A Cooperative Approach between Intelligence and Policymakers at the National Level: Does it Have a Chance?

David Siman-Tov and Shay Hershkovitz

The proximity of relations between intelligence officers and policymakers and the balance between the aspirations of the intelligence officers to influence the decision-making process and their primary professional duty to gather accurate intelligence is an ongoing argument within the intelligence discourse. Other discussions focus on whether the primary professional duty of the intelligence officer is merely to create intelligence or also to actively shape policy, and whether strategic intelligence is a product of research groups in the intelligence community or of a dialogue between intelligence and the policymaker, ultimately leading to new strategic knowledge that facilitates the formation of a national policy.

We argue that the development of knowledge for shaping policy on the strategic level should be done in a cooperative manner—in a meeting between intelligence officers and decision makers. The lack of suitable conditions in the space between intelligence and policymakers, however, prevents this in many cases. The limited ability of the intelligence community and the political echelon to act cooperatively and develop a facilitating framework of mechanisms and learning processes should therefore be recognized, in addition to the intelligence community's limitations and the characteristics of the strategic environs.

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This article reviews the main approaches concerning the interface between policymakers and intelligence—the traditional approaches versus what we call the "cooperative approach." It proposes an approach that regards intelligence on a national level as a joint project of intelligence officers and policymakers. At the same time, the article analyzes the tension and obstacles in implementing this approach and proposes possible ways of overcoming them.

Keywords: Strategic intelligence, national intelligence, intelligence community, policymakers, intelligence circle

Introduction

Much has been written about the complex relations between the civilian and military establishments and specifically policymakers and intelligence officers. Already in the 1940s, with the establishment of national intelligence institutions, pioneering attempts began in the United States to devise and shape the theory of intelligence in the context of the space between the policymaker and intelligence. Then, as now, the main argument focused on the question of how closely intelligence officers should work with policymakers, and what the balance should be between intelligence officers' aspirations to influence the decision-making process and their primary professional duty to gather intelligence reflecting the most accurate situation. Other arguments have focused on whether the intelligence officer's primary professional duty is merely to create intelligence, or also to be an active partner in shaping policy, and whether strategic intelligence is a product of research groups in the intelligence community, or a product of a dialogue between intelligence and the policymaker—the latter who both influences and is influenced—ultimately leading to new strategic knowledge that facilitates the formation of a national policy.[1]

Already at the dawn of intelligence, which was designed as a state institution to provide strategic information, questions were asked about its role on the strategic level: What should be its place in determining and implementing policy? Should intelligence exist in its own right? Does intelligence generate

1 This discussion echoes a broader debate in social studies—whether knowledge can be separated from the person who knows it, and whether objectivity with respect to human behavior is possible. For an interesting discussion on this point, see Richard Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), pp. 1–50.

output allegedly unconnected to the shaping of national strategy, or does it constitute, in the words of former head of Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate Yehoshafat Harkabi, "a policy tool?"[2] These questions concern two facets. The first is the way parties outside the intelligence system perceive the function and role of intelligence. The second is how the intelligence system perceives itself.

Strategic Intelligence

Before delving into the complicated relations between the heads of the intelligence community and policymakers, strategic intelligence should be specified as a research output of the intelligence agencies and a result of the discourse between intelligence and the decision makers. The function of strategic intelligence is to aid policymakers in formulating a general outlook, shaping policy, and making decisions in national security. It must provide assessments for aiding and enabling policymakers to understand the situation, manage risks, and take advantage of opportunities. Intelligence should also challenge current policy by describing gaps in the understanding of the strategic environment, outlining strategic trends, and assessing the observer's future place in the strategic environment.

A key question here concerns the perspective that an intelligence agency chief should have in providing strategic intelligence: Can intelligence, in talking about the "other," remain indifferent and closed off in an "intelligence ivory tower" when addressing the policy of the policymaker to whom it is reporting? Furthermore, does the involvement of intelligence in policy matters blind the intelligence officers and make them biased in their provision of relevant strategic intelligence, or would separation of intelligence from the policymakers make the assessments of intelligence officers irrelevant, because they will not be used? Should strategic intelligence focus only on intelligence tasks, or is its role to facilitate discussion and inspire discourse in which policy is eventually devised and decisions taken at a national level?

2 David Siman-Tov and Shay Hershkovitz, *Israel Military Intelligence* (Tel Aviv: Directorate Press, IDF Publishing House, 2013), pp. 52–53.

