

# **Homeland Security and the Analysis of Foreign Intelligence**

Markle Foundation Task Force on National Security  
In the Information Age

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15 July 2002

Intelligence analysts protect Homeland Security from terrorist attacks by providing decisionmakers with information acquired overseas that allows them to prevent, deter, disrupt, or destroy the terrorist threat. According to Mark Kauppi – the program manager for the Intelligence Community’s Counterterrorism Training Program--“counterterrorism intelligence analysis aims to improve our understanding of terrorist activities (what they do), their motivation (why they do what they do), and organizational associations (how they are organized to carry out their activities). The goal in terms of intelligence products ... is to, at a minimum: improve threat awareness of consumers, facilitate the disruption or destruction of terrorist organizations and their activities, (and) provide timely warning and accurate forecasting.”<sup>2</sup>

### **CIA’s Counterterrorism Center**

Most national level counterterrorism intelligence analysts are based in the Counterterrorism Center (CTC) located at CIA.<sup>3</sup> CTC was created in 1986 so personnel from different government agencies could work together “to collect intelligence on, and minimize the capabilities of, international terrorist groups and state sponsors.”<sup>4</sup> Fifteen organizations are represented in CTC, including the CIA, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Secret Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Immigration and Naturalization Service, National Security Agency, State Diplomatic Security, Federal Aviation Administration, Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and Department of Energy.<sup>5</sup> CTC facilitates intra-governmental communication, cooperation and coordination primarily through the creation of personal relationships that bridge organizational seams between collection, analysis, and policymaking institutions.

CTC combines the activities of both foreign intelligence and domestic law enforcement agencies, but information sharing between them is difficult. Information sharing is necessary because terrorists cross national boundaries in planning and implementing their attacks. However, while domestic security agencies are restricted in what intelligence and information they can collect and how they can use it, foreign intelligence agencies face no such restrictions when investigating non-US citizens abroad. The varied collection authorities leads foreign and domestic agencies to collect different kinds of information and to classify it at different levels, resulting in complications reconciling the exchange and sharing of information.

CTC was established to circumvent the tendency of intelligence agencies to “stovepipe” information vertically through their institutions before disseminating the information laterally throughout the intelligence and policy communities. In addition, agencies often fail to circulate information because it does not meet a perceived threshold of importance. CTC provides the venue for personnel from different agencies to work together and use all the information resources available in different institutions to address terrorism issues.

CTC also uses modern technology to dissolve stovepipes and facilitate governmental learning. The Intelligence Community has used its technological capabilities to enable collaboration on other issues, including the Mexico Pilot Project--an “experimental network that links Mexico watchers from the intelligence, policy, and nongovernment

(academics and business) communities into a Secret-level network”--and Iranlink.<sup>6</sup> In CTC, “information is ...exchanged between agencies via several telecommunications systems that have dramatically decreased the lag time experienced between the receipt of terrorist threat information and the dissemination of that information to Federal, state, and local intelligence/law enforcement agencies.”<sup>7</sup>

Technological collaboration, however, can be obstructed by organizational and personal impediments. An Intelligence Community Collaboration Baseline Study observed that “business processes and organizational culture ultimately determine the effectiveness of (interagency) collaboration.” The report highlighted impediments to collaboration such as “a cultural tradition inconsistent with information sharing; lack of common goals for collaboration across the community; lack of trust in organizations, individuals and systems; lack of perceived mutual benefit to participate in collaboration efforts; and inadequate reward systems to support collaboration.”<sup>8</sup>

CTC is able to bridge these individual and organizational barriers by facilitating the creation of personal relationships between individuals from different organizations within the intelligence and policy communities. According to a CIA report, “the exchange of personnel among agencies has been key to the flow of critical information between agencies and has strengthened the overall US Government counterterrorism capability.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Leveraging Intelligence Community Capabilities**

CTC strengthens the government’s counterterrorism capabilities by leveraging the capabilities of the thirteen individual Intelligence Community (IC) agencies and departments. The National Security Act of 1947 created the CIA and charged it with “coordinating the nation's intelligence activities and correlating, evaluating, and disseminating intelligence which affects national security.”<sup>10</sup> But it did so without providing an exact definition for “national security.” This has resulted in both ambiguity and leeway in assigning responsibilities for collecting and disseminating information about foreign threats. Current questions about “who should do what” are just the latest case of an issue U.S. officials have had to address throughout the IC’s history.

The Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) coordinates the operations of the IC, but has never had complete control of them. He is “the primary adviser to the President and the National Security Council on national foreign intelligence matters. ... (and is) simultaneously Director of the CIA and the leader of the Intelligence Community, of which CIA is but one component.”<sup>11</sup> The DCI coordinates the workings of the IC through the Community Management Staff (CMS), which establishes priorities and prepares the National Foreign Intelligence Program (NFIP) budget for submission to Congress.<sup>1213</sup> However, the control of the DCI is limited by the following factors:

- The Defense Department’s budget contains almost all NFIP funding, effectively giving it significant clout over the total amount of funds available for the NFIP.<sup>14</sup>
- About half of all intelligence programs – those that support military operations--are funded completely outside the NFIP.

- The DCI controls the CIA but has limited control over the day-to-day operations of other organizations which are staffed by military personnel and other people not under the DCI's chain of command.

The members of the Intelligence Community include:<sup>15</sup>

- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA): Under the Bush administration, the CIA has had greater access to the President, Vice-President, Cabinet and National Security Council. CIA collects human intelligence – or HUMINT--through its Directorate of Operations case officers who recruit foreign nationals to provide information for the US government. CIA's Directorate of Intelligence produces all-source intelligence analysis covering the full range of intelligence disciplines – political, military, and economic – to support the foreign policy and national security information needs of its consumers throughout the executive branch.
- Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA): DIA supports the intelligence needs of the nation's military leaders. It collects HUMINT both overtly through its Defense Attaches who are based overseas in embassies, and clandestinely through its Defense HUMINT Service.<sup>16</sup> DIA also centralizes the IC's focus on measurement and signature intelligence – or MASINT – which includes the use of nuclear, optical, radio frequency, acoustics, seismic, and materials sciences to locate, identify, or describe certain kinds of targets.<sup>17</sup> DIA's all-source intelligence analysts specialize in “targeting and battle damage assessment, weapons proliferation, warning of impending crises, support to peacekeeping operations, maintenance of data bases on foreign military organizations and their equipment and, as necessary, support to UN operations and US allies.”
- The intelligence components of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines: These organizations provide intelligence tailored to the needs of the individual services. The Air Force intelligence component “operates worldwide ground sites and an array of airborne reconnaissance and surveillance platforms such as the U-2, the RC-135, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to meet national-level intelligence requirements.” In addition, the Office of Naval Intelligence operates ocean surveillance systems and “is the national production center for global maritime intelligence.” Each service's intelligence component provides intelligence to its own operators, specializing in the capabilities of opposing force weaponry and the effectiveness of their tactics.
- National Reconnaissance Office (NRO): The NRO researches, develops, acquires, and operates the nation's intelligence satellites.
- National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA): NIMA processes and interprets imagery intelligence acquired from the NRO and produces imagery intelligence (IMINT) and other “geospatial information in support of military, national-level, and civil users.”
- National Security Agency (NSA): NSA intercepts, deciphers, and translated foreign communications – activities collectively known as “signals intelligence” or SIGINT.
- Intelligence units within the State, Treasury, and Energy Departments: These organizations create intelligence products tailored to the informational requirements of their respective departments. They also provide intelligence to

other consumers, drawing on their areas of expertise; diplomacy and visas in the case of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research; international finance in the case of Treasury; and nuclear weapons design and proliferation in the case of Energy.

- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI): The FBI's principle responsibilities coordinated with the NFIP concern counterintelligence. Most of its functions concerning law enforcement--including liaison with foreign law enforcement agencies--occur outside the NFIP.

