Under Pressure:
U.S. Intelligence Analysis in the Wake of 9/11 and Iraq

by Francesca Tortorella

Abstract

The years that followed the 9/11 attacks and the 2003 Iraq War observed an assessment of the effectiveness of U.S. intelligence. In the aftermath of these two intelligence failures, there was wide debate on the need to reorganize the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC). The 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) mandated an extensive restructuring.

This work examines how the reform affected intelligence analysis. Specifically, this research intends to assess whether the changes have been effective at fixing the analytic errors associated with the 9/11 attacks and the Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction (Iraq WMD) intelligence failures. This work also analyzes the unintended consequences of the reform and the challenges that still need to be addressed to improve the quality and reliability of intelligence analysis.

The need for better educating the policymakers is proposed as a means to address the remaining issues outlined. Educating policymakers at properly understanding what intelligence analysis can and cannot do would help analysts to produce more effective and valuable products.

About the Author

Francesca Tortorella received a B.Sc. and a M.Sc. in Economics and Management from Bocconi University. During the programs, she studied abroad in the Netherlands, in the United States, and in Canada, and she completed internships at the Vatican Museums and at the Italian Institute of Culture in Vancouver. Francesca worked for the Organizing Committee of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, where she gained a solid expertise in programme and project management. She also developed strong relationship management skills during her two years as Country Officer for Middle East, North Africa and Developing Countries at Expo Milano 2015. Francesca was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship, thanks to which she pursued a Master of Arts in International Relations at New York University, where she graduated top of her class in 2014.

Keywords

intelligence failures, intelligence reform

Introduction

The years that followed the 9/11 attacks and the 2003 Iraq War witnessed an intensification of debates regarding the role, capacities, responsibilities and limitations of intelligence in the United States. In the aftermath of these two intelligence failures, there was wide consensus on the need to reorganize the Intelligence Community (IC), and the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) mandated a far-reaching and extensive intelligence restructuring.

This work intends to be an assessment of the results of the IRTPA on analysis, ten years after the law was promulgated. Specifically, this work aims at understanding if the changes that analysis has experienced have been effective at precluding a repetition of the mistakes and problems brought about by the 9/11 attacks and the Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction (Iraq WMD) intelligence failures. This research also intends to examine whether analysts today are applying the lessons of these failures, what innovations worked best or did not work, and how to measure the potential improvements in analytic effectiveness.

The data on which this work is based have been collected mainly through interviews with former intelligence analysts. Interviews were held with:

- Thomas Fingar: in 1986, Fingar left Stanford University to join the State Department. In 2005, he moved to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence as the Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Analysis and concurrently served as the Chairman of the National Intelligence Council until December 2008
- Peter Clement: he worked as Deputy Director for Intelligence for Analytic Program at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and previously he served as the daily briefer for Vice-President Cheney and NSC Adviser Rice
- Casimir Yost: he served at the National Intelligence Council (NIC), where he directed the Strategic Futures Group.

There was consistency among the interviewees with regard to both the improvements brought about by the IRTPA reform, and the remaining challenges that still need to be addressed. The unintended consequences of the reform also constitute an area of agreement for all the interviewees. This convergence provides this study with legitimacy and significance.

1. Intelligence Analysis

The United States Intelligence Community (IC) is the group of 16 executive branch agencies that work separately and together to engage in intelligence activities, such as collection, analysis, production and dissemination of intelligence[1]. The entire U.S. IC is led by the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), who serves as the head of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), and coordinates the other 16 agencies.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE (ODNI)

Program Managers	Departmental	Services
• Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) • Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) • FBI National Security Branch • National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency • National Reconnaissance Office • National Security Agency	• DEA Office of National Security Intelligence • Energy Office of Intelligence & Counter-Intelligence • DHS Office of Intelligence & Analysis • State Bureau of Intelligence & Research • Treasury Office of Intelligence and Research	• Air Force Intelligence • Army Intelligence • Coast Guard Intelligence • Marine Corps Intelligence • Naval Intelligence

Figure 1 – The U.S. Intelligence Community[2]

Intelligence activities such as identifying requirements, conducting collection, and processing information are meaningless unless the intelligence is given to analysts who are experts in their fields and can turn it into reports that respond to the needs of the policymakers. The mission of intelligence analysis is to understand, integrate and evaluate information to provide warning, reduce uncertainly, and identify opportunities.

The U.S. IC publishes three overlapping levels of analysis: current intelligence, trend analysis, and long-term assessments. Trend analysis and long-term assessments are commonly referred to as 'strategic intelligence'. The focus of strategic intelligence is providing strategic warning: informing customers of what appears likely to happen far enough in advance to allow the formulation of policies to mitigate unfavorable developments[3].

