INTELLIGENCE AND US NATIONAL SECURITY POLICYMAKING (RPAD 558)

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Course Summary:

This seminar examines the role of intelligence in the formulation and implementation of US foreign policy. Through critical analysis and case studies, students will develop techniques to increase intelligence’s contribution to policy deliberations while ensuring that it does not prescribe policy.

Major foreign policy reviews and decision-making regarding day-to-day implementation are conducted through a series of interagency fora, beginning at the Assistant Secretary level and proceeding through the Cabinet-level Deputies and Principals Committees to the President. This course will assess the most appropriate role for the CIA, the DNI, and the Intelligence Community in supporting this executive branch process. We begin with an overview of the CIA, its functions, structure, and capabilities. Next we review the US foreign policy process, key players, and institutional bias. The bulk of the course is devoted to a series of mock intelligence and policy meetings on the Kosovo, Afghanistan (1 and 2), and Iraq crises to critically analyze the CIA’s proper role in supporting the policy process. Based on the instructor’s 40 years as an intelligence officer and his experience
preparing the Director of Central Intelligence for PC meetings, we will recreate the intel and policy process to critically analyze the CIA’s impact on policy decisions that led up to these three wars.

Course Objectives

The course focuses on the following questions:

--What are the roles and functions of the CIA, the DNI, and the Intelligence Community?
--How does the executive branch formulate and implement foreign policy?
--How does intelligence impact the process?
--How did intelligence succeed/fail in the policy decision-making process that led the US to go to war three times in 5 years?
--Could armed intervention have been avoided?
--Could different/better intelligence have changed US policymakers’ decisions?
--How can intelligence be more effective without becoming policy prescriptive?

Course Content and Sequence

We will begin each class with a brief discussion of articles/op ed pieces in the previous week’s NY Times and Albany Times Union that relate to intelligence and especially to the nexus between intelligence and policy.

Week 1. Course overview and administration. Discuss class assignments, including extensive role playing. Walk through syllabus to ensure a shared understanding of approach and course goals. Sign up for one-on-one meetings. Define and discuss “intelligence.”

Week 3. Lecture on US national security policy formulation and implementation process in the executive branch. Interagency working groups, the Deputies Committee, and the Principals Committee (PC) during the Clinton and Bush 43 administrations. Key players and their institutional bias. PC meetings – National Security Advisor as chairperson, policy discussion paper as agenda, the role of intelligence, the Summary of Conclusions (SOC) as official record. The limited but critical roles of Congress and the public. Readings: Halberstam, David, War in a Time of Peace (2001), Sections on Albright pp. 376-386, Berger pp. 404-409, Shelton pp. 414-415, Cohen pp. 436-443, Clark pp. 426-438. Selected students will make 10 minute presentations on the PC preparation process at the NSC, State, OSD, and JCS.

Week 4. Bosnia and the preconditions for conflict resolution. Haass’ four criteria for assessing the feasibility of successful peace negotiations. Haass, Richard, Conflicts Unending: The United States and Regional Disputes, 1990. Selected student will re-cap US policy in the former Yugoslavia during the late Bush 41 and early Clinton administrations, 1990-1995. Selected student will demonstrate that Haass’ criteria were met at Dayton. Halberstam


Weeks 6 – 8. Reenactment of 3 PC meetings during the twelve-month run-up to the March 1999 NATO military attack on Serbia. Each session begins with a short pre-brief to the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) on the agenda for -- and his role at – that day’s PC meeting. Then the PC meeting is chaired by the National Security Advisor (NSA) and will consist of an intelligence briefing (DCI) and decision-making on issues contained in the NSC policy discussion paper. Participants include the Secretary of State (SECSTATE), the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (C/JCS), and the DCI. At the conclusion of our mock session, we will critique the deliberations, identify the impact of intelligence, and compare our outcome with the historical decisions. A short internal CIA meeting is conducted to prepare for the next class.
These 3 classes involve extensive role-playing by all student every week and preparation of briefing papers by about half the class each week.