The Intelligence Community provides many different kinds of finished intelligence analysis in formats driven by the needs of its varied consumers. According to the CIA's website, "analysis may be delivered as written reports, oral briefings, or other forms tailored to the needs of the intelligence consumer, including maps, charts, photographs, or models."<sup>18</sup> When time is of the essence, phone calls -- albeit by secure phone--are also effective means to relay information. The written products remain the primary vehicles for finished intelligence, however, and according to a CIA publication are organized into four categories:<sup>19</sup>

- *Current Intelligence* "addresses day-to-day events, seeking to apprise consumers of new developments and related background, to assess their significance, to warn of their near-term consequences, and to signal potentially dangerous situations in the near future."
- *Research Intelligence* is more in-depth than current intelligence and can be used to support specific operations or decisions, or address a new development in greater detail. Research intelligence can also provide a "structured compilation of geographic, demographic, social, military, and political data on foreign countries," known as "basic intelligence."
- *Estimative Intelligence* "deals with what might be or what might happen. ... (It) starts with the available facts, but then it migrates into the unknown, even the unknowable. The main roles of estimative intelligence are to help policymakers navigate the gaps between available facts by suggesting alternative patterns into which those facts might fit and to provide informed assessments of the range and likelihood of possible outcomes." Estimative intelligence can appear in current intelligence or research intelligence, but is highlighted in National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs). NIEs are produced by the entire IC through a complicated coordination process managed by the senior intelligence experts who make up the National Intelligence Council (NIC).
- *Warning Intelligence* is a subset of estimative intelligence focusing on "developments that could have sudden and deleterious effects in US security or policy" such as "impending crises" or "long-term dangers."<sup>20</sup> Counterterrorism intelligence analysis contains a large warning component. Operations centers scattered throughout the IC monitor incoming cable traffic and "provide (IC) leadership with 24-hour-a-day alert and warning of global events affecting US interests and helps ensure the accuracy of current intelligence for White House level decisionmakers."<sup>21</sup> Warning intelligence can be provided through regular current and research intelligence and a number of IC "products specifically devoted to warning."<sup>22</sup>

CTC produces all four kinds of intelligence products, but its analytic practices are heavily influenced by its institutional context; in this case the CIA. CTC is technically an IC entity operating under the auspices of the DCI, but its analytic processes are colored by those of the CIA where it resides and from which it draws the majority of personnel:

- In 1996, a House Intelligence committee staff study noted that CTC has “a distinct “CIA” identity. (It is) predominantly staffed by CIA employees, and (is) dependent upon the CIA for administrative support and funding – often competing with other CIA programs for resources. This fact has made it difficult for (CTC) to be accepted” as a Community entity.<sup>23</sup>
- In May 2002, DCI George Tenet reported that CTC has 52 detailees on loan from other organizations.<sup>24</sup> This contribution from other institutions compares to CTC’s total staff of 1,000 personnel, according to press reporting.<sup>25</sup>

### **CIA’s Analytic Practices**

CTC’s analysts conform to CIA’s analytic and personnel practices. All-source analysts require “years of rigorous education and on-the-job experience” to be effective, according to senior IC officers.<sup>26</sup> CIA’s qualifications for new counterterrorism analysts include a master’s degree or PhD in foreign area studies, international affairs, or national security; excellent analytical, written, and oral communication skills; strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work under tight deadlines; a minimum 3.2 GPA; and preferably foreign language proficiency and foreign area knowledge through study, travel, or work abroad.”<sup>27</sup> In addition, once hired “analysts are encouraged to maintain and broaden their professional ties through academic study, contacts, and attendance at professional meetings.”

A CIA analyst’s area of responsibility and expertise is defined by his or her account. Each analyst has a specialty – also known as “discipline” or “occupation” – most frequently in political, military, economic, or leadership analysis.<sup>28</sup> Most DI analysts are organized into multidisciplinary teams and work in one of three regional offices; the Office of Russian and European Analysis, the Office of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Analysis, and the Office of Asian, Pacific and Latin American Analysis. An analyst’s account is the combination of geographic area of responsibility and discipline, for example “Iraqi leadership analyst” or “Russian political analyst.” Depending on the importance of the country and the number of analysts, some teams are further divided into smaller categories and as a result a Russian political analyst could be assigned to assess only Russia’s foreign policies towards Asia. A fourth office – the Office of Transnational Issues – is organized according to “issues that transcend regional and national boundaries” such as refugee flows or the illicit arms trade, and as a result have more idiosyncratic if similarly miniscule accounts.<sup>29</sup>

One consequence of CIA’s organization is that analysts can be spread quite thin and have minimal backup from others on their team. While there is some overlap of accounts, it is possible for intelligence data to be overlooked if the responsible analyst is out of the office or otherwise occupied.

### ***Monitoring Incoming Intelligence***

The work process for the typical CIA analyst is to continuously monitor his or her account for incoming information. Keeping up with the workload is a continuing challenge, and many analysts can be found in their cubicles reading or writing, sometimes even on weekends. The bulk of an intelligence analyst's source material comes from a variety of information systems available at his or her desk:

- CIRAS – or the Corporate Information Retrieval and Storage system – is an exclusively text-based electronic cable processing system that “consolidates the diverse cable and all-source traffic into a (single) ...system built on commercially available software.”<sup>30</sup> It contains most disseminated information and processed intelligence from the State Department, defense attaches, NSA, NIMA, and the CIA's Directorate of Operations, and has “search engines to help ... analysts isolate, prioritize, and organize the information.” However, it is a text-based system that does not have the same capabilities of the Internet. Documents cannot be linked to each other, and neither pre-processed raw imagery nor intercepts can be accessed. Nonetheless, CIRAS remains the primary source of information because of its strengths as the single source for community-wide data.
- Intelink – described as the Intelligence Community's classified worldwide intranet<sup>31</sup>--is for most CIA analysts a multimedia supplement to CIRAS. It is based on the same technology of the Internet, and can provide links to related documents and raw imagery. Published reports suggest Intelink has received greater use since September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001.<sup>32</sup>
- In 1998, the CIA's “Internet to the Desktop Program” “provided high-speed Internet access to every analyst as well as access to a variety of analytic tools.”<sup>33</sup>

Analysts supplement these three sources of information by keeping in contact with their counterparts throughout the Intelligence Community. The federal government acquires more information than is disseminated in formal channels, and experienced analysts develop their own informal networks to exploit this base of undocumented information. Many also maintain contacts in academia, although these are constrained by security rules. Contact with the media and, in most cases, congressional staff, is prohibited except when authorized and monitored by Agency representatives.

Informal contact between collectors and analysts at the working level facilitates analysis in cases in which the formal production process may be too slow. As one analyst has observed, “my close ties to counterparts at NSA and DIA--and the resulting collaboration--have repeatedly resulted in better collection, better products, less duplication, and less conflict over coordination.”<sup>34</sup> However, these informal relationships can be difficult to create and sustain due to high rates of turnover in all agencies and difficulty acquiring phone numbers when phone lists are banned for security purposes.

The volume of information contained within both formal and informal channels cannot be exaggerated, and may explain why CIA's accounts are defined so narrowly. In order to ensure that analysts read all relevant information, the CIA may have to divide its workforce into smaller and smaller pieces as more and more information becomes available. According to Mark Kauppi, information overload is also a problem for

counterterrorist analysts: “there is too much intelligence. A veritable flood comes in each day as message traffic, and then there is the vast amount of finished intelligence products available through government intranets. An analyst could easily spend all day doing nothing but reading intelligence and not actually producing anything. But being an analyst, by definition, requires an effort to make sense of the pieces of the terrorist puzzle and provide value-added analysis.”<sup>35</sup>

### ***Analyzing Intelligence Information***

The actual cognitive processes required to produce intelligence analysis are not very well understood despite the half-century or more in which intelligence analysis has been practiced. Historically, intelligence analysis has been more of a trade informed by past practice than a profession with established standards and qualifications. Today a number of different “how to” guides exist for producing intelligence analysis, and their existence is at least partially attributable to CIA’s progress in understanding and improving the analytic process:

- In the mid-1990s, CIA focused attention on analytic tradecraft and produced a series of notes – accessible on CIA’s website--“which elaborate on some of the skills and methods used by DI intelligence analysts” such as addressing US interests in DI assessments, access and credibility to policymakers, articulation of assumptions, use of facts and sourcing, and effective use of unique intelligence.<sup>36</sup>
- In 1999, CIA’s Center for the Study of Intelligence published a book by Richards Heuer entitled *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, which – according to former head of the DI Douglas MacEachin – “makes clear that the pitfalls the human mental process sets for analysts cannot be eliminated; they are part of us. What can be done is to train people how to look for and recognize these mental obstacles, and how to develop procedures designed to offset them.”<sup>37</sup>
- In May 2002, CIA’s Sherman Kent Center – affiliated with the school that trains DI analysts--held a conference devoted to “Understanding and Teaching Intelligence Analysis.” Conference attendees included representatives from national security institutions, law enforcement agencies, and private industry who gathered with the express purpose to “enhance their understanding of the different goals and common approaches within the profession, identify core competencies–aptitudes, attitudes, skills—for professional analysts, examine the challenges facing the profession now and in the years to come, and explore ways to meet those challenges.”<sup>38</sup>

