IGIS Inquiry into DIO analytical integrity

Executive Summary

- This formal inquiry (conducted pursuant to section 8(3)(a)(iii) of the *Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security Act 1986*) examined the propriety of the assessment activities of the Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO).

- The inquiry included:
    - examination of relevant policy and procedures documentation
    - examination of a selection of intelligence assessments and associated referencing
    - a survey of staff covering 20 questions
    - focus groups with a cross-section of employees and key staff
    - interviews with a number of key staff, and
    - consultation with Deputy Secretary of Intelligence, Security and International Policy and the Director DIO.

- The general picture of the propriety of DIO's assessment activities is a positive one.
    - DIO's analysts are confident that the organisation's assessments are independent of inappropriate influence and that debate and contestability are features of DIO's analytic culture.
    - DIO's assessments include an 'Intelligence base' text box to better inform its customers of the main sources used to underpin the assessment made, the reliability and credibility of those sources and any information gaps encountered.
    - DIO has codified its estimative language to ensure a consistent approach across the range of topics addressed in its various assessment products.

- Enhancement can be made through greater standardisation across the organisation in the areas of the source analysis and referencing, and the review of assumptions and previous judgements. Of particular importance is bolstering analytic training.

Findings

1. DIO analysts are confident in DIO's capacity to maintain its analytic independence, and I see no reason to think that this confidence is misplaced.

2. There is no evidence of improper external pressure being brought to bear upon DIO in the preparation of its input to the current Defence White Paper process.

3. DIO's policy on source referencing is appropriate and the practice of referencing is satisfactory (with some room for improvement).

4. DIO has a sound approach to codifying its estimative language and its analysts are cognisant of the importance of precision in this area.

5. DIO does not have organisation-wide processes to ensure systematic review/re-evaluation of previous judgements.

6. Debate and contestability are evident features of DIO's culture.

7. A systematic, high quality training and development strategy in relation to analytic tradecraft is essential to adequately equip individuals and the managers who oversee the intelligence assessment process. Close attention should continue to be given to bolstering the strategy in DIO.

Recommendations

1. I recommend that the Department of Defence give consideration to whether there is benefit in making explicit reference in DIO's mandate to DIO not being subjected to direction as to the content of assessments.

2. I recommend that DIO add a key to its use of estimative language in significant assessment products in a similar manner to its use of the intelligence-base text box.