

Interview with Dr. Stephen Cambone

Perspective of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence (U)

“

The Secretary of Defense has two obligations: to ensure that elements within the Department that are part of the Intelligence Community are responsive to the DCI [and] that combatant forces and senior Department leadership have the intelligence they need to perform their functions.

”

Editor's Note: On 11 March 2003, Dr. Stephen Cambone was sworn in as Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, a position created by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to focus on the challenges of intelligence gathering and interpretation in the security environment of the 21st century. Previously, Dr. Cambone served as Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and as Director of Research for the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University. He graduated from Catholic University and received his Masters and Ph.D. from the Claremont Graduate School. (U)

Dr. Cambone was interviewed in his Pentagon office on 22 August 2003 by Paul Johnson, Director of the Center for the Study of Intelligence, and William Nolte, a member of the Editorial Board of Studies in Intelligence. (U)

❖ ❖ ❖

Dr. Cambone, thank you very much for your time. Could you explain to our readers how and why the new position of Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence was created and what you see as your principal responsibilities? (U//FOUO)

(b)(3)(c)

The Department of Defense is both a major contributor to, and consumer of, the products of the

Intelligence Community. It has within it a number of organizations that are critical intelligence producers and others that are important intelligence consumers. The Secretary of Defense therefore has two obligations. One is to ensure that those elements within the Department that are part of the Intelligence Community are responsive to the DCI and are providing him the kind of support he needs to perform his duties. At the same time, he must ensure that both combatant forces and senior Department leadership have the intelligence they need to perform their functions. The Secretary of Defense may be unique among Cabinet officials in that he has statutory responsibilities under both Title 10 and Title 50, so the range and scope of his responsibilities are quite large.¹ He therefore came to the conclusion that it would be desirable to have an undersecretary to help him to manage that range of responsibilities. (U//FOUO)

As you are well aware, many studies and commissions in recent years have concluded that the intelligence cycle is "out of balance," and that resources have been allocated disproportionately to new collection systems at the expense of the Community's

¹ Title 10 of the US Code defines the duties and responsibilities of the Secretary of Defense; Title 50 defines, among other things, the national security functions and duties of the Director of Central Intelligence. (U)

analytic base. Today, escalating intelligence requirements of military operators seem to imply an even greater increase in collection and processing capabilities. Given these, how do we keep from exacerbating this imbalance in the years to come? (U//FOUO)

“
(b)(1)

”

tion. So we have to see how that evolves. (U//FOUO)

Secondly, if we do this right, we also may offload some of the ordinary tasks that go today to the analysts and shift them to the operators. I know that sends shivers up and down some spines, but for much of the intelligence collection activities that take place today, particularly at the tactical level, there is a decreasing need for an intermediary analyst. Now, as you get higher and higher in the echelons of command, to the corps and theater levels, the need for analysis increases, because these consumers are undertaking different tasks, and the interaction with other collection data to support decisionmaking becomes more complex. But the closer you get to the front, the less of that analytic activity is likely to be needed because you're more oriented toward a very specific set of operational and tactical objectives. You know what you need to see: "I need to see the other side of the hill." You know what you need to hear: "I need to hear the signals that are coming from that direction." And so forth. We're entering a very different kind of world. (U//FOUO)

Another thing we need to do is to think about processing procedures in that kind of world, which is going to be driven, as I say, in part by *what* you collect, *how* you collect it, and how people *use* it. But it's also going to be driven by the demand for *speed*. The closer you get to the military operator on the front,

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

What you are pointing to is a possible shift in what has been described as a dualism between collection and analysis. (U//FOUO)

Yes, I think we need to change our thinking in important ways. That's one area, and I can only barely begin to see the glimmer of these possibilities. I don't know that I have a fully developed concept, but to the extent that we start bringing machine-based tools to bear, we may free up an awful lot of people that used to do "analysis." This also implies some important changes in the way we manage our collec-

(b) (3): 50 U.S.C. 403-1 (i) (1) National Security Act of 1947



Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Stephen Cambone (center), with interviewers William Nolie (left) and Paul Johnson (right). (U)

the less valuable the "analysis" of data becomes if, in the process, it is delayed. Now, there are trade-offs, of course; you can make mistakes. That's why the higher up the chain you go in command, the more analytic work you do need. These intelligence consumers are planning the step after next, and their decision cycle is a bit longer. But the guy on the front line is not in that situation. (U//FOUO)

All that is only going to free up a number of people. But there's not a bonanza of individuals there. In the end, investments must be made in people, too, and we are going to have to have more analysts. Both the Secretary and the DCI are committed to increasing the numbers of analysts. There's an effort to find the funds to put against it. It takes nearly as long, however, to bring about a capable analytic force as it does to bring some of these new collection assets on line. So, what's the opportu-

nity? The opportunity is to start to marry changes in the way we do our collection, processing, distribution, and posting, even as we bring in a new cadre of analysts, and start to grow those two parts of the system together, so that when we get 10 years down the road, we in fact have an altered relationship between collection and analysis and at the same time strike the right balance between them. (U//FOUO)

