Intelligence and Policymaking

The Opportunity for a More Collaborative Approach

By Gary Gomez
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About the Author

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Introduction: A New Intelligence Community Paradigm for Current and Future Challenges

This paper explores the implications of a more collaborative and connected approach to intelligence analysis and policy formulation. I consider a model in which analysts and policymakers are co-located within policy offices at all levels of policymaking. The goal of this approach is to enable a better fusion of experience and knowledge to support holistic and relevant intelligence analysis and informed evidence-based foreign policy.

The current intelligence producer-consumer model imposes a firewall between the two worlds to ensure the objectivity and apolitical character of intelligence analysis. Yet decades of critical reviews of this model recommend a more synergistic and collaborative approach to the analyst–policymaker relationship. The consistency of recommendations on improving the intelligence-policy interaction reveals a need to break with the standard model and enable an evolutionary path towards more permanent associations between policy officials and intelligence analysts. This standard model, as outlined by Sherman Kent, need not be considered wrong to adjust and evolve into a new model. Indeed, such an evolution would not be possible without the intensely objective analytic ethic developed over decades by the intelligence community.

> The current intelligence-producer-consumer model imposes a firewall between the two worlds to ensure the objectivity and apolitical character of intelligence analysis. Yet decades of critical reviews of this model recommend a more synergistic and collaborative approach to the analyst–policymaker relationship.

The foundational structures and processes of U.S. intelligence community support to foreign policy development have remained fundamentally unchanged since 1947. Intelligence analysis was intentionally structured to be functionally and procedurally distinct from policy deliberations to ensure objective analysis and prevent or mitigate political influence on or distortion of analytic efforts. This separation doctrine has successfully established an ethic of objective analysis but at the cost of increasing irrelevance to the foreign policy formulation process.

The U.S. intelligence community and its well-established analytic ethos of objectivity developed over the past 75 years are likely sufficiently strong to survive any meaningful adjustments to address the realities of the current intelligence-policy dynamic and global environment.

As with any fundamental changes to long established processes and institutions, practitioner discomfort can occur. This paper will explore the opportunities and risks associated with these changes.

To evaluate the efficacy of this updated evolutionary model, this paper will reference decades of intelligence studies literature about some of the most fundamental and critical issues of the intelligence producer-consumer relationship. These include intelligence proximity to policymakers, politicization, the intelligence cycle, and the use of intelligence by policymakers.

A collaborative approach to intelligence and policymaking

The Standard Model

Intelligence analysts and policymakers are organizationally separate to ensure objectivity

- Products developed with minimal input from policymakers often lack relevance
- Multiple levels of managerial review cannot keep pace with events or new information
- Analysts cannot augment or contextualize external information regularly digested by policymakers

A More Collaborative Model

Intelligence analysts are embedded in policy offices to improve coordination

- Close and continuous engagement enables co-construction of knowledge between analysts and policymakers
- Embedded analysts support policy discussions and contextualize analysis
- Home-based analysts feed traditional intelligence analysis to their embedded counterparts

Creation of the Standard Model of Intelligence Support to Foreign Policy

The current mode of intelligence support to policy, referred to here as the standard model, is one in which intelligence analysts and policymakers are organizationally separate. It is based on the concept that objective analysis is best developed when policymakers do not have managerial or political influence on the conduct of analysis and analytic conclusions. This model has its roots in World War II intelligence and is fundamentally the same today.

The formation of the modern American intelligence community was based on problems with World War II wartime intelligence (Pettee, 1946; Kent, 1949). Among the chief concerns at the time, and the founding reason for establishing the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was the lack of coordination among the numerous independent intelligence organizations. The National Security Act of 1947, in creating the position of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) and the CIA, states that the DCI shall "correlate and evaluate intelligence relating to the national security, and provide for the appropriate dissemination of such intelligence within the Government" and support the newly created National Security Council (NSC) in the White House (National Security Act of 1947).

The world has changed dramatically since the creation of the CIA in 1947. Even though the world is drastically different from 1947 and the U.S. intelligence community has grown into a vast 18-agency, $84 billion enterprise with estimates of at least 107,000 full-time employees, the approach to intelligence support to policy has remained fundamentally unchanged since 1947 (Voelz 2009; Gellman and Miller, 2013; ODNI News, 2022).

Today, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) states that the purpose of the U.S. intelligence community (IC) "is to provide timely, insightful, objective, and relevant intelligence to inform decisions on national security issues and events" (ODNI, "*What we Do*").

Photo: President Harry S. Truman at his desk in the Oval Office signing H.R. 5632, the National Security Act Amendments of 1949, August 10, 1949. The original 1947 act, which created the CIA, was not photographed because Truman signed it while aboard the presidential aircraft. (Truman Library, Accession Number 73-3205).

Intelligence Analysts' Proximity to Policymakers

As early as 1944, it was suggested that the U.S. establish an independent, central intelligence service to provide objective and impartial intelligence that was organizationally separate and intellectually independent of policymakers to ensure objective analysis (Donovan letter to Roosevelt, 1944; Hilsman, 1952). This approach has two tenets. One is preventing policymakers from influencing analytic conclusions by directing or otherwise inducing the analyst to arrive at a predetermined analytic conclusion. The other is that intelligence does not offer policy solutions or engage in political policy debates. The current structure is that intelligence analysis is performed at a procedural and organizational distance from, but parallel to, policy formulation as a safeguard against influencing analysis and to avoid participation in political policy deliberations. Adherence to this approach comes with constant admonitions for the analyst to understand the policymaker and for the policymaker to communicate with the analyst. The standard model is to understand the policymaker but not get too close; provide relevant analysis but do not provide policy advice; avoid political influence on analysis but understand the political context.

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The concept of an analytic effort separate from policy development is mainly associated with Sherman Kent, a Yale University professor, former World War II Office of Strategic Services (OSS) officer, and who is referred to as the founder of the modern intelligence analysis profession. In 1949, he argued that a central intelligence organization should not be part of any policy-making department to avoid being an "unabashed apologist for a given policy rather than its impartial and objective analyst" (Kent, 1949). He cited Walter Lippman, a prominent post-World War II journalist and presidential advisor, who stated that "the only institutional safeguard {for impartial and objective analysis} is to separate as absolutely as it is possible to do so the staff which executes from the staff which investigates. The two should be parallel but quite distinct... responsible to different heads, intrinsically uninterested in each other's personal success" (Kent, 1949).

Photo: cia.gov. Identification card of the first civilian Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Allen W. Dulles
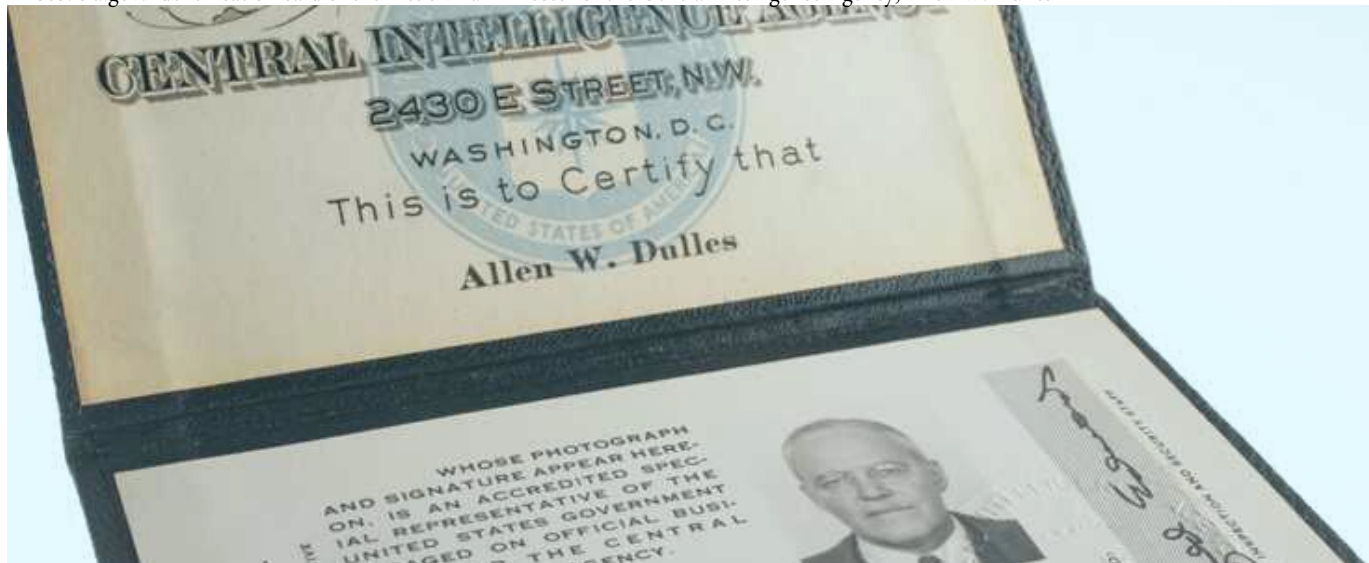
As substantiation for the separation of analysis from policy, Kent and George Pettee, another early author on intelligence and policy, cited instances during World War II in which they contended that the inaccuracy of military analysis was due to the close proximity of the analytic effort to military leadership (Pettee, 1946; Kent, 1949). This separation doctrine quickly became the established theory of intelligence (Hilsman, 1952). In 1956, policymakers expressed aversion to the idea that intelligence should be close to policy or explore policy options (Hilsman, 1952). Many policy officials at that time felt that any person, including intelligence analysts, thinking of policy options would always select facts that support their preferred policy (Hilsman, 1952).

