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| <b>14. ABSTRACT</b><br>Post 9-11 human intelligence reforms have not been fully implemented and need to include cultural change as well as structural change. An effective analysis of the unique secretive culture needs of intelligence agencies needs to be done in order to cement effective change within the intelligence community. A combination of organizational change frameworks can be used in order to have the tools necessary to analyze the culture and constitute change. |                    |  |                                   |  |  |
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**Cultural Aspects of Intelligence Reform**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
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## Executive Summary

**Title:** Cultural Aspects of Intelligence Reform

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**Thesis:** The intelligence community must assess and account for its own unique cultural aspects in order to be fully effective in implementing post-9/11 Human Intelligence (HUMINT) reforms.

**Discussion:** The inability of the intelligence community to prevent attacks on the United States homeland led the government to implement reforms. The intelligence reforms increased accountability and the number of organizations, and changed the structure of many intelligence agencies in order to unify the disjointed community and make it easier to share and disseminate information to properly cleared individuals. Although significant resources have been invested into fulfilling the mandate for change, the lack of attention paid to the unique culture of the intelligence community created a roadblock to implementing actual reform and changing the norms of personnel working in intelligence. Relevant organizational change models stress the importance of assessing and analyzing an organization's culture, along with anchoring proposed efforts within an existing culture in order to make change successful. Not doing this and failing to account for the culture of secrecy inherent within the intelligence community is detrimental to reforms that are intended to unify an intentionally separated community.

**Conclusion:** In order to be effective in implementing intelligence reforms, the United States government must understand and account for the intelligence community's culture of secrecy and use implement change that accounts for this unique characteristic.

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## ***PREFACE***

In this research paper, I look at some of the reforms that have been instituted post 9-11, and why these reforms need to include not just structural or organizational change, but cultural change as well. I have intense personal interest in this topic; having been employed with DIA for over a decade. I have seen the agency go through a myriad of changes, many that did not stick. The success of changes, improved intelligence, and employee satisfaction are all very important to me. Through a combination of the analysis of the culture of the intelligence community itself and research into effective organizational change frameworks, I conclude by providing recommendations into cementing effective change within the Intelligence Community.

## ***THE IMPETUS FOR INTELLIGENCE REFORM IN THE UNITED STATES***

The devastating attacks on the United States homeland on September 11, 2001 partially resulted from massive U.S. intelligence failures. The inability to fully predict or protect U.S. citizens from this attack was a major setback for the intelligence community, as it is their job to anticipate these through timely and accurate intelligence. This terrorist event highlighted flaws in the intelligence apparatus, thereby encouraging governmental reforms. These reforms include the establishment of new organizations, and improvements to intelligence collection to include collection, analysis, dissemination, and collaboration in and between government entities. More specifically, the flaws include poor coordination in intelligence information sharing and a lack of unified strategies to deal with intelligence collection. It became clear that too many organizations and people were not working together. This led to a reduced capacity to connect information that could have potentially prevented the 9/11 attacks.

The purpose of this paper is to research the question: Why are many post-9/11 intelligence reforms still not implemented? This paper is organized in a way to provide some background to detail the problem, discuss organizational change theories from outside the field of intelligence that could assist in implementing reforms, examine how key aspects of successful change theories were missing in intelligence reforms, and provide recommendations and conclusions on how to proceed in reforming the intelligence community.

Complexity best describes the U.S. intelligence community as it is separated by 17 individual organizational constructs. Within each agency there are divisions by mission focus or target such as war, terrorism, crime prevention, emergency response, and informally by career specialization within each agency.<sup>1</sup> The attacks of 9/11 became an impetus to fix these divisions in and between intelligence agencies, as these divisions bore the brunt of the blame for intelligence failures. A specific example that highlights this problem is that prior to the attacks, CIA possessed information on the arrival of two well-known Al Qaeda operatives in the United States in 2000 and had been tracking them for years.<sup>2</sup> In early 2000, the FBI had information on an effort by Osama bin Laden to send students to the United States to attend civilian aviation schools. Neither agency shared the information they had with each other. By May 1st of 2001, CIA had informed the President during his daily intelligence briefing that a “group presently in the United States was planning a terrorist operation”.<sup>3</sup> Weeks later, on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, CIA reported to the President that Al Qaeda strikes could be “imminent,” although intelligence suggested the time frame was flexible.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the summer, CIA continued to warn of an imminent attack and request action be taken. Why the White House didn’t take significant action is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is clear that the CIA was convinced there would be an attack on the homeland by operatives already in the U.S. This information was not duly shared with the FBI, nor was there an effort to see if other intelligence agencies had corroborating information. With such confidence in an imminent attack on the U.S., why was there little to no effort to collaborate with other intelligence agencies and connect any pieces of information that could potentially have stopped the attacks? The intelligence sharing apparatus was deficient due to parochial infighting and habitual hoarding of secret materials, mired with issues of ego and a normality of secrecy. The attacks forced reform on the intelligence community.

