

INTELLIGENCE IN THE 1990'S: RECASTING NATIONAL SECURITY IN A CHANGING WORLD

by Robert David Steele



Robert Steele, the senior civilian participant in the creation and management of the new USMC Intelligence Center at Quantico, has served in a variety of assignments both in and out of DoD. His views, while personal and not official, are consistent with those of his Commandant as published in our Winter issue, and are a refreshing demonstration of strategic and forward thinking among our mid-level career intelligence professionals in the civil service.

"I am constantly being asked a bottom-line defense number. I don't know of any logical way to arrive at such a figure without analyzing the threat; without determining what changes in our strategy should be made in light of the changes in the threat; and then determining what force structure and weapons programs we need to carry out this revised strategy." -Senator Sam Nunn

This article will discuss the changing threat in terms of six challenges critical to our over-all national security posture in the 1990's. To adapt intelligence to our new threat and fiscal environments, we must make radical and comprehensive changes in how we manage and conceptualize intelligence.

Our Environment

We find ourselves in a multi-polar and multi-dimensional environment in which a critical distinction must be drawn between the conventional threat and the emerging threat.

This distinction, first presented in the Commandant's article in the Winter issue, is straight-forward: the conven-

tional threat is generally associated with a government, conventional or nuclear in nature, represented by static orders of battle, linear in the development and deployment of its capabilities, employed in accordance with well-understood rules of engagement and doctrine, relatively easy to detect in its mobilization, and supported by generally recognizable intelligence assets.

The emerging threat...cannot be assessed...by our existing capabilities.

The emerging threat, by contrast, is non-governmental, non-conventional, dynamic or random, non-linear, with no constraints or predictable doctrine, almost impossible to detect in advance, and supported by an unlimited 5th column of criminals and drug addicts.

The conventional threat lends itself very well to conventional intelligence collection capabilities which include a strong ability at stand-off technical collection, and a fairly methodical,

repetitious, and largely bureaucratized way of doing "analysis"; the emerging threats, in sharp contrast, simply cannot be spotted, assessed, fixed, and neutralized by our existing capabilities.

The "war on drugs", and our concern over arms control (not just verification of Soviet reductions but also control of nuclear and bio-chemical weapons proliferation in the Third World) are both representative of these new threats.

Narcotics, in both the intelligence and the operational worlds, must be seen as representative of a "type" threat, not as an odious and undesirable distraction from the "real" threat.

Narcotics...is a 'type' threat...not a distraction from the 'real' threat.

The multi-dimensional nature of change in our multi-polar world must also be considered as we evaluate how best to meet these threats.

DIMENSIONS OF CHANGE

Political-Legal
Socio-Economic
Ideo-Cultural
Techno-Demographic
Natural-Geographic

Intelligence must be much more than simply political reporting or military Order of Battle "bean counting". Intelligence must be able to identify emerging sources of power and emerging sources of instability in each dimension, and forecast their rate of change.

Our emphasis on the need to modify our "world view" and our definition of what merits attention from our intelligence community in no way reduces the importance of continued attention to the Soviet Union.

Three areas in particular must be acknowledged:

- First, we must continue to monitor the strategic nuclear threat.
- Second, intelligence must be capable of monitoring "plans and intentions" of the Soviets in the decades ahead. We must be prepared to identify regression and deception, e.g. perestroika and glasnost may have a mirror image as a STRATEGIC DECEPTION, as a means by which the Soviet Union can establish its technological depth and regain its competitive edge.
- Finally, the flowering of democratic and opposition movements in Eastern Europe and Soviet Republics call for much more intelligence on the ground inside the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, and a much greater sensitivity to the socio-economic, psychological, and cultural factors which were previously overshadowed by the military threat from the Warsaw Pact.

Having established in this way the environment within which intelligence must operate in the 1990's we can now outline each of the six challenges and what it means for our intelligence structure and the allocation of resources in FY 92-97 and beyond.

SIX AREAS OF CHALLENGE

Meeting Needs of Public Programs
I&W Methods for New Threats
Theory & Methods for CI/OPSEC
InfoTech Strategy
Requirements System
Resource Realignments

Challenge Number One: Meeting the Intelligence Needs of Public Programs

Today there is insufficient emphasis on defining and meeting the intelligence needs of overt civilian agencies, law enforcement activities, and contingency military forces.

This point has major fiscal implications well beyond those of concern to defense force structure managers.

There are two major fiscal strategies that intelligence must support: first, the strategy of "spending smart", and investing in cheaper peaceful civilian nation-building capabilities as early as possible, rather than waiting for situations to deteriorate to the point that military intervention is required; and second, the strategy of fighting a truly "total war" in which we recognize that a failure on our part to be competitive in the international trade & financial markets is tantamount to losing a "real" war.

Selected public programs not necessarily associated with "national security" in fact offer an exceptional "return on investment" in terms of enhancing our strategic depth and our position overseas.

General A. M. Gray, Commandant of the Marine Corps, recently emphasized the need for "more and better Third World intelligence...(so) corresponding resource allocations can be appropriately balanced". He went on to say:

"If threat is a factor in determining national investments in security assistance and foreign aid, then a more aggressive

program of Third World intelligence analysis and forecasting is needed if we are to justify long overdue and underfunded peaceful preventive measures in this vital area of concern and potential." (emphasis in the original)

Warriors pray for peace. General MacArthur made this point with unusual eloquence, and it remains true today. The task of the warrior is made more difficult and costs the nation much more in the lost lives of its sons and daughters as well as simple economic cost if pre-revolutionary conditions are not identified and dealt with through "peaceful preventive measures". Monitoring corruption associated with our military assistance programs, identifying popular misconceptions about our Nation that should be corrected, and understanding the true and often unarticulated needs of Third World countries are extremely important tasks that intelligence can undertake in defense of our over-all national security.

Intelligence must help us make investment decisions and evaluate our programs, with special emphasis on overt & covert programs focused on "nation-building" and/or the furtherance of our national interests.

Challenge Number Two: Indications & Warnings of Revolutionary Change

Our intelligence and foreign affairs communities have demonstrated only a limited understanding of revolutionary change, no methodology for studying the preconditions, precipitants, and actualization of such change, no

We have paid insufficient attention to open sources...

framework for ensuring collection and analysis priorities respect the importance of all the dimensions within which revolutions can occur, and no indications & warnings (I&W) capability suitable to this challenge. There are several contributing factors: