INTELLIGENCE FAILURE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC FORESIGHT TO THE PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL SECURITY

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Introduction

The notions of security and stability are central to our contemporary society. They are what people in free countries demand and what their government must provide them for a democratic system cannot operate under the fear of any threat. It is the mission and the obligation of the state under a liberal system. Social and state security, in other words, "the condition or feeling untroubled by exposure to harm or fear[1]" is a major pillar if not a prerequisite of the democratic system. The ability or inability of the State to provide security is central to its legitimacy when it comes to the proper functioning of a liberal democracy. In other words, if the government loses the ability to guarantee the freedom it supposed to provide, then it loses its legitimacy to govern as "the problem of political knowledge is, how to preserve to mankind the advantages of freedom, together with an authority strong enough to control every daring violation of general security and peace" as William Godwin writes[2].

As the world gets increasingly 'smaller' thanks to transportation and communication advances, threats to national security expand acquiring a transnational and multidimensional character. 'National security' today includes, among others, such issues as the availability of certain natural resources, the overall state of the society (health standards, employment, education), military balances and the political / national objectives of a nation and the government. Subsequently, as threats expand and become more diverse, the time available for a government to respond shortens.

The post Cold War global environment has had a profound impact in the very definition of the term national security. Hence, the success of the intelligence agencies and governments will increasingly depend in the future on those warning mechanisms[3] which can promptly respond to an even more multidimensional and complicated task, the preservation of security.

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[1] Lavoix, Helene (2010) 'Enabling Security for the 21st Century: Intelligence & Strategic Foresight and Warning', RSIS Working Paper no. 207. Available at: http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/WorkingPapers/WP207.pdf, p. 4
[2] Marshall, Peter, ed. (1986), *'The Anarchist Writings of William Godwin',* (London: Freedom Press), p. 88
[3] For the purposes of this paper the terms "early warning" and "warning mechanisms" are not meant to be understood in technical (military) terms but rather in a broader political meaning. "Early warning (mechanisms)" might be referring to intelligence, reports, knowledge among decision makers and councils or other processes within a government.

The main scope of this paper is to examine the role of horizon scanning and strategic foresight towards strengthening national security and argue for permanent institutionalisation of warning intelligence as an integral part of intelligence operations.

We shall first focus on two warning failure case studies in order to identify the main problems and shortcomings of intelligence-based policies in the absence of comprehensive strategic intelligence or in view of misleading intelligence analysis. We shall then review major existing government foresight and horizon scanning initiatives. Considering the existing projects, we shall examine the arguments for and against the institutionalisation of strategic foresight as an integral part of intelligence and decision-making. The final section shall examine the ethical dimension of preemptive and preventive action based on warning intelligence and what challenges this decision entails for the liberal state.

By examining the two distinct case studies, the Yom Kippur War and the Iranian Revolution, we shall focus on what caused the intelligence blunders and subsequently whether there were any common denominators between those two, different in nature case studies. Considering the framework of intelligence analysis, we shall see what eventually caused the unpreparedness of Israel in the first case and the West in the second (mainly the UK and the United States) to foresee and anticipate the unfolding developments despite the available signals and knowledge and what warning developments and elements were missed by intelligence.

We will then examine various past and present project and government initiatives such as the US National Intelligence committee's Global Trends[4], the United Nations Millennium Project[5], and initiatives of the British government such as the Horizon Scanning Unit and MoD's Strategic Trends publications[6]. We shall then focus on the arguments for and against the institutionalisation of horizon scanning while the final chapter of this paper shall focus on the ethical dimension of unilateral or

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[4] See projects such as "*GLOBAL TRENDS 2015:*
A Dialogue About the Future With Nongovernment Experts" by the National Intelligence Council (2000), URL:
 http://www.dni.gov/nic/NIC_globaltrend2015.html and the Project on National Security Reform, URL:
http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/
[5] http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/

[6] Gustafson, Kristian (2010) 'Strategic Horizons: Futures Forecasting and the British Intelligence Community', Intelligence and National Security, 25: 5, 589 — 610

international action based on strategic foresight analysis and early warning indicators as a preemptive or preventive action. If horizon scanning and foresight are to become integral parts of intelligence analysis aimed at informing the government of plausible actions to be taken, the ethical dimension will eventually be raised as to the framework under which a government can take preemptive or preventive action.

The vast literature on intelligence failures since the works of Wohlstetter[7], Grabo[8], Betts[9] and others has been placing several blames on both the structure of intelligence as well as the decision making process including the problems of cognitive biases and closure as illustrated by Heuer[10]. In addition, the 9/11 Commission Report[11] introduced the concept of the *lack of imagination* as a reason for the grand 9/11 intelligence failure. *Imagination* or alternative thinking is not a sudden intuition but the free interpretation in the analyst's mind of all information and knowledge he has collected throughout his career, education and life at large. It is a cumulative process requiring free spirit, possession of knowledge and facts and profound understanding. As we shall see, the possession or prompt handling of the above (understanding, knowledge, imagination and the intelligence operational architecture) can play a decisive role in the institutionalisation of strategic foresight in an effort to limit future intelligence failures hence strengthening national security.

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[7] Wohlstetter, Roberta (1962) "Pearl Harbour: Warning and Decision". (California: Stanford University Press)

[8] Grabo, Cynthia M. (2004) "Anticipating Surprise. Analysis for Strategic Warning", Edited by Goldman, J (Oxford: University Press of America, Inc.)

[9] Betts, Richard; "Analysis, War and Decision. Why Intelligence Failures Are Inevitable", World Politics, 31:1 (Oct. 1978), pp 61-89
[10] Heuer, Richard J. Jr (1999), "*The Psychology of Intelligence Analysis",* Centre for the Study of Intelligence, CIA. URL: https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/psychology-of-intelligence-analysis/PsychofIntelNew.pdf
[11] The 9/11 Commission Report, available at: http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report.pdf

Chapter 1: Defining Terms

The main arguments of this study will evolve around the notions of *strategic warning, intelligence and policy failure, strategic foresight* as well as intelligence *ethics*.

For the purposes of this study, early warning is related to political or other threats that must be understood, appreciated and dealt with in view of an emerging threat. Strategic foresight is the estimative intelligence analysis based on the identified, valued and thoroughly examined information at hand in order to plan *preventive or preemptive* action[12] to deter or prevail threats to national security. Failure is attributed to either the structure of a given agency, the procedure of collecting and analysing information, psychological elements such as cognitive biases as well as failure at the operational level be it military, political or diplomatic. McCarthy describes warning as "a process of communicating judgments about threats…"[13] while Grabo argues "warning is not something which the analyst, the Intelligence Community, the policy maker, or the nation has or does not have*"*[14]. Warning is a concept and perception deriving from a given state of affairs or from possessed information. As far as surprise is concerned this is understood as a (usually rapid) unforeseen or unexpected development that can pose an imminent or a near-future threat.

Surprise is an integral part of human history and evolution. The world would had seen very little change if the element of surprise did not exist. As in nature and as theorists such as Betts stress,[15] not only surprise and rapid change is unavoidable, it is part of evolution and even the "mother" of change. *Accumulated* knowledge as argued by many specialists such as Grabo[16] along with the ability to look into others' *past and present* in order to assess the future are the foundations of warning intelligence and strategic foresight analysis.

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[12] "Action" should be understood not only in military terms but also in diplomatic, economic and collective international efforts including covert operations and policies.

[13] McCarthy, Mary *"The National Warning System: Striving for an Elusive Goal,"* cited in *"Chapter One: Making Sense of the US Intelligence Community"*, https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/curing-analytic-pathologies-pathways-to-improved-intelligence-analysis-1/chapter_1.htm#_ftn23

[14] Grabo (2004), p. 4

[15] Betts, Richard K. "Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures Are Inevitable." *World Politics,* Vol. 31, no. 2 (Oct. 1978): 61-89.

[16] Grabo (2004), p. 2

The rule of law and political liberalism are prerequisites when examining national policies, as the accountability that representative democracy charges the politicians with is paramount for the just and proper operation of the intelligence community and the character of the democratic regime. For instance, a liberal democracy could never tolerate actions, even in retrospect, such as Joseph Stalin's decision not to take into account several reports regarding Hitler's imminent attack on the Soviet Union due to his paranoia of being misinformed[17]. Hence, it is important to challenge the ethical dimension of the decision of a liberal state to take preventive or preemptive action in view of imminent developments based on intelligence obtain through current research or horizon scanning. We are referring to ethics within the realm of international relations as well as ethics related to the legitimacy of the government to rule as its decision to remain idle or take action affect the security of the population.

The respect to these ethics ultimately defines the character of the liberal state. The *"ethical aspect of international politics"* as put forward by Frost[18] remains a characteristic of western democracies and defines their actions. The indecisiveness of taking action, be it military, diplomatic or economic in nature may result in harming the wellbeing of the state and the population hence it can also be classified as unethical since lack of action may result to the failure of the government to guarantee security. The first chapter deals with such failures. While the Yom Kippur war is both an intelligence as well as political failure, the loss of Iran after the Iranian Revolution is an example of both inability to act as well as action based on inconclusive or misleading information.

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[17] https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol50no1/9_BK_What_Stalin_Knew.htm

[18] Frost, Mervyn. (2009) "*Global Ethics. Anarchy, Freedom and International Relations*", (London: Routledge)

Chapter 2: A comparative analysis of warning and intelligence failures.

"If you can look into the seeds of time / and say which grain will grow and which not / Speak to me[19]"

Case Study I: The Yom Kippur War

The Yom Kippur War of autumn 1973 between Israel, Egypt and Syria provides a good example of warning failure attributed mainly to the Israeli military intelligence (AMAN), as well as to the political establishment including the civilian intelligence, primarily MOSSAD[20] and the decisions of the government.

