

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified		1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS	
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY N/A		3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.	
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE N/A		4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) NDU-ICAF-93-1164	
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) NDU-ICAF-93-1164		5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) Same	
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Industrial College of the Armed Forces	6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable) ICAF-FAP	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION National Defense University	
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Fort Lesley J. McNair Washington, D.C. 20319-6000		7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Fort Lesley J. McNair Washington, D.C. 20319-6000	
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS	
		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.
		TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) OPENNESS. A viable strategy for U.S. Intelligence?			
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Bill R. Moore			
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Research	13b. TIME COVERED FROM Aug 92 TO Apr 93	14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) April 1993	15. PAGE COUNT 32
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION			
17. COSATI CODES		18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)	
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) SEE ATTACHED			
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS		21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Judy Clark		22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (202) 475-1889	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL ICAF-FAP

ABSTRACT

The former Director of the CIA, Robert M. Gates, announced a number of changes for the intelligence community in early 1992. Part of the new strategy was greater openness by the CIA in dealing with the public to gain better accountability.

Since I agreed with Mr. Gates assessment that openness for intelligence is an oxymoron--at least on the surface--I decided to evaluate the specific proposals to try and determine if the strategy would work.

I discovered that openness as a strategy has a great deal of potential for the intelligence community. Several of the initiatives proposed are steps in the right direction and recognize that recent changes in the world dictate changes in the intelligence community. I also found that the strategy of openness places too much reliance on historical records to accomplish its stated goals. I have recommended in my paper that the focus shift to the future, that the intelligence community place increased emphasis on the economic challenges facing the United States, and that proposed initiatives be carried farther than presently intended.

Openness is an idea whose time has come. It remains to be seen how far the intelligence community will allow openness to go.

**1993
Executive Research Project
A164**

**OPENNESS:
A Viable Strategy for
U.S. Intelligence?**

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THE CHALLENGE FOR INTELLIGENCE

Robert M. Gates, Director of Central Intelligence, in recognition of the dramatic changes going on in the world and the need for course corrections announced a new strategy for American intelligence in February 1992. A significant aspect of this strategy was the announcement of greater openness for the CIA. Better accountability to the American people, both directly and through the Congress, was the intended purpose.

It is difficult to argue with Mr. Gates' position that the intelligence community must make changes. In the next few pages, I would like to explain the initiatives undertaken to achieve openness, evaluate how well these initiatives are likely to achieve the intended outcome, examine the likely benefits of openness, evaluate openness as a strategy, and suggest other actions that may be taken by the intelligence community to achieve accountability.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

In an April 1, 1992, statement Mr. Gates outlined "the most fundamental change in the American Intelligence Community in decades, affecting structure, process, programs and management" (Gates 1). This was the response to the requirements levied by

National Security Review 29 signed by the President and requiring a top to bottom review of the missions and priorities of the Intelligence Community in view of the intelligence and support needs anticipated by 20 policy agencies out to the year 2005. Though not a stated purpose, these initiatives were also an effort to preempt perhaps drastic reorganization recommended by Senator Boren to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Mr. Gates appointed 14 task forces to identify and recommend needed change. One of those task forces addressed CIA openness. "It concluded that in today's world CIA had to be more forthcoming in public about its mission and roles, the intelligence process and to the extent possible the way we go about our business" (Gates 16). Specific proposals, which I have divided into three categories, were:

General

- *Background briefings to the media
- *On-the-record discussions by CIA senior officials about the CIA and the intelligence process
- *Publication in open sources of unclassified or declassified articles from the CIA Journal, Studies in Intelligence
- *Providing unclassified information on the CIA history, mission, function and role for the media, schools, civic groups and other organizations.

Academia

- *Expansion of the scholar-in-residence program

*Strengthening the outreach program to universities.

Declassification

*Formation of a new unit within CIA to review historical documents for declassification and release into the public domain. This is an attempt to change the basic attitude toward declassification by presuming that publications should be declassified and seeking ways to expedite the process.

