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APPENDIX C TO IAC-D-50/3 (30 November 1954)

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PRIORITY NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

OBJECTIVES

1. Priority national intelligence objectives should be directly related to the intelligence required in the formulation and execution of national security policy. NSC 162/2, paragraph 10a (which is reproduced in IAC-D-55/7 [final], page 1), provides general guidance in this respect. More specific guidance can be obtained by analysis of the basic policy objectives set forth in NSC 162/2 and in other NSC documents, and by direct consultation with the NSC Planning Board.

2. Most of the intelligence required in the formulation and execution of national security policy will be the product of normal intelligence collection and research. Priority national intelligence objectives should be limited to those critical factors which require special attention and effort.

3. In order to afford a stable basis for intelligence planning, a statement of priority national intelligence objectives should be designed to remain valid over an extended period. It should

SECRET

Page 17

APP
C

SECRET

therefore exclude topics of urgent current, but transitory, interest, which will require and receive ad hoc treatment in any case.

4. Broad generalities are of little practical use as priority guidance to collection and research. Priority intelligence objectives should therefore be reasonably specific. On the other hand, it must be recognized that such objectives cannot serve as specific collection requirements. The translation of priority national intelligence objectives into specific information requirements requires further analysis by research personnel; the translation of specific information requirements into specific tasks of collection requires further analysis by collection personnel.

5. By definition, all items in a statement of priority national intelligence objectives should be worthy of special attention, but it is obvious that some will be of greater urgency or importance than others. Some means of indicating priority within the general priority category is therefore necessary, but care must be exercised lest the system adopted should, in actual effect, deny priority to a high priority objective. For

18
-2-

SECRET

SECRET

example, a highly schematic arrangement based on country priorities would have the effect of giving a low priority topic relating to a first priority country a higher priority than a first priority topic relating to a lower priority country, which might well not represent their true order of importance. This difficulty can be avoided by recognizing levels of priority within the general priority category, with topics relating to a particular country entered at any appropriate level, as in Appendix B. This system would require the maximum exercise of judgment in relation to each item, but nevertheless, for the reason given, is preferable to any rigidly schematic system based, in the first instance, on country priorities;

6. Recapitulation: Priority national intelligence objectives should be:

- a. Directly related to the intelligence required in the formulation and execution of national security policy.
- b. Limited to pressing substantive intelligence problems.
- c. Designed to remain valid over an extended period.
- d. Expressed in reasonably specific terms (but not as a final formulation of specific collection requirements).

-19-
SECRET

SECRET

- e. Stated in such a way as to indicate broad levels of priority within the general priority category (but not in so rigidly schematic a manner as to distort the relative priority of specific objectives).

19

SECRET