Impact of Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) on Intelligence Support to DOD Joint Operations

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The paper analyzes the impact of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) on Department of Defense (DoD) operational intelligence functions. The analysis briefly covers the development and reform process, which led to the creation of the modern US Intelligence Community. The paper then views the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission as the basis for the creation of Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) in order to establish how policy makers viewed the DNI role in supporting military operations. Finally, the paper highlights that although the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 provided the tools to the DNI to support operational military commanders it is far less directive than Goldwater-Nichols was for the DoD. Therefore the paper argues that the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 will not improve DoD operational intelligence activities in support of Joint Operations without a significant DNI effort. The paper recommends how DoD can engage with the DNI in order to ensure better intelligence support to operational commanders.
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Impact of Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) on Intelligence Support to DoD Joint Operations

by

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The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____________________

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Abstract

The paper analyzes the impact of the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* (IRTPA) on Department of Defense (DoD) operational intelligence functions. The analysis briefly covers the development and reform process, which led to the creation of the modern US Intelligence Community. The paper then views the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission as the basis for the creation of Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) in order to establish how policy makers viewed the DNI role in supporting military operations. Finally, the paper highlights that although the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* provided the tools to the DNI to support operational military commanders it is far less directive than Goldwater-Nichols was for the DoD.

Therefore the paper argues that the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* will not improve DoD operational intelligence activities in support of Joint Operations without a significant DNI effort. The paper recommends how DoD can engage with the DNI in order to ensure better intelligence support to operational commanders.
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Numerous historical case studies point to failures in intelligence that resulted in both operational and strategic defeat. The most recently highlighted failure was not to identify or prevent the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. As with all failures, significant review and investigation has taken place, which eventually resulted in one of the most significant reorganizations of the U.S. National Security apparatus, specifically the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004*. Unlike Goldwater-Nichols, which significantly reformed the Department of Defense (DoD), the IRTPA reform was focused not within one executive department, but across the numerous agencies and departments that make up the U.S. intelligence community. **However, this paper argues that the impact of the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* on Department of Defense (DoD) Intelligence Activities will not improve DoD operational intelligence activities in support of Joint Operations without a significant effort on the part of the DNI.**

In looking at the impact of *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* (henceforth called IRTPA) it is best to utilize the joint framework for intelligence – planning and direction, collection, processing and exploitation, analysis and production, and dissemination and integration (see Figure 1); these common to development of intelligence across all levels from tactical to strategic. This paper

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argues, based on the background of historical and current reforms that there are both positive and negative impacts at the operational and strategic levels of war from changes to significant portions of National Security legislation. This paper demonstrates that operational commanders and forces will receive the least benefit from the latest reform, IRTPA. The paper makes some recommendations to mitigate the identified challenges and improve intelligence support to the operational level leaders based within the Intel Reform legislation.

**Background**

> It is hard to “break down stovepipes” when there are so many stoves that are legally and politically entitled to have cast iron pipes of their own.  
> - 9/11 Commission Report

There is no war-fighting function, other than intelligence that is equally significant to all levels of warfare as well as overall policy determination; therefore, the importance of this paper should become clear just through a basic study of the current amalgam of agencies and departments (see Figure 2 below) that are commonly referred to as the intelligence community (thereafter termed IC).

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Figure 2 shows 50 percent of this community has dual responsibilities to both the Department of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence. Due to these dual requirements and the associated authorities and responsibilities, it is necessary to review any significant change to the IC whether executive or legislative in nature, to determine possible impacts on the role of the IC elements as they relate to the provision of intelligence in support of joint military operations.

Further highlighting the importance of intelligence is the continued interest it attracts from all elements of the U.S. government. Most U.S. agencies and departments have a supporting intelligence function, hence the current 16 distinct members of the IC. The DNI Intelligence Community primer describes the community as: “a federation of executive branch agencies and organizations that work—both together and separately—to conduct intelligence activities necessary for the conduct of foreign relations and the protection of the national security of the United States.”

