

IMPROVING THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE MACHINERY

Introduction

1. This paper, requested by the Cabinet Secretary as Principal Accounting Officer for the Single Intelligence Account, examines the changing context for intelligence work and the capabilities required within the central intelligence machinery in the Cabinet Office to deliver effective strategic central coordination. It recommends some changes to the organisation of the Cabinet Office's central intelligence machinery and the strategic governance and other processes that govern the relationship between central Government and the intelligence services. This paper is the result of extensive consultation at senior level within the Cabinet Office, key departments, and the Agencies, and its conclusions have been endorsed by the Agency heads and the wider Joint Intelligence Committee. It also reflects consideration of recommendations by the Intelligence and Security Committee in a number of important areas.
2. Part 1 of this paper sets out the changing context on which this analysis is based. Part 2 looks at the key capabilities required by the Cabinet Office's central intelligence function. Part 3 outlines some proposed changes to the organisation of that function in the light of this analysis.

Part 1: Context

3. Intelligence work supports wider national security objectives. What is distinctive about Agency capability, and common to all three Agencies, is that their activity is for the most part covert. This sensitive and covert set of capabilities is governed by law. As a result, for many years a central mechanism has existed within the Cabinet Office to co-ordinate Agency related issues on behalf of the Prime Minister, supported by the Foreign and Home Secretaries' responsibilities for individual services. The covert nature of the work also means that agency activity both attracts high levels of political and public interest but also dictates that the normal processes of public scrutiny of Government activity do not apply in full to the Agencies. This means that from time to time, matters of intelligence policy arise which are of the highest constitutional, security and political importance. It also means that governance arrangements for the Agencies are to an extent necessarily different from other parts of Government activity.
4. **Annex I** to this paper seeks to articulate more fully the constitutional, strategic and operational framework for intelligence activity and the role of the Cabinet Office within that framework. This part of the paper is an important part of understanding the role of the Cabinet Office in intelligence. It concludes that there are four main functions:
 - providing **assurance** to Parliament, the wider public, the Prime Minister and other Ministers, and the Principal Accounting

Officer around the overall health of the intelligence community within the legal and constitutional framework;

- assuming an **advocacy** role within Government for the requirements of the Agencies;
- as in other areas of Government activity, providing **arbitration** between different Government institutions in key issues; and
- providing a central **assessment** function to integrate the processes of collection and analysis undertaken in different parts of the intelligence community, and to ensure the effectiveness of that wider analytical community.

5. Over the past decade there have been a number of structural changes to the organisation of the Cabinet Office's intelligence functions and the wider national security framework within Government. Amongst other things, these have been driven by:

- the increased challenge of tackling international terrorism since 2001, which prompted a number of changes, most significantly the establishment of an Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism in the Home Office in 2007;
- the requirements for a stronger framework for intelligence assessment set out in Lord Butler's review of intelligence on weapons of mass destruction in 2004, leading to the establishment of a Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis and the further changes announced by the Prime Minister in 2007 to strengthen the intelligence assessment function through a dedicated chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee;
- the Government's decision to enhance the role of the Intelligence and Security Committee, announced in the 'Governance of Britain' paper in 2007; and
- the development of the UK's first National Security Strategy in 2008, which led to the establishment of a small central capability in the Cabinet Office charged with co-ordination of wider strategic work in support of stronger Cabinet Committee structures.

6. These changes have been in response to the Government's assessment of evolving challenges. The context for intelligence work continues to develop and it is useful to take stock at this point about the department's structures and capabilities to meet the challenges of the future. Some eight years on from the step-change in the international counter-terrorism effort following the September 2001 attacks, and five years on from Lord Butler's review of intelligence on weapons of mass destruction, there are a number of important drivers with profound potential effects on the intelligence community that therefore affect the interface between the Cabinet Office and the intelligence community.

