SPEECH BY DCI OPEN SOURCE COORDINATOR

OPEN SOURCE SOLUTIONS SYMPOSIUM

WASHINGTON, D.C......

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I want to thank you for the opportunity to come to speak
before you today. It's been now about a year-and-a-half
since then-Director of Central Intelligence, Bob Gates, asked
me to take on newly created position of DCI Open Source
Coordinator, and it certainly has been a fascinating 18
months. In that time, we have identified what the issues are
that face us as a Community and started to resolve them.

I see some familiar faces in the audience today, but there
seems to be many new people in attendance, particularly from
other countries. For that reason, a little background
information is appropriate. The Intelligence Community is
not just CIA. The Intelligence Community refers in the
aggregate to those Executive Branch agencies and
organizations that conduct the variety of intelligence
activities that comprise the total US national intelligence
effort. The Community includes the Central Intelligence
Agency; the National Security Agency; the Defense
Intelligence Agency; offices within the Department of Defense
for collection of specialized national foreign intelligence
through reconnaissance programs; the Bureau of Intelligence
and Research of the Department of State; Army, Navy, and Air
Force intelligence; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the
Department of the Treasury; and the Department of Energy.

The person who is the Director of Central Intelligence is
simultaneously the leader of the Intelligence Community of
which CIA is but one component. I work for the Director in
his capacity as head of this Community.

What is our line of business? It is intelligence, or the
provision of information. Intelligence is information on
national security issues that happens to be classified. Open
source information has the potential to lower the
classification of many intelligence products, and to allow
for more unclassified outputs. It is not, however,
inherently better or worse than any of the classified sources
of information. Intelligence is knowledge and foreknowledge
of the world around us--the prelude to Presidential
decisions, policies, and actions.

This symposium is about competitiveness. For the United States Intelligence Community to remain competitive, we must be able to provide the President with the best knowledge and foreknowledge on the important international issues. A vigorous Intelligence Community, providing accurate assessments of current and future foreign events from as many different sources of information as possible, is required to maintain this country's competitive edge in the world. If we as a nation are anticipating events and trends correctly, our leaders will be best able to defend our national economic and security interests.

Good intelligence work can make this competitiveness possible. Because Robert Steele has attracted a large number of people from outside the Intelligence Community to this symposium, let me just take a few minutes to outline what our job entails.

Intelligence work starts with the identification of the need for information or data, and that whole process is dependent on guidance from policymakers, planners, operators, and analysts. It is initiated by requests for intelligence on certain subjects by these people ranging from -- the President and the National Security Council, to other major departments and agencies, to embassies and military commands abroad.

Once those information needs are determined, we must collect or access data that relates to those needs. There are many sources for the collection of information, including open sources, such as media broadcasts, newspapers, periodicals, electronic databases, and books. Because open source reporting is integral to the Community's analytical capabilities, enhanced access to pertinent open information in one of our primary strategic goals.

But there are also secret sources of information. The Community's collection officers obtain such information from agents abroad and from defectors who provide information obtainable in no other way. There are also unique technical systems which play an indispensable part in modern intelligence work, such as the key role in monitoring arms control agreements.

The next part of the intelligence business is the processing of this information. This step involves the conversion of the vast amount of information coming into the system to a form more suitable for production of the final intelligence output, be it a briefing, report, study, or estimate. These steps include such activities as interpretation, decryption, and translation. The information that does not go directly to analysts is sorted, stored, and available for rapid computer retrieval.

What then becomes possible is what we call "all source" analysis and reporting. This refers to the conversion of basic information into a finished product. It includes the integration, evaluation, and analysis of all available data (open sources and many different classified sources) and the preparation of one or more intelligence products.

The intelligence information and data collected is frequently fragmentary and at times contradictory. Analysts, who are subject or geographic specialists, weigh the information in terms of reliability, validity, and relevance. They integrate various pieces of data into a coherent whole, put the evaluated information into context, and produce finished intelligence that includes assessments of events or developments, and judgments about the implications of the information for the United States.

