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# National Intelligence University's Role in Interagency Research

Recommendations from  
the Intelligence Community

Judith A. Johnston, Natasha Lander, Brian McInnis





NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense

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## Preface

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The Center for Strategic Intelligence Research (CSIR) of the National Intelligence University (NIU) is responsible for supporting faculty and student research efforts and coordinating NIU research activities with the Intelligence Community (IC). To further its coordination efforts, CSIR was interested in learning more about potential interagency research partners and how collaboration could be improved in ways that would be beneficial to both NIU and the collaborating agency. However, a challenge lies in the fact that research being conducted regularly in the IC exists, for the most part, in small pockets scattered throughout a number of different IC agencies.

CSIR asked RAND to conduct a study that would capture information about these research entities, their responsibilities, and their willingness to support interagency research with NIU, which would help CSIR identify collaborative research opportunities, topics, and processes. To address this request, we identified research entities in the agencies of the IC, including NIU faculty, and conducted semistructured interviews to discuss interagency research and collaboration with NIU. The participants represented a purposive sample and were interviewed between September 2011 and January 2012.

It is important to note that, because this study is based on a purposive sample, in part recommended by the sponsor, the results represent the impressions of senior leaders engaged with research entities in the IC and are not generalizable.

This research was sponsored by NIU and conducted within the Intelligence Policy Center of the RAND National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center spon-

sored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the defense agencies, and the defense Intelligence Community.

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# Summary

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## NIU's Interagency Research Challenge

NIU and CSIR have institutional and IC responsibilities with regard to research. As an accredited institution of higher learning, NIU has an obligation to support faculty and student research. As the national intelligence university, it has an obligation to foster collaborative research to support all the agencies of the IC. Additionally, NIU is the result of an evolution of ideas in the IC and among its leaders about what a national intelligence university should be. This process began with the formation of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) as a requirement of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA).

The official formation of a national intelligence university began in 2006, as noted in IC Directive (ICD) 1.<sup>1</sup> Prior to February 2011, NIU had at least three different leaders, was considered a “virtual” institution, and was chiefly focused on the human capital aspect of intelligence analysis. In addition, from 2006–2011, NIU was besieged by a number of controversial issues and lost a great deal of credibility across the IC. In spite of this, a number of ICDs state the role of NIU in ensuring that IC members are trained on the topics contained in the directives. For example, ICD 501 orders that the NIU, “in collaboration with IC elements, develop community-level information-

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<sup>1</sup> Intelligence Community Directive 1, *Policy Directive for Intelligence Community Leadership*, May 1, 2006.



sharing training to promote understanding and individual responsibilities with regard to this directive.”<sup>2</sup> The current manifestation of the national intelligence university was officially established in February 2011, when the former National Defense Intelligence College (NDIC) was changed to NIU. Interestingly, this change came via Department of Defense Instruction 3305-1. CSIR was originally a component of NDIC and was part of the transfer from NDIC to NIU.

The evolution of NIU resulted in two major institutional challenges: the need to change perceptions within the IC, and the need to establish NIU's role and responsibilities within the IC. Although NIU has a 50-year history of exclusively military intelligence education,<sup>3</sup> it is now committed to educational excellence for the entire IC. Additionally, NIU awards master's degrees every year to students who have completed thesis research. Currently, these students work with CSIR and NIU faculty to determine research topics and locations in the IC where they can conduct their thesis research. There are no formally established collaborative relationships for this purpose.

To help NIU and CSIR address their charge of conducting interagency research, we conducted a survey of entities within the IC that either produce or consume research to gain insight into where collaboration activities might take place, what types of collaboration would be feasible, and what the potential topics for research are. Within the agencies of the IC, there are a number of what we have termed *research entities*—offices, divisions, units, or groups that conduct research. (Appendix B offers a list and descriptions of these entities.) Because research is the primary focus of these entities (although some are responsible for additional mission tasks in analysis, operations, support, etc.) we

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<sup>2</sup> Intelligence Community Directive 501, *Discovery and Dissemination or Retrieval of Information Within the Intelligence Community*, January 21, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> The Defense Intelligence School was established in 1962. It was renamed the Defense Intelligence College in 1983, and civilians were included as students. In 1993, the institution was renamed the Joint Military Intelligence College, devoted solely to intelligence education and research (no training courses). In 2006, the institution's name was changed to the NDIC.

determined that concentrating on these entities would yield meaningful information with regard to interagency research collaboration.

## **Our Methodology**

We determined that data collection should involve interviews with a purposive sample of representatives who lead or manage the IC research entities related to intelligence analysis topics. With CSIR, we identified potential candidate entities and representatives. We conducted the interviews using a semistructured instrument developed with assistance from RAND's Survey Research Group. We used thematic analysis, a qualitative method, to determine themes and patterns in the interview responses. We also consulted the literature on industry-academic partnerships to identify best practices and lessons learned that would inform our results and recommendations.

## **Findings**

Our findings were based on interview feedback from representatives of nine of the 13 possible research entities within the IC, including members of the NIU faculty and leadership. The interview data were analyzed in terms of the four major constructs included in the interview instrument: the research entity's context, the research entity's needs, the research entity's perception of NIU's role, and the research entity's suggestions for NIU regarding collaborative activities. We use these categories as a framework for our discussion of findings and recommendations.

*Research Entity Context.* We found that the majority of the research entities are small (less than 10 full-time staff); have a number of responsibilities, with longer-term analysis and research being secondary to short-term analytic responses; and have tasks and production requirements that can vary from the identification of emerging trends and threats to knowledge management to planning and hosting conferences intended to build relationships with experts outside the IC. The

competing needs of long- and short-term research represent a resource gap that might be addressed by NIU student or faculty researchers.

*Research Entity Needs.* The research entities, faced with the competing demands of many critical, time-sensitive tasks, small staffs, and limited resources, stated the need for more opportunities to conduct longer-term, strategic research and analysis. Interview participants suggested that NIU should investigate and implement research plans that complement IC goals and requirements (i.e., topics that are before the National Intelligence Managers [NIMs] and the National Intelligence Council [NIC] and are aligned with national priorities). The participants were also interested in having more access to NIU research products that might complement the research being conducted by their entity.

*Research Entity Perceptions of NIU's Role.* The responses of the participants indicated that they still perceive NIU as a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)/military intelligence institution. The participants were cautious about accepting NIU as the IC's educational institution because of NIU's history and evolution (prior to February 2011), and because official guidance has been unclear about NIU's role, particularly regarding authority and the schoolhouses that exist in most of the agencies.

*Research Entity Suggestions for NIU Regarding Collaborative Activities.* The participants did support the notion of a national intelligence university and were willing to provide limited support for a number of academic activities (e.g., guest lectures, student mentoring, providing potential thesis research topics). However, they also had expectations of what NIU should provide to the IC. They felt that NIU should take the lead in facilitating research collaboration across the IC and between the IC and academia. They were also interested in being able to access more of NIU's research. Finally, the participants stated that NIU should cultivate a more diverse student population, especially in terms of the ability to do strategic analysis, which was seen as a future need of the IC.

*Themes Across Responses.* In addition to the findings above, we looked at themes across the participants' responses to identify potential root issues. We found a major theme regarding the perceived rela-

tionship between NIU and the research entities, particularly regarding collaboration efforts and determining research topics/agendas. The research entities believed that NIU should be responsible for selecting research topics for its students and faculty that are relevant to the IC (particularly the research entities) and that NIU should take the lead in establishing and maintaining collaborative activities with the IC research entities. NIU, on the other hand, has a responsibility to its students and faculty to support their research interests and allow for academic freedom. As such, NIU needs to have control over shaping its research agenda, which is not exactly compatible with determining research topics based on other entities' preferences. This conflict regarding the perceived direction of power and responsibility (i.e., who should identify topics, who should be accountable for collaborative activities) is at the heart of the challenges NIU faces in executing its research role across the IC.

## Recommendations

As a new “version” of NIU emerges, opportunities exist to create and execute actions and processes that will align its image to its vision, particularly regarding interagency research collaboration. Our recommendations focus on key actions and processes that should be part of such an effort as based on our interview findings and literature review. We provide these recommendations in the framework of the four major constructs presented above.

*Research Entity Context.* NIU and CSIR should use a systematic approach to identify potential collaborators based on student/faculty interest and what is known about the research entity's interests and motivation.

*Research Entity Needs.* NIU should investigate and implement strategic research plans that represent NIU's vision and the research interests of faculty and students. Additionally, the research plan should complement IC interests, particularly those topics that are before the NIMs and the NIC and are aligned with national priorities.

*Research Entity Perceptions of NIU's role.* NIU should increase and maintain awareness of community-wide access to NIU research resources.

NIU should formalize its enterprise-wide outreach programs and familiarize each agency with NIU's mission, needs, and resources.

We also recommend strengthening communication and collaboration efforts outside of student research that will aide in clarifying NIU's identity and begin to change perceptions of NIU within the IC to the benefit of all.

*Research Entity Suggestions for NIU Regarding Collaborative Activities.* Create opportunities for representatives of the schoolhouses and research entities to regularly come together to discuss IC education and training needs and facility collaboration, and consider exploring ways to reduce redundancy in currently overlapping areas.