The Analytic Products

The IC's analytical products aim at providing the policymakers with the information they need to understand contexts, situations, and developments in order to make decisions[4].

The most important customer of the U.S. IC is and will remain the president of the United States. He is well served through his direct relationship with the DNI, and receives on a daily basis, the finest intelligence publication in the world: the President's Daily Brief (PDB).

The PDB has always been the flagship publication of the IC analytical community. Early in the morning the president receives this classified briefing and, should he wish, an oral briefing from the DNI. The PDB contains the most important, critical, and updated intelligence.

National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) are also a major product of the IC. They are meant to present the judgments of the entire IC on key issues of importance and, in some case, project trends into the future. The National Intelligence Council (NIC), with its National Intelligence Officers (NIOs) in charge of specific parts of the world or issues, is in charge of producing NIEs.

Analytic Mistakes

Several issues may arise from the work of the IC analysts, and analytic mistakes can be grouped into three main categories:

- mistakes due to ambiguous, deceptive, contradictory and missing information (so-called information gaps) and mistakes that derive from an excess of data[5]
- mistakes that originate from 'mindsets', faulty assumptions and embedded convictions that prevent analysts from asking the right questions
- mistakes stemming from policy bias, adoptions of policymakers' bias, or politicization[6].

The proper relationship between intelligence gathering and policymaking sharply separates the two functions. The IC collects and analyzes information, but it is the policymakers who decide which topics should be investigated. Hence, policymakers influence the topics that the IC is going to address, but not the conclusions that will be reached. It is crucial for the IC to inform policy and not to prescribe policy; otherwise it would lose credibility and impartiality[7].

2. The 21st Century Intelligence Failures

September 11

On September 11, 2001 four U.S. commercial planes were hijacked and turned into weapons that toppled the World Trade Center, damaged the Pentagon, and caused the deaths of over 3,000 people. Al-Qaeda succeeded in concealing its capabilities and intentions, and misled American intelligence.

The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, also known as the 9/11 Commission, was set up on November 27, 2002, in order to prepare a full and complete account of the circumstances surrounding the 9/11 attacks. The findings of the 9/11 Commission explained that the failure in preventing the attacks was due to:

- information gaps
- poor sharing[8]
- signal-to-noise ratio (there were very few 'signals', pieces of salient information pointing to the attacks the summer of 2001, and they were easily lost among countless other facts and meaningless 'noise')
- faulty assumptions (the conventional wisdom among analysts was that terrorist attacks against the United States was very likely to occur abroad and not on the U.S. homeland).

The commission highlighted the lack of imagination in analysis as a critical factor that led to the complete unpreparedness for the attacks. Notwithstanding the many information gaps, analysts have

a major responsibility to exercise imagination: they should have identified the shortcomings in collection and addressed it accordingly[9].

The 9/11 Commission recommended an elaborated strategy that called for unity of efforts in the fight against Islamist terrorists with the creation of a National Counterterrorism Center, and the unification of the IC with a new National Intelligence Director.

Iraq WMD

After the Gulf War, the United Nations (UN) had prohibited Iraq from developing or possessing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), and required the country to permit inspections confirming compliance. UN inspections continued for a decade, but Iraq became progressively less cooperative after 1998. During 2002, President Bush repeatedly warned of military action against Iraq unless inspections were allowed to continue.

The administration did not request any intelligence estimate on Iraqi WMD; in fact, it was the Democrats in Congress who requested the (eventually flawed) 2002 National Intelligence Estimate, and only a few senators and representatives read it before voting on the war[10].

The October 2002 NIE on Iraq included erroneous assessments regarding Iraq's WMD program. It mistakenly judged that Iraq:

- had stockpiled 500 tons of chemical weapons and had a chemical weapons program
- had an ongoing biological weapons program
- was rebuilding its nuclear program[11].

In February 2003, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell went before the United Nations to make the case for invading Iraq. He affirmed that Saddam Hussein was hiding a stock of WMD, and that his statements were based on solid intelligence. On March 19, 2003 an invasion force led by the United States attacked Iraq and deposed the Ba'athist government of Saddam Hussein.

A few months after the invasion, it became clear that the country had very little in the way of a current or near-term WMD program. The invasion of Iraq based on the belief that the Saddam Hussein's regime possessed WMD was called one of the most public – and most damaging – intelligence failures in recent American history. This was certainly due to collection faults, but it was also a major analysis failure. Analysts were more dependent on damaged collection than they realized, did not question their past assumptions, and made faulty assessments on the basis of dated information.

