

The Faces of Intelligence Reform

Perspectives on Direction and Form

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Foreword by

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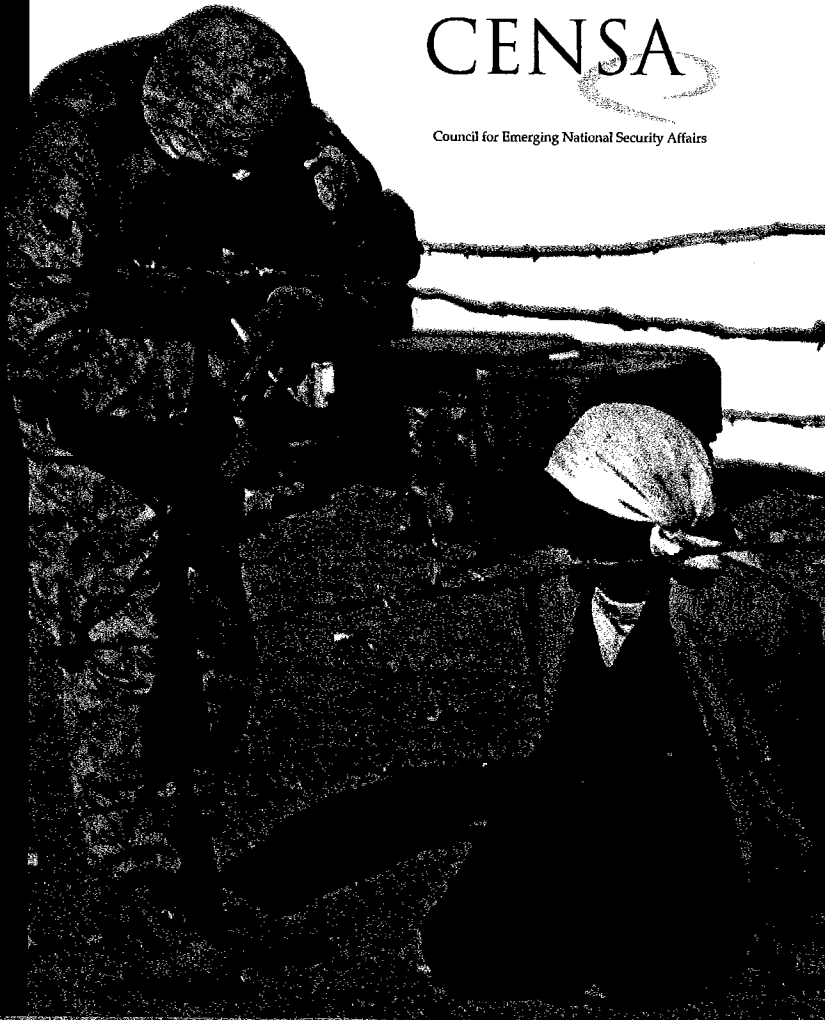
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Strengthening Intelligence to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism

Lukas Haynes

One of the most important goals of U.S. intelligence reform is the development of new capabilities and strategies to prevent a catastrophic terrorist attack using nuclear or biological weapons. These reforms should make better use of emerging technology and draw on the world's best scientific and technical expertise. Countering WMD terrorism will also require more effective strategies to link intelligence to action, serving a broader range of customers within the military, diplomatic, and law enforcement communities. Finally, we need to see international cooperation as a vital part of this effort, making full use of joint exercises, sanctions, inspections, and remote monitoring. In an age of porous borders, global nuclear supply chains, and undeterrable adversaries, timely intelligence will be critical to preventing nuclear terror.

Intelligence alone will not prevent nuclear terrorism, but there may be no more important task for the nation's intelligence agencies. The intelligence failures associated with Pearl Harbor and September 11 had a profound impact on America's national security, but the consequences of a nuclear attack would be far more devastating. An undetected terrorist attack on U.S. soil involving an improvised nuclear device could lead to hundreds of thousands of casualties—an order of magnitude that would change America, and the world, forever.

Though optimists believe that this is a low probability event, the mere existence of unsecured nuclear bomb materials coupled with the avowed intent of organized terrorist networks suggests the need for a significant investment in the intelligence effort to detect and disrupt such an attack.

The nation's spy agencies need to enlist the best talent, technology, and intelligence-gathering strategies that this country can muster. But where is the public discussion of reforms in this area?

One high-profile initiative—the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD Commission)—was established by President George W. Bush in February 2004. The Commission returned its report on March 2005 and its recommendations are still being digested. In the meantime, other efforts have been underway to help the Intelligence Community address the twin challenges of terrorism and proliferation. Some of them have begun to bear fruit.

Harvard University's Preventive Defense Project, co-chaired by William Perry and Ashton Carter, has spent the past year collecting the best ideas of intelligence officials and synthesizing suggestions for improving WMD-related intelligence. The project's preliminary conclusions, communicated to the WMD Commission in October 2004¹, identified five key areas for reform.