As a general comment about the three areas, it appears that the first group of initiatives attempts to improve understanding of the CIA by revealing facts about the organizational structure, functions, and roles of the agency. The only exception appears to be the initiative to provide background briefings to the media-presumably about current affairs. The second grouping seeks to establish credibility by offering the talents of intelligence professionals from the agency to the academic community and strengthening ties to academia in general. According to Mr. Gates, the third grouping focuses on past achievements of the agency as a means to gain some future support. "We will attach priority focus on events of particular interest to historians from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, beginning with the JFK papers and the Bay of Pigs" (Gates 17, 18).

THE STRATEGIC TARGET

The normal consumer of intelligence produced by the CIA is the policymaking apparatus of our government. Interestingly, the target for the new strategy of openness does not appear to be that audience at all. Rather, it is the public and, more specifically, academia with particular emphasis on historians and to a lesser degree those interested in the study of intelligence as a discipline, a profession, and as a support agency to national decisionmaking. The media also gets its share of attention. No doubt the CIA would like to give the media something other than expose material to print.

The chosen target of openness calls into question where the CIA's need for respectability and acceptability really lies. Given that funding for the agency and approval for its structure and products come directly from the government, and, only in an indirect sense from the public, this is an interesting, if not revolutionary, approach indeed.

It would be unfair to view this part of the overall strategy in isolation. Openness is only one small part of the overall strategy--most of which is aimed at the more traditional consumers of intelligence produced by the CIA. The broader strategy entails organizational and functional management changes designed to make the CIA more responsive to the intelligence

needs identified during the review process. It is to the agency's credit that they recognize the longer range benefits of accountability to the public.

WHAT WILL OPENNESS TELL ABOUT THE CIA?

The Public and the Media. Under the "general category" of initiatives the public should learn most about intelligence as a profession and a process to support national level decisionmaking. Some flavor of the issues seen as important to the intelligence profession will come from unclassified and declassified articles from the CIA's professional publication, Studies in Intelligence. Most of what one can learn will be based on the past and it will be up to the individual to relate patterns from past activities-to what future implications might be. The notable exception to this assessment will come in the form of background briefings and on-the-record interviews to the media. One would expect that the media will be pleased to get the official CIA assessment, but, at the same time will display an increased appetite for more information. There is much to gain in the public relations area by focusing the media on something positive about intelligence. "...democracy flourishes even more vigorously when the natural antagonism between these two powerful entities (government and the media) is reduced by a facilitator who is understanding of both. This, I believe, is one of the critical functions of a spokesman for an intelligence

agency" (Baker 17).

Academia. Relations with academia offer some new and some old ideas. The officer or scholar-in-residence program, as it is now called, is not a new idea.

"A modest expansion of officer-in-residence programs is also planned. Under this program, CIA officers teach intelligence, foreign affairs and related subjects as visiting faculty members at such institutions as Georgetown, Tennessee, Morris Brown, Harvard and the United States Air Force Academy. Although CIA prohibits officers assigned to these programs from recruiting students for employment or conducting intelligence activities, some faculties and students still object to their presence" (Gries 8).

However, a tangible positive result is the growth of course offerings at universities that are related to the study of intelligence both as a profession and as a component of the national security decisionmaking apparatus.

The most significant new initiative with academia is the sponsorship by CIA of public conferences and seminars, normally in conjunction with a university, college or research organization. In October of 1992, the CIA sponsored a conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis and in 1993 will sponsor a conference on the origins of the CIA with the Truman Library and will offer an eight-week course on the CIA with the Smithsonian

Institution's Campus on the Mall (Gries 9).

Again, I would emphasize the historical flavor of these initiatives and suggest that what one learns about CIA is more about the past than the future. In fairness, CIA recognizes this problem and has formed the National Intelligence Study Center whose basic aim "is to facilitate whatever tasks are necessary to lay the foundation for a better understanding of the importance of good intelligence in a democracy." This center publishes a newsletter, "Foreign Intelligence Literary Scene," which evaluates scholarly publications in order to enhance the understanding of the intelligence system, runs an awards program recognizing "intelligent writing on intelligence," and co-sponsored with the Smithsonian Institution a lecture series in the fall of 1991 entitled "From Spies to Satellites: Intelligence Gathering and Covert Operations for a New World Order" (Fontaine V,115,122).

