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Perils of Proximity

Kashish Parpiani

Abstract

This paper addresses the paradox that lies in advocating greater proximity between policymakers and the intelligence community. In view of the scholarship that has been produced on this subject, scholars that prefer distance over closeness have been labeled 'Traditionalists,' whereas those who prefer closeness over distance have been labeled 'Activists.' The activists' argument is centered on the belief that politics and intelligence (community) must attain a symbiotic relationship. The paper employs the Government Politics Model (à la Allison & Zelikow) to argue that greater proximity instills comprehensive debates between the two factions to ultimately yield nuanced decisions and policies. The constructive role of intelligence in the American discovery of ballistic missiles in Cuba (in the prelude to the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962) is briefly recounted. On the other hand, the traditionalists' stance is addressed by first highlighting the tendency of policy makers to perceive intelligence as enhancing uncertainty. Experiencing this pushback from policymakers, intelligence analysts then begin to engage in 'analyses to please.' With their objectivity compromised, the possibility of proximity breeding politicized intelligence is heightened. The findings of the 'Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq' are recounted to substantiate the proximity-politicization link.

In conclusion, the paper purports that avoiding proximity is therefore imperative for the intelligence community to effectively fulfill its duty of 'speaking truth to power' and to keep its objectivity intact.

Introduction

This paper addresses the paradox that lies in advocating greater proximity between policymakers and the intelligence community. In view of the scholarship that has been produced on this subject, two different readings on this issue are highlighted. Scholars who have a limited conception of the role of intelligence and prefer distance over closeness have been labeled ‘Traditionalists,’ whereas those who have an expansive conception of the role of intelligence and prefer closeness over distance have been labeled ‘Activists’

The paper then goes on to critically examine the upsides of the activists’ stance by highlighting the constructive effect that proximity may have in policymaking. Central argument being the belief that politics and intelligence (community) must attain a symbiotic relationship, and therefore must be closely knit together. The Government Politics Model (à la Allison & Zelikow) is used to argue that greater proximity instills comprehensive debates between the two factions to ultimately yield nuanced decisions and policies. For this purpose, the role of intelligence in the American discovery of ballistic missiles in Cuba (in the prelude to the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962) is briefly recounted.

Alternatively, the paper argues that, greater proximity generally does not end up working constructively since there is a tendency for policy makers to overtime view intelligence community’s inputs as increasing uncertainty rather than decreasing it. Hence policymakers tend to perceive intelligence with distaste since additional ‘uncertainty’ and ‘speculation’ only further impede policy-formulation. This leads to the complete avoidance of the intelligence community, or its irrelevance in the eyes of the policymaker during decision/policy making.

The development of this attitude against the intelligence community leads to intelligence analysts engaging in ‘analyses to please’ which hampers their objectivity. This opens the door to the ‘proximity breeds politicization of intelligence’ claim, whereby policymakers reach out to intelligence (community) to only seek confirmations of their preexisting prejudices and conceptions. To further study the ‘proximity breeds politicization’ claim, the role of intelligence in the road to the Iraq War of 2003 is recounted. American political corridors — in their pursuit to make a case for the war, tapped into their proximity to the intelligence community to systematically put out cherry-picked or tailored evidence against the Saddam Hussein regime. By citing the findings of the ‘Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence on the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq,’ the proximity-politicization link is further substantiated.

In conclusion, the paper purports that the downsides of proximity certainly outweigh its upsides. Avoiding proximity is therefore imperative for the intelligence community to effectively fulfill its duty of ‘speaking truth to power’ and to keep its objectivity intact. Maximum disassociation is therefore advised.

Traditionalists & Activists

In the analyses of intelligence, three focal points are generally adopted. The first is the concept of intelligence cycle, where analyses is broken down into a series of functional stages each leading into the next in succession. The second is the debate over whether intelligence analysis is a craft or science. The third is the long-standing debate over the ‘ideal’ relationship between analysts who produce intelligence and consumers (most generally, policymakers) who request it

and use it.¹²⁴ The question of proximity is central to the third point since it is the only juncture at which the intelligence community is susceptible to external influence.