April 3 1998: In reaction to the Serbs killing almost 100 Kosovar Albanians in retaliation for KLA attacks, the Contact Group has demarched Milosovic and he appears to be responding. The Principals must set US policy goals and define a strategy to achieve them. Daalder (22-29)

October 5 1998: The number of refugees and IDPs now exceeds 300,000. The UN passes Resolution 1199 which could lead to the use of force against Serbia. The PC must address potential showstoppers to the use of force in the UN (Russia and China) and assess NATO’s political will. The PC will consider sending Holbrooke back to Belgrade and Pristina to pursue a diplomatic solution. (Daalder 41-46)

January 19 1999: The major Serb atrocity in Racak on January 15 demands a final decision on air strikes. The PC must decide on whether to use force or to continue to pursue the diplomatic approach. The current US policy – confirmed just four days earlier – is revised in view of Racak. The harsher policy that is now proposed is advocated by SECSTATE. The PC must decide how to get Russia and NATO on board and plans the strategy rollout by the UN, NATO, and the US. (Daalder 66-72)

Pre-brief: This internal CIA meeting consists of a short briefing for the DCI to be presented by the Chief of the Balkans Task Force (C/BTF) and his analysts. The Chief of the Directorate of Operations’ Balkans Ops Group (C/BOG) will also attend.
PC Meeting: The PC meeting begins with an intelligence update before consideration of the policy discussion paper. The PC formalizes/updates US policy and directs the next steps in implementation. The results of the meeting are captured in the Summary of Conclusions (SOC). The intelligence record is captured in a Memorandum for the Record (MFR).

Kick-off Meeting: Finally, we will meet to kick-off preparation for the next PC meeting. The DCI’s staff will provide the policy discussion paper that has been prepared by the NSC (I will prepare these). Attendees from as many as three DI offices (Europe, Transnational Issues, and Russia) will join the C/BTF and C/BOG to decide on the Intelligence Assessments and the main messages of the Scene-setter memo for the next PC meeting. These products must be posted on our web site no later than noon, Friday.
At the end of the third Kosovo class we will hold the kick-off meeting for the role play NSC meeting on Afghanistan.

Week 9 – Afghanistan. The impact of 9/11. Wars of necessity and wars of choice. The dominant role of intelligence and special forces in the Afghan war. We will role-play the NSC meeting held at Camp David on 9/15/2001, including the President, VP, NSA, SECDEF, DEPSECDEF, SECSTATE, DCI, C/CTC/CIA, Director, FBI and C/JCS. Daalder and Lindsay, pp. 1-128. Bob Woodward, Bush at War, entire book. At the end of class we will hold a kick-off meeting for the first mock NSC meeting on Iraq.

Weeks 10-11 – Iraq. We will conduct two mock PC and NSC meetings covering the role of intelligence in the policy process from 2002 until the initiation of hostilities in March 2003. Selected students will role play the President, VP, NSA, SECDEF, SECSTATE, and DCI. Other students will portray intelligence officers supporting the DCI.

July 28, 2002. The PC will hold a “Regional Strategies Meeting” on Iraq to discuss the role for the United Nations, the role of key allies, the military options for removing Saddam, the nature of post-Saddam Iraq, and how to approach Congress. (Daalder and Lindsey pp 129 – 135, Woodward, Plan of Attack, entire book.)

January 29, 2003 The PC will meet to determine next steps in light of Hans Blix’s January 27th “Update on Inspection” in Iraq. See www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/recent%20items.html. Specifically, should the US and UK jointly introduce another resolution finding Iraq in material breech. (Daalder and Lindsey pp. 135-139.)

Weeks 12-13. We will hold a mock-PC meeting and a mock-NSC meeting on the Obama administrations AFPAK strategy. (Woodward, Obama’s War -- entire book).
March 12, 2009 Buce Reidel and VP Biden will make dueling recommendations for the fundamental AFPAK strategy and associated troop level changes. Obama’s War pp101 and following.

November 23, 2009 The second surge debate. Obama’s War pp 290 and following.


Course Requirements and Grades: In addition to oral presentations and the role-playing, each student will produce at least 4 written products including intelligence assessments (2-3 pages), scene-setter memos (2 pages), summaries of conclusion (2 pages), memos for the record (2-3 pages), and talking points (2-3 pages).

Student grades will be based on a combination of class presentations and participation (one-third), written intelligence products for role play (one-third), and the final paper (one-third).

Readings:

In addition to the required texts, there will be weekly reading assignments from CIA monographs, web sites, and books on reserve in the library. Readings will average about 200 pages per week.

Required Texts:
Mark M. Lowenthal, Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy CQ Press, most recent edition.


Bob Woodward, Bush at War, Simon and Schuster 2002

Bob Woodward, Plan of Attack, Simon and Schuster 2004

Bob Woodward, Obama’s War, Simon and Schuster 2010