

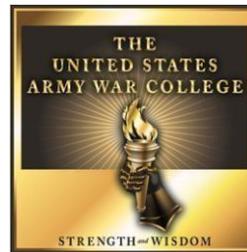
Strategy Research Project

Defense Intelligence Agency and Combat Intelligence: Cultural and Organizational Concerns

by

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Abstract

The early dismissal of Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Director Lieutenant General (LTG) Michael Flynn in 2014 for allegedly “disruptive” leadership raises a host of concerns for military professionals interested in organizational change. LTG Flynn’s attempt to reorganize DIA to provide better combat force support seemed to flag in the face of cultural resistance. It would appear that LTG Flynn’s forceful, top-down approach to change did not fare well at an established bureaucracy with an entrenched cultural identity due to an insufficient coalition of the willing to reinforce his message. In the end, this crippled his efforts and brought about an early end to his tour, despite his clear vision and tough communication. A more consensus-based style might have brought slower but more sustainable change. Also of note, an examination of resources might have begged the question of whether or not DIA should change at all--a point relevant to military change leaders in the current resource constrained environment.

Defense Intelligence Agency and Combat Intelligence: Cultural and Organizational Concerns

In January 2010, then-Major General Michael Flynn co-authored a scathing review of U.S. intelligence support to fielded forces in Afghanistan. In his review, he indicated the most significant issues with intelligence were “attitudinal, cultural, and human.”¹ He added that the most obvious personnel available to fix the problem were civilian analysts at the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and proposed a series of measures that would allow these analysts to help right the intelligence ship.² Two years later, Lieutenant General Flynn received a unique opportunity to turn his views into reality when he was appointed Director, DIA.³ That opportunity came to an emphatic end in the summer of 2014 when he stepped down from the post a year early amidst rumors he had been forced from the position.⁴ Among the reported reasons was that Lieutenant General Flynn had tried to force DIA from its organizational comfort zone, to disruptive effect.⁵ The Director’s vision had met DIA’s culture--and culture appeared to have won.

The episode raises several very important questions regarding military culture change. Why would it be culturally disruptive to move DIA, ostensibly a combat support agency, toward a better model of combat support? Furthermore, if enough resistance exists to purportedly contribute to the ouster of a sitting Director, *should* DIA move toward a more comprehensive model for combat support? This paper shall argue that DIA was capable of making the changes Lieutenant General Flynn desired, but that a confluence of leadership style and cultural resistance presented insurmountable barriers. While Lieutenant General Flynn’s goal to provide better support to fielded

forces was admirable, this paper shall also argue that a DIA that identifies as a decision-maker support organization has value.

Framework for Analysis--Organizational Culture Change

Cultural change in a large organization is enormously difficult to begin with.⁶ Cultural change when the organization is predisposed to resist the new idea requires exceptional leadership. As noted author John Kotter put it, "Useful change tends to be associated with a multistep process that creates power and motivation sufficient to overwhelm all the sources of inertia...this process is never employed effectively unless it is driven by high quality leadership."⁷ Kotter proposes just such a multistep process with his "Eight Stage Process of Creating Major Change," which runs as follows:

1. Establish a Sense of Urgency
2. Create a Guiding Coalition
3. Develop a Vision and Strategy
4. Communicate the Change Vision
5. Empower Broad-Based Action
6. Generate Short Term Wins
7. Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change
8. Anchor New Approaches in Culture⁸

Kotter's process provides an excellent yardstick to measure Lieutenant General Flynn's change process at DIA. Leaders should perform the steps more or less in sequence. While some activity may occur in parallel, moving forward between steps prematurely can cripple future efforts. Time or production pressure are the typical motivators for skipping a step or abandoning a step early. This is particularly relevant in Lieutenant General Flynn's case. The process of cultural change can take several

years, particularly in large organizations or organizations with deeply established behaviors.⁹ A Director's tour at DIA is commonly three years. Lieutenant General Flynn faced massive time pressure if he wished to complete DIA's transformation during his tenure. As it was, the early end of his term as Director prevented Lieutenant General Flynn from reaching the later stages of Kotter's process. Accordingly, this paper shall principally examine Lieutenant General Flynn's performance against Kotter's first six steps.

