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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board

THROUGH : Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Recommendations of Team "B" - Soviet Strategic Objectives

In our critique of current and previous National Intelligence Estimates, we made a concerted effort to identify those aspects of methodology, procedure and institutional structure which we believe have contributed to unsound estimative judgments. In the attached paper we proffer our recommendations to PFIAB concerning improvements in methodology, procedure and structure aimed at correcting the perceived deficiencies. Evidence for our conclusion that the cited shortcomings do, in fact, exist in the NIEs is to be found in the main body of our report.

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Team "B" Recommendations

1. Concerning methodology

A. Mirror Imaging. To overcome the bias toward viewing Soviet motives and intentions in U.S. terms, it is urged that:

1) In dealing with Soviet intentions, the NIEs should integrate observed and projected Soviet weapons' programs and force deployments derived from the "hard" physical data with more thorough analysis of historical, political, institutional, and other "soft" factors shaping Soviet motives and intentions. The search should be for a consistent elucidation of both sets of factors and their interaction. In this connection considerably more attention should be paid to relevant open and clandestinely acquired Soviet pronouncements and writings (especially those directed to internal audiences) than has been the case in the past. In this regard it should be understood that expert analysis of the open material can reveal a great deal, insofar as the Soviet political system often compels the Party to issue to its cadres authoritative guidance on policy matters through unclassified sources;

2) Soviet objectives should be perceived in terms of Soviet concepts: this rule applies especially to the treatment of concepts like "strategy", "strategic threat" and "strategic objectives", all of which should be understood in the Soviet context of "grand strategy." When, for reasons of convenience to U.S. consumers, the NIEs address Soviet military programs in the U.S. rather than the Soviet strategic context, this fact should be made clearly evident to the reader.

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B. Net assessing.* Whatever their intentions, the drafters of the NIEs do engage in implicit net assessments of sorts, particularly when advancing major judgments in the executive summaries. These assessments are usually so rough, so poorly documented, and essentially so speculative that they invite -- indeed, cannot be immune from -- the injection of the authors' general biases. Where NIE judgments demand net assessment, the netting should be done explititly, analytically, and thoroughly, not implicitly or perfunctorily. The interface between NIE judgment and net assessment should be identifiable.

C. An integrated view of Soviet weapons and force developments. The NIEs tend to an excessive extent to analyze each Soviet weapon system in isolation from the totality of the Soviet military effort (and indeed from other relevant non-military factors as well), with the result that the overall Soviet military effort appears as less significant than it actually is. Team "B" urges that in the future weapons systems and force developments be examined in a more integrated manner to yield "combined evaluations" more indicative of Soviet total military capabilities and overall intentions.

D. Policy pressures and considerations. In the opinion of Team "B", total avoidance of policy pressure on the intelligence estimating process is an impossible goal. The normal and proper function of policy makers in raising questions which are to be addressed by the intelligence estimators in and of itself influences the answers the latter provide. Some awareness on the part of the estimator of the impact of intelligence judgments in support of or in opposition to policy is unavoidable. Nonetheless, improved methods and procedures adopted for the preparation of the NIEs should be able to minimize the policy pressure

* What we mean by net assessment in this context is a judgment on the balance between U.S. and Soviet military capabilities based on the relevant static indicators extant or projected, or based on a dynamic analysis of the balance assuming that those capabilities actually are to be called into use. The latter type of net assessment assumes a scenario, but may or may not assume actual warfare.

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on judgments and prevent the abdication by the intelligence apparatus of its responsibility to provide objective answers.

