



card
Lt. General Harold R. Bull, USA (Ret.)
Chairman
Continental Defense Committee
Executive Office of the President
Washington, D. C.

Dear General Bull:

In response to your request of June 15, for the views of this Agency on organizational arrangements to provide the best possible continuing production of Net Capability Estimates, the following thoughts are submitted:

There is no need to argue the necessity for reliable estimates of net capabilities as the basis for national policy formulation. These can only be prepared by careful integration of gross-capability intelligence of the enemy with our capabilities and plans, so that the net result of the interplay may be forecast as accurately as possible. This need is not confined to the problem of defense of North America but is equally inescapable for planning US requirements and commitments in any part of the globe.

The President and the NSC in practice and pursuant to statutory authority depend on the Director of Central Intelligence, representing the coordinated views of the Intelligence Agencies, for foreign intelligence estimates, and on the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, speaking as their representative, for military advice. Thus what is required to furnish the President and Council with guidance in the most useful and complete form is the effective amalgamation of the functions of the two.

Responsibility for such combined analysis cannot rightly be assigned to one of these advisers to the exclusion of the other, for both are coordinate staff officers serving the same commander. Each must consider the factors developed by the other in order to eliminate reliance on arbitrary assumptions and produce valid and realistic forecasts.

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It is my view, therefore, that the President and Council should establish a permanent subcommittee on Net Capability Estimates to be composed of:

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Director of Central Intelligence

and that this subcommittee be charged with providing, on its initiative or as requested by the Council, estimates of net capabilities as needed to support the formulation of national policy.

The manner in which this subcommittee would discharge its function should be left flexible and might very well differ substantially according to the nature of the estimate undertaken. It should have authority to secure support and information from all executive branches of the government and should be required to consult with such agencies and interdepartmental committees as may be able to contribute significantly to any estimate. The subcommittee should take such action as may be necessary to preserve the security of highly sensitive information such as U.S. war plans and intelligence sources.

I believe you will find that the views expressed herein are substantially the same as those stated by General Smith in his memorandum of 14 October 1952 to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, and orally to the National Security Council on 26 November 1952, and to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 17 December 1952. Thus, though the need has long been recognized, no general or continuing machinery has yet been established. It is my earnest hope that as a result of the recommendations of your Committee, the Council will take necessary action along the lines I have indicated.

Sincerely yours,

Allen W. Dulles
Director

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