The Traditional Approaches to Policymaker-Intelligence Relations

The traditional approach holds that intelligence should be as distant as possible from the decision makers and independent of their interests; otherwise, it runs the risk of becoming another player—one of many—in a discussion about policy, thereby committing a double error: intelligence is liable to present a "non-objective" picture and mislead the policymaker, and it will lose its authority as the main party representing the "real situation" in the strategic discussion led by the decision maker. The main advocates of this approach were William Donovan, Allen Dulles, and Roscoe Hillenkoetter—three of the forefathers of American intelligence.[3] They believed that intelligence officers should maintain a certain distance, albeit not totally cut off, from the decision-making process; intelligence officers should conduct research and make independent assessments, and refrain from judgments tailored to the decision maker's ideological and political considerations.[4]

This approach also was supported by Sherman Kent,[5] at least at the beginning of his academic career, when he wrote in 1949 that the intelligence at the national level was a "service function," and should refrain from contaminating the intelligence output with subjective judgments resulting from direct contact between the information consumer and the information. Kent thereby shaped the concept of the intelligence officer as a producer and the policymaker as a consumer; in other words, two substantially and operationally separate functions. According to Kent, intelligence is

3 Donovan headed the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II, and is regarded as the founder of the CIA. Hillenkoetter was the first director of the CIA in 1947–1951, and Dulles was director of the CIA in 1953–1961.

4 They presumably were influenced by the positivistic discourse prevailing at the time among American academics, who enshrined "scientific" (i.e., objective) investigation in social studies fields. For a review on this subject, see Peter Halfpenny, *Positivism and Sociology: Explaining Social Life* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982).

5 Sherman Kent was a professor of history at Yale University, before beginning a seventeen-year career in the OSS and CIA during World War II. He headed the CIA research institute and is considered the most prominent theoretician in national intelligence and influential in shaping the American intelligence community. His influence continues until today in writing about intelligence and the practice of intelligence.

obligated to respond to requests by the decision maker, but must maintain the independence and objectivity of the intelligence process.[6]

In his description of the relations between the producer and the consumer, Kent cited several problematic aspects. First, the decision makers are inherently skeptical towards the intelligence product. This is because intelligence officers tend to accept only limited responsibility for the intelligence product (particularly when forecasts are involved), which does not contribute to the decision makers' confidence in the intelligence they receive. Kent therefore believed that intelligence should make clear its function as an outside observer of the phenomenon being investigated, and do this objectively, which would enable the policymaker to make the right decisions concerning the necessary policy. Second, Kent argued that excessive closeness between the producer and the consumer impairs the objectiveness of the intelligence, has a detrimental effect on the confidence of the intelligence "consumer" in the "producer" (which is, in any case, limited), and counteracts the basic purpose of the intelligence. In order to remain relevant, intelligence nevertheless must have some degree of proximity to the decision makers, but must not get too close so that it does not lose its objectivity and professional integrity.[7] Donovan best expressed this approach when he said, "Intelligence must be separate from the people it serves, so that the materials it obtains will not be distorted by the outlook of the people directing the intelligence activity."[8]

Kent therefore proposed to subject the contact between intelligence officers and the policymaker to a rigorous regime, because a gap in expectations is liable to emerge between the two sides in the absence of institutionalized channels of communication. In addition, Kent was concerned that the decision maker would impose impossible tasks on intelligence, causing the intelligence officers to adopt an apologetic attitude. He therefore advocated creating mechanisms and institutionalizing work processes that would enable a policymaker to provide orderly direction for intelligence work. Such direction would build confidence between the two sides and allow intelligence to succeed in its task.

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6 Sherman Kent, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), p. 200.

7 Ibid, p. 180.

8 William J. Donovan, "Central Intelligence Agency," *Vital Speeches* 12, no. 14 (May 1946), p. 428.

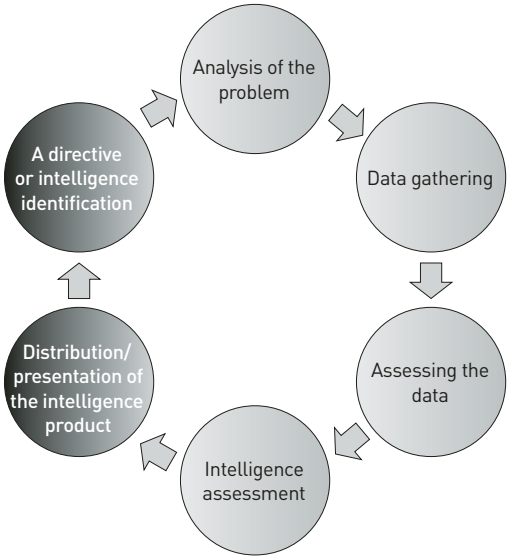
Kent developed the concept of the "intelligence circle," in which he described a "minimal interface between intelligence officers and the political echelon,"[9] with most of the knowledge-development process and thinking to occur within the intelligence system. Kent described a linear process with six stages. The first stage is when a strategic problem appears or is detected due to a directive issued by a policymaker, or when intelligence discovers something out of the ordinary through intelligence gathering. The second stage is the analysis of the problem, which takes place among the intelligence groups themselves. The third stage focuses on gathering information about the problem, which takes place among the intelligence research groups. In the fourth stage, the intelligence research groups assess the data, while comparing the new to the familiar. The fifth stage is formulating a hypothesis, i.e., making an assessment based on the information gathered. In the sixth stage, the intelligence output is presented and disseminated to the policymaker. In the first and last stages, a meeting takes place between the intelligence groups and the policymaker.

