

CATCHING FIELD MICE
Intelligence and Policy in the 21st Century

Address as prepared for delivery by

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During World War II, when the late Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles was Director of the Office of Strategic Services' operations in Switzerland, he came to admire the Swiss officials who inspected travelers' papers at border stations on trains bound for the Swiss interior. He noted that they paid special attention to each traveler's shoes, which the law-abiding Swiss were meticulous about clean footwear, and that dirty shoes were an indicator that the individual in those shoes might be entering the country illegally. Reflecting on this Swiss practice, Dulles offered a broader observation: "In a free society counterespionage is based on the practice most useful in hunting rabbits. Rather than look for the rabbit one posts oneself in a spot where the rabbit is likely to pass by."¹

Following the post-World War II Cypriot struggle for independence, General George Grivas, commander of the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters, would write of his British opponent Field Marshal Sir John Harding: 'He underrated his enemy on the one hand, and over weighted his forces on the other. But one does not use a tank to catch field mice – a cat will do the job better.'²

Knowing where to look for the terrorist and knowing how best to catch the terrorist are central to the shaping of an element of the partnership crucial to the survival and wellbeing of the nation in the early 21st century – the fragile, evolving partnership joining intelligence, the policy-maker, the military commander, and law enforcement in the war on terrorism. It is a partnership that goes well beyond the specifics of such acts, indeed well beyond the definition of war, to the shaping of a strategy and a plan of action to meet and to succeed in a confrontation between democracies, and in particular the democracies of the west, and those nations, and those political and religious entities, opposing western values.

The United States is entering a new era of national security. The structure shaped by the National Security Act of 1947 is being joined – joined is the correct word in these initial stages – by the structure of the Homeland Security Department approved in legislation of 2002. The national security requirements at the core of the 1947 act – the need for effective strategic warning against attack, for a government correctly shaped and harnessed to provide effective deterrence and defense in a new, nuclear era – are being augmented.

New dimensions of U.S. national security opportunities and challenges rise against the background of the strengths and frailties of the existing national security structure and processes. The United States role as sole superpower, the information age, the cyber era, the global economy, new political structures challenging existing nation states, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the increasing virulence of terrorism drive our fresh look at national security structure and processes.

Late in 2002, the Joint Congressional Committee investigating the September 11, 2001 attacks issued its majority and minority reports criticizing the Intelligence Community for the role it played and recommending major amendments in the National Security Act to include the creation of a new cabinet-level Director of National Intelligence, with sweeping new authority, responsibility, and accountability.

The new era is a dynamic with an on-rush of changes both revolutionary and far more subtle to the work of intelligence: with changes going far beyond those proposed by the Congress for leadership and structure, changes in the doctrine and practice of collection, analysis, and dissemination; and changes in the mindset, the relationship, the partnership between and among intelligence and the policy-maker, intelligence and law-enforcement, and intelligence and the military commander.

Intelligence professionals understand as never before that in this new era intelligence is the air the nation breathes, that their work must be relevant, with underlined emphasis on the importance of *warning*, it must be accessible when and where needed, it must be actionable, and they must accept accountability for the intelligence provided or not provided.

Policy-makers and legislators, those who use the intelligence product and oversee the Intelligence Community, understand that they can no longer limit themselves to dismissively asking, as President Richard Nixon did in 1970, “What the hell do those clowns do out there in Langley?”³ They understand as never before that intelligence is a uniquely important player in the nation’s security, that, while by its nature it is not infallible, it delivers what no other player

can deliver, that it must be available to be assessed positive or negative, that at its best it can be the skunk at the garden party, that it must have on an uninterrupted, continuing basis the authorities, the men and women, the money and the tools – from the satellites to the emerging nanotechnologies it requires.

What are these authorities, who are these men and women, what is this ever-changing kit of scientific and technological wizardry intelligence requires?