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Along with this interest comes a significant amount of oversight, which is most obvious in the number of investigations and reforms the community has undergone since its inception. The birth of the IC was based on a desire to avoid the 1941 intelligence failure of Pearl Harbor, while simultaneously being driven by the increasing threat posed by the growth of the Communist bloc. Since the inception of the formal IC under the coordination of the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) in the National Security Act of 1947, there have been numerous organizational challenges. Although some may believe that the recommendations enacted under the IRTPA were based solely on the recommendations of the 9/11 commission, many of the challenges were identified with the first major executive department investigative study in January 1949, closely followed by a similar Congressional study. From this report on through the addition of new agencies, such as the National Security Agency (NSA) in 1952, and the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in 1961, the control and coordination authorities within the IC were continually split between the DCI, DoD, and other departments. Throughout this period, the military Services and DoD agencies continued to operate with limited coordination and synchronization under the rationalization that military intelligence should be provided by the military, while other agencies provided applicable intelligence to their consumers. The intelligence investigations of the 1970s, particularly the Senate Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (commonly referred to as the Church committee), as well as several others, limited and restricted the previously disjointed intelligence efforts in response to abuses, both in the collection and analytic

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portion of the intelligence framework, within the entire IC.\textsuperscript{5} These reforms were the first major effort to limit duplication of effort across the community. However, due to bureaucratic turf protection, the structures to enable the sought-after control and coordination were not developed or implemented.

The two most recent investigations, the 9/11 Commission and the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) report, are the latest to recommend reforms. While the 9/11 Commission recommendations can be seen as the basis for the IRTPA, the WMD Commission report was completed just as the IRTPA went into effect and is therefore the first intelligence reform directly impacting the new organization created by the IRTPA. It is important that we look at the 9/11 Commission recommendation to best understand what led to the provisions within the IRTPA.

In essence, 9/11 Commission recommendation 13.2 is the basis for creation of the Director of National Intelligence, and therefore the seed from which IRTPA grew. Here the 9/11 Commission borrows heavily from Goldwater-Nichols, recommending a division of labor for intelligence similar to that of Services and combatant commands (see Figure 3 below).\textsuperscript{6}

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In this concept, the different agencies would be like the individual military Services with a duty to provide trained and equipped forces for the collection, processing, and exploitation portions of the intelligence cycle. The traditional intelligence framework portions of planning and direction, analysis and production, and dissemination and integration would be completed through the establishment of national intelligence centers similar to military geographic combatant commands. It is therefore of interest to see how the 9/11 Commission envisioned the roles and responsibilities of the first of these centers, the National Counter-Terrorism Center (NCTC), an organization designed specifically to bridge the strategic to tactical gap identified in US counter-terrorism efforts.

9/11 Commission recommendation 13.1, titled Unity of Effort Across the Foreign/Domestic Divide, actually called for the establishment of the first National Intelligence Center, or NCTC. Once again, this effort is not without precedent, as is seen
through the development of the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA), whose lineage is traced to the efforts of several different organizations in mapping and imagery analysis. NCTC has roles closely mirroring the joint intelligence framework for one specific focal area - terrorism. In establishing NCTC, the commission members saw ties to the military as important and clearly articulated the linkage to military support by using typical military Joint-code nomenclature for responsibilities. Overall, the 9/11 Commission envisioned NCTC serving as a cross-governmental organization to focus the intelligence framework against a single target. The commission also understood that NCTC efforts would also have to be translated into operational action, and therefore recommended a mechanism for NCTC to bridge the strategic-operational divide.

The recommendation goes on to suggest that NCTC be responsible for joint operational planning, or what militarily would be termed the J5, in regard to U.S. governmental efforts against terrorism. The 9/11 commission clearly saw the role of NCTC in joint operational planning in a decidedly military fashion, where NCTC would be able to assign operational responsibilities directly for counter-terrorist operations across the U.S. governmental agencies and departments. This recommendation was based primarily on the expansive

7 The predecessor of NGA is considered the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) which combined the efforts of CIA and the military services to focus imagery analysis against strategic issues. NPIC was established by executive order in 1961.

8 Of course, this change may bring its own challenges as only DoD of all executive departments and agencies is currently organized as a J-code staff, therefore giving the impression of militarization of the remaining agencies.

9 In the 9/11 Commission recommendation actually stated that the Operational Planning function should mirror the functions of a J3, while in actual military staffs the J5 initiates the planning and the J3 refines the plan and supervises it execution. My interpretation is that the 9/11 commission really desired a mix of J5 and J3 functions, where plans could be developed and execution tracked by NCTC in an OPCON type relationship with the executing agencies.

growth of counter-terrorism efforts across the entire government. NCTC was further described by the 9/11 Commission as follows: “a civilian led unified joint command for counter-terrorism.”\(^{11}\) As with any major governmental recommendation the fact that the IRTPA did not perfectly match the recommendation was the result of a compromise between bureaucratic centers within the government, similar to those impacting the National Security Act of 1947.