The *National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, more commonly known as the “9/11 Commission”, was chartered in late 2002 to prepare a complete account of circumstances surrounding the September 11, 2001 attacks, and more importantly for the topic being discussed - mandated to provide recommendations against future attacks. In addition to retroactively examining the circumstances surrounding the attack and establishing a broad global strategy, the “9/11 Commission” provided recommendations in regards to different ways of organizing the government. The study asserted the national security institutions of the U.S. government were still the institutions constructed to win the Cold War and had to adapt to confront a number of less-visible challenges that surpass the boundaries of traditional nation-states and called for quick, imaginative, and agile responses.<sup>5</sup>

The following five recommendations were made to achieve unity of effort and restructure parts of the government; 1) unify strategic intelligence and operational planning against Islamist terrorists across the foreign-domestic divide with a National Counterterrorism Center; 2) unify the intelligence community with a new National Intelligence Director; 3) unify the many participants in the counterterrorism effort and their knowledge in a network-based information-sharing system that transcends traditional governmental boundaries; 4) unify and strengthening congressional oversight to improve quality and accountability; 5) strengthen the FBI and homeland defenders.<sup>6</sup> The study noted that many operations were happening within separate and distinct stovepipes. “Stovepipe” emerged as a concept to criticize the intelligence community and explain one facet of why intelligence had failed to provide us warning on the 9/11 attacks. The aftermath of 9/11 forced the intelligence agencies to answer questions about why key pieces of information were not shared, and pushed for greater integration and unity of effort. This paper

will identify why the 9/11 Commission reforms need to address not just structural or organizational change, but cultural change as well.

### ***CULTURE OF INTELLIGENCE: THE IGNORED ISSUE***

Over a decade later, intelligence agencies are still attempting to find new and better ways to improve both upon the intelligence collection cycle and the sharing of information. Suggested reforms were difficult to implement because of existing organizational structures and personnel habits. The dissemination of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and source information is a highly protected type of intelligence due to potential harm to both the U.S. collector and any sources involved in providing information. Unlike more technical types of intelligence collection, repercussions for any leaked HUMINT information may result in not just embarrassment to the U.S., but potential loss of life as well. The safeguards required to protect this information create additional obstacles when it comes to the idea of reforming how the information is shared. While the various commission and internal agency reviews that examined what is consistently referred to as an intelligence failure did state that reform was necessary due to a myriad of issues, they directly blamed institutional habits and personal rivalries among intelligence agencies that prevented them from sharing information.<sup>7</sup>

The barriers that prevented the sharing of information provides the basis of the argument that the intelligence community needs organizational and cultural change to take place in order to fully and successfully implement post 9/11 HUMINT reforms. This topic remains timely and

relevant because suggested intelligence reforms are still being implemented within the intelligence community and have the capacity to shift due to the priorities of a new political administration. At this point, there still remains unease about the suggested intelligence reforms and uncertainty in regards to whether they are ultimately increasing the quality of intelligence collected, and the quality of analytical judgments based off of collected intelligence information.

Many of the suggested reforms carry goals of increased collaboration, but there are cultural factors that need to be addressed in order to make them successful. To understand why culture and organization present significant issues, the process of HUMINT collection must be understood. HUMINT may be simply defined as any information that can be gathered from human sources. There are overt, covert, and clandestine methodologies that can be used to gather information from people in the pursuit of intelligence. To explain this spectrum of HUMINT collection, the Department of Defense Pub 1 defines it in this way:

- **overt operations:** An operation conducted openly, without concealment,
- **covert operations:** An operation that is so planned and executed as to conceal the identity of or permit plausible deniability by the sponsor,
- **clandestine operations:** An operation sponsored or conducted by governmental departments or agencies in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment.

A clandestine operation differs from a covert action in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the operation rather than on concealment of the identity of the sponsor”.<sup>8</sup> The human sources of information obtained throughout the spectrum of HUMINT collection are referred to as assets, and they put themselves at risk along with our US collectors of intelligence information. This makes their cooperation with U.S. intelligence officers dangerous.

HUMINT collection emphasizes the unraveling of hidden or secret agendas by infiltrating human networks such as governments, terrorist organizations, and other political organizations and is the oldest form of intelligence collection.<sup>9</sup> The history of HUMINT is well

documented throughout the ages by the greatest civilizations known - ancient Chinese and Indian and military theorists such as Sun-Tzu (Art of War) and Chanakya (Arthashastra) both wrote on the fundamentals of intelligence. As Sun Tzu said, “What enables the wise sovereign and good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the ordinary men is foreknowledge.”<sup>10</sup> The ancient Egyptians developed a system of collecting intelligence, and their Hebrew rivals used spies as well, which is documented in the Bible. Other examples can be found in the Torah and Quran.<sup>11</sup> The ancient Greeks and Romans developed spy networks to obtain information on their rivals and maintain control over their empires.<sup>12</sup> Knowledge was power, knowledge is power, and knowledge remains power.

