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THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES A–B TEAM EPISODE CONCERNING SOVIET STRATEGIC CAPABILITY AND OBJECTIVES

REPORT

OF THE

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON

COLLECTION, PRODUCTION, AND QUALITY

UNITED STATES SENATE

TOGETHER WITH

SEPARATE VIEWS

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PREFACE

The following report is the second of a series prepared by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Subcommittee on Collection, Production and Quality, chaired by Senator Adlai E. Stevenson (D-Ill.), and Senator Clifford P. Case (R-N.J.), vice chairman. The report on The National Intelligence Estimates—A–B Team Episode Concerning Soviet Strategic Capability and Objectives also carries the separate views of Senators Gary Hart (D-Colo.), Daniel P. Moynihan (D-N.Y.), and Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.).

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THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES—A–B TEAM EPISODE CONCERNING SOVIET STRATEGIC CAPABILITY AND OBJECTIVES

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, as part of its oversight function, has conducted a study of the 1976 "A Team–B Team" experiment in comparative assessments of Soviet strategic strength which was initiated by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB). The committee conducted this inquiry under its mandate to evaluate the collection, production, and quality of U.S. intelligence, in this case assessing whether the A–B experiment had proved to be a useful procedure in improving National Intelligence Estimates (NIE's) on a centrally important question.

The pertinent facts of the A–B case are (a) that PFIAB commissioned three ad hoc outside groups (composing the "B Team") to examine the data available to the U.S. intelligence community's analysts (the "A Team"), to determine whether such data would support conclusions on Soviet strategic capabilities and objectives different from those presented in the community's NIE's; and (b) that during the exercise details of these sensitive questions leaked on several occasions to the press.

The committee has prepared a classified report on the subject, sent copies of that report to the executive branch, made copies available to certain members of the B Team for review and comment, and subsequently rechecked the record thoroughly and accommodated some of the B Team members' comments. A summary of the committee's report follows.

SCOPE OF THE COMMITTEE INQUIRY

The committee sought to determine the facts and issues central to the A Team–B Team case, and to give a critique of the procedures which underlay the principal judgments and conduct of both the A and B Teams. The committee's report makes no attempt to judge which group's estimates concerning the U.S.S.R. are correct. The report focuses on the processes followed; its findings and recommendations for improving the quality and utility of future NIE's on Soviet strategic capabilities and objectives are primarily directed at procedural issues.

THE FACTS OF THE CASE

In the broadest sense, the NIE–B Team episode derived from a growing concern over the U.S.S.R.'s steady increase in strategic weapons strength over the course of the past decade and disagree-

ment within the U.S. intelligence community [1] on the meaning of this growth.

The B Team experiment in competitive analysis stemmed from the PFIAB's opinion that the NIE's had been underestimating the progress of Soviet strategic weapons.[2] In an August 1975 letter to President Ford, PFIAB Chairman George W. Anderson, Jr., proposed that the President authorize the NSC to implement a "competitive analysis." The then Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) William E. Colby, speaking with the unanimous agreement of the U.S. Intelligence Board (the chiefs of the intelligence community components), responded with a proposal that the PFIAB first examine an applicable NIE then underway and thereafter determine what specific course of action to take.

The PFIAB found weaknesses in that NIE and, after having made further investigations of its own, again proposed [3] (in April 1976) an experiment in "competitive analysis." The PFIAB recommended that the exercise be placed under the DCI's jurisdiction and that it address certain critical estimative issues.

PRINCIPAL JUDGMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee's report includes these central judgments:

That the concept of a review of the NIE's by outside experts was a legitimate one.

That the B Team made some valid criticisms of the NIE's, especially concerning certain technical intelligence questions, and some useful recommendations concerning the estimative process, but those contributions were less valuable than they might have been because (1) the exercise had been so structured by the PFIAB and the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) that the B Team on Soviet objectives reflected the views of only one segment of the spectrum of opinion; and (2) that Team spent much of its effort on criticizing much earlier NIE's rather than, as had been earlier agreed upon by the PFIAB and the DCI, producing alternative estimates from certain of those of the 1976 NIE.

