UNDERSTANDING NON-WESTERN CULTURES: A STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

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With the containment of the Soviet threat, there has been a resurgence of ethnic consciousness and cultural values throughout the non-Western world. Given that non-Western societies comprise two-thirds of the world's population, their cultural perspectives will define conflict and instability in the Twenty-First Century. In the new world order, culture divergence promises to be the major challenge to United States intelligence. Therefore, the Intelligence Community must reassess its Cold War paradigm relative to a multi-polar world of smaller, but no less lethal threats. The effectiveness of technology-based collection systems, designed for the conventional battlespace, will be challenged by adversaries from different cultures with irregular and asymmetrical views of conflict. At the same time, a more transparent cultural divide between the West and non-West will require a greater emphasis on analyzing potential adversaries' actions and intentions. Therefore, a new culturally-based intelligence paradigm will be required. This paper examines the nature of this change and suggests an approach to defining a new intelligence paradigm.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The end of the Cold War marks a new challenge for the United States Intelligence Community. The familiar overarching global theme of "good versus evil" is obsolete; the great evil, communism, was contained. As a result, the United States Intelligence Community no longer has a clearly defined line of demarcation between good and the totalitarian evil. Instead of a struggle between two dominant ideologies, there is a resurgence of ethnic consciousness and cultural values throughout the non-Western world. The cultural perspectives of non-Western nations will have far-reaching strategic implications for the United States in the Twenty-First Century. Non-Western civilizations comprise two-thirds of the world's population and their actions will largely define the future stability, peace and security of the entire globe. This is the new world order. Therefore, the Intelligence Community must adapt itself to a multipolar, multicivilizational world largely dominated by issues raised by non-Western cultures. These issues will become more critical as the cultural divide between the West and non-West increasingly threatens American interests and security.

The emerging influence of the non-Western world and its cultural underpinnings pose a crucial question for the United States Intelligence Community. Is the United States' current intelligence paradigm capable of providing policymakers and military commanders the information necessary to make correct decisions in support of the national interests in the new world order? This paper will attempt to answer that question by, first, assessing whether the Intelligence Community's current focus on the collection of intelligence through technology-based systems is still valid within the global context of the Twenty-First Century. Secondly, it will analyze Western and non-Western cultural variances, and their relevance to the intelligence process. Finally, this paper will provide

insight for a new, analysis-based paradigm, more capable of understanding and interpreting non-Western cultural perspectives.

The Current Intelligence Paradigm

In 1949, Sherman Kent, one of the pioneers of strategic intelligence, defined National-level intelligence as: "Strategic intelligence is the knowledge upon which our nation's foreign relations, in war and peace, must rest."[1] The U.S. Intelligence Community is responsible for providing this knowledge to U.S. policymakers, decisionmakers, and warfighters in a timely and relevant manner. Today, the Intelligence Community comprises all of the agencies, service staffs, and other components in the United States that have as their principal task the provision of information support services to the government. It includes: the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA); the National Security Agency (NSA); the Central Imagery Office; the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO); the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA); and, all the intelligence branches of the four military services or other governmental agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Departments of Treasury, Energy, and State.[2] The Director of Central Intelligence has the dual responsibility of heading the Central Intelligence Agency and the Intelligence Community.

Intelligence is derived from a five-stage process, commonly referred to as the Intelligence Cycle:

Intelligence Cycle

Requirements

Dissemination

Collection

Analysis

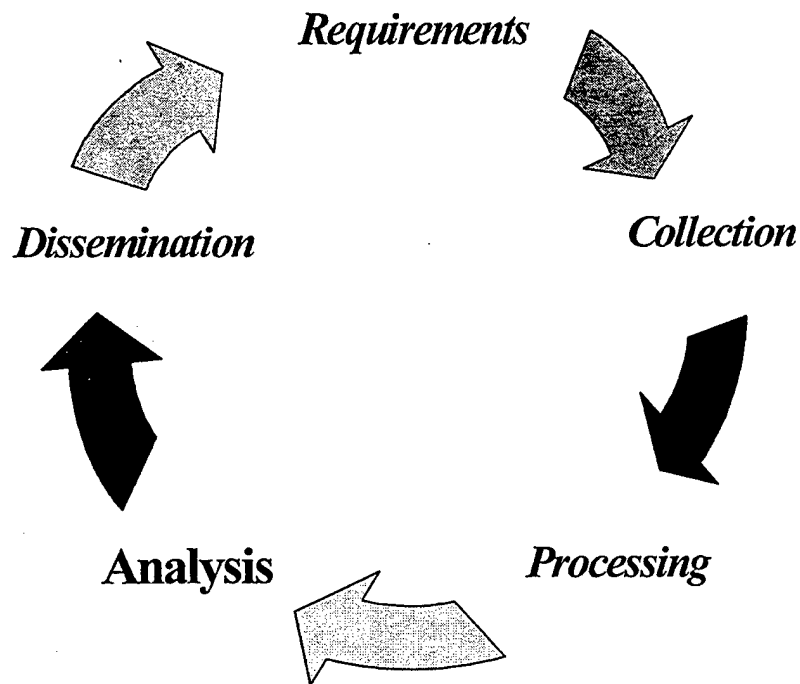Processing

FIGURE 1. Intelligence Cycle

Each stage has several functionalities associated with it, but the major ones are

generally identified as: (1) requirements; (2) collection; (3) processing (4) analysis; and

(5) dissemination. In this cycle, the consumer of intelligence identifies a need for

information, which is then translated into a requirement. The requirement is tasked to the

various collection agencies. The collected intelligence information is processed, analyzed, and disseminated to the consumer and to the Intelligence Community's all-source analysts (principally at CIA and DIA). The analyzed product is then integrated with other intelligence. The final result is an intelligence report or assessment.

It is in the analytical stage of the intelligence cycle that cultural awareness has the most relevance, but in the new world order it will permeate all stages. At the strategic level, intelligence analysis arrives at an understanding of the significance of a foreign event by conducting a logical and ordered study of pertinent facts, as related to national interests.[3] Although analysis is essential to the production of all intelligence assessments, its true value lies in determining a foreign nation's actual intentions as opposed to capabilities. This analysis has a variety of names: predictive and speculative analysis, forecasting, and estimative intelligence. Regardless of the name, knowledge of a nation's history and cultural underpinnings plays a major role in this aspect of the analytical process.

During the Cold War era the Intelligence Community focused the majority of its capabilites on the Soviet Union. In many respects, having a single near-peer competitor greatly simplified United States intelligence efforts. Focusing on the USSR, the United States postulated that: it would fight the next major war in Central Europe; the conflict would involve armor warfare; and, NATO would, initially, conduct an active defense. The Intelligence Community was able to maximize its technological resources by concentrating the majority of its collection assets and analytical energy on specific targets. As a result, analysts studied the Soviet/WARSAW Pact's ideological,

4

sociological and cultural norms, both militarily and academically, for over forty years. The Community was able, therefore, to develop an extensive data base and templates that helped it understand, analyze and forecast the adversary's actions and intentions. Eventually, the Intelligence Community acquired an intellectual "comfort zone" based on its analysts, or "Sovietologists," who spent a lifetime looking towards Moscow and it's Satellites.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the United States believed the world was finally headed towards a utopia of global peace and security. In a speech in September 1990, President Bush expressed this optimism by announcing the beginning of a new world order "... free from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace, an era in which the nations of the world can prosper and live in harmony."[4] Not quite a decade later, the prophetized utopia has not been realized. Instead, the new world order is one of multi-polarism and conflict springing from diverse cultural perspectives. The Gulf War, Haiti, Somalia, Chechyna, Rwanda, and Bosnia reflect this diversity. The Intelligence Community can no longer afford to look at the world through a single monolithic threat lens. The new world order is more like a prism, reflecting the cultural divide between the interests of the West and the non-West.