Analysts were certainly hard pressed to identify persuasive evidence to demonstrate that Iraq had an on-going WMD program, but they did not challenge it[12].

Like 9/11, the war in Iraq triggered a series of investigations. A commission chaired by Judge Silberman and former Senator Robb documented the IC's mistakes in a comprehensive report, which was publicly released in March 2005.

The main findings of the Commission, also known as the WMD Commission, include:

- analysis was overly technical and did not examine the Iraqi political and cultural context

> – the IC provided short-term products and failed to provide long-term analysis
> – uncritical acceptance of established positions and assumptions[13].

The Silberman-Robb Commission also stated that analysts worked in an environment affected by the intense interests of policymakers.[14]

3. The 2004 Reform

The inability to prevent the attacks of September 11 and the inaccurate assessment of the Iraq's WMD Program created a sense of urgency to restructure the IC: only a significant reform could prevent the repetition of the mistakes of September 11 and Iraq WMD.

The *9/11 Commission Report* set in motion the events that led to the passage of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA - 2004), which chose to strengthen authorities and restructure organizational charts.

The IRTPA created a Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to oversee the 16 intelligence agencies. The act gives the DNI two tasks: acting as senior intelligence adviser to the president and improving the IC's coordination and integration.

The act also created the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) in order to support the DNI. The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) was established in the ODNI. The NIC was moved under the authority of the DNI and within the ODNI[15].

As far as analysis is concerned, the IRTPA required the DNI to establish an alternative analysis process, and to assign an individual or entity the responsibility of ensuring that elements of the IC conduct alternative analysis appropriately[16].

The 9/11 Commission and the WMD Commission also focused attention on how to best organize analysts across the IC. The 9/11 Commission proposed the organization of all analysts by regional or functional national intelligence centers. The centers allow analysts from various agencies to be brought together to focus on a specific issue. The IRTPA only mandated one center, the NCTC. The WMD Commission later recommended the creation of one new center, the National Counterproliferation Center, which was established in 2005[17].

4. Analysis in the Wake of 9/11 and Iraq

The IC approached the notion of reform with cognitive dissonance. While a minority endorsed a substantial change, the majority believed that the reform would be largely superficial and not lead to concrete improvements. The widespread view that the IRTPA would result in little change was also fed by the defensive attitude the community took after Iraq WMD: many intelligence professionals felt that Iraq was a matter of bad policy and not their fault[18].

The ODNI, in particular, faced significant resistance, hostility and antagonism from community elements[19]. Tensions stemmed from different issues related to each agency: for instance, the CIA

lost its 'ownership' of the PDB, which was moved under the authority of the DNI, and this generated frustration and dissatisfaction.

Today, ten years after the IRTPA, the resistance phase appears to be overcome and the restructuring of the IC is settled.

