CONSIDERATIONS FOR UPDATING THE CONTEMPORARY INTELLIGENCE CYCLE TO THE CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENT

Date: November 17, 2023

Disclaimer: This briefing note contains the encapsulation of views presented by the speaker and does not exclusively represent the views of the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies.

KEY EVENTS

On November 17, 2023, Professor Candyce Kelshall presented *Considerations for Updating the Contemporary Intelligence Cycle to the Contemporary Environment* for this year's West Coast Security Conference. The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer period with questions from the audience and CASIS Vancouver executives. The key points discussed were the importance of an effective Intelligence Cycle, the main issues with the Intelligence Cycle, and the new proposed Review Centric Cycle.

NATURE OF DISCUSSION

Prof. Kelshall presented a critical assessment of the Intelligence Cycle and proposed a new model: the Review Centric Cycle, noting how an effective Intelligence Cycle should help those in the intelligence community identify their role in the greater organization. Without an effective Intelligence Cycle, the intelligence community is unable to provide the public with information, potentially leading to a subsequent turn to misinformation that can exacerbate polarization and civic disagreements.

BACKGROUND

Presentation

Prof. Kelshall explained that diagrams are of vital importance to a functioning organic entity, as they act as a guide to the security and intelligence community and define the roles and responsibilities of the individuals within them. Diagrams can help not only those who work within the intelligence community to understand their position within the larger picture, but also can impact the

public's perception of how well the community is fulfilling their duties. If the diagram which informs the organizational structure of an entity is inaccurate, the resulting product that the entity produces will be flawed and unsuccessful.

Prof. Kelshall defined the Intelligence Cycle as a set of steps to address the analysis requirements for a security problem, to fill the gaps in information efficiently in order to address the problem directly and in a way which permits the decision maker to function effectively. She stated that the Intelligence Cycle is often the last thing taught to practitioners, who possess competence-based expertise but can the cognizance of their role in the bigger picture. Previous Intelligence Cycles have followed linear diagrams—which are inadequate at addressing non-linear threats—or a diagram which lacks the role of a functioning line authority for review. Prof. Kelshall stressed that Intelligence Cycles should be the pathway that guides enterprises to function effectively in a complex environment.

Prof. Kelshall proposed the Review Centric Cycle, which focuses on the justification and efficacy of review during collection and has target appreciation at the center of the collection plan. In this new cycle, a meeting would occur mid-process and at its conclusion, during which the reviewer would address justifications and develop a feedback loop among the other steps of the cycle. The principal addition to the Intelligence Cycle within the diagram is the Analytic Reviewer, whose role centers on confirming that the assessment methodology and collection plans are sound, providing feedback and aiding in accountability. Prof. Kelshall stated that their main role is to confirm that the end product of the cycle meets all the required thresholds for stakeholders, though they could also conduct OSINT searching and collection. The result will enhance levels of efficiency within the intelligence process and produce more timely products.

Prof. Kelshall emphasized that the reviewer in this process is a capability assessor and should comprise a distinct role within the analyst team, acting as a liaison between the multiple parts of the Intelligence Cycle—only once the reviewer has signed off on the product will it then be sent for dissemination. The Review Centric Cycle provides information to the consumer in an efficient and timely manner, while reducing the potential for gaps in information throughout the process, to address the security problem at hand.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- An effective Intelligence Cycle diagram is essential to outline the lines of communication, responsibility and accountability within an organizational structure. Without this, an end product produced by the entity can be flawed and inefficient.

- The Intelligence Cycle should provide a clear process that can be used to address the analysis requirements, to fill the gaps in information around security issues efficiently and in a way that allows the client to receive correct and useful information after dissemination.

- The Review Centric Cycle places the reviewer at the center of the process. They ensure that the methodologies of the intelligence exercise align with the needs and collection objectives and that the end product will meet all the required thresholds for the consumers of the information.

FURTHER READING

Kelshall, C. (2018). Accountability and the Juxtaposition of Civil Society and Policing in a Period of Changing Norms: Using Independent Police Advisors. The Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare, 1(1), 44-60.

Kelshall, C. (2022). Identity Exclusive Violent Transnational Social Movements and 5th Generation Civic Warfare. The Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare, 4(3), 164-169.

Kelshall, C. (2023). Violent Transnational Social Movements and their Impact on Contemporary Social Conflict. The Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare, 1(3), 27-42.

SFU LIBRARY DIGITAL PUBLISHING