Most writers who focus on analytic tradecraft – whether they realize it or not – portray the intelligence analysis process as a version of the scientific method. Accordingly, most recommendations for improving intelligence analysis are akin to the lessons taught in graduate-level methodology courses; use good data, prevent bias, test hypotheses through a competitive process, and so on. Analysts tend to have a two-step analytic approach. They use intuitive “pattern and trend analysis” – consisting of the identification of repeated behavior over time and increases or decreases in that behavior – to uncover changes in some aspect of international behavior that could have national security implications.<sup>39</sup> Once patterns are detected, they rely on ad hoc rules derived from study in

relevant theory – for example, economics, political science, or psychology – to determine the significance of the pattern.

Technological tools can help analysts weed through data and discover patterns, but CIA analysts have tended to resist incorporating new analytic tools and techniques into their work processes:

- In 2002, Stanley Feder – a former CIA analyst and methodologist – argued that the use of a specific analytic model produced more precise forecasts than conventional intelligence analysis without sacrificing accuracy, yet “despite the advantages of (the models) the vast majority of analysts do not use them.”<sup>40</sup> Feder speculates that the models are not used because “this kind of systematic analysis does not fit into an organizational culture that sees an “analyst” as someone who writes reports, often evaluating and summarizing available information. In contrast, people who use models and quantitative techniques are considered “methodologists.”
- According to Boston University Professor – and 35-year intelligence veteran – Arthur Hulnick, “methodologists discovered that their new techniques were unpopular with analysts because they had no time to absorb these systems in the face of tight deadlines.”<sup>41</sup>
- Richards Heuer – the former head of CIA’s Methods and Forecasting Division – observed that “the initial attitude of country analysts toward our unconventional proposals typically ranged from skepticism to hostility. Equally typical, however, has been their post-project appraisal that the work was interesting and well worth doing.”<sup>42</sup>

In addition, while only substantive expertise can assist analysts in deriving the implications from the patterns they uncover, some critics have commented that they lack sufficient depth in their assigned areas:

- Former CIA Inspector General Frederick Hitz once observed that the agency’s “analysts have tended to be 18-month wonders who hopscotch from subject to subject without developing any broad, long-term expertise in any one area” and as a result “are ill-equipped to grapple with the information that arrives on their desks.”<sup>43</sup> He went on to suggest “analysts ... make a career of their functional or geographic specialty so that the daily flows of information are added to an already solid base of knowledge.”
- In 1996, the Brown Commission observed that “while there are senior analysts in the Intelligence Community who are nationally known experts in their respective fields, they are the exception rather than the rule.”<sup>44</sup>

The CIA has instituted several programs intended to increase the expertise of its analysts, but the quality and accuracy of finished intelligence could be further improved through the incorporation of new tools and techniques. However, this will require understanding the current DI culture and analytic practices and either working with them or changing them.

### ***Producing Finished Intelligence***

The daily routine of an intelligence analyst is to track incoming information, look for changes that would be relevant for a policymaker, and continue researching for ongoing intelligence reports or other longer-term projects. When an incident occurs that meets the threshold of current intelligence, the analyst has only a couple of hours to do background research, come to a conclusion regarding the implications of the incident for American interests, and convert this information and analysis into acceptable language for publication.

CIA analysts use a “DI Writing Style” designed to emphasize precision and clarity while removing idiosyncratic phrases and the personality of the writer so that it becomes a “corporate” product. Analysts are also taught to focus on the “what” and the “so what,” or the facts and their implications, including for American policy. In addition, analysts are taught to present conclusions first with supporting data after so that a busy reader will grasp the importance of the event without much effort diving into the details. The end product is an intelligence report that is clear and to the point, but lacking color or personality.