E. Disciplined presentation of conclusions. Key judgments of NIEs are presented in various styles and formats. This on the one hand permits statements to be made with a certainty that is not warranted by the available evidence, and on the other hand permits statements, better supported by the evidence, to be degraded in the reader's mind through the insertion of a clause or sentence that have the effect of dismissing their impact. A more disciplined (though not necessarily rigid) format for NIE key judgments, summaries, and conclusions should be constructed. The format and style should ensure that the various reasonable interpretations of the available evidence are laid out without semantic embellishment; that the pros and cons of evidence supporting each are discussed briefly; that the likelihood of occurrence of each is assessed; and that the requirements for additional data to resolve remaining uncertainties are identified. Further, each major intelligence estimate should contain as an annex a review of the past 2 to 10 years' "track record" of U.S. estimates on the major aspects of the relevant subject matter. Such an annex would be best prepared by a body of analysts not responsible for the estimates critiqued. The purpose of such an annex would not be to criticize or chastise but rather to throw light on possible trends of misanalysis or mistaken judgments so that a compounding of error by continuation into future intelligence estimates can be avoided.

2. Concerning procedures.

A. Some, though undoubtedly not all of the methodological shortcomings which Team "B" found in the National Intelligence Estimates can be overcome by improving the process of their preparation and review. The authors of the NIEs will always remain in some measure prone to perceive the USSR in U.S. terms and to allow political considerations to affect their judgments. Nevertheless by minimizing inherent institutional biases and broadening the range of judgments brought to bear on the NIEs it should be possible to weaken considerably the impact of factors which have accounted in the past for NIE misperceptions.

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B. Team "B" considers the organizational position of the NIE function within the national defense - security - foreign policy complex less than optimal for guarding against both policy and institutional biases. Current and previous organizational entities charged with preparation and processing of NIEs have been subordinate to the Director, CIA, and staffed almost exclusively with CIA officials. This arrangement was intended to compensate for the real or alleged biases of the Departments of Defense and State, but it can overcompensate by encouraging the institutional biases of the Central Intelligence Agency itself.

C. Team "B" recommends that some combination of the following three steps be considered:

1) The first involves building as much immunity to institutional pressures as possible into that entity which is charged with preparing NIEs on Soviet strategic objectives. There are various ways to accomplish this end. One attractive possibility is to identify an official in the Executive Office of the President who would be charged with assuring such immunity and who would report directly to the President. His staff would be small and guarded against acquiring an institutional life of its own. Members of the staff would be drawn from the various intelligence organizations and serve relatively short tenures (3-4 years). The official charged with this function would be genuinely removed from and independent of the operating membership of the NFIB by the devices of a separate budget, a separate staff, and a separate physical location. He should have the authority to subpoena substantive intelligence officers from any agency and to require of pertinent departments and agencies such net assessments as may be necessary to the NIE process;

2) The second step involves the marshalling of expertise in and out of government to offset the temptation to mirror-image. The official charged with assuring the objectivity of the NIEs (as specified above) should enlist the part-time services of a panel of prominent outside specialists for the purpose of reviewing estimates so as to identify judgments that are based on questionable assumptions concerning Soviet strategic

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doctrine and behavior. Such reviews should be carried out immediately post facto, but they should not form a part of the NIE preparation process itself.

3) The third step involves periodic independent checks on both the process and the substance of the NIEs by employing procedures similar to the PFIAB-conceived Team "B" approach. Intermittently, perhaps initially every second year, a team of outside experts who owe no formal responsibility to the existing governmental intelligence agencies would be assembled to play the adversary role. The composition of the Team would vary every time. Team members would have available all the pertinent information from all the sources. The effort would be reasonably time constrained. The report of the Team would be subject neither to review nor to revision but would be made available directly to the President, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense. (After the Team had made its report, it would become available to other governmental agencies for criticism but not for revision). While this step would not eliminate the particular views and biases which the non-governmental experts would bring to their study, it would be free of the bureaucratic pressures or biases of the existing governmental intelligence -- or indeed policy -- agencies.

D. Team "B" has not addressed itself to substantive national intelligence issues other than Soviet strategic objectives. Should similarly critical issues arise -- e.g., with regard to China or the Middle East -- the above recommended processes could help to ensure objective intelligence support to top policy makers.

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