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HISTORICAL
COLLECTION
DIVISION DATE:
06-18-2012

TGS 4828-65

18 AUG 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: Acting Deputy Director (Intelligence) *psc*

SUBJECT: CIA/DIA Panel on the Soviet Ground Force

1. This memorandum contains background information and recommends certain action in paragraph 6. The attached envelope contains papers pertinent to this memorandum.

2. In February 1963 Mr. McNamara expressed his concern to Mr. McCone about the reliability of existing estimates on Soviet ground forces and asked that "a new and thorough study of the problem" be undertaken by CIA and DIA. Mr. McCone's letter of April 1963 informed Mr. McNamara that a Panel of CIA and DIA personnel had been established to undertake such a study. In September 1963 Mr. McCone transmitted to Mr. McNamara the Panel's first report which was a thorough and objective reassessment of all evidence bearing on the problem of the number of major line elements and the military manpower in the Soviet ground force. Mr. McNamara, in his January 1964 letter to the DCI, noted the substantial progress made in refining our estimates of Soviet general purpose forces and expressed his pleasure with "the joint effort in this field by CIA and DIA."

3. Again in his February 1965 letter to the DCI, Secretary McNamara described the recently published NIE 11-14-64 as an excellent document which "should assist us greatly in our planning for the future." He noted that the estimate reflects "the kind of examination of evidence which I had in mind when I asked that a joint CIA/DIA study group on this problem be established two years ago." He also expressed his wish that "this group will continue to function as needed, and will make a final report on what it has been possible to accomplish before disbanding."

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4. The Panel has now completed its second report which reflects a thorough re-examination of all evidence on the production and inventory of Soviet land armaments. The findings of the report include the following:

a. There is no doubt that the Soviets have had an extensive continuing program for the design, development and production of land combat equipment and ammunition since World War II.

b. The evidence, however, is unsatisfactory for quantifying the production and inventory of land combat equipment and ammunition within useful limits. Various approaches to estimating these magnitudes were examined but none were found which would reduce the very wide quantitative ranges of uncertainty.

c. KH-7 (higher resolution satellite) photography offers the single best available source with the potential for providing information on overall inventories of ground force equipment. Increased coverage of military installations should improve our understanding not only of the gross capabilities of the USSR in production and storage of equipment and ammunition but also of the inventory patterns for such equipment in relation to major line units.

5. Although the substantive findings of the Panel have been very useful, the operation of the Panel itself has produced results which may be more important and lasting. It has fostered a close and continuing working relationship between the various analytical elements of the intelligence community working on the problem of the Soviet ground force capabilities. It has also generated a sense of greater importance and urgency to the collection and processing of information on the subject. In a broader sense it has established the importance of the recognition of the uncertainties inherent in some estimates because the limitations of the evidence available. With the achievement of these results and the publication of the second Panel report, both the CIA and DIA co-chairmen of the Panel believe that the Panel has accomplished all that it can profitably do and that further progress can best be made through working-level cooperation between the two Agencies.

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6. It is therefore recommended that you approve the second report of the Panel and that you sign the proposed letter which transmits the report to Secretary McNamara and informs him that the Panel has been disbanded. This matter has been discussed with General Carroll and he concurs.

7. No formal distribution of the Panel report will be made until you have transmitted it to Secretary McNamara. Then we propose to send copies to the Director, NSA and Ambassador Thompson (State). CIA distribution will include interested offices in the DDI, in the DDP [redacted] - DIA will receive copies for distribution to the US European Command and US Army (Europe) and within the Pentagon to the following:

HR70-14

Deputy Secretary of Defense
Joint Chiefs of Staff
Assistant Secretary (Comptroller)
Assistant Secretary (International Security Affairs)
Department of the Army (AGS/I)
Department of the Navy (DNI)
Department of the Air Force (AGS/I)



CIA Member, CIA/DIA Panel

Enclosures:

1. Sec Def ltr to DCI dated 13 Feb 63
2. DCI ltr to Sec Def dated 8 Apr 63
3. DCI ltr to Sec Def dated 10 Sep 63
4. Sec Def ltr to DCI dated 30 Jan 64
5. Sec Def ltr to DCI dated 10 Feb 65
6. Proposed DCI ltr to Sec Def transmitting Second Report
7. ~~First report of the Panel~~
8. ~~Second report of the Panel~~

Distribution:

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ORR:MRA [redacted] ltr/7111 (3 Aug 65)

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ORIGINAL DOCUMENT MISSING PAGE(S):

Enclosures missing