The Historical Record. The last grouping of initiatives under the openness strategy has to do with declassification of historical records. This too is not a totally new idea. Former Director of Central Intelligence, William Casey, in 1985, established the Historical Review Program to declassify older records and make them available to the public through the National Archives. Director Gates created a new task force to write new guidelines and expanded the size of the office

responsible for this task.

What we will learn about CIA under this initiative is best answered by examining the review process. The Director, Center for the Study of Intelligence, administers this program under which all permanent agency records except operational files 30 years old or older are reviewed. Permanent records include records on selected topics or events, some National Intelligence Estimates, and CIA documents that the Department of State includes in its Foreign Relations of the United States series. As an exception to the 30 year rule, National Intelligence Estimates of the former Soviet Union that are 10 years old or older are reviewed.

What we are sure not to learn is any item covered under Section 6 of the CIA Act of 1949 as amended by 50 U.S. Code, paragraph 403g, which exempts the CIA from any law requiring publication or disclosure of the organization, functions, names, official titles, salaries, or numbers of personnel employed. The review process measures the value of documents by their potential to aid in the understanding of the history of CIA and its role in U.S. intelligence, foreign policy, and international developments. Also, special consideration is given to information that would constitute an unauthorized disclosure of foreign government information, the identity of a confidential foreign source, or intelligence sources or methods used to acquire the information.

These seemingly formidable obstacles to declassification limit what can be made available in the spirit of openness but some success has been achieved and is useful in supporting conferences, seminars, and providing the material upon which other initiatives depend. The common thread throughout these initiatives is the dependence on the record of history to inform and become accountable to the public.

JUSTIFYING INTELLIGENCE COSTS IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

The first question that must be asked in evaluating a strategy of openness for the intelligence community--or any other strategy of our government--is whether the end product is worth the cost of the expenditures required to execute the specific steps to produce it. For the intelligence community cost is measured in funding for intelligence activities and organizations. When considering openness an additional potential cost is putting at risk sensitive sources and methods used in the collection and production of intelligence.

The stated end product against which we must evaluate cost for openness is accountability. In other words, there is an assumption that by providing information to the public that was previously classified, while possibly risking the future

viability of procedures and sources that may be exposed by the openness strategy, the cost of the intelligence function will be judged worth the expenditure. The logic of this approach follows an old paradigm: the public judges the CIA after events occur based on the relevance and accuracy of their judgments. It would seem more productive and prudent to break away from this old way of looking at the problem and shift the emphasis to the present value-added contribution of intelligence as a means of gaining accountability.

In this regard, there is a significant, present opportunity for the intelligence community to promote understanding and acceptance of its role as critical to the interests of the American people by openly working to be part of the solution to the economic challenges facing us. What is significant today is the recognition by a growing number of Americans of the importance of economic change at home and abroad to deal with the challenges facing our nation. Increasingly government agencies, including the intelligence community, will find themselves measured by a different yardstick--their ability to contribute to the economic well-being of the United States.

The emerging threat to the United States is economic and not military. We entered the Cold War as the sole economic Superpower and we exit it as the sole military Superpower with an economy that, though strong, is declining and relatively weak

when compared to its status at the onset of the Cold War. "The European Community, a united Germany, Japan, and the Four Dragons of the Pacific Rim-Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Korea-will be the chief economic threats or rivals to the United States. To help meet the challenge, the United States has a capability of great potential that has never been fully utilized-vast and powerful resources in information and intelligence" (Wright 12).

We cannot forget the remaining military threats posed to our nation by widespread instability and the existence of other powers and political systems with interests that oppose ours. Intelligence still has a traditional role to play in protecting the United States' national security that is much like its role during the Cold War. At the same time, intelligence like the rest of our government must become engaged economically more than before.

OPENNESS, IMAGE, AND MEASURING SUCCESS

Mr. Gates assessment that the intelligence community is not understood is accurate. Two perceptions about intelligence tend to prevail and neither are helpful. Perhaps the most common, and, certainly the most benign, is the image of exotic intrigue. "As the romance of secret service gradually wears off, a romance aided and abetted by decades of spy fiction and film, intelligence services are learning that they need public

respectability to operate effectively" (Farson, 7). The other perception and the most insidious is that of the rogue elephant whose actions must be closely monitored. "The disputes of the past twenty years have amply demonstrated that American citizens need a clearer perception of just what our intelligence agencies do" (Fontaine, V).