*Themes Across Responses.* In our analysis of the interview data regarding NIU and collaborative research, we saw that the IC participants believed NIU should continue to have a passive role in the development of a research program. Participants stated that NIU students and faculty should select research topics based on what is important to the IC, including the research entities.

We recommend that NIU and CSIR adopt an active role in setting NIU's research agenda that is driven by faculty research interests and that may complement priorities and strategic topics of interest at the national level. Adopting an active role—directing the research agenda—will help NIU meet its institutional goals while also allowing it to target and plan relationship development and collaboration activities.

We also recommend that NIU and CSIR develop a framework and methods for formalizing relationships with IC entities that outline the specific roles and responsibilities of the parties involved. Formalizing relationships (e.g., through a memorandum of agreement or memorandum of understanding) will ensure that NIU's and CSIR's requirements are met, as well as manage the expectations of those involved.

## Acknowledgments

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Conducting the research for this study required candid responses and observations from both the sponsor and the participants. We are grateful to Dr. David Ellison, Dr. Susan Studds, and Dr. Cathryn Thurston for their interest in getting at the real thoughts and impressions of interagency research with NIU, as well as their candor in discussions and guidance throughout the project.

Given the time and resource constraints of the senior leaders and managers of the research entities in the IC, we appreciate the time and thoughtfulness they gave during the interview process.

Our thanks go to Melissa Bradley, who possesses the unique ability to design interview instruments with questions that get at the heart of the issues of interest, and to Kathi Webb, whose creativity of thought, process guidance, and impeccable review capabilities made this report much better. We would also like to thank Carol “Rollie” Flynn and Harry Thie for their insights as reviewers.



## Abbreviations

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|       |   |
|-------|---|
| AOI   | Analytic Outreach Initiative                      |
| CCO   | Center for Strategic Research                     |
| CIA   | Central Intelligence Agency                       |
| COCOM | Combatant Command                                 |
| CSIR  | Center for Strategic Intelligence Research        |
| CSNR  | Center for the Study of National Reconnaissance   |
| CSR   | Center for Complex Operations                     |
| DIA   | Defense Intelligence Agency                       |
| DoD   | Department of Defense                             |
| IC    | Intelligence Community                            |
| ICD   | Intelligence Community Directive                  |
| IFA   | Institute for Analysis                            |
| INR   | Bureau of Intelligence and Research               |
| IRPTA | Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act  |
| JWICS | Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communication System |
| NCTC  | National Counterterrorism Center                  |
| NDIC  | National Defense Intelligence College             |
| NIC   | National Intelligence Council                     |
| NIM   | National Intelligence Manager                     |
| NIO   | National intelligence Officer                     |
| NIU   | National Intelligence University                  |
| NRO   | National Reconnaissance Office                    |
| NTAC  | National Threat Assessment Center                 |



|      |   |
|------|---|
| ODNI | Office of the Director of National Intelligence |
| OTR  | Office of Outreach (in Department of State INR) |
| SFG  | Strategic Futures Group                         |

## Introduction

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In 2005, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) was formed in response to recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Report,<sup>1</sup> four Executive Orders,<sup>2</sup> and the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA)<sup>3</sup> to “forge an Intelligence Community that delivers the most insightful intelligence possible.”<sup>4</sup> One of the goals of the ODNI is to promote a diverse, highly skilled intelligence workforce that reflects the strength of the United States. To help address this goal, the National Intelligence University (NIU) was formed.

Since its inception, the NIU has evolved as an institution of higher learning serving the Intelligence Community (IC) by preparing intelligence professionals, through education and research, to serve most effectively in positions throughout the IC, including intelligence

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<sup>1</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the 9-11 Commission), *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Executive Order 13355: Strengthened Management of the Intelligence Community, 69 FR 53593, August 27, 2004; Executive Order 13356: Strengthening the Sharing of Terrorism Information to Protect Americans, 69 FR 53599, August 27, 2004; Executive Order 13383: Amending Executive Orders 12139 and 12949 in Light of Establishment of the Office of Director of National Intelligence, 70 FR 41933, July 15, 2005; Executive Order 13388: Further Strengthening the Sharing of Terrorism Information to Protect Americans, 70 FR 62023, October 25, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Public Law 108-458, Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA), 118 Stat. 3638, Sections 1041–1043, December 17, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Office of the Director of National Intelligence, “Mission, Vision & Goals,” undated.

entities in the Department of Defense (DoD). In October 2011, the former National Defense Intelligence College (NDIC) became NIU. This change has allowed NIU to adopt the accreditation, degree seeking, and research programs associated with NDIC since the 1960s. In addition, this change has challenged NIU to extend its standards and reputation for academic research to support all agencies of the IC.

### **Background**

The first iteration of NIU was established in 2005. It was a virtual institution and mostly focused on human capital issues; providing intelligence professional education and development programs for the IC; and building cooperative relationships with schools, centers, and civilian institutions. NIU had at least four chancellors during the short time between 2005 and 2011. During this period, NIU did not demonstrate much progress against its goals, experienced some controversial events, and left the general populace of the IC with a low opinion of its effectiveness.

In 2011, the NIU was transformed by absorbing NDIC, an accredited, degree-granting institution with a 50-year history of providing military intelligence education. NDIC began as the Defense Intelligence School in 1962, was renamed the Defense Intelligence College in 1983, when accreditation was granted, then was renamed the Joint Military Intelligence College in 1993 and the National Defense Intelligence College in 2006. In February of 2011, NDIC was designated the National Intelligence University, with the goal of addressing the need for an accredited educational institution that serves all agencies of the IC in support of the strategic goals of ODNI. As the mission aperture for NIU has expanded, the role of the Center for Strategic Intelligence Research (CSIR), a component of NIU, has also expanded to include addressing the research needs of intelligence professionals in the IC, as well as Combatant Command (COCOM) intelligence professionals, including NIU students and faculty. CSIR, originally a component of NDIC, became part of NIU during the 2011 transformation.

NIU's educational infrastructure makes it well suited to adapting existing capabilities to the needs of the IC, specifically in terms of conducting research on topics that support interagency interests collectively or individually. The corpus of research developed by the research components of DoD provides resources that can be leveraged in support of new topics of value to IC components. As CSIR expands its focus from military intelligence to IC-wide issues, it needs to expand its knowledge of current IC research entities, their missions and objectives, and their resources, so as to identify potential research roles for NIU and CSIR students and faculty. Additionally, CSIR needs to develop a broader network of relationships and a wider range of processes for determining relevant research topics and collaborating within the IC to conduct and evaluate this research.

## Study Purpose

For this study, we first captured information about research entities in the IC, their missions, their willingness to support interagency research with NIU, and their representatives' suggestions for research topics of particular interest. We then analyzed this information to assist CSIR in identifying potential collaborative research opportunities and partners, research topics, and processes and activities to facilitate interagency research.

## Method

To elicit IC member views on research collaboration with NIU, we conducted semistructured interviews with representatives of the various established think tanks and research units across the IC, which we have termed *research entities*. The criterion for inclusion in this category was simply that the office, division, unit, or group focus on conducting research within the agencies of the IC.

In preparation for conducting the interviews, we created a data collection plan, an interview instrument (provided in Appendix A),

and, in collaboration with NIU and CSIR leadership, selected a sample of research entities and identified senior representatives to be interviewed. We also determined major interview constructs that would allow us to identify the mission, objectives, products, resources, and perceptions of the interviewees.

We examined primary sources and other extant data to inform our recommendations for supporting the conduct of interagency research, including collaboration strategies and processes for implementing an interagency research agenda.

## **Organization of the Report**

Chapter Two presents information about the research entities derived from our interviews with senior representatives of various IC research entities. It also includes findings from the research literature, along with best practices, predominantly from business literature, that are relevant to successful research partnerships. Chapter Three presents the results of our study and the patterns, threads, and commonalities we identified in our analysis of these results. Chapter Four presents recommendations for NIU and CSIR consideration and proposes methods and processes for implementing these recommendations. Finally, Chapter Five presents our concluding observations, particularly regarding the challenges NIU and CSIR will face in establishing its research role in the IC.

## Data Collected: Interviews and Literature

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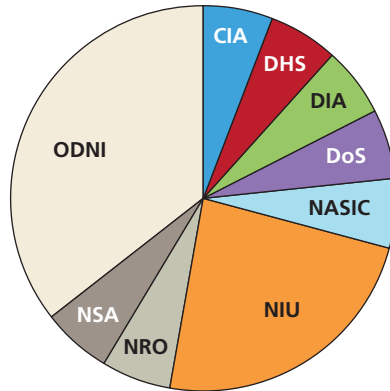
### Interview Participants and Their Research Entities

The IC consists of seventeen separate components: ODNI, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, the Department of State, the Department of the Treasury, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the National Security Agency, Air Force Intelligence, Army Intelligence, Coast Guard Intelligence, the Department of Energy, the Department of Homeland Security, the Drug Enforcement Agency, Marine Corps Intelligence, and Navy Intelligence. Working with NIU and CSIR, we identified 13 research entities in nine of these 17 components.

This study was designed to elicit expert opinions from those familiar with IC research entities that focus on intelligence analysis–related research. We were able to speak with senior leaders representing nine of the research entities identified. Our study participants were senior IC leaders of entities responsible for research production and/or consumption. The distribution of these participants across agencies is shown in Figure 2.1.

To complement our interviews and get a clearer picture of the types of research entities that exist in the IC, their missions, and the environments in which they work, we gathered data from online sources and built brief descriptions of these research entities. All the research

**Figure 2.1**  
**Distribution of Study Participants, by Agency**



NOTE: DHA = Department of Homeland Security; DoS = Department of State; NASIC = National Air and Space Intelligence Center; NRO = National Reconnaissance Office; NSA = National Security Agency.

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entities we identified within the IC are described in Appendix B. Those research entities that participated in our study are listed in Table 2.1.

Based on the descriptions we developed of the IC research entities, we identified four broad, mission-focused categories to serve as a framework for understanding these entities and for contextualizing our interview data. The variety in the structure and mission focus (i.e., the research interests) of these entities highlights the complexity of NIU/CSIR's mission to identify and promote interagency research.

The mission-focused categories we identified are: (1) conduct strategic analysis, (2) advance analytic tradecraft, (3) outreach, and (4) social science and historical research/lessons learned. In some instances, the research entity fit into more than one category. We offer brief descriptions and examples of each of these categories below to serve as background for considering our interview data.

*Conduct strategic analyses.* The research entities with this mission strive to address mid- to long-term research objectives on topics mainly of importance to the National Intelligence Managers (NIMs) and national priorities. Research entities with this mission include the National Intelligence Council (NIC) Strategic Futures Group (SFG),

**Table 2.1**  
**Participant Research Entities and Their Agencies**

| Research Entity                                       | IC Component                                    |
|---|---|
| Center for the Study of Intelligence                  | Central Intelligence Agency                     |
| Office of Intelligence Analysis                       | Department of Homeland Security                 |
| Director for Analysis, Research Director              | Defense Intelligence Agency                     |
| Bureau of Intelligence & Research, Office of Research | Department of State                             |
| CSIR, NIU leadership, NIU Faculty                     | National Intelligence University                |
| Center for the Study of National Reconnaissance       | National Reconnaissance Office                  |
| Institute for Analysis                                | National Security Agency                        |
| National Intelligence Managers                        | Office of the Director of National Intelligence |
| NIC Strategic Futures Group                           | Office of the Director of National Intelligence |
| Office of Analytic Outreach                           | Office of the Director of National Intelligence |
| National Counter Terrorism Center                     | Office of the Director of National Intelligence |

the NIMs, the Office of Intelligence Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security, the Center for Strategic Research (CSR) at the Institute for National Strategic Studies of the National Defense University, and the Center for Complex Operations (CCO).

*Develop new tradecraft and innovative methods for intelligence problem solving.* Research entities with this mission are focused on how intelligence analysis is conducted (i.e., tradecraft) and how to improve the substance, quality, and reliability of this analysis. Such research entities include the Directorate for Analysis (DI) Research Office (including the Devil's Advocate and Analytic Ombudsman programs) at DIA and the Institute for Analysis (IFA) at NSA.

*Promote and conduct analytic outreach.* Research entities that focus on analytic outreach are concerned with identifying and leveraging outside expertise to contribute to, critique, or otherwise improve intel-



ligence analysis and products. Analytic outreach is the focus of entities such as the Office of Outreach at the Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) and the Analytic Outreach Initiative (AOI) at ODNI.

*Social science and historical research/lessons learned.* The Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI) at the Central Intelligence Agency and the Center for the Study of National Reconnaissance (CSNR) at the NRO have unique roles in the IC that involve social science and historical research on individuals, organizations, operations, and programs. They also conduct scholarly studies that focus on lessons learned from strategic, operational, and tactical perspectives; studies of emerging trends; and knowledge-sharing conferences and seminars. CSNR focuses on topics that are relevant primarily to NRO. CSI is responsible for lessons-learned studies for CIA, as well as ODNI, making the variety of research topic areas quite broad. The CCO (DoD, Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development) focuses on research, lessons learned, and ways to enhance training and education for planning and executing interagency operations. Groups that study lessons learned also exist in most of the agencies of the IC.

### **Common Operating Environments**

Among the research entities studied, we found several common defining factors. The majority of research entities (78 percent) had ten or less full-time staff but had varied responsibilities, as described above. In addition, these entities are responsible for creating a number of different products that can vary by topic and scope. Finally, the operational tempo of these entities is brisk, leaving little time for strategic analysis of their own efforts—a perceived need. Given the responsibilities of these entities, their resources, and their constraints, it would seem that they are likely targets for the development of interagency research activities with NIU.

### **Interview Agenda**

Our interviews were aimed at addressing four major constructs, along with a number of subtopics for each.

*Research Entity Context.* We asked interviewees to describe their offices' missions and objectives. We also discussed what resources (i.e., personnel, financial, information, or technology) might be needed to better serve their customers and carry out their missions. We then asked the respondents about the type of products (i.e., briefings, summaries, in-depth studies) their offices provide to customers and whether these products can be shared easily within the IC, outside the IC, or both.

*Research Entity Needs.* We asked participants to explain how their research agendas are constructed. In particular, we were interested in learning if research topics are predetermined and, if so, what they are based on (e.g., customer request or specific national priorities). In light of how research topics are determined in a particular research entity, we asked participants to tell us about the topics on their wish lists (i.e., the research topics that are of great interest to the research activity and/or the IC in general but cannot realistically be addressed due to resource constraints), as well as topics that have an audience within the IC, but are typically benched when higher priority products are requested from customers.

*Research Entity Perceptions of NIU's role.* We asked participants how they were familiar with NIU—through colleagues, as a student or faculty member/guest lecturer, through interactions with faculty and/or programs, or other prior experience. We elicited further details regarding their perceptions of NIU's role in the IC based on their experience, including any strengths or weaknesses they observed during the course of their involvement with NIU.

*Research Entity Suggestions for NIU Regarding Collaborative Activities.* As part of every interview, we asked participants to provide recommendations to NIU for fulfilling its mission. These recommendations focused both on support to NIU from the research activity and support from NIU.

Chapter Three will present the findings from these interviews.

## Lessons from the Literature

To provide additional support to our research findings and identify additional related considerations that may provide insight to our recommendations, we consulted business and academic journals, related professional society reports, and websites. We focused on best practices and lessons learned from other types of partnerships that resemble interagency partnerships, such as partnerships between academic institutions and private industry or government entities.

Given that NIU is trying to introduce a new image along with new interagency activities, we also looked at research regarding changing perceptions. The topics below emerged as areas for further investigation from our interviews, discussions with the study sponsor, and the initial key findings from our data.

### Forming Partnerships with Collaborators—Turning Lessons Into Practice

The literature about forming and maintaining research partnerships between entities with one or more shared interests provided some helpful insights for our study. Our review of this literature was limited to identifying the important elements of successful industry-academic partnerships. Most examples of such relationships are between pharmaceutical companies and academia, biotechnical companies and academia, and information technology companies and academia.<sup>1</sup> In these relationships, both entities benefit. Industry acquires the specialized scientific skill set—often not resident in the firm—of experts and students without having to commit to hiring full-time staff. Academia

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<sup>1</sup> B. A. Lameman, M. S. El-Nasr, A. Drachen, W. Foster, D. Moura, and B. Aghabeigi, "User Studies—A Strategy Towards a Successful Industry-Academic Relationship," conference paper, Futureplay, 2010; New York Academy of Sciences, "Academic-Industry Collaboration Best Practices," conference proceedings, December 8, 2009; C. Reiger, "Models for Academic/Industry Partnerships," presentation made at the Center for Research on Information Technology and Organizations, University of California, Irvine, February 13, 2008; Business-Higher Education Forum, "Working Together, Creating Knowledge: The University-Industry Research Collaborative Initiative," Research Collaboration Initiative Task Force, undated.

has the benefit of funded research opportunities for faculty and students. Opportunities for student employment sometimes result as well.

We chose the industry-academic partnership as a framework because of the similarities between an industry-academic partnership and the IC-NIU relationship. In a sense, the IC writ large can be seen as sharing many characteristics with business in the partnership and NIU can be seen as sharing characteristics with academia. Like the IC, industrial environments have a broad range of operational considerations, with research being just one. Further, they are responsible for the integration of new research into the firm and the customer base. It is likely that their research interests are broader than those pursued within an academic partnership. Like NIU, the academic partner is focused on conducting quality, meaningful research that aligns with its research agenda, as well as providing learning experiences for its students and faculty. The academic partner also has commitments to academic freedom that may conflict with industry interests.

Best practices indicate that the identification of collaborative partners should be conducted systematically, keeping in mind specific goals and objectives. The following criteria are recommended when considering candidate collaborative partners. In the case of an IC-NIU partnership, the following are criteria that both the IC and NIU should consider:

- Will the experience that results from the collaborative effort enhance the student's education and support the institution's vision of the future?
- Will this experience add to the student's knowledge of the use of research methods, as well as the subject matter?
- Will this experience provide opportunities for the student to increase his or her professional network?
- Will this experience further academia's ability to provide high-performing researchers whose abilities match and/or strengthen the partner's needs?

Once an industry-academia partnership is formed, best practices suggest that the following critical issues and questions should be addressed as early in the process as possible:

- Determine what drives the partnership. Will the combined capabilities of the partnership fill a gap, or is it necessary to address a particular research question or domain?
- Determine how the partnership will account for cultural differences. For example, how can an IC-NIU partnership reconcile the IC's drive to accomplish mission objectives and NIU's commitment to academic freedom while respecting both?
- Assuming the synergy between research and education is important because it supports job readiness, does the partnership bridge the theory and practice gap?
- How will the partnership measure success?