To solve the problems of future conflict, the Intelligence Community is focusing on the acquisition and use of technology-driven intelligence systems. These systems provide an enhanced visualization of the battlefield and shared situation awareness to decision-makers and commanders at all levels. Adversaries are impersonal icons moving through a three-dimensional battlespace on a computer screen. However, as the

Intelligence Community becomes more mesmerized by technology, it is getting further

away from the human dimension of warfare. In particular, it is losing sight of the cultural,

ideological and social influences that define who the adversary is and what are his

intentions. Technology answers well the capabilities-related questions regarding specific

threats, but answering "why" an adversary acts as he does is beyond the scope of even

the most advanced computer systems. Although technology will continue to be essential

to fact-finding, there will increasingly be limits to how effective it can be in the new

asymmetrical environment.[5] The question of intent, or "when" an adversary will act,

cannot be predicted by systems technology. These questions can only be answered by a

trained and experienced intelligence analyst.

The Cultural Divide

The "West" and "non-West" are large cultural divisions that do not necessarily

relate to compass points on a map. The term "West" refers to what was once Western

Christendom. Countries with this cultural background evolved from the European

civilization and include: Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.[6]

Western culture has as its foundation the ideas and values derived from ancient Greek

philosophy, Roman law, and Christianity. These states also experienced major

transformations in the form of the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution that defined

their economic and cultural perspectives. The superior technology of the Industrial

Revolution enhanced the Western world's ability to navigate and traverse the globe. It

also inspired the development of more sophisticated and lethal methods of waging war.

In contrast, the "non-West" is comprised of those states which evolved from societies that did not share or experience the ideas, values and transformations of the West. These include the former U.S.S.R, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Latin America, although part of the Western Hemisphere and influenced by Catholicism, is also included in this grouping.[7] These states represent a potpourri of diverse cultures and ethnic and religious groups, which include: Animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, the majority of the world's Catholics, thousands of non-Western languages and the three major races.[8] Although often descended from once powerful civilizations, their cultures were over-shadowed by the expansion of Western civilization. By 1500, European culture led the way in a new era of global politics and commerce, social pluralism, and technological and scientific achievements.[9] Through violence and superior technological and military power, most non-Western states became European colonies. Although technology enabled European domination, cultural differences lay at the heart of it. The subjugation of "the other" non-Western peoples had become a natural by-product of white conceptual superiority.[10] A cultural divide was drawn between the West and the "non-West."

The cultural divide is important because knowing the enemy, or who is likely to become an adversary, has been an essential element of warfare through the ages. In the new world order, understanding "the other's" culture is the key to acquiring this knowledge. Culture is defined as "...a set of shared learned values, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, modes of living, customs and symbols."[11] In other words, culture is an inherited way of life. To understand how culture is relevant to strategic intelligence, one must

recognize that culture determines how an individual perceives the world. Thus, understanding a society's culture can lead an analyst to determine how it is apt to act. Culture, then, becomes the new prism through which the intelligence analyst observes and evaluates his potential adversaries.[12]

The prismatic challenge for the Intelligence Community is the multitude of cultures. However, the concept of cultural perspective is difficult to grasp. The difficulty lies in the fact that culture influences how an individual perceives the world. It influences not only *how* one thinks or acts, but *why* one does so. For an American analyst to effectively analyze the "how" and "why" of a non-Western event or action, two pre-conditions must exist. First, the analyst must possess an understanding of the appropriate cultural context from which non-Western perceptions are derived. What study reveals is that all cultures perceive the world from their cultural "high ground." In the cultural paradigm, each state considers itself to be the cultural focal point of its world and interprets its role and interests accordingly. Therefore, it follows that the second precondition is that the analyst have a full appreciation that the United States is equally culturally biased, and this also must be considered during the analysis process.

