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Team Number: 2

Location: Commission's K Street Office

Participants – non-Commission: Carl Ford

Participants – Commission: Col. Lorry Fenner, Gordon Lederman

(U) BACKGROUND.

(U) We received a biography (see attachment) from Mr. Carl W. Ford, Jr. who served as Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, from 31 May 2001 to 3 October 2003.

(U) Mr. Ford served in the Army between 1962 and 1974 as an infantryman and [redacted] in Vietnam (twice) and [redacted]. During that period he also completed a BA in Asian Studies and an MA in East Asian Studies. Between 1974 and 1993 Mr. Ford served with [redacted] Congress, and DoD. When he retired in May 1993 from the [redacted] he established a consulting firm before returning to public service at DoS/INR in May 2001.

(U) OPENING REMARKS.

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(U) Mr. Ford then more specifically addressed the 9-11 problem. He remarked that intelligence analysis shouldn't occur in a vacuum (analysts should not be academics who accumulate knowledge for knowledge's sake). Since someone in government needs new answers or information, analysts' efforts are always tied to a requirement (even if a policy maker does not yet know they need the information). Rather, the IC is responding to requirements. Mr. Ford went on to say that the IC is most effective when the customer is clear and the line to the customer is direct; he cited the example of lines to the Combatant Commanders (CCs) and the marriage of technology, intelligence, and "shooters". Technology and intelligence are providing information in tactical time now and the military consumer says, "I'm not satisfied, I want this, gimme that." The intelligence agencies know the CCs will "kick them in the ass if they don't get it right."

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(U) WHY THE IC IS UNDERPERFORMING ON ANALYSIS

(U) As to why the IC is underperforming on analysis, Mr. Ford stated that the reason is unclear. He suggested that if it was easy and simple, it would have been fixed and that there is no intuitive answer. Still, he elaborated on several factors.

(U) Mr. Ford believes that the first problem is size; the IC is too big. He said the IC is an almost unworkable bureaucracy and that the size is dangerous to intelligence because "creativity and initiative are squelched." Second, he opined, the people in charge are those who devised what we have today 10-15 years ago. They got promoted for having built this structure so they cannot now suggest that it needs changing, that "the emperor has no clothes." Third, making changes requires an admission that the system/structure has failed.

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(U) Mr. Ford said the foregoing is an example of how we might have good analysts, but the product published was "crap."

(S) [REDACTED]  
He recalled that it wasn't very often that he would say to himself "I didn't know that, that's good" and he would call or send a memo to the collector or analyst to compliment them.

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(U) Mr. Ford said in INR it's even worse. He read tons of "finished intelligence." This is intelligence that is supposed to inform policy makers. We are producing tons of analysis, for no value. Policy makers are not getting what they want and are starving – the intelligence satisfies on 10-15% of their intelligence requirements, and the rest is a vacuum. The policy maker needs more answers to the question "what does it mean?". Mr. Ford tried to refocus his analysts by having them pick an "unanswered question." His prime customers were Secretary Powell and Sec. Armitage. They had been getting current intelligence rather than analysis. He told his analysts that the Watch would provide updates and they should not worry about time. He wanted them to do their analysis well. He would ask them "what's the question?" rather than "what just came in?". But everyone (INR, CIA, and DIA) wanted to be the first ones into the bosses with the breaking news. For current intelligence, time is of the essence. Mr. Ford emphasized

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again that analysts should go to the question first and then to the intelligence for the answer.

(U) Mr. Ford averred that the policy makers don't realize that 90% of their queries could be filled without adding more money or people to the equation if analysts just focused on those areas. He believes that the NSC is also focused on current intelligence. He opined that the policy makers have given up on trying to get what they want. They have fostered this environment of lack of trust. They are saying, "just give me the current intelligence, I don't care what you think about it, I can analyze it myself." Anyone who believes most of what the IC churns out is crazy, he said. Mr. Ford believes the analytic community knows it could do better, but the present leaders grew up in current intelligence; they focus on "time" instead of "quality". They focus on getting information to the President quickly, but that information is not knowledge. It is easier to produce daily information than knowledge. Mr. Ford believes current intelligence can be confused with "warning;" they are very different, but use some of the same intelligence.

#### (U) ORGANIZATION.

(U) Mr. Ford opines that the way we have organized ourselves goes back to at least to World War II and we should be aware of the history of analytic tradecraft. He said, that in that earlier time if you had 5 analysts you would assign each to a separate account; they don't like to share and this organization inherently worked against collaboration. Mr. Ford said that if you only had 5 analysts the manager had a tendency to put them on the 5 "big areas" but this approach would produce intelligence that is too general. Whereas if you had 100 analysts you would put them on 100 projects so each could have their own and that would be too micro. The policy maker needs more detail, but not so micro a view as we have done with the influx of more analysts.