7. These drivers include:

- the complex operational, legal, ethical and other challenges posed by the sustained and severe threat from international

terrorism, a profoundly different threat to previous terrorist threats to the UK;

- the ongoing debate about the modernisation of intelligence powers and capabilities and the balance with individual liberty;
- the ongoing challenges from hostile foreign activity, which can now be undertaken in newer domains like cyber-space;
- the increasingly blurred distinction between 'foreign' and 'domestic' security challenges and the consequent need for even greater inter-agency working and collaboration with international partners;
- the need for the central assessment function and wider Government analytical capability to keep pace with this changing context;
- the wider strategic framework for national security in which intelligence activity plays an important part across many of the different aspects;
- the requirements of Parliamentary and wider public accountability for intelligence work in a modern democracy, including legal challenges which involve intelligence work; and
- within the fiscal parameters set out in Budget 2009, the need for effective prioritisation of intelligence resources, robust mechanisms for ensuring delivery and effective mechanisms for strategic collaboration and joint working between the Agencies.

8. Much has been achieved already in this challenging environment. To ensure the Cabinet Office's capabilities keep pace with this fast-changing picture, the department will need to adapt its structures and priorities to ensure it meets each of its four objectives in respect of the Government's intelligence effort. Part 2 of this paper therefore looks briefly at the four main key areas of work and proposes some re-focussed priorities for each area. The third and final part outlines how the department can organise itself more effectively to deliver these priorities.

9. The four areas covered are are:

- intelligence policy;
- strategic governance of the Single Intelligence Account;
- the central assessment function; and
- the wider analytical community across Government.

Part 2: Key areas of capability

Intelligence policy

10. As in all areas of Government policy, the Cabinet Office provides strategic policy leadership on intelligence and security matters. However, given the challenges facing the intelligence community, and the special position of the Cabinet Office in the national intelligence machinery, it should strengthen its central policy function and it can do more to create greater clarity about where it can best add value.

11. The consultations around this paper concluded that the focus of the existing central intelligence policy function should be clarified around four priority areas. These are:

- **strategic policy**, including, where appropriate, intelligence legislation. Technological advances continue to change the context in which the Agencies operate and this can bring into play complex and difficult questions about the role of intelligence Agencies, and the balance between national security and individual rights;
- **law and ethics**, including legal casework;
- **strategic international engagement**, including the difficult choices around information sharing, the framework for capacity building in other countries, and strategic engagement with other central intelligence functions, notably the Director of National Intelligence in the United States; and
- **Parliamentary and wider public scrutiny**, including building on the already strong engagement with the Intelligence and Security Committee, links with other Parliamentary bodies, and strategic guidance and support on media relations.

12. This more focussed policy function, organised around these four strands, would not in any way alter the relationship between the Foreign Secretary and SIS and GCHQ on the one hand, nor the Home Secretary (and for Northern Ireland issues the Northern Ireland Secretary) and the Security Service on the other. Instead it would complement these relationships by providing a more effective central capability for dealing with issues that affect the health of the intelligence effort as a whole.

Strategic governance of the Single Intelligence Account

13. The core role of the Cabinet Office in respect of the SIA (as distinct from the wider activities of the Agencies) has historically been financial. The constitutional, strategic and operational bases of Agency activity noted in Annex 1 to this paper give rise within the SIA to the central functions of assurance to the Prime Minister, advocacy on behalf of the Agencies

centrally, and where necessary arbitration between the Agencies and/or other Government departments. Consequently, a senior Cabinet Office official, either the Cabinet Secretary or a permanent secretary level figure, has held the Accounting Officer role since the inception of the SIA.

14. At the core of this function, therefore, is the need to ensure:

- i. that money allocated through the SIA is spent properly and in an efficient and effective way, in line with the standard responsibilities of Accounting Officers;
- ii. that resources allocated to the Agencies are adequate for the functions they are tasked with providing.

