

April 23, 1964

Letter from Thomas Hughes, Director, Office of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, to Director of Central Intelligence John McCone

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Summary:

Noting new intelligence information on the Indian and Israeli nuclear programs, as well as the possibility of developments concerning Sweden, Hughes requested McCone to initiate a new estimate of nuclear proliferation trends, which would eventually become part of a October 1964 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE). Hughes enclosed draft "terms of reference," that included questions about the possibility of "clandestine" weapons programs and new technological developments that could make weapons development "easier" (perhaps a reference to gas centrifuge technology that the 1964 NIE would discuss).

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH
WASHINGTON

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APR 23 1964

Dear John,

In late June of last year USIB approved NIE 4-63, The Likelihood and Consequences of a Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Systems. Since that time we have obtained new information on the nuclear programs of two countries, Israel and India, that would change somewhat the conclusions of 4-63. There may also be significant new data on the programs of other countries treated in the estimate, Sweden being one example.

We would like, therefore, to see a new Nth country estimate scheduled for the third quarter of 1964, perhaps in late summer after the annual Soviet AE estimate is finished. We suggest that the estimate concentrate on capabilities and intentions of non-communist countries to develop and produce nuclear weapons, since the implications and consequences section that appeared last year remains generally valid. Our suggested terms of reference are attached.

Sincerely,

TLH

Thomas L. Hughes

Enclosure:
Suggested Terms of Reference

Mr. John McCone,
Director of Central Intelligence,
CIA Headquarters,
Langley, Virginia.

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP

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Draft Terms of Reference: Likelihood of a Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Before 1970

The Problem

To assess the capabilities and intentions of non-communist countries to develop and produce nuclear weapons over about the next five years.

Questions Bearing on the Problem

1. What countries now have an adequate technological and scientific base for the development before 1970 of a nuclear weapon and what are their intentions in this regard?
2. To what extent are these countries deficient in materials, equipment or scientific talent that might require or make desirable outside assistance?
3. If outside assistance were necessary for specific countries, what would be the problems -- or lack of them -- in their obtaining it?
4. What inhibiting effect, if any, might the test ban have on weapon development by Nth country signatories?
5. Is clandestine weapon development a realistic possibility over the next five years?
6. What technological developments are in sight that might make weapon development easier?
7. What would be the cost of a token weapons program, excluding delivery systems, i.e., a few fission weapons a year? Of a more ambitious program?

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