However, the concept of intelligence analysis activities wholly separated from policymakers is not as absolute as commonly portrayed. Kent and Pettee offered cautions about the separation of intelligence and policy. Pettee emphasized the importance of an intimate connection between intelligence and the policymaking customer (Pettee, 1946). Kent expressed similar concerns that centralizing the entire intelligence effort would violate the single most important principle of successful intelligence: the closeness of intelligence producers to intelligence consumers (Kent, 1949). He cautioned that intelligence must be close enough to policy planning to have guidance but not so close that it loses its objectivity and integrity of judgment (Kent, 1949). Kent also warned that the danger of intelligence being too far from policymakers is much greater than the danger of being too close (Kent, 1949).

Politicization and the Proximity between Analysts and Policymakers

Politicization is a concept that refers to how information is given a political tone or context. Relative to intelligence, it is a pejorative term used to explain adverse impacts on intelligence analysis and its application. It can come in two forms. One type is when the analyst experiences pressure to arrive at a pre-determined conclusion, referred to here as analytic politicization. The other is when intelligence managers or policymakers present an analytic conclusion in a skewed or distorted way, referred to here as post-analysis politicization.

Intelligence studies literature and years of case study review suggest that the fears of analytic politicization are greater than the actuality of its occurrence and that overt and outright efforts by policymakers to distort analysis rarely occur (Lowenthal, 2023; Marrin, 2013). In some recent and prominent accusations of post-analysis politicization, reviews found that no analytic politicization (where analysis was skewed to meet policymakers' needs) had occurred (Mazzetti and Schmidt, 2017).

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Intelligence community training and culture seek to mitigate the impact of politicization. But there will always be a danger that analysts might introduce a political slant in assessments and face-to-face briefings, either deliberately or through sloppy tradecraft (Davis, 2003). And there will remain the human tendency to want to please policymakers by providing assessments that conform to what analysts imagine are policymakers' policy preferences (Omand, 2020).

The intelligence community has implemented effective ways to combat the politicized influence of analysis. They include managerial review, alternative analysis, and continuous training. The threat of politicization also incentivizes the need for diversity in analysis – having more than one agency provide assessments on an issue. In addition, institutional checks and balances such as Congress, the media, the public, and academia help intelligence and policy hew to their proper roles (CIA CSI, 2004). Indeed, the fact that charges of politicization are not taken lightly and are routinely investigated also tends to inhibit the raw distortive politicization of intelligence analysis (Lowenthal, 2023).

Still, one of the most effective influences against politicization is the analytic ethic developed over the past 75 years and the confidence that analysts will resist and speak up against such influence. A former Director of the CIA considered the concerns about objectivity, politicization, and proximity to the policymaker are not mutually exclusive and emphasized that intelligence must be of value added in a system that provides safeguards against the dangers of politicization (Omand, 2020).

Eliminating analytic bias and obtaining pure objectivity is not necessarily achievable just by keeping intelligence analysts and policymakers separate (Marrin, 2013). And keeping analysts at arm's length from policymakers to prevent politicization can provide false comfort for efforts to mitigate politicization (Omand, 2020). Recent case studies contend that just because analysts are close to policymakers does not necessarily lead to distortive politicization (Marrin 2009).

Similarly, there is no evidence that the structural distance of intelligence from policy prevents policymakers from distorting analytic conclusions. Indeed, there seems little the intelligence community can do to prevent politicization after the analysis is concluded.

Photo: From left, Sherman Kent (1903–86), Willmoore Kendall (1909–68), and George Pettee(1904–89). Credits: 1967 CIA portrait, University of Dallas, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections,.
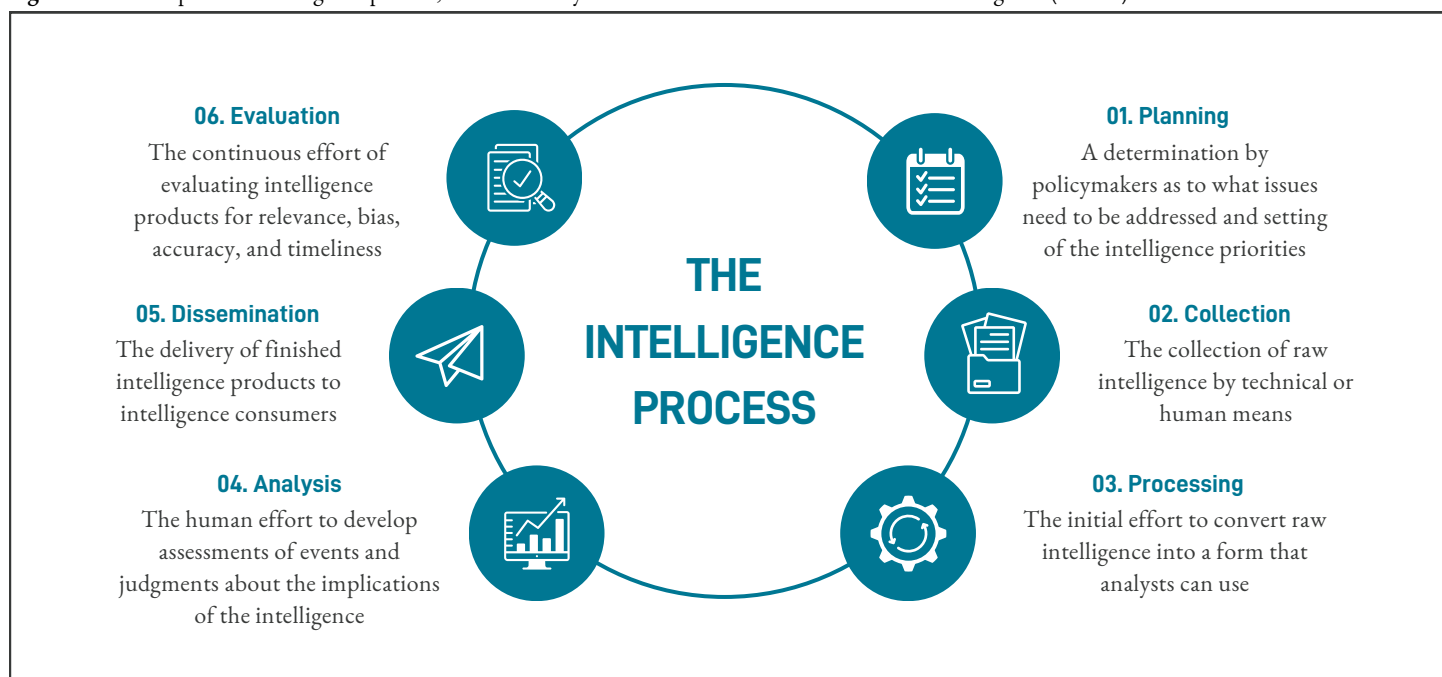
Intelligence, Information, and Irrelevance

Intelligence must adjust its models of policymaker interaction and intelligence analysis to add value to foreign policy development. The intelligence cycle itself has been considered another industrial age process incompatible with the pace of decision-making and policy development. In addition, the speed of information accumulation and dispersion in the public sphere now outpaces the conventional intelligence cycle.

The Intelligence Process

The current intelligence process can impede the intelligence-policy interface. It has its roots in military intelligence dating to 1926 and is fundamentally the same today (Wheaton, 2011). The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) states that the six steps in the intelligence process are 1) Planning: a determination by policymakers as to what issues need to be addressed and setting of the intelligence priorities; 2) Collection: the collection of raw intelligence by technical or human means; 3) Processing: the initial effort to convert raw intelligence into a form that analysts can use; 4) Analysis: the human effort to develop assessments of events and judgments about the implications of the intelligence; 5) Dissemination: the delivery of finished intelligence products to intelligence consumers; and 6) Evaluation: the continuous effort of evaluating intelligence products for relevance, bias, accuracy, and timeliness (ODNI, "How the IC Works"). In everyday practice, this cycle is often considered notional and not representative of how the IC works on a daily basis. However, it is still used by the ODNI to depict how intelligence works and is widely taught in universities and professional training. It has heavily influenced the perspectives of intelligence and policy professionals for decades and has revealed problems with the compatibility of the standard model of intelligence support with the policy process and how policymakers make decisions.