4.1 Positive Results – Restoring Confidence in Analysis

Criticism after the experiences of 9/11 and Iraq WMD stung the analytic community. This criticism was liberally directed at every analyst: it touched thousands of people that had not been involved in any 9/11-related activities or in the production of the 2002 NIE on Iraq. The imagery and verbiage used struck the community deeply: common critiques related to the inability to connect the dots and to a fervid imagination. Morale was devastated by caricatures that depicted an incompetent and hopeless community.
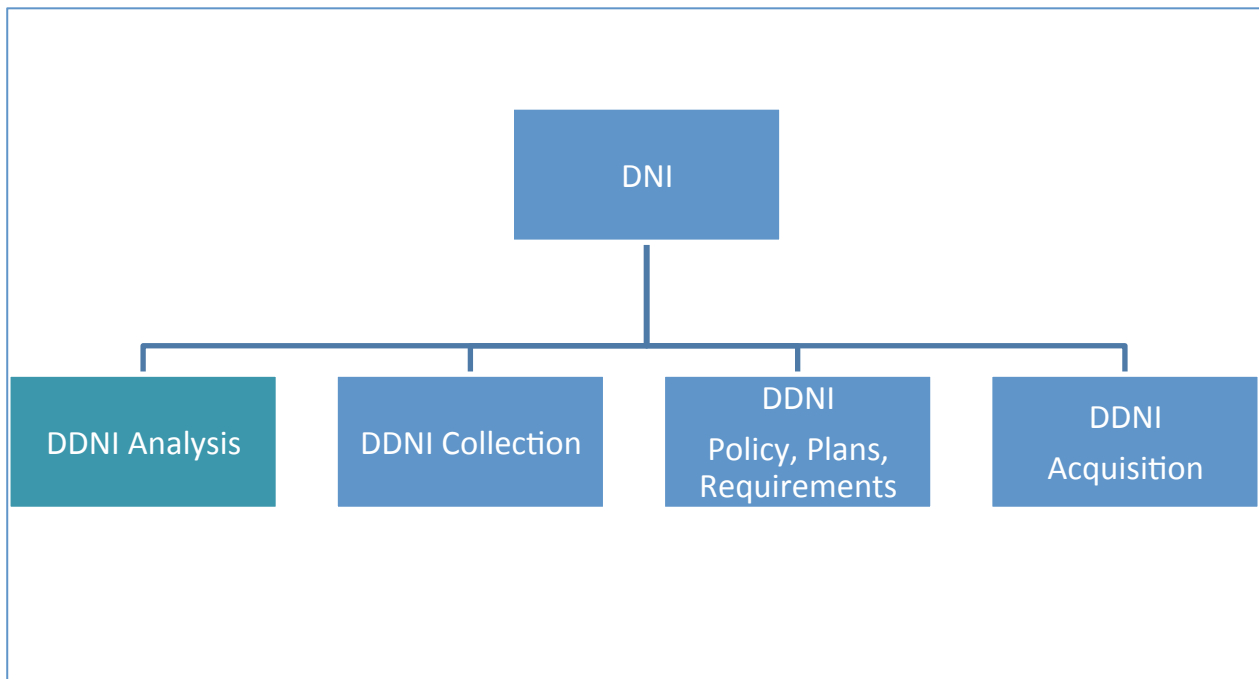

Figure 2 – ODNI Top Management Structure[20]

When appointing Thomas Fingar Deputy Director of Analysis (Figure 2), DNI John Negroponte gave him *carte blanche* on how to implement what was legislated by the reform and how to institute a new analytic methodology, on the condition that, in doing so, he would restore confidence in the analytic world. Fingar tried to do it by restoring confidence in the quality of the analytic work[21].

Since the legal mandate of the IRTPA was not excessively rigid, Fingar had a great degree of flexibility in the implementation of the reform. His main starting point was reflecting on what caused the problem. Then, in order to increase the quality of the analytic effort, he worked on tradecraft issues, collaboration issues, and sharing issues. The goal was to provide the policymakers with better and timelier analytic support. «We had to be truly useful. We had to be there at the right

time, in the right place, with the right information, with important insights. We had to know exactly what our customers need, when they needed it, and in what form.»[22]

Enhancing the quality of analysis

Analytic Standards

Community-wide IC Analytic Standards to govern the production and evaluation of intelligence analysis were promulgated on June 21, 2007. Designed as a 'diagnostic tool' for evaluating the quality of analysis, the standards have to be used as guidelines for analysts and managers throughout the community[23]. They are:

- objectivity
- independence from political consideration
- timeliness
- analysis shall be based on all available sources of intelligence
- analysis shall exhibit proper standards of analytic tradecraft[24].

These standards were sent to every analyst within the IC, and managers in the 16 intelligence agencies have been made responsible for ensuring that their analytic evaluations use these standards in a rigorous way[25].

The Internal Review Process

An internal CIA investigation of what went wrong before 9/11 and Iraq WMD highlighted the necessity of spending more time reviewing the products. The officials in charge of the investigation re-analyzed intelligence from the early nineties in the attempt to be as precise as possible. In addition to confirming the lack of alternative analysis, the findings showed mistakes especially in the area of source description.

In order to protect the identity of a source, oftentimes collectors did not provide analysts with the specifics of what piece of information was obtained from whom (i.e. collectors would tell analysts that information was obtained from three different sources, although in reality it was provided by a single individual). This could negatively affect the judgments of the analysts.

Following this study, the internal review process was reformed and improved through the enhancement of the analytic rigor in the drafting of each product. Analysts became 'fanatical' about sourcing and caveats[26]. The improved internal review process also provides analysts with the opportunity to 'go back' at any time, and re-assess the reliability and quality of analysis.

Regular meetings with National Clandestine Service (NCS) officials were established. The meetings helped analysts because they 'forced' collectors to be specific about their sources. Today, NCS specialists habitually sit in on sessions discussing NIEs to help ensure that the degree of validity of human sources providing information to be used in the NIE is understood. This process has also been extended to other collection disciplines[27].

Collaboration, Integration and Information Sharing

The 9/11 and WMD Commissions stressed the necessity of increasing collaboration, integration, and information sharing across the IC. Therefore, following the recommendations of the

commissions, sophisticated programs aimed at improving the performance of the analytic community in those areas were launched under the direction of Thomas Fingar.

