

TITLE: Serving Intelligence Clients

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As much effort must go into the care and feeding of consumers as goes into production to ensure maximum impact for finished current intelligence.

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Intelligence analysts labor long and hard to reach and coordinate significant conclusions which their supervisors and senior officials review and massage for clarity and terseness. A sophisticated, attractive product is sought by the use of graphic arts and the most modern publication and printing techniques. Then, an excellent output too often is left to the vagaries of the distribution system.

Production analysts and their supervisors too often see the fact of publication as the end of their effort. Experience shows, however, that distribution lists and blue notes from the Director or his Deputies do not guarantee that the information reaches, or is read, by the reader for whom it is intended. Although much of the intelligence product reaches the policymakers through staffers who peruse intelligence documents in preparing studies and recommendations for their principals, its impact is indirect. These simple truths manifested themselves to me while an intelligence aide to the Secretary of the Treasury from 1972 to 1974.

THE CONCEPT

In 1971 the Secretary of the Treasury became a member of NFIB (then USIB). Late that year George Shultz was appointed to that office. Seeking guidance about the role Treasury should play, Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms appointed two CIA employees—representing DDO and NFAC (then DDI)—to assist in organizing a contribution to collection (from the Treasury attaches) and to develop a systematic availability of finished intelligence to the Secretary. It is the latter function addressed in this article.

The Department of the Treasury received multiple copies of selected finished intelligence products. Due to the absence of a secure building, these were filed and made available on request to the few officials holding suitable clearances. Thus, unless senior Treasury officials had prior knowledge of the existence of an intelligence publication, they remained ignorant of much of the material sent to their Department. The Secretary received regularly only one document—a hand-carried copy of NSA's unevaluated daily *Sigint Summary*. Like most senior officials, he did not distinguish between raw information and finished, evaluated intelligence; an intelligence logo or letterhead symbolized an intelligence product.

The Secretary was amenable to rectifying this situation and instructed that he should receive an oral intelligence briefing daily, that all substantive intelligence documents directed to the Office of the Secretary be screened by his intelligence briefer, and that recommendations be made regarding clearances for his Assistant Secretaries to assure that information vital to the performance of their duties was made available

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to them. His satisfaction with CIA support subsequently caused him to direct that all members of the Economic Policy Board,* which he chaired, be briefed daily.

Thus began an experience that was exhilarating and exhausting—but most of all the fulfillment of an analyst's dream: to observe and participate in the near final process of intelligence, its consideration by the policy decision maker. I learned many lessons which I happily share with others in the hope of fostering profound change in intelligence output.

Treasury Organization

Devising a system to provide intelligence products to officials in the Treasury Department was physically taxing but not a great problem. Each day at 0600, overnight CIA publications and selected pieces of traffic were delivered. NSA furnished significant items from its take, and State Department sent a selection of cable traffic. The Treasury's own tickers provided press and FBIS material. All formed the grist for preparation of the daily briefings.

When William Simon became Secretary in 1974, the author appreciated his prior attendance at the Agency's speed reading course. Mr. Simon chose to have his briefing with breakfast, just after 0700, allowing one hour for the briefer to assimilate the overnight take. I found he digested world affairs with the same assiduity he did his grapefruit. It became a peripatetic briefing, usually ending up in the washroom where the Vietnam situation the Secretary's teeth simultaneously got the broad brush.

Interviews with the officers designated by the Secretary quickly revealed those interests and responsibilities that should be supported by intelligence. Because only the communications area of the Treasury building was secure, officers were orally briefed daily, or provided with hand-carried folders of relevant material, according to their choice. A secure vault was established where officers' materials were filed and where standard classified reference materials were kept for their perusal.

Not everyone at Treasury was enamored of this intelligence attention. Deputy Undersecretary for Monetary Affairs Paul Volcker initially declined the offer of support, noting that when he needed information on international economic developments he phoned the likely foreign source of information. (He abhorred "skulking in the corridors, eavesdropping.") Mr Volcker was later won over to intelligence when shown clandestine reporting that an ostensible ally was "setting him up," permitting him to turn aside what might have become an embarrassing situation.

Other skeptics, many of whom never became comfortable even with the knowledge that intelligence analysis was addressing problems in Treasury's area of substantive policy responsibility, at least grudgingly admitted that intelligence helped to confirm their own analyses.

Broader Contacts

A fascinating and educational part of the tour involved association with members of the Economic Policy Board. Unlike the development of a system within the Department of the Treasury to purvey finished intelligence, with the EPB approaches had to

*The Economic Policy Board (now The Economic Policy Group) during the period under consideration included Secretary of the Treasury George Shultz, Chairman; Executive Director Kenneth Dam; Economic Counselor to the President Ambassador Kenneth Rush; Secretary of Commerce Frederick Dent; Chairmen of the Council of Economic Advisors Herbert Stein; the President's Special Trade Representative Ambassador William Eberle; and Chairman of the Council of International Economic Policy Peter Flanigan. The EPB provided guidance to the President of both domestic and international economic policies.

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be designed for the widely differing physical and substantive situations and personality of each member.

Ideally, a psychologist should match the briefer to his principal. Although Secretary Shultz was of impressive stature, his desk was on a platform so he looked down on his visitors. A man of little facial expression, he chose to look directly into the eyes of a speaker. Unless he commented in his soft-spoken yet steely manner it was difficult to ascertain his reaction. Equally unnerving was Mr. Flanigan's habit of standing behind the briefer—which left me addressing an empty chair.

