International Cooperation

WITHOUT question, the United States has the most capable intelligence apparatus of any country in the world. The information produced by this apparatus gives the United States a substantial advantage when it comes to understanding world events, predicting and preparing for unsettled times, fielding military forces, and making a host of other political and economic decisions. Inasmuch as this information is also useful to other countries and international organizations, it is not surprising that intelligence constitutes a substantial factor, and often a very positive one, in U.S. international cooperation.

Intelligence is especially important to U.S. bilateral relationships. Because few other countries possess technical intelligence capabilities on the scale of the United States and the costs of creating them are prohibitive for most, there are clear incentives for others to enter into cooperative relationships. Historically, the United States has been willing to reciprocate where it shares common interests and concerns. Even where the interests of the United States and another country do not entirely converge, intelligence has often supplied the "quid" for the other's "quo." For the most part, these relationships have proven mutually beneficial.

Information derived from intelligence also forms an important element of U.S. participation in international organizations, such as the United Nations. The United States frequently uses such information to alert organizations to impending crises or to motivate action in appropriate circumstances. When international bodies do act, for example by sending in peacekeeping forces or by imposing sanctions on a "rogue" state, the United States often provides information derived from intelligence to protect the forces or detect violations of sanctions.

Despite the importance of these bilateral and multilateral relationships, questions are frequently raised about the security and reciprocity of these arrangements. Will other governments and international organizations protect information provided by the United States? Are foreign partners pulling their share of the load and is the United States benefiting sufficiently in return?

Scope of the Inquiry

As part of its statutory charter, the Commission was asked to review and to assess the cooperative relationships that the United States has in the intelligence area. To accomplish this, the Commission reviewed the size and scope of these relationships with the staff of the DCI, who is legally responsible for the coordination of U.S. intelligence relationships with other countries. The Commission also reviewed how information derived from intelligence is shared with multinational organizations.

Additional information was obtained in the course of several visits made by members of the Commission to certain foreign countries with which the United States has intelligence relationships, some dating back to the Second World War. At each location, the

Commission explored the nature and extent of the cooperative arrangements and received briefings on each nation's organizational structure for intelligence as well as how their intelligence activities generally were conducted. Each of the governments visited was candid and accommodating.

Cooperative Relationships With Other Countries

Existing Relationships in General

Bilateral cooperation almost always involves sharing of intelligence information and analysis on topics of mutual interest. Beyond this, cooperative arrangements may take any of several forms:

- another country may agree to undertake collection and/or analysis in one area and share it with the U.S. in return for the U.S.'s reciprocating in another area;
- another country may permit the U.S. to use its territory for collection operations in return for the U.S.'s sharing the results of such collection;
- the U.S. may help another country acquire a collection capability for its own purposes with the understanding that the U.S. will be permitted to share in the results;
- joint collection operations may be undertaken with U.S. intelligence officers working side-by-side with their foreign counterparts;
- exchanges of analysts or technicians between the U.S. and other services may occur; or
- the U.S. may provide training in return for services rendered by the foreign service, e.g. translations of particular foreign languages, where a foreign service brings unique skills to the endeavor.

In general, the Commission found that the United States is deriving great benefit from these cooperative relationships. Although other countries are not always able to bring to the table technical capabilities to match those of the United States, they reciprocate in other ways. In some cases, they provide geographic access that would not otherwise be available. In others, they provide skills and expertise the U.S. would otherwise have to develop. In a few cases, other governments have financed capabilities that have spared U.S. taxpayers considerable costs. By and large, these relationships have remained confidential.

In those countries visited, the Commission found uniformly that these countries were extremely conscious of the need to "pull their share of the load" within the limits of their respective resources. Most of these nations have smaller populations, a smaller tax base, and a smaller military. Generally, compared to the United States, they have a smaller role in world affairs and worry principally about threats closer to home. While a few actually

spend a greater percentage of their defense budget on intelligence than does the United States, it is unreasonable for the United States to expect quantitative comparability in these relationships. Quite apart from the access and capabilities they provide, there is great benefit for this country in having close and enduring friends who can be counted upon in times of trouble. Intelligence provides tangible "cement" for these security relationships.

