



Naval Aircrewman (Operator) 2nd Class Meghan Cooke, assigned to "Skinny Dragons" of Patrol Squadron (VP) 4, conducts flight operations aboard squadron P-8A Poseidon aircraft during intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance mission over Eastern Mediterranean Sea, near Sigonella, Sicily, March 20, 2020 (U.S. Navy/Juan Sua)

Improving Analytic Tradecraft

The Benefit of a Multilateral Foundational Training Model for Military Intelligence

By Eric Daniels

Professional builders know that the main purpose of a foundation is to secure the structure and keep it upright. A poorly constructed foundation can be dangerous to occupants and neighboring structures. Similarly, the

foundational training of our military intelligence professionals is paramount for our national security.

This training could be improved by soliciting the individual military Services by means of a multilateral approach. The Services should work together multilaterally through their lead commands for intelligence, versus unilaterally or even jointly, ensuring synchronized instruction at a foundational level. It is vital for the educational

framework that which, how, and when intelligence should be delivered to our military professionals in every Service be harmonized cohesively across strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Regardless of their specific roles within the profession, all Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen, and Guardians in the intelligence profession should have a solid understanding of the core analytic tradecraft standards that should apply to their daily work.

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The Warning Light Flashed . . . Twice

The work that our military professionals do for the Nation is second to none. They are trained extensively in their designated fields as technicians first and analysts second, unlike their civilian intelligence community (IC) counterparts. More important, training in the military is taken seriously to ensure career development and to make certain every mission is accomplished with excellence.

The military intelligence profession is different from its counterparts in the civilian agencies. Nonetheless, it shares with them the requirement to keep classified information secure while providing unbiased, accurate reporting in a timely manner, which is both an art and a science. According to Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 203, the intelligence provided to our military leaders must be objective, independent of political consideration, timely, and based on all available sources, and it must exhibit analytic tradecraft standards. This is where the issue resides: As a collective, the IC within the Department of Defense (DOD) has not met the required core principles of intelligence analysis across the entire IC.¹ The 2007 Intelligence Community Directive 203, *Analytic Standards*, lays the groundwork for the military's ability to govern the production and evaluation of analytic products and support intelligence professionals in striving for excellence, integrity, and rigor in their analytic thinking and work practices.

In 2010, Brigadier General Wayne Michael Hall, USA (Ret.), wrote:

These shortfalls in analytic training, education, and operations are not the fault of the courageous and talented people who perform analytic work today. It is, sadly enough, the defense institution's fault, as it has not yet engaged in the hard thinking work to first understand what is needed to support intelligence operations in urban settings, and then to set about to change intelligence analysis to produce thinking sufficient to go after insurgent, irregular warrior, and terrorist threats in large urban settings.²

In 2014, the first alarm sounded. The DOD Office of the Inspector General (DODIG) issued a report stating that

the DOD Intelligence Enterprise lacks intelligence training program standards for the common training needs and developmental skills. The military Services and agencies in the DOD Intelligence Enterprise each have varying processes for providing intelligence training and education to the intelligence workforce. As a result of the absence of DOD Intelligence Enterprise standards, the DOD developmental intelligence training program has a fragmented training structure, varying proficiency levels, training redundancy, and critical skill gaps.³

This report to Congress outlined the deficiencies in the DOD training structure as it pertains to intelligence functions such as human intelligence, geospatial intelligence, signals intelligence, and all-source intelligence.

Regardless of function, the DODIG reported that there is an issue with foundational training across the department. Whereas drastic improvements have been made in training standards on the joint level across the board by combat support agencies such as the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency, on the operational and tactical levels, military Services still lack the momentum to stay on par with other agencies within their department. Whereas some would argue that the Service branches are meant to adapt to the battlespace and dynamic adversaries while the IC agencies can conduct more strategic analysis, others would suggest the absence of resources, specific policies, and other "organizational culture" issues continues to hamper the Service branches' momentum.⁴

Four years later, another warning was issued. In 2018, the DODIG issued a second report to Congress stating that

improvements are needed in the following areas in order to further support communications and analytical integrity. Specifically: Many military analysts lacked formal

training on ICD 203 Analytic Standards when they arrived at their commands. . . .

A majority of the military all-source intelligence analysts we interviewed had no prior training on ICD 203 Analytic Standards through other courses, and were not eligible to attend the DIA's PACE [Professional Analyst Career Education] training prior to 2018 DIA decisions to open the course to military personnel.⁵

This finding did not fall on deaf ears within the Services. Subsequently, many Services began using their own resources and methods to attempt to make improvements in their intelligence training. Still, the question remains: Are the Services' foundational intelligence training standards synchronized? Are the established elements within the Services and in the joint DOD actively playing a role to facilitate unity of effort to improve foundational training across the board? I would argue that a multi-lateral approach to improving training would provide each Service with the enhancements in tradecraft production that DOD desires. In addition, more rigorous production and a higher quality of analysis within the joint and Service components intelligence environment would be likely.

Let's Put Premium Tires on the Issue Instead of Reinventing the Wheel

The military should avoid reinventing the wheel. The practice of re-creating the wheel to stand up a new idea, fix problems, or simply ensure promotion is a little-discussed pet peeve in the community. Many mechanisms are already proposed in existing joint publications to help solve most if not all of the issues raised by the DODIG. One approach was to request that DIA's Joint Military Intelligence Training Center facilitate support in the military Services by opening its doors and providing instructors to train others besides its own agency's civilian and military analysts. Because of congressional funding lines, the request to provide direct support in various ways is being negotiated between DIA and military Service commands.

Air Force independent research, Navy publications, and Army intelligence brigade publications provide evidence backing the DODIG reporting and highlight the need for certified subject matter experts who have analytic experience on the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.⁶ As referenced in the 2018 DODIG report, the DIA PACE course (along with analytic certification requirements) has helped effect drastic improvements in analyst tradecraft standards across agencies. This finding indicates that improvements are possible within a year—the period from the initial warning to Congress. On the other hand, because of funding, allocation of resources, and other congressional mandates, the request to have DIA take the lead in this requirement is currently being negotiated.

Among some leaders across the Services, there is a misconception that analytic tradecraft standards are necessary only for strategic or possibly operational intelligence analysis. This is not true. Not only does ICD mandate these standards for all U.S. intelligence analysts, but also most Services mandate the use of these standards in their own regulations. What are the core issues that hinder foundational training for intelligence analysts across the Services to ensure our professionals are proficient analysts? Is it organizational culture? Is it funding? Is it a lack of knowledge? Why is the foundational training not synchronized across the board among the Services? Why are we not all speaking the same language when it comes to analytic production requirements by using the required ICD standards?

Some of these core issues can be solved multilaterally, through mechanisms already in place. Major James Kwoun, USA, an Active-duty intelligence officer, stated, “The prevailing view that tradecraft standards are applicable only at the strategic level is false. In fact, cognitive biases—one of the primary reasons for adopting analytic tradecraft standards—are arguably most prevalent at lower echelons.”⁷ There must be changes throughout the Services. The only way to begin messaging and see improvement across the Services in military analytic tradecraft is through foundational training

at the entry level. The approach needs to be synced multilaterally and requires a uniform training system that includes the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence (USAICoE), the Air Force Air Education and Training Command (AETC), and the Navy and Marine Corps Intelligence Training Center (NMITC). They must collaborate multilaterally to ensure that what they are teaching in their programs, and how and when they teach them, is harmonized. This does not mean it should be left to the joint world to solve their problems; the Services should continue their individual programs while simultaneously making sure those programs are synchronized to get the improvement needed.