That the value of the A–B experiment was further lessened by the fact that details concerning these highly classified questions leaked to the press, where these appeared in garbled and one-sided form. It has not been determined who was responsible for the leaks.

That, most importantly, NIE's on Soviet strategic capabilities and objectives still need improvement in a number of important respects.

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[1] In the past, the U.S. intelligence community included the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence components of the State Department, Army, Navy, Air Force, FBI, Energy Resources Development Administration, and Treasury.

[2] As of August 1975, the PFIAB's members, in addition to Chairman George W. Anderson, Jr. (Adm. USN, Ret.), were William O. Baker, Leo Cherne, John S. Foster, Jr., Robert W. Galvin, Gordon Gray, Edwin H. Land, Clare Booth Luce, George P. Shultz, and Edward Teller. As of mid-1976, Mr. Cherne had become chairman, and these additional members had joined the PFIAB: John B. Connally, Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, Robert D. Murphy, and Edward Bennett Williams. The PFIAB function has since been abolished by President Carter.

[3] Through its Committee on NIE Evaluation (Messrs. Robert Galvin, Edward Teller, and John Foster).

The report's principal recommendations include:

That a collegial estimative group be formed in place of individual National Intelligence Officers.

That outside critiques of NIE's should continue to be conducted, but should, in each instance, be made by expert groups which are broadly representative in character, and whose procedures are thereafter more strictly monitored by the commissioning authorities than obtained in the A–B case.

The committee's investigation was based upon study of primary documents; examination of the NIE record since 1959 on Soviet strategic weapons developments; and interviews with principals from the A and B Teams, the intelligence community, and the PFIAB. The committee has enjoyed the full cooperation of all the above parties. The comments of DCI Stansfield Turner on the report and the present statement and the views of certain members of the B Team on Soviet Objectives have been given consideration by the committee.

Responding to the PFIAB initiatives, the new DCI, Mr. George Bush, consented to the experiment, and by June 1976, the PFIAB and the DCI had worked out ground rules for a competitive assessment experiment. The DCI, through his representatives, made arrangements for, and monitored the experiment in accordance with, those ground rules. Members of the PFIAB were called upon to assist in the formation of the three B Teams and took an active role in the selection of team members.

The exercise did not simply pit an A (or NIE) team against a B Team. There were three B Teams: two on technical questions and one on Soviet objectives. As for the A side, an NIE on Soviet strategic weapons had already been regularly scheduled earlier in the year, and work on it by the intelligence community had already begun before the B Teams came into being. This NIE was much broader in scope than the particular estimative questions the B Teams had been commissioned to address, and the individual civilian and military analysts involved in producing that NIE represented a wide range of views held within the departments and agencies of the intelligence community on the NIE's many questions.

The NIE participants and the B Teams proceeded to produce their two sets of studies independently, with only occasional direct contact during the drafting phase. After the initial drafts of the three B teams were completed, the two sides confronted one another formally on three occasions. Once the decision to proceed with the exercise had been made, procedural cooperation was good between the intelligence community and the three respective B teams. The specific results differed, however, in the three cases. Those concerning technical questions were the most rewarding: there was a mutual give-and-take, and these B Teams clearly made a constructive contribution. By contrast, the discussions concerning Soviet objectives were more controversial and less conclusive. The B Team on Soviet Objectives contributed some useful critiques concerning certain technical intelligence questions, but there was not much give-and-take on broader issues. The view cited in a December 1976 press article [4] that the B Team challenge turned the NIE "around 180 degrees" is incorrect.

[4] New York Times, Dec. 26, 1976.

CRITIQUE

It is the view of the committee that past NIE's could have profited from drawing on experts on Soviet strategic questions from outside the intelligence community, both in and out of Government, and from subjecting NIE analyses and judgments on this and other areas to competing assessments from such sources. The PFIAB's 1975–76 proposition that outside expertise should be used to criticize and evaluate the NIE's was a legitimate one. The exercise in practice, however, fell short of the initial conception.

