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26 February 1969

Comments on NORAD Paper

1. National estimates thru 1962 did significantly underestimate the future heavy bomber forces. Since 1963, however, the record is not bad; in the last few years it is good:

Estimate for Mid-68

Current best (TF/A)	200
NIE 11-8-68	195-205
11-8-67	195-210
11-8-66	185-210
11-8-65	n/a
11-8-64	160-195
11-8-63	140-185

2. The LRA Badger decline has not been at a steady rate. Approximate numbers taken out of LRA by year are as follows (mid-years, number dropped in preceding 12 months):

<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>
50	100	75	75	40	30

3. The fact that LRA Badger were transferred to the SNAF works against the NORAD position, not for it. Many of the aircraft transferred were tankers -- the very tankers that would be needed to support LRA Badger operations against the US.

4. The record of the national estimates concerning Badger deployment has not been good. The NORAD paper, however, neglects to mention that one of the main reasons that Badger has been underestimated is that the Blinder and its ASM have been overestimated.

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	Estimates for Mid-1968			
	<u>Badger</u>	<u>Blinder</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>IOC for ASM</u>
Current best	580	160	740	1967/68
NIE 11-8-68	570-590	145-165	715-755	1967
11-8-67	525-575	150-175	675-750	1967
11-8-66	450-550	150-180	600-730	1966/67
11-8-65	n/a	n/a	n/a	1966
11-8-64	300-390	180-280	480-670	1965
11-8-63	300-400	200-325	500-725	1964

Note that the high sides of the estimates from 11-8-63 thru 11-8-67 all provide a more potent medium bomber force because of the number of Blinder estimated.

5. Current NIE's use the term "virtually all," allowing for the possibility that a few heavy bombers might be diverted to support the SNAF. This possibility received even more attention a few years back.

6. It should be noted that even the heavy bombers would require aerial refueling and/or Arctic staging in order to cover many US targets.

7. The national estimates that the medium bomber no longer plays a major role in intercontinental attack were based on observed trends in the training, equipment, and deployment of these forces. Projections of declining numbers of medium bombers were based on actual reductions in these forces (see para 2, above), and evidence of limited deployment of the new medium (Blinder). The growth of the ICBM forces was considered to be further evidence of a declining requirement, but it certainly was not the basis for a "contention that the medium bomber forces would be phased out."

8. The NORAD study assumes that the Soviets make a pre-emptive attack on the US using counterforce targeting; desired amounts of damage are specified. The study concludes that the desired amount of damage (as specified by NORAD) cannot be obtained without the use of medium bombers, and that this proves that the medium bomber is a necessary element of a Soviet attack on the NORAD-defended area. The weakness of this line of reasoning is apparent. The amount of damage desired (as specified by NORAD) is not defined -- it appears to be nothing less than the destruction or negation of US retaliatory forces.

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9. Nearly half of the aircraft in the tactical air forces have a primary mission of air defense. The tactical strike capability is the weakest element of these forces -- there are only about 360 light bombers, for example -- and it is highly unlikely that 467 TAF aircraft (23% of 2,900) would be assigned strategic targets).

10. The paper has made the point that the addition of medium bombers to an attack on the US would substantially increase the level of damage inflicted. It is said that the Soviets "...have only 1,550 weapons to deal with 1,910 targets, 1,300 of them hard." NORAD then suggests that this situation can be fixed by the use of some 140 mediums. Even with two weapons per aircraft this would provide only "1,830 weapons to deal with 1,910 targets, 1,300 of which are hard."

11. For many targets the mediums would need refueling as well as Arctic staging.

12. The projected level of Arctic staging is far above normal levels and would be considered highly unusual and significant activity and would indeed arouse suspicion.

13. The deployment of 125 mediums to the Chukotsk Peninsula would be about a five-fold increase over normal maximum deployment levels. There are only about 140 medium bombers assigned to the Far East Long Range Air Army and about 40% of these are based in Central Siberia over 2,000 miles from the Chukotsk Peninsula.

14. The staging of "all available medium bomber tankers" to the Kola Peninsula would involve some peculiar shifts in the LRA bomber forces. Available evidence indicates that LRA has few medium tankers (many were transferred to the SNAF in the early 1960's), and the only medium bomber unit that still engages in aerial refueling on a continuing basis is located in the Far East. The NORAD plan presumably requires this unit to move to the Kola Peninsula while some aircraft from the Western USSR move to the Far East.

15. There is no evidence that any LRA Blinder have ever been deployed to any Arctic staging base, much less to Magadan which is not normally used by LRA bombers. The choice of this airfield is puzzling in any case, since Blinders operating against Alaska from here would be near the limits of their combat radius.

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16. NORAD's pattern of staging for the Soviet medium bomber force is completely at odds with the normal disposition of these forces. The paper stages 125 mediums thru the Eastern Arctic and 40 mediums plus tankers thru the Western Arctic. The LRA medium bomber force, however, is deployed so that there are about 140 mediums in Central Siberia and the Far East, and about 600 mediums in the Western USSR.

17. The suggestion that 200 mediums might be staged thru the Chukotsk Peninsula is absurd. See paras 13 and 16, above.

18. There are many targets for LRA mediums outside of the US. The fact that there appears to be an overwhelming concentration of these forces in Western USSR (i.e., directed against Western Europe) should not be surprising, because this is where the Soviets have always concentrated their forces. The LRA mediums could provide much of the strike capability missing from the Tactical Air Forces, and there is, in fact, documentary evidence of the assignment of LRA units to the support of front operations.

19. Note that NORAD's assumptions have now become the Soviet objectives.

20. The suggestion made here and earlier that the Soviets have more confidence in bombers than in missiles is not convincing. As a matter of fact, the last time LRA was "tested in a wartime environment" was at the beginning of World War II, when it failed to accomplish its strategic objectives and was reassigned to secondary supporting roles.

21. The paper presents a hypothetical plan for the use of the LRA medium bombers. It does not attempt to discuss any of the intelligence information bearing on this subject, presumably because all of this information indicates that the LRA medium does not play a major role in Soviet plans for intercontinental attack.

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