

TOP SECRET

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

2854-75

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4 NOV 1975

The Honorable Albert C. Hall
Assistant Secretary for Intelligence
Department of Defense
Washington, D. C. 20301

Dear Al:

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Your letter of 6 October suggests improving [redacted] responsiveness during crisis situations. Your interest in examining ways to improve Community performance in this area is one we share and one reflected in our current actions and planning.

A critical feature of the kinds of crisis situations which we are most likely to face in the near and midterm, it seems to me, is the necessity that intelligence cover all facets of the crisis, military, political and even economic. The National Security Council system establishes the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG) as the vehicle for coordinated policy making. I believe it essential therefore that the tasking of our intelligence structure stem from that level rather than from being delegated down to any single agency which would be apt to stress its own requirements over those of outsiders. Thus, I would hope we would continue the studies that have been in progress on how [redacted] and even our existing intelligence machinery, closer to the WSAG level. I think this can be done through WSAG working groups, a vigorous National Intelligence Officer, and the varieties of systems established to insure that our Intelligence Community works as a whole rather than as parts. Once the priorities in tasking are established at this level, of course, the mechanical work of operating the satellites can indeed be delegated down and subordinate tasking assumed within categories or allocations decided above.

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Future arrangements for controlling collection, and, equally as important, processing and dissemination, will have to provide for speedy weighing of priorities from various governmental entities. In a period of actual or imminent crisis, there are bound to be several different sets of intelligence consumers--at national and theater levels--and each consumer will legitimately consider his needs to carry the top priority and to be the most time-urgent. Anything that the governmental entities can do to define and categorize priorities will be welcome. DoD's focusing of its requirements within the NMCC is a very positive step in this direction.

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I am concerned that policy makers and intelligence users do not well understand the Community's current and projected arrangements for meeting the time-critical needs of all concerned. To accomplish this, I have asked the Intelligence Community Staff to develop ways to increase the visibility of those arrangements. As we widen understanding, we will identify weaknesses and seek improvement where improvement is required.

Sincerely,

~~W. E. Colby~~ Bill

W. E. Colby

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