Once collected, raw HUMINT is then disseminated to the intelligence community to make immediate decisions on the battlefield, or collated along with other types of intelligence to produce finished intelligence products for US policymakers.<sup>13</sup> Raw intelligence in this sense means intelligence that has not gone through the analytical process and is reported as the collector has collected and written it. The responsibility of conducting HUMINT historically fell to the CIA, but they never operated alone. CIA HUMINT has included the recruitment of foreign nationals to conduct espionage, the use of travelers to gather intelligence, as well as the debriefing of defectors and other individuals with access to information of value. The primary focus of these HUMINT operations was strategic, although post 9/11 efforts have devoted considerable energy to supporting efforts to capture or kill terrorist leaders and their followers, and disrupt terrorist activities.<sup>14</sup> Defense entities that collect HUMINT, to include DIA and the military services, focused on recruiting and debriefing individuals of interest with information on matters of interest to military officials, including foreign weapons systems, military plans, intentions, and doctrine.<sup>15</sup> The nature of our current non-state enemies has forced defense

HUMINT to evolve as well into including an increased emphasis of collections on terrorist organizations, personalities, and intentions.

Because of the potential repercussions and details of intelligence collection discussed above, secrecy is the culture of an intelligence agency. There may have been a brief moment post 9/11 that intelligence officials believed that the pendulum swung too far in the opposite direction of secrecy to over-sharing.<sup>16</sup> The swing in that direction was a result of the criticism that key intelligence never made it to other people inside the government who may have connected the dots and figured out what the 9/11 hijackers were planning to do and when they were going to do it.<sup>17</sup> This resulted in an overwhelming amount of information for analysts to process and other problems such as the growing potential for leaks. Analysts needed to devote more time searching through information, inevitably leading to analysts spending more time sifting through inconsequential data instead of analyzing important intelligence finds.

There are valid reasons that secrecy dominates intelligence, but this quality can also become a problem in organizations that conduct clandestine and other forms of HUMINT collection. Information is classified to protect lives and intelligence. Affiliations with intelligence agencies are hidden to protect personnel, and the dissemination of information is limited to protect sources and methods of collection, or the tradecraft of intelligence collectors. This maintenance of secrecy becomes the norm of an intelligence collector, at times even when dealing with analysts within their own organizations. Even Congressional oversight committees have made mention of changing the “culture” of intelligence agencies, with little depth or explanation behind it.<sup>18</sup> Along with secrecy, deception and misrepresentation are at the heart of HUMINT skills. Essentially, the ability to manipulate people makes a person a good HUMINT officer, but these same skills are not helpful to managers and leaders in hierarchical

organizations.<sup>19</sup> When lower and midlevel managers are trained to manipulate, maintain secrecy, and shield their sources rather than reporting just the tangible facts and being transparent in the context of an organizational bureaucracy this undermines the ability of others to control and direct the organization effectively towards its goals. All intelligence organizations face an aspect of this problem due to secrecy requirements, but agencies that conduct clandestine HUMINT operations are more vulnerable.<sup>20</sup>

A second problem linked to secrecy and job requirements is the often stressful and anonymous life of a HUMINT collector. As mentioned, many in this profession do not share what they do with family and friends, much less be publicly recognized for any significant career accomplishments or intelligence collection operations. Adding to the stress of secrecy is the professional isolation many collectors experience when working alone all over the world. All of this culminates in creating a bonding effect within intelligence organizations and between HUMINT collectors as individual subgroups, and contributing to the gap between collectors and analysts of intelligence information. Adding fuel to the cultural differences between collectors and analysts are recent unauthorized intelligence disclosures that came from the likes of Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden.<sup>21</sup> The creed of an intelligence collector requires them to protect their sources and methods of collection. Recent, major unauthorized intelligence disclosures have come from outside the collector realm, from analysts, system administrators, and others with access to highly classified information.

Protections must be in place against information leaks, but the level at which this is done must be manageable enough to not undermine the intelligence process. For example, if the protection of collectors and sources is too extreme, information may not get disseminated wide enough to shed light on potential threats. The protection of sources and methods remains of

utmost importance to collectors and individuals within the intelligence community, a protection that sometimes conflicts with the wide dissemination of intelligence information to cleared individuals and integration with analysts.<sup>22</sup> Not only are lives at risk, but national security. Security and collaboration must be balanced.

Although raw intelligence information is collected to be shared with decision makers and those employed to piece together information to make analytical judgments, there is a debate on how open the source information should be made. This debate has been observed by intelligence personnel at all levels, who are sometimes involved in hard calls on when to share information.<sup>23</sup> Tearlines are portions of an intelligence report or product that provide the substance of a more highly classified or controlled report without identifying sensitive sources, methods, or other operational information. In intelligence reporting, they make it easier to separate different sections of a report making it easy to allocate only the information that collectors want shared while being able to classify other sections to a higher degree. Tearlines allow classified intelligence information to be released with less restrictive dissemination controls, and, when possible, at a lower classification.<sup>24</sup> The process of background checks on people with top secret clearances, strong information technology systems, and strengthened insider threat programs can all help to mitigate the potential leak of unauthorized information, but no system will be foolproof.