The composition of the B Team dealing with Soviet objectives was so structured that the outcome of the exercise was predetermined and the experiment's contribution lessened. The procedures followed by the intelligence community in the A–B episode also weakened the overall effort to some degree. The intelligence agencies were cast inaccurately in the role of "doves," when they in fact represented a broad spectrum of views. They needlessly allowed analytic mismatches, by sending relatively junior specialists into the debating arena against prestigious and articulate B Team authorities. And the monitoring of the procedures of the B Team on Soviet Objectives was subsequently fairly loose.

The B Team contributions and the 1976 NIE can also be faulted on various substantive grounds. Because of its narrowly specified purpose and scope, influenced strongly in recent years by the preferences of senior policymaking readers regarding format, the NIE did not address the question of how Soviet strategic weapons development fits into important larger concerns [the entire panoply] of Soviet domestic, military, diplomatic, economic, and cultural efforts. As a consequence, the NIE's discussion of Soviet objectives was too brief to be useful. In the view of some readers, its discussion of Soviet military hardware in certain respects was inadequate to be helpful to high-level officials.

A weakness in both the NIE and the B Team report is their lack of expressed sensitivity to the fact and the significance of world developments other than those directly related to the U.S.-Soviet arms race. The strategic weapons balance is the chief subject of both documents, but both documents nonetheless are dominated by military hardware questions and define "strategic power" quite narrowly. By design, in neither the NIE nor the B report are U.S.-Soviet strategic matters set within the wider framework of other dynamic world forces, many of which are essentially the creatures of neither U.S. nor Soviet initiative or control.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS

Estimates should, of course, be written in an accurate and dispassionate manner. They should reflect the best and most broadly representative expert knowledge possible, from both inside and outside the Government. The sensitive estimative questions at hand should not be argued in the press. These requirements did not obtain in the case of the NIE–B Team exercise.

The field of strategic weaponry is complex, and there is much valuable expertise on the subject outside of the intelligence community. The quality of NIE's on these subjects would benefit from more extensive use of this outside knowledge than is now the case. In this respect, the PFIAB initiative was justifiable and desirable.

To be of maximum value, however, such efforts must employ the best and most competent expertise available. Panels representing only one perspective, whether "hard" or "soft," are not desirable. In this respect, the B Team "experiment" was not as constructive as it could have been concerning Soviet objectives.

The exercise in competitive analysis was devalued by the fact that, contrary to the expressed directions of both DCI George Bush and PFIAB Chairman Leo Cherne, word of these sensitive matters leaked to the press, where it appeared in garbled form.

The A–B Team experience sharply demonstrated the intense preoccupation of the CIA, the rest of the intelligence community, the PFIAB, and policymakers with Soviet strategic weapons and their consequences. This subject is of enormous significance to U.S. policymaking, but there are also other significant questions. The greatest intelligence attention often is given to the least likely Soviet actions, nuclear attack, rather than to Soviet intentions and assertive world activity short of those extremes.

Of most significance, the A–B Team case has demonstrated: (a) that the key question of Soviet strategic intentions and conduct is one which demands the best possible marshalling of U.S. intelligence resources and American brainpower; and (b) that the estimative process needs improvement in this area of concern.

The committee's recommendations for improving National Intelligence Estimates concerning Soviet strategic weapons capabilities and objectives included these judgments:

> The intelligence community must more effectively meet the particular needs of particular policymakers. Creative use should be made of other estimative formats, in addition to the current categories of NIE's, tailored to the particular needs, but not the views, of different policymaking entities and levels.
>
> There is need for competitive and alternative analyses. Both within the estimative body and with respect to outside expertise, competing and on occasion alternative estimates should be encouraged. To be fully useful, such initiatives must avoid panels with narrow preconceptions, of whatever kind, to assure the balance necessary for the competitors to evaluate evidence which is often both conflicting and ambiguous.
>
> Estimates must openly express differences of judgment, and clearly indicate the assumptions, the evidence, and the reasoning which produce alternative readings.
>
> Estimates should highlight significant changes from related past estimates, including changing probabilities, the emergence of new important alternatives, and findings that make past estimates false or less relevant.
>
> NIE's should define "strategic matters" more comprehensively than has obtained in recent years, so that Soviet military developments can be better seen within the context of Soviet interests and policies, and in interaction with U.S. and world developments. Enchantment with the details of military hardware must not permit either the producers or the policymaking consumers of intelligence to become deflected from pursuit of the most important estimative questions at hand, those of intentions.