Case Study: Lieutenant General Flynn and DIA

The situation with DIA and Lieutenant General Flynn offers an excellent case study because of the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous global operating environment facing by the military at the time. The end of the Iraq and Afghanistan deployments in many ways mirror the situation at the end of the cold war. The combination of the end of long-running operational paradigms and the expectation of a refund in committed resources pressures commanders to invent new ways of doing business. In turn, commanders must implement these new ways across massive organizations, sometimes in relatively short time frames. Both in 1993, at the end of the Cold War, and from 2012-2014 as U.S. overseas posture drew down, DIA Directors attempted to reorganize. In both cases, the reorganizations did not go smoothly. Lieutenant General Flynn's experience at DIA is illustrative of some of the pitfalls inherent in such a move, and provides an opportunity for reflection as the U.S. military seeks to navigate current resource and operational uncertainties.

Limitations

The author built the case study with only limited available materials, augmented by personal knowledge of DIA and the broader intelligence community. The DIA

currently does not release organizational details below the directorate level.¹⁰ It issued its most recent directorate overview in 2011 for the Directorate of Analysis; since that time the DIA has published no similar documents at the unclassified level.¹¹ As a result, while some sources are available for reorganization efforts by Lieutenant General Clapper and Vice Admiral Jacoby, General Flynn's reorganization efforts at DIA have been less transparent. Similarly, General Flynn halted production of DIA's unclassified, in-house magazine, *Communiqué*, in 2013.¹² *Communiqué* was a treasure trove of insights into DIA workforce and structural issues; for example its last issue, published in the summer of 2012, contains an analysis of how DIA was faring against its current strategic plan and a spotlight article detailing efforts to champion the strategy within the organization.¹³ Unfortunately, publication ceased before it could chronicle any of Lieutenant General Flynn's reorganization steps. The resultant lack of organizational detail and cultural reporting has forced some use of secondary sources, in particular informal workplace feedback, academic sourcebooks, press reporting, and intelligence community web logs, to garner atmospherics on DIA culture during the period of interest. Due care has been taken not to over-extrapolate from these sources, and their use is appropriately annotated.

DIA: Mission and Purpose

A brief review of DIA's guiding purpose will frame Lieutenant General Flynn's reorganization. The Defense Intelligence Agency is by law a Combat Support Agency.¹⁴ As such, the Secretary of Defense, through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, designates its missions as follows:

Defense Intelligence Agency's (DIA's) mission is to satisfy the military and military-related IRs of SecDef and the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the CJCS, and the Director of National Intelligence, and provide the military

intelligence contribution to national foreign intelligence and CI. DIA also leads efforts to align ISR activities and links and synchronizes national, defense, and military intelligence. DIA also provides intelligence analytical and operational support in areas such as CI, counterterrorism, counterdrug operations, computer network operations, personnel recovery, counterproliferation of weapons of mass destruction and associated delivery means, United Nations peacekeeping and multinational support, measurement and signature intelligence, noncombatant evacuation efforts, I&W, targeting, battle damage assessment, current intelligence, collection management, intelligence architecture and systems support, document and media exploitation, and counterinsurgency support (including the forensic collection and exploitation of improvised explosive devices and other weapons systems derived from weapons technical intelligence).¹⁵

This mission set is so broad as to essentially include practically any type of military intelligence endeavor. Furthermore, the range of missions reaches from the clearly tactical to national decision-making support, meaning the potential customer base includes almost anyone with a clearance. This charter leaves much to the prioritization of an individual DIA Director.

Guidance from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) is no more specific. The OSD's *Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)*, Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 5105.21, lists 12 individual mission sets, 74 mission elements, and 15 additional tasks, along with the catchall that the Director of DIA shall, "Plan, organize, direct, and manage DIA and all assigned resources to provide peacetime, contingency, crisis, and combat intelligence support to the operational military forces of the United States."¹⁶ The net effect in no way pares down the JP-2 guidance.

Resource rules offers similar guidance. The two major funding streams for DIA are the General Defense Intelligence Program (GDIP) (of which the DIA Director is the program manager) and the Military Intelligence Program (MIP).¹⁷ Guidance for what constitutes a valid GDIP-funded activity tends to concentrate on strategic and high

operational missions from the national level to the combatant commander, with some implied excursions for Joint Task Force (JTF) support and contingencies.¹⁸ The DIA MIP, by contrast, covers direct military support and tactical military intelligence activities.¹⁹ Between the GDIP and DIA MIP, nearly all potential military intelligence activities can find a funding justification.

