

COMMITTEE ON BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH TO IMPROVE INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

Board on Behavioral, Cognitive, and Sensory Sciences
Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education
National Research Council

Our nation's national security depends on timely, accurate, and relevant intelligence information for decision makers, including the President, the Congress, state and local authorities, and the military. To improve our nation's intelligence, the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 created the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). The Director serves as the head of the Intelligence Community and is the principal advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council for intelligence matters related to national security. ODNI coordinates the work of the intelligence community, a federation of sixteen separate agencies throughout government.

On 10 October 2007, ODNI issued a 500-day plan to transform the intelligence community and integrate their work. The core and enabling initiatives contained in the plan build upon the 11 April 2007 100-day plan designed to accelerate the execution of the National Intelligence Strategy through specific transformation initiatives. The 500-day plan "removes the barriers that degrade mission performance, creating the conditions for cross-agency collaboration by the IC's 'best and brightest' on current and emerging mission needs."¹ In part, this will be achieved through analytic transformation which strengthens analytic tradecraft across the IC and creates a collaborative environment for all analysts.

Statement of Task for the National Research Council Study

To better inform and improve the work of the IC, ODNI requested the National Research Council to convene a panel of experts to synthesize and assess the behavioral and social-science research evidence relevant (1) to critical problems of individual and group judgment and of communication by intelligence analysts and (2) to kinds of analytic processes that are employed or have potential to address these problems. To the extent the evidence warrants, the panel will recommend kinds of analytic practices that intelligence analysts should adopt or at least explore further. The panel will also recommend an agenda of further research that is needed to better understand the problems analysts face and to establish a base of evidence for current and potential solutions. Finally, the panel will identify impediments to implementing the results of such research, especially new tools, techniques, and other methods, and suggest how their implementation could be more effectively achieved.

¹ Office of the Director of National Intelligence (2007). United States Intelligence Community 500 Day Plan: Integration and Collaboration. P. 2 Online at < <http://www.dni.gov/500-day-plan.pdf>>.

Committee Membership

The Committee on Behavioral and Social Science Research to Improve Intelligence Analysis for National Security includes members with expertise in areas such as intelligence analysis, decision making, risk assessment and communication, artificial intelligence, expert systems, simulation, forecasting, psychology, cognitive science, political science, international affairs and statistics.

- ◆ **Baruch Fischhoff** Chair, Department of Social and Decision Sciences, Carnegie Mellon University
- ◆ **Hal Arkes**, Department of Psychology, Ohio State University
- ◆ **Bruce Bueno de Mesquita** Department of Politics, New York University and Hoover Institute, Stanford University
- ◆ **Thomas Fingar**, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University
- ◆ **Reid Hastie**, Department of Psychology, University of Chicago
- ◆ **Edward Kaplan**, School of Management, Yale University
- ◆ **Gary McClelland**, Department of Psychology, University of Colorado
- ◆ **Kiron Skinner**, Department of Social and Decision Sciences, Carnegie Mellon University
- ◆ **Barbara Spellman** Department of Psychology, University of Virginia
- ◆ **Amy Zegart**, School of Public Affairs, University of California at Los Angeles

Preliminary Work Plan

During phase one, the committee will meet three times over a twelve month period to gather information, hear from experts, and discuss and deliberate about the evidence. As part of the information gathering process, papers from relevant experts may be commissioned by the committee as the evidence base for deliberations and to form the basis for a collection of individually-authored papers. As an additional aspect of this information-gathering process, one workshop, corresponding with the second study committee meeting in Washington, D.C., will be held in which invited experts will address specified topics. During phase two, the committee will meet two additional times to continue deliberations and to synthesize their assessments and findings. The committee's work will culminate in the publication of a collection of individually authored papers detailing evidence supporting a separately published consensus report of the committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The collection of individually authored papers and final committee consensus report will be published in early 2011. Both products will be reviewed through the NRC institutional review process and released only after they receive formal institutional sign-off.

Staff Contact

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