The handling of spies, the turning of agents, and the exfiltration of agents are at the heart of intelligence operations. This is work that you should not expect to find in the Department of Labor or the Department of Education. The challenges such operations pose, the skills they require, and the stresses they place on those responsible for their conduct are uniquely challenging. People – however varied, laudable or ugly their motives – talk, they betray, they ferret out information critical to intelligence successes.

Since the terrorist attacks of 2001, the Executive Branch and the Congress have begun to act to give intelligence and the nation's law enforcement agencies the enhanced authorities needed to deal with such people. This includes enhanced surveillance authorities; it includes authorities pushing aside the 1990s' policy-level reluctance to having intelligence deal with foreigners considered criminal, considered unsavory, considered unfit for U.S. contact.

Take the case of Eddie Chapman, a British crook, a safecracker by trade. Early in World War II, when the Germans overran the Channel Islands they found him in jail there. He offered

them his services; they took him back to Germany, trained him in sabotage, and then slipped him back into England in 1942 to blow up an aircraft factory.

Chapman made contact with the British government and told them what he was about. The target factory was camouflaged so that German aerial reconnaissance would report its destruction. The British secret service sent Chapman back to Germany. He was decorated by the Germans and entered into training on the targeting of V-1 buzz bombs and V-2 rockets. He reentered England where he collaborated with his British handlers.

At the end of the war, Chapman's British prison sentences were suspended. He was dropped by the secret service and lived for several years in Algeria before returning once more to England to end his years running a health farm north of London.⁴ Chapman was a complicated individual; his handling required great attention and care, not your typical laid-back Harvard graduate.

In this new era of the war on terrorism, when information from human sources, from spies, from traitors, is of such critical importance, the voice of the late Dame Rebecca West as expressed in her book *The Meaning of Treason* provides sage advice. "Not till the Earthly Paradise is established," she wrote, "and man regains his innocence, can a power which has ever been at war be blamed if it accepts information regarding the military strength of another power, however this may be obtained; and of course it can be blamed least of all if the information comes to it from traitors, for then it is likely to touch on the truly secret."⁵

As policy looks to intelligence for information that will make the difference, information on which vital decisions will hinge, it must give the fullest possible support to clandestine operations in all their unique dimensions. This is not a business that turns on and off easily; it involves dedicated, long-term investment.

In this new era, of course, intelligence collection goes well beyond the work of spies, agents, and traitors, with collection systems operating beneath and on the seas, on land, in the air, and in space. Predator unmanned aerial vehicles, some fitted with Hellfire missiles, are flying lengthy missions at heights of some 25,000 feet providing multi-hour surveillance – I underline surveillance – of designated geography, installations and activity. Tasking to the Predator and electro-optical video and infrared images collected by its cameras move near-instantaneously – which is to say real-time – to and from the area being surveilled, the in-theater commanders at MacDill Air Force Base, and Washington. Communications and the resulting data stream flow through a network of ground stations and satellites with part of the product traveling through the secure medium of Intelink, the classified Internet counterpart.⁶

The episodic, manned U-2 photography missions of the 1950s; the periodic, evolutionary satellite missions proceeding from the 1960s have now been joined by the current generation of surveilling UAV eyes. Image collection, analysis, and decision-making that once proceeded in distinct, often lengthy sequential steps can now be the business of simultaneity. The policy-maker and the military commander increasingly press the Intelligence Community to meet this new standard whenever and wherever the demand for actionable intelligence requires.

Today, scientists and flight engineers in laboratories, in wind tunnels, here and abroad study the free-flight of butterflies and other insects analyzing the wing beats and the wing strokes producing flight – as part of research and development on future unmanned aerial vehicles no larger than insects able to surveil the interiors of buildings and other areas currently inaccessible to our aerial and space eyes.⁷ At the same time that this nation and others press ahead with work on successors to Predator and spectrum of tools of advanced surveillance and reconnaissance, we should think back to the technological response to the daunting intelligence challenge of half a century ago, to gain a sense of the level of effort that such technological advance requires.