The Intelligence Community devotes the bulk of its resources to providing strategic intelligence to policymakers and tactical intelligence to warfighters and peacekeepers. It performs these important functions by monitoring events, warning decisionmakers about threats to the US interests, and forecasting future developments. The subjects involved may concern different regions, problems, or personalities in various contexts--political, geographic, economic, military, scientific, or biographic. Current events, capabilities, and future trends are examined.

The Community also produces numerous written reports, which may be brief--one page or less--or lengthy studies. These outputs may involve current intelligence, which is of immediate importance, or long-range assessments. Some finished intelligence is presented in the form of oral briefings. The Community also produces National Intelligence Estimates, which reflect the collective judgments of the Intelligence Community on topical, critical issues.

There is still one more part of the business cycle of intelligence: the dissemination of the finished intelligence. This involves the distribution of the finished intelligence to the consumers, including the same policymakers whose needs initiated the intelligence requirements. Finished intelligence is hand-carried and delivered electronically on a daily basis to the President and the key national security advisors he designates. Dissemination to policymakers is accomplished by means of distribution lists, each designed on the "need to know" basis. The policymakers, the recipients of the finished intelligence, then make decisions based on the information, which may lead to the levying of additional requirements.

Now I went into this detail to describe the nature of the intelligence business to make several points. First, the "all source" aspect of intelligence work uses many, many different sources of information--from human beings to satellites. Open sources is just one of many means of becoming wiser on a given topic.

As a result, it is very important to stress that open source is not a panacea for intelligence community information needs. It cannot replace the unique capabilities of the other collection processes, which truly provide the Intelligence Community with its competitive edge over other information services.

To be most effective, the open sources available to the Intelligence Community must be used in concert with classified sources of information. This is certainly true when we are deciding how to meet the information needs of our customers. To avoid duplication of effort, and to be truly cost-effective, managers of the intelligence collection disciplines, including those that collect and distribute open source material, must meet regularly to discuss how the Community's assets are to be best tasked to result in a complementary, coherent, cost-effective effort. This work-- for obvious reasons--can best be performed from within the Community itself. Thus, the Community has no need for an open source information "broker" outside the Community to identify those open sources that could best solve intelligence problems. That broker, by definition, would be unaware of current, classified intelligence activities already working synergistically with open sources to meet those needs.

One of the roles that I play as the DCI Open Source Coordinator, is to ensure this that synergism is taking place within the Community.

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No other organization in the world can match the ability of the US Intelligence Community to collect and analyze information and data on the breadth of topics required by the leaders of the free world. The United States is the sole great power in the world partly because of this intelligence capability and our ability to keep pace with technical and information developments that hone our processing, research, and analytical skills.

One of these developments is the explosion in availability of open source information.

In the last 5 years alone, over 3,000 new publications have been launched in the former Soviet Union and East Europe. As political changes have increased the availability of open information, so too have technological advances made the production and distribution of multimedia information a commonplace event throughout much of the world. The best example of this phenomenon is the proliferation of on-line computer networks and databases, which doubled in number from 1989 to 1993, with commercial databases alone now estimated to total 8,000 worldwide. The resulting sheer volume of information demands that the Intelligence Community keep abreast of information industry innovations and that it develop methods and systems to cope with the ever-increasing flow of open information and data.

For policy as well as technical reasons, the Community has not been in the best position to adapt quickly to the dramatic growth in open source information. Community procedures for "hooking up" to the outside world are cumbersome. Moreover, the Community needs to improve the necessary array of search, processing, and exploitation tools to allow users to effectively access massive amounts of open source data. Community information handling policies require top to bottom review and modification to make them relevant and adaptable to our vastly changed information landscape.

The Community not only will confront an increasing number of open sources, but will have to collect, process, and disseminate them in a variety of forms. In particular, visual media (video and graphics) will become more prominent in the open source arena, requiring a vastly different technical infrastructure than presently exists for textual material. Also, the skills necessary to manipulate and integrate multimedia sources will require retraining of collectors, processors, and analysts in the increasing scope of open sources, and in the use of access and exploitation technologies.