Researchers have made efforts over the years to perfect the intelligence circle concept. They have assumed that the basis of producing the knowledge is virtually an exclusive product of intelligence, and accordingly have adjusted and revised the concept. For example, Amos Jordan and William Taylor added elements of management and coordination to Kent's basic concept of the circle. These are part of the basis of the "intelligence circle," which can be perceived as a kind of gear surrounded by six other smaller elements.[10]

9 Kent, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*, pp. 159–164.

10 Amos Jordan and William Taylor, *American National Security: Policy and Process* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

Figure 1: The Intelligence Circle According to Sherman Kent



In the blue circles, an interface exists between intelligence and the decision makers. In the green circles, internal processes take place within the intelligence community. A directive is an instruction by the political echelon that identifies a problem. Alternatively, it is possible for intelligence to detect a problem and bring it to the policymaker's attention.

A post-traditional approach developed later, based on the traditional approach. This approach does not regard intelligence as the only element nor necessarily as the most significant one in the decision-making process. Jack Zlotnik argued in favor of a closer connection between the intelligence officer and the decision maker, given the fact that the intelligence officer must contend with other parties for the decision maker's attention. In his opinion, reducing the distance between the intelligence officer and the decision maker renders the intelligence officer more prominent and enables him to better understand the effect of intelligence on the decision-making process, which in turn improves the intelligence work.[11]

11 Jack Zlotnick, *National Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1964); Jack Zlotnick, "Bayes, the Forum for Intelligence Analysis," *Studies in Intelligence* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1972): 43–52.

In addition to describing the real situation, the post-traditional approach holds that intelligence should also present the decision maker with the possible consequences of implementing policy. At the same time, it stresses the need for a clear distinction between the creator of intelligence and its consumers, particularly in all matters pertaining to the structural aspects. For example, John Huizenga asserted that although an ongoing dialogue between the two was needed, since intelligence was an inherent part of the decision-making process, intelligence should strive to provide as objective a picture as possible and should not be subjected to the policymaker's considerations.[12]

Since the beginning of national intelligence in Israel, the traditional approach has been dominant. Academics and intelligence officers repeatedly have emphasized the need for intelligence to remain "pure" and faithfully reflect the existing situation, without being distracted by the policymaker's political considerations.[13] According to them, reality, with all its complexity, could be revealed by perfecting intelligence gathering, and the job of the intelligence officer at the national level was therefore to understand and interpret reality and make this interpretation accessible to the decision maker.[14]

As noted, intelligence officers are not the only ones who advocate this approach. It can also be found among some policymakers. The Israeli situation is unique in this context, because Israeli policymakers, such as Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak Rabin, Ezer Weizman, Ariel Sharon, and Ehud Barak, frequently have had military and defense experience. At times, some of them preferred that intelligence provide them with raw data, interpret only infrequently, and not intervene in decision making. Others believed that since they bore the responsibility, it was better for them to assess the intelligence by themselves without any filtering by intelligence officers. Furthermore, a series of painful intelligence failures engraved in Israeli history and the investigative

12 Huizenga was a member of the US State Department Policy Planning Council in 1964–1966, and later deputy director of the CIA Office of National Estimates. The above remarks appear in his testimony before the Murphy Commission, which dealt with the US administration's organization for handling foreign affairs. For the full report, see research.policyarchive.org/20213.pdf.

13 Uri Bar-Yosef, *Intelligence Intervention in the Politics of Democratic States: The United States, Israel, and Britain* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

14 Colonel Y., "The Other Within Us—the Intelligence Officer between Objectivity and Relevance," *Maarachot* no. 434 (2010): 52-59, (in Hebrew), http://maarachot.idf.il/PDF/FILES/5/112575.pdf.

commissions that followed made the decision makers realize that they could not always avoid bearing responsibility for the decisions they made, even if these decisions had been recommended by the intelligence officers. For this reason, also, decision makers have tended to regard intelligence assessments with caution, not to mention with suspicion.

Another phenomenon discernable in Israel is the tendency of some policymakers to refrain from involving the intelligence community in political initiatives. Examples of this include the peace initiative with Egypt, the Oslo process, the withdrawal from Lebanon, and the disengagement from the Gaza Strip. The reason for this is strict compartmentalization and the desire to keep the circle of those involved as small as possible in order to prevent leaks in the early stages; moreover, it may also reflect the policymakers' disinclination to regard the intelligence community as a partner in making decisions and formulating strategy.