Defining the limits of closeness has led to various conceptions about the role of intelligence itself. The role of intelligence can be conceived on the scale of limited to expansive. The former speaks of intelligence only as to inform, assess with no influence on policy. Under this conception of intelligence (and its role), interaction with consumers (i.e. policymakers) must be limited to a bare minimum to attain maximum objectivity in analyses – and by that extension, maximum accuracy.

The latter conception speaks of intelligence to be conceived so as to support a decision by reducing uncertainty, ignorance and the possibility of surprise. In this case, interaction with consumers is deemed imperative for a healthy symbiosis and to ensure intelligence participation in policymaking processes. Those who purport the limited conception and prefer distance over closeness have been labeled traditionalists. While those who purport a more expansive conception and prefer closeness over distance have been labeled activists.

Implied inference of the dichotomy of proximity has been; greater distance between intelligence and policy produces a relatively more accurate but less influential output, whereas greater closeness leads to increased influence but decreased accuracy.¹²⁵ Succinctly, traditionalists heavily emphasize the importance of accuracy and objectivity, meanwhile activists heavily emphasize influence on policymaker's judgement or the policy outcome itself.

¹²⁴ Glenn Hastedt, "The Politics of Intelligence and the Politicization of Intelligence: The American Experience." *Intelligence and National Security* 28, no. 1 (2013), p. 6

¹²⁵ Stephen Marrin, "Revisiting Intelligence and Policy: Problems with Politicization and Receptivity." *Intelligence and National Security* 38, no. 1 (2013), pp. 1-2

Constructive Proximity

In Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow's seminal work (entitled 'The Essence of Decision') on the Cuban Missile Crisis, policymaking is put under a microscope. For the purpose of parsimony in the analyses of policymaking, Allison and Zelikow chalked out three models of decision making viz. The Rational Actor model, The Organizational Process model and, The Bureaucratic Politics model.

The basic unit of analysis under the Bureaucratic Politics Model is government action as a political resultant. Outcomes are formed, and deformed, by the interaction of competing preferences.¹²⁶ This model does not see a unitary actor but rather many actors as players: players who focus on many diverse issues; players who act in terms of no consistent set of strategic objectives but rather according to various conceptions of national, organizational, and personal goals; players who make government decisions not by a single, rational choice but by the pulling and hauling that is politics.¹²⁷

This model cites heavy emphases on cognition, perceptions and conceptions held by these multiple players that tend to pit them at odds over interpretation of issues – and therefore by that extension, policy preferences too.

The relevance of cognition is central to the analyses of the intelligence-policy dynamic. L. Keith Gardiner argues that differences are predictable because of the contrasting personality characteristics that each camp brings to the work-place (resonating to Allison & Zelikow's Model III). The critical dimension seems to be the cognitive structures: how their minds tend to see the

¹²⁶ Graham T. Allison, and Philip Zelikow. *Essence of Decision; Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971. p. 255

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 294-313

world about them, and most importantly, how they process that information and come to conclusions about what to do with it. To policymakers, the world is a highly personalized place. They seek allies to move their ideas forward and particularly, they personalize conflict. Analysts on the other hand, are ostensibly more objective.¹²⁸ According to Gardiner, the policymaker is constantly in tension with other policymakers of roughly equal power in trying to win acceptance for his ideas, he spends much of his time negotiating, bargaining and maneuvering as he attempts to construct or become part of a winning coalition.¹²⁹ Taking that into consideration with Model III (as prescribed by Allison and Zelikow), the intelligence community can be considered as an additional actor that policymakers must engage in a negotiating tug-of-war with.