15. There is of course more to it than this. As Sir Michael Quinlan's report in 1994 on the governance of the SIA on its inception made clear, the SIA has never been intended solely as a simple aggregation of three classified Votes, but also as a more coherent strategic framework for funding and monitoring the capabilities being paid for. On occasion, such as the transfer of funds between Agencies to meet urgent requirements, or the decision to establish the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), this has been demonstrated in practice.

16. This wider framework is becoming increasingly important. The last three spending reviews in 2002, 2004 and 2007 saw significant increases in SIA resources, following discussions with HM Treasury involving strong Cabinet Office engagement. It is vital that the intelligence community can continue to demonstrate that this investment has delivered results, and is aligned to wider national security priorities. In the next spending review and beyond, it will be more important still for the Agencies to be able to demonstrate strategic prioritisation and the ability to deliver through collaborative working where possible.

17. To this end, discussions around this paper point towards strengthening in the first instance two existing processes:

- better alignment of the quarterly Cabinet Secretary stock-takes with Agency Heads and the Financial Strategy Group, chaired by the Cabinet Office Director General for intelligence, based on commonly recognised financial and performance information; and
- that the key requirements for financial and performance management data should be agreed by the Agencies, the Cabinet Office and the Treasury along with an annual timetable for submission of the data.

18. Second, there is a strong sense that, as elsewhere in Government, the central SIA function needs to have access to greater professional finance skills.

19. Third, in terms of Cabinet Office organisation, the department's focus in

this area should be around two strands of work:

- a core finance branch, with strong professional finance skills; and
- a strategy function, which focuses on **capability building and corporate provision**. The SIA is a repository for specialist capabilities that the Government can choose to deploy across a number of priorities (for example, countering terrorism, espionage or proliferation. A framework could usefully draw together a unified picture of the overall capabilities that the SIA is providing, considering the trade-offs between developing and deploying them in particular ways and planning for their long term health. The Cabinet Office can contribute to this process by helping to identify how wider policy issues, including those arising from the National Security Strategy, will affect the SIA and helping to identify where there may be tensions or trade offs to manage. This new strategic framework for the SIA will allow more transparent conversations about relative priorities and choices.

The central assessment function

20. At the heart of the central intelligence machinery is the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). The JIC retains its vital constitutional position at the heart of the central intelligence machinery. It remains highly regarded externally, particularly by international partners who see the value of reaching an agreed view on key areas of great complexity. Internally, the value of the JIC in principle as the senior, independent assessment body is deemed of great value.
21. Based on the views of JIC members, including the Chairman, and key customers, this paper concludes that the mechanisms and processes for agreeing and prioritising the JIC's work programme could usefully be strengthened further so that its objective assessments are of maximum use to policymakers. Such a process would aim better to balance and prioritise the many requests for JIC and wider central Assessments Staff input from a wide range of customers (of which the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, for understandable reasons, is the principal one). Successfully done, this would ensure that the JIC improved the balance between key strategic judgments, tactically relevant assessments, early warning assessments, and other outputs.
22. The JIC Chairman has now undertaken to review the processes it uses to commission its work in order to prioritise the demands placed on it more effectively and to ensure the quality and relevance of JIC outputs. A clear set of criteria is to be established against which demands for centrally assessed products can be evaluated. The impact of these changes will then be evaluated, alongside a fuller analysis of customer views.
23. It is also important that the key customers within Government of JIC and

wider assessment staff products understand fully the nature and use of intelligence. Much has been done since the Butler review to improve the training of policy staff in the use of intelligence. However, the necessary widening of the national security community of interest has drawn a wider range of people, sometimes from non-national security backgrounds, into the fold of customers of intelligence products. Individuals within this wider community have the required levels of security clearance, but there is some limited evidence that not all have benefited from the high quality training available on the nature and use of intelligence. Addressing this is a small but important further strengthening of the reforms introduced post-Butler review, and the Professional Head of Analysis has committed to identifying the relevant posts and training requirements.