When Anwar Sadat came to power in Egypt following Nasser's death in September 1970 the Middle East was a very flux place. Although the Cold War had entered the phase of Détente, the Middle East remained a major hotspot with the Six-Day war of 1967 still fresh in memory. That war, considered by many as Israel's response to an existential threat, had a swift and decisive outcome. However, as Israel emerged strong, the military was also overstretched making it difficult for the army structure to successfully adapt to the new realities, especially for the North and South Commands in the Golan Heights and Sinai respectively. The Bar Lev defensive line in the Sinai was a problematic fortification mainly due to the number of forces assigned to it. Despite the War of Attrition (1967-1970) the belief among Israeli politicians as well as military officers was that Egypt would not attack due to its demoralised status and fear of similar defeat rather than actual inability of breaching the Bar Lev Line although opposed crossing of a major waterway has always been one of the hardest attacking options. One of the first high-ranking officials to observe this anomaly regarding Israel's military capabilities under the reality of the new, extended Israeli borders was Defence Minister Moshe Dayan. Prime Minister Golda Meir confessed later that she could not understand Dayan's proposal of moving the

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[19] Macbeth, Banquo, Act I, Scene III

[20] Bregman, Ahron (2002) *"Israel's Wars. A History since 1947",* (Routledge), pp 112-113

defensive to the further east[21]. Dayan also made the proposal in order for the Egyptians to reopen the canal, somewhat amplifying the grievances of the '67 defeat.

In 1971 Sadat declared that this would be the "year of decision", a phrase that many initially misunderstood. The president surprised the international community by declaring that if Israel decided to pull back its forces in the Sinai to Mitla and Giddi Passes (some 48 km east of Suez) he would reopen the canal for business, recognise Israel and sign a peace treaty while Egypt would also restore relations with the US[22]. Following Sadat's proposal Dayan proposed to Meir that Israel would be safer if her forces withdrew some 35 km eastwards[23]. The Israeli government failed to realise the importance behind both Sadat's proposal as well as Dayan's rationale. That event was the first in a series of mistakes and failures by the Israelis to appreciate the situation and avert the forthcoming crisis. On the political level Sadat's move right after taking power to purge some political opponents including the pro-Soviet vice-president Ali Sabri was one of many mixed signals sent by the Egyptian president to both Israel and the United States until October 1973.

Washington took Sadat's proposal more seriously and in the summer of 1971 president Nixon sent Under-Secretary of State Joseph Sisco to discuss with PM Meir the possibility of partial withdrawal. Nevertheless, as instructed by Nixon, Sisco did not press too much for Israel was at the time, along with Iran, a major pillar of US policy and presence in the region. Nixon's move was not appreciated by Meir as the Israelis had a profound mistrust of Egypt[24]. That was neither completely unjustified nor it presented a case of cognitive bias. What lacked in this case however was insight and foreknowledge regarding the Egyptian president's intentions. In fact, as the former Israeli Lieutenant-General Chaim

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[21] Bregman (2002), p.106

[22] Ibid, pp. 103-104

[23] Bregman (2002), p. 105

[24] The Israelis had nicknamed Sadat "the dark donkey" and regarded him initial as a transitional president, Bregman (2002), p. 103

Bar-Lev argued, the Yom Kippur war bared all three *symptoms* of warning failures, that is it constituted a surprise in place, time and method by the opposing side[25].

The failures were caused by both the ability of the Egyptians to deceit Israel in many ways as well as the inability of the Israelis to appreciate the enemy's capabilities and, mainly, future intentions. Military deception included information regarding army activities and a series of military exercises. Political and diplomatic deception was based on Sadat's back-and-forth movements regarding Soviet assistance, the local Soviet advisors, the approach to Washington and then again the signing of new treaties with Moscow. In the sphere of intelligence, deception had the name of Marwan Ashraf[26] who was an Egyptian double agent that almost self-recruited himself to Mossad through the Israeli Embassy in London. The miscalculation of the Israeli side was linked to the fact that the government had essentially linked Egypt's intentions with its capabilities. The reason was the following: the dominant rationale behind Israel's expectations[27] was that Sadat would not attack lest he acquired by the USSR necessary weaponry. That included long-range fighter-bombers, surface-to-surface mid-range missiles (Scuds) and anti-aircraft SAMs. Further on, Sadat's decision by October 1972 to go to war in the near future was not registered as ought to be[28]. Hence, the Israeli side firmly believed that unless Egypt acquires the proper weaponry Sadat would not attack because Egypt was doomed to fail dramatically had she opted for a full-out war without this weaponry, despite some limited acquisitions of 18 Mirage planes from Libya and 16 Hunter planes from Iraq[29]. That miscalculation was based on the other "pillar" of failure, the one regarding Sadat's intentions. The failure was that the Israelis did not consider the possibility Sadat would be attacking not within the framework of a general war but clearly using the military as an extension of diplomacy in order to achieve political objectives which

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[25] Shlaim, Avi (1976) *"Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Yom Kippur War"*, World Politics, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 348-380

[26] Bar-Joseph, Uri (2005) "The Watchman fell Asleep. The surprise of Yom Kippur and its sources" (SUNY Press), p. 5

[27] The so-called "Concept" of the Israeli government that guided its decision since the War of Attrition

[28] Bar-Joseph, Uri, p. 11

[29] Shalev, Aryeh (2010) "Israel's Intelligence Assessment before the Yom Kippur War", (Sussex Academic Press for the Institute of National Security Studies , Israel)

were no other than the repossession of Sinai and particularly the control of Suez. This strategic failure was caused, in turn, by a tactical failure for which responsible was primarily Mossad and the cabinet of Meir despite the fact that the Agranat Commission in 1974 -set up to investigate the failures of the IDF during the initial stages of the war- placed the blame mainly, but not solely, on military intelligence AMAN[30].

The double agent Ashraf, very close to Sadat and present in all his trips during the period building up to the war such Moscow and Saudi Arabia, was maybe the most decisive element of Egypt's deception efforts while in the same time the most vital component of Israeli agencies and their over-reliance on his information. Ashraf, or "the source" based on the Israeli persistence on the "Concept" and 'aided' by Sadat's continuous military deceptions and false alarms forced the Israelis to fall into the 'cry wolf' trap, especially regarding the reports of an attack in May 1973. Military deception by Egypt's included the Tahrir exercises, mobilisation and demobilisation of the reserves, advancement of forces to the front line and repeated alerts by the Egyptian Air Force[31]. The continuous false alarms and the money spent was yet another element that forced Meir's cabinet not to take as seriously Egypt's and Syria's unprecedented military formations around the border. When King Hussein of Jordan (officially at war with Israel) visited Meir in secret to inform her of an imminent attack by Syria and Egypt which also, as he stressed, would happen simultaneously[32] Meir did not enquire about the timing of the attack.

The Yom Kippur failure, both on the warning level related to capabilities and activities of the enemies' armies as well as on the strategic foresight level related to the long-term objectives and intentions of Sadat (and Assad), shows that the main failure was indeed related to intelligence's capabilities to forecast and estimate Egypt's reactions after the Six-Days War of 1967. Despite the failure to appreciate several warning signals, the fault cannot be attributed solely to the IDF or

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[30] Bregman, pp. 112-113

[31] Bar-Joseph, pp. 27-28

[32] Bregman, pp. 119-120

AMAN but it should be charged to the political leadership and the very function of decision-making intelligence and character of analysis. John Wilson writes: "the Egyptians deliberately set out to provoke the presence of the abnormal [as] the new perception of normality[33]". It was the failure by the Israeli side to foresee this 'new normality' created by the Egyptians because of the "Concept" and the failure to thoroughly assess the situation. However, Egyptian deception efforts were but one of the reason for the failure of Yom Kippur. Another fundamental shortcoming was the availability of deeper knowledge to the analysts and the lack of historical research required which current intelligence cycle prohibits. Greater cooperation with scholars and experts should be put in place to expand the pool of knowledge. The preoccupations and firm beliefs the small group of the decisions makers had and the secrecy that usually surrounds these procedures showed that a wider debate on the issue and especially the Arab intentions could had presented alternative scenarios such as a cooperative limited attack against Israel with political goals instead of an all-out war that the Israelis expected. Finally, overreliance on sources also contributed to the failure and the initial surprise of the Israelis.

Case Study II: The double failure of Iran

The outcome of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 was a shocking geopolitical event not only for the region but also for the international community at large. This case study shall focus on the reasons why Western decision makers and intelligence mechanisms failed to promptly estimate and foresee the building up of the situation which eventually led to the fall of the Shah and then the complete loss of Iran and the fixation of Khomeini in power following the 444-days siege of the US Embassy.

In retrospect, it is possibly the 'longest' intelligence failure in the sense that it was not a case of strategic surprise but a continuous misjudgement of the situation.

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[33] Wilson, John (1999) *"Intelligence Blunders form Stalin to Falklands",* The RUSI Journal, Vol. 144, Issue 5, p.63

The CIA and British intelligence-engineered operation "Ajax"[34] in August 1953 to topple the government of Muhammad Mossadeq, democratically elected in 1951, after his nationalisation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) can be said to be the beginning of active Western involvement in Iran. Britain had key relations with Iran since the discovery of oil reserves in 1908[35]. The Shah's behaviour in 1953 was an important element that would lately be missed when Western institutions and governments tried to assess the character and political personality of the Iranian ruler[36]. As David Owen stated in his Financial Times article[37], referring to his historical inquiry about British policies on Iran of March 1979, presented by diplomat N. W. Browne[38], one element admitted to be missed was the misjudgement about the Shah's underlying personality due to his irresolution and indecisiveness he demonstrated in his behaviour following Mossadeq's rise to power in 1953.