Unfortunately, the intelligence community has had and likely will continue to have insider threats. There have been people who have misused classified information before and we can assume it will happen again. That does not mean we should be overly cautious and unnecessarily overprotect information. The risk caused of not sharing information with those who need it is simply too great. The community must improve its ability to share information

without weakening safeguards. The more information that is shared, the more likely the intelligence community is to identify a threat and warn national leaders of a possible event. Intelligence agencies should be mindful of the risks but manage those risks in the light of the importance of the intelligence mission.<sup>25</sup>

By over-protecting information intelligence agencies create a generally accepted “need to know” culture, where the justifications for sharing information becomes so difficult to overcome that communication ceases. There is insufficient organizational guidance on how to share and protect information. Without clear policies, personnel will take it on themselves to become increasingly opaque. Changing a culture of “need to know” to “need to share” does not come easily in spy circles.<sup>26</sup> In the very unique world where employees may even hide their true employers and affiliation from family members, the protection of classified and source information is taken incredibly seriously.

How to protect this information and who to share it with may not necessarily be codified or agreed upon. Sharing classified information with other personnel in intelligence circles relies primarily on two things; 1) the individual having the proper security clearances and 2) having a “need to know”. The “need to know” can be difficult to define as there could be a number of reasons for an individual to have access to a particular set of classified files, but essentially it must relate to one’s official duties.<sup>27</sup> The obvious purpose is to protect classified information, but at times it is not clear who holds the authority to share certain types of information. Therefore, in some instances it essentially becomes the call of mid-level managers to share or not share information and can contribute to culture clashes when there are no clear and distinct rules for what can be shared.

A former CIA officer said “Human intelligence in particular is kind of an arcane little business and it involves sources and secrets and things that just have to be protected. You can't take that kind of stuff and spread it out around the community and let hundreds of thousands of people look at it and then seriously expect at the end of the day that it's not going to leak.”<sup>28</sup> Efforts in finding a balance between sharing information and the need to protect information are often approached as a zero-sum relationship, meaning we decrease protection as we increase sharing.<sup>29</sup> At a very basic level that may be true, but there can be policies, practices, and technologies employed that incorporate cultural issues and allow for increased sharing and protection.

### ***ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE RESEARCH AND CULTURAL FACTORS***

In this section, we will look at research from outside the field of intelligence to understand how effective organizational change takes place. Both Kotter's model and the Competing Values Framework will be examined. Kotter's model provides an eight step model for change that comprises of eight overlapping steps.<sup>30</sup> The first three are all about creating a climate for change. The next on engaging and enabling the organization. The final step deals with implementing and sustaining change. The competing values framework provides validated instruments for diagnosing organizational culture and management competency, a theoretical framework for understanding organizational culture, and a systematic strategy for changing organizational culture and personal behavior.

The incomplete nature of intelligence reform that leaves the US open to attacks is linked more to our bureaucratic failures than the capabilities of our adversaries. Almost none of the previous era of intelligence reforms have addressed structural, organizational, and management

change.<sup>31</sup> Virtually all Congressional investigations and reform studies focused on scandals and policy issues. There was a great deal of negative publicity over events such as the CIA attempted assassinations as part of covert actions, the FBI's tracking of antiwar movement leaders in the 60s and 70s, personnel and operational issues that were investigated within CIA, and concern over a KGB agent that had infiltrated the CIA.<sup>32</sup> From each of these examples there was no concerted effort to make bureaucratic, organizational, or cultural changes.

So what needs to be done to fully and successfully implement reforms within intelligence agencies? A change need to be made to the culture, not just the structure of intelligence management. Culture change often results from a crisis so the the momentum must be kept going agencies become years removed from a crisis. The hunger for change was huge in the post 9/11 years, but people and organizations quickly fell back into organizational norms and bad habits. There was a crisis that forced the U.S. government to recognize significant problems within the intelligence community. What failed to happen after crisis mode was the right sort of strategically thought out plan as to how the suggested reforms would need to incorporate cultural changes.

Dr. John Kotter is often referenced for his eight step change model for transformation. While examining why transformation efforts fail, he outlined eight critical success factors and said "Leaders who successfully transform businesses do eight things right (and they do them in the right order)."<sup>33</sup> Although the intelligence community may technically not be a "business", Dr. Kotter's change model can be extended to the transformation of any organization.