Reliable net assessments are needed to complete an effective estimative process, so that policymakers can better appreciate Soviet strengths and weaknesses by having systematically compared them with those of the United States—a function which the NIE's are not designed to perform. The NSC should commission such net assessments, to be prepared by experts at the national level, including some from the intelligence community.

Policymakers must define the questions, not the answers. The DCI and the intelligence community's estimative body must remain independent in judgment. Judgments must not be bent or suppressed by outside pressures or fear of an uncongenial reaction.

SEPARATE VIEWS OF SENATOR GARY HART

The most unfortunate result of the experiment in competitive analysis was that the objectivity of one of the Nation's most important intelligence judgments was compromised. And through leaks to the press, the credibility and quality of earlier estimates was unfairly and inaccurately brought into question.

The National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Conflict is one of the most important intelligence documents produced each year.

As the Director of Central Intelligence's official report to the President on the Soviet strategic threat, it is a document that can affect tens of billions of dollars in defense spending; the potential for arms control agreements, and the confidence with which we guarantee our own security and fulfill our commitments abroad.

Thus, it is essential to protect the objectivity of this judgment of the strength and intentions of our most formidable adversary.

The committee report and information from other sources has convinced me that "competitive analysis" and use of selected outside experts was little more than a camouflage for a political effort to force the National Intelligence Estimate to take a more bleak view of the Soviet strategic threat.

The correspondence about the exercise shows that the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) included members more interested in altering the conclusions of the national estimate than in improving its quality. From the outset of the PFIAB's initiative in this case, it believed existing NIE's were "deficient" because the PFIAB's members disagreed with the NIE conclusions.

William Colby, who was then the Director of Central Intelligence, was successful in halting PFIAB's first effort to have "competition" in analysis. Later, DCI George Bush consented to such an experiment.

The A-Team/B-Team experiment has also been explained as an effort to allow greater dissent and conflicting views. This overlooks the procedures to accommodate differing viewpoints that are already a part of the national estimates process. Representatives of the Defense Department, Army, Navy, and Air Force, and State Department work with the CIA in producing the estimates. The participating departments also have, and frequently exercise, the right to dissent from an estimate as a whole or in part. In producing the 1976 estimates, for example, the Department of Defense had more members of the A-Team than either CIA or the State Department. Because of the selection of outside experts with known views and a mandate to advocate a specific position, the A-Team/B-Team experiment did not promote dissent. To the contrary, it intimidated and stifled the expression of more balanced estimates of the Soviet threat.

I also disagree strongly with one of the apparent goals of the B-Team exercise: That is, to make a "worst case" analysis of the Soviet threat. There is real value in such analysis but it should not be the mainstay of the National Intelligence Estimate.

In his NIE's, the Director of Central Intelligence should provide not only a catalogue of what an adversary country might do, but also his own best judgment of what is actually likely to happen—a judgment that should not be tainted either by a desire to justify greater defense spending and new weapons systems, or by any motive to limit these expenditures.

The Pro-B Team leak and public attack on the conclusions of the NIE represent but one element in a series of leaks and other statements which have been aimed at fostering a "worst case" view for the public of the Soviet threat. In turn, this view of the Soviet threat is used to justify new weapons systems.

It is neither possible nor necessarily desirable to remove such politics and debate from the defense budget. But it is essential to protect our key intelligence judgments from these pressures.