In retrospect, operation "Ajax" seemed to have had multiple effects on the Iranian people. It asserted the dependence of the Shah on the West while it also demonstrated that the Shah was unable to take decisions other than reacting with violence, making him in the eyes of his people a rather authoritarian yet weak monarch and leader.

The shortcomings of Western intelligence demonstrated in its dealings vis-à-vis Iran are attributed to a number of decisive factors. Until the year 1978 Western policy and intelligence failure concerned the inability to appreciate the situation within Iran which led to the crumbling and demise of Pahlavi's regime. The second part of the failure was that a small circle of experts around President Carter and National Security adviser Brzezinski had decided, in correlation with the situation in Afghanistan and the US support for the Mujahideen prior to the Soviet invasion[39], to drop the support to the Shah and,

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[34] See Marsh, Steve(2003) 'The United States, Iran and operation 'Ajax': Inverting interpretative orthodoxy', Middle Eastern Studies, 39: 3, 1 — 38

[35] Raynolds, Paul, „Britain and Iran's fraught history", BBC News, 29 June 2009, via: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/8116245.stm

[36] Jervis, Robert "Why Intelligence Fails - Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and Iraq War", Cornell University Press (London: 2010), pp. 24-25

[37] Owen, D. 2010, "Avoiding Issue of Shah's Odium Aided his Downfall", Financial Times, 14 Nov. Available at http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/8f85711e-0781-11e0-8d80-00144feabdc0.html

[38] Browne, N. W. "British Policy on Iran 1974-1978", The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 020/28, London 1979

[39] See the interview of Dr Brzezinski to Le Nouvel Observateur, Paris, 15-21 January 1998: http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/BRZ110A.html

in view of the Soviet threat as then perceived by the White House, to support an Islamist regime in Iran[40].

Although various American and more so British institutions and scholars had a fair amount of knowledge about the history of Iran and its people, it is evident through the FCO archives and literature on the Iranian Revolution that specific analysts and operatives within the intelligence community and the political leadership had no deeper knowledge of the Iranian people's culture, political behaviour and attitude towards their own ruler and the West. Furthermore, Owner subscribes to the opinion that the absence of close contact to the opposition in Iran and the reliance on SAVAK and on the close circle around the Shah distorted the general idea the FCO had regarding the populous' stance and feelings about their monarch. That idea was corrected only when it was too late, some four months before the events that led to the revolution and the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime as the FCO document indicates[41].

The failure of the Shah's policies and the reactions by the people that followed as well as the failure to correctly assert the character of the emerging regime after the revolution are due to poor intelligence analysis, estimations, understanding of the situation as well as deeply affirmed cognitive biases as these were elaborated by Heuer[42].

The first signs indicating potential crisis for the regime can be traced at least as back as 1975. Despite the initial success of the Shah's reforms, the inequities of the economic situation within the country affected by the simultaneous land reforms, created a serious blowback that affected economically most of the Iranian society. With an authoritarian regime in place and limited ability of change, the opposition started consolidating.

One of the crucial shortcomings by warning intelligence was the correlation of the Shah's policies and the consolidation of the otherwise fragmented opposition which was mainly compromised by the religious forces (financed, among others by the important *Bazar*-the traders and commerce people) the

[40] Engdahl, F. William, *A Century of War: Anglo-American Oil Politics and the New World Order", (*Pluto Press: 2004), pp. 171-174, cited in www.informationliberation.com, URL: http://www.informationliberation.com/?id=7883
[41] Browne, N. W. "*British Policy on Iran 1974-1978", The Foreign and Commonwealth Office,* NBP 020/28, London, 1979
[41] Heuer, Richard J. Jr. *"Psychology of Intelligence Analysis",* Centre for the Study of Intelligence, CIA, (1999) URL: www.odci.gov/csi.

socialists and other factions. The extend of the authoritarian character of the regime and of the Shah's own ideas and ambitions prohibited correct and secure information as both Britain and the US lacked 'on the ground' knowledge and had often misleading information by their sources. Furthermore, the Shah's increasing regional aspirations and his aide to Egypt during the 1973 Yom Kippur war had already created an uneasy feeling among Western governments, which however at that point did not consider taking serious action as Iran remained a major ally in the region and the Shah was constantly reaffirmed. Nevertheless, there were certain indicators.

According to the FCO document, there were warning reports by British diplomats as early as 1971. Sir Denis Wright stressed that the Shah might become overconfident given his unchallenged power and position as well as the way he had reacted to the previous challenge of this regime[43]. That said, reports of potential threats coming out of the religious establishment were also taken under consideration as early as 1972[44]. By 1975 the British Embassy had noted the shattering of the Pahlavi's economic reforms and the downturn of the initial success. Resentments of religious classes were also noted as a threat. The importance of the religious factor however was downplayed due to the differences among religious factions and their fragmentation. According to experts it was, eventually, the Shah's own policies and pressures during the 1950s, '60s and '70s that united the religious leaders into one opposition along (but not together) with socialist and other political and social groups. Such policies included the Shah's financing of certain religious leaders who propagated in his favour further agitating the radical factions within the Islamic clergy.

One other element missed by the British and US intelligence as a threat factor was the general corruption within the regime both on economic as well as political terms and on how this contributed to the mounting of reactions among society. The mistreatment and torture of political prisoners was purposely omitted in order not to create negative sentiments among the British population and government and thus creating pressure to the policy makers for a different stance vis-à-vis Tehran. Although the SAVAK was not regarded as an ethical or just organisation, allegations of torture and

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[43] Browne, N. W. "*British Policy on Iran 1974-1978", The Foreign and Commonwealth Office,* NBP 020/28, London, 1979, p.23
[44] Ibid.

misbehaviour were not an issue that affected the estimations of British intelligence and it was not taken under serious consideration. The lack of understanding of Iran's political culture was an underestimated, if not altogether missed, issue by both the Americans and the British. Because of the strong image of the Shah abroad the cultural factor was not seriously considered. *"The combination of weak intelligence gathering, pressures to adhere to prevailing views, and a mindset that the Shah would be able to rule indefinitely led to severe underestimations of the importance of the Shah's opponents, and particularly religious opponents"*[45]. In a lengthy cable by the British Embassy in January 1977 special attention was paid to a cleric named Ruhollah Khomeini and described him as the "true leader" (of the revolt)[46].

The geopolitical importance of Iran was but one of the political in nature factors that prohibited decision makers in the West realise the true situation and challenge the status quo on the ground by ordering the correct intelligence products. That is a problem linked to the very character of the intelligence cycle and the very scope of intelligence which has for many decades been based on the 'order-product' philosophy as the capabilities, in theory, were there for a more accurate assertion of the situation before it got beyond control. Similar to the Yom Kippur case, continuous research of the situation on the ground especially when it comes to undemocratic regimes such as Egypt or Iran as well as alternative opinions were either lacking or not taken into account by the ultimate decision maker. The failure was both conceptual and systematic. Conceptual as to a series of misleading beliefs concerning the realities on the ground and systematic for it was the absence of proper mechanisms in place and serious overriding of the chain of command. In addition, the limited cooperation between intelligence services (primarily the British, American and Israeli) had a negative effect to the overall estimation of the situation.

The Israeli intelligence had a better understanding of the situation on the ground. Built on the back of an ancient Jewish community in the country and numerous operatives as well as the very close

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[45] Project Co-ordinated by Tockman, Kristine. "Discourse, Dissent, and Strategic Surprise: Formulating American Security in an Age of Uncertainty*; Iran: Intelligence Failure or Policy Stalemate?",* Working Group Report I, Georgetown University, 23/11/2004, p. 2. Available at: http://www12.georgetown.edu/sfs/isd/Iran_WG_Report.pdf
[46] Ibid, p. 10

relations on highest level, that is between the Shah, the Israeli military attaché in Tehran Yitzhak Segev and the Israeli government including Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan had foreseen signs of discontent in Iran before most of the Western governments[47]. A certain incident in 1978 gives a fair picture of the situation when the chief of the Iranian Air Force Gen. Hossein Rabii urged Segev to call in Dayan to describe the situation in Iran for the Shah based on the reports by Mossad's operatives as the Shah would pay more attention to them than his own SAVAK[48].