High level of proximity between the Kennedy administration and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) worked constructively in the politics of discovering the ballistic missile installations in the prelude to the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

President John F. Kennedy perceived Cuba as his “political Achilles’ heel”¹³⁰ (personalization of issues by the policymaker). This stemmed from the bumbling of the Bay of Pigs invasion¹³¹ and no concrete prescriptions coming out of the workings of Operation Mongoose.¹³² Post the Bay of Pigs debacle, Kennedy replaced CIA Director Allen Dulles with

¹²⁸ L. Keith Gardiner, "Squaring the Circle: Dealing with Intelligence-policy Breakdowns." *Intelligence and National Security* 6 (1991): pp. 141-53

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 142

¹³⁰ Graham T. Allison, and Philip Zelikow. *Op. cit.* p 329

¹³¹ The Bay of Pigs invasion was a failed military invasion of Cuba undertaken by the Kennedy administration under the tutelage of the CIA which trained a paramilitary group (Brigade 2506) to launch an invasion from Guatemala and ultimately overthrow the Castro government. It was launched on 17 April 1961. The invasion was however thwarted in a matter of 3 days by the Cuban armed forces. The failure of this invasion left the Kennedy administration red-faced.

¹³² Post the Bay of Pigs debacle, Cuba was perceived to be a major irritant in the successful manifestation of American foreign policy in the western hemisphere, and domestic political debates against Republications. Operation Mongoose was a special committee formed by the

John A. McCone. Kennedy believed that McCone would be a capable manager, able to understand the CIA's burgeoning development of technical intelligence. McCone was already the President's personal link to former President Eisenhower (who President Kennedy turned to for advice occasionally) and came to be a personal friend of Robert Kennedy.¹³³ Hence it can be inferred that there existed an unusual degree of proximity between the two factions owing to McCone's previous professional and personal relationships. On September 6, 1962, the CIA informed President Kennedy that they had spotted coastal defense surface-to-air cruise missiles (not the ballistic missiles, just as yet) in Cuba. McCone was on a vacation at this point in Southern France, from where he coaxed his deputy back at Langley to push for more action, at least in terms of getting more aerial surveillance operations sanctioned to probe into the findings further.¹³⁴

McCone was of the opinion that these defense missiles wouldn't be installed unless it was intended to defend very important military targets. He believed that this deployment was intended to prevent American reconnaissance aircraft from penetrating Cuban airspace, so that they would not discover the next stage of the military buildup — the installation of offensive missiles.¹³⁵

Heeding to McCone's hunch, The Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance (COMOR) chaired by Marshall Carter (also acting CIA director in McCone's absence) planned U-2 surveillance flights. However, this was opposed by Secretary of State Dean Rusk who raised his apprehensions over going ahead with the surveillance operations during a meeting convened by

Kennedy administration to contemplate methods to undermine Castro's legitimacy in Cuba. It was a government-wide operation run out of Attorney General Robert Kennedy's office and led by Edward Lansdale of the Defense Department.

¹³³ Graham T. Allison, and Philip Zelikow. Op. cit. p. 333

¹³⁴ Ibid. pp. 335-338

¹³⁵ Walter Laqueur, *A World of Secrets: The Uses and Limits of Intelligence*. New York: Basic Books, 1985. p. 168

National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy. Rusk's opposition stemmed from the fear of the surveillance aircrafts getting shot down and causing embarrassment to the Kennedy administration.¹³⁶ Embarrassment which would politically cost the Democrats in the upcoming primaries. However at that meeting, Robert Kennedy voiced his support for the CIA-proposed flight plan that would cover the areas of Cuba that had not been photographed. Robert Kennedy's affirmation took precedence owing to his influential position in the committee of Operation Mongoose – which by now looked into every intelligence report regarding Cuba. Rusk's apprehensions persisted, which prolonged the pulling and hauling. The result was a compromise. The CIA proposal for a long flight on the edge of and over Cuba was put aside. In its place would be four short flights, two over international waters and two moving quickly over Cuba on short routes.