The common denominator of all the programs was the concept of 'synergy' and the need to capitalize on the concerted effort of the IC. Useful interactions (synergies) could be translated into products that are more valuable. Fundamentally, the number of agencies offered an opportunity in terms of expertise, and the IC needed to take advantage of the differences in missions in order to capture synergies that were lost in the past because analysts were not aware of the work being done at another component of the community.

Thus, transparency was vital and the crucial requirement in order to capture synergies was a better understanding of 'who did what for whom'.

The programs that were launched in this vein included:

- Library of National Intelligence (LNI), which created a database of all disseminated intelligence
- A-Space, which was created to build a common collaborative workspace where IC analysts in different locations could work together simultaneously[28]
- Catalyst, a program intended to enable analysts to make discoveries in large amount of intelligence data
- Intellipedia, an online encyclopedia with three levels of classification (Top Secret, Secret, and Unclassified)
- Analytic Resources Catalogue (ARC) and Analyst Yellow Pages, with the goal of gathering basic contact data of all IC analysts, as well as information on their skills, expertise, and experience[29].

These programs re-conceptualized the analytic resources catalogue (the former database of 'who did what for whom'): they are an important resource for analysts that now know who to contact should they need an expert on a specific issue/country.

These databases also overcome the issue of trust and the tendency of analysts to have more confidence in colleagues they know than in those they have never met. Being listed in the ARC means knowledge and expertise: this also represents an incentive for developing good standing and reputation among the analytic community.

Each of these initiatives improved the daily routine analysts within the community, all of whom struggled to gain access to all of the available sources[30].

Lessons Learned

The importance of recalling the lessons learned of 9/11 and Iraq triggered the establishment of the Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI – under the authority of the Human Resource Department of the CIA).

The CSI serves as the Agency's Lessons Learned center and leverages its 'think tank' role to promote the understanding of the importance of alternative analysis. Analysts must learn to generate alternative hypotheses about unlikely, but potentially consequential, events.

Another important lesson learned, systematically stressed by the work of the CSI, is that better collection helps analysis. However, while better collection might have been achievable in some cases, in others was nearly impossible (i.e. it was impossible to penetrate the top decision-making circle of Saddam). The failures showed that it is necessary for the analysts to deeply understand the collection discipline in order to make judgments.

When collection of information improves, and when analysts are better able to appreciate the limited collection on which they are basing their arguments, the assessment of possible outcomes will be more accurate[31].

All these improvements appear to have contributed to reaching the goal of restoring confidence in the IC. In Thomas Fingar's words: «Do they (the policymakers) have confidence in our world today? […] Let me begin with the first customer. The President spends between 30 minutes and an hour with us six days a week. He's a very busy man. He's a very demanding senior executive. If he thought we were wasting his time, we would get short shrift.»[32]

The efforts to reform and improve analysis did not finish with the end of the mandates of DNI Negroponte and DDNI Fingar. The work towards the integration of the IC and the improvement of the way analysts do their job is what Casimir Yost calls a 'NeverEnding Story'[33]. The analytic community has wide responsibilities to reduce vagueness about issues affecting national security. Thus, it is essential to continue to transform the community in ways that will enable it to meet the future challenges and expectations.

4.2 Challenges that remain to be addressed

Innovations such as A-Space have made it much easier for analysts to share information and collaborate in cyberspace, but more needs to be done in order to facilitate a higher degree of integration. Furthermore, as far as the intelligence-policy relationship is concerned, some issues persist and have not yet been addressed entirely.

Collaboration, Integration and Information Sharing

While information sharing today is certainly more rigorous, the situation is not yet an optimal one. As previously mentioned, the IC agencies respond to different customers and follow different imperatives, and it has proven difficult to reconcile them under the same umbrella. Many agencies are still mindful of their own practices in terms of processes, and this continues to this day.

In this framework, mindsets and cultures of various IC organizations continue to prove serious obstacles to the kind of relatively open and collaborative platforms made available by the changes that the reform effort instituted[34].

The teaching of 'Analysis 101', for example, might be new for DIA and NGA analysts, but it is certainly not new for CIA analysts. Thus, the CIA has opted to rely on its own training curriculum and not to have its young officers participate in the DIA course.

Furthermore, while programs such as the ARC rendered collaboration, integration and information sharing more structured across the IC, the formalization of external expertise has not yet been

addressed. Although this represents a complicated and time-consuming task, it is necessary in order to achieve a greater degree of synergy.