According to Kotter's model, the first step in creating successful change is establishing a sense of urgency. The intelligence community experienced this urgency due to events that took place on September 11th, 2001. The sense of urgency was high, and only became heightened as

the investigations and critiques came out explaining that the intelligence failure of 9/11 was not only an inability to holistically assess intelligence, but also related to the complex bureaucratic systems within the intelligence community that failed to work as they should. Steps two through eight in Kotter's change model are: 2) forming a powerful guiding coalition, 3) creating a vision, 4) communicating a vision, 5) empowering others to act on the vision, 6) planning for and creating short-term wins, 7) consolidating improvements and creating more change, 8) institutionalizing new approaches.

It can be argued that steps two and three were addressed, but not implemented in the correct manner. The creation of new government agencies such as the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and Department of Homeland Security appointed with strong individuals worked in part to form guiding coalitions for reform and create new visions for the intelligence community. The Director of National Intelligence is the United States cabinet-level official required of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 to serve as the head of the 16 member United States Intelligence Community. Other duties include directing and overseeing the National Intelligence Plan, and serve as an advisor to the President and his executive offices of the National Security Council and the Homeland Security Council about intelligence matters related to national security.<sup>34</sup>

Dr. Kotter warns that the creation of a new vision must be simple and be able to be communicated in five minutes or less, otherwise there is the risk of a vision that doesn't clearly define where the organization is going, or many incompatible projects developing that lead the organization nowhere or in the wrong direction.<sup>35</sup> Whether or not this occurred may be debated. The stated mission of the DNI includes the statements: "Lead Intelligence Integration" and "Forge an Intelligence Community that delivers the most insightful intelligence possible".<sup>36</sup> As

quickly discovered after 9/11, the lack of integration was a major factor in intelligence failures, thus the creation of the DNI. But, questions remain on whether that mission has been successful to date, or another bureaucratic arm was simply added to the intelligence arena, making it even harder to coordinate and get things done.

The creation of DNI was not universally welcome in the tradition bound intelligence community. Because of the speed that intelligence reform initially occurred and the compromises it took to pass legislation to create the DNI, disagreements over the appropriate role of the agency were masked by ambiguous language and left to the executive branch to resolve. Each of the four DNIs has pursued a distinct vision, prolonging debate on the role of the organization. No clear guidance exists to direct the DNI to either unify and direct, integrate, or merely coordinate the work of America's now 17 intelligence agencies.<sup>37</sup> This leads to confusion over creating and communicating the vision of DNI. Legislative reform in our nation often includes compromises, but the vague nature of some intelligence reform language weakened DNI's mandate, undermining any DNI efforts to be more directive. Each DNI led the organization in a slightly different direction. There may have been mistakes by the intelligence agencies when determining whether they should work in collaboration with the DNI or view it as an umbrella organization in charge of the organizations and the faults lie in vague direction and also cultural issues that allow the independent intelligence agencies to keep the status quo.

Kotter's eight step model highlighted many challenges, but where the intelligence community may have failed most is to account for what is required to affect strong, lasting organizational change, and that is to institutionalize new approaches. This is the last step in Dr. Kotter's change model, and he warns that organizational change cannot be effective if the changes aren't anchored in an organization's culture. When new behaviors are not rooted in

social norms and shared values, they are subject to degradation as soon as the pressure is reduced. The pressure was high for the intelligence community a decade ago, and that intensity slowly degraded as the years went by. The momentum for change must be maintained and the change must be anchored in the organizations culture. The overall culture of the intelligence community does not foster collaboration and intelligence sharing<sup>38</sup>, and this was not taken into account when intelligence reform legislation was enacted. Culture may be a squishy concept that is difficult to address policy or legislation, but must be addressed for successful intelligence reform and greater intelligence successes. The “need to know culture” that is an imperative to protect information is now an obstacle to uncovering, responding, and protecting against terrorism and asymmetric threats.<sup>39</sup>

Steps one, two, three, and eight highlight areas that witnessed minimal changes or even failed to be considered when it comes to reform efforts within the intelligence community. Communicating a vision, empowering others to act on the vision, planning for and creating short-term wins, consolidating improvements and creating more change were not focused on at all. Structures were changed, but the reason for the changes and relation to new visions were never discussed as short-comings. Lower and mid level managers were not really given the resources to act on the vision, or empowered to do so. It appears that planning for short-term wins was not considered at all.

The competing values framework emphasizes diagnosing and changing organizational culture in order to effectively change an organization. This framework discusses the importance of; understanding organizational culture and its central place in facilitating or inhibiting organizational improvement efforts, providing instruments for diagnosing organizational culture, and a process for producing an organizational culture profile, and focusing on the changes

needed to support and facilitate culture change.<sup>40</sup> Researchers that have dealt with the competing values framework in changing organizations noted that they often fail in their own efforts because of the inability to address culture. Several studies reported that the most frequently cited reason given for failure was a neglect of the organizations culture.<sup>41</sup> The secrecy and uniqueness of the intelligence culture and separation between collectors and analysts are unique cultural qualities that cannot be ignored when attempting to solidify organizational change initiatives.