Use a Wrench Instead of a Screwdriver to Change a Tire

The problem is clear: military Services’ foundational intelligence training standards are not sufficiently synchronized for DOD to fully meet analytic tradecraft standards. We have seen attempts to solve this problem in various ways, but the challenge of solving it without a large requirement of resources, time, and changes in policy remains. The DODIG recommended

*that the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence examine current DOD intelligence training and education policies and mandate, as necessary, training standards based on a common essential body of knowledge, including Intelligence Community Directive 203, “Analytic Standards,” January 2, 2015, for all entry-level and developmental intelligence professionals.*⁸

As previously stated, this recommendation was provided twice by DODIG, and the Services are currently “reinventing the wheel” to follow it. I would suggest the following multilateral approach.

Ways (Concept). USAICoE, AETC, and NMITC should extensively collaborate, coordinate, and communicate (three Cs method) at the Service level when it comes to formulating a course and syllabus and recruiting/selecting instructors who are Certified Defense All-Source Analysis (CDASA) 1–certified to teach

foundational courses that reinforce analytic tradecraft standards. This process should include collaborating through the existing DOD Intelligence Training and Education Board (DITEB) recommended in the 2014 DODIG report.⁹ This should be the central forum used by intelligence leaders in each Service, just as it would be if line analysts were working together to solve an analytic intelligence question. This is an opportunity to collaborate, coordinate, and communicate extensively to create a unified policy (product) that benefits the greater good for each Service and for national security. Using the three Cs method at the leadership level reinforces what is taught on a foundational level when it comes to the cornerstone of our craft.

Means (Resources). The Services should coordinate what they are teaching. The following should be congruent across the board when it comes to foundational analysis:

- A unified course, course syllabus, and course instruction methodology. Each Service currently has its own version of critical thinking, analytic writing, analytic tradecraft standards, and structured analytic techniques courses. These foundational courses should all be the same. Several reports have noted that Servicemembers deployed or assigned to a joint environment lack training in these foundational qualities; this lack affects their ability to work with civilian IC analysts who were taught at their respective agencies.¹⁰ Professionally, these courses are critical. Most if not all civilian IC agencies work together to ensure their material is synchronized, with the expectation that their analysts will work side by side in their career paths. They communicate effectively across agencies because of their foundational training. The Services should work together to ensure their courses use the same material and are taught the same way. The foundation of intelligence training *must* be synchronized across DOD.
- Incorporate CDASA 1–certified instructors. We want our elementary

school teachers, construction contractors, doctors, and accountants to be certified. Why do we require less when it comes to the instructors who teach the foundation of analysis to our intelligence professionals? According to the DOD CDASA program management office, “The development of professional certification programs ensures an integrated, agile intelligence workforce that can meet the department’s needs in a dynamic environment.”¹¹ CDASA-1 instructors understand the *Why?* the *What?* and the *So what?* and undoubtedly have the knowledge to teach foundational analytic skills. They have practical experience, have a breadth of knowledge in the area, and have successfully passed the qualifying exam. For each of the foundational requirements, we trust certified instructors to know what right looks like. Using such instructors would reinforce competence through training and support the DODIG recommendations of 2014 and 2018.