The result is that the IRTPA mandated the creation of a new executive body organization that was given significant new authorities as well as assuming the responsibilities of the former DCI. Fundamentally important in impacting the IC support to military operations, however, was that this new organization, embodied in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, was for the first time given some measure of control over the funding, human resources, and coordination of the entire U.S. national intelligence effort. Although the level of control is not complete, as witnessed by DNI McConnell’s recent statements that he has immense responsibilities in managing the IC but still does not have the basic authority to release poorly performing personnel within the community, it is a significant step in IC “jointness.”\(^{12}\)

In summary, each of the numerous studies, investigations, and reforms has directly impacted the organization and operations across the IC, and these reforms have had significant impact on intelligence support to military operations and will continue to do so.


Discussion / Analysis

Now that the background to the latest round of intelligence reform has been established, it is vital to look more closely at what the impacts on what the military understands as the operational level of war. At the strategic level, the impacts would appear to be primarily positive, establishing better synchronization and coordination across the entire U.S. government, which will likely have a trickle-down effect on the remaining portion of the intelligence framework; but will these support military operations?

Dr. Milan Vego, operational warfare theorist, describes operational intelligence as “collection, analysis, and evaluation of information dealing with all aspects of the situation in a given theater of operations plus adjacent areas of interest.” Additionally, he clearly expresses that operational intelligence deals with less concrete factors, such as morale, and must anticipate actions over a longer period. The complexity of determining what separates operational intelligence from tactical and strategic makes assessing the operational level impacts of IRTPA very difficult. Clearly the law was primarily focused on improvements to national intelligence, but the operational level commanders will also see impacts. For example, the law does require that the DNI provide intelligence to “senior military commanders,” but determining to what level and how has been left to the DNI. Clearly operational level commanders, whether they are geographic combatant commanders, sub-

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13 Lathrop, Charles, ed. The Literary Spy. (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2004), 257.

14 Milan Vego, Operational Warfare (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2000), 203.
unified commanders or Joint Task Force commanders, will require support of national level analysis and collection capabilities in order to develop operational intelligence in support of their campaigns. In fact, much of the new Revolution in Military Affairs relies on access to information from national level systems and organizations. Efforts such as precision-guided attack and expeditionary warfare depend fundamentally on the provision of information from national level systems and organizations with both operational and tactical impacts.

Additionally, military Service intelligence departments also have responsibilities to the DNI as members of the larger IC, and therefore DNI decisions will have impacts well beyond the national/strategic level.

Although the law itself did not address support to military operations directly, there have been several areas where the support has developed, either intentionally or unintentionally. First and foremost has been the development of specifically focused mission managers and centers by the DNI. Although not directly focused on military support, each of these centers and mission managers is targeted against areas in which the military has significant plans or involvement. Perfect examples are the mission managers for North Korea and Iran. Each mission manager can serve as a single focal point for the planning and direction portion of the intelligence framework against these targets. How this would translate into support to military operations is still in development, but at a minimum it provides a mechanism for a sub-unified command in one case and a combatant command in the other to coordinate both their requirements and operational intelligence efforts. One can hope that these mission managers under DNI authorities grow to assume authorities similar to that envisioned by the 9/11 Commission for NCTC, achieving true synchronization and coordination of efforts against a focused target.
Mission Managers may not be a suitable mechanism to address specific or focused issues, but the DNI has established another mechanism which may help operational commanders address specific and continuing intelligence needs, the National Intelligence Priorities Framework (NIPF). Although created and directed at the strategic level, NIPF institutionalizes the synchronization, planning, and direction of national intelligence requirements. The DNI reported the NIPF process as a success in his initial report to Congress on the intelligence reform.\(^\text{15}\) Through the direction of NIPF, the remaining elements of the overall intelligence framework (collection, processing and exploitation, analysis and production, and dissemination and integration) for national intelligence are developed. To supervise input, the DNI established as one of his principle deputies, the Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Customer Outcomes (DDNI/CO). Despite his unfortunate title, the DDNI/CO is tasked in Intelligence Community Policy Directive (ICPD) 2005-400-1 with “ascertaining the intelligence needs of military, homeland security, policy, diplomatic, and law enforcement consumers.”\(^\text{16}\) Although ideal in concept, the question remains if DoD requests through the National Security Council and DDNI/CO can properly articulate the operational level commander’s requirements into this process in a timely fashion. Further, whether the operational requirements fall high enough in the NIPF to meet the operational level commander’s requirements for intelligence remains to be seen.

