymakers feel they do not need national estimates, inasmuch as they carry around their own NIEs in their heads.

2. The senior policymakers whom the producers of national estimating seek most to influence are those very officials who have the least time and energy to absorb such wisdom.

3. Intelligence producers and consumers tend to be two different kinds of beast. As developed in a brilliant essay by Hans Heymann, at the time a distinguished professor at the Defense Intelligence College, key policymakers are often political leaders who have risen to their positions by being decisive, aggressive, and self-confident, whereas intelligence analysts often tend to be more reflective, introspective, self-doubting.[18]

4. National intelligence estimating understandably receives a cool reception when its messages are uncongenial and do not necessarily support particular policies being advocated at the time. As had occurred in the case of Vietnam and various other crises, this hazard is one of the most substantial difficulties national estimating faces. Decisionmakers "use" intelligence where it can help sell their particular arguments, budget requests, or policies. They often look upon national intelligence estimating whose logic differs from these needs as worthless, or worse. Policymakers often criticize such analyses as being unrealistic, unaware of all the facts, or slanted. Yet few policymakers so criticize national estimating that happens to support their own needs or courses of action. And, such resistance of consumers to the arguments of intelligence assessments generally becomes more pronounced the more committed given decisionmakers are to given policies.

5. A large ingredient of such resistance is often inordinate pride on the part of policymakers. Over the years this has at times marked the case of new administrations coming to power, Republican and Democratic alike, replacing those of the opposite party. Often there has been a lot of hubris present: the former policymakers have botched world affairs;

we will put things straight. But in practice, by the time this new batch of decisionmakers leaves office, the cruel world's many restraints have at times made their actual foreign policies not too different from those of the former, discredited policymakers. One of the foremost tasks of national intelligence estimating is to cut through such hubris with as accurate an image of this and that world problem as is possible, without, as the essayist Walter Lippmann termed it years ago, someone distorting that image of reality by painting in the (non-existent) coasts of Bohemia – the distorter in our case being the proud certainty of some policymaker.

6. One of the main purposes of national intelligence estimating is to lessen policymakers' uncertainties about the world, but in fact such assessments on occasion increase those uncertainties. The world is often far more ambiguous and elusive to the intelligence analyst than it is to a decisionmaker certain that he or she has the nifty policy answer that can cut through given uncertainties.

7. Estimates face an enormous amount of competition for the attention of senior policymakers. National estimating has to compete with **other intelligence** which flows into the offices of policymakers in enormous amounts. National estimating also has to compete with **other information** senior policymakers constantly possess: not only what experience and preconceptions decisionmakers bring with them to their positions, but what they have subsequently absorbed there from columnists and the media, from expert consultants in and out of government, from trusted colleagues abroad or at home, from personal agents they may have specially commissioned, from private or back-channel messages

from senior officers in other countries, and the like.

8. In turn, all intelligence – national estimating and other – is only one input to the making of national policy. Intelligence has to compete with numerous potent influences on top decisionmakers. For example: How can I, as a policymaker, sell my desired foreign policy course to the members of Congress or whiff it past them? What about budgetary considerations? How can I sell this policy within the administration when, say, State and Defense perhaps differ 180 degrees on it? How will this policy sell in Peoria? Will my desired course embarrass me with the other party? Or with the other wing of my own party? What about previous commitments to Mitterrand, or Major, or other allied leaders? How will the Russians read this? Could my desired policy cause me serious domestic grief with certain voters if it looks as if I'm favoring country x too much rather than country y? Could I be accused of "losing" this or that country? And could my desired policy seriously threaten my political longevity? Hence tough sledding indeed for intelligence estimating, no matter how accurate its image of world realities may be.

9. Finally, policymakers have a number of legitimate grievances against national estimating and hesitancies concerning its authors. Decisionmakers, especially new ones, often expect too much of intelligence, and when frustrated in policymaking or policy execution use intelligence as a whipping boy. Intelligence has on occasion been wrong, or in more cases late, or in still more cases, too cloudy to be of much use. Decisionmakers can legitimately fault national estimating in cases where it seems ignorant of the role US policy is playing in the analytic equation at hand. And if the producers of intelligence estimates are

> unknown personal quantities to experienced policymakers, then why should the latter pay attention to their product, especially in cases where those estimative judgments may run counter to their own readings of the situation? Policymakers can legitimately fault national estimating in cases where it seems biased, or special pleading, or remote from situations that experienced policymakers know to be different or far more complex. Decisionmakers can legitimately be wary of estimators if the track record or estimative batting average of those producers of intelligence has not been high. Not least, decisionmakers have been known to fault estimators because the latters' product did not reflect certain sensitive information that these same policymakers withheld from them.

All in all, thus, much closer ties must be established and maintained between the producers and the consumers of national intelligence estimating if policymaking is to profit from the insights intelligence can provide, and if the tax money spent on intelligence is to be justified. This need is especially pressing because we now face a much more different, complex, and uncertain world than that we have known for so many decades. This requires substantial changes in the processes of national intelligence estimating – such as the recommendations that follow.