The business of intelligence must be restricted to reporting the unvarnished facts. Any attempt to bend intelligence to serve political needs other than the truth is a danger as great as the Soviet threat itself.

In conclusion, let me add two recommendations to supplement those contained in the committee report. We need better mechanisms—some outside the national estimates procedure—to create a more orderly and balanced debate about Soviet strength, objectives, and intentions.

The estimates themselves should be better protected from political influence and remain the Director of Central Intelligence's best judgment about key intelligence questions. These estimates should remain highly classified to help guarantee the President the best possible advice, unaffected by fears of political consequences of reporting facts that do not support established policy or preconceptions.

At the same time, the DCI should take steps to allow a more orderly and informed public debate about Soviet strength, objectives, and intentions. A great deal of this information already becomes available through selective leaks and occasional public disclosure. To replace this haphazard and occasionally illegal process, the DCI should regularly review our strategic intelligence product to determine what information may be safely released to promote an informed public debate.

SEPARATE VIEWS OF SENATOR DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN

The subject of the "B Team" report has been before our committee for a year now, during which, if I am not mistaken, rather a striking shift has taken place in the attitude of what might be called official Washington to the then unwelcome views of this group of scholars and officials. Their notion, that the Soviets intend to surpass the United States in strategic arms and are in the process of doing so, has gone from heresy to respectability, if not orthodoxy.

In his annual report, Defense Secretary Brown referred to "a substantial and continuing Soviet [strategic] effort, [which] is highly dynamic." Although puzzled as to "why the Soviets are pushing so hard to improve their strategic nuclear capabilities," Brown noted that "we cannot ignore their efforts or assume that they are motivated by considerations either of altruism or of pure deterrence."

Last month, a member of the House of Representatives, Mr. Les Aspin, in a paper the State Department promptly endorsed, warned that if the Senate did not ratify a proposed SALT agreement, we would be "entering a race in which we are already behind." Even after spending $20 billion on strategic arms, in his judgment, we would still be comparatively worse off.

This, by the way, is not a completely new argument in favor of SALT. In 1972, then-Presidential Assistant Henry Kissinger had reference to the "not the most brilliant" bargaining position in which he found himself due to the imbalance between the Soviet and American paces of strategic arms development.

It is worth reflecting on how we got into this unfavorable bargaining position, if we are indeed in it. While many different political and economic factors could be adduced, it is impossible to ignore the quality of the intelligence that our top leaders were receiving throughout the long period during which American nuclear superiority was eroded, and during which we placed ourselves in the situation so alarmingly described by Representative Aspin.

It was a sense that the National Intelligence Estimates had not adequately performed their function of informing our top leaders as to the dynamism of the Soviet strategic buildup that led to the "B Team" episode. Prior to its abolition in early 1977, the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board had the mandate (in the words of Executive Order 11460) to "conduct a continuing review of foreign intelligence . . ." and to "report to the President concerning [its] findings and appraisals and make appropriate recommendations for actions to achieve increased effectiveness . . . in meeting national intelligence needs." This group persuaded the then Director of Central Intelligence, the distinguished George Bush, to take the courageous step of allowing an outside group of experts full access to the resources of the Intelligence Community. This group (the "B Team") was to examine all the data available to the analysts of the intelligence community to, in the words of the committee statement, "determine

whether such data would support conclusions on Soviet strategic capabilities and objectives different from those presented in the intelligence community's National Intelligence Estimates." The B Team reached "somber assessments" of the Soviet strategic challenge, which subsequently leaked to the press, most notably in a New York Times article of December 26, 1976.

Given the B Team's purpose, it is hardly surprising that its members' views reflected "only one segment of the spectrum of opinion." Inasmuch as the main purpose of the experiment was to determine why previous estimates had produced such misleading pictures of Soviet strategic developments, it was reasonable to pick Team members whose views of Soviet strategy differed from those of the official estimators, just as a similar experiment, had one been conducted in 1962, might have called for a "B Team" composed of strategic analysts who had been skeptical of the "missile gap."