Problems with the Traditional Approach

The traditional approach regards knowledge in general and intelligence knowledge in particular as something "real" if it constitutes an accurate portrayal of reality and "correct" if it faithfully describes the state of affairs as it "really" is. This is applied to both limited and broad portrayals, as well as concrete, physical, and abstract ones and extends the concept of a "factual report" to more consciousness-related and abstract realms. A key contention in the criticism of the traditional approach is that in contrast to the tactical environment, in which knowledge is universal, knowledge in the strategic environment cannot be detached from the ones who know, including their perspective and interests.

In order to illustrate this, we will consider an intelligence problem from the realm of tactics, in contrast to that of strategy. A tactical question is likely to be the location of tanks at a certain point. The answer to this question is exact, absolute, and rests on a factual basis: whether the platoon is at a specific point. The answer is not subject to the observer's interpretation, because any observer, regardless of identity, can see the platoon of tanks in satellite photographs. What is involved, therefore, is universal knowledge.

A question on the strategic level is likely to be whether the enemy regime is stable. The answer to this is interpretive and depends, among other things, on the intention, interests, perspective, and policy of the person who asks

the question. For example, is the reference to political, economic, or social stability, or stability and instability in the sense of replacing the policymaker or the entire governmental system? What aspect of stability of the enemy regime is relevant to the questioning party who is able to change the state of strategic affairs? Is the person who asks the question a head of state, such as Syria's President Assad or Egypt's President el-Sisi, for whom stability is a matter of survival? Is it an external party—such as Israel or the United States—for which stability may relate to the existence of a peace agreement or the permanency of an entire region, such as the Middle East?

In contrast to the presence or absence of tanks in a specific location, stability as a strategic question depends on the observer's perspective and the interpretation given. If we take the Israeli governmental system as an example, many Israelis perceive it as stable, even if the average lifespan of Israeli governments is a little more than two years. On the other hand, a foreign observer is likely to regard the Israeli system as suffering from chronic instability, making investment in the country risky.

Another problem arising from the traditional approach involves the above-mentioned "intelligence circle" concept. The concept of "gathering" (of intelligence reports) constitutes a metaphor for the compiling of facts collected, which is the task of the intelligence officer. From that perspective, the concept of "processing" reflects the idea that the intelligence officer connects the pieces of information to form a broad and complete picture of the "real" situation. According to the traditional approach, the intelligence task is equivalent to a jigsaw puzzle, with no room for subjective interpretation, other than formulating an assessment, which supplements the missing parts of the puzzle. The practice of national intelligence work, which characterizes the relationship between the intelligence officer and the political echelon, is therefore one of separation and unilateralism. The intelligence officer is usually required to give an assessment at the beginning of a discussion, or to communicate the conclusions and assessments in a written review. In other words, assessing the enemy precedes discussing the formulation of a policy towards the adversary. Thus, in the strategic intelligence environment, the intelligence assessment precedes the political action, as in the battlefield, in which the intelligence information precedes the operation.

The Cooperative Approach

The close contact between the American intelligence officers and decision makers during the 1960s and the series of intelligence failures during the 1970s led to a change in the approaches and for advocating a clear and inflexible separation between intelligence and decision makers. The intelligence failures in the Vietnam War, press leaks about the CIA's sensitive intelligence operations, and revelations that the CIA was conducting operations without the approval and knowledge of the political echelon led to the establishment of investigative commissions. These commissions reconsidered the work of the American intelligence services and fostered the formation of a new approach in intelligence work, which, for the purposes of this article, will be called the "cooperative approach."[15] The existence of clandestine activity by the American intelligence services, without the knowledge of the political echelon, caused members of these committees to recommend not only institutionalized oversight but also the establishment of mechanisms for improving the connection between intelligence and policymakers. The committees recommended that a channel for direct personal dialogue, sometimes informal, should be developed between intelligence officers and intelligence consumers, because the relationship between the two parties are essentially symbiotic, and close work relations between them should be regulated through organizational mechanisms and verification of two-directional communication of information and feedback.

Notably, one of the main supporters of the cooperative approach, Professor Willmoore Kendall of Yale University had published as early as 1949—many years before this approach became popular—an article entitled "The Function of Intelligence," in which he took issue with the arguments raised in Sherman Kent's book.[16] Kendall believed that the role of intelligence was to help decision makers influence and shape reality. He therefore saw nothing

15 Prominent commissions include the Schlesinger Committee in 1971; the Rockefeller Commission, which published its findings in June 1975; and the Church Committee, which was appointed by the US Senate and published its reports in April 1976. It is interesting to note that another investigative commission formed three decades later (the 1996 Aspin-Brown Commission) reached the same conclusions as the Church Committee about needing closer relations between the decision maker and the intelligence officer.

16 Wilmoore Kendall, "The Function of Intelligence," *World Politics* 1, no. 6 (1949): 452–453.

wrong with close relations between the two, and he even argued that such relations were necessary and desirable. Like Kent, Kendall also believed that the decision maker should be the one guiding the intelligence officer. In contrast to Kent, however, he went on to assert that intelligence helps decision makers influence reality by clarifying the ways in which events around the world influence—and are likely to influence—national security. Intelligence officers therefore cannot separate themselves from their own perspective, because it constitutes an integral part of their work.

