

New Challenges for Intelligence

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Repeated failures on the part of American intelligence services and policy-making officials have brought into focus an array of new challenges facing the 21st century intelligence and policy-making communities. While substantial efforts are underway to reform the U.S. intelligence community to address new transnational non-state threats, the very nature of new globally networked threats demands that U.S. intelligence reforms incorporate novel ways of improving coordination and collaboration with Europe's intelligence services. This seminar presentation will focus on the key challenges to improving the means of intelligence collection, analysis, and collaboration in light of the new challenges presented by non-state actors.

Fixing intelligence to improve its prospects of furnishing useful information to policy officials will not be accomplished through the types of reforms being implemented at present in the United States. While the creation of a national director of intelligence with full budgetary authority might well increase collaboration throughout the intelligence community, it will not deal with the more prosaic but far more critical matter of intelligence effectiveness. This depends on the quality of collected intelligence, on the nature of the analytic process, and ultimately, on the relationship between intelligence and policy-making officials.

While a host of individual, institutional, and political factors can bias analysis and threat perceptions, low-quality intelligence is more susceptible to political and analytical manipulation than high-quality intelligence. Revitalization of human intelligence and improved liaison relationships between intelligence organizations of friends and allies are essential requirements in confronting non-state violence. Nevertheless, the challenge of penetrating organizations like al-Qaeda should not be underestimated, nor should the peculiar demands of maintaining quality control of source information. More and better human intelligence collectors with appropriate skills, languages, and cultural sensitivities are necessary but not sufficient to enhance the quality of collected information. Truly agile human intelligence also requires better methods of gathering information. Illustrative examples of such new approaches to collecting information will be explored. Equally important, democratic oversight of intelligence is becoming even more paramount a challenge in light of new laws permitting intrusions of civil liberties in America and Europe alike.

The chief analytic shortcoming that invites both performance errors and political manipulation of intelligence is the decidedly unscientific nature of the intelligence community's approach to analysis. Intelligence analysis for the world of transnational non-state threats needs to be very different from the traditional approach. It has to recognize complexity and variability of outcomes by using multiple alternative competing hypotheses, while making greater use of efforts to probe and manipulate

transnational actors in order to achieve a greater understanding of their structure and behavior.

One notion now under exploration within the U.S. intelligence community is the cultivation of a transnational intelligence community (TIC) to provide more comprehensive coverage and better analysis. The TIC can best be understood as a dynamic ad hoc network that shifts from issue to issue and that includes trusted (but unclassified) actors, including NGOs and academics. It also shifts the emphasis from secret intelligence to the development of adjacent communities engaged in transnational, non-secret but controlled intelligence collaboration aimed at pattern and anomaly detection, and early warning through the assembly, collation, and analysis of disparate pieces of information from the public domain.

Finally, a new challenge will be effecting a closer harmonization of intelligence and policy-making, which has compelling historical roots. Its urgency is even more imperative due to the character of today's threats—in particular, those of apocalyptic terror emanating from non-state actors.

Biography

Dennis M. Gormley joined the Monterey Institute for International Studies, Center for Nonproliferation Studies as a Senior Fellow in early 2003. During 2002, he was a Consulting Senior Fellow for Technology and Defense Policy at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. Mr. Gormley served for 20 years with Pacific-Sierra Research (PSR), where he founded PSR's Defense Policy Group. From 1989 to 1992, he directed PSR's Washington Operations staff of 140 scientists, engineers, and policy analysts in providing analytical studies and applications software to government clients and served as a member of PSR's Board of Directors. Mr. Gormley has frequently chaired or served on U.S. Department of Defense advisory committees, including chairing a 1997 Summer Study for the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy on Nuclear Weapons and the Revolution in Military Affairs. He frequently furnishes expert testimony to Congress and serves as a consultant to Sandia National Laboratories and The RAND Corporation, among others. He has also been a Visiting Scholar at the Geneva Center for Security Policy, Geneva, Switzerland and currently is an adjunct faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs. Before joining PSR in 1979, he was head of foreign intelligence at the U.S. Army's Harry Diamond Laboratories in Washington, D.C. Mr. Gormley received a BA and MA in history from the University of Connecticut in 1965 and 1966 and attended Officer Candidate School at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland, where he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps, serving on active duty from 1966 to 1969. He has published three books and authored over 100 contributions to leading journals and newspapers internationally.

