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(BUSH)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERTS ARE SPLIT OVER WHETHER THE FORD ADMINISTRATION SHOULD HAVE CREATED "B-TEAM" -- AN OUTSIDE BODY OF EXPERTS -- TO CRITIQUE CIA ASSESSMENTS OF SOVIET STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES AND INTENTIONS.

THE PANEL PRODUCED SOME STIFF CRITICISM OF CIA READINGS AND CONCLUDED THE SOVIET UNION IS SEEKING STRATEGIC SUPERIORITY OVER THE UNITED STATES -- NOT JUST NUCLEAR PARITY.

WORD OF B-TEAM'S SECRET EXISTENCE AND OPERATION LEAKED TO THE NEWS MEDIA DEC. 26.

OUTGOING CIA DIRECTOR GEORGE BUSH APPEARS TODAY BEFORE A CLOSED SESSION OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE TO EXPLAIN THE CONCEPT AND OPERATIONS OF B-TEAM.

KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES SAID THE IDEA ORIGINATED WITH THE PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD WHICH WAS CONCERNED WITH WHAT IT CONSIDERED THE CONSISTENT UNDERESTIMATING OF SOVIET STRATEGIC GOALS BY THE CIA.

BUSH AGREED LAST FALL, THE SOURCES SAID, TO APPOINT AN OUTSIDE BOARD TO CRITIQUE THE CIA'S ESTIMATES. NOW, FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERTS IN CONGRESS, THE EXECUTIVE AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENT OUTSIDERS ARE WONDERING IF THE B-TEAM EXERCISE WAS WORTH IT.

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