Understanding non-Western cultures is difficult for all Westerners. This is particularly true of Americans. The primary reason for this is the United States' fundamental belief in exceptionalism, or its righteousness and moral superiority over other nations. This attitude is rooted in the United States' successful democratic system which enabled it to obtain global economic and political dominance.[13] Exceptionalism is significant because it creates a mind-set that prejudices or distorts the way Americans

perceive non-Westerners. Adda B. Bozeman, a noted scholar and expert on the relationship of cultural history and intelligence, provides some profound insights into this mind-set. In her book, <u>Strategic Intelligence & Statecraft</u>, Bozeman theorizes that Americans can only identify with the last two hundred years, as opposed to the several thousand year life-spans of most non-Western civilizations. She contends that Americans believe they hold the democratic mandate that all should emulate. Therefore, Christian and democratic ideals form the blueprint for how Americans judge, interact and predict the actions of other cultures. This is particularly evident when Americans try to relate to the dichotomies of non-Western cultures.

Exceptionalism also extends into the realm of strategic intelligence. This American societal tendency causes two phenomenon which distort how intelligence analysts perceive and assesses information. The first phenomenon is referred to as "mirror-imaging." It occurs when the analyst tries to compensate for uncertainty by assessing that it wouldn't make sense for *x* to do *y*, while ignoring cultural values that are different from the analyst's own. Mirror-imaging occurs when an American analyst assumes that other cultures think and act according to the analyst's beliefs and values, despite diametrically opposed ends.[14] The problem of cultural mirror-imaging is a result of the American educational system, where teachings have a purely Western slant. Non-Western cultures and ideologies like Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, or Islam receive very little attention. The analyst, therefore, may not understand what motivates a non-Western state to act as it does. He can only "mirror" what his culture dictates in a similar set of circumstances.

The second phenomenon caused by American exceptionalism is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism relates to the United States' "...inability to understand the non-Western world on its own terms, an insistence on viewing it through the lenses of its Western experience, and the condescending and patronizing attitudes that such ethnocentrism implies."[15] In part, this attitude persists because the United States evolved in relative isolation, not having to coexist with other cultures until the Twentieth Century. As a result, Americans' views of the world are often skewed to conform with their own beliefs and standards. The more disparate a cultural is from the Western norm, the more inferior it is perceived to be. Thus, it is treated differently.[16] This lack of understanding and empathy for the non-Western world is at the heart of many of the shortfalls in intelligence analysis.

These exceptionalistic tendencies can distort and inhibit an American intelligence analyst's ability to interpret and predict non-Western actions. The history of warfare abounds with examples of intelligence failures that resulted from misinterpretations or misperceptions of an adversary. At the tactical and operational levels, these failures are usually associated with misreading analytical factors that have discernible "cause and effect" relationships with American forces and warfighting operations, i.e. enemy doctrine, composition, capabilities, vulnerabilities, terrain, or weather. At the strategic level, however, less obvious and intangible influences, like mirror-imaging and ethnocentrism, come into play. These two phenomenon contributed to some of the most tragic intelligence failures in United States history.

Although there were numerous reasons for the failure to predict the catastrophic attack on Pearl Harbor, United States ethnocentrism and analytical mirror-imaging played significant roles. Americans were confident that a small, industrially inferior country like Japan would not attack a large, industrial power like the United States. Americans also believed that a Japanese attack would not occur because, they believed that, in the same position, the United States would not attack! "U.S. personnel reasoned that the United States had far greater military, economic, and industrial strength than Japan; thus the Japanese would recognize that they could not win a war against this country...U.S. analysts perceived a Japanese attack as irrational."[17] Additionally, the United States' ethnocentric disdain for Japan's ability to wage war was totally inaccurate. Americans viewed the Japanese from a position of Occidental supremacy, judging them to be an inferior race.

Much of the United States' intelligence failure in Korea was at the tactical and operational levels as a result of General Douglas MacArthur's zeal to destroy the North Korean People's Army. However, this was compounded at the strategic level when the United States failed to assess the situation from China's perspective. Despite strong indicators to the contrary, the United States did not believe China would intervene. The United States ignored China's historical memory of Japanese invasions.[18] Equally important, the United States failed to recognize China's fear of Western colonialism.