Current intelligence production is the least analytical because time constraints do not permit so-called “analytic tradecraft” to be applied.<sup>45</sup> The analytic process itself “includes integrating, evaluating, and analyzing all available data--which is often fragmentary and even contradictory--... into a coherent whole, put(ing) the evaluated information in context, and produc(ing) finished intelligence that includes assessments of events and judgments about the implications of the information for the United States.”<sup>46</sup> Short deadlines require analysts apply short-cuts, and as a result most current intelligence analysis is based more on informed intuition than structured or rigorous methods. After the piece is drafted it then undergoes coordination, which entails review by other analysts with related geographic knowledge but different disciplinary perspectives. In this way the niche knowledge of the single analyst can be broadened, mistakes corrected, and context from other disciplines brought to bear.<sup>47</sup> Finally, the piece of written intelligence undergoes multiple layers of managerial review before being sent to the editors of the daily current intelligence publications. The production process for research intelligence takes longer, but is also usually more intuitive than rigorous.

CIA analysts produce a variety of finished intelligence products:

- Current Intelligence includes the President’s Daily Brief (PDB), the Senior Executive Intelligence Brief (SEIB), and the Economic Executives’ Intelligence Brief (EEIB), according to the CIA’s website.<sup>48</sup> The PDB is geared exclusively to the interests of the President, and is distributed to only a handful of other officials. The SEIB – formerly the National Intelligence Daily--is both less sensitive and more broadly distributed than the PDB, but with a similar focus on breaking issues. The EEIB “takes a multidisciplinary look at the issues on economic officials’ agendas, including foreign trade practices, illicit finance, and international energy developments.” Analysts in the respective DI offices write the current intelligence pieces which are assembled by a separate office--the DI’s

Office of Policy Support--into the daily publications and delivered by briefers “to the most senior US policymakers,” according to the CIA’s website.

- Research Intelligence includes “Intelligence Reports” which offer longer treatments of intelligence issues and fill policymaker needs for “basic research and information, responses to specific questions, situation reports, and briefing books.”<sup>49</sup> The DI “also produces classified serial publications and situation reports to address more specialized topics on key countries.”<sup>50</sup> The regional offices produce regional reviews, and the Intelligence Community Centers produce publications relevant to their focus. For example, CTC produces “The Terrorism Review” monthly which “addresses current trends in international terrorism activity and methods.” Finally, the DI “publishes on a periodic basis a limited number of reference aids, which provide basic information drawn from publicly available sources on individual countries and issues” including the “World Factbook.”<sup>51</sup>

### ***Disseminating Finished Intelligence***

Intelligence analysts provide targeted intelligence when the needs of the policymaker are known, but policymakers frequently fail to keep analysts informed of policy initiatives or alternatives being considered in the policymaking process.<sup>52</sup> No formal mechanism or communications channel has enabled analysts to gain insight into the American policymaking process. Instead, most intelligence analysts acquire their information through informal channels and personal rapport with specific policymakers or their staffs. However, the physical separation between analyst and policymaker impedes the creation of these personal relationships.<sup>53</sup> Secure electronic communications can help maintain relationships once initiated, but does not help to make initial contacts. Also, DI analysts tend to be introverts and are hesitant to initiate personal contacts. Technology can facilitate the communication process, but if personal relationships are necessary then changes in the DI’s culture and interaction with intelligence consumers will be necessary.

The Intelligence Community has instituted a number of structural and procedural changes – and intelligence authors have suggested even more--to decrease the distance between analysts and policymakers. The IC is already assigning a small number of senior analysts to policymaker staffs, detailing analysts to help with a particular issue such as a treaty negotiation, and providing analytic “liaisons” to entire institutions to serve as focal points for intelligence support.<sup>54</sup> However, some observers have made further recommendations. These include:

- “Encourag(ing analysts) to get out of their offices, know their customers, and “sell” their products. To promote the new approach, intelligence officials could make serving a stint among consumers a prerequisite for promotion, or agencies could offer bonuses to those analysts who take on such assignments.”<sup>55</sup>
- “Put an analytic office in downtown Washington.”<sup>56</sup>
- Split the DI into two parts by supplementing the traditional DI with “a much smaller suprastructure” composed of analysts “sensitive to the decisionmakers’ particular wants and needs” and dedicated to providing policymakers with intelligence that is relevant to their interests.<sup>57</sup>

- Disperse the CIA's analytic components "to the State, Treasury and Commerce departments and elsewhere across official Washington" so that "policy-makers would be better served by intelligence brokers close at hand."<sup>58</sup>

