

DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20511

E/S 01167

MEMORANDUM FOR: Intelligence Community Workforce

SUBJECT: Guidance on Declassification of National Intelligence Estimate  
Key Judgments

The declassification and release of unclassified versions of the Key Judgments (KJs) from some recent National Intelligence Estimates (NIE) does not portend that this is going to become a standard practice. With regard to this matter, the following guidance is provided:

- It is the policy of the Director of National Intelligence (DN) that KJs should not be declassified.
- No predisposition to declassify KJs should exist in drafting an NIE or its KJs. Any decision to declassify will be made by the DNI and only after he and other National Intelligence Board principals have reviewed and approved the entire NIE. (There is both a real and a perceived danger that analysts will adopt less bold approaches, or otherwise modify the way they characterize developments, and that the integrity of the NIE process could be harmed by expectations that all or portions of the NIE are likely to be declassified.)
- The possibility that the KJs or other positions of an estimate will be leaked is not a sufficient reason for preparing unclassified KJs.
- The decision to declassify KJs from NIE will be made only when the following conditions pertain but meeting all of these conditions will not automatically or presumptively result in declassification:
  - KJs will be declassified only if the protection of sources and methods can be assured.
  - Compelling reasons to declassify include the need to communicate judgments to police and other first responders or to give the public an accurate view of Intelligence Community judgments on issues like terrorist threats that could affect their safety directly and rapidly.
  - Declassification of KJs will be done only in a way that will not jeopardize US diplomatic activities, military operations, or other policy interests (e.g., by revealing negative assessments of leaders or countries whose cooperation is essential for the attainment of policy objectives).
  - Declassification of KJs will be done only if there can be provided a nearly-complete presentation of the logic linking individual KJs and an accurate holistic view of the assessments in the NIE. (As a rule, the level of classified KJs being contemplated for declassification should already be at level below the Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information and HUMINT Control System compartment

levels. Anything else would risk the appearance of selecting judgments to support or oppose policy positions and diminish confidence in the integrity and tradecraft of the Estimate.)

- The guidance outlined above will be published and promulgated throughout the Community and shared with the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and appropriate committees of Congress.

  
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J. M. McConnell

  
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