However, this operation conducted on September 17 gathered little useful data. McCone tried again with new proposals for aerial surveillance, which were discussed on September 20.¹³⁷ Rusk deflected again with another counterproposal asking for these CIA proposals (argued by McCone) to be collated into one single option to be considered a week later. Finally, on September 27, McCone, by now back in Washington, won grudging approval for overflights of Cuba's periphery¹³⁸ – backed once again by Robert Kennedy. The flights discovered more air and coastal defense installations, but no nuclear missiles. On October 4, McCone turned up the pressure, and Robert Kennedy again affirmed with McCone's stance. Meanwhile, Rusk and the State department continued to assert their belief that the presence of those missiles meant nothing more than a casual Cuban defensive posture. On October 9, bolstered by a human agent report informing of Medium-

¹³⁶ Graham T. Allison, and Philip Zelikow, *Op. Cit.* pp. 335-338

¹³⁷ Graham T. Allison, and Philip Zelikow, *Op. Cit.* p. 336

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 337

Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBM) being unloaded in Cuba, McCone won assent for another surveillance operation. This time around, President Kennedy personally agreed to a COMOR-approved plan for direct overflights over Cuba. On October 10, McCone brought to Kennedy's notice that, there now was naval photographic evidence of crates aboard Soviet merchant ships with IL-28 bombers, capable of carrying nuclear warheads had landed in Cuba.¹³⁹ This as we now know, formed the prelude to the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

It can be argued that McCone conveying his early curiosity to advocate more surveillance flights was largely possible because of his close proximity to President Kennedy via his personal relationship with Robert Kennedy – who held an influential position in the decision making architecture. In addition, McCone's stance enjoyed greater representation in the policymaking architecture with Marshall Carter (acting CIA director in McCone's absence) serving as the chair of COMOR. The discovery of the missiles was the product of pulling and hauling, a metaphorical tug-of-war principally between CIA (headed by McCone) on one end of the rope, and State Department (headed by Rusk) on the other. As a product of pulling and hauling of divergent preferences, proximity in this case constructively led to the discovery of the ballistic missiles and at the same time (owing to Rusk's pressure) guarded the Kennedy administration from political embarrassment.

Policymakers' Conceptions of Intelligence

The policymaker's political imperative (owing to his/her electoral mandate) is to make decisions, to act quickly and with confidence. For which, complexity and uncertainty are frowned upon since they tend to not only impede decision, but also increase the time and thought

¹³⁹ Ibid, pp. 337-338

involved.¹⁴⁰ According to Richard K. Betts, intelligence analyses should be balanced, distinguishing facts from their implications, and admitting as many reasonable interpretations as the facts permit. Balance in this sense can be of two types, both of which are not ideal from the policy maker's standpoint. The first is lengthy and ambivalent which attempts to include all possible arguments and swings back and forth with respect to assertions. The other type involves suppression of those qualities to produce bite-sized drafts which may end up not conveying to the policy-maker what he/she does not already know.¹⁴¹

Moreover, policy-makers suffer from a short term horizon, and are constantly engaged in fighting immediate temporal fires that put distant to-be problems on the back burner. By that extension, the dominant problem of policy-makers, in terms of using intelligence, remains time since careful, balanced, accurate intelligence estimates take a long time to produce.

According to Arthur S. Hulnick, policymakers out of their impatience towards the intelligence community end up developing some general attitudes about intelligence itself. Policymakers find that intelligence tends to expand, rather than reduce, the level of uncertainty about the world. They find intelligence judgements to be couched in ambiguities (which opens the door to speculation) that suggest subjectivity especially where the judgements tend to conflict with those of the policymaker's own. Skepticism towards intelligence also stems from the fact that policymakers know little about the way in which the intelligence community gathers its information. Moreover, there is therefore a general tendency to perceive intelligence inputs as just

¹⁴⁰ Michael I Handel, "Leaders and Intelligence." *Intelligence and National Security* 3, no. 3 (1988), pp. 5-6

¹⁴¹ Richard K Betts. "Policy-makers and Intelligence Analysts: Love, Hate or Indifference?" *Intelligence and National Security* 3 (1988): pp. 184-85

one in the mass of information they receive.¹⁴² Overtime, these attitudes may turn into complete abandonment or irrelevance of intelligence in the eyes of the policymakers. Due to the development of such attitudes towards intelligence, the prospects of proximity working constructively seem bleak.