The goal of the B Team was to place Soviet weapons developments of the past dozen or so years in the context of an overall Soviet "grand strategy." In its view, the estimates had avoided a conscious discussion of Soviet strategy and, as a result, had resorted willy-nilly to explaining Soviet developments in terms of U.S. strategic concepts. Unfortunately, these concepts corresponded to the Soviet reality less and less as the years went by.

This contribution should not be disparaged on the grounds that the B Team did not reflect the whole spectrum of opinions on the questions it discussed; surely the point of "competitive analysis" is to sharpen the issues and to force bureaucratic committees—so often characterized by consensus-seeking, to say nothing of plain inertia—to face the difficulties in the lines of argument with which they have become comfortable.

The committee statement concludes that "judgments must not be bent or suppressed by outside pressures or fear of an uncongenial reaction." This is certainly an important objective, and one in terms of which the current trend toward centralized management of the intelligence community ought to be evaluated. While "national" control might help dampen the bureaucratic rivalry (interservice, and military vs. civilian intelligence) which occasionally raises its head in the estimates, it would tend to make it even more difficult for intelligence analysts to draw conclusions which would complicate the lives of the senior policymakers. Calling in outside experts from time to time is a healthy corrective against the tendency of any organization to become set in its own way of thinking. The particular panel of experts chosen, however, will always be subject to charges of being "unrepresentative" or "biased" by those who do not like its findings, including those in the intelligence community who are, after all, the ones being criticized.

Knowledge is power; and the ability to define what others will take to be knowledge is the greatest power. It is not to be wondered then, that the National Intelligence Estimates—the sources of "official truth"—escape irrelevance only at the price of controversy. Any attempt to improve the estimates will be denounced as an attempt to manipulate them by those who disagree with the new directions they take. The objective standard will be to look at how well one institutional arrangement, or one line of argument, has predicted and explained recent events.

In the current case, it would appear that the National Intelligence Estimates of the past dozen years have, by and large, failed this test. The B-Team Report, the heart of which did *not* find its way into the press, was in my view a creditable attempt to place recent developments in a context which makes them more understandable, and which offers the possibility of greater predictive success. No one should have expected that the intelligence community would accept the entire B Team position; but it should not miss the opportunity, provided by a powerful critique of some of its past failures, to sharpen its own thinking.

SEPARATE VIEWS OF SENATOR MALCOLM WALLOP

The drafters of the NIE's on Soviet strategic forces, and the members of Dr. Richard Pipes' B Team came up with substantially different evaluations of the Soviet Union's intentions and future capabilities. The committee—especially the Subcommittee on Quality of Intelligence—rightly found this difference of opinion interesting, and after gaining the views of Dr. Pipes and certain other members of his Team on the committee's report, asked the staff to recheck the "facts and issues" of the controversy. This remained an inquiry, however, into the *quality* of competing products. But although the rechecking has produced a report on the A–B Team episode which is much improved from the original, it is still fundamentally flawed, because, in the words of the report, it "makes no attempt to judge which group's estimates concerning the U.S.S.R. are correct." Therefore, the report's "findings and recommendations for improving the quality of future NIE's on Soviet capabilities and objectives are primarily directed at procedural issues." But it is logically impossible to determine the *quality* of opposing arguments without reference to the *substance* of those arguments. After all, the *quality* of an estimate depends, above all, upon its accuracy. In order to make judgments concerning quality, never mind suggesting improvements, one must judge where the truth lies against which the estimate's accuracy is to be measured.

Of course, because there is controversy over the significance of the Soviets' buildup of strategic forces, any report that touches on the facts is likely to be fought over. But we cannot and should not try to avoid responsibility for substantive judgments in this area. The flow of events won't let us. Moreover, as is the case here, judgments on substance turned away at the front door often come in through the windows.

