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USIB-D-28. 5/1
12 February 1962

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Review of Advance Intelligence Pertaining to the Berlin Wall and Syrian Coup Incidents

1. The attached memorandum from Mr. McGeorge Bundy, enclosing a report and certain recommendations of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, is forwarded for review.
2. Because of the relatively short deadline within which a reply must be made, we presently propose to place this matter on the agenda of the 14 February USIB meeting for preliminary discussion. At that time the Board will be asked to address itself to matters such as the appropriate method of assembling relevant data and the allocation of responsibility for preparation of a draft response to Mr. Bundy for USIB consideration.

PFIAB review completed.

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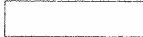


Executive Secretary

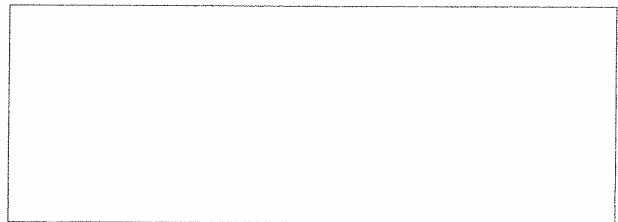
Our paper attached -
Attachment

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DIA review(s) completed.



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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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January 22, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Review of Advance Intelligence Pertaining to the Berlin Wall and Syrian Coup Incidents

Enclosed herewith is a report and recommendations on the subject which were approved and submitted to the President on January 11, 1962, by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

The enclosure is being forwarded for your consideration, in consultation with appropriate members of the United States Intelligence Board. It is requested that, based on such consideration, you furnish to the President and the President's Board a report containing your views and comments on each of the recommendations contained in the enclosure.

Submission of your report by March 12, 1962, will be appreciated.

Barl Kayser for
McGeorge Bundy

Barl Kayser

cc: President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board
(Attention: J. Patrick Coyne)

Inclosure with USIB-D-28.5/1 dated 12 February 1962.

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PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

In accordance with your request, made when this Board last met with you, a study has been made with a view to determining: (a) what advance information was available to the U.S. Government from the intelligence community concerning the "Berlin Wall" action of August 13; and the Syrian coup which occurred on September 28, 1961; and (b) what lessons might be learned from such study.

As a basis for our review, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Departments of State and Defense (including the Military Intelligence Services and the National Security Agency) were asked to identify and submit any intelligence reports and related materials which constituted advance information regarding the Berlin and Syrian incidents.

Review has been made of: [REDACTED]
reports [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
of the subjects under review by the Board; and (c) pertinent National Intelligence Estimates and other specialized intelligence publications produced within the intelligence community for dissemination at highest Government levels in support of the policy and decision-making process. (Substantiating information which was developed in the course of our review is being retained in the offices of the Board for such further reference as may be required.)

Our consideration of all of the intelligence documentation, which was made available for the Board's review, leads us to the following major conclusions:

1. The Berlin and Syrian incidents demonstrate that the estimative processes of the intelligence community are not fully geared to the timely production of current appraisals of developing cold war crisis situations which are required for consideration by the President and his principal policy advisers.

2. In both the Berlin and Syrian cases, indications of imminent significant developments were apparently lost sight of in the mass of intelligence reports which were produced [REDACTED] over an extended period of time.

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3. The surprise created by the Berlin and Syrian incidents might well have been reduced had the significant advance intelligence which was available to the intelligence community been given sensitive, continuing, and discriminating assessment for timely consideration by the President, the members of the National Security Council, and other top policy officials. In reaching this conclusion we note that:

a. Although our foreign intelligence agencies produced no reports which pinpointed in advance the specific date or particulars of the "Berlin Wall" action, during the period preceding that event our intelligence collectors did obtain information which pointed to the possible imminence of drastic action by the East German regime to shut off the flow of refugees into West Berlin; and

b. While our foreign intelligence agencies did not report advance information as to the date and particulars of the Syrian coup, the intelligence which was available did point to the likely imminence of a military revolt. [redacted]

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4. In both the Berlin and Syrian events, more importance should be attached to the failure of the intelligence community and the Department of State to provide adequate and timely appraisals of the advance information which had been collected, than to their inability to estimate the exact nature of the events which were to occur. Had such appraisals been prepared and appropriately channeled to our major policy-making officials, there would have been little justification for the United States to have been surprised so completely by the East German planners and the Syrian plotters, even though no one could have been expected to predict the precise form which those events would take.

5. The two case histories which we have studied illustrate the importance of having in the estimative and appraisal process the most alert, perceptive and qualified men obtainable. No machinery or multiplication of personnel can serve as a substitute for the sensitive judgments which are required in the analysis of intelligence information and the preparation of assessments thereof for consideration by our top policy officials.

