

292. National Security Council Directive on Office of Special Projects

NSC 10/2

Washington, June 18, 1948.

1. The National Security Council, taking cognizance of the vicious covert activities of the USSR, its satellite countries and Communist groups to discredit and defeat the aims and activities of the United States and other Western powers, has determined that, in the interests of world peace and US national security, the overt foreign activities of the US Government must be supplemented by covert operations.

2. The Central Intelligence Agency is charged by the National Security Council with conducting espionage and counter-espionage operations abroad. It therefore seems desirable, for operational reasons, not to create a new agency for covert operations, but in time of peace to place the responsibility for them within the structure of the Central Intelligence Agency and correlate them with espionage and counter-espionage operations under the over-all control of the Director of Central Intelligence.

3. Therefore, under the authority of Section 102(d)(5) of the National Security Act of 1947, the National Security Council hereby directs that in time of peace:

a. A new Office of Special Projects shall be created within the Central Intelligence Agency to plan and conduct covert operations; and in coordination with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to plan and prepare for the conduct of such operations in wartime.

b. A highly qualified person, nominated by the Secretary of State, acceptable to the Director of Central Intelligence and approved by the National Security Council, shall be appointed as Chief of the Office of Special Projects.

c. The Chief of the Office of Special Projects shall report directly to the Director of Central Intelligence. For purposes of security and of flexibility of operations, and to the maximum degree consistent with efficiency, the Office of Special Projects shall operate independently of other components of Central Intelligence Agency.

d. The Director of Central Intelligence shall be responsible for:

Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 273, Records of the National Security Council, NSC 10/2. Top Secret. Although undated, this directive was approved by the National Security Council at its June 17 meeting and the final text, incorporating changes made at the meeting, was circulated to members by the Executive Secretary under a June 18 note. (Ibid.) See the Supplement. NSC 10/2 and the June 18 note are also reproduced in *CIA Cold War Records: The CIA under Harry Truman*, pp. 213-216.

(1) Ensuring, through designated representatives of the Secretary of State¹ and of the Secretary of Defense, that covert operations are planned and conducted in a manner consistent with US foreign and military policies and with overt activities. In disagreements arising between the Director of Central Intelligence and the representative of the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense over such plans, the matter shall be referred to the National Security Council for decision.

(2) Ensuring that plans for wartime covert operations are also drawn up with the assistance of a representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and are accepted by the latter as being consistent with and complementary to approved plans for wartime military operations.

(3) Informing, through appropriate channels, agencies of the US Government, both at home and abroad (including diplomatic and military representatives in each area), of such operations as will affect them.

e. Covert operations pertaining to economic warfare will be conducted by the Office of Special Projects under the guidance of the departments and agencies responsible for the planning of economic warfare.

f. Supplemental funds for the conduct of the proposed operations for fiscal year 1949 shall be immediately requested. Thereafter operational funds for these purposes shall be included in normal Central Intelligence Agency Budget requests.

4. In time of war, or when the President directs, all plans for covert operations shall be coordinated with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In active theaters of war where American forces are engaged, covert operations will be conducted under the direct command of the American Theater Commander and orders therefor will be transmitted through the Joint Chiefs of Staff unless otherwise directed by the President.

5. As used in this directive, "covert operations" are understood to be all activities (except as noted herein) which are conducted or sponsored by this Government against hostile foreign states or groups or in support of friendly foreign states or groups but which are so planned and executed that any US Government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if uncovered the US Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them. Specifically, such operations shall include any covert activities related to: propaganda, economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation groups, and support of indigenous anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the free world. Such operations shall not include armed conflict by recognized military

¹ According to an August 13 memorandum from Davies to Kennan, Kennan was subsequently appointed as the representative of the Secretary of State. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Records of the Department of State, Policy Planning Staff Files 1947-53: Lot 64 D 563) See the Supplement.

forces, espionage, counter-espionage, and cover and deception for military operations.

6. This Directive supersedes the directive contained in NSC 4-A, which is hereby cancelled.

**293. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence
Hillenkoetter to the Chief of Naval Operations (Denfeld)**

Washington, June 18, 1948.

SUBJECT

Project for high level balloon research and development

1. The Central Intelligence Agency has developed an effective method of penetrating the Iron Curtain with the use of high level balloons.

2. Naval officers with special technical training and essential background of upper air conditions are required to effectively carry out this project. It is requested that the Chief of Naval Operations issue the necessary directive to implement this project as discussed and approved verbally between representative of this office and Admiral Denfeld, Vice Admiral Price¹ and Rear Admirals Cassady² and Inglis. Liaison officers are prepared to furnish detailed information for use in preparation of necessary details.

3. U.S. Air Force participation will be required and approval for such participation has been given by the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force. This will include full cooperation with the Navy in implementing the project upon receipt of an official request from the Chief of Naval Operations.

4. You will appreciate the fact that because of the nature of this project this letter should be shown only to those officers who "need to know."

Source: Central Intelligence Agency Historical Files, HS/CSG-605, Job 83-0036, Box 4, Folder 10. Top Secret. The source text is a transcript made for the CIA Historian in December 1952.

¹ Probably Vice Admiral J. D. Price, the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air).

² Probably Rear Admiral John H. Cassady, the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Air.