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29 June 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: D/DCI/NI

SUBJECT : The NIO's Briefing Responsibility

1. Last year, the Publication and Presentation Branch handled 68 briefings and speeches. Of the 64 briefings, 45 were given to such Executive bodies as the NSC and WSAG and 19 to Congressional committees; of the latter, 6 were world-wide briefings. Thus far this year, there have been two speeches, ten briefings for Executive bodies, and ten briefings for Congressional committees. Of the Congressional briefings, four have been world-wide. The world-wide briefings are the most difficult to manage.

2. The ground rule for Congressional briefings has essentially been that the NIOs have handled those substantive briefings that the Director was to give, while [redacted] has handled those that the DCI was not asked to give. In other words, it was a DCI staff function delegated to the D/DCI/NIO. Of course, the arrangement was not all that tidy. The NIOs, for example, have paid relatively little attention to world-wide briefings, even though given by the DCI. As of late, I gather, the DCI has essentially read only a summary and then turned the full briefing over to an Agency officer.

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3. Under the National Intelligence charter, NIOs are now to have responsibility only for selected briefings. In my discussions with the NIOs, they did not seem to have any great problems with the notion that world-wide briefings might be handled outside the NI staff -- as long as their right to sign off on the briefings was preserved. Mechanically, the transfer of responsibility for world-wide briefings from the NIOs -- really from [redacted] should present no great problems. Managerially, however, the arrangement would be even less tidy than the present one; the NIOs would be

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responsible for some DCI Congressional briefings, but not for others. The big danger here, of course, is that the DCI might end up saying something different in a world-wide briefing that [redacted] handled than in a special briefing that an NIO handled.

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4. Alternatively, [redacted] could assume responsibility for all Congressional briefings. The problem here, of course, is that the DCI is going to continue to look to the NIOs to take the lead on a number of special congressional briefings. Of the eleven special Congressional briefings last year, the NIOs were heavily involved in seven and would have been heavily involved in three more had not the economic NIO been leaving and had not [redacted] been serving as the NIO for Africa. So far this year, the NIOs have been heavily involved in three of the six special briefings. The NIOs want their own production capability when they have the action on briefings for all the reasons cited in my last paper. As a practical matter, it is probably worth noting that [redacted] is very much a take-charge fellow; the possibility of tension would not be remote.

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5. Now that the DDI is not preparing a special publication for Congress, probably the most clear-cut arrangement for Congressional briefings would be to make [redacted] an NIO for support of Congress. He, in close cooperation with the Legislative Counsel, would supervise the preparation of both written and oral presentations to Congress, in some cases delegating a specific project to an NIO or calling, as [redacted] now does, on the resources of the DDI for those ad hoc and current intelligence briefings that the DCI does not give. Making such an arrangement, of course, would be to go against current trends.

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6. In sum, current arrangements for handling Congressional briefings are probably the best possible at this time. There are no economies to be realized; and any particular change increases the chances of making a mistake, could create even more ill will between the NIOs and the DDI, and might be difficult to justify. If change is nonetheless necessary, probably the least risky is transferring the responsibility for the world-wide briefings to the DDI. If we do so, we should negotiate a treaty which makes explicit the DDI's obligation to clear these briefings with the NIOs.

[redacted]

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Executive Officer
National Intelligence

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