Roger Hilsman,[17] one of the authors of American intelligence theory, favored the approach expressed by Kendall, holding that intelligence should be encouraged to consider how its assessments affect the range of possibilities placed before the decision maker. Hilsman argued that intelligence officers should not be isolated from the party for whom they create their product. According to Hilsman, intelligence officers work for the decision makers and serve their goals by providing them with the background necessary for assessing situations and making decisions,[18] in contrast to the opposite situation, described well by Robert Jervis, of "keep[ing] intelligence pure when it is irrelevant."[19]

William Brands also believed that the intelligence product should be useful to the decision makers, and the intelligence community should therefore have a good understanding of their needs. Thus, the intelligence officer should be in the proximity of the decision maker. According to Brands, the needs of the decision maker are like a beam of light that directs the intelligence gathering and the research efforts, while at the same time the decision maker gives feedback about the intelligence information received.[20]

Adoption of this approach by the policymakers within the American intelligence community can be seen in Robert Gates' speech in 1992, shortly

17 Hilsman was a professor of political science recruited to the American army in World War II and then continued to national intelligence. In his last position, he served as director of research in the US State Department.

18 Roger Hilsman, *Strategic Intelligence and National Decisions* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1966); Roger Hilsman, "On Intelligence," *Armed Forces and Society* 8 (Fall 1981:129–143; Roger Hilsman, *The Cuban Missile Crisis: The Struggle Over Policy* (Westport: Praeger, 1996).

19 Robert Jervis, "What's Wrong with the Intelligence Process?" *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 39.

20 William J. Brands, "Intelligence and Foreign Policy: Dilemmas of a Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 47 (1969): 288.

following his appointment as director of the US Central Intelligence. Gates emphasized that the open dialogue had to exist between intelligence and the policymaker, particularly given that none of the parties involved in the strategic discussion was immune to errors: "No one has a monopoly on the truth; we are all learning new things every day . . . Dialogue must take place, each participant must be open to new ideas, and well-grounded alternative views must be represented."[21]

Gates claimed that the interaction between intelligence officers and decision makers is a meeting in which the two sides conduct a dialogue and jointly create knowledge, and not a one-sided, linear event in which only the intelligence officer gives information to the policymaker:

> Getting the policymaker to read our product should not jeopardize our objectivity; it does not mean sugarcoating our analysis. On the contrary, it means providing a frank, evenhanded discussion of the issues. If we know that a policymaker holds a certain viewpoint on an issue that is different from our analysis, we ought not lightly dismiss that view but rather address its strengths and weaknesses and then provide the evidence and reasoning behind our own judgment.[22]

In contrast to the popularity of the traditional approach in Israel, the cooperative approach is regarded less highly, and most who support it are intelligence officers. They are inclined to blur the procedural aspect formalizing such cooperation. They stress the trust of the two sides as the key to partnership, as well as the idea of shared responsibility.[23] Senior commanders in the Israeli intelligence community, such as Itai Brun, former head of the Research Department of the Military Intelligence Directorate, have also emphasized recently that the job of intelligence officers should not be confined to clarifying the situation and presenting it to the policymaker. In Brun's opinion, they should also be involved in shaping policy on the various levels.[24]

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21 Robert Gates, "Guarding Against Politicization," *Studies in Intelligence* 36, no. 5 (1992): 8.

22 Ibid.

23 Gershon Hacohen, *What is National in National Security* (Ben Shemen: Ministry of Defense Publishing House, Modan Publishing House, 2014) (in Hebrew).

24 Itai Brun, *Intelligence Analysis: Understanding Reality in an Era of Dramatic Changes* (Tel Aviv: Israel Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center – IICC, 2015), p. 42.

In his testimony before the State Comptroller, who investigated Operation Protective Edge in Gaza in 2014, former head of the Military Intelligence Directorate, Major General Aviv Kochavi emphasized that the military commanders and the political cabinet did not need to be passive listeners to the intelligence evaluations. In his view, they should have taken part in the process of scratching at the intelligence and should have cooperated in analyzing and interpreting the information. From his perspective as the head of the Military Intelligence Directorate, Kochavi notes that the dialogue with the cabinet enriches the intelligence analysis, and he emphasizes that assessment bodies, even if they have reliable sources, need to be exposed to criticism.[25]

Among the prominent advocates of the cooperative approach is former head of the Military Intelligence Directorate of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Moshe Ya'alon, who also served in key IDF command positions (head of the Central Command and chief of staff) and in the government. In a recent interview, Ya'alon noted that the processes of joint learning and thinking between the political and intelligence echelons are essential for developing an appropriate strategy, and he also had practiced cooperation, in which the discourse had taken place in a non-hierarchal fashion and without "ceremony," both in the framework of his positions in the army and when he was minister of defense. At the same time, Ya'alon stated that the political echelon is not always able to reveal its intentions to the military-strategic echelon, particularly the intelligence echelon, and is entitled to preserve strategic ambiguity. In such cases, the intelligence community must develop the ability to analyze the intentions of the political echelon and its directive, so that it can direct intelligence efforts in a way that will assist in the designing of an appropriate strategy.[26]