NATIONAL ESTIMATING AND TOMORROW'S WORLD

The demands of tomorrow's challenges will be immense, requiring substantial intelligence capabilities as the first line of national defense, and substantially expanded definitions of "national intelligence." This expanded definition will, as we now know, include a vast spectrum of dissimilar, demanding questions, among them: arms limitation verification, arms transfers, terrorism, drugs, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, resource shortages, threats to the world's ecology, the proliferation of political actors and of irresponsible initiatives, tribalism, money laundering, religious fundamentalism, population pressures, mass starvation, increasing migration/refugee flows, the increasing demands of domestic needs on national budgets, genetic engineering, and stealth technologies, to name a few. In sum, there will be much more movement, more change in the world balances of power and in major world political patterns than there has been for decades. This will result not only from problems such as the above, but from an accelerating movement on the part of the more developed powers toward a space-related 21st Century – and, in the process, a widening gap between those powers and the most distressed members of the Third World.

Hence the areas of needed analytical and estimative talent will have to expand, as will the interplay of the Intelligence Community with other agencies of government and with other sources of special expertise outside of government. This will require added clarification of just which issues are legitimate fields for intelligence input, and of how national estimating can best contribute to assisting decisionmakers in these regards. In sum, there will be all the more need for creativity in the intelligence and policymaking communities, alike. For national

intelligence estimating, this means that it must not allow itself to become bound by yesterday's procedures and thought patterns, and must not permit situations to develop where national estimating remains better prepared to deal with yesterday's challenges than with those of tomorrow.

Assumptions concerning tomorrow's national intelligence estimating:

That NIEs and other types of national estimating will continue to be necessary and will continue to serve numerous valuable functions: educating the policymaking community about the true state of the world, and the true threats and opportunities that face the United States; presenting the total such evidence available analyzed by the entire Intelligence Community; making clear to the decisionmakers what differences of interpretation may exist among the producers of these estimative judgments; and giving decisionmakers an opportunity to test their own readings of situations against the views of experts who have no policy or budgetary axes to grind.

That the services national estimating can perform will nonetheless continue to face various constraints. Some of these will be **inherent** in nature, those flowing directly form the innate unknowability and volatility of world politics. Other constraints will be exerted by **bureaucratic forces**: complications contributed by the particulars of organization and process, competition for turf, hazards between estimative producers and consumers, and the like. Still other constraints will be exerted by **psychological forces**: the incrustations of habit, the hubris of producers and consumers alike, and the influence of particular personalities on the intelligence and policy processes.

That there will continue to be a certain gap between the theory and reality of national estimating. That is, whatever party occupies the White House, there will still be occasions where policymaking will be less than orderly, and where decisionmakers will go their own way whatever the estimative inputs the Intelligence Community has made.

That there will continue to be a differentiation of impact on policymakers by various topics of national estimating: that is, the greatest impact by studies concerning key weapons questions and other subjects where considerable hard evidence may be at hand, the least by estimates concerning political intentions or other subjects where evidence is thinner and more ambiguous.

That there will continue to be greater opportunity for top decisionmakers to be influenced by concise, focused estimative pieces, by face-to-face briefings, and/or by personal informal-setting national estimating than by formal NIEs. These latter products will nevertheless continue to contribute significantly, especially down the chains of command, as authoritative bodies of data.

That despite the many difficulties national estimating will continue to face – in world politics and in other intelligence-policymaking arena – **there are certain changes of process, emphasis, and priority that, if made and maintained, will enhance the impact of national estimating on decisionmaking.**

General recommendations, or lessons derived from the above-discussed history and processes of national estimating:

Most of these emphases are rather obvious needs at

any time, but especially as decisionmaking faces a much less familiar, more complex future. National estimating must, for example: remain closely relevant to the specific interests of policymakers; be timely; be based on all information, classified and unclassified, that is available; represent data that have been shared by all the elements of the Intelligence Community; reflect judgments in which all elements of the Intelligence Community have participated; clearly indicate what differences of view may exist among the estimators – and why; go where the evidence has taken the estimators, remaining fiercely objective, not permitting superiors to water down judgments – above all, not softening judgments beforehand for fear they won't sell up the line; remain starkly candid, telling it like it is, however such facts and judgments may seem to reflect on the wisdom or success of particular US policies; reflect knowledge of the US ingredient in the question under study, appreciating how US actions or inactions may be influencing the estimative questions under review; venture out courageously beyond evidence into the future; clearly differentiate for the consumer that which is fact and that which is judgment; and in the case of judgments, clearly indicate on what evidence they have been based, just what analytical methods have been used, and with what degree of confidence these judgments are presented.