The Commission notes, nevertheless, that bilateral relationships can be problematic. U.S. intelligence maintains liaison relationships with countries all over the world. At times, these necessarily involve relationships with governments or individuals that do not measure up to our moral or ethical standards. Such relationships may, nonetheless, benefit the United States by providing valuable information that serves broader U.S. national security interests. In addition, liaison relationships provide insight into the activities of other intelligence services, as well as provide important contacts that may be essential to the ability of the United States to influence events during a crisis.

By maintaining relationships with such governments or individuals, however, U.S. intelligence agencies risk becoming associated with their misdeeds. There are no easy answers for these situations. Obviously, where such concerns are present, the intelligence liaison relationship must be carefully and frequently assessed by senior policymakers to ensure that the benefits of the relationship outweigh the inherent risks in the continuing association. But even where this balancing of interests occurs, problems may still arise beyond the ability of U.S. intelligence agencies to control.

Cooperation With Multinational Organizations

The interests of the United States are being increasingly affected by the actions of multinational organizations. It seems more likely than not that the United States will conduct future military operations within a multinational framework or as part of a multilateral coalition. In addition, there are a range of activities undertaken by multinational bodies—from peacekeeping operations to enforcing internationally imposed sanctions to dealing with humanitarian crises—which either involve U.S. military or civilian personnel directly, or where the United States has a strong interest in seeing the activity succeed. To the extent that the United States has information important to the success of these activities, it is in the interest of the U.S. to find a way to share it.

Historically, the United States has been able to share intelligence or information derived from intelligence successfully in a coalition environment. For example, intelligence has been shared with NATO member countries for many years on a classified basis, albeit within established limits. Moreover, when multinational coalitions have been formed to achieve specific military objectives, for example, during the Persian Gulf War, the United States out of necessity developed arrangements for sharing pertinent intelligence with coalition forces.

Sharing information with the United Nations has been more tentative and limited due to the nature of the organization itself (which includes countries whose interests are perceived as inimical to those of the United States) and to the lack of any effective system at the UN to control information provided by member nations. Still, the UN must rely entirely on the information provided by member nations to support its operations. It

has no capability of its own to collect or to analyze information. While the United States presently provides the majority of the information that the UN receives in support of its operations, this support remains relatively limited. Other nations reportedly contribute very little.

In general, the Commission believes the United States should use its broad experience in intelligence matters to arrange for appropriate information support to multinational bodies as well as international coalitions, where important interests of the United States are at stake. The Commission is persuaded that this can be accomplished without jeopardizing the security of U.S. intelligence activities. It may require "sanitizing" information produced by intelligence agencies to ensure protection of sources or methods and/or limiting this sanitized information to particular topics or operational activities. These actions do place extra burdens on U.S. intelligence agencies to assess the particular needs of foreign recipients, to create "sanitized" versions of their reports, and to set up separate dissemination channels and/or communication systems for the foreign recipients. But, in the Commission's view, it is essential that the effort be made. Good information support is ordinarily critical to the success of any multilateral or coalition operation in which the U.S. is involved and, as a practical matter, the United States may be best positioned to take a leadership role.

In providing such support, U.S. intelligence agencies ordinarily should not deal directly with multinational organizations or coalitions, but rather should work through other elements of the U.S. Government (e.g. the Department of State for diplomatic actions, appropriate military channels for military coalitions). The U.S. agency charged with overall responsibility for the relationship with the multinational organization or coalition being supported will usually be in the best position to understand the needs of the recipients and balance risk versus gain.

The Commission's impression is that the arrangements for information support to multinational organizations or coalitions are often constructed and tailored to meet particular situations. While a certain amount of tailoring will inevitably be needed for each organization or coalition supported, new policies, procedures and capabilities (e.g. communications systems) should be developed to provide the standard means and methods for providing support in a multinational environment, similar to those in existence with NATO. Deviations could be authorized as appropriate.

12-1. The Commission recommends that the DCI and the Secretaries of State and Defense jointly develop a strategy that sets forth the policies, procedures, and capabilities that will normally serve as the basis for sharing information derived from intelligence in a multinational environment as well as how deviations from these policies, procedures, or capabilities may be authorized. To achieve maximum effectiveness, this strategy should build upon the extensive set of bilateral and multilateral relationships already maintained by the United States.