Another fundamental problem was the autocratic and repressing character of the Iranian regime and that the Shah, at least by 1978, had gotten detached from reality. However, in retrospect it is clear that the Shah remained under the impression 'until the last minute' that he enjoyed full support by the West. By 1978 George Ball, a prominent US diplomat was sent to Iran during the crisis to contact the opponents of the regime by conducting a series of interviews[49]. Ball, Brzezinski as well as the president himself who initially envisioned a more liberal rule by the Shah eventually sided with the Trilateral Commission[50]. The Brzezinski and Ball-dominated policy on Iran from late 1978 onwards was only part of a wider policy planned mainly by Brzezinski but also his friend S. Huntington. The policy of the 'arc of crisis' saw to contain the USSR by the creation of a series of Islamist regimes who would also inspire the Muslims living in the Soviet Central Asia leading to the containment of the USSR and eventually its demise. To achieve that Brzezinski set up a Special Coordination Committee (SCC) in the White House including George Ball and several other key figures[51]. In an article in TIME magazine published 15 January 1979, in the midst of the crisis in Iran, national security advisor Brzezinski stated *"An arc of crisis stretches along the shores of the Indian Ocean, with fragile social and political structures in a region of vital importance to us threatened with fragmentation. The resulting political chaos could well be filled by elements hostile to our values and*

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[47] Parsi, Trita (2008) "Treacherous Alliance. The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and the US", (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp 79-80
[48] Ibid
[50] See excerpts from the book "The last Shah of Iran" by Nahavandi, Houchang, translated by Steeve Reed (2005) on the website Studien Von Zeitfragen at: http://www.studien-von-zeitfragen.net/Eurasien/Shah_of_Iran/shah_of_iran.html
[50] See extracts from the book "A Century Of War : Anglo-American Oil Politics and the New World Order", by F. William Engdahl (2004) cited in Informationliberation website. Available at: http://www.informationliberation.com/?id=7883
[51] Scott, Peter Dale. *"The Road to 9/11: Wealth Empire and the Future of America" (*University of California Press, Berkeley: 2007), p. 68

sympathetic to our adversaries"[52]. By that statement (published one day before the Shah left) Brzezinski meant the Soviet Union or Soviet-friendly regimes including the one in Afghanistan. The main rationale behind that was to contain the USSR from achieving access to the hydrocarbons of Iran and the Gulf while simultaneously pressing for greater access of the oil and gas of the Caspian Sea[53]. The main idea behind the "arc of crisis" allegedly came from a study by British Islamic expert, Dr. Bernard Lewis at Princeton University. Lewis called for a sort of "balkanisation" of the Middle East by encouraging ethnic groups within the region while supporting the Islamic opposition in Iran[54]. That, in turn, would spill over the region affecting the Muslim ethnicities within the USSR and in combination with Afghanistan create a serious blowback to the USSR even forcing it to lose certain areas[55]. With riots and the revolution in full development Carter himself said on January 6, 1979, that the Shah cannot stay as the Iranian people do not want him anymore [thus] *"we* (America) *have nothing to worry about"*[56]. That was not the moment Carter dropped his support to the Shah. That occurred when the SCC had been set up by Brzezinski to counter the authority of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance who had a linear stance vis-à-vis the USSR having downplayed the Soviet threat in general in a previous report he had authored[57]. The SCC and former members of the Trilateral Committee however failed to appreciate the power of the radicals within the regime and that was due to both lack of accurate warning intelligence with a focus on the future of the emerging new regime. By October 26, 1979 with Khomeini by now firmly in power and a fragmented opposition, cables from the Embassy in Tehran signed by the charge d'affaires, Bruce Laingen, noted that *"within the past few weeks, moderate groups who favour a more balanced society resembling a western social-democracy have become more vocal"* continuing *"although the position of the moderate parties is still very fragile, they have shown some signs of life..."*[58]. Eventually the rivalry between Vance and

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[52] TIME Magazine *"Iran: The Crescent of Crisis",* 15/01/1979, URL: http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,919995-1,00.html
[53] Scott (2007), p. 67
[54] See extracts from the book "A Century Of War : Anglo-American Oil Politics and the New World Order", by F. William Engdahl (2004) cited in Informationliberation website. Available at: http://www.informationliberation.com/?id=7883
[55] Scott, Peter Dale. "The Road to 9/11: Wealth Empire and the Future of America" (University of California Press: 2007), p. 67
[56] See excerpts from the book *"The last Shah of Iran"* by Nahavandi, Houchang on the website *Studien Von Zeitfragen* at: http://www.studien-von-zeitfragen.net/Eurasien/Shah_of_Iran/shah_of_iran.html
[57] Scott (2007) p. 66
[58] Tisdall Simon, *"US believed moderates would prevail during Iranian revolution*

Brzezinski ended in the latter's favour. The intelligence, ultimately failed to identify the power Khomeini was gathering around him and moderate figures, such as Shariatmadari who favoured a parliamentary democracy, supporting an Islamic framework were overestimated[59]. It remains unknown as to what point Brzezinski realised that an Islamist regime in Tehran could help towards creating a complete 'arc of crisis' with Khomeini as the central figure[60]. That was certainly the case by the summer of 1979 when Dreyfus argues that the CIA started exchanging intelligence with the Iranian secret service on Iraq, Afghanistan and the communists within Iran[61]. The final mistake in this series of events was to accept the Shah to the United States once had fled Iran despite Cyrus Vance's warning that the Shah must under no circumstances be accepted by the US government[62]. That decision, helped by David Rockefeller and other members of his family as he had direct interest in the health of the Shah and repayment of personal loans to the Pahlavi family for years by Chase Manhattan, further agitated the Iranian population[63]. It is considered one of the main reasons of the second siege of the US Embassy on November 4, 1979.

Political surprise resulting from fixated ideas without much inquiry leading to the decision of the SCC members to support the Islamists in Iran back in 1979 had proven fatal. From the intelligence analysis point of view, this is a typical case of policy-driven intelligence, lacking any forecasting of the developing situation, turning out catastrophic. As in Yom Kippur failure, the decision-makers were affected to an unacceptable degree by external forces. Multiple advocacy is a tool helping the ultimate decision maker take a course of action. It is not meant to override democracy and press towards decisions that would ultimately hurt the national security of a country and personal safety of several civilians thereafter. As it is evident from Israeli sources, the FCO report, the US Embassy cables and literature, the government of Israel in the Yom Kippur case study as well as the Western governments

Optimism of American diplomats in Tehran was cut short after they were taken hostage during the US embassy siege", The Guardian, 28/11/10 available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/28/wikileaks-embassy-cables-iranian-revolution?INTCMP=SRCH
[59] Tockman, Kristine (co-ordinator). *"Discourse, Dissent, and Strategic Surprise: Formulating American Security in an Age of Uncertainty; Iran: Intelligence Failure or Policy Stalemate?"*, Working Group Report I, Georgetown University, 23/11/2004, p. 14. Available at: http://www12.georgetown.edu/sfs/isd/Iran_WG_Report.pdf
[60] Dreyfuss, Robert. *"How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamental Islam"* (New York, Metropolitan Press: 2005), pp. 236-243
[61] Dreyfuss (2005), pp. 264-265
[62] Blitz, J. and Khalaf, R. (2010) *"The fall of the Shah and a missed moment",* Financial Times, 14 Dec. Available at: http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/193c4efe-07ba-11e0-a568-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1K8hK0WST
[63] Scott (2007), pp. 82-85

during the Iranian revolution had specific insight, however the final assumptions and estimations regarding the ultimate intentions of the other side proved wrong and were grossly miscalculated.

Another common feature was the fixation of all parts involved on certain misconceptions. In the case of Yom Kippur this misconception was mainly manifested in the persistence of the "Concept" which supported that Sadat would only opt for a total war hence he will be in need of specific weaponry. That turned both the military and the political intelligence towards a wrong understanding of the threat in view. In the case of Iran, there were two misconceptions. First, was the belief by the intelligence community that the Shah, even well into 1978, was in complete control. The second misconception was the continuous underestimation of religion, despite clear signals of religious affection and of the power of the Mullahs. That was only a part of what seemed to be an overall misunderstanding of the way of thinking of Iranian people, and culture at large. The latter cost dearly when the American administration accepted the Shah into the United States. While the Yom Kippur war eventually turned out positively for Israel, the handling of Iran pre and post-revolution resulted in the total loss of a crucial ally. These failures as we shall see further on, are not incurable and although failure will remain as a phenomenon, it can be decisively reduced and amplified if proper methods are in place.

Chapter 3: A Comparative Review of Past and Current Strategic Foresight Initiatives

This chapter shall focus upon various foresight and early warning projects and government initiatives. Although not integrated into the intelligence cycle, certain periodical studies, publications and special committees within governmental departments have made an effort to broadly understand future developments by projecting current trends often with the participation of several specialists including professionals and scholars[64].

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[64] A good example which we will examine is the UN Millennium Project. Information available at: http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/

Herman argues "most finished intelligence should embody probability estimates as well as information and forecasts"[65]. Although there can be no assurance that one or more policies aimed at enhancing national security will endure or proven right, the raising of awareness to the decision maker with a finished intelligence product that will also cover horizon scanning can be proven crucial. Many argue that it is virtually impossible to foresee sudden events in the analysis because that would require immense knowledge by the analyst as well as continuous cooperation with all parts of collection. As Grabo argues,[66] the ability to foresee the unexpected is not (solely) a matter of current knowledge but is in fact the accumulation of knowledge through continuous research and education.

The British government in light of the Iraq WMD fiasco, following the Butler report[67] of 2004, set up in 2008 the Strategic Horizon Unit (SHU)[68] by Prime Ministerial declaration. The PM stated "alongside (the National Security Secretariat) a horizon scanning unit will be established which will co-ordinate the security-related horizon scanning currently undertaken in a number of Government Departments, with the intention of giving it an overarching framework and a more coherent output."[69] The SHU was created under the Cabinet Office's Join Intelligence Committee (JIC) and initially operated within the Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO). Although the 1990s saw the creation of horizon scanning offices within several departments of the British government including BIS, DEFRA, MOD, DFID, GCHQ[70] even the Department of Health, these had a role beyond intelligence aimed at bettering the government's performance within those specific department by scanning emerging and potential future dangers[71]. The creation of the SHU came about to aid the drafting of the 2009 National Security Strategy and saw to coordinate the work from the existing horizon units following their pattern[72]. The Unit also held a "Futures Symposium" (November 30 to December 1st, 2009) with the participation of all the above Departments plus the participation from 'the academic

