



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON

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March 7, 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: The President's Daily Brief

I appreciate your inviting my views on the daily intelligence prepared for the President. Nationally and internationally, the President of the United States is seen as having the best intelligence network in the world -- the President of the United States is seen as having a unique, continuing flow of the most sensitive information on all important subjects -- and, in turn, because of such intelligence he is seen as being better able to take the best, most carefully considered decisions.

The President's Daily Brief is the principal conveyor of this information. At the start of each day, it should provide the President with a unique window on the world, his daily tour d'horizon. The PDB must be a unique document. It should be the showpiece, substantively speaking, of U.S. intelligence - of the breadth, the accuracy and the ability of CIA to be of valuable service to the nation. Do not forget that the President's impression of the competence of his intelligence service must be importantly influenced - either positively or negatively - by the PDB; he has daily exposure to this document.

The President wants to turn to the PDB each morning for his immersion into key developments around the world. He does so each morning having read the most brilliant unclassified PDB in the world - The New York Times - having followed the network broadcasts of the morning and the preceding evening, having read the White House's digest of national and international news, and having had occasion already in the day to talk with members of his staff and of his Cabinet on developments of importance. The PDB should provide the authoritative

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foundation of information -- alerts, status reports, significant intelligence being received from the most sensitive covert sources, signals being given or possibly being given by foreign individuals, entities, organizations or governments, activities of noteworthy foreign leaders. The President wishes to treat the PDB as the most important document he regularly reads. The President's favorable disposition toward the PDB, the document's daily luxury of access to the President and the document's unique character impose a responsibility of the highest order on the CIA.

Factors to be considered in shaping the production of a President's Daily Brief that successfully accomplishes its mission:

- The PDB should be a professional product, clearly reflecting that the CIA knows what it is doing -- and that the U.S. intelligence service has the best possible gauge on what is happening around the world.
- If the PDB is to accomplish its objective, much hard work is going to be required by CIA both on the collection and the analytical sides of the Agency, and hard attention is going to have to be given to refinement of intelligence received and preparation by a CIA production management team of each day's brief. Tasking to stations around the world should have the PDB in mind, although the collector need not know, probably should not know, that the PDB may be the "consumer" of his reporting. If the Agency is working worldwide to produce the information it requires to provide the President with a professional daily brief, the Agency is at the same time "humming," functioning effectively in a way that serves myriad U.S. intelligence requirements and objectives.
- The PDB is a brief. To do its job effectively it need not and should not be a clumsy, lengthy document. One good paragraph for most issues, two-to-three paragraphs at the outside should be the guide for presentation. The President should be provided with the key information. If the President wants more information on any item, he will ask for it. On certain PDB items, the Agency might wish to include a parenthetical "Fuller report available, satellite photographs available, text of intercept available, etc."
- The PDB should systematically cover the world each day. If there is an Alert, the PDB should open with that Alert - again, no more than one or two paragraphs.

The PDB should each day cover the USSR and Warsaw Pact nations, and developments within each of the world's major geographical regions - e.g., North Asia/PRC, IndoChina/ASEAN/ANZUS, subcontinent/Southwest Asia, Middle East, Africa, Western Europe/Canada & Caribbean/Central America/South America. The daily table of contents should not seem ad hoc, it should not omit up to 90% of the world excluding oceans two days out of six. There is too much going on in the world, information of importance to the President, for such omissions. The PDB should not become a bureaucratic slave to format in this process. The top level of CIA has a major responsibility here. Every item in the PDB should be there because substantively it warrants the President's attention. The rule of thumb should be that the DCI would want personally to brief the President on each item included in each PDB -- no filler that the DCI could not justify if asked by the President.

-- The top levels of CIA have to keep in mind that they are dealing with a President who regularly takes actions keyed to significant international developments, a President who is in frequent personal, written and telephonic contact with foreign leaders, a President who as a matter of central and continuing importance wishes to shape international events in a way that best serves U.S. interests. What additionally can the PDB provide that will be of assistance to the President, perhaps a single page at the beginning and in the middle of each week that lists key international events and meetings, e.g.:

-- Giscard and Schmidt to meet in Paris,

-- Zimbabwe officially becomes independent this Friday,

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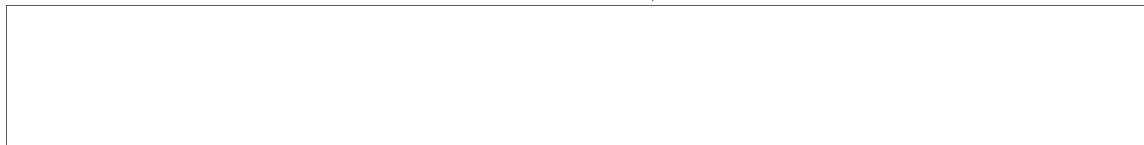
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-- UNHCR arrives in Kampuchea Thursday, etc.

an informal calendar, a memory aid. Perhaps the PDB can add a brief section once or twice a week letting the President know what leaders -- friend and foe -- are doing abroad, e.g.:

-- USSR: Brezhnev spending upcoming week in Yalta, receiving various Pact leaders.

- UK: Prime Minister Thatcher enters heavy week in Parliament budget debate, she continues to grapple with steel strike.



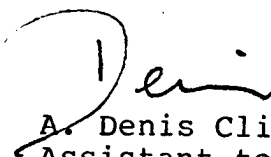
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- NATO: Luns travelling to Turkey and Greece to mediate,

etc., etc.

These are leaders the President is dealing with or taking into account as he shapes and implements policy. The list should be organized routinely by region and include 20 or more top foreign leaders.

- The PDB should reflect the pride and competence of the CIA. It should be lean, to the point. It should include good graphics where they help present the necessary information -- satellite photography, other photography, good maps, the reproduction of the front page of a foreign newspaper if that paper is presenting major pro- or anti-U.S. coverage of significance -- no need for anything fancy, no pullouts, coupons or scented pages, there should be a real intelligence reason for the inclusion of every written and graphic element. The PDB cannot be shaped by "what's available" from the lower levels of the Agency. It must be "driven" by a 100% top level effort day after day, week after week. Professional editorial skill of the highest caliber must be wedded to intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination of the highest caliber.



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