The U. S. Intelligence Community: An Overview

This course provides a broad overview of the roles, functions, activities and current issues facing the U.S. Intelligence Community. This course is specifically designed to provide government, military, academic, and contractor professionals working with the Intelligence Community a firm basis for understanding the Community’s roles, needs and culture and the issues that they are facing today as the Community deals with a new structure and new threats. This course places special emphasis on the ongoing changes in U.S. Intelligence and the issues that these changes raise, and the changes that have been implemented since 2001 and how they are progressing.

This course is comprised of the following modules with associated learning objectives, each of which helps meet the needs noted above:

• Structure & Missions: the key organizing and methodological principles that guide the structure and function of the Intelligence Community; the role and function of each of the main agencies and of the DNI; and the issues that continue to be problematic in managing U.S. intelligence. The Learning Objectives include understanding the various types of functions carried out in U.S. intelligence (analysis, operational, acquisition), the roles played by each of the major intelligence agencies, the inherent issue of coordination, and a sense of how the DNI is faring.

• U.S. National Security Threats in the 21st Century: what are the main policy issues that drive U.S. intelligence; the role of the National Intelligence Priorities Framework (NIPF); the intelligence implications of the main policy issues (including terrorism, WMD, failed states; military deployments, et al.); and the role of opportunity analysis. The Learning Objectives include understanding the key issues that currently concern policy makers and how these concerns are then translated into intelligence problem sets, many of which the students will be dealing with.

• Collection: we review the strengths and weaknesses of each of the collection disciplines (HUMINT, GEOINT, SIGINT, MASINT, OSINT), the intelligence issues (as discussed in the previous module) for which they are each best suited, and Community collection management issues. The Learning Objectives include understanding how the various INTs work, which agencies are responsible for them and the relative strengths and weaknesses of each INT.

• Collection exercise: In this brief exercise we offer the class three real-world intelligence problems (e.g., Iran’s nuclear program; a possible terrorist attack, etc.) and ask the students to identify which of the five collection disciplines would be well-suited for this issue. This exercise and the ensuing discussion allows the students to put to use their knowledge about intelligence collection capabilities in a timely manner, and also serves to reinforce the discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the collection disciplines.
• Intelligence Analysis: the key issues driving U.S. intelligence analysis, including policy maker focus, workforce issues, and the continuing legacy of 9/11 and Iraq WMD. The Learning Objectives include achieving a better understanding of the stresses, strengths and weaknesses inherent in intelligence analysis.

• Congress & the Intelligence Community: a discussion of Congress’s role in oversight and the shaping of the intelligence budget, with an emphasis on the intelligence issues before the 112th Congress. The Learning Objectives include an improved appreciation for the role Congress plays in intelligence and a firmer understanding of the politics underlying many current issues.

• Intelligence Community: An Introduction has been approved for .7 CEUs by George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia.

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Dr. Mark M. Lowenthal is an internationally recognized expert on intelligence and recipient of the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, the Intelligence Community’s highest award. From 2002-2005, Dr. Lowenthal served as the Assistant Director of Central Intelligence for Analysis and Production and also as the Vice Chairman for Evaluation on the National Intelligence Council. Prior to these duties, he served as Counselor to the Director of Central Intelligence. Dr. Lowenthal was the staff director of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in the 104th Congress (1995-97), where he directed the committee’s study on the future of the Intelligence Community, IC21: The Intelligence Community in the 21st Century. He has also served in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), as both an office director and as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. He was also the Senior Specialist in U.S. Foreign Policy at the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Dr. Lowenthal has written extensively on intelligence and national security issues, including five books and over 90 articles or studies. His most recent book, Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy Sage/CQ Press, 5th ed.,2011, has become the standard college and graduate school textbook on the subject. He is an Adjunct Professor at The Johns Hopkins University. He is also the Executive Director of the International Association for Intelligence Education, a member of the Joint Military Intelligence College Foundation board and a Chairman Emeritus of the Intelligence Committee for AFCEA. He is the President and CEO of the Intelligence & Security Academy, LLC.