\(^{15}\) Director of National Intelligence. Report on the Progress of the Director of National Intelligence in Implementing the "Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004". (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, May 2006), 4.

\(^{16}\) Amb John D. Negroponte, Director of National Intelligence, Intelligence Community Policy Memorandum 2005-400-1, 9NOV05.
Both the mission manager concept and NIPF are focused primarily at the strategic-operational level. On the operational side, these centers and mission managers can do little to help in a crisis or an issue for which they are not targeted, so this will require the DNI to utilize his authorities in another manner to best support an operational commander. In the case of a rapidly developing crisis or contingency, one option is for the DNI to establish an intelligence task force. The newly elevated DDNI for policy, plans, and requirements could establish a standing intelligence task force framework similar to that of the standing joint force headquarters (SJFHQ) under development by DoD. Although this would be a primarily DNI-led effort, DoD could greatly assist the process by providing anticipated requirements, authorities, and expectations to the DNI staff in order to develop a task force that best serves both the DNI’s and the DoD’s requirements.

Looking at OEF operations in Afghanistan, it is easy to see the utility of such an Intelligence Task Force in support of the JTF. The threats and challenges facing the Combined Joint Task Force in Afghanistan are complex and multifaceted, and not easily tackled using either geographic or traditional means. An intelligence task force would be invaluable in such an environment because it could serve to maximize and synchronize the intelligence effort at the operational level, while also supporting both the tactical and strategic decision makers.

In organizing the intelligence task force, the DNI can use his authorities to move personnel and assign a leadership team that best mirrors the overall effort in country. If the operations are primarily military in nature, then the intelligence task force leader could be the J2, but if the mission has transitioned to a stability effort, then a senior CIA member may best lead the effort. Ideally the deputy would then be from a different agency to ensure a balance of expertise and supervision across the participating agencies. Underneath this leadership there would be functional components, which would be multi-agency in nature. For example, a HUMINT section could be established and led by a senior CIA member with authority over all HUMINT collectors to include DIA/Defense HUMINT collectors. In the establishment of this Intelligence Task Force, the DNI could vest this subordinate HUMINT element with Title 50 authorities under the supervision of the senior CIA member. Further, the HUMINT lead would serve in a role similar to that of the CFLCC and CFACC in directing the associated HUMINT support effort to the overall JTF plan. In this he would need to have some level of direction over HUMINT actors within the theater. Clearly in a place such as Afghanistan, the HUMINT director would need the ability to direct the efforts of all agencies with HUMINT responsibilities operating in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. In doing this, the DNI would provide the JTF commander the expertise and capability to utilize unique authorities of Title 50 in support of the overall JTF effort. Establishment of a similar arrangement could be made for other collection disciplines for the entire intelligence framework. The other portions of the intelligence framework would also be addressed as subordinate components under an Intelligence Task Force.

A useful model of an Intelligence Task Force exists from Operation Iraqi Freedom. Although not focused across all operations within Iraq, an Intelligence Task Force with
cross-IC and international participation is illustrated in the development of the Iraq Survey Group. Major General Dayton, the original head of the Iraqi Survey Group, described the ISG as follows: “The ISG will consolidate the efforts of the various intelligence collection operations currently in Iraq under one national-level headquarters. Moreover, the ISG will have a powerful intelligence analytical element forward-deployed in the region, with virtual connectivity to an interagency intelligence community fusion center here in the D.C. area.”

The final report from this Intelligence Task Force even showed how responsibility can be shared, because the ISG was established under military command, yet CIA published the final report. Clearly this highlights that a true Intelligence Task Force can be established and operate in support of an operational level task.

JFCOM could cooperate with the DNI to ensure the concept is further developed and exercised, saving the DNI from having to develop an IC internal training and evaluation department. JFCOM can also codify the DNI’s expectations into joint doctrine in order to ensure that appropriate authorities and responsibilities are addressed. Although some agencies may see an Intelligence Task Force as a mechanism to limit their authorities, it would also clearly offer each agency some advantages. First, support function redundancy in areas such as logistics could be reduced, freeing funds and personnel for other mission requirements. Additionally, the non-DoD members of the IC could gain significantly increased access and resources in having the ability to utilize DoD significant support systems and manpower pool. In the end, a crisis response Intelligence Task Force may result in a mechanism similar in form and function to today’s National Intelligence Support Teams.