All of these recommendations entail greater risk of politicization, or the shaping of the analysis for political purposes, but most intelligence observers believe the benefits of a closer relationship between analyst and policymaker is worth the risk. As the Brown Commission Report observed in its 1996 study: "the greater danger lies not in becoming "politicized" but in becoming irrelevant to the process of government."<sup>59</sup>

### **CTC's Counterterrorism Analysis**

CTC's analytic practices are similar to those of the DI but entail a greater degree of support to operational missions. CTC's mission includes "a comprehensive counterterrorist operations program to collect intelligence on, and minimize the capabilities of, international terrorist groups and state sponsors" as well as the exploitation of "all-source intelligence to produce in-depth analyses of the groups and states responsible for international terrorism."<sup>60</sup> To fulfill this dual mission, CTC analysts provide both strategic analysis to national level policymakers and operational analysis for intelligence collectors, law enforcement professionals, and military responders.

#### ***Working in a Fusion Center***

CTC analysts work in an environment in which operations dominate. Structurally, CTC is an Intelligence Community body located in CIA's Directorate of Operations due to the importance of HUMINT in ascertaining terrorist intentions. In 1996, a House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence staff study said CTC was intended to be a shared IC resource with substantial representation of staff from elsewhere in the IC, but this did not occur.<sup>61</sup> Instead, as the report noted, CTC became mostly a CIA institution reprising a partnership between its DI and its DO "into which a Community partnership is inserted."

CTC's organizational structure provides an opportunity for CIA's two directorates to work closely together; something they rarely do. According to a former CIA analyst, "analysts and operations officers have long been separated bureaucratically and culturally within the agency."<sup>62</sup> Due to its desire to protect sources and methods, the DO is highly wary of sharing its information with other organizations, and at times even with analysts within its own organization. The DI, in contrast, contributes to the nation's security by widely distributing information to those who might be able to use it. If the DO is closely involved in an intelligence issue, the conservative "need to know" principle dominates and limits an analyst's ability to "publish" intelligence.

CTC analysts also interact with other IC members including the FBI. The relationship between the CIA and FBI has been portrayed as a partnership variously described as either cooperative or dysfunctional, but for CTC analysts the FBI is more a customer of intelligence on issues that overlap foreign and domestic coverage than a partner in its production.<sup>63,64</sup> DCI John Deutch once said that "we look at the FBI as being an important customer for foreign intelligence... because of [its] law enforcement responsibilities."<sup>65</sup> CTC analysts also provide intelligence support to the FBI's presence

overseas which has increased in recent years due to a “1995 ...Presidential directive (which gave) the F.B.I. the lead authority both in investigating and in preventing acts of terrorism wherever Americans or American interests were threatened.”<sup>66</sup>

### ***Increasing Analytic Expertise***

CTC has made improvements in its ability to acquire and retain analytic expertise. Until the late 1990s, all CTC employees – including CIA analysts – were detailees on short rotations to the center. A common perception in government is that rotations slow promotions, and in 1995, a CIA Inspector General study found that the DO was promoting its officers detailed to CTC at a lower rate than others, indicating either that there was a bias against them or that they were sending low performers to CTC.<sup>67</sup> In the late 1990s, CTC created a separate career track for its employees, enabling it to attract higher-caliber officers. In addition, CIA is now hiring analysts specializing in counterterrorism;<sup>68</sup> something they did not do even five years ago. As a result, CTC’s analytic expertise should be increasing.

### ***Analyzing Intelligence Information***

CTC’s analytic processes and products are very similar to those of DI analysts in general. CTC relies on CIA’s information systems and accesses the same sources of data. Even though CTC analysts have greater access to DO files, Mark Kauppi recommends that new counterterrorism analysts start their research with open source information because while “it is tempting for an analyst new to counterterrorism to immediately dive into the classified material, ... intelligence without context is not particularly useful. .. (S)uch context is often best provided by open source material. An analyst’s day is driven by the tyranny of current intelligence and the latest tasking. Academics, however, are paid to produce in-depth works on a multiplicity of topics. They have the luxury of time which members of the Intelligence Community rarely enjoy. Furthermore, academics, like journalists, are the most likely to gain direct access to terrorists. Interviews are not uncommon, and provide a window into the world of terrorist motivation.”<sup>69</sup>

