

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/11/27/the-decline-of-the-cia/>

The Decline of the CIA

The Latest Flawed Reorganization Scheme

MELVIN A. GOODMAN

November 27, 2014

CIA director John Brennan is promoting a reorganization scheme at the Central Intelligence Agency that will make it more likely that intelligence analysis will be politicized to support the interests of the White House and senior policymakers. The organizational change that he favors would abolish the directorates of intelligence and operations, which were designed to maintain a bureaucratic wall between intelligence analysis and clandestine actions, in order to create regional and functional “centers” that would place analysts and operatives side-by-side. There is no doubt that such centers would do great harm to the production of strategic intelligence and would increase the likelihood of politicizing all intelligence production.

The CIA already relies heavily on so-called fusion centers, such as the Counter Terrorism Center (CTC) and the Counter Intelligence Center (CIC), which combine intelligence analysts and clandestine operatives. These centers were responsible for the operational failures in 2009 that allowed a Nigerian terrorist to board a commercial airline flight to the United States and enabled a Jordanian suicide bomber, a double agent, to enter (and blow up) the most sensitive CIA base in Afghanistan. More recently, the CTC contributed to the intelligence failure regarding the danger and the lethality of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, which has contributed to the policy nightmare in the Middle East that just claimed a major bureaucratic victim, Secretary of Defense

Chuck Hagel. And let's not forget the role of the CTC regarding the 9/11 intelligence failure, the most important intelligence setback since Pearl Harbor 60 years earlier.

The analysts in these centers do serve an important purpose as "targeting analysts," which allows them to concentrate on identifying targets for drone attacks in the case of the CTC or for counter-intelligence operations in the case of the CIC. This is very tedious and parochial work, but very different from the kind of academic and analytical work needed to produce trenchant analysis on long-term geopolitical concerns regarding Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran. There is already too much insularity in these regional offices, which do not take full advantage of outside experts, and combining analysts and operatives will lead to greater parochialism.

The "centers" that currently exist have become more or less service centers for policymakers, answering specific questions and preparing requested briefings, but not distinguished for exploring new ideas or for sponsoring competitive analysis. They often justify themselves by citing the numbers of briefings given to policymakers or staffers, with an emphasis on quantitative evaluation and rarely on qualitative assessment or lessons learned. This is similar to the evaluation that takes place in the National Clandestine Service (formerly the directorate of operations) that grades its operatives on the number of recruitments rather than the usefulness of the intelligence that is elicited from these recruits.

Clandestine operatives are deeply involved in policy; they rely on secrecy and hierarchy and reluctantly share information on a strict need-to-know basis. Intelligence analysts must have no policy axes to grind; their credibility rests on that fact. Serious intelligence failures, such as the lack of warning about the decline of the Soviet Union or the phony assessments of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, occurred when policy advocacy hampered the flow of intelligence information. CIA directors and deputy directors such as William Casey and Robert Gates were involved in the Soviet failure; George Tenet and John McLaughlin played key roles in preparing the phony intelligence case for going to war against Iraq. We will be paying for these cases of politicized intelligence for a long time.

One of the most important factors in the decline of the CIA over the past 30 years has been the inability to produce relevant strategic intelligence and to prepare timely national intelligence estimates. The intelligence from the fusion centers concentrates on tactical warning, but does a poor job of producing intelligence that explains the "why" and "wherefore" of geopolitical events. There is already too much "opportunity analysis" at the CIA, which finds analysts pointing out possible lines of action for policymakers based on intelligence information. This kind of analysis clearly breaches the firewall between intelligence and policy that Casey and Gates ignored in the 1980s and Tenet and McLaughlin exploited more recently.

There are many examples of the misuse of clandestine collection to suit policy interests and ignore intelligence requirements. In Central and South America, clandestine operatives contributed to the cover-up of human rights abuses to satisfy the Reagan administration in the 1980s. In Southwest Asia, operatives often censored or simply ignored reporting on strategic weaponry in Pakistan to satisfy the Nixon administration in the 1970s and the Reagan administration in the 1980s. President Nixon wanted to protect Pakistan as a conduit for

conducting secret diplomacy with China; President Reagan wanted to protect Pakistan as a conduit for arms shipments to the Mujahideen fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Previous CIA failures led to reform measures, but this has not been so in more recent times. The CIA corruption of the 1960s and 1970s during the Vietnam War led to the creation of the congressional oversight committees as well as a congressional review function for covert action. The Iran-Contra scandal of the 1980s led to the creation of a statutory or “independent” Inspector General (IG) at the CIA, appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Senate.

There have been no recent reform efforts at the CIA despite the intelligence failures of 9/11 and Iraqi WMD as well as the operational degradation of torture and abuse, extraordinary renditions, and erroneous detentions. In fact, the Obama administration and then CIA director Leon Panetta combined several years ago to weaken the office of the Inspector General, even the statutory IG himself. CIA director Brennan, who is already part of a constitutional crisis by lying to the chairwoman of the Senate intelligence committee and blocking a Senate report on torture and abuse, is now lobbying for a “reform” that will do even more harm to the CIA’s original mission to produce strategic intelligence.