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The Intelligence Assets of the United Nations: Sources, Methods, and Implications

Although defining precisely what constitutes the United Nations' (UN) intelligence system is difficult, the role anticipated by its advocates within the UN structure compares favorably with those expected of state intelligence. Reform documents such as *An Agenda for Peace*, and more recently the *Brahimi Report*, describe tasks that include early-warning-based information gathering and the need to provide for preventive steps based upon timely and accurate knowledge of facts. Other roles have included information for the understanding of developments and global trends based on sound analysis, and the need to integrate intelligence assets into the UN's decision processes.¹ Subsequent UN documents, such as the "Lessons Learned" reports, also reveal a range of roles, which strictly speaking do not differ much from those of state intelligence. This range of functions can be defined as "knowledge and analysis designed to assist action and the task of intelligence as prognosis to warning and estimate of future events."²

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