Figure: The six steps in the intelligence process, as described by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)

06. Evaluation
The continuous effort of evaluating intelligence products for relevance, bias, accuracy, and timeliness

05. Dissemination
The delivery of finished intelligence products to intelligence consumers

04. Analysis
The human effort to develop assessments of events and judgments about the implications of the intelligence

THE INTELLIGENCE PROCESS

01. Planning
A determination by policymakers as to what issues need to be addressed and setting of the intelligence priorities

02. Collection
The collection of raw intelligence by technical or human means

03. Processing
The initial effort to convert raw intelligence into a form that analysts can use

Due in part to the organizational separation of analysts from policymakers and processes that enable the separation of tasks, policymakers rarely provide guidance on information requirements, also known as 'taskings.' As a result, analytic products are often developed with minimal input from policymakers (Hulnick, 2006; Marrin, 2009). And it is not unusual that intelligence assessments are produced on topics selected by intelligence managers or analysts (Hulnick, 2006).

Intelligence assessments range in depth and scope on specific and sometimes arcane subjects. Overall, intelligence products created through this process facilitate the continued mass production of reports and analyses with questionable value to actual policymaker needs and without knowing why or for whom they are made. Often, multiple levels of managerial review cannot keep pace with events or newly discovered information sources (Medina, 2002).

A survey from 2023 indicated that policymakers want to be actively involved in the intelligence process (Bajraktari, 2023). The survey also suggests that policymakers consider the conventional intelligence cycle too rigid and ineffective for routine or day-to-day interaction with the intelligence community (Bajraktari, 2023). This reflects their desire to participate with analysts in understanding the available information space, defining new information requirements, assessing information, and developing knowledge.

Exclusive Information and Open Information

Policymakers are also analysts, working to identify relevant information amidst a flood of intelligence and open-source reports. Intelligence analysts must work hard to surpass the analytic abilities of their policymaking customers (Medina, 2002). Current communication technologies and diplomatic practices enable U.S. policymakers to communicate freely and often with allied and hostile government leaders. This environment supports policymakers in gaining firsthand insights into other governments' intentions, deciphering conflicting signals, leveraging their knowledge and experience, and "be their own analysts" to better understand situations and future developments (Medina, 2002). Within the standard model of separation, intelligence analysts are excluded from working directly with policymakers at these critical junctures of analysis and decision-making. Analysts cannot augment their knowledge with policymaker input or provide immediate context to policymaker information obtained daily.

Whereas intelligence was once the near exclusive provider of analytic insight for policymakers, today, it has been relegated to a voice among many. In the early years of the intelligence community and throughout the Cold War, the U.S. intelligence community was the predominant provider of intelligence, sometimes having a monopoly on information about closed societies and government. The primary intelligence targets were the Soviet Union and Communist China, which required clandestine intelligence collection (satellites, intercepting communications, espionage, etc.) to gather information. Since the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a new information age, the U.S. intelligence community is no longer an exclusive provider of information about adversaries and other threats. Also, the growth of think tanks, journalism, and other sources of evaluation has provided policymakers with daily access to accurate, unclassified information.

The source of this information shift is broadly considered open-source information or OSINT. It is touted as a new phenomenon, but the prominence and use of unclassified publicly available information have been around for a while. In the 1950s, two former Directors of the CIA noted that roughly 80% of intelligence is derived from open sources such as books, newspapers, and magazines (Hilsman, 1956). That assessment is consistent with a statement made in 2022 by a former Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research that roughly 80% of all information in intelligence reports is available in publicly accessible venues (Kyzer, 2022). Concurrently, in a 2000 survey of senior policymakers, 85 percent of the respondents said the unclassified information sources they relied on were foreign newspapers and periodicals, U.S. newspapers and periodicals, their professional networks, and other communications such as email (Medina, 2002). In a 2023 survey, 52% of policymakers indicated they use open sources for daily information needs and 66% for breaking news (Kurata and Bajraktari, 2023). For strategic foresight, 50% of the respondents referenced information from the intelligence community and other government sources, with 26% referencing academic and scientific publications for their strategic foresight information (Kurata and Bajraktari, 2023).

Figure: Frequency of sources used by policymakers for day-to-day or breaking news information. Source: Kurata and Bajraktari (SCSP), "Intelligence Community," April 25, 2023.
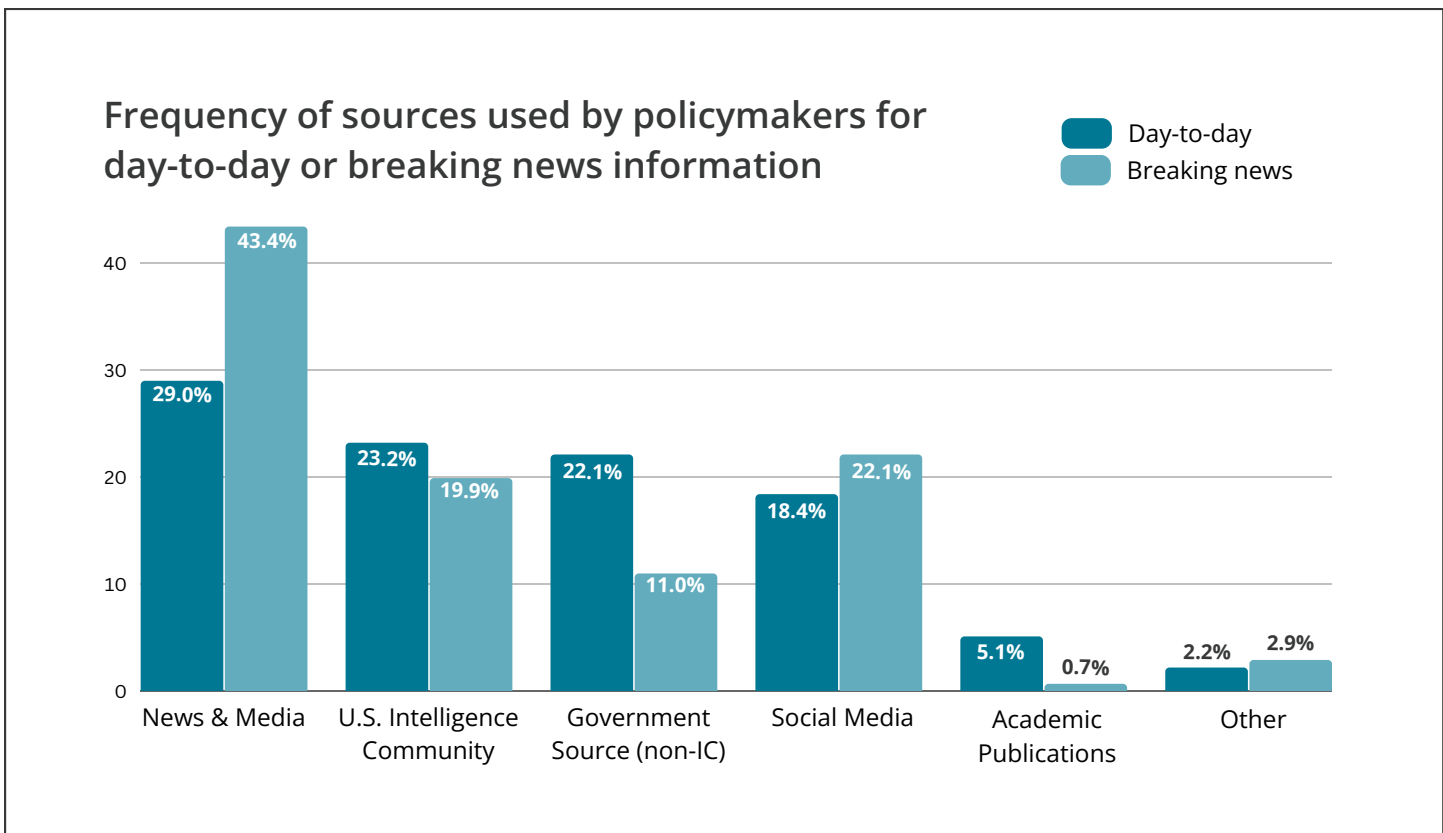
A New Paradigm of Intelligence-Policymaker Collaboration for Current and Future Challenges

The next evolutionary step for intelligence support to policy requires a shift away from report writing to a service-oriented framework that provides direct and permanent analytic and consultative support to policymakers.

The quest for analytic objectivity was the primary influence in separating intelligence from policy. Instead of approaching the issue only from that perspective, the topic of intelligence support to policy should be viewed from other reference points.

> The next evolutionary step for intelligence support to policy requires a shift away from a focus on report writing to a service-oriented framework that provides direct and permanent analytic and consultative support to policymakers.

A new paradigm would challenge the orthodoxy of the separations of intelligence and policy and contravene the "theology" that "intelligence should flourish in its protected sanctuary, its state-within-a-state, fortified by its privileges of detachment, [and] embedded in the hard rock of undaunted objectivity" (Hughes, 1976).