These best practice recommendations—based on the experiences of industry-academic research partnerships—underscore the importance of forethought, careful planning, and organizing discussion during the development of research partnerships. Accepting the similarities between industry-academic partnerships and IC-NIU partnerships, it becomes apparent how these best practices could be applied.

### **Changing Perceptions and Attitudes—What Leads to Success?**

A challenging issue as NIU attempts to establish its role within the IC is that of changing the IC members' perceptions of NIU. As stated earlier, the identity of the NIU in the IC has been unstable and its reputation is of a less-than-successful institution. Therefore, it is understandable that members of the IC have an unclear view of NIU, its role in the IC enterprise, and its role as a driver of interagency research. Unfortunately, these perceptions can be difficult to change.

Research shows that the formation of perception relies on feedback between what people perceive and what they expect, and that people's expectations and beliefs further create a predisposition to

see things in a certain way.<sup>2</sup> Perceptions shaped by drive or motivation and/or expectations can result in people interpreting ambiguous data so that it appears unambiguous.<sup>3</sup> In the case of NIU, examples of ambiguous data would include changes in the description of NIU, such as changes regarding its relationship with the IC schoolhouses; the separation of an Assistant Director of National Intelligence position from the Chancellor of NIU; adopting a different physical concept of NIU (e.g., a virtual versus a brick-and-mortar campus); or replacing one institution with another (e.g., replacing NDIC with NIU). Members of the IC will likely retain the impressions they formed about NIU based on their first exposure to it. And when changes are made that do not seem to fit with their original impressions, they will ignore the ambiguous data or interpret it so that it does fit.

Attitudes are formed by experiences and perceptions of experiences.<sup>4</sup> Changing or overcoming perceptions and impressions, even those based on ambiguous data, can require a number of external conditions—behavior modeling of a respected figure, expectancy of success associated with desired change, opportunities to demonstrate the changed perception or attitude, and opportunities for feedback on successful performance.<sup>5</sup> Perception change, depending on how it is formed and how permanent the change is anticipated to be, can require a much greater effort than the persuasion techniques common to marketing activities.

Clearly, implementing measures to successfully, positively affect perceptions requires a significant commitment that should figure prominently in the decisionmaking process. Resource restrictions may not allow for a robust effort. However, smaller-scale activities may have

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<sup>2</sup> F. H. Allport, *Theories of Perception and the Concept of Structure*, New York: Wiley, 1955.

<sup>3</sup> J. S. Bruner and L. Postman, "On the Perception of Incongruity: A Paradigm," *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 18, 1949, pp. 203–223.

<sup>4</sup> Allport, 1955.

<sup>5</sup> A. Bandura, *Principles of Behavior Modification*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969; R. M. Gagne, *The Conditions of Learning*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985; R. M. Gagne and M. P. Driscoll, *Essentials of Learning for Instruction*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1988.

an impact with the persistent support of NIU faculty and students. An awareness of NIU's history and current roles and responsibilities, as well as a sensitivity to its roots and the reputation it has in the IC as a defense intelligence institution can guide the NIU faculty and students in their interactions within the IC as ambassadors of NIU and stewards of the NIU message.

## Findings

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We conducted interviews with 18 senior leaders representing the IC research entities and NIU either in person or by telephone. We conducted interpretational/thematic analysis on the interview data, yielding findings that we categorized into four major constructs (matching the constructs of the interview instrument) and 13 sub-constructs. We then looked at themes across the interview responses to identify root causes and/or issues. Our findings will be discussed first in terms of the constructs and sub-constructs identified in Table 3.1, and then by the themes we identified across responses.

**Table 3.1**  
**Constructs and Sub-Constructs for Data Categorization**

| <b>Construct</b>  | <b>Sub-Constructs</b>                                      |
|---|--|
| Describing the context of the research entity                                 | Mission<br>Objectives<br>Resources<br>Products             |
| Understanding the research entity's needs                                     | Product wish list<br>Unaddressed research topics           |
| Perceptions of NIU's role   | Perceptions<br>Prior experience<br>Strengths<br>Weaknesses |
| Collecting participant suggestions for NIU regarding collaborative activities | Support from NIU<br>Support to NIU<br>Other activities     |



## Describing the Research Entity Context—Findings

The research entities represented in this study were generally small in size (78 percent had ten or fewer full-time staff members) but varied in terms of their mission, objectives, and products. The research entities fell into one or both of two mission categories: traditional intelligence analysis and knowledge management. Where the mission was traditional intelligence analysis, objectives included identifying emerging technology, trends, and risks and advancing analytic tradecraft. The objectives that fell under the knowledge management category were information sharing within the IC and outreach between the private sector, academia, and the IC.

The products developed by the research entities varied greatly:

- To meet the objective of identifying patterns and risks of emerging trends, products included recommending and/or conducting relevant studies—both near-term and strategic—as well as making contributions to longer-range, high-visibility studies such as the National Intelligence Estimates.
- Products geared toward advancing analytic tradecraft or improving information sharing in the IC included support to professional development activities, the identification of tools and analysis methods, conducting gap analyses, and examining past and current practices via lessons learned studies.
- The products for facilitating outreach between the IC and outside experts included relationship building; conducting conferences; generating papers and reports (including conference proceedings); identifying new data, data sources, and subject-matter experts; and sponsoring academic research projects.

In summary, the IC research entities can be characterized by having a small staff, a mission that involves various objectives met through the production of a number of different products. In addition, the operational tempo of these entities is brisk, leaving little time for strategic analysis of their own efforts.

## Understanding Research Entity Needs—Findings

The research entities, particularly those reported as having ten or fewer full-time staff, were faced with the challenge of having insufficient time and manpower to address their competing needs: near-term, critical, and/or tactical analysis versus longer-term, strategic research and analysis. Interview participants expressed the need to more regularly address emerging concerns and trends in intelligence analysis. The ability to increase staff was limited and access to additional research support (via NIU thesis students or research fellows) would fill what seemed to be a nagging and consistent void. Current research relationships between NIU/CSIR and the IC are generally of an ad hoc nature. Student and/or faculty research topics are driven by individual interest, and they partner with whoever is willing.

Participants expressed a desire to have a greater awareness of and convenient, timely access to NIU research activities and products. Knowledge of NIU research was seen as helpful for identifying work that might complement or inform their research efforts.

## Perceptions of NIU's Role—Findings

Among the participants in this study, the perception still persists that the “new” NIU is solely a DIA/military institution. Many members of the IC see military intelligence analysis as very different from intelligence analysis in the nonmilitary elements of the IC. They are concerned that this difference in perspective and, to a degree, culture, will hinder NIU from becoming fully relevant to needs across the IC. Additionally, the history of NIU in ODNI prior to February 2011 made some of the study participants doubtful about the effectiveness of or need for a national intelligence university. Many participants were unsure of NIU's educational role versus the training/professional development roles of other agency-based “schoolhouses.”

Finally, participants stated that the physical location of NIU, which was perceived as far away from many of the IC agencies, was a deterrent to in-person collaboration.

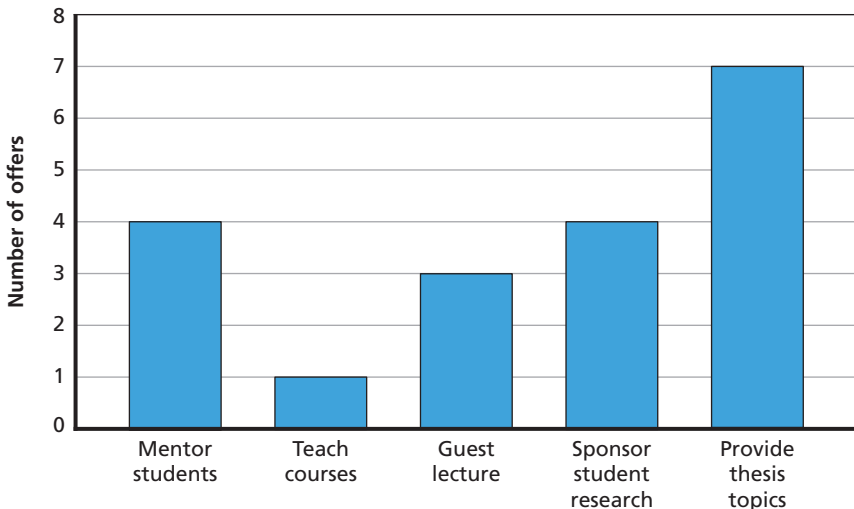
## Participant Suggestions for NIU Regarding Collaborative Activities—Findings

All participants offered suggestions regarding NIU's role in the IC and NIU's pursuit of interagency research efforts. These suggestions were directional—some of them had to do with the research entities providing support to NIU, while others focused on NIU providing support to the research entities or the IC writ large.

*Support to NIU.* The participants were willing to support NIU in academic activities. Many of the participants were willing to sponsor student research, provide thesis topics, and provide mentoring. One participant was willing to teach a course and three were willing to conduct guest lectures. The break out of the types of support offered and frequency of offers made by study participants is shown in Figure 3.1. The frequency shown in the figure represents all offers of help. Some participants offered more than one type of support.