The first is to better utilize emerging technology to detect the illicit development or diversion of nuclear material and weapons' components. During the Cold War, satellite reconnaissance led to breakthroughs in reporting on strategic nuclear stockpiles. Today, there are "close-in" technologies that can be used to detect suspicious activity. Krypton air sampling, for example, can be helpful in detecting spent nuclear fuel reprocessing. Ground sensors, using chemical, radiological, acoustic, and seismic transducers, can be embedded, air-dropped, and networked for remote data collection. Tagging of critical components can also be used to penetrate suspicious networks. Many of these techniques will benefit from increasing miniaturization, combination with information and computing technologies, and integration into more traditional surveillance programs.

¹ Ashton Carter, Statement before the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, October 4, 2004, Washington, D.C.

A second critical area is strengthening the scientific and technological knowledge base of intelligence analysts and policy makers. Developing nuclear and biological weapons requires substantial technical competence. Detecting illicit activity requires a vast range of scientific and technical expertise in addition to strong links with the nongovernmental scientific community that monitors trends relevant to proliferation. Many of the tips that help to focus government intelligence collection come from "open source" scientific literature, the training and movement of foreign scientists, and commerce in scientific equipment.

A third area, and one in which the U.S. government has made substantial progress in recent years, is linking intelligence to action. To successfully prevent or disrupt the illicit transfer of WMD components requires much more than sound reporting. Interdiction requires timely provision of accurate information to operational task-forces with national security, law enforcement, and diplomatic elements. The synchronicity necessary for successful operations is exceedingly complex. Without timely "actionable" intelligence, they are almost impossible.

Related to this challenge is broadening the customer base for this intelligence. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the principal customers were defense officials and diplomats. Today, the range of national and international authorities involved in counter-proliferation and counterterrorism activities is staggering. It includes FBI investigators and law enforcement, national laboratories, Department of Energy officials, international inspectors, national regulatory authorities, border police agencies, customs officials, local police, and many other authorities that now fall under the Department of Homeland Security. In preventing nuclear terrorism, our last defense may be the most local defense, and all of these customers need timely collection and analysis.

The Harvard project has identified a final area in which counter-proliferation intelligence efforts can be improved: utilizing international cooperation. According to Ashton Carter, "The debate leading up to the invasion of Iraq pitted arms control inspections against national intelligence, as though the two were alternatives. In fact, if handled properly, the arms control

framework can be used creatively as a platform for national collection.”

International agreements have provided the basis for material declarations, inspections, material sampling, forensic analysis, remote monitoring, document searches, and interviews with scientists. These methods produce an enormous amount of information that helps to further focus intelligence efforts.

If the U.S. government is to prevent the devastation of a nuclear terrorist attack, it will need effective long-term prevention and interdiction efforts that take place far beyond U.S. soil. In an age of porous borders, global nuclear supply chains, and undeterrable adversaries, this needs to be a global effort. But intelligence reform starts at home.

"In over three-dozen short pieces *The Faces of Intelligence Reform* offers bold new ideas from the next generation of foreign policy leaders. The authors, drawn from the diverse ranks of CENSA members including active duty military officers, former National Security Council officials, and the best young minds from think tanks and academia, have put together an impressive collection tackling the problem of intelligence reform from every angle. Moving well beyond the media focus on re-wiring diagrams, *The Faces of Intelligence Reform* is one of few works that offers concrete recommendations to address the gap between the current capabilities and the rapidly changing needs of the intelligence community. Pieces address such narrow but critical subjects as building relationships with local tribes, improving intelligence with regard to terrorist financing, how to penetrate insurgents and terrorist groups, and fixing the hiring process. John Negroponte should read this book. Then he should start the true process of reforming the intelligence community."

—**Richard A. Clarke**, former U.S. National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism, author of *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror*

"In the past year demands for change in the structure and process of the Intelligence Community reached a crescendo. The legislation that resulted in response is now playing out. This collection of short essays is an extremely useful way to flag crucial issues and disagreements, and to expose a range of views, for the ongoing debate that accompanies this shakedown cruise."

—**Richard K. Betts**, Director of the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies, Columbia University

"By covering a broad array of new and contentious issues that are highly relevant to the long war we are in—from data mining to the cultural barriers that block effective penetration of terrorist groups—by sharpening rather than submerging policy debates, and by giving a forum to the next generation of intelligence policy makers this fine volume makes a signal contribution. Essential reading for anyone interested in the field."

—**R. James Woolsey**,
Vice President, Booz Allen Hamilton, Director of Central Intelligence 1993-95

Intelligence reform remains one of the most hotly debated national security issues in recent memory. The 9/11 terrorist attacks and failed intelligence efforts preceding the war in Iraq have prompted the most profound overhaul of the U.S. Intelligence Community since the end of the Cold War. As battles continue to rage in Afghanistan and Iraq, and new threats emerge in Iran and North Korea, it is more critical than ever to address weaknesses in the U.S. intelligence system to ensure we are suitably armed to counter both ongoing and future threats to national security.

This volume analyzes key issues faced by policy makers striving to upgrade the U.S. intelligence system and presents important policy prescriptions to improve the collection, analysis, management, and use of intelligence. These thirty-seven essays from mid-career professionals not only focus on the challenges faced in improving the effectiveness of the Intelligence Community but also provide careful analysis of the broader policy implications of intelligence reform within the United States and abroad.

Project Directors, Michael R. Fenzel, Angela M. Sapp

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