The wider analytical community across Government.

24. Strengthening the coordination of the wider Government's intelligence analysis and analytical community has been the focus of considerable activity since Lord Butler's report in 2004. A central part of the Government's response was setting up the Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis (PHIA) function. The PHIA position is now combined with the Chair of the JIC, supported by a small team.
25. Of particular importance, as previously identified by the Intelligence and Security Committee, is the alignment of the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) with the wider intelligence effort. But this is not the only dynamic in this area. JTAC is now an established and significant force within the analytical profession, and the establishment of the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) in 2004 saw the bulk of intelligence analysis on organised crime transferred to a new organisation.
26. There is no analogous structure to the SIA for the Government's analytical profession. This is for good reason: for example, the DIS is, and will remain, an integral part of the Ministry of Defence because of its role in providing intelligence support to the Armed Forces. There have been recent restructurings to both the DIS and the Foreign and Commonwealth's Research Analysts (RA) functions, in consultation with the wider analytical community.
27. Given the absence of an SIA style governance mechanism, the fast-changing context for intelligence work set out in part 1 of this paper, and the five year mark since the publication of Butler, a financial and capability analysis of the wider analytical community would be both appropriate and timely. It would most obviously fall to the Chairman of the JIC, in his capacity as Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis, to undertake this role. Following the completion of this work, its findings should be discussed within the wider community and recommendations for addressing any capability gaps should be put forward: these might include recommendations for structural changes to the governance of the community.

Part 3: The organisation of the Cabinet Office's intelligence work

28. This analysis of the improvements in capability required by the Cabinet Office's intelligence work to help the Agencies and wider Government meet increasingly complex challenges give rise to some questions about how the department best organises itself at a structural level.

29. The structures at senior level within the Cabinet Office have been the subject of considerable evolution over the past decade, with one notable feature being a permanent secretary level post of intelligence co-ordinator from 2001 to 2007, who assumed the role of Principal Accounting Officer for the SIA. For the last two years of this period, this post was combined with the post of JIC Chairman. The changes announced by the Prime Minister in 2007 separated out the JIC Chairman role.

30. The current arrangements at senior level can be summarised as follows:

- the Secretary of the Cabinet has reassumed the role of Principal Accounting Officer, as was the norm before 2001;
- the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, at permanent secretary level, has responsibility for the Assessments Staff and is also Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis, and as such is the head of the wider analytical community within Government;
- the 'Co-ordinator' function for the SIA is discharged at Director General level. This position also has responsibility for a range of wider national security matters, including, most significantly, the National Security Strategy and its Secretariat, and also counter-terrorism, response to civil emergencies, Northern Ireland, and key aspects of protective security within Government.

31. The current arrangements are compliant with the recommendations of Lord Butler's 2004 report. There is not at this point any need to alter these high level structures. There is no bar in the future to a permanent secretary level co-ordinator with overall responsibility for the health of the intelligence community, including aspects of the assessment and analytical functions. But only a very senior permanent secretary could credibly assume the Principal Accounting Officer role and the responsibility will continue to rest with the Cabinet Secretary at this point. Equally, the current arrangements for the JIC Chairman are one of a number of ways in which the Butler criteria for strengthening the assessment function of the JIC and these could be explored in future.

32. There are however two important areas which would benefit from more immediate strengthening.

Strategic oversight: Ministerial and senior officials

33. The first is strategic oversight by Ministers and senior officials. The public booklet – *The National Intelligence Machinery* – sets out the current