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(NISTs) in manning and equipment, but ideally come vested with more authorities than the liaison relationship NISTs provide today.19

In some cases, an Intelligence Task Force may not be the right answer, but military commanders will still need support of the IC at the operational level. Here another new DNI initiative, the addition of a new deputy director under the DNI with responsibilities for policy, plans, and requirements, could assist.20 Although new and undeveloped, it is possible that this new deputy director position can serve as a primary point for the combatant commanders and the Joint Staff to coordinate IC interagency support for military operations. Before the establishment of an office at this level, all Contingency Plans (CONPLAN) and Operations Plans (OPLAN) had to be individually coordinated through each of the agencies impacted by military operations, resulting in significant frustration, delays, and misunderstanding on the part of both DoD and other involved agencies. This left any synchronization effort to ill-prepared military planners as opposed to an office appropriately advised of authorities and capabilities across the IC. There is clearly an opportunity for DoD and the military commanders to support this process and further the integration of military efforts with those of other governmental agencies. The vast majority of IC elements do not maintain planning staffs on the scale of those maintained by DoD. DoD could assist, through the provision of military planners educated in the strategic and operational planning process. Further the military maintains a significant infrastructure for the education of strategic and operational planners, which could be utilized by other agencies to develop initial interagency

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19 Some may say that DIA or the new Joint Intelligence Operations Centers (JIOCs) at the combatant commands should form the Intelligence Task Forces. The flaw is that neither DIA nor JIOCs have authorities outside those already belonging to DoD, while as other such agency, CIA and NSA for example, have unique title authorities, which without their participation would be unavailable to the Combatant or JTF Commander.

20 Director of National Intelligence, Office of Public Affairs. Director McConnell Announces Organizational Changes at the ODNI. (Washington DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 23 MAR07).
planning expertise. Unwittingly, DoD has begun this process in the form of Intelligence Support Plans, which are plans that synchronize intelligence efforts in support of a theater commanders overall campaign plan. These efforts can be a starting point for the synchronization of IC efforts with operational military plans.

Expanding on the existing authorities and initiatives of the DNI, another recommendation is that the Services to engage with the DDNI/CO to maximize exchange opportunities and further enhance the national and operational intelligence relationship. The DNI has provided DoD with a unique opportunity within the IC Strategy for Human Capital, which requires IC diversified experience (or “joint-duty”) prior to promotion into senior ranks within the IC. DoD can clearly share its experience, developed through Goldwater-Nichols, to identify areas and experience levels for proper exchanges. Ideally, the military can identify key intelligence staff positions throughout its organization to provide opportunities for other IC members to gain diversified IC experience. One option could be for either a senior DIA or CIA area analyst to serve as a senior member of a joint task force or combatant commander’s J2 section, while senior uniformed collection managers could serve on mission manager staffs to provide expertise on military efforts and capabilities in NIPF focused areas. Of course, without a supporting growth of personnel in some IC components this will be hard to achieve, but in most cases this challenge could be offset by a true exchange of personnel among applicable sections and agencies. The challenge of training differences would remain, but the exchange period could include applicable time and synchronization to allow for training by the gaining IC component. To minimize the training, a 3-year exchange for civilian agency personnel could include a year as a student at one of the War Colleges.

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followed by a two-year assignment to a military command. On the flip side, a mid-level military analyst could attend CIA/DI’s Career Analyst Program or DIA’s Post-Graduate Intelligence Program, and then serve as a military or country analyst within the larger IC for two to three years. This is merely one example, but it is a great opportunity to meet the requirements of both DoD and the IC, while increasing the theoretical and practical expertise of IC personnel.

Conclusion

In summary, IRTPA has made some significant changes in the national security infrastructure of the United States. While these changes have provided strategic DoD and military leaders an enhanced mechanism to cooperate with the national IC, the law leaves to the DNI the authorities to determine how best to support operational level military efforts. Throughout the IRTPA and subsequent DNI documentation there appears to be a desire to ensure support to the military, but to date evidence is scarce as to any impact on the operational level. Fundamentally the IRTPA has provided the Office of the Director of National Intelligence the authorities to impact the operational war fighter, but it remains to be seen if the DNI will translate these authorities into support at this level. One can only hope that the DNI and his offices can live up to the challenge they placed before themselves in the IC Human Capital Strategy:

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“We must identify, articulate, and above all, demonstrate the core values that bind us all together…and make us different. This will demand visionary, courageous leadership – not just at the top, but at all levels of the Community….”

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Selected Bibliography