The point of departure in our theoretical approach to the desirable pattern of relations between the intelligence officer and the decision maker is what we call the "cooperative approach." This approach rests on a fundamental assumption that does not regard intelligence knowledge as referring to an independent objective reality by the observer. Thus, we do not regard

25 State Comptroller, "Operation Protective Edge," (February 28, 2017), p. 75 (in Hebrew).

26 Interview with Moshe Ya'alon, conducted by David Siman-Tov, Institute for National Security Studies, October 6, 2016.

intelligence as an "institution for discerning reality"[27] in isolation from the observer. As we see it, the objectives, values, and strategic interests of the observer of intelligence, and even the fact that the observer has been selected to watch the subject of a given study—rather than someone else—all constitute an essential framework for the way in which reality is interpreted. We therefore oppose the concept that regards the development of knowledge about an environment or enemy as an exclusive project of intelligence, and we do not regard the intelligence output as the final step in the intelligence process—that is, as a "product" placed on the table of the "consumer"—but rather as the opening point of a discourse and the development of shared knowledge.

Our approach emphasizes three dimensions in the role of intelligence on the national level. The first is the change in the perception of intelligence as clarifying reality by "discovering" the truth, simply because it does not exist on the strategic level. The second is that the quality of the intelligence assessment is based on its relevance to the decision maker, and not on its ability to reflect the "objective" reality. The third dimension emphasizes the need for policymakers and intelligence officers to cooperate in creating conditions for an open dialogue and to develop knowledge at the national level with the aim of designing and implementing policy.

From Facts to Interpretation

As noted, the knowledge necessary for designing a successful strategy is abstract knowledge, which is conceptualized in a concrete context and reflects an idea and interpretation, rather than real information. In contrast to the intelligence information in a tactical environment, intelligence at the strategic, national level is developed by the intelligence officer and is not received as intelligence information. The challenges here that face the intelligence community are materially different than in the earlier approach: the intelligence officer does not collect factual information, but rather interprets and conceptualizes the enemy's situation as a basis for a fruitful discourse with the policymaker, so that it can serve as a platform for devising policy. In most cases, this conceptualization cannot be judged as "correct"

27 Yitzhak Ben-Israel, *The Philosophy of Intelligence* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 1999) (in Hebrew).

or "incorrect," because it reflects only a possible concept used in forming a concrete policy, and not a universal one.[28]

It should be emphasized that the switching of the intelligence community from facts to interpretations does not mean that it has abandoned the factual sphere. Interpretation in a strategic environment rests on facts obtained at the tactical level. In the switch from objectivity to relevance, the intelligence community must carefully avoid compromising the professional integrity of the person who observes the facts, thereby enjoying an advantage over other partners in the strategic discussion. In this context, intelligence enjoys a double advantage: it has a unique access—and sometimes an exclusive one—to the factual level and is among the few parties around the discussion table accustomed to the knowledge-development processes that are essential to decision making.

From Objectivity to Relevance

Although approaches that emphasize relevance at the expense of objectivity and even deny the possibility of being objective are sometimes heard, leaders of the Israel intelligence research community—like the American community—favor efforts at achieving objectivity, or at least maneuvering between objectivity and relevance. The CIA website, for example, emphasizes the need for objective research:

> Members of the DA (CIA Directorate of Analysis) help provide timely, accurate, and objective all-source intelligence analysis on the full range of national security and foreign policy issues to the president, Cabinet, and senior policymakers in the US government.[29]

As noted, aiming for objectivity in intelligence information is futile, because information and knowledge will always be relative and dependent on the observer. We therefore wish to abandon the principle of evaluating the quality and role of intelligence in the context of objectivity and replace it with the principle of its relevance to decision making. Josh Kerbel and Anthony Olcott

28 Thomas L. Hughes, "The Fate of Facts in a World of Men: Foreign Policy and Intelligence-Making," *Headline Seri*es 233, (December 1976): 5; Richard Betts, "Policy-Makers and Intelligence Analysis: Love, Hate or Indifference?" *Intelligence and National Security* 3, no. 1 (1988):184–185.

