


# Political and Military Intention Estimation Technical Memorandum 80-1



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MEMORANDUM

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NUCLEAR POLICY PROJECT

PREPARED UNDER THE  
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NUCLEAR POLICY PROJECT

TO: Reviewers of "Political and Military Intention Estimation"

FROM: Frank J. Stech

DATE: 21 August 1980

Many of you expressed an interest in learning what other reviewers wrote about the intention estimation monograph. The enclosed technical memorandum to ONR attempts to summarize the many reviews so far received.

I hope you find your own criticisms fairly and accurately expressed. If not, I am confident you will howl back; please do. In particular, if you are dissatisfied with the overall revision plan, or if you feel certain important things are missing, please share your observations with me, as you did so forthrightly before.

It is important to note that I no longer intend to revise the monograph into a "handbook" for analysts--your voices (and others) were heeded on that score. A handbook approach may be yet in the works, but the revision of the monograph will aim at the community of experience rather than an inexperienced audience. The group I aim to address is fairly represented by the names in Table I of the enclosed tech memo.

Let me take this chance to thank you again for your help with this effort, and to ask your forgiveness for this impersonal memo. I hope to keep you personally informed as we make progress on the problem of intention estimation.

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The necessity for accurate intelligence as a vital element to the successfulness of a state actor's offensive and defensive military contingencies need not be belabored. In 1973, an Egyptian-led coalition of Arab states launched a coordinated surprise attack on the nascent state of Israel in what is known as the Yom Kippur War. Despite intelligence reports provided to Israeli leaders on Arab

troop mobilizations and other signs signaling a possible attack, Israeli leaders were caught off guard as a result of unclear and ambiguous intelligence analysis on Arab military intentions. With precedents such as the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, the need for improved and accurate analysis of military "intentions" by the intelligence community is important given the rapidly evolving and fluid nature of today's conflicts, especially when considering potential future conflicts with states such as Iran over its suspected nuclear weapons program.

Frank Stech's 1980 monographic report examines why intelligence analysis has succeeded and failed by highlighting the methodological and procedural problems inherent in intelligence analysis and the intelligence community overall, as well as the imperative for clear and distinct definitions of the term "intentions" for adversaries as opposed to motivations, goals, and capabilities in order to formulate successful foreign policy and security contingencies.

Stech writes:

"Intelligence: Intelligence on a foreign nation differs from information; intelligence is evaluated and interpreted information which is significant to a nation's plans, policies, and operations. Intelligence is subordinate to the formulation of policy and plans, it helps determine feasible policy objectives with respect to other nations and provides a basis for developing methods to attain them. Intelligence in the most general sense is evaluated, policy-oriented information on another nation." [section 2, page 8]

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