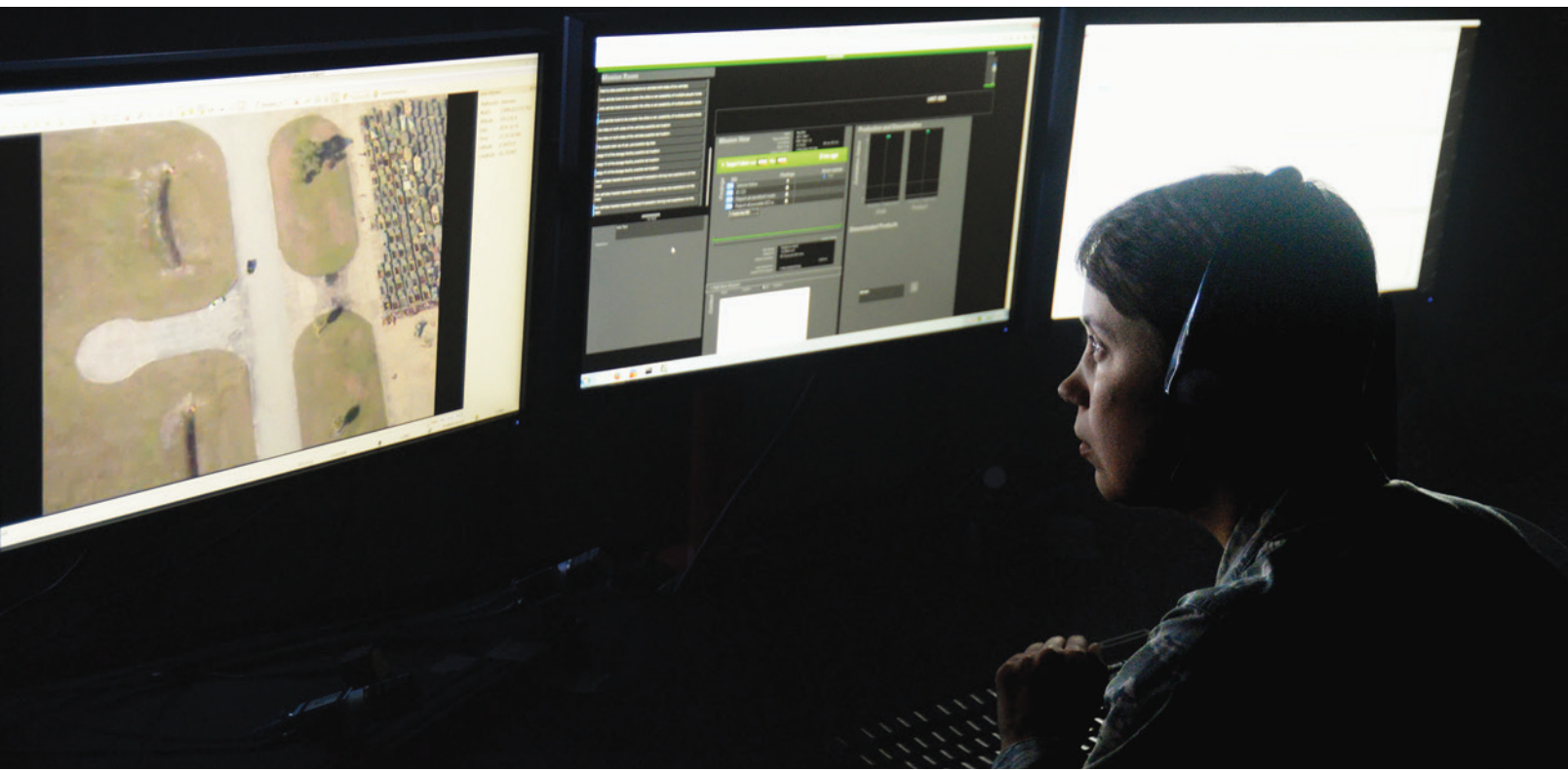
Ends (Objective). Through collaboration within the DITEB, each Service can better understand the rationale behind the recommended timing for each Service’s military occupational specialty requirements. As we know, each Service has its own training schools and programs for every occupational specialty. Most of them “rack and stack” their courses for different reasons. I would suggest that a small body of intelligence professionals, all with stakes in the matter, be selected to work together and create a three-Cs approach to make sure that all military intelligence professionals take foundational intelligence courses that include the same material at the same time in their careers.

Let’s Take a Walk Around the New Model and Be on Our Way to Success

There is no need for a new joint office to be constructed to solve this issue. Neither is there a need for major changes to be made in the bureaucracies within each military Service. Rather, we

need to teach intelligence tradecraft at a higher standard to solve foundational issues within the military Services that affect intelligence professionals. In 2010, Michael T. Flynn, Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor wrote, “Meaningful change will not occur until commanders at all levels take responsibility for intelligence. The way to do so is through devising and prioritizing smart, relevant questions—‘information requirements’—about the environment as well as the enemy.”¹² This quote hit the target, defining the solution to a clear risk to the foundation of our intelligence: excellence in training the Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen, and Guardians who conduct intelligence analysis and operations each day.

