



PROFESSIONALIZING AND STANDARDIZING INTELLIGENCE PRACTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL SECURITY

Date: November 22, 2022

Disclaimer: This briefing note contains the encapsulation of views presented by the speaker and does not exclusively represent the views of the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies.

KEY EVENTS

On November 22, 2022, Roberto Mendoza, the Co-Chair of the Canadian Association of Professional Intelligence Analysts (CAPIA), presented on *Professionalizing and Standardizing Intelligence Practice in the Context of National Security*. The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer period with questions from the audience and CASIS-Vancouver executives. The key points discussed were the role and function CAPIA serves in the Canadian Security & Intelligence Community (S&I Community) and how intelligence practices can be improved.

NATURE OF DISCUSSION

Presentation

Mr. Mendoza presented on the value of professionalizing and standardizing intelligence practices in the context of national security, the need to continue to incorporate interdisciplinary expertise into intelligence analysis, and the greater role that academia could play in the S&I Community.

Question & Answer Period

Drawing on lessons from Bill C-51 (otherwise known as the *Anti-terrorism Act of 2015*), Mr. Mendoza emphasized that having a communication strategy with Canadians is critical when implementing large or significant changes to government practices, such as introducing new comprehensive legislation. Such a strategy should communicate the objectives to be achieved with newly

proposed legislation and therefore minimizing room for misinterpretation, or misunderstandings on the intent and impact of newly proposed legislation.

BACKGROUND

Presentation

Mr. Mendoza began with a discussion on CAPIA and its function within Canada's intelligence community. CAPIA is permanently situated out of the Privy Council Office and was created following the tragic events of 9/11. CAPIA promotes a sense of community and defines, enhances, and sets the standards for professional development amongst intelligence analysts, operators, and policymakers. CAPIA is intended to provide a community of best practices within the Government of Canada's S&I Community. It also provides developmental guidance for consumers of the intelligence that the community of analysts produces. By promoting the efficient and effective stewardship of analytical resources, CAPIA continues to ensure that the Government of Canada has the best intelligence analysis professionals and products in support of government policymaking and decision-making procedures. Through its activities and engagements, CAPIA has provided support to members of Canada's intelligence community, including those working in operations, policymakers and intelligence assessment professionals.

Intelligence practice in Canada has evolved significantly since 9/11, with a particular focus by the S&I Community on how to improve intelligence assessment and information sharing. The strong emphasis on information sharing however, was not enough to anticipate multidisciplinary considerations, such as impact and relevance of thematic areas such as economics and climate change. For example, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring in 2011, additional analyses revealed that regional protests and civil unrest were correlated with areas heavily impacted by climate change, predominantly in rural communities that were experiencing prolonged periods of drought. This correlation demonstrated that not only was the threat environment evolving, but further thought should also be given to how multidisciplinary analysis could inform strategic considerations. In response to this, the intelligence community utilized CAPIA's reach and extensive networks and the association began to shift its membership focus to include non-traditional intelligence partners. It was recognized that it was necessary to have broader multidisciplinary understanding from traditional intelligence assessments and include the perspectives of national security operators and policymakers regarding the evolving threat environment. This

provided a healthy tension between perspectives from policy, operational, and assessment lenses.

In other areas outside of CAPIA, extensive efforts have been made to standardize intelligence assessment training, such as enhancing and maintaining the Intelligence Analysts Learning Program (IALP), based out of the Privy Council Office. The IALP offers training for new personnel across the S&I Community on topics ranging from assessments to specific thematic areas. Positive feedback has been received from senior decision makers over the years as a result of these various efforts in Canada's national security landscape. However, it has been observed that intelligence analytical methodologies may still vary from one assessment institution to another, explained by each department or agency tailoring their products based on the preferences of their particular senior management and reinforced by applying perspectives based on their specific mandates. Mr. Mendoza asserts that there is value in centralizing foundational training and approaches through programs like IALP, as federal departments and agencies are required to consult and work together to inform and provide consistent, reliable and strategic solutions to decision-makers on national security issues.

Mr. Mendoza noted that the future of this industry could possibly entail that professionalizing intelligence practices will likely require some sort of a formalized certification process. Additionally, CAPIA's membership has identified a desire for a stronger focus on training in fields that utilize economics and international political economy; a better understanding of both domestic and international supply chain mechanisms and distribution channels, such as, raw resources including minerals and fossil fuel with a better understanding of their impact on Canada's national security, and identifying what appropriate actions that government departments can take to address it.

CAPIA's membership has also raised a strong desire to further integrate assessments pertaining to technological advancements, which includes a better understanding of advances in quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and the impacts of misinformation through platforms on social media—specifically the impact and influence on the day-to-day life of Canadians and their perceptions of critical questions of the security of the nation state. Common practice by governments has been to allow misinformation to dissipate, however, this is no longer an affordable option. As witnessed during the pandemic, the fostering of popular mistrust of government institutions by foreign state actors hindered domestic public health efforts.

Lastly, in the context of professionalizing and standardizing intelligence practice for Canada's national security, Mr. Mendoza made an open call to academia highlighting that there is a need for a shift in thinking within the academic community. Within academia, national security issues remain to be theoretically heavy as a subject matter and there should be an increased practical element incorporated into both teaching and research efforts across Canadian universities. While strong efforts have been observed in universities throughout the national capital region, Mr. Mendoza called on the academic community across the country to expand their efforts to incorporate courses both at the Bachelors and Post-Graduate levels. Such courses should entail practical elements in addition to the traditional theoretical aspects of national security courses, so that Canada's S&I Community can broaden its access of talented individuals looking to work in national security, beyond universities located in the capital region.

Question & Answer Period

Mr. Mendoza stressed the importance of having a strong communications plan when advancing new national security tools, citing Bill C-51 as an example where a stronger communication plan regarding the intention of the bill would have clarified many of the concerns expressed by professional institutions and civil society.

Discussing the ability of the current national security framework in Canada in relation to the contemporary threat environment, Mr. Mendoza noted that the system is working, the necessary tools are available and being appropriately utilized with an extensive external review and oversight regimes in place. The threat environment is always evolving, and even though Canada has the intelligence tools and authorities to address threats, there is always room for improvement; thus, more discussions on the topic are welcomed.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

Presentation

- CAPIA is one of several mechanisms intended to be provide community of best practices within the Government of Canada's S&I Community, while also providing developmental guidance for producers of intelligence.
- Intelligence practice in Canada has evolved significantly since 9/11, with a particular focus by the S&I Community on how to improve intelligence

assessment, information sharing as well as incorporating multidisciplinary thematic areas.

- There is an ongoing need for centralized foundational training and approaches for assessing information, as federal departments and agencies are required more often to consult one another and work closely together as their respective mandates may require the resolution of national security issues interdepartmentally.
- There is an increased call for focused training in fields that utilize interdisciplinary subjects, including economics and international political economy, as well as a focus on emerging technologies, such as quantum computing, AI, pandemics and social media.
- There is a growing role for academia to play in terms of professionalizing, and standardizing intelligence practice in the context of national security, but more practical elements need to be integrated into the education system.

Question & Answer Period

- Whenever proposing a new piece of legislation or changes to existing legislation, continued public consultation as witnessed by efforts in Bill C-59 and a strong communication strategy is critical.
- A strong communication plan addresses the parameters, the scope, and what is to be achieved with newly proposed changes.
- The threat environment is always evolving, and even though Canada has the intelligence tools to address threats, there is always room for improvement as the nature of threats and how they are delivered, as well as their impact will always be changing.



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