An important first step in the competing values framework for organizational change is to determine the kind of culture that you are trying to change. Broadly, it lays out four different types of cultures in an organization; the hierarchy culture, the market culture, the clan culture, and the adhocracy culture.<sup>42</sup> Many intelligence agencies exhibit portions of both the hierarchy culture, as they are governmental entities and must maintain some sense of bureaucracy, and a clan culture, which is defined as a family-type organization where commitment is high and held together by loyalty and tradition. Because of the bonding of intelligence collectors and the secrecy that creates a close-knit community mentioned previously, traits of a clan culture tend to emerge. Both of these traits make it difficult to effect cultural change, as both bureaucracies and tradition held cultures are rigid. Bureaucracies are complex organizations that hold to norms and do not shift easily, and tradition held cultures do not easily move away from their deep seeded values and ways of doing things. The competing values framework provides a process for undergoing this change after the culture has been assessed and identified.

The six steps identified for change in the competing values framework are; 1) reach consensus on the current culture, 2) reach consensus on the desired future culture, 3) determine what the changes will and will not mean, 4) identify illustrative stories, 5) develop a strategic action plan, 6) develop an implementation plan.<sup>43</sup> The reason for outlining these six steps in the

competing values framework is to help ensure the organization is transparent about its current culture, and why it needs to change. Unsuccessful organizations often launch right into a new change program without considering the need to develop a consensual view of the current culture, the need to reach consensus on what the change means and does not mean, and the specific changes that will be started, stopped, and continued.<sup>44</sup>

Both Kotter's change model and the competing values framework provide deliberate and thought out processes for effecting change within an organization. Examining these models illustrates that change cannot be successful in the long-term if it is only superficial and not carefully planned to affect organizational culture in a sustained manner. Additionally, both models highlight the need to examine culture, and anchor changes in an organizations culture. If this is not done, attempts at change will fail.

While the aforementioned models explain how to bring about effective change, diffusions of innovation theory explains why getting a new idea adopted is difficult. This theory argues that diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated over time among the participants in a social system.<sup>45</sup> There are four main elements that influence the adoption of new ideas; the innovation or idea itself, communication system, time, and a social system. This process relies heavily on people, as new ideas must be widely adopted to self-sustain. Both Kotter's model and the competing values framework also focus on getting agreement and excitement from an affected group in order to succeed in implementing change. As far as organizations such as the intelligence community, they face much more complex adoption possibilities because organizations include both the aggregate of its individuals and its own system with procedures and norms.<sup>46</sup> As stressed in both models for change, the group must agree on changes to be made, not just authority figures in a group.

## ***APPLYING CHANGE THEORIES AND CULTURE TO INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES***

Organizational change theory provides an opportunity to step outside of a culture to consider strategic development and initiatives. Management must pause and analyze the problem, and then look at frameworks to help resolve the problem - in this case, the culture of the intelligence community. In this section, we will look at how these theories can be applied to intelligence agencies, and develop a better understanding about impediments to intelligence reform.

As part of the trickle-down effect of larger bureaucratic and legislative changes that took place after 9/11, intelligence agencies underwent organizational reforms and restructuring with the intent of unifying efforts against terrorist organizations and increasing counterterrorism capabilities. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) along with CIA, created intelligence centers where HUMINT collectors and analysts work together in teams focused on specific regions and issues.<sup>47</sup> Historically, the work of DIA collectors and analysts has been separated into two distinct directorates - the Directorate of Operations (DO) under which the collectors fall, and the Directorate of Analysis (DI). These two directorates could communicate with each other through formal channels, but accomplished a large amount of routine intelligence tasks without collaborating. Collectors and leadership within DO would create collection strategies to attack and answer intelligence requirements, not entirely without input from analysts, but in large part based on their own source access and priorities. Analysts receive new information and conduct analysis with older or intelligence.as context. The ability to provide analytic guidance to

collection was identified as a problem. Analysts were unable to directly and habitually communicate his or her requirements to the distributed collection network.<sup>48</sup> Direct communication and an analytical driven approach to collection as well as the creation of centers to make the work of intelligence collectors and intelligence analysts more collaborative seemed like a common sense reform. However, implementation encountered significant obstacles, largely linked to culture and organization.

The DIA provides military intelligence to warfighters, defense policymakers, and the Intelligence Community, in support of U.S. military planning, operations, and weapon systems acquisition. Prior to 9/11, the DIA has historically had a DO and DI, similar to CIA. Within the DIA, DO and DI still exist as bureaucratic constructs, but four intelligence centers have been established; Americas, Asia/Pacific, Europe/Eurasia, and Middle East/Africa centers. Their goal is to pool personnel from both DO and DI in order to integrate collectors and analysts. This provides for analytical and requirements driven intelligence, with analysts having greater insight into the veracity of sources and information. This is where the common sense ends and the cultural problems begin to manifest themselves. Intelligence officials criticized the new team-focused system, saying it dilutes the cultures that made each agency directorate strong. They made the claim that the best analysts are deeply skeptical and need to be separated from covert operatives to avoid group-think. The best covert operatives are famously arrogant, a trait needed to carry out the extraordinarily difficult task of convincing foreigners to spy for America.<sup>49</sup> Essentially, the culture of secrecy effects the internal functioning of intelligence agencies, not just their interactions with outside agencies.