In reference to the case-study recounted in the earlier section too, it can be argued that Secretary of State Dean Rusk did show signs of an attitude of distaste towards intelligence (and McCone in particular). Rusk's continued attempts to battle McCone's insistence stemmed from his predisposition about the deployment of the surface-to-air missiles in Cuba as being nothing but of defensive character. Rusk continually also advocated ignoring/putting-off of McCone's assessment in COMOR meetings since Rusk was skeptical of political costs of failed surveillance missions. Rusk and his department were so adamant on their stance that they went on to assure a congressional committee – abandoning intelligence estimates (on October 3, 1962,) that, “Our intelligence is very good and very hard. All the indications are that this is equipment which is basically of a defensive capability and it does not offer any offensive capability to Cuba as against the United States or the other nations of the hemisphere”¹⁴³

Eventually in case of the American discovery of ballistic missiles in Cuba, this distaste for intelligence did not fully follow through to complete abandonment/irrelevance of intelligence. However it must be noted that the mere existence of this distaste is certainly enough to hamper the prospects of proximity playing out constructively by causing an action lag. This was evident in the prolonged pulling and hauling that ensued between the CIA and the State Department, which led

¹⁴² Arthur S. Hulnick, "The Intelligence Producer – Policy Consumer Linkage: A Theoretical Approach." *Intelligence and National Security* 1, no. 2 (1986): pp. 212-33

¹⁴³ Graham T. Allison, and Philip Zelikow, *Op. Cit.* pp. 337

to the loss of precious time that could have led to major national security ramifications. In theory (with respect to Allison and Zelikow's prescriptions) the loss of time can be deemed 'constructive', but in view of policymakers (as explained earlier) this loss of time can turn out to be politically costly – at the very least.

Proximity and Politicization of Intelligence

According to Richard K. Betts, policymakers generally need an expert evaluation that change their minds about something, either in the sense of alerting them about a cropping problem or revising their understanding of an old one. If the policymaker reads a paper that does not do this he may most certainly be pleased because it runs parallel to his opinion and provides validation for the same. Alternatively, he may be irritated that he wasted his time on something he had already settled on. Therefore analysts then have to be ready for readers who see their product only as tools for mere validation of prevalent conceptions. Otherwise, their reports stand the chance of being undermined if assumptions that seem to flow with it or the policy implications that seem to flow from it run contrary to the consumers' views.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, there is no way for analysts to avoid criticism unless they pay lip-service to their political masters' agenda. As an implication — in order to refrain from being a hindrance to policy making and inviting the wrath of policymakers, analysts tend to engage in the putting out of reports that do not speak truth to power, but rather telling them what they don't want to hear. This breeds politicization of intelligence.

With greater proximity, there will be a possibility of a greater dilution of (intelligence) analyses to suit the policymaker. This would lead to a culture of producing 'intelligence to please'. Greater proximity will only increase the stakes for the analysts while counting the costs of

¹⁴⁴ Richard K. Betts. Op. Cit. pp. 187-89

aggravating the policymaker. Therefore, by that extension, it can be inferred that greater proximity breeds greater politicization. John Gannon defined it as “the willful distortion of analysis to satisfy the demands of intelligence bosses or policymakers”¹⁴⁵ This definition can be broadened to encompass “commitments to perspectives or conclusions, in the process of intelligence analysis or interaction with policy, that suppress other evidence or views, or blind people to them.”¹⁴⁶ Several forms of politicization have been brought to light from the scholarship on this issue:

- Direct pressure¹⁴⁷ from senior policy officials to come to particular conclusions, generally the ones that accord with policymakers’ policy preferences.