Common to all was the never-ending need to be made familiar with the services and capabilities of the intelligence world. During the two-year period in which there were nine changes of EPB members, it became clear that it was the individual's perception of the role to be played, as well as his/her influence in decision-making bodies and relation to the Chief Executive, rather than the title of the office held by the member, that dictated the support intelligence required. The President regularly made assignments of responsibility that related more to the individual's ability, interests, and background than to job title.

The Executive Branch may appear highly structured, but in fact it is highly personalized. With each change of incumbency, a whole new set of interests and capabilities is brought into the picture. Varying relationships develop with the Chief Executive, and tasks are not only given to the new official, but they are also assigned or reassigned widely. Even without a change of incumbency, it is important to keep a sharp watch for Presidential details. During my tour, the role of chief negotiator on the sensitive problem of US economic relations with Japan shifted among the Vice President, the President's Special Trade Representative, the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, and the Secretary of Commerce. Keeping abreast of such changes in assignment is vital to insure that intelligence is properly exploited by the policymaker/negotiator.

I found that close daily contact with officials—and their willingness in most cases to permit a review of their appointment calendars listing meetings they would attend or chair, foreign officials they would host, trips they would make—permitted the tailoring of intelligence support to their needs. On this point, Henry Kissinger was not the only official to make unheralded trips abroad. Often a confidential foreign visit had significance beyond the publicized trips of Administration officials. During the 1972-1973 international monetary crises, intelligence support for the secret meetings far exceeded in importance the more regular intelligence assistance supplied.

It was not surprising to find each Cabinet Secretary or Presidential adviser had a quite individual style and approach to assigned responsibility. As regards intelligence, some read, some listened; some were receptive, some hostile; some were attentive, some few were querulous and distracted. Many opted to avoid "IN" boxes, relying solely on aides to screen incoming material—which required a dual contact to make certain that the principal was well-served by assisting the aide in making judgments about what should be forwarded or discarded. This required a careful balance to avoid overloading the official and yet faithfully representing intelligence output.

One official insisted that he always be briefed privately, that his staff not be informed of our exchanges. Another asked that his personal staff be cleared to participate in the briefings. A third was briefed privately but would indicate items to be brought to the attention of particular subordinates. Most did not regularly read any general intelligence publication, preferring to be given specific items for study and frequently asking for summaries with important background details underscored.

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In addition to understanding these idiosyncracies, it was necessary to establish a personal relationship with each official. Perhaps the most bizarre incident that led to a warm and lasting association involved Dr. Herbert Stein—a man of stern demeanor but, I discovered, with an impish proclivity. I was ^{chided} unmercifully in front of his staff for a considerably off-mark estimate of a (b)(1) election outcome. Before thinking, I blurted out that I felt quite at home with that mis-estimate in the presence of the Council of Economic Advisors. The first uproarious laugh came from Dr. Stein with whom, from that point, and easy relationship existed.

Almost universally, these senior officials developed a strong desire to be in charge of the briefings. They sought information related to an imminent meeting or a problem in which they were embroiled. Only with tact and persistence could they be led to consider those analyses that are the major purpose of intelligence—reporting developing situations that would in the future require decisions. It became an interesting contest between what the policymaker wanted to know and what the intelligence aide thought he should know.

Again, personal contact was invaluable in this area. It permitted, with perseverance, the preparation of the policymaker to influence forthcoming problems rather than merely to react to them. It also made it possible to retrieve and re-present older published materials relevant to situations in which he/she had become involved. With some frequency, routine intelligence output had no relevance for many consumers at the time of its production, yet was welcomed as thought-provoking analysis subsequently. Often current intelligence became “current” when consumed rather than when produced.

Although OER had published considerable data on Soviet and world agricultural prospects and Moscow's need to import grains from major suppliers (read the US), much of that reporting had not been absorbed by those about to participate in the decision on US grain acreage allocations in 1973. The preparation of a packet of existing materials and an update briefing provided an economic rationale for what otherwise would have been largely a domestic political decision.

And yet I would make clear that in two years of briefing a large number of appointed officials, I found none unintelligent. Quite the contrary: they were busy people with a tendency to problem solve using their considerable native intelligence unless specific help was laid before them. On being designated “oil czar” in 1973, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Simon vowed to become expert in that field. While both CIA and the Department of the Interior briefed and provided written materials, his ability to sort, evaluate, and digest information and isolate the real issues, led to a mastery of the subject that was generally typical of the ability of policymakers.

On many occasions daily personal contact contributed to improved targets for intelligence exploitation. Busy officials are unlikely on their own to investigate ways to elucidate reports they read, but with great frequency they asked me for fuller explanation or analyses into related areas of intelligence. Chairman Herbert Stein of the Council of Economic Advisors recommended content and format for a quarterly summary economic analysis that appeared in OER's Economic Intelligence Weekly. [redacted]

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SERVICE TO CLIENTS

How should intelligence assure that it makes an appropriate and major contribution to a decisionmaker too busy to search out all relevant information? How do we

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make maximum and telling use of the production of the intelligence analyst, much of which derives from exciting "finds" in his daily take but which may not match the immediate need of a consumer?

I believe there is no substitute for personal contact. Exposure to random intelligence production does not alone meet policy needs and the busy executive is unlikely regularly to search out a channel for clarification or to supplement his knowledge. He will, however, with an established face-to-face daily encounter, ask questions, solicit help, and often provide grist for the intelligence mill based on his experiences when to do so requires nothing more than a few moments of his time. *The above article is*
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