To assert that there are different and distinct cultures within DIA may seem overreaching. However, as the examination and communication of culture contexts within the organization

begins, it can be seen that all communication takes place from a frame of reference that feeds into communication context. The frame of reference is how a particular individual or group sees and processes things. Often, people assume culture refers to “other” cultures or multiculturalism, but it can also be defined as a “group’s particular way of life”.<sup>50</sup> In this discussion, the groups we are looking at are the different cultural groups within DIA - collectors and analysts. Many suggestions and commentaries on intelligence reform speak only to organizational changes that need to be made as they provide observable developments.

Robert Cardillo, who is currently the director of National Geospatial Intelligence Agency and has held senior positions within the DNI and DIA, has said that he believes “we need to focus more on cultural change - less observable and less measurable - but infinitely more important...”<sup>51</sup> In a concept paper written on a cultural evolution in intelligence community reform, Mr. Cardillo reminds us that Edgar Schein, a well known scholar of organizational culture, defines it as: “A pattern of basic assumptions - invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration - that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.”<sup>52</sup> There are two distinct cultures within DIA and the IC, that of the analytic tradecraft, and that of the collectors. There needs to be an examination as to why the culture tensions may exist within DIA and other intelligence entities between collectors and analysts. Having different cultures to begin with is inherently linked to the possibility of having conflict, even if it is unintended. We have already discussed a couple huge factors - the potential for the release of classified information and the need to protect sources and methods. The job of an analyst is distinctly different from that of a collector, as they work to make assessments they hope will be widely recognized within

intelligence and policy circles. Even though HUMINT collectors work hard to collect vital intelligence information, their world remains one of close-hold information and secrecy.

Overlaying the change models examined above onto agencies within the intelligence community, it starts to become clear why efforts at reform were severely lacking. The U.S. bureaucratic structure entered crisis mode post-9/11 and did not put forth the effort to conduct analysis on the influencing factors and other intelligence failures. Significant efforts were launched to find out why the intelligence community was not able to connect the dots and stop the 9/11 attacks. Culture was mentioned as a point of failure, but all the changes forced on the intelligence community dealt with structural change. Each change model examined explained why changes need to be rooted in an organizations culture. Only by examining, accepting, and fostering change of intelligence community organizations would we be able to pursue full and effective reforms.

Kotter's theory necessitates changes that were completely ignored in intelligence reform. As mentioned, the sense of urgency was created for the intelligence community. The government reacted without the necessary planning to make changes successful. The dedication of money and resources without strategic guidance was predictably unsuccessful. New leaders were appointed and new organizations were created, but the reforms lacked a powerful guiding coalition. As mentioned, the lack of strong legislative language allowed for leaders to move organizations in different directions without clear policy direction. Because there was never one concise vision created, it was not communicated to personnel within the intelligence community. Additionally, people cannot be empowered to act on a vision that is not clear. As far as planning for and creating short-term wins, the intelligence community continues to have quiet successes,

but these successes do not at all support larger organizational changes because there is no overarching guidance to be successful in the long term.

### ***CONCLUSION: HOW DO WE IMPACT INTELLIGENCE CULTURE?***

Understanding intelligence community culture is the key to successful reform. The first step is to implement robust legislative language allowing for leadership to affect change needs to come from Congress. Without these policies, senior leaders may come and go every two to five years, allowing mid and lower ranking intelligence officials and avoid innovative practices. To be successful agents of change and reform, leaders not only must be able to envision a new way forward but also must be practical, with the skill to build broad support for the implementation of their vision.<sup>53</sup> Our national security is dependent on our intelligence community and we cannot continue to hide behind divisive politics and squeeze through minimalistic reforms that result in continued capability gaps. Our leaders must be given the tools to affect cultural change and that includes appropriate policies. Once that is done, they can move forward in creating the strong vision that has so far been lacking.

Using Kotter's theory and the Competing Values Framework, intelligence community leaders must examine the current culture of their organizations and determine a plan for change. Referring back to the competing values framework, there are six steps offered to implement a cultural change effort that foster involvement and minimize resistance, including clarifying for all what the new cultural emphases will be, identifying what is to remain unaltered in the organization in the midst of change, and generating specific action steps that can be initiated to create momentum towards culture change.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, personnel from all levels should be involved in vision implementation to gain support for integration and change. This enables

broader acceptance across intelligence agencies. Both Kotter's model and the competing values framework explain the necessity to self-examine organizational culture and then create a strategic vision that gains support from people affected by the change.