Part of our interview tool centered on research topics that might be relevant for NIU students. About 40 percent of participants reported

**Figure 3.1**  
**Type and Frequency of Support Suggested**



that, if asked, they would be willing to provide potential research topics. While the participants identified no specific topics, the majority of participants recommended that the research be derived from topics under study by NIMs and the NIC and be aligned with identified national priorities.

Participants suggested and were willing to support other NIU-related activities that were focused on increasing interagency collaboration. These suggestions included helping to identify audiences and fora for student presentations, as well as supporting access for NIU students and faculty to IC fora. Other suggestions ranged from the very broad (e.g., supporting NIU outreach activities) to the somewhat narrow (e.g., posting links to NIU websites on the research entity's classified research websites, including summaries of student theses in IC publications).

*Support from NIU.* Participants also had expectations about support from NIU. In the interviews, participants also provided a number of broad expectations from NIU that would benefit the IC. Among these expectations, participants proposed several roles/responsibilities for NIU in the community. These suggestions focused on interagency collaboration (facilitating collaboration across the IC), helping to make the analyst population more diverse, acting as a bridge between the IC and academia, and sharing research products.

## Themes Across Responses

As we analyzed the data across responses, one significant theme emerged. In discussions of NIU's role in interagency research, there was a distinct, directional perception of the relationship between NIU and the IC research entities underlying most remarks. The perception is focused on responsibility and, perhaps, power. The participants saw NIU as the driver for most of the efforts discussed, with the expectation that NIU is mindful of research entity and IC needs. For example, the research entity representatives believed that NIU should be responsible for selecting research topics for NIU students but wanted the topics to be relevant to the research entities' unspecified needs. The

research entities supported the idea of collaborative research but felt that the bulk of the collaborative effort (identifying partners, determining topics, setting up necessary agreements) should rest with NIU. The research entities were willing to support NIU activities but did not express a willingness to take the lead on any of them. The way forward for NIU will include decisions regarding this perceived relationship and ways to ensure success.

## Recommendations

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Our study participants were positive in their discussion of NIU and they provided a number of suggestions that addressed CSIR and NIU more generally. The suggestions focused on how NIU and CSIR could help address the needs and resources of their own research entities, and on what NIU should do. The recommendations that follow are based on the findings of our interviews with senior leaders in the IC.

Our recommendations are presented in terms of the four constructs that frame this study. The interviewees recommended a wide range of activities that would, indeed, support the research entities but may not meet NIU's needs. Rather than suggest a laundry list of activities that would meet needs in a somewhat one-sided way, we recommend actions that should help build a strong foundation for the new instantiation of NIU. The challenges to building an interagency research capability are discussed in Chapter Five.

### **Describing the Context of the Research Entity— Recommendations**

#### **NIU/CSIR Should Use a Systematic Approach to Identifying Potential Research Collaborators**

By constructing and implementing a systematic approach, NIU could use its knowledge of the research entities' context—their missions, interests, and constraints—to identify IC candidates for collaborative research or research support activities. Such a systematic approach would include

- an examination of research topics to find a confluence between NIU-relevant topics, NIM/NIC-relevant topics, and research entity–relevant topics
- analysis to determine the appropriate product scope (e.g., a long- or short-range topic, an existing or emergent topic)
- establishing the role of the NIU researcher and the type of activity that would best benefit both NIU and the research entity.

### **NIU/CSIR Should Use a Stepwise Development Model for Creating Partnerships**

Upon identification of a potential collaboration activity and collaboration candidates, NIU would reach out to representatives of the identified entities, either through a formal presentation or informal meetings, to discuss potential research projects that would be useful for both parties. As part of these discussions, NIU should reflect on the following best practice questions relating to partnership:

- What drives the partnership?
- How will the partnership account for cultural differences?
- Does the partnership bridge the theory and practice gap?
- How will the partnership measure success?

Agreements to pursue interagency research or other collaboration efforts should be formalized, possibly through a memorandum of understanding or memorandum of agreement.

To establish its own best practices for developing partnerships, we recommend that NIU create a stepwise model, focusing first on the development of a particular partnership model for research (e.g., partnership between IC and NIU/CSIR) and then using a successful iteration of that model to inform the development of other partnerships (e.g., with industry, other academic institutions). In the development of the first model, special attention should be paid to lessons learned, as well as to processes for formalizing relationships and responsibilities with new partners.

Additional efforts to foster interagency research partnerships could include

- making faculty, students, and prospective students aware of interagency research partners and topics under study
- conducting regular group meetings with IC partnership representatives at rotating locations to identify additional research topics of common interest and potential new partners.

## **Understanding the Research Entity Needs— Recommendations**

### **NIU Should Investigate and Implement Research Plans That Complement IC Goals and Requirements and Are Aligned with National Priorities**

The current nature of research topic selection for NIU/IC collaborations is generally ad hoc, and is managed by whoever is willing to support it. It is possible to use such a model to identify research topics for interagency collaboration with NIU. However, ad hoc topic selection based on the identification of pockets of IC support may serve to deconstruct NIU/CSIR's research agenda. Also, this process can limit the type of research conducted, the topics addressed, the number of relationships and opportunities created for students, and the stability and growth of NIU/CSIR's research portfolio.

While considering the research requirements of other IC entities will help collaboration efforts, NIU student and faculty research should take priority. To best serve the research community, we recommend that NIU develop an overarching strategic research agenda that takes into consideration faculty and student research interests, national priorities, and major issues that have the attention of NIMs and the NIC. Creating such an overarching research framework would support and simplify research topic selection for NIU and would help ensure that the research is relevant to one or more of the IC research entities.



## **Research Entity's Perception of NIU's Role— Recommendations**

### **NIU Should Formalize Its Enterprise-Wide Outreach Programs and Familiarize Each Agency with NIU's Mission, Needs, and Resources**

By formalizing NIU's outreach program and educating the IC, NIU has the opportunity to get its message out. How regularly and frequently NIU reaches out to the community should be considered in terms of the educational impact it wants to have.

Participants showed a preference for having web-based access to information about NIU via the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communication System (JWICS). Therefore, it is important that NIU ensure it has a significant online presence with up-to-date resources and information and uses platforms that maximize access for IC agencies. Maintaining a research blog, a newsletter, or an information portal focused on areas of potential involvement with NIU and including a mechanism for interested parties to respond could help open doors for interagency involvement. The success of such an approach would, of course, depend on the IC members' awareness of its existence.

Student and faculty participation in IC blogs and/or analyst exchange sites could subtly expose NIU to a wider audience while also increasing networking opportunities for the NIU participants.

### **NIU Should Increase and Maintain Awareness of Community-Wide Access to NIU Research Resources**

The participants of this study were very interested in having access to a wider variety of NIU research products. The motivation was that NIU research products might complement the research entities' work, providing a building block for additional research. While NIU/CSIR has an active plan in place to make past and current theses available, the perception exists that not much of NIU's research is available across the IC. Currently, only certain research products are available to the rest of the community, and the paths to access these products are not well known. In addition to creating greater awareness of the availability of student and faculty research, NIU should consider how and where to provide access to additional research products. At the same time,

specific criteria should be developed to determine the selection and suitability of student research for publication. The criteria for publication could reflect the objectives for student education and research at NIU, and selection results could provide valuable feedback information on this topic.

If a research entity's specific interests are known to NIU—perhaps through systematic analysis, as discussed earlier—NIU should consider ways to connect that research entity with relevant NIU research directly.

Providing the IC access to a greater number of student and faculty research products presents an additional resource burden. NIU might tap members of the IC to support the review of potential research for relevancy to IC interests, as defined earlier, and to provide input regarding the selection of products for broader circulation from an IC perspective.

### **NIU Should Focus on Strengthening Communication and Collaboration Efforts Outside of Student Research**

Communication and collaboration activities will aid in clarifying NIU's identity and help with perception issues in the IC regarding NIU's roles.

NIU should consider providing frequent reminders of NIU activities through a network that is commonly used by the IC (e.g., A-Space, or an NIU information portal) to reach across the IC, engage a number of interested persons, and ensure that the NIU stays on the radar in an environment where there is competition for time and resources.

### **Participant Suggestions for NIU Regarding Collaborative Activities—Recommendations**

Given NIU's responsibility as a collaborative agent, the emphasis in the IC on developing collaborative efforts, and the enterprise-wide reality of insufficient time and resources, it is not surprising that the participants in this study looked to NIU to take on the lead role in developing IC collaborations.

NIU should engage IC representatives, particularly those representing IC research entities, in NIU programs regularly. Creating an awareness of milestones in the academic calendar, opportunities and/or needs for guest lecturers or subject-matter experts, and the support of faculty/fellow/student research can open up opportunities for engaging others in the IC. Another possible form of engagement would be to conduct a series of topical seminars that are particularly relevant to current national priorities and NIC and NIM areas of analysis. Rotating the host location of in-person events or employing videoconferencing technology would foster a sense of equity and collaboration, as would requests for post-event feedback.