arrangements. A small committee of very senior Ministers – the Committee on the Security and Intelligence Services or CSI – is charged with keeping under review matters affecting the Agencies. This is supported by a Permanent Secretary’s Committee on the Intelligence Services (PSIS). Under the broad supervision of PSIS, the JIC has, within its terms of reference, a number of functions related to the governance of the Agencies as a whole which go well beyond the central assessment function. This includes a general remit “to give direction to, and to keep under review, the organisation and working of British intelligence activity as a whole at home and overseas”. At various times in its history, the JIC has devoted considerable attention to the governance of the intelligence community as well as to the assessment of intelligence information. In the modern era the governance role is limited, and focuses on the annual requirements and priorities process (R&P), which is an important forum for the collective consideration of community priorities and outputs. Furthermore, in 2007, the Prime Minister established a wide-ranging National Security, International Relations and Development (NSID) committee to bring together various strands of national security related work within Government, reflecting the wider understanding of the scope of national security policy presented in the Government’s first National Security Strategy in March of last year and update last month. The National Security Strategy framework now forms the basis for the R&P process.

34. As the Intelligence and Security Committee has previously noted, there could be some greater clarity about how these mechanisms operate and interact, and some additional impetus is needed to ensure that the mechanisms for senior Ministerial and official consideration of issues affecting the intelligence community are optimal. Furthermore, it can be argued that these arrangements have not fully taken into account either the post-Butler review changes – particularly by leaving a major role for the JIC in matters of policy affecting the intelligence community – nor of the development of the NSID structures.
35. **To achieve this greater coherence, this paper concludes that a small sub-committee of NSID should be established, to consider issues affecting the intelligence services. This should cover both policy issues affecting the services and strategic issues of resourcing and performance.** It should be chaired by the Prime Minister. It should be underpinned by an officials’ committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, and both committees should be supported by a small, Cabinet Office Secretariat. These would replace the current CSI and PSIS committees, and help to ensure greater coherence and alignment with the rest of the Government’s national security Cabinet Committee system. It follows that the terms of reference for the Joint Intelligence Committee would be revised to reflect these changes, though the JIC should continue to play its key role in the R&P process.
36. Implementing these changes will better reflect both the Butler Review and the 2007 changes by pointing the role of the JIC more firmly towards

intelligence assessments, with different and stronger fora for consideration of strategic issues facing the intelligence community.

37. The new Committees should have a regular schedule of meetings with a formal forward agenda, and should start work as soon as possible. A dedicated Secretariat, which will form part of the functions of the revised structures detailed in the next section, will deliver this.

The organisation of the Cabinet Office's SIA and intelligence policy work

38. This leads to the second and main question before this paper – how the Cabinet Office should be structured and resourced to discharge its central intelligence function. As noted in Paragraph 31 above, there is not at this stage any need to alter the high level structures established in 2007. On the assessments side, the JIC Chairman is now taking forward a capability analysis of the analytical function in Government five years on from the Butler review: the central apparatus dealing with this function may be altered in the light of that.

39. The range of priority functions around policy issues affecting the intelligence community, and strategic questions around resourcing and performance management, fall within the side of the 'Co-ordinator' function, headed by the Prime Minister's Security Adviser. In these areas this paper therefore recommends that the functions are more clearly articulated, with dedicated and slightly expanded resources devoted to them.

40. **For these reasons, there should be two key teams within a restructured Intelligence Secretariat:**

- a **policy** team, to cover the four key areas of: ensuring strong Parliamentary engagement and public accountability; law; strategic international engagement; and wider policy, including legislation;
- a **Single Intelligence Account governance team**, to cover resources and financial management of the SIA, as well as performance management and the centre's strategic engagement in collaborative working and corporate services.

41. This restructured Secretariat should become operational quickly. The skills required within it need to combine an understanding of central Government and working with Ministers, as well as an understanding of the intelligence community and the Agencies. There is therefore likely to be considerable opportunity for the Agencies to provide seconded staff to it, reversing a trend in recent years whereby fewer Agency staff have operated in this area. Equally, there are increasing opportunities for Cabinet Office and other central Government staff to be seconded to the Agencies, particularly in corporate functions. This greater level of interchange should be encouraged, and human resources directors from the Cabinet Office and the Agencies should be invited to develop an

agreed approach for it. The finance skills within the new team should reflect current best practice. The restructured Secretariat should also build closer links with the new National Security Secretariat, which is responsible for the National Security Strategy.