- A house line¹⁴⁸ where, a particular view on an issue is defined, and analysis or analysts that suggest otherwise are ignored.

- Cherry picking¹⁴⁹ (and sometimes growing some cherries), in which policy officials pick their favorites out of a range of assessments.

- Question asking,¹⁵⁰ where, policy asks a reasonable question but continues to ask it over and over, which distorts analyses — by depriving it of time and effort to work on other angles of the issue at hand.

¹⁴⁵ Gregory F. Treverton, "Intelligence Analysis: Between "Politicization" and Irrelevance." In *Analyzing Intelligence: Origins, Obstacles, and Innovations*, Georgetown University Press, 2008, pp. 93

¹⁴⁶ Gregory F. Treverton, Op. Cit.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

- A shared mindset,¹⁵¹ whereby intelligence and policy share strong presumptions, or are policymaker-imposed.

The issue of politicization of intelligence sprang back up on the agenda in the postmortem analyses of the selling of the Iraq War (2003) to the masses. According to Paul Pillar (U.S. National Intelligence Officer, 2000-05), the Bush administration used intelligence not to inform decision-making, but to justify a decision already made. The administration deviated from the professional standard not only in using policy to drive intelligence, but also in aggressively using intelligence to win public support for its decision to go to war. This meant ‘cherry picking’ what deemed consistent with the decision to go to war.¹⁵² Similarly, Senator Durbin concluded (in the ‘Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence on the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq’) that ‘Administration policymakers were not looking for the Intelligence Community’s consensus on conclusions regarding Iraq’s WMD programs – the President, the Vice President, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and General Myers had already reached their own conclusions, including that the U.S. needed to go to war to neutralize the perceived Iraqi threat’.¹⁵³ The CIA Ombudsman too testified to the select committee that he felt the “hammering” by the Bush administration on Iraq intelligence was harder than he had previously witnessed in his 32-year career with the agency.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² P. R Pillar, Intelligence, policy, and the war in Iraq, *Foreign Affairs*, 85(2), 15-27. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/214298010?accountid=12665>

¹⁵³ Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S. Senate, “Report of the select committee on intelligence on the U.S intelligence community’s prewar intelligence assessments on Iraq - Together with additional views”, U.S. Senate. Accessed April 3, 2015. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/CRPT-108srpt301/CRPT-108srpt301/content-detail.html>. pp. 449-465

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 456

In the 'Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq,' Senator Dianne Feinstein concludes that the intelligence produced in the run-up to the war was either ignored or cherry-picked to suit the Bush administration's policy decisions. In reference to one of CIA's sources (codenamed Curveball, who provided intelligence regarding Iraq's alleged WMD program), shades of 'House Line' politicization are seen. In the said report, she states that:

"... Despite new information discrediting the sources, no reevaluation was made. A Department of Defense detailee to the CIA who met with "Curveball," made several observations that raised questions about the reliability of Curveball's information. The detailee, after explaining his views, received an email from the Deputy of the CIA Counter Proliferation Unit which read as follows:

As I said last night, let's keep in mind the fact that this war's going to happen regardless of what Curveball said or didn't say, and the Powers That Be probably aren't terribly interested in whether Curveball knows what he's talking about."¹⁵⁵

The report also highlights instances of 'cherry-picking' politicization in its findings regarding the sale of aluminum tubes to Iraq which were alleged to be for WMD processing purposes. "In the review of the aluminum tubes, Department of Energy analysts, the acknowledged experts in nuclear technology, found that the tubes were not suitable for a nuclear program, and the State Department's analysts agreed. However, CIA and Defense Intelligence Agency analysts believed these items were intended to be used for a nuclear program. Despite the fact that the