American involvement in Vietnam was a classic violation of Sun Tsu's edict: "know your enemy." The American leadership was totally ignorant of the North Vietnamese's blend of nationalism and Communism, and of Vietnamese history, culture,

and language.[19] The United States thought that superior military force and technology would win the war; that with so much overwhelming power there was no need to know the enemy. Ho Chi Minh understood this by noting that although the Americans were much stronger than the French, they did not know the Vietnamese as well.[20] The United States' cultural background and sense of rightness led the Americans to believe they could intervene in a country whose culture was well grounded in its ability to wage guerrilla warfare. The United States looked at the enemy through that Western "mirror," mistakenly concluding that it could defeat the North Vietnamese quickly. American analysts assumed the Vietnamese culture did not differ sufficiently from American culture; therefore assuming they would quit at the same point the Americans would quit.[21] The Intelligence Community also failed to recognize that the Asian's perspective of time was radically different from that of the West. The Vietnamese, however, did not make the same mistake. They correctly assessed that, by hanging on, they would win if they did not lose. They also understood that the United States believed it would lose if it did not win. As it turned out, time was on the enemy's side. While the United States spent billions of dollars trying to win the war, the Vietnamese spent years. Their investment succeeded.[22]

Each non-Western state has its own unique cultural identity and perspective; however, there are certain commonalties that illustrate the West and non-West cultural divide. The following paragraphs analyze how selected major cultural perspectives are diametrically opposed to American views. An American analyst's failure to view these

non-Western perspectives through the appropriate cultural "lens," leads to misperceptions and faulty judgments.

Time: Differences in the perspective of time are great between Western and Asian societies. A Westerner's view of historical time is like traveling down a highway: it is a series of past events that leads to the present. Time is also viewed in an impersonal and objective manner -- a catalog of facts, without purpose, that lead to a non-predetermined end state. In the Asian culture, facts have a definite purpose because it is incumbent upon each individual to make history. Therefore, all situations are preordained.[23]

A Westerner's concept of the present is also much different than the Asian's. In the West, the present is measured by a twenty-four hour clock. Man is considered the center of the universe, with control over time and destiny. In Asian cultures, time is not immediate or controlled, it is a continuum in which order and balance ultimately prevail in search of harmony.

Individualism vs. Authoritarianism: Non-Western cultures do not subscribe to the unique Western view that everyone is created equal. In the Western world, relationships are made by choice. The ability to chose is based on individualism and equality. In non-Western societies, however, individualism is mistrusted. There is no basis for a concept of freedom and equality, in which individuals develop independently. This is particularly evident in Asian and Islamic countries where many cultural dynamics are based on authoritarian principles.

In Asia, Confucianism teaches that all relationships are based on a senior-subordinate or senior-junior hierarchy. Relationships are founded on the principles of authority and order and represent a "give-take" dynamic. For instance, the junior gives respect and obedience and, in turn, the senior protects and gives consideration to the needs of the junior.

In the Middle East and Northern Africa, the teachings of Islam serve not only as a religion, but also an authoritarian way of life that has continued for over a thousand years. Islam in the past, as well as the present, denies the rights of the individual and advocates the will of Allah. Holy Law is the sovereign power, dictating complete and unwavering obedience as a religious duty.[24] These principles of authority and order, and, conformity and obedience are in stark contrast to the Western ideals of self-expression and liberty.

War and Peace: Conquest and subjugation have been enduring themes throughout the history of most non-Western cultures. Although the conquered of one era were often the conquerors in another, peace was seldom a lasting state. Wars were also waged within territorial boundaries, so no one culture was exempt from invasion or domination by another. Europe shares this heritage, which culminated in two World Wars. However, with the exception of it's War of Independence, the United States has remained comfortably isolated from foreign conflict on it's own soil. The propensity, therefore, for many non-Western states to engage in conflict and violence continues to frustrate and baffle many Americans. War to Americans is equated with suffering and death, and casualties are not easily accepted.

