

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION held in the CIA Conference Room,  
Administration Building, 22 May 1951, at 1130 hours

SUBJECT: Psychological Strategy Board (PSB)

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Allen Dulles, CIA ✓  
Rear Admiral Leslie C. Stevens, JCS  
General John L. Magruder, OSD  
Mr. Frank G. Wisner, CIA  
Mr. James Q. Reber, CIA  
Mr. Phillip Davison, State  
Mr. Leon Crutcher, State  
Mr. Howland Sargeant, State  
Mr. Joseph Phillips, State  
Lieut. Colonel P. C. Davis, Army



1. The working party (established at the last meeting of the above on 16 May 1951) submitted its proposals with respect to the functions and organization of the Director and Staff of the PSB and immediate steps for action. There was also submitted a proposal for possible agenda items for an early meeting of the Board.

2. Suggested changes will now be incorporated in redrafted papers which will be redistributed for concurrence prior to submission to General Smith and in the form proposed for subsequent transmittal to the Board itself.

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION held in the CIA Conference Room,  
Administration Building, 16 May 1951, at 1400 hours

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Rear Admiral Leslie C. Stevens, JCS  
General John L. Magruder, OSD  
Mr. Frank G. Wisner, CIA  
Mr. James Q. Reber, CIA  
Mr. Philip Davison, State  
Mr. Leon Crutcher, State  
Lieut. Colonel T. R. Philbin, JCS  
Lieut. Colonel P. C. Davis, Army

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1. Action: An interdepartmental working group under the chairmanship of Mr. Reber was appointed to develop a paper on the organization and functions of the Psychological Strategy Board.

2. The matter of the relationship of the PSB to the NSC was mentioned and it was agreed that the Board should discuss this problem at an early meeting. There is a possible confusion because the PSB was set up by Presidential directive although it will report to the NSC. There may also be some conflict with NSC-10/2.

3. Discussion: It was understood that the new PSB should not get into overly detailed planning. It will approve ideas proposed by existing agencies and will advance its own original proposals. It will probably not meet very much but will still be able to give valuable and needed guidance to the operating agencies. It was thought that there would still be a big job to be done by IFIO.

4. General Magruder presented his conception of the organization and function of the PSB and distributed a draft paper which set forth his tentative views in detail.

5. Mr. Davison commented that he saw four functions for the Board: (a) National planning, (b) "wheel-greasing," (c) Evaluation, and (d) Coordination at a high level. To this list Colonel Davis suggested the addition of an item on the application of the best techniques.

6. Mr. Dulles stated that he had not conceived that the Board would be set up with regional specialists, since they would be in competition with the existing agencies.

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7. General Magruder acknowledged that the organization could not start full grown and that in the beginning many of the functions of the Board would have to be performed within the operating agencies.

8. Admiral Stevens suggested that since the eventual size and duties of the Staff are in dispute we should bypass some of the arguments for the present and try to get a practical paper on what can be done now with the two or three people actually available. He further stated his disagreement with the planning concept in General Magruder's paper. He felt that the functions referred to by General Magruder are already placed squarely on the shoulders of responsible officials. He did not see any need to interpret NSC papers into guidances for the departments. In his conception the PSB could give top direction by setting priorities and needling departments to do what needs to be done. He also looked to the PSB as having decision-making powers, referring matters where necessary to the NSC.

9. It was suggested also that the Board could help get qualified personnel from industry and elsewhere and put them to the best use in psychological operations.

10. It was agreed that the functions of the staff should be those that are not being done elsewhere and cannot be delegated. There was some disagreement as to whether or not the working group should attempt to sketch the organization of the Staff as it might ultimately develop.

11. Mr. Wisner suggested that the working group should shy away from any thought of a "Charter" which would require formal departmental concurrence. Rather they should develop a paper which would be informally accepted by the Board as indicating the general lines which they would probably follow. Mr. Wisner also suggested that the working group discuss the role of a group of senior consultants or deputies to the Board members. The thought also was advanced that the Board should screen public and Congressional inquiries and suggestions and act as a focal point and figurehead for the national psychological effort.

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Approved For Release 2003/04/22 : CIA-RDP80R01731R003400010025-1

This paper has been sent to Mr. Wisner  
and Mr. Houston for their comments.

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Approved For Release 2003/04/22 : CIA-RDP80R01731R003400010025-1

24 May 1951

RELATIONSHIP OF THE PSB TO THE NSC

1. The President's directive of April 4, 1951, establishing the Psychological Strategy Board states that "The Board will report to the NSC on the Board's activities and on its evaluation of the national psychological operations..."