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[65] Herman, Michael (1996) "Intelligence in War and Peace", (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the RIIA), p. 104
[66] Grabo (2004), p. 5
[67] For basic information see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butler_Review
[68] See http://www.powerbase.info/index.php/Strategic_Horizons_Unit
[69] Ibid.
[70] Department of Business, Innovation and Skills; Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, Ministry of Defence; Department of For International Development; and Government Communications Headquarters
[71] Gustafson, Kristian (2010) "Strategic Horizons: Futures Forecasting and the British Intelligence Community", Intelligence and National Security, Vol. 25 Issue 5, p. 590
[72] Ibid, p. 591

and private Sectors'[73]. The SHU contributed towards the drafting of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2010, after it was moved in the same year under the National Security Secretariat (NSS). The recently created NSS (copying the similar organisation in the US) does not include a National Intelligence Council (NIC), which according to experts, could coordinate more effectively the SHU which, after 2010 was seriously reduced in personnel and operations since many of its operatives were transferred to contribute to other departments[74]. Claims about SHU being insufficiently integrated into policy and decision making include the absence of rounded research and collection and excludes all-source intelligence. In addition, there is no cooperation with any external pool of knowledge, i.e. external experts contributing to the work of the Unit[75] as far as daily work of the SHU is concerned which would then be used into the policymaking process. Despite repeated statements by officials and government documents including the SDSR's affirmation that 'strategic all source assessment, horizon scanning and early warning are integral'[76], the experience of the SHU as an integral part of national security formation was a rather short lived one as today many of the unit's operatives have been dispatched to other positions and the SHU has lost its initial role. A JIC assessment noted that there must be a body within the Committee to deal solely with the production of log-term strategic intelligence[77]. A similar unit exists in the US within the NIC, the Long Range Analysis Unit (LRAU) dealing with under-examined strategic threats conducting interagency projects and some within the British government argue that the NSS should include a similar body which could be the SHU[78]. Specialists such as Herman, Cooper, Goodman[79] and others argue the main obstacle for such a rationale within most intelligence communities is the so-called 'tyranny of current intelligence' or the 'tyranny of tasking'[80]. That goes beyond the SHU and the British intelligence community at large. It is a timeless phenomenon which in fact 'worsens' as developments unfold with

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[73] For a basic description see: http://www.powerbase.info/index.php/Strategic_Horizons_Unit
[74] Gustafson (2010), p. 591
[75] http://www.powerbase.info/index.php/Strategic_Horizons_Unit
[76] HMG, SDRS 2010, p. 66. Available at
http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_191634.pdf?CID=PDF&PLA=furl&CRE=sdsr
[77] Gustafson, p. 605
[78] Ibid.
[79] Goodman, Michael S. (2008) 'Learning to Walk: The Origins of the UK's Joint Intelligence Committee', International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, Vol. 21, Issue 1, pp. 40 - 56
[80] Gustafson, p. 596

an increasingly quicker pace than in the past, hence, demanding more effort to be put into current projects that need immediate attention as well as a longer-term insight when it comes to forecasting to keep on top of developments. The eventual diminishing of the SHU after 2010 has brought back some important questions regarding the very nature of horizon scanning and strategic foresight within the intelligence establishment. As Gustafson argues, the main question is whether horizon scanning is a natural function of intelligence. The main question is whether it shares common methodologies and, ultimately, if it contribute to a general improvement of intelligence work by being a steady component[81].

As we will examine further on when we will discuss the arguments for and against strategic foresight becoming an integral part of intelligence production, it appears the solution stands in between. That is, due to its nature, strategic foresight should work neither within nor outside intelligence processes but alongside them.

Before the establishment of the SHU and the departmental horizon scanning offices across the British government in the first decade of the new century, the MoD had realised by the end of 1990s that there is the need to understand the future context of threats. This was articulated in the Security and Defence Review (SDR) of 1998[82].

The Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre's (DCDC) Global Strategic Trends (GST) programme conducts analysis of the future strategic context based on research within the department in conjunction with subject-matter experts across various disciplines. That includes experts from the UK government and the global academia as the document covers trends around the world and it is primarily aimed at the defence community.[83]

The report states that the major challenges for the future are characterised by instability among and within states: climate change, global inequality, resource scarcity and population trends will dominate the main challenges for the future. Although the GST report has contributed to the Defence Green

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[81] Ibid, p. 591
[82] HMG, MoD, DCDC (2010) 'Strategic Trends Programme: Global Strategic Trends - Out to 2040' (4th ed), available at http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/38651ACB-D9A9-4494-98AA-1C86433BB673/0/gst4_update9_Feb10.pdf, p. 2
[83] Ibid, p. 2

Paper,[84] it is not a binding policy-making document and has a clearly consulting role for the government and its relevant departments.

The GST is based on three major themes: Human Environment, Dynamics of Global Power and Evolving Defence and Security Challenges as it is based on driver and trend analysis. It first identifies the key trends within dimensions and then conducts a cross-dimensional analysis on how these trends interact and evolve[85]. It looks upon the Probability Cone[86] and is divided into Ring-Road Issues (such as climate change), Key Themes (such as human environment) and Strategic Shocks which are no other than single or a series of single high-impact events, largely undetectable albeit broadly anticipated. Finally, the report is based on four Probability Scales (Will, Likely/Probably, May/Possibly and Unlikely/Improbable)[87]. Although the GST series has been a steady endeavour it remains, up to this day, an external publication. Nevertheless, it can offer a fair framework to be used towards an integrated analysis which will then be poured into the intelligence establishment in general, eventually assisting towards the formulation of medium to long-term policy formation.

The United States government, as stated earlier has taken a more active stance regarding the use of horizon scanning and strategic foresight. Beyond the integrated Long Range Analysis Unit (LRAU), the overall structure of the intelligence establishment includes the National Intelligence Council has which has the official role to support the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) acting as the medium and long-term analysis branch of the Intelligence Community[88]. Earlier efforts at Vice-Presidential (V.P) level include the State Failure Task Force (SFTF), a commission of prominent scholars and contractors created by V.P Al Gore in 1994 to identify and examine key factors associated with state failure and possible threats to US national security[89].

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[84] Ibid, p. 3
[85] Ibid, p. 6
[86] See for example: Habegger, Beat (2009) 'Horizon Scanning in Government: Concept, Country Experiences and Models for Switzerland', (Zurich: Centre for Security Studies), available at:
http://www.bevoelkerungsschutz.admin.ch/internet/bs/en/home/dokumente/Unterlagen_Risiken.parsys.0001150.downloadList.69578.DownloadFile.tmp/horizonscanningingovernment.pdf
[87] HMG, MoD, DCDC (2010) 'Strategic Trends Programme: Global Strategic Trends - Out to 2040' (4th ed), available at http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/38651ACB-D9A9-4494-98AA-1C86433BB673/0/gst4_update9_Feb10.pdf, p. 8
[88] See "NIC Mission" at the National Intelligence Council website: http://www.dni.gov/nic/NIC_about.html
[89] O'Brien, Sean P (2002) 'Anticipating the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: An Early Warning Approach to Conflict and Instability Analysis', The Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 46, No. 6, p. 792

Except the LRA Unit, the NIC since the end of 1990s has been publishing the Global Trends Series (GTS), similar to the Strategic Trends Programme, however with a more active role. It provides the US President, secretaries and other policymakers analyses of foreign policy issues that have been coordinated and produced by the intelligence community and interacts regularly with senior intelligence consumers and supports their current and longer-term needs. It deals with both current issues as well as 'over the horizon estimates and threats'[90]. After the 2010, 2015 and 2020 Global Trends reports, the 'Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World'[91] is the most diverse document yet in terms of participation and drivers considered. As the chairman of the NIC states in his Forward, special attention has been paid to input by global expertise, both by region and topic covered[92]. Multiple advocacy and external expertise are the landmarks of the Global Trends series, especially of the latest edition. Contributors include US Government (USG) experts, non-USG experts across disciplines and around the world as well as live discussions around the United States and discussions via the internet with wider participation. The project generally follows the methodology of alternative futures. For constructing the scenarios, the study focused on critical uncertainties regarding the relative importance of the State as compared to the non-state actors. The global economy, demographics, new global players, scarcity of resources, potential conflicts and response of the international system and power sharing are the major directions of research and analysis.

In addition to Global Trends, the NIC is responsible for the production of the Global Governance series, the latest being the 2025 edition 'At a Critical Juncture'[93]. The publication is in cooperation with the European Union (EU) Institute of Security Studies (ISS) with an aim "to produce this assessment of the long-term prospects for global governance frameworks"[94]. The main direction of the whole Strategic Trends (ST) programme by the NIC is aimed at foreign policy in the general framework of international cooperation and exchange of ideas and expertise in order for the USG to

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[90] Ibid.
[91] NIC (2008) 'Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World', available at:
http://www.dni.gov/nic/PDF_2025/2025_Global_Trends_Final_Report.pdf
[92] Ibid.
[93] Available via DNI / NIC website: http://www.dni.gov/nic/PDF_2025/2025_Global_Governance.pdf
[94] NIC/ISS 2010 'Global Governance 2025: At A Critical Juncture', p. i

address key global challenges through its foreign policy and international cooperation. Similarly to the British MoD's Global Trends, the ST project uses rather qualitative methods, which include of course certain statistics and numeric trends. However, as in the case of Global Trends the whole project is not a continuous (albeit in terms of research and organisation there is a devoted team) input into the intelligence and subsequently foreign policy machinery. Later on, when we examine the challenges of institutionalising an horizon scanning and strategic foresight mechanism, we shall focus on how these methods and project could permanently contribute into the intelligence analysis and become a parallel consulting-to-the-policymakers arm within the IC. The last methodology we shall briefly focus upon it may not be directed towards the IC, however it is a general tool for world governments to tackle poverty mitigating major threats.