Research on policymakers revealed they desire a timely and readily available one-on-one interaction with intelligence analysts to support their information needs (Teitelbaum, 2023). This research concluded that the ideal situation for policymakers was to embed analysts in policymaking agencies to work closely with policymakers, learn their needs and preferences, and be ready to support them at any time (Teitelbaum, 2023). This is consistent with suggestions by policymakers and senior intelligence officers to provide policymakers with direct contact with analysts.

This model would also provide an environment for developing a shared discourse community between two distinctly different business cultures. Such an environment would enhance the opportunities for analysts and policymakers to conduct collaborative information analysis and co-construct policy options.

This discourse community concept recognizes that the language of objective analysis and the language of subjective policy can be quite different. The intelligence professional and the policymaking consumer belong to different professional cultures, perform in different spheres, have different goals, and do not share the same language, set of assumptions, or knowledge base (Bean, 2018). This is often understood as the 'tribal tongues' phenomenon, where analysts and policymakers wrongly assume they speak the same language (Lowenthal, 1994). The reality is that the nature of each work culture dictates that they speak and engage in different terms of reference and belong to what can be called unique "discourse communities" (Swales, 1990).

Institutional separation accompanied by impulses to actively minimize exposure to another can exacerbate minor difficulties in communication and understanding. Improved integration between intelligence analysts and policymakers is an appropriate response to the problems of differentiated organizational subcultures (Bean, 2018). To that end, "shared discourse communities" can house select members of individual discourse communities like intelligence analysts and policymakers. The shared discourse community is a mutually established virtual association with a broadly agreed set of common goals that use participatory mechanisms to provide information and feedback with specific lexis within a sense of "silential relations" while allowing each participant to retain attributes of their unique discourse communities (Swales, 2016).

Paths to Improved Relevance

The cumulative result of this dialogue suggests that the intelligence and foreign policy communities must reject the "caricature" of the pure Sherman Kent model that requires strict separation. One must recognize that the concerns of Kent and Pettee are not mutually exclusive (Omand, 2020). This suggestion reflects changes in global complexity, information access, technology, workforce generational characteristics, and advancements in collaboration between research and policy.

Policymakers need analyses that relate to policies and objectives (Betts, 2003). Separating the analysts from policymakers has reinforced the intelligence community's culture of objectivity but also made it less relevant to policymaking (Betts, 2003). Constant admonitions to actively avoid considering U.S. political imperatives coupled with a lack of close and continuing contact significantly inhibit the value of intelligence analysis to policy deliberations. One study contends that irrelevance is an arguably more significant problem for analysts than politicization (CFR, 1996). While conceding that even though politicization is a risk, many foreign policy professionals increasingly desire a closer relationship with intelligence (Betts, 2003).

A model that enhances interaction with policymakers would ensure that the intelligence analyst has a more accurate understanding of the policymaker's subject matter expertise, information needs, and policy goals (Richards, 2013). This would facilitate a better understanding by policymakers of intelligence capabilities, resulting in more informed information requests levied on the intelligence community.

> Closing the physical distance would presumably close the intellectual distance between the two. It is an approach supported by an increasing number of intelligence practitioners and policymakers.

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The Intelligence Analysts' Perspective

A former head of the Department of State Intelligence and Research Bureau (INR) suggested that a better approach to exchanging information is for policymakers to have direct contact with analysts (Ford, 2015). This view is consistent with a former Director of the CIA who felt that unless intelligence officers are "down in the trenches" with the policymakers, understand the issues, and know what US objectives are, they cannot provide relevant or timely intelligence that will contribute to better- informed decisions (Davis, 2002).

> Intelligence requires an understanding by the analyst of the political context of any given policy issue that is most accurately developed through close and continuous contact with policy officials.

When considering bringing intelligence analysts closer to policymakers, concerns about a loss of analytic objectivity frequently arise. But a former National Intelligence Officer argued that enforcing a rigorous separation of intelligence and policy in pursuit of analytical purity imposes "a splendid isolation upon intelligence that ensured its eventual policy irrelevance," that "faith in the arm's-length relationship was misplaced," and that "close ties between intelligence and policy are not only inevitable but also essential if the policymakers' needs are to be served" (Heymann, 1985; Marrin, 2009). Current intelligence studies literature is consistent with an observation from 1956 that being objective is "maintaining a mental discipline, not a mental vacuum" (Hilsman, 1956). Policymakers must see intelligence analysis to have applicability and utility to their policy development efforts. This requires an understanding by the analyst of the political context of any given policy issue that is most accurately developed through close and continuous contact with policy officials (Davis, 2003).

This approach is not without risk. As a career CIA intelligence officer observed:

> "The most controversial contention may be that 21st-century analysts will need to become less independent and neutral in favor of greater tailoring to customer needs. Some critics have already noted that our customer focus in recent years is eroding our detachment from policymaking. The usual answer is to assert that customer focus and neutrality are compatible; but in truth they are not completely. The more we care, as we should, that we have an impact on the policymaking community, the less neutral we become, in the sense that we select our topics based on customer interests and we analyze those aspects that are most relevant to policymakers" (Medina, 2002).

This CIA officer contends that being completely neutral and independent in the future will likely ensure irrelevance. Such neutrality, ostensibly gained through distance from the policymaker, "cannot be used to justify analytic celibacy and disengagement" from the policymaker and presupposes some "near-mystical ability to parse the truth completely free from bias or prejudice" (Medina, 2002). In the stark choice between analytic detachment and impact on policymaking, the 21st-century analyst must choose the latter (Medina, 2002).

The Policymakers' Perspective

Policymakers provide a spectrum of perspectives on this topic. A 2023 survey of intelligence-consuming policymakers indicated that (within the confines of the standard model of intelligence support to policy) satisfaction with intelligence is exceptionally high, and intelligence does influence decisions and generally improves policy outcomes (Kurata and Bajraktari, 2023). At the same time, policymakers expressed a need for more rapid access and response from intelligence coupled with a desire to have intelligence help more to inform policy outcomes (Kurata and Bajraktari, 2023).

While the survey indicated that policymakers have a high demand for intelligence, with over 73% of respondents saying they consume intelligence daily, they indicated that intelligence had less influence on daily policymaker decisions (Kurata and Bajraktari, 2023). This current or daily intelligence is one of the most prevalent and popular intelligence products because they are short, to the point, and easy to read (Hulnick, 2006). However, this type of intelligence is not intended to lead to policy decisions, most notably because it does not contain the detailed information required to support policymaking (Hulnick, 2006). Further, if intelligence analysts lack timely insight into policy option development, their daily analysis will be less relevant.

A former Director of Policy Planning for the Department of State said that the irrelevancy of intelligence analysis is a greater danger than politicization. His experience has shown that intelligence assessments can be less relevant than they should be because analysts may not ask the right questions and do not understand what is really on the policymaker's mind (Haas, 2002). Concurrently, a former Director of Policy for the Department of Defense believes that the artificial separation of intelligence and policy "serves only to degrade the performance of both systems," significant harm is done if "the two groups avoid close contact," and "the closer the relationship between intelligence and policy, the better both systems operate" (Davis, 1996). He encourages intelligence analysts to constantly, persistently, and if need be, "annoyingly" press to get close to policymakers to see what is on their agenda (Haas, 2002). For this to happen, policymakers need to keep intelligence representatives "in the room" when policy is debated to:

> ". . . hear the underlying assumptions and beliefs that inform policy, both to correct errors of fact that may creep into policy and to provide policymakers with insights into the factors that might lead them to question or change those assumptions as events unfold. The real danger in the ongoing debate about the danger of 'politicizing' intelligence is that both sides will overreact and create a 'Chinese wall' that cuts off the analysts from firsthand access to policy debates" (Steinberg, 2014)

Furthermore, policymakers need to appreciate the unique nature of intelligence analysts and should not subject them to tests of loyalty or ideological affinity and should not be punished or ignored for putting forth skeptical or inconvenient perspectives (Steinberg, 2014).
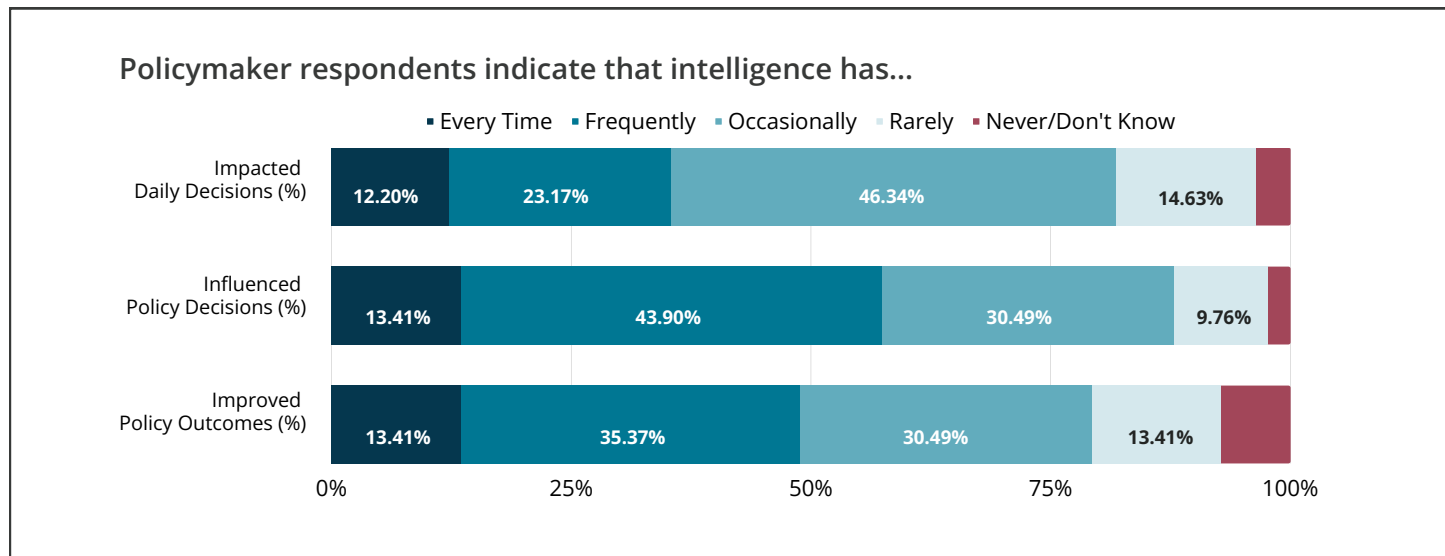
Policymakers and Analysts in Agreement