We have noted several explanations which have been offered to justify the absence of advance intelligence on the precise timing and circumstances of the two incidents. [redacted]

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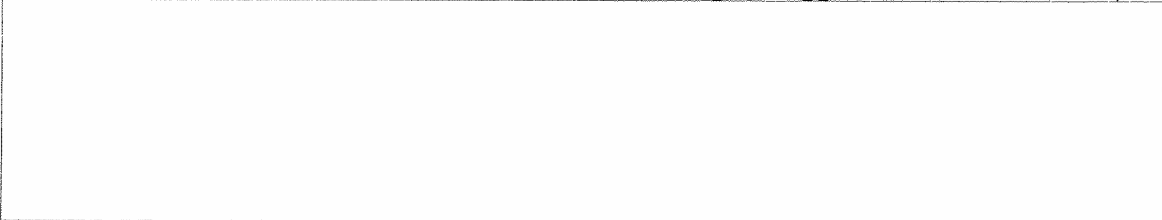
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The Board realizes that questions of judgment, interpretation and relative priorities always confront the professional intelligence officer in the field and at the headquarters level, in the process of collecting, reporting, appraising and disseminating intelligence concerning a developing political situation in a foreign country. There were undoubtedly a number of factors which inhibited the acquisition of advance information or the formulation of forecasts on the exact timing and the specific character of the incidents which were about to occur in Berlin and Syria.

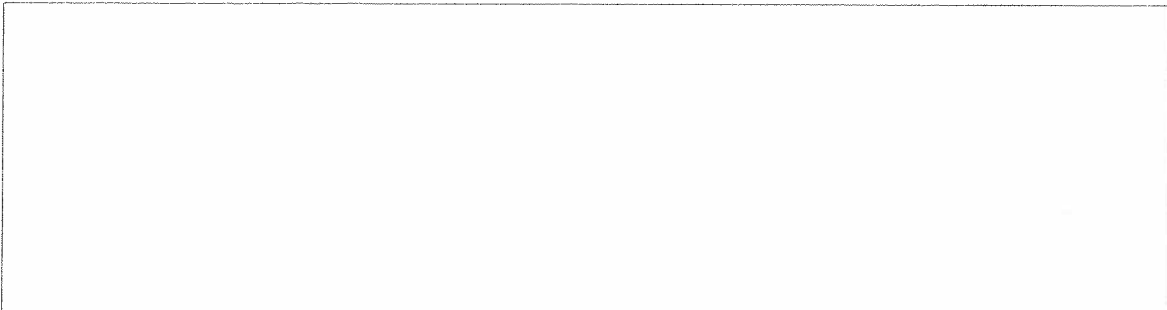
Nevertheless, [redacted] indications of the imminence of the Berlin and Syrian incidents, appear to have been available at the Washington headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency and other member agencies of the intelligence community. Had our review reflected that these indications were considered by our intelligence analysts and rejected for cause, this might present a question as to whether, from the vantage point of hindsight, the analysts were correct in their interpretations. We raise no such question, however, for it appears from our review that the fault was not so much an error of interpretation as a failure to pull together all of the pertinent information which was available as the basis for a meaningful appraisal. Otherwise,

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[Redacted] the best indicator was
Ulbricht himself who declared in a major address on August 10 (three
days before the "Wall" action), that "We have discussed the (refugee)
matter with our Soviet friends and with representatives of the Warsaw
Pact states, and we have agreed that the time has come when one must
say 'so far and no farther'."

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[Redacted]

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Rather than attempting to achieve unanimity in intelligence appraisals,
as was done in this instance, it would appear that differing views which
are held by members of the intelligence community regarding matters of
substance should be reflected in the "Watch Report" and other intelligence
assessments.

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[Redacted]

