

GREATER EXPECTATIONS IN WILDER WEATHER

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- Your conference theme is navigating uncertainty. But are these more uncertain times? Is it a time when the tectonic plates are shifting or is there essentially continuity with a fair amount of ephemera washing around?

Wilder Weather

- I think history is likely to conclude that in the current era we have seen and are seeing fundamental shifts. Everyone is familiar with the extensive economic, social and cultural fluidity we usually label globalisation. This poses some sharp challenges for the political order of nation states, including how the safety and security of citizens and of institutions of these states can be safeguarded.
- Technological developments are at a speed not previously seen, facilitating and in turn being facilitated by globalisation.
- Also, in the post World War II era internal conflicts, either civil wars or other armed conflicts have become much more common than those fought between states. Some of these conflicts can continue for decades without any genuine prospect of victory or settlement. The weapons available in conflicts are of greater lethality.
- There has also been erosion of the distinction between combatants and non-combatants and the impact of conflict on civilians has been markedly greater. This is through high levels of civilian death and injury, internal and external displacement creating huge numbers of refugees, and through impacts on economic activities and social infrastructure.
- In addition to those precipitated by conflict, we are seeing vast population shifts as there is a decline in the proportion of populations in most countries engaged in agriculture. Mankind is ceasing to be an essentially rural species. In 1900 only 16 percent of the world's population lived in towns. Today it's just under half.
- The 21st century is seeing the rise of powers such as China and India and uncertainty as to how that will play out in international affairs. The period in which the United States of America was the sole superpower will be seen by history as quite brief.

- At the same time we are seeing new and ready means of communication creating what can be called an emerging ‘global civil society’ - one only has to think about the amount of information available about recent events in Iran and Western China - and the increasing influence wielded by non-government organisations and other non-state players.
- Global civil society seems to have some strong expectations about ethical behaviour and how power should be used.

Our frameworks

- When I reflect on my time at senior levels of the Commonwealth Government, one point of note is the time it can take issues that strategic intelligence work has identified, to permeate into policy decision making and operational thinking.
- In 1997 a departmental head said to me that if I was looking for a new challenge, the area of law enforcement and national security would be an increasingly important one. Prescient words indeed. When I took up this challenge, I found that the Commonwealth’s law enforcement agencies were keen to sensitise the government to emerging techniques and technologies that criminals were already exploiting such as in the areas of cyber crime and identity fraud.
- The concern was that criminals were quick to use the fluidity of the new global environment and weaknesses in particular countries for their purposes, and this created challenges of a quite different order than previously.
- On the security and foreign intelligence side, we know of the funding reductions following what was thought to be the end of the Cold War, which were predicated on the erroneous assumption that a period of global calm and prosperity would prevail.
- Despite the attempts of intelligence services in some countries to present themselves as people who could tackle economic espionage in the new economic order, funding was still cut back. But by the end of the 1990s, it was clear in intelligence circles that insurgents, warlords, militia’s and violent extremists were among the key threats globally, with all of the attendant difficulties associated with collecting intelligence on such people.
- These changes have thrown up considerable challenge to some of the assumptions that underlie our Australia legislation and frameworks. One aspect of this is that the distinction between foreign intelligence and domestic security is very blurred.
- Nor can intelligence be neatly separated from law enforcement and the prosecution process. If prosecution is to be a key part of our counter-terrorism strategy, then inevitably some material gathered originally for intelligence

purposes may be required as evidence in court.

- However, there are very strict rules around the admissibility of evidence in courts. These rules and their strictness springs from a long tradition of protecting individuals from coercion and torture and I for one would say that this history needs to be understood and respected. Yet what may be within the bounds of propriety in collecting reliable and valid intelligence, may not be viewed as proper for purposes of the rules of criminal law evidence.
- Another assumption which is increasingly questionable is that there is a clear distinction between a domestic telecommunications network and international communications.
- You may be sitting there thinking that that's all very interesting, but what does it actually mean.
- I think that in such a context the particular components of your conference are well chosen.

Expectations of leadership

- In relation to leadership the extent of the changes that I have very briefly touched on, necessitate a very high degree of strategic skill on the part of leaders at all levels in the intelligence community. It is not that the requirement to be highly strategic is a new or novel requirement for leadership, but the sharpness of the skill now required is very high.
- Not that as a leader you can be expected to know and foresee everything - however easily they seem to be able to do that in certain popular films or television series. But it is a case of always making sure you are lifting your gaze and thinking about the wider dimensions of what you are seeing and doing.
- It also involves constantly thinking about how the intelligence function and organisational activities generally should be positioned, or repositioned, to be ready enough to shift to dealing with different challenges which may eventuate.
- The need for ethical leadership which ensures integrity in intelligence work is also a premium requirement. Older procedures may no longer be sufficient, or greater flexibilities may be needed, but whatever the situation leaders still need to be conscious of the continuing centrality in a liberal democratic society of agencies maintaining the trust and confidence of the community whose interests they are protecting. This is something I spoke about when I addressed your conference in 2005, and nothing in the intervening time has meant that the requirement is any less. Arguably it is more important than ever.

Other expectations

- The new environment certainly requires greater collaboration (i.e. “an obligation to share”) and client focus, and a key challenge for you is to achieve those things and still protect the fundamentals.
- Sharing must be within arrangements which still protect sources and methodologies. Those receiving information must be acutely aware that if sources and methodologies are not protected, then the game is up and there is little to be achieved by persisting.
- Client focus is also subject to the precept that while intelligence assessments must be relevant to decision makers, they cannot be driven by the institutional or policy or political concerns of the key stakeholders. Intelligence assessments must have integrity and have been formed with an independence of mind.
- This links in a sense to capability development, where I think that for all the technological possibilities that seem to swirl around, there must still be a strong and continuing focus on developing the intellectual and analytic skills of intelligence personnel.
- And while technology can offer all sorts of new collection possibilities, we must always ensure that technical advances are accompanied by equal advances in governance frameworks, which can maintain the trust and confidence of a community that activities are done to a proper end.
- I wish you well in this conference as you set your compasses and polish your sextants.