Finally, the integration between collection and analysis represents another issue that remains to be addressed. Today, collection 'dominates': «Collectors receive more money and more tools to collect information and analysts are told to work harder.»[35] This results in the fact that IC collects a substantially larger amount of information than analysts can possibly examine. This does not generate effective intelligence analysis, and a more efficient linkage between collection requirements and analytic work needs to be envisioned[36].

The Intelligence-Policy Relationship

In the wake of the Iraq war, it was clear that intelligence analysis was not relied upon in making significant national security decisions, that intelligence was overtly misused to justify decisions already made, and that the IC's work was politicized.

As far as the war in Iraq is concerned, the Bush administration did not take into consideration the distinction between intelligence and policy. It used intelligence to obtain public support for the invasion and it used policy to drive intelligence.

Today, incoming policymakers have little understanding of what types of information they can reasonably expect from the IC and the types of questions they should ask to elicit a valuable response from the IC. Therefore, requests often produce a standard bureaucratic process that pulls together pertinent information, but does not necessarily provide useful insight about the issue or topic in question[37].

Moreover, many policymakers remain unable, or unwilling, to distinguish the difference between challenging the quality of the analysis presented to them, and challenging the political implications of this analysis. This implies that a failure to communicate across the IC-policy divide still exists and has not been properly addressed.

4.3 Unintended consequences

The Analytic Products

The 9/11 and WMD Commissions' reports brought a lot of attention on the PDB and NIEs. This increased focus has had unintended consequences on the quality of the products.

The PDB is the premier product of the all source analytical work of the IC. Hence, getting an item into the PDB has always been a major goal for analysts. Today in particular, the analytic community sees much of its *raison d'être* as centered on the PDB, and sometimes forgets the other products. In addition to negatively affecting the quality of other reports, the attention on the PDB can also present the following problems:

- the goal of getting an item into the PDB can trigger bad decisions in terms of topic selection
- analysts may use hyperbolic language in order to give an item enough dramatic flair to have it included in the PDB

     –   analysts may save useful information for PDB use and only disseminate it to non-PDB policy users late[38].

In addition, President Bush elevated the PDB to an unprecedented level of importance, which had the unintended consequence of skewing intelligence production away from deeper research, and towards being driven by the latest clandestine reports from the field (because they perceive this to be their added value). Yet, much of that information often lacks context and is rather marginal. As a consequence, products driven by classified sources may suffer from ignorance of important information in unclassified sources[39].

Problems exist with the NIEs too. They are frequently late, long and too detailed to serve high-level policymakers well. Furthermore, NIE analytic quality is often compromised by the attempt to present a unified analytic position, producing reports that can become the lowest common denominator statement of the IC. Moreover, even in the process of drafting NIEs, IC analysts tend to focus their attention on information obtained by clandestine means[40].

Pressure and Strategic Intelligence

The 9/11 Commission and the Silberman-Robb Commission shared one critical finding: the importance of strategic analysis. Strategic intelligence helps the policymakers understand countries, regions, issues and the potential outcomes of their decisions.

However, the improvements of the internal review process and the enhancement of the standards of rigor in sourcing triggered a trend away from strategic analysis, which is the main unintended consequence of the IRTPA.

The negative side of the fact that analysis is more reliable and rigorous is in fact associated with caution. Today, analysts rarely risk being called to account for making assertions that cannot be supported with specific data, and they are very cautious in making predictions. Since mistakes are no longer tolerated, they tend to be unwilling to venture forth and think about the future. Strategic analysis, as the other types of analysis, may be evidence-based or assertion-based: now analysts are less willing to make assertions due to the pressure they feel on their work. «Since analytic judgments for Iraq were made on insufficient evidence, now nobody wants to make assumptions and this is bad.»[41]

Furthermore, policymakers favor both analytical judgments and parsimony in presentations, and these exact qualities tend to be lost in the effort of presenting and sourcing all the potentially relevant piece of information. It should, of course, be possible to both cite sources and build on these sources to produce analytical insight. However, in reality the products have shifted emphasis from analytical judgment to make sure no source is left unreported[42]. Analytic risk aversion can rob policymakers of the so-called 'opportunity analysis', which provides the policymakers with analysts' insights into policy options that might advance U.S. objectives[43].

Moreover, in order to produce valuable current intelligence, analysts need to be familiar with trends. The knowledge of the strategic context of an issue is essential to any piece of worthy current intelligence. Thus, the trend away from strategic analysis in favor of short-term reporting is weakening to a great extent analysts' ability to build up an in-depth collection of knowledge[44].