In the Eisenhower administration, U.S. policy-makers attached urgency to acquiring hard facts about Soviet strategic and conventional military capabilities – a tall order when dealing with a closed-society target covering one-sixth of the earth’s land surface. In the mid-1950s, the United States embarked on a photographic, reconnaissance-satellite program – CORONA. The challenges were three-fold: first to build such a satellite and place it in correct orbit; second, to have it perform its photographic mission; and third, to recover the film from the camera. There would be a dozen failures, four years of tremendous effort – with Eisenhower steadfastly giving his backing – before the first successful mission in 1960, just 110 days after the downing of Francis Gary Powers’ U-2 aircraft.

The public had been led to believe that the Thor booster rockets being launched in full view from Vandenberg Air Base were part of the unclassified environmental, space-biomedical research DISCOVERER program. During the first unsuccessful CORONA missions, even when the Thors fired successfully and the satellites attained orbit, the cameras malfunctioned. “The

system was designed to operate without pressurization ... and the acetate-based film being used was tearing or breaking in the high vacuum existing in space and causing the camera to jam.”⁸

Film experts and chemists, dedicated Americans working at Eastman Kodak, revolutionized film technology – how soon will it be before we are asking ‘Do you remember the days when they had film?’ – revolutionized film technology providing CORONA with a new polyester-based film able to capture the reconnaissance quality required while withstanding the rigors of space.

With their photographic missions completed, the film capsules were designed to separate from the satellite and return to earth, deploying a parachute after atmospheric re-entry. The Air Force had the mission of recovering the film capsule by flying recovery aircraft just over the canopy bloom of the descending parachute and snagging the shrouds with a trapeze wire trailing from the aircraft. Here, the revolutionary CORONA system drew on a fresh dimension of American ingenuity and courage. Colonel Philip Rowe, one of the pilots for these flights, offered the following description.

“An array of grappling hooks and cables hung below and behind the transport to engage the parachute. Hooking the parachute without flying into the canopy or fouling the propellers in the lines required considerable flying skill and precision ... A winch equipped with hydraulic brakes stood ready to unwind almost 1,500 feet of cable in barely four seconds as the hooks engaged the parachute. Braking would slow the cable to bring the payload into steady trail behind the plane. Then ... the winch would wind the cable to draw the parachute and payload into the cargo bay. It was dangerous work for the cargo handlers ... The rapidly unwinding cable could become fouled; instant death awaited the crewman caught by that metallic snake.”⁹

The world of signals intelligence collection is confronting its own gargantuan revolution and challenge in this new era with communications moving away from radio beams through the atmosphere and stratosphere to signals, commercially encrypted, traveling millions of miles of fiber-optic cable and traveling the Internet. The information age of the Internet is also an enabler for those in the business of collecting data. There has been excitement and consternation over the news that the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA) is dedicating some \$200 million a year to the Information Awareness Office for its development of “a global computer surveillance system to give U.S. counterintelligence officials access to personal information in government and commercial data bases around the world.”¹⁰

If President Eisenhower did not waiver in providing the large amounts of money required over several years to bring CORONA into being despite so many failures, so today’s leaders, policy officials at the highest levels have, to appreciate and have to budget for the vast sums required for new generations of intelligence collection systems – at a time of stiff, competing priorities for the taxpayer’s dollar. And, today, research and development on such systems by government agencies such as DARPA is more and more the exception rather than the rule. The government now looks to industry to take the lead in such research and development. There is a new intelligence partnership between government and industry, bringing with it the requirement for new, wisely executed contracts – balancing the needs of both parties – recognizing the expense, the trials, the lead times required – enabling research and development that, in fact, brings into being the collection systems needed by intelligence for the conduct of its mission.

If spies and revolutionary new technologies are more than ever important to the gathering of intelligence in this new era, expert, timely analysis is crucial if it is to be of value to the user of intelligence, if intelligence is to be recognized as doing its work well.