The idea that openness can contribute to a more positive image of the intelligence community cannot be disputed. Accountability to the American people directly and through Congress will also help the intelligence community over the long run. I would argue that openness as a strategy is a step in the right direction in that it has the potential to gain for the intelligence community the necessary credibility to foster the support of the American people. As in the past, the degree to which intelligence succeeds or fails will be based on the relevance and accuracy of the output it produces.

WILL THE STRATEGY WORK?

The fact that the overall strategy announced by Gates--of which openness is only one part--correctly recognizes the need for flexibility in the face of a very challenging world situation is likely to assist the intelligence community in its efforts to stay tuned to the national security interests of the United States and the specific requirements of our policymakers. At

least in its relations with our government, it may continue to garner support in the form of funding for its programs. The reorganization and other initiatives, announced to more closely align the intelligence community with the government agencies it supports, are positive signs.

When evaluating the openness initiative subcomponent in isolation from the rest of the strategy it is harder to identify specific, tangible benefits for the intelligence community. There are several reasons for this:

First, the objective is stated as accountability to the American people with the expected byproduct of improvement of the American peoples' understanding of intelligence. This is a noble concept but it is an abstract idea. Certainly, in a democracy every government institution should recognize its obligation to the people and at the same time know that without public support its very legitimacy is in question. As a strategic initiative, it is appropriate to look at the long-term implications of public support. Near-term benefits are harder to visualize since the American public is not actively involved in lobbying for or against intelligence activities on a day-to-day basis.

Second, the reliance on the history of intelligence

activities to gain accountability is not the ideal approach. Even if the results of historical analysis, with all the stumbling blocks inherent in releasing information about past intelligence activities, prove that intelligence has been very valuable, it will not ensure future accountability. Even worse, trying to draw conclusions about the future through historical analogy may produce different than the intended results.

Third, the bottom line of any discussion of support for the intelligence community is funding. What good is all the respectability and admiration without the money to continue to collect, analyze and produce intelligence? In this regard one could conclude that the primary target and the historical focus of openness are wrong. Funding will come from Congress. Though they should be concerned about the opinions of the public about intelligence, their support for intelligence will be based on its relevance to the security needs of the United States. Obviously, it is not possible to announce a strategy that targets Congress directly to ensure future funding. One could conclude that this strategy takes a semantically more palatable approach to the same end.

OPENNESS: A PLACE IN THE FUTURE?

I would recommend that all the initiatives proposed by Gates be continued. Though they may not gain immediate benefits for intelligence, they have potential over the longer term to be very valuable. Better understanding by the public, the media, and academia of the value of intelligence can result in support for its activities, contribute indirectly to future funding for intelligence, enhance recruiting into the intelligence profession, lessen the need to divert resources to answer criticism from these same groups, and ultimately improve the image of intelligence. If anything, the initiatives should be expanded. Once the "green door" is open it is difficult to explain the rationale for closing it again.

WHERE SHOULD OPENNESS GO FROM HERE?

Breaking the Mold. First, using momentum from the initiatives already suggested, the intelligence community should decide to break a long-standing paradigm. The intelligence community has traditionally argued that its uniqueness resulted from its sensitive sources and methods. Information--necessarily classified to protect those sources and methods--would not be available from any other source since no one else had this exact combination of assets. This is an argument that still can be made. After all, one cannot forget the significant expenditure

of resources both technological and human to develop the robust intelligence capabilities of the United States.

While one can argue for the need to keep doing some things the same, the time has come to recognize that some things have changed. For instance, intelligence cannot compete with an international, private-sector, intelligence agency like CNN in covering current information around the world. In fact, they no longer attempt to.

Space is becoming a private-sector, commercial enterprise. What was formerly the domain of government and mostly the intelligence community is now available to anyone who can afford to pay for LANDSAT or French SPOT imagery. The trend for the future is more commercialization of space with the possible result that private enterprise will be able to provide products at a price that will make one question why the government and the intelligence community are spending so much on space with no tangible benefit to the public.