The United Nations (UN) Millennium Project (MP) aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals[95] ("End Poverty 2015") "was commissioned by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2002 to develop a concrete action plan for the world to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to reverse the grinding poverty, hunger and disease affecting billions of people" according to the official UNMP website and lasted from 2002 to 2006[96]. The Development Goals actions include eradicate extreme hunger and poverty, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and develop a 'global partnership for development'[97]. Although these goals tackle general and long-term issues, the main rationale is that these problems constitute multiple sources of instability hence a threat to national security both in their home countries or regions and for the international community at large. The project included ten thematic Task Forces, with a total of more than 250 experts from around the world. The core recommendation was that the goals must be at the centre of national and international poverty reduction strategies[98]. The Task Forces then conducted extensive research within fields of expertise to produce recommendations. The project was based on

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[95] UN Millennium Goals website at: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/
[96] See introduction on UN Millennium Project home page at: http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/
[97] Ibid.
[98] "Millennium Project: About the UN Millennium Project" available at:
http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/UNMP_AboutMP_E.pdf, pp. 1-2

various future methodologies which systematically explore and test possible and desired futures checking the consequences of policies and actions in order to help decision makers[99]. In its 39 chapters the UNMP examines more than 35 different future methodologies from text mining tools to Delphi method variables and the SOFI software system[100]. The project sees to form a shared image of the future among policymakers and experts as this is the only way of synchronised progress regarding the substantiation of the Development Goals. In addition, it supports that the faster the rate of change the further we need to look into the future in order to have better decisions[101]. There are some general assumptions resulting from the whole research which can be summarised as follows: One cannot know the future but a range of possible futures; The likelihood of future events can be changed by policy; Gradations of foreknowledge and probabilities can be made; No single method should be trusted in itself and Humans will have more influence on the future (they did) in the past[102]. The UNMP albeit a non-state futures project, can provide a general framework for horizon scanning especially as far as the combination of various methodologies and inputs is concerned with specific goals and fixed review deadlines.

Chapter 4: The Case for Institutionalisation

So far we have dealt with state-initiated projects and governmental organisations conducting horizon scanning or producing strategic foresight-related reports. This section shall focus on the debate whether strategic foresight and horizon scanning could and should become an integral part of the production of intelligence.

This study supports that horizon scanning and strategic foresight as a continuous endeavour of the intelligence community and as background information within finished intelligence products should be part of the intelligence analysis, working not within but 'alongside' the intelligence cycle. During

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[99] Glenn, Jerome C 'Introduction To The Futures Research Methods Series' in Glenn, Jerome C and Gordon, Theodore J, eds., 'The Millennium Project: Futures Research Methodologies'-V3.0 [CD-ROM], pp. 3-4
[100] Gordon, Theodore J 'State Of The Future Index (SOFI) Method' in Glenn, Jerome C and Gordon, Theodore J, eds., 'The Millennium Project: Futures Research Methodologies'-V3.0 [CD-ROM], pp. i
[101] Glenn, p. 3
[102] Glenn, p. 4

this debate, one should always keep in mind that intelligence is the primal, constitutional and globally accepted branch of a government with the task to provide *timely* and crucial information to avoid or counter any danger, external or internal the country and its citizens may face. In other words, it is the primal 'institution' with a mission to help and advise the democratic government in one of its major objectives, that of security.

There are a number of important issues, questions and objections we shall focus upon in order to tackle the main question (in a way summarising the entire debate) of *why do we need strategic foresight* and *horizon scanning*. As Gustafson argues in his review of British efforts on horizon scanning, the argument should begin by raising a number of questions. These are mainly on the debate of the nature of horizon scanning as a natural function of intelligence, its methodologies and output, the issue of the 'tyranny of current intelligence', and ultimately whether horizon scanning and strategic foresight can help fix any shortcomings of the function and operation of intelligence.[103]

As Betts stresses, 'warning without response is useless'[104] and this is understandable since the warning is aimed at those who have the authority to protect and (re)act. Hence, the existence of warning and forecasting mechanisms within the intelligence community would be useless (considering the resources it would consume) if it would not affect respective policy making. According to the CIA, "reduced to its simplest terms, intelligence is knowledge and *foreknowledge* of the world around us"[105]. The US agency also considers as some of its major duties the assessment of the significance of current developments and warning of near-term consequences as well as signalling potentially dangerous situations in the future[106]. The British SDSR 2010 also confirms that, "strategic all-source assessment,[107] horizon scanning and early warning are integral"[108].

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[103] Gustafson, Kristian (2010) 'Strategic Horizons: Futures Forecasting and the British Intelligence Community', Intelligence and National Security, Vol. 25, Issue 5, p. 591

[104] Betts, Richard (1980) 'Surprise despite Warning: Why sudden attacks succeed', Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 95, Issue 4, pp. 551 - 572

[105] US Government (1999), 'A Consumer's guide to Intelligence', (CIA Publications) p.iv. Accessed via http://www.scribd.com/doc/16981173/CIA-Publication-A-Consumers-Guide-to-Intelligence-

[106] Medina, Carmen (2002) 'What to do when traditional models fails', in Andrew, Christopher; Aldrich, Richard J and Wark, Wesley K, (ed) 'Secret Intelligence: A Reader', (Routledge: London), pp. 108 - 109

[107] The British use the term "assessment" where the Americans tend to use the word "estimate" as "assessment" sounds more facts-based, "scientific" and affirmative.

It is evident that strategic foresight is and has always been part of intelligence analysis proper. Threat assessments, near-term analysis and "government options" have always been parts of the cycle and is a job usually done by the analyst as part of the final product for dissemination. However, these are *parts* of the analysis and do not elaborate on detailed horizon scanning or medium-to-long-term insightful assessment including policy options. Mainly, it is not an autonomous and continuous effort and it is a mere part of current analysis.

Although there are shared methodologies and output, there are important differences between current intelligence analysis and strategic foresight. As Herman notes, intelligence analysis is based solely or mainly on covert sources, whereas strategic foresight is mainly based on open sources[109] because "warning is evidence filtered through perception"[110]. Another main difference is the timeframe. Whereas an intelligence product has a specific timeframe (a source of stress to the analyst and cause of failure), strategic foresight or warning as conducted today is an open-ended process with no specific deadline (unless ordered for a specific, unfolding event). Timeframe, among others, is a main issue when it comes to the so-called 'tyranny of tasking'[111].

There are various, interlinked problems here that can indeed be minimised and mitigated by horizon scanning if it becomes a separate process. These are mainly the availability of crucial information when a threat is identified or when a specific issue arises from a given situation anywhere in the world. As the pace of developments is now faster and as the threats are multidimensional and more complex, horizon scanning mechanisms producing strategic foresight on specific issues or as a continuous assessment process on thematic or geographic merits (e.g. the growing discontent with politics among the Iranian society) become crucial.

The final of Gustafson's issues under question is whether horizon scanning and forecasting can help the overall function of intelligence and whether this assistance can help minimise intelligence failure.

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[108] HM Government (2010) 'Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review', p. 66. Accessed via http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_191634.pdf?CID=PDF&PLA=furl&CRE=sdsr
[109] Herman (1996), p. 108
[110] Betts (1980), p. 91
[111] Gustafson (2010), p. 596

If the "government should know as much as possible about threats and opportunities" with the responsibility to act as Betts stresses in *'Enemies of Intelligence: Knowledge and Power in American National Security'*[112], then the use of foresight to intelligence's overall effectiveness, based on the previous premises is justified.

As the intelligence cycle[113] is tight enough for the collector and the analyst as it is (producing the usual problems with intelligence analysis sometimes leading to failure), there could not possibly be a place for horizon scanning within the same process. It is therefore becoming clear that any horizon scanning and forecasting processes should work in parallel with the intelligence cycle as a continuous support for current intelligence but also as a long-term process in an effort to understand the dynamics underlying potential or emerging crisis[114]. The term "understanding" should not be confused with *knowledge*. The 9/11 commission report makes specific reference to and stresses the importance of "understanding the danger", explaining that despite existing knowledge and collected information prior to the attack the understanding was lacking and so existing knowledge could not be comprehended[115]. Inaccurate understanding of the situation leads to inaccurate foresight as the projection of the future will be the one of a false present hence producing a false future.

Once the situation, its background and trends are understood and knowledge exists then horizon scanning can bring in the benefit of effective policy options for the near-to-short-term future. This, in turn, will be used again [especially if accurate in its projection(s)] for the purposes of future 'current intelligence'. Hence, the benefits for the standard operation of intelligence can be many. Not only projections and scanning will be available for an important issue, but also in the near future this information could be reused as it will have become 'current'. Finally, an additional benefit can be that when the intelligence community and subsequently the government becomes aware of a situation and its short-term prospects, then it can avert it altogether by taking the appropriate preventing or

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[112] Cited in Lavoix, Helene (2010), p. 8
[113] USG, CIA 'The Intelligence Cycle', available at: https://www.cia.gov/kids-page/6-12th-grade/who-we-are-what-we-do/the-intelligence-cycle.html
[114] An example of this distinction is the current situation across the Arab world. "Micro" or current intelligence focuses on the developing issues and the immediate challenges and opportunities for the respective governments. A "macro" research and analysis is the examination of the projection of the current trends including alternative scenario-building depending on the possible outcomes.
[115] The 9/11 Commission Report, pp. 340–344

preemptive action[116]. A good, military in nature example is the early warning provided to the US government by U2 planes that led to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Although that was a developing issue, US policies once aware of the situation, through the intelligence available, averted altogether the plans of the USSR to place medium-range nuclear missiles on Cuba as a political leverage. An opposite example of this is the failure of the Israelis as we examined in the first section to comprehend the intentions of Sadat for the near future since from the moment he was elected his importance and objectives were undermined and misunderstood by the Israelis.

We shall finally focus on the criticism and the problems in view of institutionalisation of horizon scanning and strategic foresight.