Intelligence agencies and hiring managers must have more leeway to hire intelligence professionals. As with reform, immediate knee-jerk responses are often made in response to budgetary restrictions and crisis events. The 9/11 attack brought on a realization that there was an aging intelligence corps that was focused on Cold War issues. There was a rush to hire individuals to fill gaps and strengthen the intelligence agencies, and the individuals brought on were promised quick pay raises and exciting work. Intelligence agencies became bloated and top-heavy and the proposed solutions went to the opposite extreme - hire at low pay grades and promise no promotions or potential to rise through the ranks. To maintain balance, agencies must have the discretion to hire at levels appropriate to the requirement. If it is mandated that intelligence agencies can only hire at low pay grades, a generation of talent will be missed.

Bringing on younger and inexperienced individuals with an eye on only the budget and providing little to no information on the realities of intelligence work during the interview process exacerbates the culture problems that exist. Very early in the application process, intelligence agencies stress to applicants that they should not discuss their interest in intelligence work or provide details on the application process, which begins their inculcation into the culture of secrecy. There are good reasons for this, but if we are to break the secrecy barriers we must begin the education process when new employees are hired, not when their opinions and practices have already been determined by years in the organization.

Once given a conditional offer within the intelligence community, employees undergo a security clearance process. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004

explicitly addresses security clearances in Title III Section 3001. The Act calls for reciprocity of security clearance and access determinations, establishment of a national database, use of all available technology in clearance investigations and a reduction in the length of time required for personal security clearances to be investigated and adjudicated. It stated in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act that the President would designate a single entity to oversee the security clearance process and develop uniform standards and policies for access to classified information, establishing a national database. The President would also designate a single entity to conduct clearance investigations and reciprocity among clearances at the same level is required. This has not been fully implemented and is an essential part of creating a common culture, rather than a series of disparate organizations. Once this standardization is complete, trust can increase between agencies which alleviates compartmentalization and increases sharing. The clearance process has not been shortened and there remains an incredibly long backlog.

Additionally, training and education of individuals within the intelligence community must be addressed and integrated throughout careers, not just as new hires. To successfully achieve a cultural shift it cannot just be a messaging program or a stated new direction that comes without any training and does not touch every level of the workforces. Training programs must address all employees, from new hires to senior executives, and must include all professional specialties within intelligence organizations. The use of training programs in the change process can help develop a psychological safety net during and after the change process. For example, they can be used to help reduce resistance, anxiety, feelings of instability and help in the re-socialization process. The goal is to achieve behavioral compliance at key points and to ensure participation in activities likely to have influencing effects on intelligence reform. This is

essential because the new way requires new knowledge, as well as new behavior patterns.<sup>55</sup>

Most important is integrating training throughout a career and not treating it as a one off experience. As with anything important, and particularly when you are trying to effect a cultural shift, it must be consistently reinforced and woven throughout normal duties and activities. Training needs to be completed on not just a new culture of sharing, but the mechanics of how that sharing will take place and be encompassed in daily duties. A culture of sharing with the proper, cleared individuals needs to be promoted, rather than a culture of secrecy.

Once employed, cleared, and trained, there must be less emphasis on metrics in the intelligence community. Although some quality may come with quantity, the importance of information in intelligence is the accuracy of it. Numbers will always exist on personnel evaluations as a quantifiable measurement of performance and something substantive that can be measured against, but when judging an individual by the number of clandestine recruitments made or the number of finished intelligence products published, the emphasis becomes misplaced. Of course, individuals must be expected to do their jobs - collectors need to collect and report, and analysts need to analyze and create intelligence products.

The intelligence community has not failed entirely. Restructuring of organizations, more resources, and new organizations are a beginning, not an end point. Intelligence failures often make headlines, while the successes are never known by the public. There may also be an over emphasis on the belief that anything not uncovered by an intelligence agency prior to it happening is a “failure”. The intelligence community must work hard to counter threats to the United States, but they will never have the capability to be aware of every bad actor planning to attack the U.S.

There has not been another large scale attack on U.S. soil since 9/11. Whether that is because of luck or hard work is unknown. However, it is clear that a cultural shift must take place to allow intelligence reforms to be fully institutionalized. It takes a significant amount of time to fully implement cultural change, but it can not be changed by being ignored. In many respects, it took 20 years for the results of the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act to positively change the culture of the US military. Now, joint duty is not just mandatory for promotion to flag rank, it is viewed as desirable for any military career.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, it will take a long time to effect cultural change within the intelligence community. The culture can be changed by making it a deliberate process that takes into account frameworks for successful organizational change. This research shows that it would be of interest to delve further into organizational culture research to better understand why cultures evolve differently and explore different frameworks that could lead to greater cooperative behavior. The Intelligence Community needs to do more to understand its own culture and affect a change that will lead to greater cooperation.

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