### **NIU Should Create Opportunities for Representatives of Schoolhouses and Research Entities to Regularly Discuss IC Education and Training Needs, Facilitate Collaboration**

Nearly every agency in the IC has its own schoolhouse for agency-specific training and preparation. While NIU's original responsibilities included oversight of these schoolhouses, the current instantiation of NIU does not maintain this responsibility. However, there is a certain sensitivity among some of the schoolhouses stemming from confusion or apprehension about who might have decisionmaking power over them. It would be useful for NIU to create opportunities for and facilitate regular discussions among representatives of schoolhouses and research entities regarding training needs, collaborative opportunities, and possible ways of reducing the redundancy in education and training areas that currently overlap. This activity could include the establishment of enterprise-wide standards for IC intelligence education programs. In this role, NIU can help shape IC training and education without threatening agency autonomy and help prepare for the day when funding shortages lead to the centralization or reduction of IC education and training.

### **NIU Should Consider Building Its Role as an Academic Hub for Practitioners of All Levels**

Identifying and incubating special topics or skills in tradecraft or other intelligence functions could help develop NIU's role as an academic

hub for practitioners. NIU could also act as coordinator for working groups or other groups authorized to operationalize skill or topic development, offering student and faculty support, as well as a physical meeting space.



## Concluding Observations

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As a dual-hatted organization in the IC with both institutional and community obligations, NIU faces a number of challenges when embarking on interagency research and other collaborative activities. One benefit to this position is that NIU, unlike many of the entities it will be partnering with, has visibility across the agencies of the IC and a broader view of IC needs and research interests. This visibility can inform research decisions that serve NIU's current and future educational goals and vision for intelligence analysis education and support IC research needs holistically.

This chapter addresses the challenges to expanding NIU engagement in interagency research.

### **Challenge: Enterprise-Wide Understanding of NIU's Role**

First and foremost among these challenges is ensuring, to the greatest extent possible, that members of the IC have a clear understanding of NIU and its charter.<sup>1</sup> Our study results revealed a lingering impression that NIU, because of its roots as a military intelligence college, is focused solely on military intelligence education and has limited relevance to the IC enterprise. This is compounded by the fact that DIA, a military intelligence agency, currently houses and is the executive

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<sup>1</sup> Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, Department of Defense Instruction 3305.01, December 22, 2006, Incorporating Change 1, February 9, 2011.

agent for NIU, with oversight from the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.

In February 2011, NDIC which was colocated with DIA on Joint Base Anacostia Bolling, was designated the NIU. As stated earlier, there were at least three prior incarnations of NIU, which focused mostly on human capital issues and suffered from a number of controversial problems. The current incarnation comes with a 50-year history of exclusively military intelligence education.

The previous incarnations of NIU, beginning in 2005 and stemming from the recommendations of IRTPA,<sup>2</sup> called for an NIU system that would draw together the existing IC schools and training centers and provide centralized management and common educational standards through a virtual model rather than a brick-and-mortar institution. At that time, the Chancellor of NIU was also the Assistant Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Education and Training. Several subsequent Intelligence Community Directives (ICDs) defined very specific responsibilities of the chancellor that were heavily focused on human capital issues.<sup>3</sup> In addition, other ICDs (e.g., ICD 501<sup>4</sup>) began to include directives that charged the chancellor of NIU with developing shared, community-level training to promote an understanding of the individual responsibilities related in these directives. However, NIU's agency over the IC schoolhouses was not sustained as a responsibility.<sup>5</sup>

Depending on exactly when, since 2005, an individual or agency interacted with or learned about NIU, they will have a different perception of NIU that may or may not have changed since. To facilitate collaboration, NIU needs to address this challenge. There are a number of options that could be used to address this, each with varying scope. There is no compelling evidence to show that a large campaign would have more success or impact than a smaller effort. However, NIU

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<sup>2</sup> Public Law 108-458.

<sup>3</sup> Intelligence Community Directive 610, *Competency Directories for the Intelligence Community Workforce*, September 1, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Intelligence Community Directive 501.

<sup>5</sup> Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, 2011.

should remain cognizant of the challenges tied to misperceptions about its role and take every opportunity to educate their colleagues in the IC.

### **Challenge: Collaborating in a Disparate Research Environment**

A second challenge is determining effective methods for collaborating with research entities that would support NIU's research interests and identifying which research entities in the IC would benefit from NIU's assistance. Currently, the research entities reside within their own agencies and there is little organizational "glue" connecting them. To move interagency research forward, relationships must be built to help identify commonalities among research entities and the benefits to collaboration/collaborators. Awareness of this common ground will help increase communication and awareness, serving to strengthen the bond.

The organizational glue could take one of a number of different forms from the informal (e.g., an IC Community of Interest for Interagency Intelligence Research) to the formal (securing ODNI leadership support for identifying research entities in the IC as Centers of Intelligence Research Excellence). The precise form the organization would take depends on what outcomes are desired and what level of support for the idea exists among IC leadership and the community itself. It is possible that a government Working Group could be established to determine how an IC Interagency Research Group would be structured, what its responsibilities would be, and how its success would be measured.

### **Challenge: Finding a Balance When Setting the Research Agenda**

Our study participants were positive in their discussion of NIU and they provided a number of suggestions addressed to NIU/CSIR and to



NIU more generally. The suggestions focused on how NIU/CSIR could help address the needs and resources of the individual IC research entities, and on what NIU *should* do writ large. These suggestions propose a passive model in which the NIU/CSIR research agenda is driven by the needs and directives of others in the IC.

NIU's role as an academic institution suggests, however, that it needs to adopt an active model in which the research requirements and interests of NIU faculty and students drive NIU's research agenda and related research activities in the IC (interagency and intra-agency). While NIU research cannot be totally independent from the IC and must consider IC enterprise research requirements, an active model would allow NIU to control the development of its own research agenda rather than being directed by what others think is best.

Setting a research agenda involves a series of decisions, including what topics will be addressed, what research methods and designs will be used, and how research will be conducted and evaluated. These decisions may be made passively or actively. *Active decisionmaking* involves the consideration of two or more alternatives, their possible consequences, and how those consequences are valued and/or prioritized by the decisionmaker. *Passive decisionmaking* also involves a choice, but the decisionmaker allows someone else, time, or chance to make the decision. The models for research agenda setting presented here—active and passive—are so named because of the type of decisionmaking that most closely resembles the method used to set the research agenda.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 5.1 depicts the influences on CSIR in a passive model of agenda setting<sup>7</sup> regarding interagency research. If, for example, the research entities or other elements of the IC determine the topics for collaborative research with NIU based on their own needs and require-

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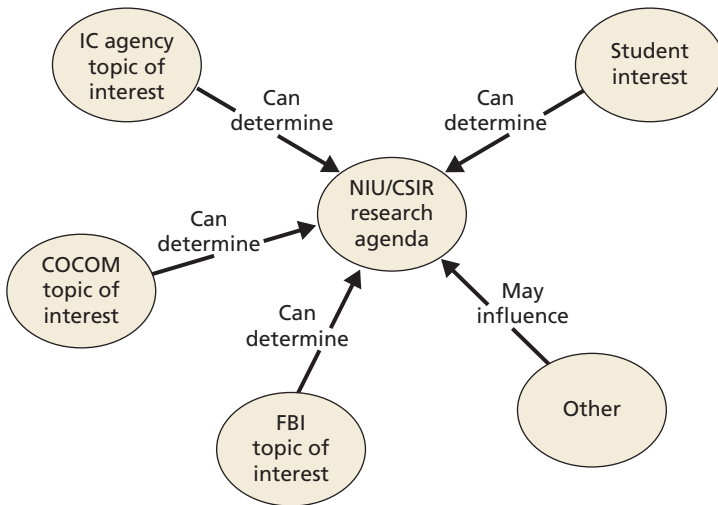
<sup>6</sup> H. A. Simon, "Rational Choice and the Structure of the Environment," *Psychological Review*, Vol. 63, No. 2, 1965, pp. 129–138; P. Slovic, S. Lichtenstein, and B. Fischhoff, "Decision-making," in R. C. Atkinson, R. J. Herrnstein, G. Lindzey, and R. D. Luce, eds., *Steven's Handbook of Experimental Psychology, Volume 2: Learning and Cognition*, 2nd ed., New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1988, pp. 673–738.

<sup>7</sup> Figure 5.1 was created with the concept-mapping software *Inspiration 9.0*. This representation is not intended to be exhaustive.

ments, the net result is an NIU research identity that consists of a combination of topics and issues determined by NIU’s collaborative partners. In this model, a number of different competing interests can influence or determine the research agenda with little influence from NIU/CSIR itself.