To effectively handle visual media, wideband communications channels linking foreign and domestic sites will have to become much more common than they are today. User workstations will have to operate sophisticated processing software and possess necessary interfaces to receive data and images from various information streams. Collectors and processors will have to devise new formats and products in order to deliver information in a way that is both timely and relevant to user and consumer needs.

So, to this end, what are we doing from an Intelligence Community perspective to respond to these challenging times?

Early last year, a Task Force established by DCI Bob Gates concluded that it was essential that the Community's open source assets and capabilities be carefully managed to produce relevant products that are readily available to users in an immediately useful form. This requires Community-level coordination of an architectural design effort; the implementation of an information needs process; and the systematic review of Community open source plans and budgets.

In June 1992, DCI Gates named me as the DCI Open Source Coordinator, and in September, Congress provided me with additional resources to develop a strategic plan, and to design an architecture that would allow the more efficient utilization of open source information throughout the Community.

To make this happen, we have created the Community Open Source Coordination Office, which I head up. This office has several primary tasks:

- It is charged with coordinating the development of an investment strategy to enhance open source collection, processing, exploitation, and distribution capabilities throughout the Intelligence Community.

- This office has developed and is overseeing the implementation of an integrated, long-range open source strategic plan.

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- We will manage the implementation of the open source information architecture for the integration of open source information access and handling across the Intelligence Community. Last, but not least, we will manage the open source information needs or requirements process to determine what steps should be taken in the open source arena to help close the information gaps in the national strategic priorities.

What is our strategy for using open source?

We are seeking to establish open source as the analyst's first information choice and fundamental knowledge base, thereby guiding and focusing the other collection disciplines on the remaining priority issues or, in other words, the real secrets.

To achieve this, we have developed a Community Open Source Strategic Plan that outlines a cohesive, coordinated approach to current and future open source activities. Among other things, the Strategic Plan defines an integrated Community program that will enable users to have timely access to all open source information pertinent to their needs.

The open source program incorporates existing and expected advances in key enabling technologies into a Community architecture that encompasses open source collection, processing, dissemination, and exploitation. A key characteristic of this architecture is that it will employ existing infrastructure wherever possible, particularly in communications linkages, to avoid creating redundant systems and networks.

Responsiveness to user requests for open source information stands out as another key objective of the program. The Open Source Information Needs Process, when implemented, will manage, evaluate, and coordinate open source collection activities across the Community.

What is the Community Open Source Architecture?

- It will be a distributed set of information and service providers and users interconnected by a private, virtual network.

- The network will be superimposed on existing communications infrastructures, such as the Internet and DISNET3.

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- It will make existing capabilities and resources widely available and build on them for the future.

- The architecture will foster the development and sharing of tools for both information access and analysis.

- It will be implemented in three major phases -- each phase will increase the amount of relevant information available to all users.

- Finally, the architecture will provide a mechanism for the integration and management of open source activities across the Community.

In conclusion:

- My vision for the future is to make it possible for US intelligence officers to have ready access to openly available information that is relevant to their needs. We must accomplish this without inundating the users with extraneous information, and, at the same time protecting our data from access by people outside the government.

- If we make it possible for analysts, collection managers, and others in the intelligence community to get answers to their questions first from openly available information, we will ensure that even better use is made of our scarce, classified collection assets. This will be particularly critical in this era of declining resources and budgets.

- The other collection assets must be protected as much as possible because they provide our Community with unique insights into global developments. We must improve our open source exploitation not to replace these classified sources, but to make them even more relevant in meeting the changing needs of our customers for sound intelligence. This will, in effect, ensure that the US Intelligence Community remains the best intelligence service in the world. More importantly, it will help to maintain the competitiveness of the United States in a constantly changing, increasingly uncertain world situation.

Thank you very much.

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