There are three main categories of criticism towards the idea of integrating strategic foresight[117] into the intelligence process. First, there is the question of preventive action as a whole, either on ethical merits or simply as a feasible endeavour since it is often quite difficult to predict third party intentions or indeed the information may be misleading altogether as in the case of Iraqi WMD intelligence failure. The reply to this criticism is of dual nature. The first part argues that horizon scanning does not only exist for the purposes of retaliation or preventive action but also to avert the threat from evolving through peaceful and diplomatic processes. Then there is the overall argument that the world has now shifted from retaliatory to preventive action as this leads to eventually less casualties, economic losses and various expenses.

The second kind of criticism is about the usefulness of horizon scanning and forecasting for crises and conflicts. This is based on the argument that at least *some* intelligence surprises or warning failures are ultimately inevitable to be foreseen. Again, understanding of the situation may lead to preventing diplomatic and political action before a crisis evolves. No one can argue that horizon scanning is there to eliminate any forthcoming threats. Instead it can minimise those threats in either impact or volume saving lives and increasing security.

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[116] In the next and final chapter we shall focus on the issue of preemptive and preventing action when examining the ethical component of strategic foresight-based action.
[117] Lavoix, Helene (2007), 'Developing an early warning system for crises' pp. 368-9 in Ricci, Andrea, ed (2008) 'From Early Warning to Early Action?' Debate on the Enhancement of the EU's Crisis Response Capability, EU Publication available via: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/ifs/publications/book_2_en.htm

The third kind of criticism claims that it is difficult if not impossible to translate warning into response. Even if, the argument goes, the situation is understood, all crucial information is at hand and action options have become known, it is rarely possible to react as decisively as to reverse the situation. In challenging this criticism it is important to remember that preemptive action is not only meant for the third party but for the purposes of own national security. Country X may not be successful to avert policies of country Y, however it can protect itself better once a danger has been identified and the threat has been understood.

Beyond the more theoretic objections there are some issues, leading to potential problems, of technical nature that should be considered. First, there is the issue of prioritisation and timeframe. If horizon scanning is to be conducted in a way relieved of strict deadlines, there still has to be a specific hierarchy of issues under focus as manpower and overall resources are not unlimited. Although many developments could be flagged as "potentially dangerous" (such as the rise of an extremist government in a resources-rich African country), according to Kenneth Knight, CIA specialist on warning working with his own team within the agency, the hierarchy is found with the 'likelihood versus impact' formula after having become certain on evidence hence minimising the chances for "cry-wolf" effects[118], making sure the respective team works on frontline issues. Then, there is the issue of biases. Although it is easier to identify the key elements of an unfolding crisis, when it comes to what could signal a future threat personal biases may have a bigger impact. Knight supports that training and challenging of own biases may be a way to reduce that problem-'what is the most important thing, what are we trying to avoid?'[119]. Lavoix stresses that *all* possibilities must be included in the analyst's thinking process[120]. Simple as it sounds, this is one of the problems often leading to failures, policy or intelligence ones as there is a continuous cycle affecting both. A wrong enquiry will produce a misleading report which in turn can produce a wrong policy decision.

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[118] 'Focused on Foresight', an interview with Kenneth Knight by McKinsey Quarterly via:
http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/focused_on_foresight_An_interview_with_the_US_national_intelligence_officer_for_warning_2415#top
[119] Ibid.
[120] Lavoix (2010), p. 17

Finally, a major problem for horizon scanning is considered the alternation of governments. If, according to the CIA, intelligence must be 'sitting on the fence' in order to look as far as possible into time then a problem arises-that of the continuation of research (if we assume SF will be conducted by a specific team of people). In turn, the continuation of research is linked to the more general policy options and targets by the government. Hence, an interlinked problem as Lavoix also suggests[121] is that the alternation of governments poses an obstacle to the smooth and continuous operation of horizon scanning as matters evolve beyond government terms. In other words although hierarchy might change, the overall interest in a major issue should not be dropped. It is not the role of intelligence and in specific of strategic foresight reports to persuade specific policy goals, although they do have to illustrate and communicate promptly any emerging issue that arises. Nevertheless, if horizon scanning is to identify developing or future threats then this must be done beyond current policy priorities as the future eventually becomes the present. If the purpose of any democratic state is to provide security, the base for stability and thus prosperity, then the government should make any effort to tackle current national security threats as well as emerging and future ones. The past, present and future are interlinked. Hence, historic knowledge, understanding, current intelligence and foresight should ultimately form a unified operation and work in parallel.

Chapter 5: The Ethical Component of Preemptive and Preventive Action

The focus of the final chapter is on the important ongoing debate of whether preemptive and preventive action, based upon current and strategic intelligence, is justified in order to counter or prevent a national security threat.

As Betts asserted[122] and as the common logic suggests warning without response is indeed useless. Therefore, the whole scope of institutionalising strategic foresight which means allocation of resources and personnel diminishes if the relevant intelligence product is not taken to the policy maker in order to help formulate a specific policy aiming at countering a national security threat.

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[121] Lavoix (2007), pp. 371-372
[122] Betts (1980)

We hold that the institutionalisation of strategic foresight can indeed help towards formulating a more clear policy based on knowledge and understanding in view of imminent or medium-term developing threats hence having a more justified, through evidence, cause and a wider consensus on conducting a preemptive or preventive strike.

In Books II and IV of the *Republic*, Plato deals with the issue of the "guardians" and the moral dimension of offensive activities (wars) in order to sustain the status quo of the Polis, that is the well being of its citizens[123]. The philosopher links this situation with the very nature of human kind and whether is justified to conduct war not when the very existence is in imminent danger but simply to continue having the same living standards and sustain the Polis' power and status quo. The situation is also linked to the main objective of the State which is the security of its citizens and of the democratic system.

If the sustainability of security is the major obligation of the government, then action is indeed required to ensure this security.

Likewise, in today's world the issues of preemptive and especially preventive action are directly linked to the definition of national security. Hence, the line separating preemptive and preventive action is often blurred and very thin as it is highly subjective. Access to natural resources in a third country can be read, for example, both as a direct or indirect national security threat.

The advances of technology during the last century and the shortening of the timeframe between the identification of a threat and the required action(s) by a state construct a new framework of the debate and make the existence of a permanent horizon scanning mechanism to support intelligence and consequently policymaking ever more necessary. Technological advances and the pace of development also shorten the distance between imminent and medium-term threat.

The thin distinction between preemptive and preventive action was part of the great debate and confusion that followed president W. Bush's doctrine of preemption in the 2002 National Security

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[123] Plato '*The Republic',* Books II & IV

Strategy[124]. The controversial doctrine was fuelled by the 9/11 attacks and the US-led war in Afghanistan as it was also a prelude to the much-debated war in Iraq in view of the country's alleged WMD programme.

Walzer in *'Just and Unjust Wars'* (2006), refers to the "spectrum of anticipation" where at one end there is the morally justifiable action of preemptive attack, once hostile activities are imminent, and the less-morally justifiable one when a preventive action is taken to "maintain the balance"[125] and the status quo. Whereas preemptive action is part of the domain of early warning where a known threat is imminent, preventive action is entirely based on strategic foresight and horizon scanning as there must be an authoritative assertion of the short-to-medium-term intentions as well as capabilities of the third party. Gray suggests that preemption is all about the concept of self-defence, a justifiable notion across the international community, however it too needs "incontrovertible" evidence that aggression is forthcoming[126].

Both prevention and preemption can be non-military. The immediate raising of the issue at the UN or directly to the other country via the diplomatic service can be an alternative option to a preemptive military strike. Likewise, when it comes to preventive action (where developments concern a more long-term horizon) sanctions and other economic and diplomatic measures can be taken instead of a strategic military operation. These actions may alter the situation altogether. A case study of that is the harder stance some within Carter's administration wanted the Shah to take vis-à-vis the Iranian people with the rationale that this would avert both the coming of Khomeini as well as the opposition's overall strength.

Timing is also central to both preemptive and preventive actions. However, when it comes to preventability, timing is even more vital as in some cases there is a specific time window where the government can react and if it does not then the next option is preemptive action as the situation will

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[124] Defalco III, Ralph L (2010) '*Ethics, Intelligence, and Preemptive and Preventive Actions',* International Journal of Intelligence Ethics, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 76
[125] Cited in Defalco, p. 77
[126] Ibid.

have progressed[127]. A paradigm of that is president Clinton's preemptive missile attacks in Afghanistan and Sudan in 1998 to avert a suspected al-Qaeda preparations for chemical weapons attacks on the US[128]. This paradigm also brings out the ambiguity of the terms preemptive and preventive since that specific threat was not imminent and in fact, in the case of Sudan, the government could be pressed by the international community in light of US intelligence's findings to arrest the terrorists and neutralise their capabilities. That is linked to the issue of the use of violence as the "last resort", a major component of the debate on preventability today.

If we suppose that the use of force is indeed the only mean to avert a certain situation from developing, then the intelligence assessments must be indeed incontrovertible because as Walzer suggests a first strike can be legitimate even upon the recognition of a sufficient threat, a phase he describes as "necessarily vague"[129]. The typical case study of successful preventive action that in retrospect has been justified is the Israeli air strike on Osirak nuclear facilities in Iraq in June 1981. That was a preventive action because the threat was developing. As it was not imminent, it could be controlled before the situation becomes fixed and irreversible while there was also sufficient timeframe for non-military initiatives before the use of force as a last resort. As timing was central, the Israeli intelligence not only had the obligation of gathering sufficient current intelligence (through infiltration to the plant with a nuclear scientist working on the site and other intelligence including photographs of the actual reactor and facilities) but they also had to project the threat in time[130]. They had to assert when the nuclear plant will become operational for the construction of nuclear weapons, what capabilities it will have (in production) but primarily they had to understand the overall intentions of Saddam Hussein for the region and Israel in particular given former hostilities by Iraq[131]. The above caused criticism, even doubts by the heads of AMAN and Mossad who, however, followed

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[127] The CIA has described this issue as the "tube effect". In cases, for example, of a weapons development programme in the beginning information may be more easily available. If action is not taken at that point then as the weapons programme progresses information flow diminishes and becomes more widely available again when the programme is near completion. There is therefore a certain timeframe when the government based on intelligence can act. That assertion is highly relevant today to the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme.
[128] Russell, Richard L. (2005) 'A weak pillar for American national security: The CIA's dismal performance against WMD threats', Intelligence and National Security, Vol. 20, No. 3, p. 467
[129] DeFalco, p. 78
[130] Ibid, pp. 88-91
[131] Ibid, p. 87

prime minister Begin's orders and concluded a comprehensive estimate. Israel took action only after negotiations and secret meetings with European powers regarding the shipment of remaining fuel and the final phase of the construction[132].