Much of the non-West does not share the same abhorrence of war. Death in war is often viewed as a natural part of life or even honorable, moral and just. In Sub-Saharan Africa, war is considered to be logical and necessary to the identity of the group. Participating in war is a mark of manhood within the tribe, and an intregal part of its customs and rites.[25] In the Muslim world, the "jihad," or holy war, is a pervasive part of the Arab culture. The Koran's religious creed teaches that the way to paradise is obtained through service to Allah and that war, in the name of Allah, supersedes peace.[26] China's prevailing ideology evolved from a culture marked by a long history of warfare, where conflict was regarded as a normal part of evolution. Legacies of that culture, such as the teachings of Sun Tzu whose strategic thought led to Mao Tse-tung and his focus on guerrilla warfare, revolution and protracted war to create change represent a different perspective. In non-Western societies, cultural perspectives do not necessarily draw a clear distinction between war and peace. War is simply another aspect of life, only differing by matter of degree.

The Family, Clan or Tribe: In the majority of Asian cultures, the concept of "family" is derived from Confucianism. In Asia, individualism is subordinated to the family. Maintaining harmony and discipline in the family is each individual's responsibility. Therefore, the family is at the core of an individual's existence and a person's desires are secondary. Arab and African cultures also revere the family, although in a different context. They are clan or tribal societies consisting of descendants of a common ancestor or comprising generations of people with a common culture. Those "within" the group are protected; those "without" are strangers and even enemies. In Arab

15

countries, a child grows up believing his duty is to the clan or tribe, not to society. Society, therefore, represents only an environment where a living is earned and external strife occurs.[27] In sub-Saharan Africa, tribes form the primary social unit. Tribes are closely-knit, conform to common beliefs and customs, and often regard strangers as potential enemies.[28]

In many non-Western societies, families, clan and tribal relationships are traced back for hundreds of years. Their origins are founded in closed, tightly-controlled societies, which have experienced little change in the modern world. Old customs and grievances are passed down from generation to generation. These concepts are different from those found in the United States, where value is placed on the individual rather than the family; the future rather than the past. It is obviously erroneous to assume that American norms and values will take precedence over ancient traditions and customs; or, that national identity, or loyalty to the state, will be more important than clan or tribal identity and loyalty. Yet most Americans, even in intelligence circles, act as if non-Westerners share American values.

Religion: In non-Western cultures, religion can vary significantly from Western Judeo-Christian beliefs. In the non-West, the family, caste or religious community takes precedence over the individual or private enterprise. According to Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Confucianism, non-material and ethical achievements are more important than power or riches. Islam, of all non-Western religions, has been the root cause of the most conflict between other world and the West. Its maxims are the most divergent from those of Western religions. Specifically, it combines government and religion, as opposed to

16

the United States secularist tradition which separates church and state.[29] There has been a

rise in religious radicalism, the most threatening being Islamic radicals who are united in

a jihad, or Holy War, against the West. Violence in the name of religion is an ancient

motif and one not easily understood by the Judeo-Christian mind with its focus on peace.

Anti-Westernism: There is an increasing surge of anti-Western resentment

throughout the non-Western world. The potential catalyst of future conflicts is embedded

deep in non-Western culture and the idea of all outsiders as enemies. Much of current

resentment is largely the result of the Western colonization of non-Western peoples --

exploiting their economies and discriminating against their racial, cultural and religious

heritages.[30] Unfortunately, the United States, in particular, evokes the most resentment in

the non-Western world. While Europeans pursued colonialism largely for reasons of

economic expansion and strategic superiority, Americans concentrated on re-making

others into their own image.[31] Americans promoted democracy, Christianity and their law

and values system throughout the world. They have, in effect, tried to make other cultures

a mirror of their own. However, non-Westerners tend to view these actions as

hypocritical. On the one hand, the United States sees itself as the model for all nations;

on the other, it avoids the cultural influences of the same world it is trying to change.[32]