In 1977, CIA officers interviewed a diverse group of consumers and producers of intelligence analysis, most of whom believed that close cooperation between intelligence and policy was mandatory. In doing so, the intelligence analyst could better understand the problems and thinking of the policymaker (Marrin, 2009). One of the respondents considered it necessary for the intelligence producer to "get inside the mind of the user," which could not be done "without close and continuing association" (Marrin, 2009)

And in a 1994 CIA sponsored seminar that summarized the views of 60 intelligence officers and policymakers, the conclusion was that there had been a clear trend toward a closer relationship between intelligence and policy for the previous decade. The report said this approach has become "the new orthodoxy, supplanting the traditional view that intelligence should be kept at arm's length from policy and concerned principally with the objectivity of its assessments" (Barry et al., 1994). And in a 2017 argument for closer proximity, literature from 1964 and 1972 was cited that called for a closer connection between the intelligence officer and the decision maker, which will enable the intelligence officer to understand better the effect of intelligence on the decision-making process, which in turn improves the intelligence work (Zlotnick in Siman-Tov, 1972).

Intelligence reform commissions and reviews have also consistently called for closer ties between intelligence and policy. The 1949 Dulles Report admonished intelligence consumers for inadequate guidance on intelligence needs, as did the 1971 Schlesinger Report and the 1975 Olgivie Report (Dulles, 1949). The Ogilvie Report observed that when intelligence officers are in close contact with policy, their appreciation of policymaker issues is vastly improved, a view echoed by the 1975 Murphy Report (Ogilvie, 1975; Murphy, 1975). The 1996 Aspin-Brown Commission advised that intelligence must be closer to those it services, a view augmented by the 2001 Hart-Rudman Commission, which suggests that policy and guidance for intelligence should be formulated in tandem (Aspin-Brown Commission, 1996; Hart-Rudman Commission, 2001). The 2005 WMD Commission stated that close engagement between intelligence analysts and policymakers is not politicization but the system working at its best (Gomez, 2018).

Figure: The reported impact of intelligence on policymaker decisions. Source: Kurata and Bajraktari (SCSP), "Intelligence Community," April 25, 2023.

Policymaker respondents indicate that intelligence has...

Legend: ■ Every Time ■ Frequently ■ Occasionally ■ Rarely ■ Never/Don't Know

| Category	Every Time	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely
Impacted Daily Decisions (%)	12.20%	23.17%	46.34%	14.63%
Influenced Policy Decisions (%)	13.41%	43.90%	30.49%	9.76%
Improved Policy Outcomes (%)	13.41%	35.37%	30.49%	13.41%

Focus on More Than Just Senior Policymakers

When the CIA was established in 1947, its original charter had it as a central repository of collected intelligence assessment from other intelligence departments and primarily, if not exclusively, focused on supporting the newly formed National Security Council (NSC) and the President. Since then, the CIA has always referred to the president as "Customer Number 1" and is the collator and editor of the President's Daily Brief (PDB). The PDB is also distributed to select cabinet members and other senior policymakers. Indeed, the CIA has prioritized the PDB product above all others, and "support to senior policymakers has culturally become intertwined with the Agency's reason for being" (Castelli, 2020). The lack of importance that the CIA seems to place on a diverse set of policy officials other than the President has even been cited as a cause for low morale in the agency (Castelli, 2020). This focus on senior policymakers has filtered throughout the intelligence community and is still a notable characteristic of intelligence support. Most intelligence studies literature about the analyst–policymaker relationship focuses on senior policymakers.

This focus on senior policymakers has required intelligence officers to expend considerable effort to identify the most influential individuals among policy officials, study writings and public statements of key policymakers, watch them on TV talk shows, and read press reports on policy issues and Washington politics (Barry et al., 1994). Intelligence analysts end up analyzing their own policymaking intelligence consumers at a physical and intellectual distance. This is not only time consuming but is subject to the same analytic errors experienced when performing the same task on foreign leaders.

As a result of this focus on senior policymakers, a large population of policy advisors and junior policymakers are left out of the intelligence-policy relationship. A senior CIA analyst noted that intelligence analysts expressed dismay because the CIA has not placed enough importance and value on its work to support a diverse set of customers other than the president (Castelli, 2020). Indeed, intelligence studies researchers and practitioners have noted that the relationship between intelligence experts and junior to mid-level policy officers is essential because they typically form options for decisions by senior officials (Barry et al., 1994). Further, relationships and understanding built early in analysts' and policymakers' careers can pay dividends as officials ascend to positions of greater authority.

Photo: The Presidential Daily Brief is the focal point of the intelligence-policymaker relationship today. Image couresty of cia.gov
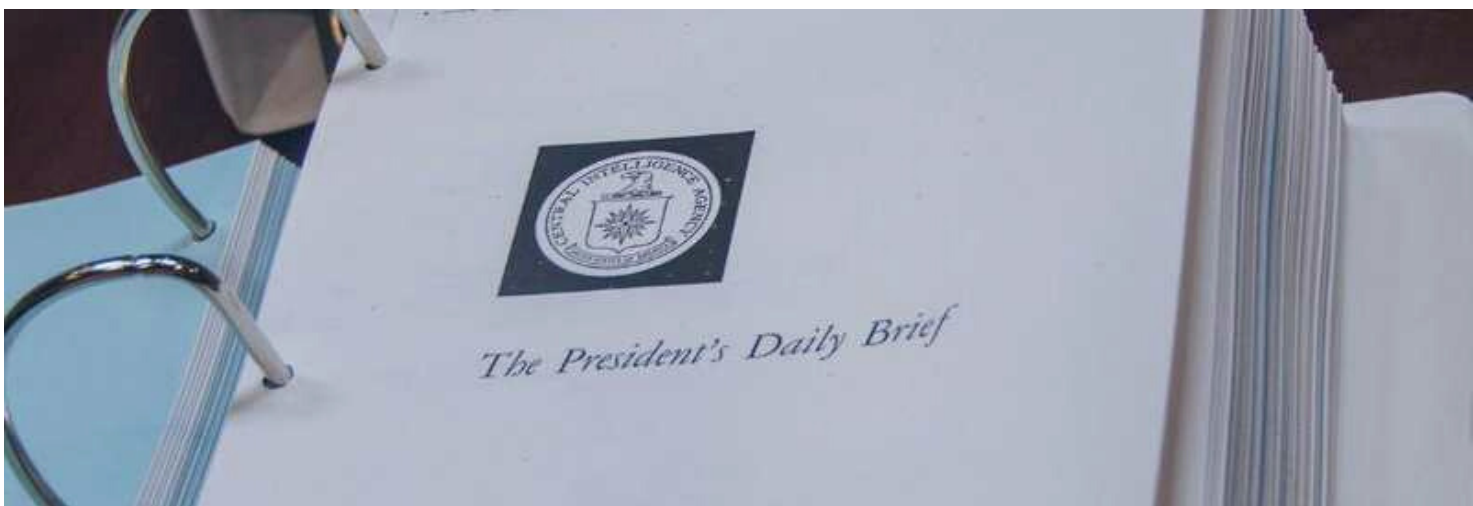
The focus on senior policymakers is consistent with the standard model of emphasizing the value of intelligence on high policy (Marrin, 2017). Such a focus on high policy may be misplaced. Instead, of more importance may be how intelligence analysis shapes the understanding of issues at the mid-level working levels of government (Marrin, 2017).

> Focusing on senior policymakers presupposes a top-down model of policymaking that does not always fit with reality. We must invest early in stronger relationships between intelligence and policy officials.