In addition to improving the balance between analysts and collectors, will defense intelligence need to look at organizational arrangements? We have a multitude of all-source analytic organizations. Within DOD, analysts are distributed among DIA, the Military Services, the combatant commands' Joint Intelligence Centers, and other components. For meeting future defense intelligence priorities, is this the most efficient allocation of analytic resources? (U//FOUO)

I have asked Lt. Gen. Gerry Boykin, who is the Deputy Undersecretary for Intelligence and Warfighting Support, to address this issue. He is presently working with each of the Services to look at their requirements and activities and ask what they need to do to meet not only their Title 10 requirements but also to make their contribution to the joint fight. When I say "joint fight," I mean not just the melding of Army, Air Force, and Navy capabilities. In the end, it's an *all-capabilities* strategy that extends to the overall Intelligence Community—the full range of analytic capabilities not only for short-term tactical applications, but for longer-term strategic intelligence needs as well. (U//FOUO)

How are we going to go about this?

(b)(3)

The bulk of them are where you would expect, which is in the Army. And the Army's needs are going to only get more complex in terms of their need for information related to land combat, because they're going to become essentially a combined-arms force. They're going to fly everything but large, fixed-wing aircraft, and they're going to be getting feeds from large, fixed-wing aircraft, and they're going to have to get all the information fused together. Now, back to my earlier point: Is that activity "intelligence?" Or is it "operations?" Clearly what's happening out there is that the traditional boundaries between

“

We are in for a change in what we think defense intelligence is, and what role and function it plays.

”

intelligence and operations are blurring or just disappearing. If you're living in an information-based environment, where the action of the maneuver unit, if you will—squadron, battle group, or combat brigade—operates as an “extension of the information,” then this is now a very different world than we've had before. So, while there is still an important function associated with compiling, collating, and presenting information to someone else for making decisions, there's another function which is becoming increasingly apparent, one that involves a seamless interaction of operations and information where the two become almost indistinguishable. (U//FOUO)

That brings up some really interesting challenges in the relationship between military operator and intelligence provider. Historically, military operators have been more inclined to think that “intel is costing me F-16s,” or “costing me ships,” or that “it's a cost against operations.” But what you're describing is a broader realization that lethal things can't work without intelligence-derived information. (U//FOUO)

That's right. My judgment is that within the military we're well over the old way of thinking. I was talking with the senior Service programmers recently, and they are clear that there needs to be care and attention paid to providing that information, because they cannot function without it. They know that. The tension for us is to assure that the Services, and, by extension, the combatant

commanders who use the Services as their component commands provide the joint capability that is the key to success in war. (U//FOUO)

But does that growing realization hold true not only for combatant commanders but for those responsible for design and acquisition, as well as analysis, of military weapons systems? (U//FOUO)

Well, you know, whether it's an aircraft or the Stryker combat vehicle, they're now all in that dual mode. And that's why I'm saying that we are in for a change in what we think defense intelligence is, and what role and function it plays. Because what they do well is increasingly an extension of the information that they're getting, and their intelligence support must be designed to make the information available, clearer, more precise, and more exact. The old mindset is that “the fight takes place, a set piece kind of battle, and then afterwards you sort of step back in with your intelligence to assess the battle damage.” It's not going to happen that way anymore. It did not happen that way in Iraq. Battle- or Bomb-Damage Assessments were useful. More critical, however, was predictive intelligence—where will the enemy be, and how can I

maneuver to gain an advantage and bring US battlespace dominance to bear. (U//FOUO)

As the distinction between operations and intelligence begins to blur for the military commander, we also have a challenge of getting the “tactical” information to strategic decisionmakers at the national level. They will have a critical need for what we used to think of as “tactical data,” which, in the past, often remained in theater. Can the same approach support not only the information-driven operations you described, but also the information-driven decisions inside the beltway? (U//FOUO)

Charlie Allen asked you to pose that question!² (U//FOUO)

No, Charlie didn't set us up on that. He would have given us the really tough ones. (U//FOUO)

(b)(1)

² Charlie E. Allen is Assistant Director of Central Intelligence for Collection. (U)

“

With better horizontal integration, the collection managers on the DCI's side and on the Secretary of Defense's side can begin to integrate their programs.

”

for either the analyst or the immediate “tactical” user—the kind of data that they’re going to need. So the key is moving much closer to real-time management of collection, analytic, and distribution systems than we have today. (U//FOUO)

(b)(1)

(b)(1)

(b)(1)

Right. And that was a relatively limited example of what I’m talking about. Now, if you do that, if you can get that sort of system going, then the question of “what is analysis about” is very interesting. Because it’s about possibly different things. You still have to do the long-range planning. But, if you get to the point where you can act quickly on the information, now you’re asking yourself the question, what effect did I have? Because you are now an actor in the very intelligence picture that you were trying to understand. You are causing it to change. So it’s not any longer something separate from you. You are a part of it. You’re inside your own picture, because you did something . . . caused something to happen and, if you’re really good, what happens is, you begin to cause to happen what you want



UNCLASSIFIED

So, where am I going with all of this? If we achieve better horizontal integration, there will be a way for the collection manager on the DCI's side and the collection manager on the Secretary of Defense's side to begin to integrate their programs and find a way to match the availability of the various platforms, as a function of time and target, to yield—

“

The intelligence side of the house [must] keep the consumer well informed of the effects of his operation.