With the end of the Cold War and the advent of new technology, the Western

world is able to reach more non-Western societies than ever before. There is more

opportunity to impose cultural change. However, the economic, social and technological

chasm between the two is increasingly apparent. Old resentments are fueled by images of

Western wealth, power and military dominance. As a result, many non-Western societies

have a renewed sense of identity with their pre-Colonial culture. In a recent speech before two Senate Committees on Intelligence, the Director of DIA stated that those societies who are unable to cope with modernization are more likely to resent the dominant role of the United States in the international environment. These nations, he contended, will respond accordingly by trying to undermine United States and Western influence and interests.[33] Analysis with the culture paradigm suggests his insight is valid.

In general, the implications of the non-Western trends for strategic intelligence are threefold: the rekindling of cultural and ethnic consciousness is a rejection of Western influence; at the same time, there is a desire to emulate Western power and technology; and, there is a need to escape the stigma of Western colonialism, and regain a cultural identity. While these forces are in play, there will continue to be tension between the West and non-West which the United States cannot ignore. The old Cold War paradigm of focusing on a modern, symmetrically-oriented threat is no longer applicable since none of these numerous cultures can or chose to mirror the United States. The Intelligence Community must readjust its analytical efforts to interpret numerous asymmetric threats. It must be able to determine the intentions and actions of adversaries who will avoid direct confrontation with the United States by leveraging their own strengths, while exploiting American weaknesses.[34]

Changing the Intelligence Paradigm

The end of the Cold War has not produced a less dangerous world. There is no evidence to suggest that the Intelligence Community can relax its vigil. For over four decades the United States wanted to know everything there was to know about the Soviet

Union; now it needs to know everything about everybody. The majority of that "everybody" resides in the non-Western world. In the new world order, many non-Western countries have the money and inclination to match the West in selected areas of military technology and modernization as well as the ability to finance and pursue asymmetrical strategies. Insurgent groups, no longer supported by the Soviets, are not constrained in their subversive or terrorist endeavors. Weapons of mass destruction have become more of a threat to world peace and security. Conversely, as the global environment becomes more volatile and unpredictable and demands for intelligence are increasing rather than declining, the Intelligence Community is confronted with budget cuts and downsizing. Faced with a multitude of smaller, but less predictable threats, the United States is compromising its ability to track the elements of power in those parts of the world where United States interests are most heavily engaged.[35] In this environment, the focus of the intelligence paradigm needs to be more cultural.

Despite the United States' emphasis on new technology, most future conflicts will not be characterized by a clearly defined battlespace. The current National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement states that the military must be prepared to fight at the high end of the conflict spectrum – that is two almost simultaneous major regional conflicts.[36] However, with the asymmetrical focus of future warfare, Americans are more likely to become involved in conflicts at the lower end of the spectrum. Many future adversaries will not be technically equal, and will not initially present themselves as a threat. Instead, culture may play the dominant role in how future adversaries wage war. For many, their style of warfare may not have progressed beyond the 19th Century,

making Western technology irrelevant in their society. "Westerners, with their superior technology and organization, have been killed for a long time by primitives or 'savages' whose style of warfare the westerners misunderstood and whose skills exceeded those of the west in irregular wars."[37] Others will chose to challenge United States interests with asymmetrical strategies as opposed to conventional warfare. In this environment, the Cold War vintage intelligence paradigm is inappropriate and must be redefined. If the Intelligence Community is to dominate in this environment, it must understand the non-Western actors. It will not be enough to just assess strengths and capabilities. There must be an understanding of what motivates their leaders; why they think and act as they do; and, most importantly, when and how they will act. A new paradigm needs to be developed to help intelligence analysts achieve this knowledge. To accomplish this, the Intelligence Community must revise its analytical capability and dedicate more resources towards understanding non-Western cultures. There are three basic changes that need to be made.