Focusing on senior policymakers also presupposes a top-down model of policymaking that does not always fit with reality. For many issue areas, mid-level bureaucrats are influential in shaping the understanding of the challenges, bringing new challenges to the attention of senior leadership, and scoping potential solutions. Intelligence officers' emphasis on senior leadership results in a system that inhibits the ability of early-career policy officials to learn about intelligence, including its capabilities and purpose. This is a missed opportunity to invest early in stronger relationships between intelligence and policy officials.

Generational Influences

As with any discussion of business culture, organizational change is influenced by the attributes associated with each generation. The founders of the modern intelligence community were of the pre and immediate post-World War II culture of information and decision-making. The Baby Boomer generation (born 1946 – 1964) and Generation X (born 1965 – 1980) dominated the population in the national security enterprise during the Cold War (approximately 1947 – 1991) and were fundamentally consistent with the previous generation. They are now the most senior intelligence and foreign policy leaders and continue to have a substantive impact. But today, Millennials, or Generation Y (born 1981 – 1996) and Generation Z (born 1997 and 2012), comprise most of the U.S. population.

As of 2023, Millennial ages range from 27 – 42; the oldest Gen Z is 26. As noted in 2016, within the intelligence community, Millennials constitute much of the non–Senior Executive Service workforce and most of the entry-level labor market that the IC intends to recruit for soon (Weinbaum et al., 2016). This is in addition to those Millennials and Gen Z who are already junior to mid-level analysts and policy staff.

Globally, Millennials constitute the most educated, informed, and interconnected generation in history (Weinbaum et al., 2016). The intelligence and policy communities must adjust paradigms and processes that recognize how these generations face problems, communicate, and interact (Weinbaum et al., 2016). Among the distinctions millennials tend to display are technological savviness and an innate openness to change (Weinbaum et al., 2016).

This emerging generation will expect more information access, analytic transparency, and collaboration. Much has been learned since 1949 about how people think, learn, and collaborate. Applying this knowledge can facilitate improvements to the intelligence-policy interface (Brown, 2020). Analysts and policymakers have adjusted the standard model by how they conduct everyday business, interact with each other, and access and use information. However, the post-World War II / Cold War industrial-based information and organizational interaction models are inconsistent with the analytic and decision-making models of emerging policymakers and many in the intelligence community workforce.

> The intelligence and policy communities must adjust paradigms and processes that recognize how millennials face problems, communicate, and interact.

One notable generational attribute of the Millennial/Gen Z cohort concerns information access, speed, value, and confidence. Technology has been the principal enabling factor in access to information from across the globe. But contrary to some current discussions, this is not about creating a new information culture but becoming part of one already existing and adapting legacy processes to the current reality.

Millennials are the first generation to have been raised in an environment of unfettered information access. Millennials expect to have information access 24 hours a day, seven days a week, be it from the internet or a person (Weinbaum et al., 2016). They are a digital population and are more apt to gravitate to a handheld device for information than a conventional written analytic product. Only 24 percent of millennials say they get most of their news from a newspaper, while 59 percent rely on the Internet for news (Weinbaum et al., 2016). Millennials also prefer open communication and continuous feedback throughout the organizations and teams in which they participate. They prefer quick responses to questions and get impatient with the slow pace of organizations that are less than cutting edge in their technology usage to access information. They prefer to share and discuss information (Weinbaum et al., 2016).

Open-source intelligence (OSINT) is not new for millennials – it is the standard. As noted above, OSINT has always been a component of intelligence analysis. For today's intelligence consumers, open-source information equates to easy access, clear depictions and explanations, established credibility, and no classification that inhibits sharing.

Millennials also prefer teamwork and are accustomed to collaboration. They tend to share information rapidly within their networks and expect others to share accordingly (Weinbaum et al., 2016). They also like continuous reporting and routine direct access to intelligence and other experts (Weinbaum et al., 2016). These attributes are consistent with their preference for receiving intelligence from people they trust in their network. This would require building familiar relationships between analysts and policymakers by working closely and continuously (Weinbaum et al., 2016). As such, millennial intelligence officers and policymakers may "see themselves more as members of the same larger team, sharing information continuously and advancing policy in support of U.S. national security interests" (Weinbaum et al., 2016).

Product, Service, or Both

Even though an industrial-age producer-consumer model still predominates in the intelligence-policy relationship, some intelligence agencies are shifting from the term intelligence 'consumer' to intelligence 'client.' The emphasis on 'client' rather than 'consumer' indicates the need for more of an established, ongoing, interpersonal effort.
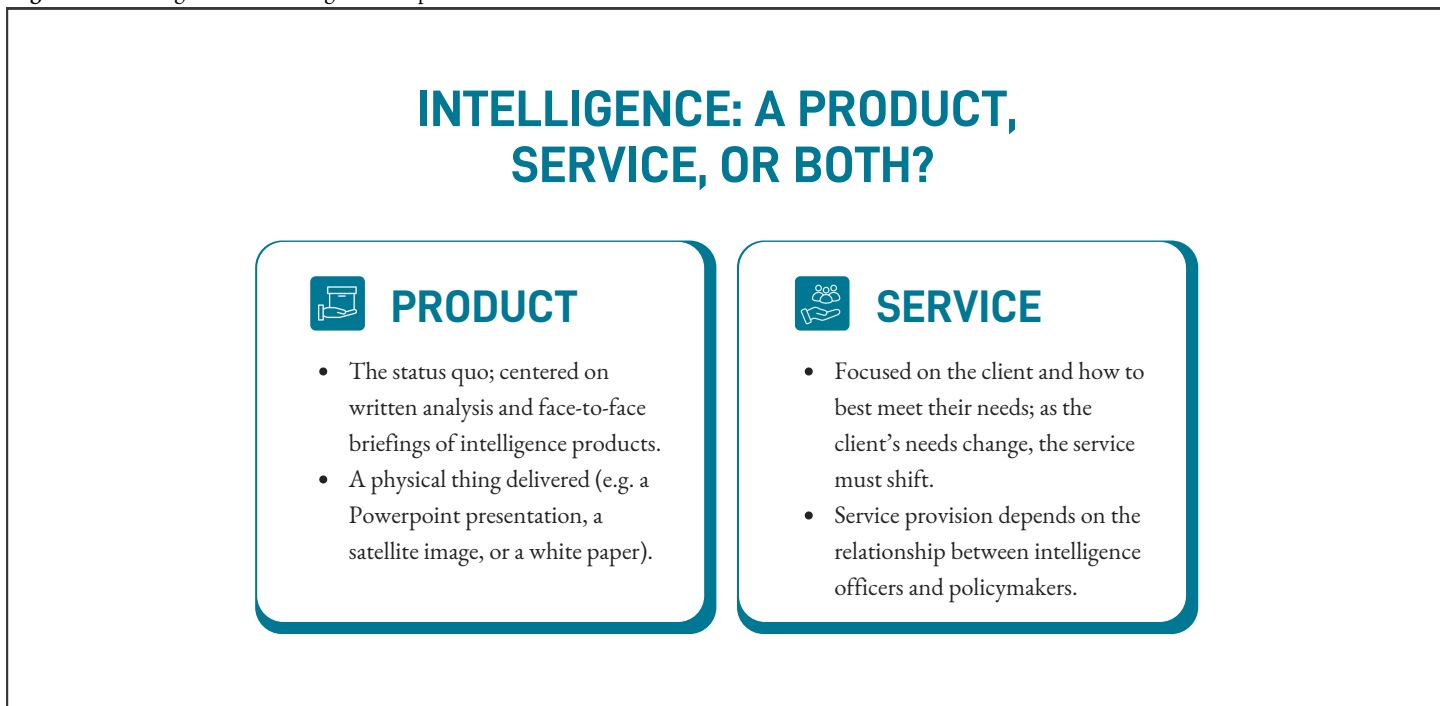
This shift is pulling the intelligence community in two directions. While increasing focus on the policymaker as a client ostensibly provides a foundation shift to an information service culture, the intelligence community is still a product-focused enterprise centered on written analysis and face-to-face briefings of intelligence products.

A service mentality is subtly divergent from a product mentality. In a service mentality, the focus is on the client and how best to meet their needs, rather than the needs of the producer. As the client's needs change, the service must shift. Adherence to a product mentality makes this shift impossible.

In the intelligence context, a service mentality means facilitating the policymaker's understanding of an issue, being timely and relevant, and ultimately focusing on improving the quality of resulting policy decisions. Success should be measured by how well the analysis addresses and answers the specific concerns of the policymaking process (Peterson, 2011).

Intelligence could thus be envisioned as an "intangible, continuous, and user-focused service that expands a user's mental map of the world and helps them to navigate that world more easily" (Brown, 2021).

Figure: Discerning between intelligence as a product and as a service.

INTELLIGENCE: A PRODUCT, SERVICE, OR BOTH?

PRODUCT

- The status quo; centered on written analysis and face-to-face briefings of intelligence products.
- A physical thing delivered (e.g. a Powerpoint presentation, a satellite image, or a white paper).