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 482

acknowledged experts disagreed, the National Intelligence Estimate included the faulty analysis of CIA analysts, with DIA concurring, in its key judgement”¹⁵⁶

In September 2002, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told the Senate Armed Services Committee that “the Iraq problem cannot be solved by airstrikes alone”¹⁵⁷ because Iraqi chemical and biological weapons were so deeply buried that they could not be penetrated even by state-of-the-art American air power. Two months later, the National Intelligence Council wrote a counter assessment concluding that the Iraqi weapons facilities identified by the intelligence agencies “are vulnerable to conventional, precision guided, penetration munitions because they are not deeply buried.”¹⁵⁸ This counter-assessment report was never presented to the Congress in the run-up to the war.

Further, intelligence over Iraq supposedly vying to procure uranium ore and yellowcake via Niger, was also concluded to have been an overt exaggeration. Once it emerged that claims of Iraqi attempts to procure the said materials from Niger were based on forged documents, both the CIA and the DIA, continued to publish assessments that Iraq may have been seeking uranium from Africa, and the CIA continued to approve the use of similar language in administration publications and speeches¹⁵⁹ – thereby staying consistent with the ‘house line’

The most dubious of the intelligence ‘evidence’ presented were the ones concerning the establishment of links between Saddam Hussein’s regime and Al Qaeda. According to Pillar, there

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 483

¹⁵⁷ Mark Mazzetti, and Scott Shane, "Senate Panel Accuses Bush of Iraq Exaggerations." The New York Times. June 4, 2008. Accessed April 5, 2015.
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/05/washington/05cnd-intel.html?_r=0.

¹⁵⁸ Mark Mazzetti and Scott Shane, Op. Cit.

¹⁵⁹ Peter Gill, and Mark Phythian. "Intelligence on Iraqi WMD: What Kind of Intelligence Failure?" In *Intelligence in an Insecure World*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2006, p. 129

was an innate eagerness to establish that link in order to hitch the Iraq expedition to the “War on Terror” and the threat the American public feared most – thereby capitalizing on the country’s post-9/11 sentiments.¹⁶⁰ Here is where shades of (policymaker imposed) ‘shared mindset’ politicization are seen. As per the minutes of a Pentagon meeting with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, on the afternoon of 9/11, Rumsfeld’s orders to the ranks of Pentagon and American intelligence was to find “Best info fast. Judge whether good enough hit S.H at same time” — meaning Saddam Hussein – “not only UBL” – meaning Usama bin Laden. – “Go massive. Sweep it all up. Things related and not.”¹⁶¹ The Bush administration, in the run up to the war maintained that Mohammad Atta (one of the 9/11 ringleaders) met with Iraqi official Ahmad al-Anian in Prague in April 2001. The FBI and CIA both warned that they were skeptical that Atta was in Prague, on numerous occasions.¹⁶² However, Policymakers’ statements did not accurately convey the intelligence assessments about contacts between the then-Iraqi leader and Osama bin Laden’s group, and left the impression that these instances meant substantive Iraqi cooperation or support of al Qaeda.¹⁶³

Therefore in consideration of the above, greater closeness (proximity) did not buy influence (as the activists would argue). Instead, it only led to the utilization of intelligence to add (false) weightage to a preconceived policy and security assessment. According to Tyler Drumheller (Head of CIA operations in Europe until 2005), “The policy was set, the war in Iraq was coming and they

¹⁶⁰ P. R Pillar, Op. Cit. 25

¹⁶¹ Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S. Senate, Op. Cit, pp. 451-52

¹⁶² CNN, "2003 CIA Cable Casts Doubt on Claim Linking Iraq, 9/11 - CNN.com." CNN. December 12, 2014. Accessed April 11, 2015. <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/12/12/world/cia-cable-iraq-war/>.

¹⁶³ CNN, "Senate Report Slams Bush over Prewar Intelligence." CNN. June 5, 2008. Accessed April 13, 2015.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/06/05/senate.iraq/index.html?iref=nextin>.