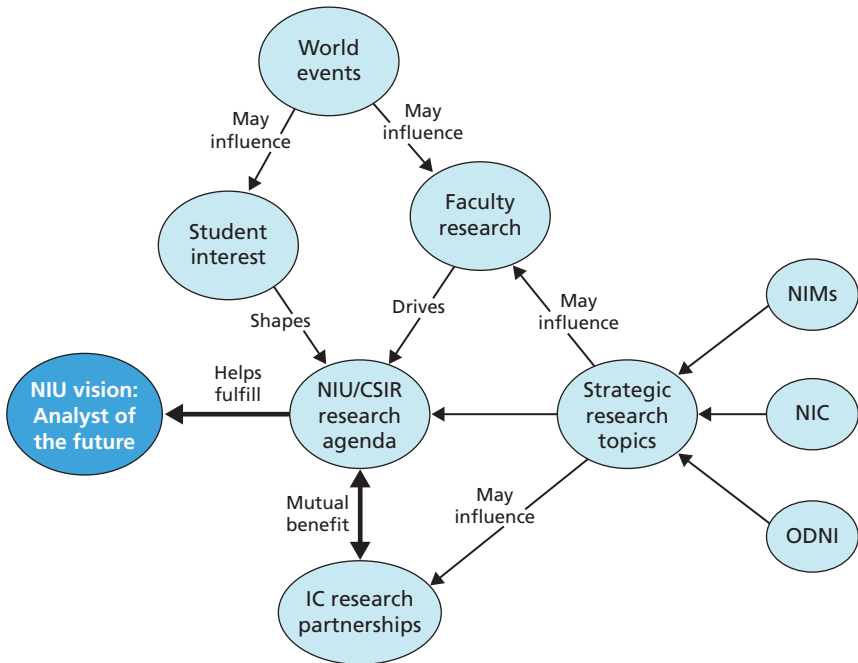
This lack of identity and, in some ways, lack of control, limits NIU’s ability to tie the research experiences it offers to students with NIU’s vision of student achievement. There is no way to predict accurately which topics the IC entities will request research on, making a reliable agenda challenging. The passive model also makes it difficult to streamline efforts for setting the research agenda because the agenda is always subject to change based on the needs of the IC and individual relationships within the community that are often personality-driven.

**Figure 5.1**  
**Influences on Passive Research Agenda Setting**



The active model of research agenda setting, as shown in Figure 5.2<sup>8</sup> for NIU/CSIR, presents a different power dynamic among the influences and drivers. In the active model, NIU/CSIR determines the research agenda. As in active decisionmaking, this model of agenda setting allows NIU/CSIR to consider alternatives and prioritize their consequences to meet NIU’s educational goals and objectives. Faculty research and strategic research topics (as determined by NIMs, national intelligence officers (NIOs), and national priorities set by ODNI) are the primary influences on the research agenda and NIU

**Figure 5.2**  
**Influences on Active Research Agenda Setting**



RAND RR243-5.2

<sup>8</sup> Figure 5.2 was created with the concept-mapping software *Inspiration 9.0*. This representation is not intended to be exhaustive.

faculty research programs are the primary drivers. Because NIU/CSIR determines the research agenda, the research topics and requirements can be reliable and consistent. As such, the research agenda that results from this model can help shape student interest and can be crafted to directly support NIU's educational goals and vision for future analysts.

In the active model, IC research partnerships are formed to serve mutual interests and both parties benefit. Maintaining a greater level of control over the selection of collaborative research topics and partners does not detract from the collaboration itself, but enriches it. The adoption of this model requires the engagement of NIU faculty not only to maintain a level of research quality that is consistent with higher education and IC standards but also to ensure that the research agenda stays relevant to both educational and IC purposes.

A comparison of the active and passive models of research agenda setting indicates that the type of model employed, particularly with regard to interagency collaboration, can and will affect more than just who identifies the research topic. It determines who actually controls the process and, in some ways, the outcomes.

Because of its unique role in the IC, NIU will need to strike a balance between these two models to guide the development of interagency research partnerships, the selection of research topics, and other collaborative activities. It can either continue in a passive role and identify ways to temper its shortcomings, or it can adopt an active model with some flexibility, staying mindful of the need to remain relevant to the work of the IC.

Good research builds the reputation and identity of an institution of higher learning. Students, faculty, research partners (IC, academic, industry), and research funders are drawn to institutions that exhibit a strong, easily identifiable research program. At the base of these assertions is the development and maintenance of a research agenda that is actively determined and represents high-quality products. This is the model that most universities and colleges have used to build their research capabilities, their student body, and their reputations. It is one that NIU should consider as it attempts to reach its new goals and objectives.



## Interview Instrument

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### CSIR Interagency Research Study Interview Instrument

1. Research Conducted
  - a. How would you characterize research in your unit?
    - Is there a specific research agenda for your unit?
    - Are research objectives formalized?
    - What types of objectives are included (e.g., long-term and/or short-term research goals/plans)?
  - b. Who designs and conducts the studies? Who provides guidance?
    - Do you have students/interns/etc. engaged in research at your agency?
  - c. What/who drives topic selection? What is the process for topic identification/selection?
  - d. Are research topics: Internally oriented or customer/externally oriented? Both? Strategic or tactical? Both? Of local interest only? Agency interest? IC interest?
  - e. What is done currently with results? Are they published or disseminated in some way?
  - f. In your opinion, what are some examples of successful research projects? What made them successful?
  - g. What constraints impact your ability to conduct research (e.g., funding, access to materials)?



## Research Entities in the Intelligence Community

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This appendix includes descriptions of a number of research entities in the IC. It is important to note that the predominant definition of research in these centers is, in fact, analysis that focuses on either emerging or strategic topics that are generally outside the scope of the work of discipline-specific intelligence analysts. Research is a systematic, *repeatable* investigation that includes a research question or hypothesis, research design that identifies and employs particular discipline-specific methods for data collection and analysis, results of data collection and analysis, and the impact of the data analysis on the research question or hypothesis. With very few exceptions, the research being conducted by these entities is technically analysis, rather than research.

### Analytic Outreach Initiative

#### Office of the Director of National Intelligence

AOI's purpose is to identify existing outreach activities in the IC, expand their capabilities, and encourage new approaches or best practices to improve their efforts. Membership of the group incorporates representatives from all IC agencies. To meet its goals for outreach, AOI focuses on building collegial ties between members of the IC, as well as promoting different ways for members to engage with each other through outreach activities. Through these measures, AOI intends to promote relationships and professional networks throughout the IC that will



advance the community's ability to share knowledge, tradecraft, and craft collaborative analysis. The outreach exercises include conferences, seminars, workshops, scenario exercises, studies, and exchanges all sponsored or lead by AOI. Further, through networking and building "communities of interest," AOI aims to help the IC more readily access shared, unclassified knowledge to solve critical problems. AOI coordinates and supports outreach efforts conducted through the Department of State INR, the executive agent for outreach in the IC.

## Center for Complex Operations

### Department of Defense, Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development

CCO is "a Congressionally mandated center located at the National Defense University tasked to conduct research, identify lessons learned, enhance training and education, and improve the planning and execution of interagency operations."<sup>1</sup> It is also responsible for knowledge and information management for training and education related to complex operations. CCO is responsible for enabling networking and coordination among government entities involved in complex operations, as well as the development and maintenance of a complex operations training and education Community of Practice. CCO publishes *Prism* (a journal of security studies relevant to complex operations), the *CCO Case Studies Series* (classroom teaching case studies that focus on complex operations), and a number of books on complex operation subjects. CCO offers a number of unpaid internship positions throughout the year to support its research activities.

**Website:** <http://cco.dodlive.mil/>

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<sup>1</sup> National Defense University, Center for Complex Operations, home page, undated.

## Center for Strategic Research

### Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University

CSR provides objective, rigorous, and timely analysis that responds to the needs of decisionmakers and various policy audiences. The research focuses on emerging strategic trends that pose longer-term challenges for U.S. national security and raise important questions for policymakers. The center focuses on seven core regions and areas of interest: East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Eurasia, Near East and South Asia, the Western Hemisphere, Africa, Energy and Environmental Security, and Future Strategic Concepts. The center also addresses special projects, including those related to “power and vulnerability in an era of contested dominance.”<sup>2</sup> CSR is responsible for a number of publications, including analytic papers, event reports, and analysis and reviews.

**Website:** <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/index.cfm?type=section&secid=52&pageid=4>

## Center for the Study of Intelligence

### Central Intelligence Agency

CSI is responsible for research, outreach to intelligence practitioners and scholars, and the collection of intelligence material for historical purposes. CSI does not necessarily cover the current intelligence issues that analysts follow but is interested, rather, in how intelligence shapes policy.

CSI has five specific responsibilities to the intelligence community, which are as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> National Defense University Institute for National Studies, Center for Strategic Research, home page, 2010.

1. Intelligence Research: CSI publishes *Studies in Intelligence*, a journal that is published quarterly in a classified format and annually in an unclassified format. It also publishes books, monographs, and other research on intelligence issues.
2. Intelligence History: CSI publishes written and oral reports on the history of intelligence and the CIA. It also publishes documentaries from the Cold War and supports the State Department's *Foreign Relations of the United States* series.
3. Historical Records: CSI publishes historical records to promote the general public's understanding of intelligence.
4. Conferences and Seminars: CSI sponsors events to make its research widely available. It also creates opportunities to bring practitioners and scholars together and commemorate landmark events in intelligence.

CSI is also home to the CIA and ODNI Lessons Learned programs. Through these programs, CSI produces studies about internal “issues, programs, operations, business practices, and events that illustrate lessons worthy of being preserved and shared.”<sup>3</sup> Publications produced by way of these lessons learned programs include, (U) *Relocation of CIA's Iraq Support Base in 2009: Keys to Success*; (U) *Lessons Learned: The National Security Council Staff Rotation—Walking in a Policymaker's Shoes*; and (U) *CIA's Management of Nonofficial Cover Personnel and Operations*.

**Website:** <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/index.html>

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<sup>3</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, Center for the Study of Intelligence, home page, March 7, 2013.