SERVICE

- Focused on the client and how to best meet their needs; as the client's needs change, the service must shift.
- Service provision depends on the relationship between intelligence officers and policymakers.

Such an intelligence business model would require reframing the concept of intelligence itself. Instead of seeing an intelligence product as a physical thing delivered (e.g., a PowerPoint presentation, a satellite image, or a white paper), the intelligence officers themselves would be seen *as* the product collaborating with the intelligence consumer (Brown, 2021). Intelligence would not be a separate process or product but part of an enterprise that facilitates the "integration of both intelligence and policy perspectives in mutual assessments" (Marrin, 2017).

In a new paradigm of intelligence-policymaking collaboration, the intelligence community would become a knowledge service provider that engages with policymakers in goal focused conversations (Kerbel and Olcott, 2010). This discourse would enable "strategic sensemaking" to recognize strategic threats beyond immediate challenges (Brown, 2020). Sensemaking is the human ability to make sense of amorphous information by detecting patterns in data and inferring the "underlying causes of those patterns - even when the data are sparse, noisy, and uncertain" (ICARUS - IARPA). Sensemaking on behalf of the policymaker is facilitated by face-to-face interaction with intelligence analysts that engage in sensegiving, in which the analyst can convey analysis and "contextualize and adapt complex and technical information" (Wolfberg, 2017). This approach is a shift in the conception of intelligence (Brown, 2020). It recognizes that intelligence is and always has been as much an interpersonal and political activity as a technical and cognitive one. It suggests that the intelligence community and policymakers see the analysts as the product (Brown, 2020).

Collaboration

The idea of collaboration in the intelligence-policy relationship may seem novel compared to the standard model of intelligence support to policy, but it is not new and is consistent with intelligence studies literature dating back 66 years. In 1956, it was suggested that in the relationship between intelligence and policy, the process of decision-making strives for the relationship of knowledge and action to be:

> ". . . one of continuous interplay, of mutual pervasion, intermarriage. Knowledge and action should interact, should condition and control each other at every point. The need is for an integration, an amalgamation of knowledge and action . . . the bringer of knowledge should work in a context of policy and action: the implementer should act within a frame of knowledge. From the very beginning the two must proceed companionately – simultaneously and in unison" (Hilsman, 1956).

Furthermore, policymakers need to appreciate the unique nature of intelligence analysts and should not subject them to tests of loyalty or ideological affinity and should not be punished or ignored for putting forth skeptical or inconvenient perspectives (Steinberg, 2014).

The results of a CIA sponsored study in 1980 substantiated earlier observations that decision-makers preferred to see intelligence and policy options at the same time, that the fusion of intelligence into policy analysis is inevitable, and how the process of formulating policy should work (Marrin, 2009).

Collaboration is central to the concept known as the Target Centric Approach, an alternative to the conventional intelligence cycle. It is an approach that has analysts and policymakers working together on a target or issue. They collaborate to discover new knowledge, address knowledge gaps, and create an analytic assessment. It is a close, interactive relationship in which analysts and policymakers contribute their knowledge and experience to "construct a shared picture of the target" and has been described by the intelligence community as a "network-centric collaboration process" (Clark, 2020).

An approach consistent with collaboration is synchrony. Modern-era private sector markets have embraced this concept to replace the traditional sequential research, development, manufacturing, and marketing method by synchronizing specialists from these specialized functions in one team. This approach, prompted by the recognition of a faster paced world, reduced commercial development cycles from years to months (Kamarck, 2005). For the intelligence-policy relationship, this concept would replace the traditional intelligence cycle, a sequential model, and evolve into a future where analysts and policymakers work simultaneously to understand emerging events (Kamarck, 2005). Concurrent with this approach is the suggestion that intelligence analysts synthesize with policymakers. Instead of analyzing and writing products for intelligence consumers, intelligence becomes a provider of knowledge services. Analysts would combine elements of expertise with policymakers' expertise to create "a process the Greeks saw as the antithesis of analysis, or synthesis" (Kerbel and Olcottm, 2010). A client-synthesist relationship . . .

> ". . . would be more conversation than 'product,' a series of iterative loops in which both sides would get smarter, drawing on resources and making connections that neither might have been aware they had and, when necessary, going out to find them when they don't. In short, the 'deliverable' in such a relationship would be a process, not an endpoint, and would be measured by the degree to which it promotes *cognition*, not by the number of its pages" (Kerbel and Olcottm, 2010; italics in original).

This approach envisions analysis not just as the exclusive domain of the intelligence analyst but as a process of discovery and problem-solving involving the analyst and the intelligence consumer in a relationship requiring a continuing conversation (Kerbel and Olcottm, 2010). It is consistent with approaches in other research-policy domains in which interaction and collaboration are vital activities that link knowledge and policy and require partnerships between the producers and the users of knowledge that establish a shared understanding about questions and answers around an idea of "co-construction" or "co-creation" of policy knowledge (Jones, 2009; Campbell et al., 2023).

Co-creation is the joint production of innovation between researchers and policymakers. It is an environment in which researchers (i.e., intelligence analysts) and policymakers develop common research questions and information needs that feed evidence into the policy process (Campbell et al., 2023). Co-creation of knowledge and policy was key to developing successful COVID-19 prevention and treatment protocols (de Silva et. al, 2022). A review of these COVID-19 research-policy initiatives revealed the value of multidisciplinary researcher-policyaker teams in developing knowledge in uncertain and quickly changing contexts that prove applicable to exigent circumstances and normal times (de Silva et. al, 2022). Envisioning the collaboration and co-creation processes as a "product" to replace the standard model intelligence product could be how the intelligence community shifts from a collection and product-oriented model to a more service-oriented one (Kerbel, 2023).

Some Progress within the Standard Model Framework

Recognizing these issues, the intelligence community has taken steps to increase the interaction between intelligence and policy. Still, these efforts are ad hoc, often temporary, and characterized by the continued impulse to maintain a wall of separation between analysts and policymakers.

> Efforts to increase interaction between intelligence and policy are ad hoc, often temporary, and characterized by the continued impulse to maintain a wall of separation between analysts and policymakers.

These efforts come in two categories – 1) frequent visits with policymakers and 2) occasional assignments to policy offices, committees, or interagency working groups. Both have served to close the distance between intelligence and policy and improve mutual understanding by having intelligence officers "in the room" during policy deliberations. However, their impact is mitigated by the restrictions within the standard model of intelligence support, which requires an organizational separation that creates an intellectual separation.

The ad hoc or temporary assignments of senior intelligence officers in a liaison or intelligence briefing capacity are sporadic and only sometimes allow for close and continuous intellectual engagement. As much as these are positive efforts to improve the interaction between intelligence and policy, they are less than can be achieved through permanent, in-office staffing.

An informal, personal relationship network is also a common way to facilitate intelligence-policy exchange. These can consist of casual contact and impromptu discussions (Gries, 1990). Some policy officials invite intelligence officers to senior staff meetings or ask intelligence representatives to travel with them (Barry et al., 1994). Some intelligence officers have developed close working relationships with policy officials by volunteering to participate in evening and weekend meetings (Barry et al., 1994). This framework is often characterized by long-standing personal relationships between policy officials and intelligence officers and represents the "inside the beltway" network. This is a personality and network-based approach that all intelligence officers and policy officials do not use. These types of intelligence-policy relationships often rely on a professional network based system that requires previous relationships or an introduction to gain access (Barry et al., 1994). As such, the intelligence-policy relationship for many policy departments or offices within this paradigm can suddenly evaporate if the intelligence officer or policy official leaves that post.

Another approach has been regular rotations of intelligence officers embedded in policymaking departments and offices to serve as onsite intelligence community resources for policymakers in day-to-day activities. A former Director of the CIA and former Acting Director of the CIA endorses this approach (McLaughlin, 2014; Steinberg, 2014; Bean, 2018). Often, the intelligence officer that is assigned provides briefings on analytic products or serves as a conduit to intelligence agencies for feedback on analysis or other analysis requests (McLaughlin, 2014).

Another example is when intelligence officers are assigned to a U.S. embassy. This model allows for small, interactive teams that seamlessly incorporate intelligence into the real-time decision-making and policy-making process. However, not all embassies have resident intelligence officers or analysts that provide this function, and embassies tend to play only a supporting role in the policymaking process centered in Washington, DC.

Intelligence officers are also routinely assigned to temporary inter-agency policy working groups. These working groups comprise government departments, agencies, organizations, or offices. These working groups focus on regional issues (e.g., Middle East North Africa, Indo-Pacific), topical issues (e.g., terrorism, weapons of mass destruction), policy initiatives (e.g., economic sanctions, trade, and treaty negotiations), and national security topics (e.g., coercive diplomacy, regional conflicts). The intelligence representative(s) can be liaison officers, briefers, or actual analysts related to the specific topic. But these intelligence officers are not always expert analysts. Quite often, they simply serve as liaison officers that field information requests then search for existing analytic products or contact analysts to answer specific questions. These structures do not always facilitate a close and continuous intellectual exchange between policy officers and expert intelligence analysts.