2. The National Security Act of 1947, as amended in 1949, states that "The function of the Council (NSC) shall be to advise the President with respect to..." The Council shall also make certain "recommendations" and "reports" to the President.

3. The suggestion has been made that the NSC should formally adopt the President's directive of April 4 in order legally and clearly to establish the NSC-PSB relationship envisaged in that directive.

In view of the fact that the NSC can merely "advise" the President and "make recommendations," which are inoperative until approved by him, it is apparent that the Council has no decision-making authority apart from the President (whether that authority is retained by the President personally or delegated to the NSC or to the individual members thereof). It does not appear necessary therefore for the NSC to confirm any directive of the President even where its own functions are involved.

4. The question was also raised as to whether there might not be some conflict between the President's directive and NSC 10/2.

A large part of the possible area of conflict was specifically dealt with in the April 4 directive, which stated that "... the operational planning and execution of [all activities (other than overt types of economic warfare) envisioned under NSC 50/1 and NSC 10/2] shall remain, approved for release 2003/04/22 : CIA-RDP80R01731R003400010025-1

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subject to this directive, as therein assigned."

Insofar as any conflict may arise that is separate from the "operational planning and execution" of these activities, it is dealt with only by implication and would be resolved in favor of the April 4 directive on the theory that a subsequent issuance by the same authority is controlling.

5. The PSB was established and derives its authority from the President, who has directed that its reports be made to the NSC. It is presumed that the PSB will operate independently of the NSC Senior Staff although informal liaison and coordination with that Staff would be very helpful, if not essential.

6. The relationship of the work of the PSB to that of the NSC will be of two kinds. First, the PSB will reach agreements on the solution of problems within the field of their responsibilities, and, recognizing problems in that field on which they disagree or on which Presidential approval is required, PSB will refer them to the NSC.

Second, the PSB will act on the basis of policies and papers approved by the NSC. They will see that the psychological weapons at their disposal are employed to maximum effectiveness in pursuance of NSC policies.

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To insure that the psychological policies, objectives and programs promulgated by the Board or within the capabilities of execution of the operating agencies, or, if not, to make provision for such specific administrative, personnel and logistical support as may be required from an appropriate department or agency.

25 May 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR: DEPUTY DIRECTOR, PLANS  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

SUBJECT: Agenda for Psychological Strategy Board

1. The draft memorandum, dated 23 May 1951, from you to the DCI (copy attached) has been circulated for comment to Mr. Barrett, Admiral Stevens, General Magruder and Mr. Wisner. This memorandum contained the results of our discussions on Tuesday, 22 May 1951.

2. The suggested agenda that emerged from those discussions, in my opinion, can be considerably improved. Although I do not believe we are at liberty to keep the present proposals from General Smith, I do understand that he has complete freedom to accept, reject or modify them, and therefore that we are obligated to express our views in that regard.

3. I heartily endorse the first item on the proposed agenda: "To note the proposed functions and organization of the Staff (TAB A, 1-5)." I do not conceive that this should take more than a few minutes of the Board's time, and any lengthy discussion or formal action should be avoided.

4. With regard to the second item: "To discuss the relationship of the PSB to the NSC." I believe the Board should have the benefit of a staff paper outlining the problem. My office has attempted to produce such a paper (first draft attached). If, after coordination, the substance of this paper proves correct, I would raise a question as to whether in fact the Board needs to discuss the matter.

5. With respect to the third item on the agenda: "To consider future business of the Board (TAB B)," I suggest that the Chairman select the half dozen most important and urgent items and ask the Board members to direct their staffs to expedite the preparation of papers on them for PSB consideration. The Board should not be burdened with the remainder of TAB B, the main value of which is to the Staff level. I would propose the following as the half dozen problems and would hope that they not be discussed substantively at the first meeting:

- a. The defection of Communist China from the USSR
- b. Subversion, demoralization and defection of Soviet troops in East Germany
- c. Psychological policies on public statements with regard to the Atomic Bomb
- d. A psychological plan for

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e. Psychological strategy with regard to the universal desire for Peace

f. Implementation of

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6. It is recommended that an additional item be placed on the agenda: "A brief oral presentation of psychological measures being taken with respect to  A senior assistant to each member of the Board should make this presentation with regard to his own kind of activity. The State Department might well call on Mr. McGhee for the political and economic side and Mr. Barrett for the propaganda aspects. It is assumed that a discussion would follow which would probe what further measures, if any, the United States could take in

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JAMES Q. REBER  
Assistant Director  
Intelligence Coordination