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5 November 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT: The Solitary Ice Cube Problem

1. In our summarization of PRD reactions to the NIB and DIN, we seem to have overlooked several addressed to fragmentation and the lack of continuity of coverage in the daily periodicals. Note the following:

"The articles should, whenever possible, fit into a pattern of other contributions... Articles which violate (this) principle and which are not otherwise distinguished, fade quickly from memory, like a solitary ice cube in a glass."

"I doubt that the average, non-intelligence community reader has either the time or the inclination to piece daily fragments of information into a meaningful mosaic."

"...there is apparent lack of integration within a given NIB issue. No threads binding the publication together seem to exist."

"...unless you keep a written running record of what has been produced in the NIB and the DIN... you are unlikely to recall details of what was in these products and you are equally unlikely to go to the trouble of finding and sifting through back copies for that old information."

2. I think these are highly significant criticisms and may identify the chief reason why the NIB and the DINs lack readership appeal. What the consumer reads today more often than not has little reference to what he read yesterday or what he will read tomorrow. He thus has

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little of that sense of anticipation which one gets from a periodical that implicitly or explicitly says "Continued in our next." On the contrary, he is often irritated by being unable to recall and piece together the background of a situation being reported on.

3. To remedy this weakness, I would propose restructuring the NIB into three sections, entitled Special Developments, Weekly Round-ups, and Daily Briefs. Section III would consist of six parts covering the following geographic and functional areas:

- a. Soviet and PRC
- b. Western Europe
- c. Middle East and South Asia
- d. Far East and South East Asia
- e. Economics and Energy
- f. Africa and Latin America

The items in Section III would be primarily reportorial and as brief as possible.

4. Section II would cover only one of the foregoing areas each day of the week, e.g., Soviet and PRC on Mondays, Western Europe on Tuesdays, etc. These articles would be analytical and estimative.

5. Section I would cover special developments too urgent to await coverage during the normal weekly cycle. It might also include an occasional article on subjects (e.g., The Law of the Sea Conference and international narcotics) that do not fit logically into any one of the six major categories covered by Section III.

6. In order to accommodate Danny Graham's desire for special focus on military intelligence, I would suggest adding a seventh category to Section III of the NIB. Interpretative articles on military developments should appear in Section II, tied to the appropriate geographic area, or perhaps occasionally in Section I. (Additional categories could also be used for S&T items, narcotics, and terrorism.)

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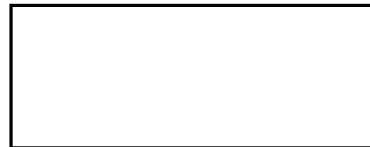
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7. I do not see any need to change the criteria for the kinds of information appearing in this restructured NIB. Since it would draw a clearer distinction between reportorial items (Section III) and interpretative articles (Sections I and II), the former are likely to be shorter and the latter longer than the average article now appearing in the NIB. The overall size of the publication, however, need be no greater than now and possibly considerably smaller.

8. A NIB structured in this way would appear to have at least four major advantages over the current NIB. The consumer would know where to look for, and when to expect, the community's latest views of his area of interest. He would be provided with a chronological log, updated daily, of all key developments in his area of interest. He would be provided with a weekly "think piece" on developments in his area. He would also feel confident that, if anything of urgent significance occurred, he would be alerted to it immediately by a Special article.

9. This proposal is not, of course, applicable to the DINs.

10. I would appreciate reactions to this proposal from all PRD hands -- perhaps in a staff meeting.



Deputy Chief, PRD

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IC/PRD/[redacted]

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1. ADEQUACY OF COVERAGE

TK limitation on NIB cuts out some S&T items.

Tech intel gets short shrift because NIB and DIN editorial staffs lack tech "advocates." Tech items not used are often more significant than many non-tech items which are used.

S&T types feel more comfortable using their own S&T publications.

"Integrate tech analysis more extensively into national products."

Almost no coverage of Soviet internal political and Sino-Soviet relations.

Overkill on Brezhnev visit to East German parade and routine improvements in East German and Bulgarian military capabilities.

Good coverage on Soviet economics, Soviet relations with Arabs, Yugoslavia.

Hence, plethora of items of marginal or no interest to top policy level.

2. QUALITY OF COVERAGE AND PUBLICATIONS

Economic intelligence does not fit comfortably into daily periodicals, primarily because of its multi-national nature and broad sweep. Primary media are weeklies (EIW and IOD), which top policy people probably don't read. To remedy this, effort being made to increase input to NID.

Scatter-gun nature of DIN confusing.

NIB too long (17 pages) for busy consumer.

QUALITY OF COVERAGE AND PUBLICATIONS (continued)

NIB--too many marginal articles.

Too much technical detail--not enough analysis. Address significance rather than tech details.

DIN product generally weak.

DIN--many useless articles--meant primarily for low-level analysts.

Too little analytical content, but better in NIB than DIN.

Too many marginal or useless articles--maybe half.

Few analytical pieces.

DIN political analysis shallow.

"Too much production for production's sake."

A related and more substantial weakness in the DINs was the superficiality that sometimes marred analyses of European politics.

On NIB--most articles benefited from concise and coherent exposition, not always true of the DINs, and offered some analysis of the events described. That the articles appeared a day or two later than similar articles in the DIN did not appear consequential.

Treatment in the Daily Intelligence Notices (DINs) of more narrowly military subjects tended to be somewhat better; they were, in any case, more self-confident.

3. RELATIONSHIP OF COVERAGE TO KIQs

Response to KIQs in literal sense is good--but only because KIQs so broad.

Response to sub-KIQs is poor, chiefly because items are reportorial rather than analytic.

RELATIONSHIP OF COVERAGE TO KIQs (continued)

KIQs per se do not influence NIB and DIN production very much.

Little relevance to KIQs.

Nearly a third of the DINs and a somewhat larger fraction of the NIB articles had some relevance to the key intelligence questions on Western Europe, but I suspect that in such instances both the KIQs and the articles were informed by the same, prior understanding of what was important. There were in both publications articles of considerable usefulness which had very little to do with the KIQs.

4. REDUNDANCY OF COVERAGE

NIB/DIN redundancy--an irritant to the consumer.

Only 25 percent overlap in NIB and DIN reporting--clearly have different production standards.

5. PRD METHODOLOGY

PRD review lacks significant input--consumer evaluation of product.

All PRD officers should use same summary chart, or other tool, to draw up monthly conclusions.

Add column on review form in re source.

6. OTHER PROBLEMS

NIB exclusion of TK unacceptable for a 'national' product.