The intelligence community can continue to develop and protect sources and methods but it must look for new areas where it can make a contribution to the national security and the public need. The bottom line for intelligence is expansion into unclassified methods and sources. That is, if the community is serious about improving knowledge and understanding about intelligence.

Openness provides the vehicle to make this transition possible.

The following are some specific comments about ongoing initiatives:

*Every attempt should be made to limit classification and compartmentation of products as they are produced. There is a study underway at CIA that may assist by simplification of the system in place since 1947 governing classification and discourage overclassification of information. Clearly, it is easier to publish something unclassified than it is to fight to declassify it later. New rules are needed that help to change the whole approach to classification.

*Publish as many unclassified products as possible whether or not credit for the information can be fully attributed to the intelligence community. Gates has appointed an Open Source Coordinator who will "establish a catalog of the open source holdings of not only each agency but of the Community as a whole, establish a comprehensive requirements system that will guide the acquisition of open source materials for the Community, and over a longer period, establish the capacity to share this information broadly within the Intelligence Community" (Gates 27). This a good idea but does not go far enough in the right direction. The goal should be to publish unclassified products resulting

from analysis of open sources to share inside and "outside" the intelligence community. Two facts about the intelligence community are underappreciated: the community gathers and uses a great deal of unclassified products in the normal course of doing business; and, they possess a very high quality group of professionals dedicated to the analysis of information. The combination of the two has significant potential to produce products useful and relevant to our nation and the American public.

*Exploit contacts with academia. This is an area where too many resources can be spent with little value added. Academia is interested in expanding knowledge but only if it can be published. Nevertheless, joint publications with academia as the result of on-campus cooperation, publications from joint symposia, or as the result of members of the academic community working in CIA all are within reach.

*Increase the availability of unclassified imagery to the public. To the credit of CIA they have recognized this need. "Under an agreement worked out between Senator Albert Gore and Director Gates, ...scientists will determine whether imagery produced over the years to track developments in strategic weapons programs in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere could lead to greater understanding of land use,

soil conditions, and climate change...If the scientists find the archives valuable, Gates intends to make as much of the imagery public as possible" (Gries 15). This is an excellent idea but why must the focus always be on the past? Why don't we look for opportunities to answer other important questions with future missions? The fact we have a space program under the National Reconnaissance Office and that the Director of Central Intelligence establishes the collection priorities and requirements for targeting is no longer classified information. Certainly the space resources available to the intelligence community are limited; but, if intelligence is looking for support for its programs and even increased support where it can be justified, it makes sense to carry this initiative further by managing non-traditional uses of space capabilities.

Change the Focus. The second area where the strategy of openness needs refinement is in its focus. History is replete with lessons that may be applied to the future. It is fair to say, however, that it will take more than the lessons of history to meet the challenges facing the United States in the future. As I have suggested, the next struggle that has the greatest potential to undermine the continued security of the United States will be an economic war. The intelligence community to an increasing degree will find the measure of its success linked to its ability to contribute to the economic challenges that we will face.

No one is arguing or is likely to produce much of a challenge to the future viability of intelligence by arguing that our nation no longer has enemies and therefore intelligence is not an appropriate activity in pursuit of our national security. What the critics of intelligence are after is proof that intelligence structure and focus is anachronistic-still fighting the Cold War.

I believe that the intelligence community will probably do a reasonably good job in molding itself functionally and organizationally to the threats of the future. There is evidence of this in Mr. Gates reorganization initiatives. There is a more critical issue for intelligence. Will they provide answers to the right questions? This is not a new problem for intelligence. It is a problem of focus and focus is not entirely the prerogative of intelligence. Policymakers at the highest level and decisionmakers at various levels of government hierarchy have the responsibility to establish requirements for the intelligence community. This is seldom remembered when the topic of intelligence failure is discussed.

Changes in focus are already being discussed by the Clinton administration for the intelligence community. According to Mr. Woolsey, the new CIA Director, a review is underway of the feasibility of sharing economic intelligence with private companies and individuals. This would represent the single most

important adjustment in focus that could be made and probably the most inexpensive. Increased emphasis on economics has the greatest potential to promote the intelligence community in the future. There are opportunities to tie intelligence initiatives into President Clinton's economic agenda at the outset.