First, the community must find a proper balance between technology-driven collection and intelligence analysis. During the Cold War, a majority of the intelligence effort was focused on technology-based collection systems. The United States spent billions of dollars on technologically superior systems that would provide early warning of an impending Soviet attack. In the Post-Cold War era, even better "systems of systems" are being developed to achieve technological dominance on the conventional battlefield. However, as the spectrum of conflict moves towards its lower end or asymmetrical strategies ethnic; tribal and clan warfare; and different cultural perspectives

will play a more dominant role. The Intelligence Community, therefore, needs to reassess the effectiveness of its technology-based collection systems relative to threats where custom, history, geography and culture are key elements of conflict. Where, in the old paradigm, collection was the means for providing information on threat capabilities, the new paradigm requires more emphasis on analysis to focus technological means and determine an adversary's intent.

Second, the analytical system needs to be realigned to adapt to the changed circumstances of the new world order. In the past, it focused on adversaries with similar capabilities and fairly predictable behavior. Traditional analytical models were used: order of battle, doctrine, strengths and weaknesses, and known personality profiles. However, in the non-Western world, potential adversaries do not necessarily fit the old mold of predictable, rational actors. In many non-Western societies, warfare is still fought at the primitive level, where the enemy is engaged, no matter what the consequences. Although irrational from the Western perspective, it is fully "rational" within their cultural perspective. The United States needs only to review the lessons-learned from Vietnam and Somalia to realize that understanding an adversary's culture may save more lives than technology.

Third, analysts must be re-educated. Understanding and interpreting non-Western cultures requires time and effort. The Intelligence Community must revamp its educational system to train both civilian and military analysts in non-Western cultures and cultural analysis. In the past, this was largely relegated to Foreign Area specialists; however, in the new world order this function is at the heart of the intelligence paradigm.

Analysts must receive a period of immersion training in their respective cultures as the means to fully comprehend the cultural disparities. For the short term, there is a pool of subject matter experts among the academia, in agencies and "think tanks," and even in the retired sector. Analysts with acceptable levels of expertise can't be developed in the short term. Education and training requires a long term commitment. In the interim, the tremendous potential outside the military and government agencies should be maximized.

Conclusion

The United States is an idealistic society founded in Western civilization and American exceptionalism. Americans want to believe that the rest of the world is a mirror image of themselves. This has not been true in the past, nor will it be true in the foreseeable future. The American Intelligence Community, as an extension of this culture, holds up the same societal mirror and sees all others reflected in the Western image. To properly serve the nation, the Community must move past American ethnocentrism, shatter the cultural mirror, and interpret the world as it really is. Cultural influences, vastly different from those of the Western world, will motivate actions and intent on a global scale. Inherited hatreds, ancient feuds, and tribal jealousies will command the attention of the Western world. Non-Western leaders will emerge, embracing cultures spawned by authoritarian rule, religious dogma, tribal loyalties and anti-Western sentiments. With growing ethnic, religious and cultural tensions throughout many parts of the non-Western world, the Intelligence Community must accept that basic American concepts such as democracy, individualism, and peace do not define other cultures' perspectives. Instead, authority, collectivism, and a continuum of war, changing

only in scope, duration and intensity, characterize the non-Western perspective and offer the intelligence challenge of the future.

To meet this challenge, the Intelligence Community must redefine the existing paradigm. The United States cannot allow its technological superiority to create a "technological myopic view" of the world. It would be tragic for the United States, with its ability to measure capability to the nth degree, to miss the next Pearl Harbor or fail to perceive the real threat. Technology served Americans well in the Cold War and is essential to success in the new world order. However, in the new world order focusing technology and interpreting technological output will increasingly be defined by the ability to understand non-Western cultures. In this sense, the intelligence paradigm must be changed. As Sherman Kent recognized in 1949, intelligence leaders cannot know everything but must look to the future and see it as it is. "Armed with this knowledge the leaders of positive policy, may go forward assured at least that, if they fail, their failure will not be chargeable to their ignorance."[38]

ENDNOTES

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