the entire effort and involves, in particular, determining collection requirements based on customer requests. *Collection* refers to the gathering of raw data to meet the collection requirements. These data can be derived from any number and type of open and secret sources. *Processing* refers to the conversion of raw data into a format analysts can use. *Analysis and production* describes the process of evaluating data for reliability, validity, and relevance; integrating and analyzing it; and converting the product of this effort into a meaningful whole, which includes assessments of events and implications of the information collected. Finally, the product is *disseminated* to its intended audience.4

In some ways, this process resembles many other production cycles. It is prescriptive, structured, made up of discrete steps, and expected to yield a specific product. The traditional depiction of the process in the Intelligence Cycle, however, is not an accurate representation of the way intelligence is produced. The notion of a cycle assumes that the steps will proceed in the prescribed order and that the process will repeat itself continuously with reliable results. This type of representation gives the impression that all inputs are constant and flow automatically, but it does not address elements that may influence the movement of the cycle, positively or negatively.

The most significant assumption about the Intelligence Cycle model, that it provides a means for helping managers and analysts deliver a reliable product, should be examined at the outset. This can be accomplished through two types of analyses. The first is a systematic examination of the elements of the process, the inputs it relies on, and the outcomes that can be expected. The second uses a systemic approach to identifying the relationships of the elements in the process and their influence on each other.

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4 Central Intelligence Agency, *Factbook on Intelligence*.