

26 March 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Staff Meeting Minutes of 26 March 1979

The Director chaired the meeting. [redacted]

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[redacted] reported that the Soviet military exercise is winding down. [redacted], two motorized rifle divisions have been left behind in Mongolia. In response to the Director's question of where these divisions came from, [redacted] speculated that they were moved from within the Far Eastern area. The Director asked that this be sorted out [redacted] specifying whether there are now 47 instead of 45 divisions in the Far East or whether the number of divisions remains the same but has just been deployed differently. [redacted] noted that the General Petrov who was in the area of the exercise is the same individual who was in Ethiopia. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted] Later in the meeting, the Director asked [redacted] to include in a retrospective analysis of the exercise whether or not the Soviets have augmented or changed their military posture in the Far East and whether or not they have established a new theater of war command in the area. (Action: NFAC) [redacted]

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[redacted] the facility in Korea has been dismantled and the armor has vanished, presumably moving to the east. [redacted]

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[redacted] reported that Afghanistan is moving significant military units closer to its border. [redacted] added that they were originally three miles from the border and are now moving closer. [redacted]

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[redacted]

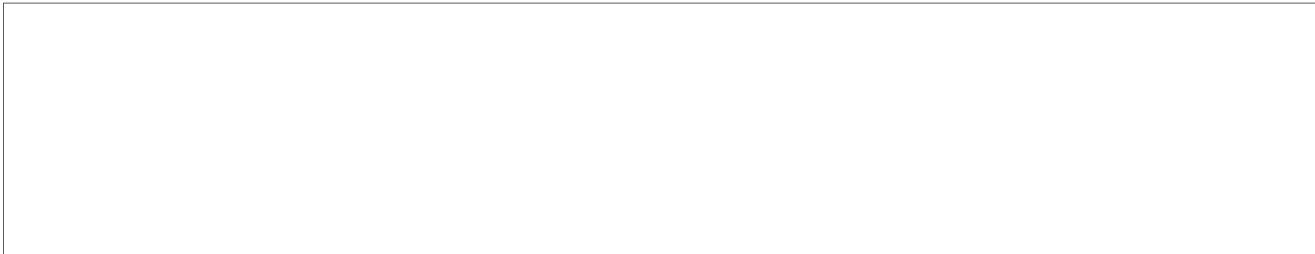
Bowie noted receipt of a call advising that Dick Lehman suffered a mild stroke while in Honolulu and is returning to Washington today. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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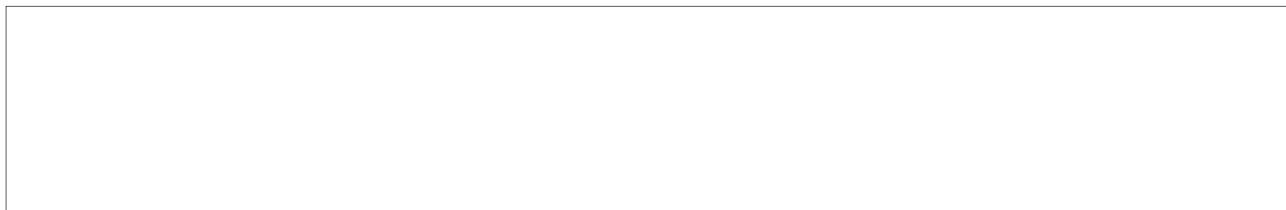


Calling attention to an article in the Washington Post (attached) about the HPSCI evaluation of the performance of the Intelligence Community during the recent Indo-Chinese crisis, Hitz said that Congressman Aspin's press release had both positive and negative comments, but the press did not pick up the negative. Hitz added that Congressman Aspin was helpful in a disagreement over classification this weekend by deleting the number of Americans slated to go to the Yemens from Defense testimony. Hitz said that he would call and thank him for doing so.

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Briggs noted that Waller has returned from his Far East trip.

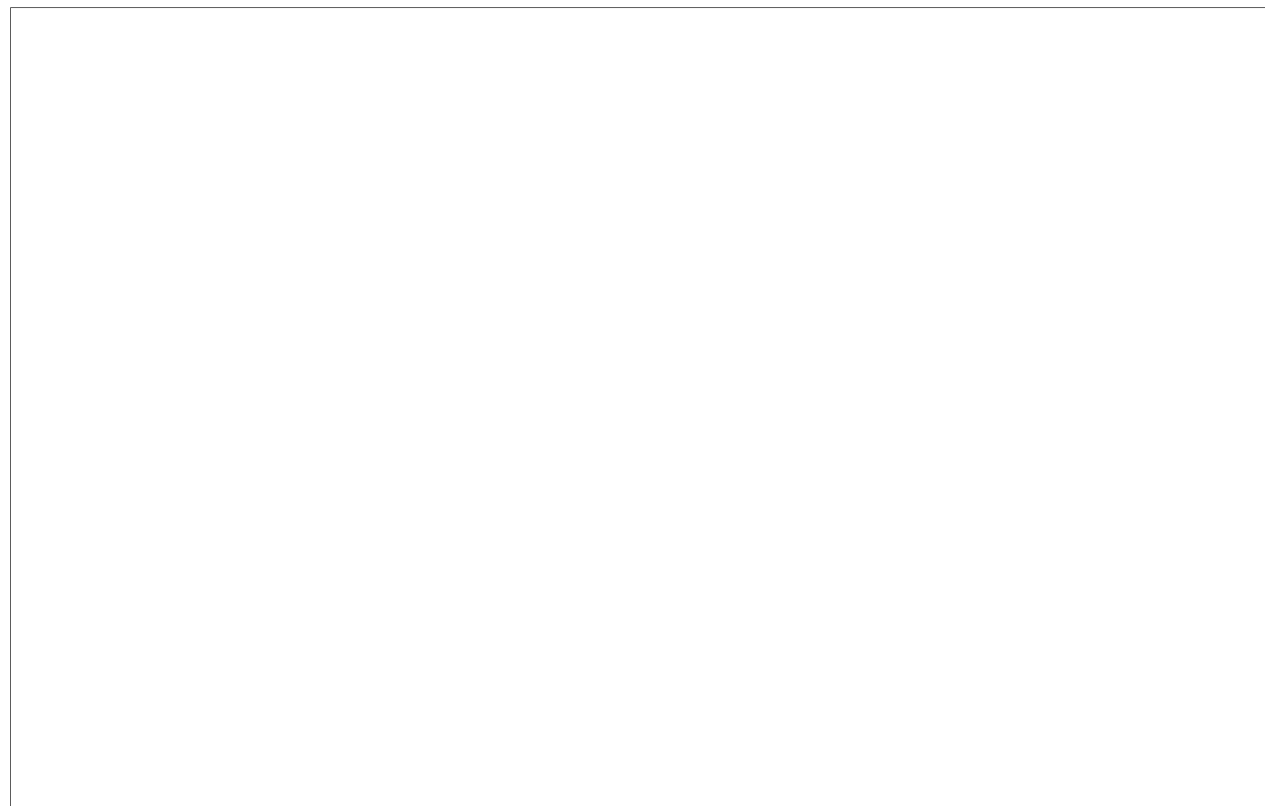
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Wortman advised that if Deputies take his memorandum seriously about reducing the handwritten corrections in cables, DDA will be able to save four man-years.