(Bush administration) were looking for intelligence to fit into the policy, to justify the policy.”¹⁶⁴ Meanwhile, the analysts indulged in groupthink, i.e. readily came to agree on a position without examining it critically¹⁶⁵ – by failing to effectively communicate uncertainties in intelligence sources, performing “layering” of judgments whereby past judgements were used as factual bases for current assessments, and being risk-averse by simply nodding to policymakers’ preferences. However, the intelligence community did produce and disseminate numerous assessments on the postwar environment in Iraq, prior to the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom. These assessments signaled the establishment of a cohesive, democratic government as being a long, difficult and turbulent process. Not only did the policymakers not appropriately consider and prepare for these difficulties predicted by the intelligence community, but also sidelined these assessments to have little or absolutely no impact on policy deliberation.¹⁶⁶

According to Pillar, the lesson of this experience must be that intelligence community should be repositioned to reflect on the fact that influence flows not just in policy corridors, but also accounts for credibility with the masses beyond Capitol Hill.¹⁶⁷

However the costs have not been limited to the loss of credibility. Some of the more tangible costs – at the rate of 0 Weapons of Mass Destruction found, have been the 4,488 U.S.

¹⁶⁴ CBS News, “A Spy Speaks Out.”, April 21, 2006. Accessed April 14, 2015.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-spy-speaks-out-21-04-2006/>.

¹⁶⁵ Mark M. Lowenthal “Intelligence in Transition: Analysis after September 11 and Iraq” In *Analyzing Intelligence: Origins, Obstacles, and Innovations*, 93. Georgetown University Press, 2008. p. 228

¹⁶⁶ Dianne Feinstein, “Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein on the Senate Intelligence Committee Report on Prewar Intelligence Assessments about Postwar Iraq.” May 25, 2007. Accessed April 12, 2015. <http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=c54edbafe9-96e9-c55e-224f-d7a5a8ea0382>.

¹⁶⁷ P. R Pillar, Op. Cit. p. 27

service personnel deaths, 134,000 civilian deaths, 2.8 million people displacements, and \$12 billion per month as the cost of the Iraq war.¹⁶⁸

Conclusion

This paper has delved into the examination of intelligence's role on the spectrum of limited to expansive, with regards to its relationship with policymakers. Adopting Allison and Zelikow's model of decision-making, proximity can serve constructively. Although, due to the development of distasteful attitudes towards intelligence, policymakers incite a culture of seeking 'intelligence to-please'. This may then manifest into the politicization of intelligence. The degree of which can be deemed directly proportional to the degree of proximity. Greater politicization only leads to the utilization of intelligence (via the different types of politicization, as discussed) for furtherance of policymakers' predetermined policies. Therefore, proximity seriously hampers the ideal role of intelligence to speak truth to power. Intelligence works for government, but its role is that of an objective assessor, not that of the lawyer whose client wants all the help he can get in pursuing his chosen case.¹⁶⁹

In summation, the case for lesser proximity can be made by recounting the words of General William Donovan. As one of the conveners of the central intelligence service in the United States, he believed that, "... Intelligence must be independent of the people it serves so that the

¹⁶⁸ Michael B Kelley and Geoffrey Ingersoll. "The Staggering Cost Of The Last Decade's US War In Iraq - In Numbers." Business Insider. June 20, 2014. Accessed April 10, 2015.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-iraq-war-by-numbers-2014-6>

¹⁶⁹ Michael Herman, "Threat Assessments and the Legitimation of Policy?" *Intelligence and National Security* 18, no. 3 (2013): 174-78. p. 178

material it obtains will not be slanted or distorted by the views of the people directing operations.”¹⁷⁰

Hence, in view of the intelligence community maintaining its analytical objectivity, and avoiding high degrees of politicization, maximum disassociation from the policymakers is imperative.

¹⁷⁰ Arthur S. Hulnick, *Op. Cit.* p. 214

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