Part of a strategic foresight analysis is the examination of blowbacks after a certain action in both cases-that is in success and failure. This assessment must be presented to the policymakers in order to have an as-rounded-as-possible estimate of every aspect of the operation. This part is highly depended on the assessment of the character and idiosyncrasy of the leaders of the other party as well as their retaliatory capabilities. That includes current as well as potential future leaders who might have a different agenda or stance.

Just cause, legitimate authority, right intention, proportionality, likelihood of success (and subsequent consequences) and war as the last resort, are generally accepted to be the preconditions of a preventive action[133]. The equation *capabilities + intent* is also a crucial component of the assessment. Just cause, right intention (intent), proportionality and likelihood of success (capabilities) are all issues to be dealt by the intelligence analysis both current and strategic/projective analysis while legitimacy falls under a different domain, that of international law.

Preemptive attacks are generally accepted based on the principle of self-defence, however, preventive strikes like the bombing of Osirak and current discussions on neutralising the Iranian nuclear programme belong to a different realm. Frost suggests a testing procedure in the book Global Ethics. That includes a hypothetical dialogue between the Minister of Defence and an international lawyer about bombing suspected terrorist hubs in a third country without its government's permission along with the allegation that this country is harbouring those terrorists[134]. The arguments evolve around the use of force in a third territory, however, with the note that that country is also breaching international law by harbouring terrorists. In this case, both a preventive military action as well as diplomatic and economic activities can and must be decisively supported by evidence both on the current situation but in this case especially about possible future developments (multiple scenario analysis). This

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[132] Ibid, p. 88
[133] DeFalco, p. 81
[134] Frost, Mervyn (2009), 'Global Ethics: Anarchy, Freedom and International Relations', (London: Routledge), p. 42

evidence is the obligation of the intelligence and strategic foresight in support of legitimate action by the government.

Beyond doubt, there are a number of strategic and political pitfalls even when all information is available and every aspect of an operation has been thoroughly examined. The quality of sources (as in the Iraqi WMD failure), possibly uncontrollable future consequences (such as in the case of Western involvement in Iran), having the wrong lead, a misleading policy decision or altogether a false understanding of the situation are but a few things that could lead to a failure or an unsuccessful outcome in the short or long term.

Unless unimaginable technological progresses occur in the future, intelligence or policy failures will always be inevitable. Warning or estimative intelligence failures such as the case of Iraqi WMD or the expansion of al Qaeda and of Islamic fundamentalism and its appeal among and beyond the Muslim world will continue to occur.

What the liberal state should do is to ensure that it has done anything in its power to keep the peace and status quo and to look into the horizon for growing threats both abroad as well as domestically. Past successes, such as the operation of Osirak or the Cuban missile crisis, as well as recent advances in the war against global jihad should provide detailed case studies and examples of how horizon scanning and foreknowledge through solid intelligence should not only be part of intelligence proper but a continuous endeavour through ordered products as well as constant background research on a prioritised, hierarchical fashion.

The importance of the ethical dimension of preemptive and especially preventive action should be there as a motive for more accurate and grounded intelligence analysis and forecasting. It should not be a deterrent for action but an opportunity if warning intelligence is to excel and be trusted as a policy supporting and ultimately advisory mechanism towards limiting threats.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on the interrelation between intelligence failures and the importance of horizon scanning and warning intelligence. The *raison d'être* of strategic foresight and scanning mechanisms is to provide policy and decision makers an authoritative insight of emerging and medium-term threats and suggest courses of action before a situation becomes irreversible. Chan supports that the main characteristic of strategic warning is the prediction of a single event which, if it occurs can create a 'step-level change from the status quo'[135]. Nevertheless, whether a change in a country's status quo automatically poses a threat to its security it is a debatable matter. Many people in the West for instance failed to recognise a national security threat that would excuse the human lives and millions 'invested' in both Afghanistan and especially Iraq. In fact, these wars constituted efforts to indeed change the status quo of those regions to the benefit of the West as the tracking down of Al Qaeda or a peaceful (and open for business Iraq) were objectives of US and British foreign and security policies, regardless if most of the people agreed with that premise.

It is also important to remember that although the works of Chan, Betts, Heuer, Wohlstetter, Grabo and others will always serve as the base for intelligence and warning-related studies and debates, many key concepts and numerous other aspects have since altered dramatically, especially during the course of the past twenty or so years. These include the enemies of the West at large, the nature of warfare itself, the advances in technology and intelligence gathering, international community balances as well as the very concept of national security itself. It is now acceptable that it is the small details that line up to create the 'bigger picture' when it comes to crucial decisions and warning intelligence.

That was well illustrated in the most modern main intelligence failure, that of 9/11 and the general omission that Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism including Al Qaeda in specific pose a major threat to the US and the West at large including crucial interests abroad. This was the fallacious base

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[135] Chan, Steve (1979) 'The Intelligence of Stupidity: Understanding Failures in Strategic Warning', American Political Science Review, Vol. 73, Issue 1, pp. 171-172

that helped create the conceptual misunderstanding and omissions of various other small incidents such as the flying training certain individuals received within the US itself or former cooperation between and the records of the people involved held internationally as well as their home countries. As Betts writes in Analysis, War and Decision 'the most crucial mistakes are most often made by the decision maker'[136], and those can be summarised by the product ordered by the policymakers to the intelligence as well as the hierarchy of threats according to which resources and 'weight' are allocated.

As, even today, money and resources are not limitless (despite the immense progress since the 1970s and 1980s when most of the above major studies were written) and given the usual causes of failure (be it strictly military or political/diplomatic), it becomes apparent that strategic foresight should be a continuous endeavour of intelligence based on a non-steady hierarchy as developments unfold internationally. Intelligence should be as focused as possible within a more general 'ring road' framework. For instance, the future of the Iranian nuclear programme, a textbook paradigm of the need for strategic foresight as far as intelligence can reach into the horizon in order to decisively aide the subsequent decision making, sits within a more general issue, that of the balances in the Eurasian region and the future of Western access to crucial sources of hydrocarbons.

The creation of a continuous horizon scanning mechanism, based on a hierarchy of issues under focus, as an integral part of any intelligence agency or community at large seems as a crucial step towards creating a framework of a new department. In the long run, this will ease tension on current intelligence as knowledge will be pre-existing on a number of issues. The hierarchy of national security issues of interest would also serve as another step towards the 'democratisation' of the whole intelligence process as this will be formed by the respective committees within parliaments. This will increase the participation of all involved parliamentary forces within a Western political system as the responsibility will be shared as well as the consensus when it comes to the crucial issue of preemptive and preventing action as the materialisation of warning intelligence-based decision making.

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[136] Heazle, Michael (2010) 'Policy Lessons from Iraq on Managing Uncertainty in Intelligence Assessment: Why the Strategic/Tactical Distinction Matters', Intelligence and National Security, Vol. 25, Issue 3, p. 291

The 9/11 Commission Report stresses that a significant part of failure was the lack of a National Intelligence Estimate on the terrorist threat between 1998 and 2001. If had one been produced, the policy makers would more easily recognised the threat for an attack on the US mainland. Such an official report would not only raise the level of awareness (hence helping the analysts make sense of a series of seemingly insignificant facts) but would work as a vehicle for those that did worry about Al Qaeda and Islamic fundamentalism[137].

Some professionals such as Friedman, support that "common sense almost always betrays us"[138] when it comes to forecasting. Indeed this is the case but this is better realised when analysing longer historical periods. In 1990 an attack such as 9/11 would seem unthinkable as unthinkable would seem in the early 20th century what shape international order would be taking by 1945. However, as such long-term forecasting is practically impossible for various reasons, it is the immediate and short-term future where strategic foresight must focus upon. As Loch suggests the core objective of strategic intelligence is to increase the chances that decision makers will be grounded in the reality of events and conditions rather in seeking the unknown[139].

Fast-paced global developments as well as the diversification of threats and the changing nature of the very concept of national security do not allow policy makers the luxury of time when it comes to ordering and waiting for an intelligence product to face a breaking development. Hence, horizon scanning and strategic foresight-based intelligence can provide those supporting mechanisms for a more accurate, insightful and rounded warning intelligence and subsequently the policies towards achieving the fundamental governmental objectives of stability and security, prerequisites for a stable and prosperous democratic system and people.

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[137] As cited in Marrin, Stephen (2011) 'The 9/11 Terrorist Attacks: A Failure of policy not Strategic Intelligence Analysis', Intelligence and National Security, Vol. 26, Nos 2-3, p. 183

[138] Friedman, George (2009), 'The Next 100 Years', (New York: Doubleday) p. 249

[139] Johnson, Loch K (1989) 'Strategic Intelligence: An American Perspective', International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, Vol. 3, Issue 3, p. 299

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