Conclusion

This research showed that, while the reform has generated many improvements, there are some remaining obstacles that prevent the analytic community to operate successfully.

The magnitude of the challenges renders recommendations hard to make. However, addressing the intelligence-policy relationship may be the starting point and the key to solving the remaining issues described.

Educating the policymakers about what analysis can and cannot do might address effectively the misunderstandings in the intelligence-policy relationship.

The IC has neglected the education of its customers: the appointed and elected officials. Additionally, policymakers with little knowledge about the IC often found themselves being frustrated with their attempts to get the right kind of intelligence support[45].

The quality of service policymakers receive from the IC is directly related to the degree of expertise and experience that the former have with the intelligence world. Policymakers who are better informed on how best to specify and articulate their needs will impact positively on the analysts' performance. Colin Powell said, about his interaction with the IC: «An old rule that I've used with my intelligence officers over the years […] goes like this: Tell me what you know. Tell me what you don't know. And then, based on what you really know and what you really don't know, tell me what you think it's most likely to happen. […] Now, when you tell me what's most likely to happen, then I, as the policymaker, have to make a judgment as to whether I act on that, and I won't hold you accountable for it because that is a judgment; and judgments of this kind are made by policymakers, not intelligence experts.»[46]

This statement is a paradigmatic example of what every policymaker should be receiving from the IC. They need to know what the IC can tell them about an issue, and need to understand the limits of what the IC knows about that particular issue. A good analytic product is one that has forced analysts to think through the implications of their data, discuss the significance of facts and evidence, and make explicit their level of confidence.

How can a policymaker become an educated intelligence customer?

After every intelligence failure, there have been careful observations regarding what was wrong within the IC or what the IC did that led to the mistake. Following these studies, the IC is carefully schooled to understand its errors and to discern what constitutes success and failure. However, there are no parallel efforts to systematically educate current and future policymakers to avoid policy failures because of inadequately understanding the IC's capabilities[47].

The education of an administration should start from the moment that presidential candidates are selected by their political parties and are given their first national security briefing. Often, new officials start reading intelligence with a superficial understanding of its essence: many of them are disappointed when they read their first report because they believe intelligence equals 'the real secrets'[48].

Policymakers and members of Congress should undergo a deliberate and thoughtful education process with a specific 'course' on intelligence analysis. Today's world offers a variety of media formats that can be used to structure this course: from interactive online presentations to instant messaging with retired intelligence officials, who are available to quickly reply to brief organizational questions (i.e. 'who should I contact to obtain this type of intelligence?'). The course should not just be given by intelligence professionals, but should also include talks by former policymakers willing to share the lessons they have learned in working with the IC.

Better-educated customers would make an analytic product more useful to their particular need, and would better understand what the intelligence they received mean. They would comprehend the inherent limitations of analysis and develop realistic expectations of how intelligence may support them.

Furthermore, better educated customers would be able to define their requirements more effectively, and would help analysts to work smarter. Analysts would focus more on dimensions of issues that are most important to policymakers within the vast amount of data gathered by collectors, and in so doing they could also generate a more efficient linkage between collection and analysis.

In sum, better education would help addressing the intelligence policy relationship, and reducing the analytic risk aversion in order to find the right balance between evidence-based and assertion-based intelligence.

The *National Intelligence Strategy of the United States of America* states that «the IC must be integrated (a team making the whole greater than the sum of its part), agile (adaptive, diverse, embraces innovation and takes initiative), and must exemplify America's values»[49]. The implementation of the IRTPA aimed at building a community that reflected the *Strategy*'s vision. In the framework of the reform, the analytic transformation was fairly successful, which does not mean that the analytic community is now perfectly efficient and successfully operational. The implementation of the IRTPA was a good start, but as this work outlined, more needs to be done. Much is still being developed. The analytic transformation that occurred in these last years, and involved processes, programs, tools and training, is impressive. Some issues remain and they need to be addressed. However, better education of the policymakers may be the key to addressing both the persistent challenges and the unintended consequences of the reform.

Notes

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⁷ J. MCLAUGHLIN, *Serving the National Policymaker*, in *Analyzing Intelligence: Origins, Obstacles, and Innovations*, ed. Roger George and James Bruce, Georgetown Press, 2008, p. 75.

⁸ The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) each had information that would have helped the other, but they did not share on time.

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¹⁰ P. PILLAR, *Think Again: Intelligence*, in «Foreign Policy.com», Jan/Feb 2012, <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/01/03/intelligence> (date of access: 14 November 2014).

