

Is NATO Getting Better Intelligence?

NATO Gets Better Intelligence - New Challenges Require New Answers to Satisfy Intelligence Needs for Headquarters and Deployed/Employed Forces, Friedrich W. Korkisch, *IAS Reader Strategy Paper* 1-2010, Institut für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik, Vienna, Updated April 2010 (see pdf attachment)

The demands on intelligence gathering and assessment are enormous and the consequences of getting it wrong can be dire. One issue that undoubtedly affected intelligence assessments in the lead up to US-led military intervention in Iraq in 2003, for example, was the prior failure of US and British intelligence to spot Al Qaeda's strategic ambitions, particularly the attack on 9/11. As several inquiry reports have since confirmed, British intelligence agencies tended to "worst case" thinking, especially after political pressure was brought to bear. The failure to find any banned weapons in Iraq also makes it more difficult to trust intelligence reports about North Korean, Iranian or other 'rogue state' threats.

Threats to our security - such as those from NBC proliferation and catastrophic forms of terrorism - are now much more diffuse and debatable. Since most of these threats are developed in secret, the case for maintaining secret specific intelligence is strong. This is not only to provide early warning, but to facilitate diplomatic and other policy responses short of military action. But it is vital to base future non-proliferation, counter-proliferation and counter-terrorism strategies on carefully collected and analysed open evidence rather than on prejudice or political expediency.

There are hundreds of books and thousands of articles written on national intelligence-gathering agencies: the CIA, the FBI, German, British, French or Soviet/Russian intelligence, their operations, directors and real or assumed mistakes. But as the author of a new study, *NATO Gets Better Intelligence*, says "there is no book written about NATO intelligence". Friedrich Korkisch's detailed primer seeks to fill this information gap by outlining how NATO intelligence works: the state of the art, ongoing problems and the recent improvements in the Alliance's intelligence operations.

Korkisch concludes that intelligence within NATO still remains predominantly a national prerogative: "Intelligence hardware is neither NATO- nor EU-driven, but mainly US driven, industry driven (new technologies), threat-driven, and now counterterrorism-driven". One of the key lessons from Iraq was that the intelligence agencies need greater visibility and accountability. This truism also applies to the Alliance as it begins to adopt a greater intelligence role.

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