29 See the CIA website, https://www.cia.gov/offices-of-cia/intelligence-analysis/index.html.

have expressed well this principle as a criterion for evaluating intelligence in dealing with decision makers at the national level.[30] They argue that a synthesis between intelligence and decision makers is needed, in which intelligence would no longer be merely a provider of information, but also would provide knowledge and ideas. This requires a two-fold change: first, decision makers must expose their policy to intelligence and ask questions about more than just data.[31] Second, intelligence officers must be involved in formulating recommendations and must overcome their reluctance to do so, which has prevented them from including the consequences of their forces' activity in their assessment. According to Kerbel and Olcott, dialogue and cooperation will render it impossible to speak about policy successes or intelligence failures, because they will be intertwined. Another change results from the shift from the need to study policy and adapt intelligence assessments to the needs resulting from this policy. Kerbel and Olcott argue that with the new synthesis, intelligence will provide what is needed, not what it has. The new intelligence officer will learn to accept political and strategic goals as legitimate and proper.[32]

Developing such a pattern of intelligence, which includes shaping policy, is liable to cause tension between the intelligence officer and the decision maker. According to Kerbel and Olcott, an intelligence officer who does not identify with the proposed policy should resign, although the risk exists that in the absence of tension between the two sides, intelligence would become a tool for the policymaker[33] (as was alleged concerning Western intelligence assessments on Iraq in 2003).[34] In Kerbel and Olcott's opinion, the main achievement of this approach, beyond making intelligence relevant, was that

30 Josh Kerbel and Anthony Olcott, "Synthesizing with Clients, not Analyzing for Customers," *Studies in Intelligence* 54, no. 4 (2010): 11–27.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Intelligence as a State Institution* (Tel Aviv: IDF Publishing House, 2015), p. 71. Harkabi, who was chief of the IDF Military Intelligence Directorate and later served as a strategic advisor to the Ministry of Defense and as a strategic consultant for the prime minister, called this approach "intelligence tailoring."

34 Paul R. Pillar, "Intelligence, Policy and the War in Iraq," *Foreign Affairs* (March–April 2006).

decision makers had a partner with whom they could consider, ask questions, and formulate an appropriate policy, if they wanted to.[35]

From a Producer/Consumer Dichotomy to a Partnership

Policymakers need a partner so that they can, together with intelligence and other parties, understand the limitations and weak points of the players in the strategic environment and consider them when shaping a successful strategic policy. The task of formulating a strategy is therefore a joint task led by the policymakers in which intelligence plays a special—albeit not exclusive—role, because it is supposed to bring insights and interpretations about the strategic environment into the discourse. At the same time, the knowledge brought by intelligence does not stand on its own (as described in Kent's "The Intelligence Circle"); joint processes of developing knowledge and formulating insights also are involved. Presenting intelligence insights about the environment as a topic itself, without reflecting upon the observer's insights, is meaningless.

In view of the above, formulating a system of strategic insights concerning a strategic environment or enemy must include intelligence officers and policymakers. We therefore seek to eradicate the traditional dichotomy that distinguishes between producers and consumers of intelligence and to regard them as partners—at least on the theoretical level—even if unequal ones. We do not propose completely doing away with Kent's "intelligence circle" concept. As we see it, however, its first and final stage should take place in a close and interactive interface between intelligence and the policymaker, which makes the pattern of their relations a two-sided one.

The following table summarizes the distinction between the traditional approach and the active cooperative one that we are advocating.

35 Kerbel and Olcott, "Synthesizing with Clients."

Figure 2: A Comparison between the Traditional Approach and the Cooperative Approach[36]

Traditional Approach	Cooperative Approach
What do you want to know?	What do you want to achieve?
Focused on threats	Focused on opportunities
Refers to the past	Refers to the future
Inclined to be tactical	Must be strategic
Output	Process, dialogue
Searches for comparisons and analogies	Tries to detect what is unique
Interested in objects	Interested in context and affinities
Introverted	Extroverted
Tends to focus on what went wrong	Makes it possible to also evaluate what succeeded
Rewards sharpness with large systems, more personnel, specialties, and broad plans	Rewards imagination, flexibility, accommodation, and is less hierarchal, and more networked.
Gathering	Cognition—insight

Problems in Implementing the Cooperative Approach

The cooperative approach appears to be an accepted practice in the interface between the intelligence community and military policymakers, such as the command intelligence officer, who is an integral part of the study group led by the commander. At the same time, over the years, real difficulties have emerged in implementing the cooperative approach on the national level, i.e., in the interface between the intelligence community and the political echelon. We believe that the reason for this lies in the behavioral and structural characteristics of both the policymaker and the intelligence officer, as well as in the tensions that are typical of the national environment.

A fundamental tension exists in the strategic environment between the perspective of the intelligence community, some who want to describe the future, and the perspective of the policymaker, who aims to shape the future.[37] Policymakers frequently believe that intelligence officers tend to expand uncertainties in the world in which the policymakers act, instead

36 This table is based on a table in Kerbel and Olcott, "Synthesizing with Clients," p. 22.

37 Hans Heymann, "Intelligence and Policy Relationships," in *Intelligence Policy and Processes*, ed. Alfred C. Maurer, Marion D. Tunstall, and James M. Keagle (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 57–66.

of reducing them. The policymakers need solutions, while the intelligence assessments mainly pose challenges and rarely provide the policymakers with solutions. Furthermore, the intelligence community is inclined to qualify its assessments and to outline a range of scenarios that are frequently described in a vague fashion. Policymakers often want intelligence to provide them with forecasts, but intelligence officers who adhere to the status of prophet cannot be loyal partners for policymakers in the complete sense of the word.

