

Overcoming Old Barriers

Operations Analysis: A New DI Tradecraft for Partnership

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"Partnership" and "collocation" are the hottest buzzwords today in CIA's lexicon. Former Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Woolsey stated in November 1994 before the DCI Seminar that partnership signals a "change in the way we approach our mission to be the intelligence organization of choice in the United States Government." As a Directorate of Intelligence (DI) officer who spent four years working in a Directorate of Operations (DO) operations branch in the Counterterrorist Center (CTC), I believe that the CTC provides a prototype for partnership. The distinguishing feature of the CTC which makes it useful for developing a broader program of DO-DI partnership is what I call "operations analysis." This analytical methodology is the vital ingredient for making partnership and collocation work for the two directorates. Operations analysis offers the DI a new mission that will benefit the directorate, the DO, and the Agency.

A Laboratory for Partnership

The assumption underlying partnership and collocation is that, despite the challenges, the DO-DI partnership will result in better intelligence operations and reports and, ultimately, better analysis. Many, if not most, officers probably sense that there are advantages to be gained through partnership. Thus far, however, much of the dialogue on the benefits seems to revolve around anecdotal comments and speculative observations. Much remains to be done to define exactly how better operations and better finished intelligence will come about through partnership. Cooperation between the DO and DI is as old as the Agency, but the nature and modalities of formal interaction between the two directorates have yet to be spelled out.

The CTC offers a current example of partnership and collocation in action. DO and DI officers have been working together in close quarters in CTC since the Center's creation in 1986. Although the CTC essentially operates as an office of the DO in terms of its core mission of penetrating terrorist groups, collecting threat information, and preventing terrorist acts, (b)(3)(c) officers working in the Center as of May 1995 were from the DI. CTC has been at the forefront of hosting experts from different directorates and from other US Government agencies for the purpose of tackling international terrorism. It would be fair to say that most officers who have worked in the CTC view DO-DI cooperation in the Center as a successful experiment.

The establishment of effective, cross-directorate working relations within the CTC has not been without difficulty. Working in CTC at Headquarters can be the first occasion where DO and DI officers share workspace and professional responsibilities. DO and DI officers will come to the Center expecting to witness the worst stereotypes of officers from the other directorate and act accordingly. More often than not, however, DI officers discover that DO officers can write cogently, and DO officers realize that DI officers can fathom the mysteries of agent operations. In a sense, partnership between the DO and the DI in the CTC must be re-established continually as new officers from both

services rotate in and out. In my view, time and the clear mission of the CTC have slowly reduced the qualms that DO and DI officers hold about the Center and its institutional strength within the Agency.

The CTC experience also demonstrates that partnership does not automatically follow from collocation. Indeed, there are different degrees of collocation and partnership even within the Center.

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The expectation in CTC, however, is that the DI officers in operations branches will provide a substantive skill and perspective on a region, state, group, or intelligence issue that may not otherwise be available in the branch. They are to bring to the operational milieu their ability to organize and analyze data and to package this analysis for briefings or other operations-related, or finished-intelligence-related, purposes. If this type of DI officer in CTC is the model for future DO-DI partnership, then the likely result would be full collaboration, but with the attendant risk of possible absorption of the DI into the DO. The CTC experience suggests that the right mix is a DO-DI relationship that is a compromise between the two models cited above.

Operations Analysis

What, exactly, is the "value added" work of the DI officer serving in the CTC, either as an analyst in AIG or as an officer integrated in an operations branch? Can this service be replicated throughout the DO and DI in the new partnership scheme? The answers are that the DI officer in CTC provides what can be termed operations analysis, and that this type of analysis is precisely the kind of assistance that the DI can provide to the DO across the board.

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Partnership and Compartmentation

The more intimate professional interaction between the DI and the DO, and the pursuit of operations analysis by the DI, inevitably runs up against the competing demand for greater compartmentation of Agency operations in the aftermath of the Aldrich Ames case. No other issue in the move to partnership evokes such strong reactions on the part of DO and DI officers. Some DO officers fear access of DI officers to sensitive sources and information will lead to the compromise of assets and operations. Some DI officers are concerned that their entry into the world of clandestine operations will turn into a "Faustian pact" that will somehow compromise the DI's integrity and independence.

Neither concern should be played down or dismissed, but neither should be exaggerated. The short but honest answer to the question of whether partnership and compartmentation can be reconciled is that they cannot. I do not believe that the introduction of one or two--or even a handful--of DI officers to a DO operational case poses appreciable new risks, especially when the identity of that asset is already known by dozens of DO officers.

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The advantages of collocation and partnership, in which the DI provides operations analysis to the DO, are too many to let compartmentation stand in the way. The DO could use the help of DI officers, while the DI would benefit from new information and an important new mission. The status quo and the traditional separation of services is a luxury that neither office can afford in this era of downsizing.

For the DO, the end result should be a quantitative and qualitative improvement in intelligence reports. For the DI, partnership should result in better finished intelligence products that are more suited to the needs of the Agency's consumers, a greater understanding of the subject matter, and a better appreciation of what it takes to run successful clandestine operations.

Operations Analysis and "Opportunity Analysis"

There is a complementary relationship between operations analysis and "opportunity analysis," which is the focus of the new "Tradecraft 2000" training program for DI officers. If opportunity analysis is supplying US policy officials with explicitly actionable intelligence support, then operations analysis is providing the same service to the DO.

And the DO is no less a US foreign policy actor than other departments and agencies of the Federal Government. To be sure, the DO fundamentally is a collector of intelligence, and the DI's support of

the DO through operations analysis is different from DI opportunity analysis for US policymakers. The difference, however, is all too easy to overstate. In the discussion of opportunity analysis, the fact that the DO, in much of its activities, has a tremendous effect on the foreign policy of the US Government is often overlooked. (b)(1)

engages in an exchange of information and analysis with another intelligence service on a topic of interest to both parties, it has the opportunity to influence the attitudes of key foreign officials in a manner that may not be available to US diplomats or military officers. Through partnership with the DO and operations analysis, the DI can better serve the overall interests of both the Agency and US foreign policy.