The relationship between policy and intelligence can be more easily modified within government organizations with small, organic intelligence departments. For example, the Department of State Intelligence and Research Bureau (INR) is in the same building as the State Department headquarters. This allowed one former head of INR to implement a program in which INR managers and analysts participated in the daily policy department meetings, facilitating routine relationships that allowed INR to tailor its analysis to specific policymaker needs (Haas, 2002). But organizational affiliation does not necessarily equate to close, continuous, and physical proximity to policymakers and decision-makers. INR is still a separate directorate in which all the analysts and analytic work are located. Despite the relationship described above, the analysts are apart from policymakers.

Efforts to increase interaction between intelligence and policy

1. Ad hoc or temporary assignments of senior intelligence officers in a liaison or intelligence briefing capacity

2. Occasional assignments to policy offices, committees, or interagency working groups

3. Intelligence-policy exchange via informal, personal relationship networks (e.g. casual contact or impromptu discussions)

An Alternative Model

An alternative to the standard model would be to permanently assign intelligence analysts to policy offices. These analysts would retain their intelligence agency affiliation and career management but would be co-located within policy offices and seated next to policy officials. The policymakers would not directly influence the analysts' careers, thus mitigating the policymaker's power to influence the analysts to arrive at a specific analytic conclusion. The analysts would attend daily scheduled and impromptu meetings, be immediately available to consult with their policy counterparts, and be included in daily, in person discussions of policies and courses of action.

Parent intelligence agencies would retain a robust cadre of home-based analysts. They would conduct long-term strategic estimative and anticipatory intelligence analysis, standing intelligence analysis (e.g., terrorism, WMD), and notify their embedded counterparts regarding on-the-horizon items. Home-based intelligence managers would retain administrative control of embed analysts for performance evaluations, career guidance, future assignments, and other administrative issues. Home-based analysts and management would also provide peer review and quality assurance support for embedded analysts. Embedded analysts would stay in regular contact with their managers in the home office and eventually rotate back to the host agency and then to another policy office embedded position.

While intelligence community managers would forfeit some immediate influence over interactions with policymakers, policymakers would benefit from discovering new synergies between intelligence analysts and policymakers. From their positions inside the policymaker's sanctum, embedded analysts could provide immediate insight to support a range of vital products, such as talking points for key meetings, strategy processes, policy analysis, and option papers. This approach is consistent with the assertion that policymakers do not wait for objective intelligence analysis before they begin policy deliberations (Gill and Phythian, 2013; Marrin, 2017). Intelligence officials would still be trained to avoid advocating for specific policy solutions. But their historical, contextual, and cultural insight would help improve the policy process's quality.

> The new model represents a shift from organizational impediments to a close and continuous engagement and a relationship that enables a collaborative environment for the co-construction of knowledge.

This model challenges the shibboleth that a firewall is needed between analysts and policymakers (Kerbel and Olcott, 2010). It represents a shift from the current model encumbered with organizational impediments to a close and continuous engagement and a relationship that enables a collaborative environment for the co-construction of knowledge. This model works to manage the risk of analytic politicization as opposed to the current risk-averse approach that emphasizes avoiding politicization over relevance and utility.

The concept of intelligence analysis co-located at the highest policy level is not new. The National Security Council (NSC) maintains a permanent intelligence presence on staff. And in 2023, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency was appointed to the president's cabinet. The Director of National Intelligence (DNI) had already been a cabinet-level position, but the elevation of the CIA Director was based on analytic efforts in "providing 'good intelligence, delivered with honesty and integrity' on China, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and emerging technologies" (Shear, 2023).

The inclusion of analysts in policy discussions is not the same as the politicization of intelligence analysis as long as analysts' assessments are heard and policymakers do not try to change analysis to suit their purposes (Buluc, 2015). This concept is also based on the premise that intelligence is knowledge (Kent, 1949), not a product and that intelligence is not bound by organizational line-and-block diagrams or an industrial age sequential intelligence cycle.

The concept of integrating analysts with policymakers has been introduced previously. In 1996, a diverse group of former senior policymakers, intelligence officials, and academicians recommended the integration of policymakers and intelligence analysts to support effective intelligence analysis and decision-making (Davis, 2002). The report offered the British Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) as a model.

The JIC is an interdepartmental cabinet office staff made up of officials from both United Kingdom (UK) intelligence and policy organizations that integrates intelligence into decision-making at the strategic level primarily through weekly meetings and other forms of personal interaction (Marrin, 2007; Davis, 2002). The JIC process supports a "gathering of voices within the government as a whole," where "intelligence assessments are clearly distinct from policy papers" (Marrin, 2007). The overall impact is that the JIC integrates intelligence into decision-making via frequent personal interaction (Marrin, 2009). The JIC concept represents an example of an effective working model in which strategic intelligence fits into policy development as "an integral part" (Pettee, 1946).

A More Collaborative Model for Intelligence and Policymaking

1. Intelligence analysts are embedded in policy offices to improve coordination

2. Close and continuous engagement enables co-construction of knowledge between analysts and policymakers

3. Embedded analysts support policy discussions and contextualize analysis

4. Home-based analysts feed traditional intelligence analysis to their embedded counterparts

Again, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) at the Department of State (DOS) exemplifies a continuous and relatively close relationship between intelligence and policy. Within the DOS, analysts and policy officials have always had the opportunity for easy and prompt access to each other. However, the INR is still structured such that the analysts sit in their own offices and interact with policy officials on an as-needed basis. While these instances may include occasional routine policy office meetings or more sustained support to issue-focused working groups, the separation of analysts from policymakers is still a factor in the relationship. As Kent proffered:

> "Even within a single department it is hard enough to develop the kinds of confidence between producers and consumers that alone make possible the completeness, timeliness, and applicability of the product. There are great barriers to this confidence even when intelligence is in the same uniform or building or line of work . . ." (Kent, 1949).

Photo: The United States Intelligence Board in 1965. Seated second from right is Thomas L. Hughes, then INR Director. Credit: National Security Archive.

Conclusion

The purpose of intelligence is to support informed and effective policymaking. The 75-year experiment of strict separation between intelligence producers and consumers has resulted in an environment that consistently deprives both parties of opportunities to fully leverage the total value of each other's knowledge and skill.

But these many decades of separation have also resulted in a well-defined professional ethos of analytic objectivity. The time is right to leverage this culture and build the next phase in intelligence-policy relations. A new model of the intelligence-policy interface can be developed that supports analytic objectivity and its value to policy. The established analytic ethos would combat any concomitant danger of political influence on the analytic process (Davis, 2002).

A new collaborative analysis and policymaking model would facilitate intelligence being seen as a knowledge service for policymakers rather than simply another information input. Instead, the new model would create a plethora of touchpoints for analysts at all levels to co-construct knowledge with policymakers. The intellectual exchange would move in both directions. Analysts would help policymakers understand intelligence methods and findings, while policymakers would help analysts understand the policy making context and information needs.

> The 75-year experiment of strict separation between intelligence producers and consumers has resulted in an environment that deprives both parties the opportunity to leverage the full value of each other's knowledge and skill.

This model can be done without a large-scale re-organization or creating new organizations or offices. Indeed, this approach defies the "peculiarly American need for organizational arrangements that are sharp and obvious, adapting themselves easily to portrayal by boxes on a chart" (Hilsman, 1956).

The cost of an increase in the number of intelligence analysts required to staff this model could be "modest in the context of the total intelligence budget" compared to expensive technical collection systems and can potentially show a positive impact in a few years (Betts, 2007).

The same attributes of government intelligence organizations that make them a stable, methodical, thoughtful, and reliable community can also make them resistant to change in processes and business cultures. But this should not be considered a revolutionary approach but an evolutionary adjustment based on knowledge developed over many decades of the intelligence-policy interface coupled with the realities of today's information and collaboration culture.

Sherman Kent, recognizing the inherent tension in his dueling admonishments for intelligence to stay both close and separate from policy, noted that "in a moment of intense exasperation" the intelligence community and policymakers might eliminate the administrative barriers between the two and move intelligence into policy sections, but that doing so "may prove to be too heroic a cure for both disease and patient" (Kent, 1949).

The disease of subjective and politically influenced analysis envisioned by Kent, while still something that must be guarded against, is less of a threat today than in 1949. It has been overshadowed by a more complex geo-political world, a much different information landscape, and an evolution in the relationship between intelligence and policy.

The efforts to achieve objective purity in analysis by organizational separation have proved detrimental to providing the best intelligence support for policymaking. The cure is to break the cycle of modifications to the standard model that do not result in substantive improvements.

The nature of intelligence, policymaking, and the world has evolved profoundly since 1949. The time may be right to leverage the intelligence community's strong analytic ethos and build the next generation in intelligence-policy relations on new conceptual, institutional, and procedural guidelines that would mitigate Kent's concerns. The reward of more timely, relevant, and impactful intelligence support to policymakers is worth the effort.

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