Another important obstacle in implementing the cooperative approach is that policymakers usually do not want to share their covert considerations and intentions with the intelligence community. Policymakers are anxious about leaks and sometimes do not wish to be challenged, preferring instead to promote a specific outlook, without having a professional party cast doubt on it. An additional problem is the absence of a common language between the policymaker and the intelligence officer. For policymakers, the intelligence community's language is unclear, or at least it does not reflect the levels of certainty they need for managing risks.

Furthermore, there is not always a direct connection between intelligence assessments and decision making. Sometimes policymakers make decisions in isolation from the intelligence assessment and do not involve the intelligence community's insights about the environment and its players; rather, these decisions reflect other considerations stemming from the policymaker's perspective. Furthermore, decisions are sometimes made contrary to the intelligence assessment, because the difference in an intelligent officer's perspective and that of a policymaker is likely to result in varying—not to mention contradictory—interpretations of reality.

Another problem is that the decision maker receives information about the strategic environment from a wide range of information sources, most of which are not intelligence sources. This is especially true now, in which everyone has access to a huge mass of information, interpretations, and various insights; policymaker even have their own sources. Policymakers can ask themselves, sometimes with justification, whether the intelligence community can add any value to alternative interpretations, which are directly available to them and may reflect a policymaker's own outlook.

In addition, policymakers have an advantage over the intelligence community in understanding the strategic system, particularly when they have experience and personal ties with other policymakers around the world.

The policymakers usually show a profound understanding of the way the international system works, which is liable to keep them from regarding the intelligence community as a partner, especially if the intelligence community stresses military threats at the expense of diplomatic opportunities. The nature of the policymakers' political agenda is liable to hinder any partnership between policymakers and intelligence—policymakers are interested in knowledge about civilian companies, economics, and culture in contrast to the intelligence community, which emphasizes military threats. This gap could make it difficult for the policymakers to regard the intelligence community as a partner, even if they want to do so.

We have so far described mainly the difficulties and obstacles that prevent the policymakers from regarding the intelligence community as a partner. At the same time, intelligence officers also face obstacles that may prevent them from regarding themselves as partners. These obstacles can result, for example, from the intelligence community's profound adherence to the traditional approach and from the nature of the intelligence output. In many cases, this output does not encourage dialogue; rather, it seeks to describe end results, which even then are often not clearly formulated.

The combination of these two-directional obstacles and especially the lack of mutual recognition by the two sides that the cooperative approach constitutes a genuine opportunity for an open strategic dialogue between the intelligence community and the policymakers make implementing this approach a very difficult task.

Conclusion

Limitations and obstacles stand in the way of achieving a synthesis between the intelligence community and decision makers, including the decision makers' wish to avoid exposure and/or to be committed to a policy, their concern about leaks, and a bureaucratic and conceptual tradition. Other significant barriers include principles of producer-consumer relations, which are still quite dominant in the national intelligence discourse, as well as the striving for (imaginary) objectivity.

A changing pattern of relations between the intelligence community and policymakers is only now beginning. The idea of cooperative relations between the two sides appears to be the correct direction and should therefore be shaped accordingly in order to provide an optimal response to the current

challenges facing both policymakers and intelligence officers. The preliminary condition for creating such a transformation is a desire to change, as defined by Kerbel and Olcott.[38] Furthermore, the cooperative concept needs to be recognized—along with the new potential it entails—so that the policymakers and the intelligence community can apply it. Although this concept may not be suitable for all policymakers, a substantial effort is required by those for whom it is appropriate. If intelligence officers are interested in encouraging an open dialogue with the policymakers, they should present policymakers with output that does not purport to "predict the future" at the strategic levels, because these forecasts will only create distance between them and the policymakers. Policymakers are more likely to regard the intelligence offers as partners if they are given output that presents a range of possibilities and enables the policymakers to manage risks.

If the policymakers are interested in changing the pattern of relations with the intelligence officers, the policymakers must create conditions for an open dialogue with the intelligence community, and allow it to voice different and challenging opinions. The policymakers must build relations of trust with the intelligence officers and inform them of their plans and doubts to the greatest possible extent. For their part, the intelligence officers must respond to this trust by discretely maintaining the policymakers' confidence and preventing leaks.

The partnership between the intelligence community and the policymakers at the strategic level cannot be taken for granted; both sides must make a major effort at implementing a partnership. At the same time, such a partnership has the potential for a new type of dialogue that will contribute to both utilizing intelligence and devising a better strategy.

38 Kerbel and Olcott, "Synthesizing with Client."