One could ask why the idea of increased emphasis on economics by the intelligence community is something new. It would seem that economics should be a part of any intelligence analysis. These are good questions. The fact is the intelligence community has tracked and used economic data in the past to produce its products. I am suggesting that the intelligence community raise the priority for collection of economic intelligence and information and produce new products, classified and unclassified, with an economic focus. As with any other intelligence effort it is up to the policymakers to define the requirements that lead to products. Intelligence does not make policy and should not presume to decide what the requirements are for economic information.

The interest of the new administration in economics is an opportunity for the intelligence community to make linkages to economic policymaking organizations, many of which did not exist previously. If the assumption that economic competitiveness is the struggle of the future is correct, these steps will place the intelligence community in the correct position to stay attuned

to the economic information and intelligence needed, to have assets dedicated to the collection, analysis, and publication of economic data, and to have in place direct linkages to those charged with policymaking.

WILL THE STRATEGY SURVIVE?

The time is right for changes in the way intelligence performs its craft. The efforts already underway are steps in the right direction and there is potential to do more. What are the obstacles that dictate against the strategy and its prospects for the future?

Leadership. Mr. Gates was the driving force behind the strategy. He is now a part of the CIA historical record. Whether Mr. Woolsey chooses to make openness an important part of the strategy of the intelligence community remains to be seen. His leadership in this area is critical to the survival of what is now working.

Institutional Resistance. There are those within the intelligence community who would be quick to point out that intelligence has done a much better job than the public record indicates and thereby argue to continue with traditional intelligence strategies. As previously pointed out, there is still a place within the intelligence profession for the more

traditional methods of collecting, analyzing, and producing intelligence on our enemies. However, there is evidence that the community, as a whole, is supportive of the search for new ways to function and actions aimed at improving the image of intelligence. In fact, the community may be more forward looking than would be assumed by the public evidence. There are, after all, many obstacles to revealing the whole story to the public.

The Law. The protection of intelligence sources and methods and more importantly the rights of American citizens is important. The body of law governing intelligence is massive and grows regularly. When one decides to open the doors and release information from the intelligence world into the public domain, the legal considerations are stifling. In order to overcome the legal obstacles it will be necessary for the intelligence community to seek relief from some existing statutes and appeal to the Congress and the President to change the focus of legislation in the future. It will be important to distinguish between those laws aimed at the protection of the rights of American citizens and those that are tied to intelligence processes and procedures. It is in the latter group that changes can be made. As our government seeks ways to involve itself in ensuring the productivity and economic competitiveness of U.S. business, the intelligence community will find itself hampered by legal constraints and not a participant in what is being pursued as a vital security concern of our nation unless legal

strategy changes also.

Proving Success. Whatever changes in intelligence strategy bring about, it will continue to be very difficult to measure the success of openness. This is the reason that going farther than presently planned in an effort to produce tangible products of value and relevance and the establishment of linkages into new government economic initiatives and organizations is so important. Without tangible evidence of success it will prove difficult indeed to argue for continued funding for intelligence activities. Reliance on harmonious relations with academia and improved public image is insufficient.

CONCLUSION

Robert M. Gates stated that openness in intelligence is an oxymoron. However, we live in a world today that when interpreted by yesterday's rules is full of oxymorons-where most of Eastern Europe no longer has a Communist Party but the United States does. Such a world holds special challenges for the intelligence community. Openness, though seen as a contradiction in the past, holds great promise to change the way the intelligence community relates to the American people and the policymakers charged with the protection of the national security interests of the United States. The intelligence community must not be timid in discovering ways to implement the strategy of

openness. It must break with past paradigms that cloaked its value in secrecy and prevented it from revealing its success while others revealed all the failures they could discover. It must recognize the contribution it can make to the economic challenges facing our nation and work hard to provide the information and intelligence needed to overcome them. In the new World Order openness for intelligence may not be a contradiction at all. Rather, it may be a very useful initiative to meet the challenges of the future.

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