Counterterrorism analysts also perform the difficult and tedious work of tracking terrorists and finding patterns among their activities. Arabic does not transliterate into English easily due to ambiguity in the representation of its sounds, and as a result the same name can have multiple spellings in varied databases. The name “Muhammed,” for example, has approximately 300 English variations.<sup>70</sup> Analysts who run name traces for terrorists need to be aware of all the spelling variants of the name, including unusual ones, if they are to be able to track a terrorist from departure point to his destination.<sup>71</sup> An additional complication comes from the frequent use of the same name, based either on the Koran or – depending on the country--a tribal group. Name traces in these circumstances are possible, but difficult.<sup>72</sup> The tedium for counterterrorism analysts comes from running multiple searches for all the different variations of the same name through multiple databases using different kinds of search engines with varied capabilities.

### ***Producing Finished Intelligence***

CTC analysts use their expertise to provide informational products to both national-level policymakers and operators:

- Strategic intelligence production “assesses the capabilities and intentions of key terrorist groups worldwide: their organization, infrastructure, leadership, support and financial networks, weapons acquisitions, capabilities, and operational intent to attack US facilities and personnel.”<sup>73</sup>
- Operational intelligence for offensive purposes includes information that will assist operators to “exploit vulnerabilities within terrorist groups, weaken terrorist groups’ infrastructures so that they will be unable to carry out plans, work closely with friendly foreign security and intelligence services around the world, ...and pursue major terrorists overseas and help the FBI render them to justice.”<sup>74</sup> According to Mark Kauppi, “analysts also provide an important service by carefully constructing detailed analyses of the structure of terrorist organizations that can assist operators and foreign security services in the dismantling of terrorist networks.”<sup>75</sup> He observes that neutralizing terrorists before they implement their plans avoids the difficulties of “predict(ing) when, where, and how terrorists will strike.”
- Operational intelligence can also have defensive purposes such as force protection. CTC analysts provide military consumers with intelligence related to the security of military facilities and personnel because “US military personnel overseas have long been prime targets of terrorists. CTC contributes to protecting US military forces overseas by: determining the modus operandi of terrorist groups that may operate in the vicinity of US military units overseas, ensuring that military components overseas that need the information about terrorist groups receive it quickly and in usable form, and maintaining direct contact with military intelligence units at all the major commands.”<sup>76</sup>

CTC analysts also produce warning intelligence which--according to Mark Kauppi--is “the number one job of the counterterrorism analyst.”<sup>77</sup> He goes on to describe three levels of warning:

- Tactical warning: Indicates an attack may come within hours or days.
- Operational warning: Indicates threats within several weeks or months.
- Strategic warning: Warns of threats from six months to several years out.

CTC fulfills its warning function by “immediately disseminat(ing) information that warns of an impending terrorist operation to those who can counter the threat,” according to the DCI’s website.<sup>78</sup> While “strategic level warning in terms of terrorist trends has generally been quite good,” according to Kauppi, policymakers and commanders primarily “want ... tactical level warning: Who is going to hit what target, when, where, how, and why? ... Consumers want timely threat warnings that allow terrorist operations to be deterred, preempted, or disrupted.”<sup>79</sup> CTC facilitates the provision of tactical warning by enabling information to flow freely and with greater speed between collectors, analysts, policymakers, and operators.

## Protecting Homeland Security

Change is a constant in the intelligence analysis profession. Technologies change, organizational structures change, and procedures change. Yet the importance of personal relationships is a constant in the production of finished intelligence. In order to access informal knowledge from collectors throughout the Intelligence Community, benefit from the comments of analytic counterparts, and produce analysis relevant to policymakers, personal relationships are crucial. CTC enables the creation and maintenance of personal relationships, and in so doing leverages the capabilities of the entire Intelligence Community to protect Homeland Security.

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<sup>2</sup> Kauppi, Mark. Counterterrorism Analysis 101. *Defense Intelligence Journal*. 11-1 (Winter 2002). 39-40.

<sup>3</sup> CTC is technically an intelligence community entity operating under the auspices of the Director of Central Intelligence, but it is located at CIA and most of its personnel are CIA employees.

<sup>4</sup> CIA Website: DCI Counterterrorist Center. <http://www.odci.gov/terrorism/ctc.html>

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