Although the report finds some elements of value in the fact that the NIE's drafters had some competition, it still tries to denigrate the B Team by giving the impression that the NIE team contains a wide variety of points of view, while its competitor was a narrow band of zealots with preconceived notions. It even implies that Dr. Pipes, head of Harvard's Russian Institute, wrote on Soviet intentions before looking at the data. In fact, Dr. Pipes did no such thing. The report focuses on the leakage of information about the B Team's report. Although it states that the leakers were "persons unknown," it leads the reader to ask *cui bono?* and gives the impression the B Team benefited. This is pure innuendo.

But above all, this sort of thing distracts from the main point: The B Team was constituted because, for 10 years in a row, the NIE's had been giving a picture of Soviet strategic programs which appeared out of touch with reality. (I am not referring to relatively short-range projections of numbers of launchers, which can hardly help but be correct.)

While the Soviets were beginning the biggest military buildup in history, the NIE's judged that they would not try to build as many missiles as we had. When the Soviets approached our number, the NIE's said they were unlikely to exceed it substantially; when they exceeded it substantially, the NIE's said they would not try for decisive superiority—the capability to fight and win a nuclear war. Only very recently have the NIE's admitted that possibility as an "elusive question." Now the NIE's say the Soviets may be trying for such a capability but they cannot be sure it will work. While there were divisive views in the intelligence agencies responsible for the NIE's, the views which dissented from the above-mentioned line were confined to little footnotes. Only recently, under the pressure of events, have dissenters gained the privilege of setting out contrasting views in parallel text. Thus, while it would be inaccurate to cast the agencies in the role of doves, it is quite accurate to characterize the NIE's thrust and tone as very doveish indeed! The President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board was therefore quite right to ask whether the data on Soviet strategic programs would support more somber views.

The report's main charge against the B Team on Soviet Objectives is that it "reflected the views of only one segment of the spectrum" and that consequently "the outcome of the exercise was predetermined and the experiment's contribution lessened." One might ask whether the report is to be read to imply that what it calls the "prestigious and articulate B Team authorities" wrote predetermined, that is to say academically dishonest, analyses. The B Team's critique was indeed pointed. It had a definite thrust. But, it seems to me, the *direction* of that thrust was called for by the relationship between the NIE's past analyses and the reality of the Soviet buildup.

The fundamental argument, of course, is over the Soviet Union's intentions. Soviet professional literature has not deviated from the pattern set in Sokolovskii's book, "Soviet Military Strategy," that nuclear weapons do not change the fundamental nature of warfare. Nuclear wars, like all others, have winners and losers. The Soviet military's task is, above all, to win wars. The Soviets have considered the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), on which our military posture is based, but they have always rejected it. As the report states, the NIE's in question do not deal adequately with how the Soviet leadership views nuclear war. In my opinion, the problem is not brevity, but rather that while consciously refusing to entertain the Soviets' own conception of what they are about militarily, the authors of the NIE's over the years have evaluated Soviet strategic forces using indexes which tend to stress our own doctrine of MAD. In 1976, the NIE mentioned that the Soviets think in terms of the ability to win wars. Nevertheless, it continued to evaluate both U.S. and Soviet forces using MAD criteria. The B Team's position is that because the Soviet Union has built its forces all along with a view to fighting, surviving, and winning a war, the use of MAD criteria in evaluating Soviet forces makes no sense. Instead of arguing the contrary explicitly, some of the B Team's detractors now try to minimize the existence of a fundamental clash of approaches.

We need more confrontation of opposing points of view on the basis of evidence. It is well known that experts, especially in bureaucratic settings, acquire interest in positions painstakingly built and long defended. Too often they seek consensus in carefully hedged analyses, so that whatever events ensue, they can point to this or that paragraph to justify themselves. This sort of thing does not serve the country well. The last thing we need are mechanisms for reaching more censensus on intelligence estimates, least of all should any such mechanisms be placed under so politicized a body as the National Security Council. Rather we need separate, competitive, teams of analysts, each making the best possible case for what the evidence at hand seems to indicate. Of course it is more comfortable for a policymaker to receive a single estimate on any given subject, especially if that estimate tells him what he wants to hear. But, while competitive analysis is not likely to make either policymakers or the intelligence community happy, it is likely to make all concerned more responsible.

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