”

to have happen. And, now, this whole business about being inside the decision cycle of your adversaries is true, because you're actually painting the picture you're seeing. And then you arrive where Gen. Jumper wants to be, that is, you're predictive.³ Now you are actually causing to happen what best suits you and what most discomforts your adversary. (U//FOUO)

And in some cases, you're doing this with even more decisions to make. Suppose, for example, you find the communications line an enemy is using. Traditionally, you would move at once, bring the line down. Now, if they're sending back reports of "Things are terrible. The Americans are invincible," you may not want to bring that line down. (U//FOUO)

But that's all part of the planning that goes on in what's called "effects-based operations." You've got to have that in your mind as you go into it. So it seems to me we're on the verge of a huge revolution in the role for the analyst, the collector, and the manager. It's as true for the military and for the operations people inside the Agency as it's going to be, over time, for the analysts and for the political and strategic decisionmakers. (U//FOUO)

Expanding on your thought about "being inside the picture:" Most of us grew up in an intelligence environment where it was almost

³ US Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper. (U)

like having a Miranda card you read off: "Mr. Chairman, I don't make policy; we just provide information." And now as you change the picture, does that distinction go away? (U//FOUO)

Well, the intelligence people are not deciding "what picture to paint." They are assembling and relaying that picture. The leadership—the policymaker or military commander, as appropriate—decides whether "I want landscapes," or "I want portraits," or, "I want them in the Dutch style." That's their job. The intelligence side of the house is providing the running commentary, if you will, on how well they're doing. If the intelligence consumer anticipated he was painting a Van Gogh-like picture and his effort results in a Whistler, that's a problem for intelligence. It did not keep that consumer well informed of his operation's effects. (U//FOUO)

You're talking about a flow of information that is simultaneously available to a variety of distinctive intelligence consumers, whether it's Homeland Security, a law enforcement officer, or a military planner. But tactical intelligence collected by theater assets is obviously being refocused and retasked at the direction of the war fighter—the first among equals in this environment. And the concern

remains: Buried in the flow of tactical information are data of no value to the military operators driving collection, but data that's critical for other consumers when it's matched up by analysts with all-source reporting. (U//FOUO)

What I think we have here is an issue of *scale*, on the one hand, and *application*, on the other. Let's compare needs of the Community to the tactical commander to illustrate. The struggle between the offense and the defense is one that plays out over a period of time. Stealing the secret that has to do with how a particular element of an adversary's air defense system might work, or his countermeasures, is really hard, and it takes a long time. So although the time sensitivity is different—the dial goes around the face of the clock more slowly for acquisition decisions than for those of the tactical command on the battlefield—both are trying to do the same thing: figure out how an adversary air defense operation works. For the acquisition consumer, we would like to be able to anticipate where that adversary's capabilities are going and put ours out ahead of his, or discourage him from heading in the direction where we don't want him to go. For the tactical commander, he needs to know the secrets to adjust his tactics, techniques, and procedures to succeed in battle. (U//FOUO)

The second factor is *application*. And you've made the point: A large volume of data is collected in a tactical setting, but the data don't care who applies

“

While occasionally DOD and CIA may disagree, my sense is that the level of cooperation is vastly superior to what it once was.

”

them. They just are. So what you have are different people who have different applications for portions of the same data stream; they often serve different customers, or they have different functions. But it's all the same data, and it isn't going to change because one person is doing political analysis and another is doing economic analysis. The question is how you apply it. (U//FOUO)

In the future environment you're describing, speed of data flow is critical. Will this cause us to rethink what it means to provide for information security?
(U//FOUO)

You bet. I think we have to get to a much more sophisticated notion of risk management, as opposed to the more defensive approach where you try to prevent information from escaping. It's going to escape. The way of the world is what it is. So how do you manage that risk of others learning your secrets before you learn theirs? That's the contest we're now in. One can argue that it's always been that way. True, but what's different is that we live in a world of global markets, of the easy exchange of technical, economic, and political information. The open-source-intelligence field is just littered with jewels if you know where to look and how to piece the information together. The nature of the technology that we are dealing with is not such that its characteristics can be kept very long from anyone else. The information proliferates as students travel and go from school to

school, and as engineers go from one business to another. There are global conglomerates and companies. All this places us in a risk-management world; you're not in a secure, vaulted environment anymore. And to top it all off, we all live on the electronic highway. So when you put all that together, you know, it's a matter of risk management. Very hard. (U//FOUO)

To the extent you're supporting different segments of the national security environment, you're working on different time constants. Speed means something different in the acquisition world than in the world of the tactical commander or the policymaker. Nevertheless, managing speed is the only way it seems to me that you can do these things, and having an approach that is continuous forward motion rather than reactive seems to me to give you more security. (U//FOUO)

(b)(1)
(b)(3)(n)

(b)(1)
(b)(3)(n)

Dr. Cambone, we appreciate your time and are grateful for the opportunity to communicate your views to our readers. Thank you very much. (U)