¹¹ NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE COUNCIL, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs*, NIE, October 2002, 1-2, <https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq_wmd/Iraq_Oct_2002.pdf> (date of access: 14 November 2014).

¹² Bruce, *The Missing Link*, p. 202.

¹³ M. LOWENTHAL, *Intelligence in Transition: Analysis after September 11 and Iraq*, in *Analyzing Intelligence: Origins, Obstacles, and Innovations*, ed. R.Z. George and J.B. Bruce, Georgetown Press, 2008, p. 228.

¹⁴ P. PILLAR, *Intelligence, Policy, and the War in Iraq*, in «Foreign Affairs» Vol. 85, No. 2 (Mar/Apr 2006), p. 20.

¹⁵ *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004*, Public Law 108-458-Dec. 17, 2004, <http://www.intelligence.senate.gov/laws/pl108-458.pdf> (date of access: 14 November 2014).

¹⁶ *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004*.

¹⁷ M. LOWENTHAL, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 5th edition, SAGE/CQ Press 2012, pp. 336-337.

¹⁸ P. NEARY, *Intelligence Reform, 2001-2009: Requiescat in Pace? Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 54, no. 1 (March 2010), p. 3. Available online at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/volume-54-number-1/PDFs-Vol.-54-No.1/U-%20Studies%2054no1-IntelReform2001-2009-Web.pdf> (date of access: 14 November 2014).

¹⁹ Neary, *Intelligence Reform, 2001-2009*, p. 3.

²⁰ Neary, *Intelligence Reform, 2001-2009*, p. 6.

²¹ Fingar, *Reducing Uncertainty*, p. 127.

²² In-depth phone interview held by the author with Thomas Fingar, March 10, 2014.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Intelligence Community Directive Number 203 – Analytic Standards,* June 21, 2007, <http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICD/ICD%20203%20Analytic%20Standards%20pdf-unclassified.pdf> (date of access: 14 November 2014).

²⁵ Lieberthal, *The U.S. Intelligence Community and Foreign Policy*, p. 3.

[26] In-depth in-person interview held by the author with Peter Clement, February 19, 2014.

[27] G. TREVERTON, *Intelligence Analysis: Between Politicization and Irrelevance*, in *Analyzing Intelligence: Origins, Obstacles, and Innovations*, ed. Roger Z. George and James B. Bruce, Georgetown Press, 2008, p. 98.

[28] A-Space was also designed to help analysts to quickly get answers to rapid questions, such as 'what is the meaning of this sentence in farsi?'

[29] Lieberthal, *The U.S. Intelligence Community and Foreign Policy*, pp. 4-5.

[30] Neary, *Intelligence Reform, 2001-2009*, p. 9.

[31] Bruce, *The Missing Link*, pp. 203-206.

[32] Keynote Address by Thomas Fingar, INSA Analytic Transformation Conference, September 4, 2008.

[33] In-depth phone interview held by the author with Casimir Yost, February 26, 2014.

[34] Lieberthal, *The U.S. Intelligence Community and Foreign Policy*, p. 5.

[35] Fingar, *Reducing Uncertainty*, p. 128.

[36] In-depth interview with Thomas Fingar, March 10, 2014.

[37] Lieberthal, *The U.S. Intelligence Community and Foreign Policy*, p. 54.

[38] Lieberthal, *The U.S. Intelligence Community and Foreign Policy*, pp. 9-11.

[39] Lieberthal, *The U.S. Intelligence Community and Foreign Policy*, pp. 11-12 and 15.

[40] Lieberthal, *The U.S. Intelligence Community and Foreign Policy*, pp. 12-16.

[41] In-depth interview with Casimir Yost, February 26, 2014.

[42] Lieberthal, *The U.S. Intelligence Community and Foreign Policy*, p. 18.

[43] Lieberthal, *The U.S. Intelligence Community and Foreign Policy*, p. 18.

[44] Lowenthal, *Intelligence in Transition*, p. 233.

[45] D. WILDER, *An Educated Consumer Is Our Best Customer*, in «Studies in Intelligence», Vol. 55, No. 2 (June 2011), pp. 23-24. Available online at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol.-55-no.-2/pdfs-vol.-55-no.-2/Wilder-TheEducatedConsumer-7June2011.pdf> (date of access: 14 November 2014).

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[48] Wilder, *An Educated Consumer Is Our Best Customer*, p. 26.

[49] *The National Intelligence Strategy of the United States of America*, August 2009, p. 2, <http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Reports%20and%20Pubs/2009_NIS.pdf> (date of access: 14 November 2014).

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