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Noting an item in Sunday's Washington Post about sections deleted from the American version of former DCI Colby's book that were printed in the French version, the Director said that this was an embarrassing situation that opens up the thorny question of whether or not the Agency treats former employees' publications differently. He asked that Lapham address the question of whether or not Mr. Colby and [] are in the same category as Snapp and Stockwell. [] noted that these cases were different. The Director asked OGC to be certain the Agency could answer questions about possible selective treatment of former employees' publications. (Action: OGC) []

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Noting that the State Department Iranian Working Group has suspended publication, the Director asked NFAC to be sure and keep him and the DDCI up to date on the general tenor of the Iranian situation, possibly on a weekly basis, as appropriate. (Action: NFAC) []

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In response to the Director's comment about State Department's optimistic outlook on the oil situation, Bowie said that he has asked OER for an assessment. (Action: NFAC) []

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Noting that he would be leaving the city for a few days, the Director asked attendees to advise him of anything he could do for them at SAC Headquarters. []

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Noting that an important meeting on SALT is scheduled for 30 March, the Director said that Bowie would attend. The major issue should be whether or not Brezhnev has responded on the telemetry issue. The Director asked EA/DCI [] to arrange in advance for a secure phone in the Los Angeles area on which he could discuss this issue with Bowie on 29 March. (Action: EA/DCI) []

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Returning to the subject of the alternatives [] the Director said that it has been agreed not to brief on this subject in any detail until this matter is addressed by the SCC. He asked Hitz to keep him informed if Congressional pressure continued to build for such briefings. (Action: OLC) []

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In response to the Director's question, [] and Hitz responded that there may not be a CIAP briefing before the House Appropriations Committee. [] explained that House Appropriations Committee Staffer Snodgrass is concentrating on IRA matters. []

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WASHINGTON POST

Intelligence Agencies Receive Unusual Accolade on the Hill

By Don Oberdorfer

Washington Post Staff Writer

In an unusual accolade for the performance of U.S. intelligence agencies, a House subcommittee chairman reported yesterday that they "served the nation well" during the recent Chinese invasion of Vietnam.

Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis.), chairman of the House Intelligence subcommittee on oversight, said in a written report that the Central Intelligence Agency provided at least six weeks' warning that China might take the action it did.

He said his findings were based on classified testimony before the subcommittee by State and Defense department officials.

Aspin quoted an "alert memorandum" issued by the CIA in early January as concluding that "the Chinese

may choose to engineer a strong localized demonstration of Chinese power along the [Vietnamese] frontier." He said the CIA continued to reinforce this view until the Chinese attack into Vietnam's border area on Feb. 17.

On the other hand, he reported that U.S. agencies "had trouble in assessing the likelihood of Soviet involvement" as China moved to the attack.

He quoted a report by the Strategic Warning Staff, jointly manned by the CIA and the Pentagon, as saying the Soviets "almost certainly will attempt counterpressures along the Sino-Soviet border."

This view was revised later to recognize that the likelihood of Soviet intervention would depend on the depth of China's penetration into Vietnam, Aspin said.

As far as is known, the Soviet Union made no move against China

along their common border. China had anticipated Soviet actions by evacuating large numbers of civilians and some vulnerable military units from the area near the Sino-Soviet border.

Aspin said a memorandum published by U.S. intelligence agencies last November erroneously held that Vietnam would not overrun all of Cambodia—as Hanoi forces actually did, starting around Christmas.

However, he said the Strategic Warning Staff argued it is "difficult to believe" that such a large Vietnamese force deployed along the Cambodian border was intended for only a limited objective.

Aspin said, from a policymaker's viewpoint, intelligence shortcomings in this situation were "minor" compared to the overall success in following Vietnamese military preparations.

On the whole, he concluded, the ability of U.S. intelligence "rapidly to

observe, assess and report military preparations informed policymakers of impending Vietnamese, Chinese and Soviet actions well in advance."

He also praised the recent practice of permitting the full presentation of competing views, which he attributed to CIA Director Stansfield Turner.

Aspin suggested that the airing of competing views should be continued and strengthened, based on the record of intelligence performance in the Sino-Vietnamese war.