Additionally, as discussed above in this study, the history of national estimating has told us that it must also: avoid mirror-imaging, remembering always that the foreign actors under study do not necessarily think the way we Americans do, and that what may make sense to us may not to them; clearly flag off-chance possibilities, indicating their likelihood and – most important – their consequences for US interests

should these contingencies occur; not permit the estimators to stick to their desks and never go to sea, a la Gilbert & Sullivan, but instead insure that they mix it up regularly and actively with policymaking opposite numbers; not permit estimative officers to become isolated or ivory-towered; keep fresh blood and fresh ideas coming in; and appreciate the needs of the policymakers, the countless pressures and constraints working upon them, and the competition of ideas the Intelligence Community's inputs face.

Additional, more fundamental recommendations for improving tomorrow's national estimating:

Through various means – at various levels – the producers and consumers of estimates must be brought into much closer, continuing contact with and knowledge of one another than has been the case to date. Above all, the DCI must have ready, informal access to the President, must enjoy the President's full confidence, and – without being an explicit policymaker – must have the entree to be completely candid with the President concerning US intelligence and US policies.

There should be a much more systematic, continuing arrangement to tie national intelligence and policymaking together at the very top of government. Such needed improvement in organization and process could probably be best accomplished by creating a small, senior, elite office in the NSC structure – one that is staffed by top officers who are experienced in both intelligence and policymaking, and who enjoy widespread respect for their abilities, character, candor, and courage of convictions.

The central theory behind the creation of the

National Intelligence Officer process – the facilitating of much greater interchange between producers and consumers of national intelligence – must on a continuing basis be made more real in practice than in the past. To date, the record of NIO contact with senior policymakers has been a mixed one, the results directly dependent on the imaginativeness, initiative and energies of the individual NIO. Intelligence supervisors should not hesitate to move out those NIOs who stick too closely to their desks or who remain unknown quantities to top policymakers.

More meaningful contact must also take place on a continuing basis, down the line, between more junior estimators and their opposite numbers in the intelligence and policymaking communities.

There should also be substantially greater resort to interchanges of duty tours, within and among the various offices of the Intelligence Community and between intelligence and policymaking offices.

The relevance of national estimating to policymaking – and the ties between these two endeavors – will be advanced by substantially increasing the number of estimates wherein prime consumers ask the Intelligence Community what the probable world reactions would be to this or that specific (theoretical) US course of action. Many such estimates were requested years ago, few in recent years. Decisionmakers need not buy the estimative judgments given them in such exercises, but they will profit from learning the views of experts not responsible for the success of given policies.

Much more attention must be given to the communicating of estimative data and judgments. This

will entail more face-to-face briefings and discussions, more use of video and other multi-sensory means, and personal marketing of estimates by the DCI, the C/NIC, and the NIOs.

Much improvement is needed in communicating the data and judgments of estimates to US military commands in the field, and in so translating that information that it can much better serve the particular needs of these commands.

More rigorous and more diversified testing of given estimates' evidence, analysis, and judgments should be achieved through various means: more competitive analysis within and without the Intelligence Community; more regularized use of the country's best expert consultants; more use of "devil's advocate" challenges; and the use of methodologies and procedures that can reduce the bureaucratic and psychological hazards of the face-to-face coordination of estimates.

Far more care must be given to the developing of human capital in the estimating business if national intelligence estimating is to contribute the potential to the national interest of which it is capable. The needs of national estimating and of first-rate intelligence analysis have suffered over the years as there has grown a sort of infatuation with machines and technical systems, plus a widespread assumption that more collection and more people will automatically produce better intelligence products. There is no substitute for the depth, imaginativeness, and "feel" that experienced, first-rate analysts and estimators can bring to the often semi-unknowable questions handed them.

> Hence the principal offices of the CIA, Defense, and State that engage in national estimating must be manned by the finest experts available, on the model of the R&A officers of the OSS. These offices must **never** be manned by just available "warm bodies." These standards must apply not only to government experts, but to the quality and effectiveness of (and needed larger number of) those officers brought into national estimating from the outside. For in the end, it will basically be the quality of the people involved – the experts and their managers – that will or will not bring us the quality national estimating of which we are capable.

All in all, national intelligence estimating will continue to fall short of its potential until and unless it gains and maintains the deserved quality/status that DCI Walter Bedell Smith foresaw for this enterprise when, in establishing the NIEs and O/NE in 1950, he told his Intelligence Community colleagues that national estimating should become "the heart" of the intelligence process.[19]

FOOTNOTES

1. "An Imperative for the CIA: Professionalism Free of Politics and Partisanship," remarks to US Senate, *Congressional Record*. 11 November 1975, p. 35786.

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Publisher's Acknowledgements

Manuscript reviewed by Cynthia M. Grabo who chairs AFIO's Publication Review Board, by CAPT Richard W. Bates, USN(Ret), and by Dr. William A. Mitchell.

Publication advice and guidance by Elizabeth Bancroft, editor of *Surveillant*, a bimonthly publication of the National Intelligence Book Center, Washington, D.C.

Cover design contributed by The Russell Group, Architects, Los Angeles.

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