(U) Mr. Ford proposed that analysis should be modeled on a scientific or medical research team concept. Instead of 5 or 150 working independently, analysts should all be part of a team answering the questions the seniors have. They can be doing different things, but working toward a common goal—organized and led by one person. Then their product can be more than the sum of the parts. This approach also helps with IT problems. Mr. Ford maintains that IT people live in a different world than analysts, but they need to be on the same team. The IC needs to put the substance and process people together. Analysts don't need a part-timer, they need the IT worker to be an integral part of the team. Mr. Ford also opined that the team needs young professionals (like young sergeants in the military and in the science community) so they can be trained (like journeymen) by the seniors. He said that the intelligence community on the other hand has chosen the "education model" rather than the "science model" and that the education model is worse than what we already have. In the education model, each teacher is on his/her own. His wife, a principal, has instituted a team approach at her school where each teacher can do their own thing, but within a common approach. The school has the highest test scores in the US. Mr. Ford maintains that the IC does not work as a team, but as individuals. One analyst, no matter how good, cannot deal with the questions that policymakers have; a team of 10 is needed. In this regard, he added that analysts could

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work the feedback loop with collectors, but they are not doing it. They just take what they get and answer the easy questions. And they are not being pushed by the customer who is asking easy questions or not asking any. So the analysts opt to do the easy thing.

(U) Mr. Ford does believe parts of the community are doing well, particularly collectors and reporters.

(U) Mr. Ford opined that 90% of the questions policy makers have cannot be answered by current intelligence. He said, you can put all the "dots" we have together and it still doesn't add up; "it's not about the dots." Mr. Ford remarked that in his 40 years in intelligence/government putting dots together was not his world (maybe it works for the criminologist). He said "there are not enough dots." He continued that if you added more money you might increase the number of dots you could get from say 5 to 20 but there was still a 4000 piece puzzle to fit them into and the analyst doesn't have the box cover for reference. They don't know whether they have a piece of sky, water or car.

(U) Mr. Ford thinks that the IC must accept that the dots would not be the answer. When one has a dot, one must look around it and find related things. First take the dots and arrange them and ask about them. One surely should try to get more and different dots. But dots only give the analyst a place to start to look for the answer; they are not the answer. One has to imagine what the pieces mean and decide how to get to the bigger picture (for which you don't have the box top). He maintains that it's never going to be obvious, it's never going to be certain, it's always going to be a guess. Anyone who claims certainty is wrong. An analyst must finally report, "here's the evidence, here's my methodology, here's why I think this is." They must present and sell their logic. And policymakers must accept that analysts cannot be definitive.

#### (U) COUNTERTERRORISM.

(C) Mr. Ford said policy makers are not equipped to frame the appropriate questions; they do not know what the IC can do for them. Analysts will therefore have to supplement what the policy maker is asking for, by providing information to answer questions that the policymaker did not but should have asked. Analysts may also have difficulty understanding the policy maker's question. (Some analysts want to tell the policy maker what to do; many aspire to be the DCI). If the policy maker asks "who won the election?" The analysts should really look into who won the last 3 elections and what that means. Rather than answering off the top of one's head, the analyst needs to take a systematic approach and look at databases (which need to be built, and require patience to do so) and formulate questions to pursue.

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(U) INTELLIGENCE FAILURE.

(U) Mr. Ford does not believe we should blame the analysts for 9-11. He blames himself and the leaders for not helping the analysts, particularly the new ones, to learn how to do it right. The analysts shouldn't have to guess. He said this was a management and leadership problem.

(U) Mr. Ford believes we could do collection better, but NSA could use the same collection but do more processing, reporting and analysis. He proposes that we need more people to do processing. He maintains that we can't even scratch the surface of what we've collected, so one can't even say how good collection really is. But, he continued, we don't need more money or people overall, we just need to do our job differently. We could cut the budget and still improve analysis. He went on to say that we could take the CIA/DI, cut it by 75%, and it would take months or years before the policy makers would realize it. He said he wasn't arguing for a 75% reduction but we could reduce DI's size and still do better. Mr. Ford believes we've been doing analysis badly for a long time and we're focused on the wrong problems. [REDACTED] avers that the IC is not trained right or organized right to fix the problem and over 2 decades we have not recognized that we have a problem. As he framed it, "How can you [REDACTED] and not do a good job?" Mr. Ford suggested, as in a "12 Step Program", we first have to stop doing what we're doing and admit we have a problem rather than focusing on small reforms and micromanagement.

(U) SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.

(S) Mr. Ford was aware of the Bojinka plot and the possible bombing of aircraft, but attacks against the US were not INR's focus.

(U) INR used to have a separate group doing "TIPOFF" for watch listing with interaction with the FBI, but that has gone to the TTIC. After trying something a little different, he understands that TTIC's IT has now had to step back to the "INR model" [\*further discussion below].