42. The restructured Intelligence Secretariat will require limited extra resources. The Cabinet Office's budget is declining in the current spending review period, so funding this modest expansion will have to occur through reprioritisation from other areas of the department, and with the cooperation of Agencies. The head of the Secretariat should also examine the linkages with the wider Security Policy Division (SPD), which falls within the same area of responsibility at senior management level.

Conclusion

43. This paper has set out the changing context for intelligence work, and how the Cabinet Office should organise itself to help the intelligence community meet the key challenges of the period ahead, and ensure effective dialogue between Ministers, policy officials and the intelligence community around priorities and key issues. In taking forward the recommendations, particular urgency should be given to developing the restructured Intelligence Secretariat and the strengthened Ministerial and senior official mechanisms for strategic engagement with intelligence issues.

**CABINET OFFICE
JULY 2009**

ANNEX 1

THE CABINET OFFICE AND THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES: THE OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK

1. This annex aims to clarify the role of the Cabinet Office in intelligence. A number of observations can usefully be made about the basis of the Agencies' work and their responsibilities which can help frame those principles. These include:

- i) **the constitutional basis.** The Prime Minister is responsible for intelligence and security matters overall, and is supported in that capacity by the Cabinet Secretary, who as Principal Accounting Officer for the Single Intelligence Account is accountable to the Prime Minister and to Parliament. At the same time, the Foreign Secretary has statutory Ministerial responsibility for GCHQ and SIS, and the Home Secretary for the Security Service. Additionally, each Agency Head has specific statutory responsibilities including for the proper management of their Service and its operations under the law (principally the Security Service Act 1989 and the Intelligence Service Act 1994). Also, by virtue of statute, each Agency head submits an annual report to the Prime Minister and derived from that, by convention, has been implied a direct right of access to the Prime Minister when necessary.

Nothing in this paper proposes changes to any of these responsibilities and accountabilities;

- ii) **the strategic basis:** a broad definition of the individual Agencies' functions are set out in various statutes, around the protection of national security (and with particular reference to the Government's defence and foreign policy), the economic wellbeing of the United Kingdom, and the prevention and detection of serious crime. In practice, issues under the broad heading of national security absorb the bulk of Agency resources and activity.

The National Security Strategy (NSS) brought together the various strands of Government activity in a single framework. The Agencies represent a set of capabilities which can be deployed in support of the NSS and strategic priorities within it, like the counter-terrorism or counter-proliferation strategies. This year, for the first time, the Requirements and Priorities process for the Agencies, conducted under the auspices of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), used the NSS framework as a basis for its discussion of collection priorities;

- iii) **the operational basis:** the Agencies provide a set of capabilities

that work in support of a range of strategic national security requirements and priorities. There is much commonality in the Agencies' work. But they have notably different remits (the self-tasking investigative functions of the Security Service and the Information Assurance role of GCHQ being among the more obvious examples). Collectively, they have a great variety of customers and partners, spanning defence and its intelligence elements, law enforcement Agencies, senior policymakers, and others.

2. What is distinctive about Agency capability, and common to all three, is that it is for the most part covert. This sensitive, covert set of capabilities are governed by law. As a result, for many years a central mechanism has existed to co-ordinate Agency related issues on behalf of the Prime Minister. The covert nature of the work also means that agency activity both attracts high levels of political and public interest but also dictates that the normal processes of public scrutiny of Government activity do not apply in full to the Agencies. This means that from time to time, matters of intelligence policy arise which are of the highest constitutional, security and political importance. It also means that governance arrangements for the Agencies are to an extent necessarily different from other parts of Government activity.