Conversely, consider the alternative: that the current intelligence training structures within each military Service should not consider syncing, instead just improving the intelligence training for the functional and geographic combatant commands. This alternative is possible,



Air Force 1st Lieutenant Amanda Chichester, 711th Human Performance Wing behavioral scientist, watches video loop for suspicious behavior during demonstration of new Enhanced Reporting, Narrative Event Streaming Tool developed by Air Force Research Lab, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, October 15, 2014 (U.S. Air Force/Wesley Farnsworth)

given that the 2014 and 2018 DODIG reports specifically recommended that the combatant commands make changes in their military analytic training policies and standards (and indeed these changes are already in progress). However, given military analysts' lack of training on ICD 203 standards, as noted in the 2018 DODIG report, sufficient progress on separate Service tracks seems unlikely.¹³

Implementing the DODIG recommendations under the auspices of already established programs and instituting multilateral approaches among the lead training centers within each Service center would support military commanders' and political leaders' confidence in military intelligence analysis across the board. JFQ

Notes

¹ Intelligence Community Directive 203, *Analytic Standards* (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, January 2, 2015), <https://fas.org/irp/dni/icd/icd-203.pdf>.

² Wayne Michael Hall and Gary Citrenbaum, *Intelligence Analysis: How to Think in Complex Environments* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2009), 3, <https://publisher.abc-clio.com/9780313382666/20>.

³ Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DODIG)-2015-015, *Evaluation of DOD Intelligence Training and Education Programs for the Fundamental Competencies of the DOD Intelligence Workforce* (Washington, DC: DODIG, October 31, 2014), I, [https://media.defense.gov/2018/Aug/31/2001960960/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2015-015 \(REDACTED\). PDF](https://media.defense.gov/2018/Aug/31/2001960960/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2015-015%20%28REDACTED%29.PDF).

⁴ M. Grunwald, M. Crouse, and R. Sullivan, "The State of Analysis and Critical Thinking: Final Report in Support of Air Combat Command [Review]," Integrity ISR (June 2020), 13.

⁵ DODIG-2019-032, *Evaluation of Combatant Command Intelligence Directorate Internal Communications Processes* (Washington, DC: DODIG, December 4, 2018), i, 11–12, <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Dec/11/2002071181/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2019-032.PDF>.

⁶ Sherrill L. Stramara, "Integrated Certification and Training for Intelligence Professionals," *MI Professional Bulletin* 41, no. 1 (January–March 2015), 21, <https://www.ikn>.

army.mil/apps/MIPBW/MIPB_Issues/MIPB-Jan_Mar15IKN.pdf.

⁷ James Kwoun, "The Limits of Intuition: Army Intelligence Should Embrace Analytic Tradecraft Standards," *War on the Rocks*, July 8, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/07/the-limits-of-intuition-army-intelligence-should-embrace-analytic-tradecraft-standards/>.

⁸ DODIG-2019-032, ii.

⁹ DODIG-2015-015.

¹⁰ DODIG-2019-032; Grunwald, Crouse, and Sullivan, "The State of Analysis and Critical Thinking," 15–16.

¹¹ "All-Source Analysis," Department of Defense Intelligence and Security Professional Certification, <https://dodcertpmo.defense.gov/CDASA/>.

¹² Michael T. Flynn, Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor, *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, January 2010), https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/hero/documents/AfghanIntel_Flynn_Jan2010_code507_voices.pdf?mtime=20160906080416&focal=none.

¹³ DODIG-2019-032, i.



Airman from 118th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Group, Tennessee Air National Guard, examines images of tornado damage across Tennessee, March 4, 2020, at Berry Field Air National Guard Base, Nashville, Tennessee (U.S. Air National Guard/Anthony Agosti)