In the spring of 1974, I had the privilege of being named to lead the Soviet and European staff on the National Security Council. I selected a very talented young CIA analyst to become a member of this staff, a gentleman by the name of Robert M. Gates, who would go on to be Director of Central Intelligence, and is today President of Texas A&M University. When Bob returned to CIA having served with me in the Nixon and Ford years and with Zbig Brzezinski in the Carter years, he published a very thoughtful essay in the journal *Studies in Intelligence*, a work entitled “An Opportunity Unfulfilled,” a work that has just been declassified and published in November 2002 in the Center for the Study of Intelligence’s 50th anniversary salute to CIA’s analytic arm, the Directorate for Intelligence.

Bob Gates examined the inability of CIA’s analysts to appreciate and act on the intelligence needs of the NSC staff and the White House. In a section subtitled ‘Overcoming Isolation (Ours) and Suspicion (Theirs),’ Bob wrote: “To the extent intelligence professionals isolate themselves from White House/NSC officials and are unresponsive to White House analytic needs, this adversarial nature of the relationship will be emphasized and understanding of we [the CIA] can and cannot do will be lacking. Thus, the Intelligence Community must take the initiative to establish and maintain close personal ties to the White House and NSC officials from the President on down. It must also aggressively seek new ways to get the maximum amount of analysis before the President, even while experimenting with old mechanisms such as

the PDB. White House procedures and relationships are always dynamic; accordingly, we must always be searching for new and better ways to serve our principal customer.”¹¹

Bob Gates and I are of a single mind on this issue and this intelligence challenge. We discussed it often in our days together in the Old Executive Office overlooking the White House. I currently have the pleasure of serving on the Editorial Board of *Studies in Intelligence*, and I was delighted in 2001 when CIA senior analyst Carmen Medina submitted an excellent essay entitled “What to do When Traditional Models Fail.” Medina writes that the Web and new information technologies are an incredible enabler and at the same time a fresh challenge to the intelligence analyst.

The sources of information available to today’s policy-maker, today’s policy-level consumer are far, far greater than they were in the Cold War a quarter of a century ago. It is almost a given that today’s policy-level consumer of intelligence is quite well-informed in his or her area of interest and not dependent on an analyst for a continuing stream of routine, updating information. The analyst no longer sets the pace of the information flow. The Web, the media – electronic and hard copy, U.S. and foreign – the telephone, fax, the interaction with academics, with think tanks, with U.S. and foreign colleagues in the field, and the intelligence reporting already available at the touch of the Intelink keyboard all play a part.

Today’s analyst, Ms. Medina writes, must not only have a sense of his or her consumer’s level of continuing information and knowledge. To provide value-added analysis, today’s analyst must focus more sharply on the specific needs and the timing of meeting those needs for

the policy-level consumer, seek specific tasking, analyze feedback from analysis already provided, and invite and tackle the consumer's hard questions demanding answers.¹²

When one considers the challenges of dealing with nations such as North Korea and Iraq, expert analysis of denial and deception practices is of the highest priority in the evolving work of intelligence. It is rooted in the human experience. H.L. Mencken allowed that "It is hard to believe that a man is telling the truth when you know that you would lie if you were in his place."¹³

In the 1980s, intelligence analysts came to associate S-shaped bunkers with suspect Iraqi chemical weapons storage sites. Following the Gulf War, it became clear with the destruction of chemical weapons at Khamisiyah that S-shaped bunkers were not a reliable signature. Learning from the lessons of the Gulf War continues to be of tremendous importance to the United States. To understand that S-shaped bunkers are not necessarily the storage site for chemical munitions is to ask whether the adversary will then build phony S-shaped bunkers to deceive. The intelligence professional must forever battle mindset, the mind's embrace of the status quo, the mind's reluctance to develop and examine alternative views.

At the Joint Military Intelligence College, to educate better analysts and better intelligence leaders, we have just entered into a new partnership with the Director of Central Intelligence's National Intelligence Council and are offering – starting this term – a new four course denial and deception program as part of our Master of Science of Strategic Intelligence degree and as a Director of Central Intelligence certificate program. This advanced, graduate-level work focuses on the history, the psychology, the cultural aspects; the adversaries, the

organizations, measures and countermeasures; and the tradecraft, tools, and methodologies of denial and deception.