## Center for the Study of National Reconnaissance

### National Reconnaissance Office

CSNR's mission is to promote the study, dialogue, and understanding of the discipline and practice of national reconnaissance. The primary purpose of research at CSNR is to provide an analytical framework and historical context for effective policy and programmatic decisions by NRO leadership. The research focus is on social science and the humanities (history). CSNR's products include organizational and program histories, research articles, symposia, and lessons learned studies. It also publishes scholarly articles, studies, commentaries, and book reviews in *National Reconnaissance: Journal of the Discipline and Practice*.

**Websites:** [http://intellipedia.intelink.ic.gov/wiki/Center\\_for\\_the\\_Study\\_of\\_National\\_Reconnaissance](http://intellipedia.intelink.ic.gov/wiki/Center_for_the_Study_of_National_Reconnaissance)

<http://www.nro.gov/history/csnr/index.html>

## Directorate for Analysis Research Director

### Defense Intelligence Agency

The DI at DIA is positioned to develop analytic methods and tradecraft. The Research Director staff is responsible for identifying what gets at research—the tools, methods, and professional activities that support the research mission of DIA and the socialization of analysts within the IC.

The DI is designed to maintain DIA's strategic research efforts. The office also “develops, implements, and evaluates activities and transformation efforts improving analytic quality, tradecraft, and professional development for all of DI's open source analysts.”<sup>4</sup> The Research Director's office also houses DIA's Devil's Advocate and Ana-

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<sup>4</sup> Defense Intelligence Agency, “DI Research Director,” April 2010.

lytic Ombudsman programs, both of which seek to emphasize analytic rigor and the development of well-rounded intelligence analysts.

**Website:** <http://www.dia.mil/about/>

## **INR Office of Outreach**

### **Department of State/Bureau of Intelligence and Research**

As the executive agent for outreach in the IC, INR Office of Outreach (OTR) is positioned to “organize and fund conferences and studies to facilitate the interchange of expertise and ideas between outside experts and government officials, leading to a more informed foreign policy process.”<sup>5</sup> OTR’s external research staff sponsors 200–250 seminars each year that bring together IC personnel and external experts to enhance their collective understanding of foreign policy issues. OTR publishes the results of these conferences as conference papers distributed to the State Department and other U.S. government agencies. They also sponsor research studies that pertain to a specific event or decision. Additionally, OTR houses the Title VIII program on Eastern Europe and the Independent States of the Former Soviet Union, which seeks to develop and maintain U.S. experts on these regions by providing grants for language training, graduate-level studies, and postdoctoral research to interested and qualified recipients.<sup>6</sup>

**Website:** <http://www.state.gov/s/inr/>

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<sup>5</sup> United States Department of State, INR Office of External Research Staff, “Office Description and Mission,” August 12, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> United States Department of State, 2011.

## Office of Intelligence Analysis

### Department of Homeland Security

The Office of Intelligence Analysis's capability is primarily focused on intelligence analysis, based on its mission to "equip the Homeland Security Enterprise with the intelligence and information it needs to keep the homeland safe, secure, and resilient."<sup>7</sup> It does this through analysis, collection, information-sharing, and information management. Its analysis activities fall under three categories:

- immediate and ongoing threats
- strategic contexts (context, trends, pattern analysis)
- opportunities (emerging issues for which reporting streams are new or fragmentary).

Based on information provided through its website, about 10 percent of I&A's focus is on identifying new topics and issues that could impact the Department of Homeland Security and its customers.

**Websites:** [http://intellipedia.interlink.ic.gov/wiki/DHS\\_Office\\_of\\_Intelligence\\_and\\_Analysis](http://intellipedia.interlink.ic.gov/wiki/DHS_Office_of_Intelligence_and_Analysis)

<http://www.dhs.gov/about-office-intelligence-and-analysis>

## National Counterterrorism Center

### Office of the Director of National Intelligence

The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) is designed to support the collection and dissemination of intelligence analysis on counterterrorism measures. Although not a traditional center for research within the IC, NCTC identifies, analyzes, and shares information on counterterrorism so that the leaders in operations and analysis at other U.S.

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<sup>7</sup> Department of Homeland Security, "About the Office of Intelligence Analysis," undated.

government agencies can respond to threats more effectively. NCTC research includes the gap analysis of IC-wide counterterrorism needs for research and analysis. NCTC has far-reaching access to U.S. government resources to support counterterrorism planning activities.

NCTC serves as the primary U.S. government agency for analyzing and integrating all intelligence pertaining to terrorism and counterterrorism, with the exception of purely domestic terrorism. In this capacity, NCTC serves as the central, shared knowledge bank on terrorists (known and suspected) and international terrorist groups and is responsible for outreach of this material to agencies and ensuring access to all-source intelligence needed to execute counterterrorism measures.

**Website:** <http://www.nctc.gov/>

## **National Intelligence Council Strategic Futures Group**

### **Office of the Director of National Intelligence**

The NIC SFG collects research on global issues and generates analysis on the future strategic environment and emerging risks and opportunities. The NIC SFG is a production environment focusing on strategic research without the geographic or functional area constraints of other agencies. However, unlike the analysis at other agencies, the NIC SFG is a consumer of analysis that it then uses to produce authoritative strategic research on far-reaching issues and trends. One product of this work is the SFG intelligence estimates of emerging technology and threats.

To meet its objectives, the NIC works with senior intelligence consumers to identify their current and future needs and promote collaboration between analysts at each agency in the IC. More broadly, the NIC is the center for mid- and long-term strategic thinking in the IC, and the SFG is a key nexus in meeting that mission.

**Website:** [http://www.dni.gov/nic/NIC\\_home.html](http://www.dni.gov/nic/NIC_home.html)

## National Intelligence Managers

### Office of the Director of National Intelligence

The NIMs, through ODNI, “oversee and integrate all aspects of the IC’s collection and analytic efforts against a particular region or function.”<sup>8</sup> The NIMs are organized into 17 regional and functional areas, as shown in Table B.1.

NIMs are designated representatives of the Director of National Intelligence for each area. They are responsible for the design and successful implementation of the Unifying Intelligence Strategies for each region or function.

**Website:** <http://www.intelink.ic.gov/sites/ddii/nim/default.aspx>

**Table B.1**  
**NIM Regional and Functional Areas**

| Regional           | Functional             |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Africa             | Counterintelligence    |
| East Asia          | Counterproliferation   |
| Eurasia            | Counterterrorism       |
| Europe             | Cyber                  |
| Iran               | Economic Issues        |
| Near East          | Military Issues        |
| Koreas             | Science and Technology |
| South Asia         | Threat Finance         |
| Western Hemisphere |                        |

<sup>8</sup> Office of the Director of National Intelligence, “Home – National Intelligence Managers (NIMs),” undated.



## **National Security Agency**

### **Institute for Analysis**

NSA is responsible for producing new processes, methodologies, and techniques for the analytic community. They create these new methods for problem solving by reaching out to industry and academic experts and leveraging previously untapped human capital. IFA works through “challenges” with “challenge champions,” who are generally NSA employees who commit to working with the IFA to solve a difficult intelligence problem that is relevant to their office and to the IC. While challenges vary in scope, they generally receive six to nine months of effort.

## **National Threat Assessment Center**

### **United States Secret Service, Department of Justice**

The National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) mission is “to identify, assess, and manage persons who have the interest and ability to mount attacks against Secret Service protectees.”<sup>9</sup> Although NTAC is not traditionally recognized as a center for research within the IC, the organization provides collection, aggregation, and training roles that advance the capabilities of both intelligence operations and analysis. Specifically, NTAC conducts research on potential threats and targeted violence and provides training on their methods to law enforcement and public safety officials. They also engage in information sharing with these partners and promote standardization among all levels of government to investigate threats.

Examples of NTAC’s products include *Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education*, which was written in response to the April 2007 Virginia Tech shooting; *Safe School Initiative*, a study of school-based attacks at K–12 schools; and *The Insider Threat Study*, a series of reports on illicit cyber activity within the gov-

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<sup>9</sup> United States Secret Service, “National Threat Assessment Center,” 2010.

ernment, information technology, telecommunications, banking and finance, and critical infrastructure sectors.<sup>10</sup>

**Website:** <http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac.shtml>

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<sup>10</sup> United States Secret Service, 2010.



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United States Secret Service, “National Threat Assessment Center,” 2010. As of March 13, 2012:  
<http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac.shtml>

The Center for Strategic Intelligence Research (CSIR) of the National Intelligence University (NIU) is responsible for supporting faculty and student research efforts and coordinating NIU research activities with the Intelligence Community (IC). A challenge to these coordination efforts lies in the fact that research being conducted regularly in the IC exists, for the most part, in small pockets scattered throughout a number of different IC agencies. To better identify collaborative research opportunities, topics, and processes, CSIR asked RAND to conduct a study that would capture information about these research entities, their responsibilities, and their willingness to support interagency research with NIU. The study team conducted semistructured interviews with a purposive sample of representatives of research entities in the IC. The interviews discussed interagency research and collaboration with NIU. We found that the majority of these research entities are small (less than ten full-time staff), face the competing responsibilities of short-term analytic responses and longer-term analysis and research, and are interested in research plans aligned with national priorities. The research entities are willing to support NIU, but expect NIU to take the lead in facilitating research collaboration.



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