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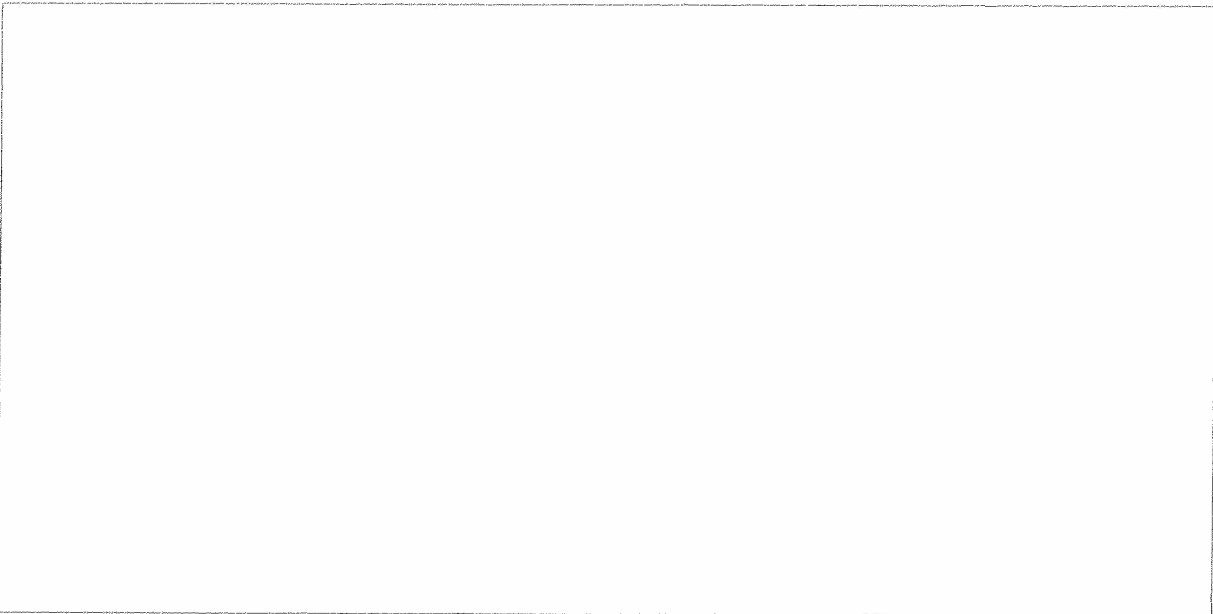
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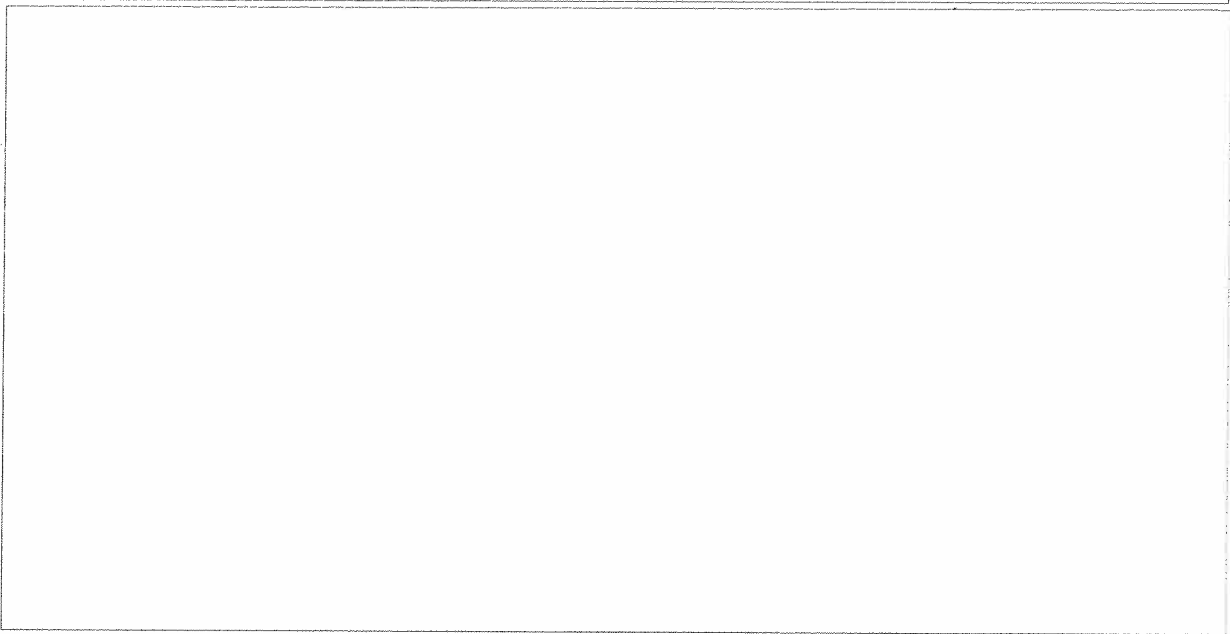
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RECOMMENDATIONS

To the end that the President may be afforded the earliest opportunities for the advance consideration of counter-action to be taken in response to developing cold war crisis situations, we recommend that:

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1. A sense of urgency be imparted at the field and headquarters levels of our intelligence agencies, with a view to ensuring the timely reporting, dissemination and assessment of foreign intelligence indicating the imminence of crisis situations which are of potential significance to the foreign policy and national security interests of the United States

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2. Without imposing delay upon the transmittal of raw intelligence to Washington, competent State Department officials in the foreign countries involved exercise responsibility for preparing periodic appraisals of all available intelligence concerning developing crisis situations, for use at the field collection level and for consideration by the Washington intelligence community in the timely production of analyses and estimates.