3. Another vital feature of the overarching framework involves **assessment and analysis** of intelligence products. This function acts a channel between the Agencies and policymakers by providing an objective and contextualised assessment of available intelligence. This function is carried out under the auspices of the Joint Intelligence Committee and the Assessments staff, based in the Cabinet Office. This part of the UK system has long enjoyed an excellent reputation internationally because it provides a strong, independent and single view of the balance of the information available and the context.

4. Additionally, since Lord Butler's report in 2004 and the Government's response to it, the Cabinet Office has assumed a **strengthened responsibility for the health of the analysis community**. As well as the Cabinet Office Assessments staff, this wider community spans a number of different organisations throughout Government. It includes the Defence Intelligence Staff, which is an integral part of the Ministry of Defence but is also an important part of the wider national intelligence machinery, and the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), a multi-agency body staffed by members of the Agencies, departments and other bodies. The wider community also includes the intelligence functions of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and law enforcement.

5. **Taking all these points together, in principle the role of the Cabinet Office could be defined as supporting those functions of Agency strategy, governance and policy and of the wider intelligence community selectively. This support should focus on issues that require collective consideration across the intelligence community and relevant departments, without cutting across long established, clearly**

understood and vital relationships with individual Secretaries of State.

6. To this end, the **functions** can be articulated as:

- **assurance.** This is a complex and multi-faceted function. The basis of it is the assurance the Prime Minister can provide to Parliament and the public about the overall health of the intelligence community in the UK. The Cabinet Secretary, as Principal Accounting Officer (PAO) for the Single Intelligence Account (SIA), is responsible not just for providing the Prime Minister with this assurance but is also personally accountable to Parliament.

Derived from this high level definition are various important, complex and interacting factors. The Prime Minister needs assurance that the resources allocated to the Agencies are adding significant value to the overall national security effort, and that capabilities are being protected for the future and are being efficiently managed and effectively deployed in line with priorities. Assurance is also needed to ensure that the right balance between transparency and necessary secrecy is being maintained. It also means assurance that the covert capabilities overall are being used legally, ethically and defensibly.

- **advocacy.** The intelligence community, including the Agencies will need, from time to time, an authoritative and value-adding voice within the centre of Government, on issues of strategy, finance, governance and policy, in order to make sure those at the centre of Government understand their needs. This is the flip side of assurance and requires a deep level of understanding of the Agencies so as to be able to act as an advocate across the same range of issues. Part of the advocacy function also involves the overall collective health of the community. It also means acting on the collective behalf of the community, and Government more widely, in key matters of international liaison when required;
- **arbitration.** As in other areas of Government business, the Cabinet Office may need to arbitrate in areas where the interests and views of individual Agencies or others in the Intelligence Community may not align with each other, or where they may not align with Government departments;
- **assessment.** The Cabinet Office needs to provide a means of effectively integrating the processes of collection and analysis undertaken in different parts of the intelligence community to produce all-source assessments, and of ensuring that customers are consulted and their needs met as fully as possible.

7. It is axiomatic that to discharge these functions there needs to be, within the Cabinet Office, a significant degree of expertise in and understanding of

intelligence matters. This is absolutely essential if either the assurance or advocacy functions are to be credible and effective. Of necessity, this will involve some degree of **challenge**, both to the Agencies and on their behalf. But it is equally important that the Cabinet Office is able to provide some mechanism for **coherence** among the Agencies: indeed it can be argued that part of the central role is to promote the reality of an intelligence community whilst respecting the strong identity and culture of individual services.

8. The principal **lever** through which the Cabinet Office exercises these functions is the Single Intelligence Account, the main collective central mechanism under which Agency work is governed. Additionally, the Cabinet Office is responsible for bringing together the wider Government community with an interest in the intelligence community under the auspices of the Joint Intelligence Committee, not just in its role of assessing intelligence but also through the JIC's role in the annual R&P process. The Cabinet Office is also responsible for ensuring that the key cross-Government Cabinet Committee processes for ensuring the health of the intelligence community work effectively.