(U) In reference to relations with the DCI, other IC members, the Interagency, and DoD and the problem of military versus "national" focus, Mr. Ford responded that INR really

had their own priorities. He said CIA did not figure prominently. He wanted INR to be focused on learning. He said that TIPOFF performed impressively despite the imperfections; it was good enough for State, INS, and [redacted]

[redacted] INR administers TIPOFF for the community, but receives no direct benefit. TIPOFF is basically a "process" – including validating names for placement on the list.

[redacted]

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(U) Team 3 submitted questions related to the following:

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(U) INR's CT analysts were focused on the Middle East rather than Germany/Europe but they knew the terrorists traveled. And after 9-11, there has been more focus on East Asia.

(U) Mr. Ford was not aware of the DCI's "declaration of war" in 1998, but in his observations of CIA it was not surprising that there was a "declaration of war."

(U) For the periods both pre- and post-9-11, Mr. Ford had no recollection of working on Sudan, Germany, or Pakistan as terrorist sanctuaries, nor was INR working on support to terrorists from other countries. The Taliban was a top priority reporting requirement. He did know some demarches were issued but they didn't run those by INR.

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(U) Mr. Ford recounted that before 9-11 there was an increasing "noise level" with counterterrorism and al Qai'da analysts. The 4<sup>th</sup> of July was worrisome and there were some warnings in August. He remembered the Consular Affairs Director as "a tough lady." She put out a warning mentioning UBL even though INR wasn't sure there was justification. They were focused on UBL, but thought attacks would be overseas in Africa or against other embassies. His experience at the PCCs was that there was a transition in ideology and reality. The new administration felt the previous administration hadn't done enough; they wanted to do more on CT. He remembers the debates focusing on concepts and approaches [redacted] and "use of force" debates. They didn't think the problem was time sensitive though. INR was in a position to be the "helper" in these discussions. They had started to discuss initiatives in May 2001 and in the summer, but "hadn't gotten there yet." [redacted]

[redacted] He went to both Tenet and McLaughlin and then he told



Armitage and Grossman, INR people were not the right people to have in the debates. State needed to have policy people rather than IC people in these discussions. They agreed.

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(U) FINAL THOUGHTS HE LEFT WITH THE SECRETARY WHEN HE RETIRED.

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(U) Mr. Ford said he also told the Secretary that INR was a "national treasure" and he should take good care of it. If anything, it should be bigger but he knows there will be no new resources. He argued that contrary to the criticism that INR is too political, it is really the least politicized in the IC. INR must be close to the policy maker and anticipate their questions and focus on the most important. This has to be divorced from political pressures.

(U) FINAL THOUGHTS ON MANAGEMENT.

(U) Mr. Ford believes that the parts of the IC work better than the whole. He believes that Lt. Gen Hayden has done a "remarkable job" with NSA as a huge bureaucracy. He has broken through and been able to change the culture, as has Gen. Clapper at NIMA. (He lamented that there is no Clapper or Hayden for analysis). Mr. Ford said he was

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But when you put all the organizations together they are much worse off. He believes the reason is size. The IC is just too big. Mr. Ford proposes dis-aggregation instead of centralization. He thinks the notion of "community" is an anachronism. He believes in the notion of "intelligence officers" who work for everyone and that intelligence services should be integrated. He suggested that every intelligence officer should serve at least one tour as a collector or processor at the operational level before they become an analyst. Mr. Ford opined that analysts are arrogant and the IC tends to hire those from outside with academic credentials instead of transitioning our collectors to analysis. He believes that real world experience is very important for analysts. Now people straight out of college "are dumped into it." In INR a person with 5 years of analytical experience is a "rookie"

Analysts need to do apprenticeships.

(U) Mr. Ford pointed out that CMS is 3 times the size of INR. He asked why there is so much bureaucratic stuff. He proposed that whether to centralize more or not may not be the right question. He believes that so much could be fixed without that approach. The cosmic issue is that "nothing gets done" and the seniors are worried about themselves. The centralization question could be just a distraction. There is so much wrong that could be fixed without looking at cosmic issues - the cosmic issues are just a distraction. He said he watched Gen. Scowcroft after the NSPD 5 Commission brief a PCC then "he was only patted on the head" after all that work. And he only got that far [to the PCC] because of his personal cache. Mr. Ford continued that his intuition was that more would be gained by decentralizing the work better rather than creating a mammoth bureaucratic machine - smaller is better in his view. Mr. Ford did not answer Mr. Lederman's question of who is responsible and accountable today for the IC's performance.

(U) Mr. Ford continued that the greatest intelligence successes he saw in the last 20 years had been tactical, getting intelligence to shooters. He said that the SECDEF and DCI are in charge and have the money and it's all pretty centralized - about as much as you can get. He remarked that if the IC doesn't work well now, then there's not much you can do about it. He does believe the creation of the USD/I is a step forward because the SECDEF is too busy to manage intelligence. They both have to work well with the DCI.

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