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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, United States Intelligence Board

SUBJECT: National Intelligence Surveys (NIS)

1. The Central Intelligence Agency has recently conducted an informal internal review of the NIS program to determine whether the large work load and budgetary expenditures now entailed are essential and whether chronic deficiencies in coverage and timeliness can be remedied. Preliminary findings indicate that:

a. The NIS program at present includes detailed treatment of comparatively transient subjects, such as political, which cannot be kept up-to-date in a formal publication program of this type. This effort to cover subjects which are of no value as intelligence, unless maintained in a quite current status, has brought about a persistent problem of obsolescence.

b. The NIS program should be more concentrated on subjects of a fundamental and more or less permanent nature, as stated in NSCID No. 3, with a substantial reduction in the coverage now prescribed; for example, for the political chapter, the scientific chapter, the chapter dealing with the armed forces, and the economic and sociological chapters.

c. The intelligence community has assets and facilities which can produce intelligence on political, sociological, scientific, military and economic developments in all countries of strategic interest and can schedule such production in accordance with actual requirements, rather than subject such production to the coordination and publication procedure required for an encyclopedic compilation.

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4. It is clear from the proliferation of other forms of basic intelligence production that the NIS program does not at present include all of the more or less permanent type information that might be required by, or be most useful to, planners and operators.

2. In the light of these conclusions, I believe it would be appropriate for the Board to review the overall concept of the NIS, with a view to revising the program, taking into account the changes in needs for basic intelligence which have occurred since 1947, and the facilities for meeting these needs which have come into being since the conception of the NIS.

3. It is recommended that the Board request the Coordination Staff of the Director of Central Intelligence to examine this matter and submit recommendations for revision of the NIS program to the Board for its consideration.

((Signed) Marshall S. Carter

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Lieutenant General, USA  
Deputy Director

AC/DCI: [redacted] rad 10 Oct 62

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