3. Procedures of the United States Intelligence Board and its subordinate bodies, such as the Watch Committee, be modified to insure that the appraisals of such bodies will reflect any significant differences of view which may be developed in the course of the estimative process.

4. In keeping with our earlier recommendations that the Director of Central Intelligence serve as the President's principal intelligence officer with responsibility for assuring the timely flow of intelligence to the White House, the Director of Central Intelligence be requested to review, in consultation with appropriate White House officials, existing arrangements and procedures to assure that: (a) the Central Intelligence Agency's intelligence assessments and spot reports on developing crisis situations are made available for timely consideration by the President and, where appropriate, by members of the National Security Council; and (b) copies of assessments and spot reports which are made available for such consideration from any other source be furnished to the Director of Central Intelligence for his information and for introduction into the intelligence estimating process.

FOR THE BOARD

James R. Killian, Jr.
Chairman, President's Foreign
Intelligence Advisory Board

Inclosure with USIB-D-28.5/1 dated 12 February 1962

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RECOMMENDATION

1. A sense of urgency be imparted at the field and headquarters levels of our intelligence agencies, with a view to ensuring the timely reporting, dissemination and assessment of foreign intelligence indicating the imminence of crisis situations which are of potential significance to the foreign policy and national security interests of the United States.

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1. a. Comment on whether the "sense of urgency" now exists in the field and in Washington headquarters with reference to timely reporting, dissemination, etc. How this is imparted (RI, letters, etc)?

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c. Make a point of the fact that there is a mass of reports on most significant intelligence problems and the fact that all of them do not appear in the final finished intelligence product does not indicate that they were not considered in arriving at the intelligence judgment.

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RECOMMENDATION

2. Without imposing delay upon the transmittal of raw intelligence to Washington, competent State Department officials in the foreign countries involved exercise responsibility for preparing periodic appraisals of all available intelligence concerning developing crisis situations, for use at the field collection level and for consideration by the Washington intelligence community in the timely production of analyses and estimates.

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2. Are State Department officials oriented from the indications view point of intelligence?

Will there be a tendency to hold reports in order to prepare a periodic report?

Of what value would the procedure have been if in effect with reference to the Berlin Wall?

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Who would receive this periodic report? State? CIA? Others?

Do current directives direct immediate reporting of "hot" intelligence to the DCI as the coordinator of intelligence?

Will raw intelligence continue to be reported to Washington by individual agencies? Does the Country Team concept satisfy the periodic report concept?

Will information be delayed while the Country Team deliberates?

Can DCI continue his coordinating responsibility for intelligence? Will a field reporting agency not under control of CIA be placed in an over-all coordinating position?

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RECOMMENDATION

3. Procedures of the United States Intelligence Board and its subordinate bodies, such as the Watch Committee, be modified to insure that the appraisals of such bodies will reflect any significant differences of view which may be developed in the course of the estimative process.

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3. Can't acceptable wordings be found and agreed to by USIB members to reflect in the text of Estimates, Watch Reports and other inter-agency papers significant differences of agency opinion on the matter discussed?

Can't this be done without weakening the effect of footnotes for full statements of basic agency positions? Indeed if other conventions were used for minor differences, footnotes would seem to gain in stature and effect.

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RECOMMENDATION

4. In keeping with our earlier recommendations that the Director of Central Intelligence serve as the President's principal intelligence officer with responsibility for assuring the timely flow of intelligence to the White House, the Director of Central Intelligence be requested to review, in consultation with appropriate White House officials, existing arrangements and procedures to assure that: (a) the Central Intelligence Agency's intelligence assessments and spot reports on developing crisis situations are made available for timely consideration by the President and, where appropriate, by members of the National Security Council; and (b) copies of assessments and spot reports which are made available for such consideration from any other source be furnished to the Director of Central Intelligence for his information and for introduction into the intelligence estimating process.

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4. Will the committee need to know what the Board's earlier recommendations are concerning the fact that the DCI serve as the President's principal intelligence officer?

Comment on present arrangements and procedures to assure that CIA intelligence assessments and spot reports on developing crisis situations are made available for timely consideration by the President. Are they adequate? If not, changes to be made to improve same.

Statement as to whether the DCI is currently receiving copies of assessments and spot reports from other intelligence agencies. If not, why not?

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Recommendations for Committee Approach to Action on Documents Referred
by DCI

1. Recommend the Committee respond to Mr. Killian's recommendations in his memorandum to the President simply by reviewing briefly the extent to which recommended attitudes or procedures now pertain, and stating further actions which can and will be taken to insure the adequacy of procedures discussed in recommendations.

2. Recommend the Committee respond to Mr. Coyne's memorandum on The Watch Committee - National Indications Center by an analysis of the relative merits of the NIC and the proposed DIC and a recommendation as to changes, if any, which should be made (based on the study by the ad hoc committee).

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