

61-6792

23 AUG 1961

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

**SUBJECT: Provision for Early Warning of 'Cold War Crisis
Situations' (Recommendation Number 4, of the
2 July 1961 Report to the President by the President's
Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board)**

1. The United States Intelligence Board has considered the subject recommendation of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and would propose to meet the requirement indicated by weekly consideration and adoption of a "Weekly Survey of Cold War Crisis Situations" as a part of its present weekly review of "sensitive situations."

2. It is contemplated that this "Weekly Survey" would (a) identify, as early as possible, any situation which seriously threatened to become critical; (b) flag any significant change (for better or worse) in any situation previously identified as actually or potentially critical; and (c) list other situations previously identified as actually or potentially critical, with references to the last previous treatment of the subject in the "Weekly Survey" and to any appropriate National Intelligence Estimate or other USIB-approved intelligence report.

3. Attached for your information is a report approved by USIB on 15 August which sets forth more fully the manner in which the task would be carried out if USIB is instructed to do so.



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Attachment

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USIB-D-28.4/2
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Provision for Early Warning of Developing
Crisis Situations

REFERENCES : a. USIB-D-28.4/1, 24 July 1961
b. USIB-M-165, item 3
c. Memorandum for the DCI, 31 July 1961
d. USIB-M-166, item 11

1. The problem presented is to devise a means whereby the USIB can systematically provide "early warning of developing 'cold war' crisis situations in any area of the world" (USIB-D-28.4/1). A coordinated written report, discussed and approved by USIB, is desired (Reference c, para. 2. c.).

2. In context, it is evident that the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board used the term "cold war" in order to distinguish this function from the "hot war" early warning function of the Watch Committee, and that it is not intended to restrict consideration to situations in which there is a direct Sino-Soviet involvement. The requirement is for early warning of any development which, if unchecked, could have seriously adverse effect on U. S. objectives in a given country or area.

3. The key words of the prescription are early warning of developing crisis situations. This is not a matter of promptly reporting events which have already occurred, or of providing running comment on current

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developments of "cold war" significance. The function is estimative and occasional: to anticipate, as far in advance as possible, an impending crisis, and to call attention to that potentiality. To be effective as warning, the report should treat only those situations in which a critical development is foreseen as contingently likely, and should state its warning distinctly, without burying them in extensive (and perhaps equivocal) analysis. Any such warning may, of course, be followed up by a supporting SNIE, but that would be a separate operation. In sum, the report should be estimative in character, highly selective rather than comprehensive, direct and brief in its treatment of particular situations, and distinct from current intelligence reporting.

Organization and Procedure

4. It is agreed that this requirement can best be met by systematizing the customary USIB review of "sensitive situations." Inasmuch as a coordinated written report would be required, USIB consideration and action would be facilitated by the submission of a prepared draft in due form. The purpose of such preliminary staff work would be to avoid an expenditure of USIB time and energy on incidental matters and to define the real issues, if any. In the event of any substantial disagreement, it is proposed that the alternative versions be incorporated in the draft text for USIB consideration.

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5. No new machinery comparable to the NIC and Watch Committee would be required for this purpose. The task can be accomplished by the established mechanism for the preparation and coordination of USIB estimates: that is, by the Board of National Estimates acting in coordination with designated USIB representatives--all being informed, of course, by current intelligence reporting and continuing systematic surveillance of potentially critical situations.

6. The preparation of the report would be greatly facilitated if USIB meetings were to be held on Thursdays instead of Tuesdays. This relates to the availability of staff support and authoritative guidance within the respective USIB agencies, not merely to the personal convenience of the designated action officers. On the basis of a USIB meeting on Thursday, the procedure might be as follows:

Tuesday:	receipt of oral or written proposals (analogous to contributions) from USIB representatives; dissemination of a proposed draft;
Wednesday:	coordination as necessary with USIB representatives, including consideration of any later developments; and
Thursday:	USIB action and dissemination to the designated recipients.

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Form and Content

7. We propose that the weekly report be divided into three sections which would, respectively:

- a. Identify, as early as possible, any situation which seriously threatened to become critical.
- b. Flag any significant change (for better or worse) in any situation previously identified as actually or potentially critical.
- c. Note other situations previously identified as actually or potentially critical.

8. The content of the first two sections of any one report will, of course, depend on developments. Hopefully, there would only occasionally be a newly developing crisis situation to report--but it is, of course, by occasional entries in the first section, as warranted, that the report would accomplish its early warning function. Really significant changes in previously identified potential crisis situations are also not likely to occur every week, but the second section will presumably be the most active section of the report. Care and discrimination will be required to prevent it from lapsing into duplicative current intelligence reporting. Only estimative judgments regarding a substantial change in the situation should be included. In either section, treatment should be direct and brief. For

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warning purposes, it is necessary only to cite the development which led to the item's inclusion and to indicate what further development of the situation that development portends.

9. We envisage the proposed third section of the report as simply a checklist of situations previously identified as actually or potentially critical with respect to which there is no substantial change to report in section two. We would propose to give, in each case, references to the last previous treatment of the subject in this weekly survey and to any appropriate NIE, SNIE, or other USIB-approved intelligence report.

10. It is inadvisable to establish elaborate criteria for the identification of impending crisis situations. The task is essentially an exercise of responsible estimative judgment; the purpose for which the work is done is a sufficient guide. Although the judgments called for are necessarily speculative and the possibilities for untoward developments in the world are innumerable, the basic requirement for selectivity should serve to limit consideration to situations having serious implications for important U.S. interests. Valid standards for inclusion will in due course become established through the practical process of nomination and selection.

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Recommendations

11. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that the USIB:
 - a. Agree to meet on Thursdays.
 - b. Agree to include under the present "sensitive situations" item of its agenda the consideration and adoption of a "Weekly Survey of Cold War Crisis Situations" to be prepared by the Board of National Estimates in coordination with designated USIB representatives.
 - c. Approve the attached memorandum for dispatch to the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs in response to his memorandum in USIB-D-28.4/1.

11 August 1961

The foregoing report and recommendations were approved by the United States Intelligence Board on August 15, 1961.