In the war on terrorism, the analyst has a new range of challenges in serving the policy-makers and other consumers. The analyst must deal with specific signatures of terrorist organizational and operational behavior – loosely affiliated groups, small footprints, with extraordinary efforts to conceal activities, with resulting terrorism-related data often fragmentary, ambiguous and uncorroborated.¹⁴ Recall Grivas' words 'one does not use a tank to catch field mice – a cat will do the job better.' The challenge for the analyst of terrorism is compounded by the velocity of information and exponential growth of the quantity of information, as well as the uncertain quality of the data received.

In a new course on terrorism analysis introduced at my College this past November, we are providing our graduate students with an educational foundation – conceptual, methodological, and case specific – structured to broaden their professional knowledge and expertise to a point where they will be able to apply what they have learned to a broad range of evolving strategic and tactical terrorist problems. The two-term, twenty-week graduate seminar has the student develop a comprehensive analytical framework for the study of terrorism; apply this framework to the study of a terrorist group using case-study methodology; apply forecasting methodologies to identify four, possible alternative futures for the terrorist group, and – based on this analysis – critically examine existing all-source collection plans and indications and warning

indicator lists, and develop all-source collection and I&W indicator lists for the target group's four alternative futures. And, you thought that you have problems with your professors here at Harvard!

Just over a month ago, in mid-January, in an article headlined "Harvard Aims to Promote Public Service," *The New York Times* reported that Harvard University is planning to award \$14 million in scholarships to 200-to-300 graduate students over the coming three years to encourage public service and research careers.¹⁵

The article brought to mind words Woodrow Wilson chose on October 25, 1902, just over a century ago, for his inaugural address as President of Princeton University. "In planning for Princeton ... we are planning for the country. The service of institutions of learning is not private, but public. It is plain what the nation needs as its affairs grow more and more complex and its interests begin to touch the ends of the earth. It needs efficient and enlightened men. The universities of the country must take part in supplying them."¹⁶

Dr. Oettinger told me that by the time of today's session all of you would have eagerly have read my book *Clift Notes – Intelligence and the Nation's Security*. If you did have a chance at least to glance at the back cover you will know that I have written that: "Some of the past great successes in U.S. intelligence have reflected the genius and have been the labors of citizen-soldiers – men and women from across the land who have answered the call to service during times of crisis and conflict. It is important that upcoming generations continue to answer the

call, to meet the nation's complex intelligence requirements. It is vital to have the finest talent in the land.”

For those who are interested in public service, who are interested in this fascinating field of intelligence, I would note that the Joint Military Intelligence College in partnership with the Defense Intelligence Agency, offers a new, very appealing Defense Intelligence Community Scholar Program. Those graduating college seniors who apply, and who are selected for employment by DIA and selected for admission by the College – that is to say those who win the scholarships – will join the federal government as a salaried employee with all benefits, will spend the first year of their employment earning the Master of Science of Strategic Intelligence degree at the College, and with degree in hand will move on to their first professional DIA assignment. It is a splendid professional springboard in service to the nation.

Thank you.

End Notes

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3. "Opportunity Unfulfilled," Robert M. Gates, *DI 50th Anniversary Edition of Studies in Intelligence*, Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C., 2002, p. 51.
4. "Safecracker Eddie Chapman Dies: Spy for Britain in WWII," *The Washington Post*, December 17, 1997.
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12. "What to do When Traditional Models Fail," Carmen A. Medina, *Studies in Intelligence*, Volume 45, No. 4, 2001, pp. 35-40.
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15. "Harvard Aims to Promote Public Service," Karen W. Arenson, *The New York Times*, January 16, 2003.

16. *Woodrow Wilson Life and Letters – Youth-Princeton, 1856-1910*, Ray Stannard Baker, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1946, p. 141.