Given that guidance from higher authority essentially orders DIA to perform any task that almost any customer might require of it at any time, it seems to be up to the Director to chart priorities within this broad guidance. At the time Major General Flynn wrote his 2010 review, then-DIA Director, Lieutenant General Burgess articulated his priority for DIA in his organizational mission statement. In that statement, Lieutenant General Burgess avowed,

DIA is first in all-source defense intelligence to prevent strategic surprise and deliver a decision advantage to warfighters, defense planners, and policymakers. We deploy globally alongside warfighters and interagency partners to defend America's national security interests.²⁰

Thus, even as Major General Flynn eyed DIA as a potential source of manpower to help fulfill his goals for combat support intelligence, Lieutenant General Burgess had already set the stage by making warfighter support deployments one of his flagship mission priorities. By all appearances, DIA seemed primed for Lieutenant General Flynn's leadership. His ideas appeared doctrinally permissible, resource compliant, and at least partially in sympathy with his predecessor's ideals.

DIA's Reorganizational Experience

In theory, DIA should be an organization inured to change. Under significant "peace dividend" resource pressure, Lieutenant General Gen. Clapper instituted sweeping changes in 1993, consolidating five of DIA's directorate-sized offices into

three functional offices.²¹ Lieutenant General Hughes largely reverted these changes in 1996, breaking the three directorates into four organizations along mission lines.²² Vice Admiral Jacoby reorganized again in 2003, citing defense transformation as the impetus.²³ His structure consisted of seven directorates organized along a varied mix of mission, functional, and intelligence-type lines.²⁴ Later in the decade, other Directors added a Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and counterintelligence center, and a Defense Intelligence Operations Coordination Center.²⁵ Against the background of these decades of change, any initiatives by Lieutenant General Flynn would seem to be a continuation of a steady diet of organizational flux.

Such a viewpoint, while logical, would ignore significant contextual data. DIA corporate memory associated Lt. Gen. Clapper's reorganization with massive organizational dislocation and workforce trauma. The 1993 restructuring cut supervisors by 30 percent, senior executives by over 17 percent, General Schedule (excepted service) paygrade 15 employees (abbreviated as "GG-15") by twenty percent, and GG-14 employees by 17 percent.²⁶ Additionally, 45 percent of DIA's senior officials changed jobs, 80% of analysts were required to physically move to new locations, and the military workforce drew down by 25%.²⁷ While most attrition occurred through non-hiring for vacancies, DIA also froze recruitment, which created a crippling youth gap at the agency for years to come.²⁸

Aside from the massive personnel cuts and workforce dislocation, Lt. Gen. Clapper's reorganization also became enshrined in corporate memory as a disaster because it did away with regional focus in favor of functional focus amongst the analytic workforce.²⁹ The shift from geographic to functional emphasis was not inherently a

problem *per se*; the real issue was asking analysts trained in regional specialties to suddenly flex to a functional specialty with little notice.³⁰ Analysts left the workforce in “droves,” which while fortuitous for the planned workforce cuts, did little for workplace morale.³¹ Perhaps most insidious was that the precipitous change became associated with increased emphasis on military support. Lt. Gen. Clapper’s decision to radically reorient the workforce came about due to his interest in military technology and operations rather than strategic-level thinking.³² The organizational reaction revealed that the DIA workforce regarded decision-maker support, rather than combat force support, as its default purpose. DIA’s own official history acknowledges this workforce bias when it notes, “Some contend that while that approach might have been beneficial for the warfighter, it did not help DIA’s *primary day-to-day customer*—the office of the secretary of defense [sic] and the Joint Chiefs of Staff [emphasis added].”³³

DIA’s Customer History

In hindsight, perhaps this bias should have been obvious. The culture in most organizations is a reflection of the beliefs present at their founding.³⁴ DIA had been originally created over the objections of the service intelligence components and Joint Chiefs, who believed a centralized agency beholden to the Secretary of Defense would not provide tailored intelligence to fielded forces.³⁵ That objection failed to carry the day, as the primary intelligence issues concerning Secretary McNamara at the time were Soviet missile activity (viewed from a grand strategic perspective) and national military intelligence integration.³⁶ As a result, DIA’s initial missions were almost entirely decision-maker support in nature. Initial guidance called for the nascent organization to produce national-level DoD estimates, to provide indications and warning staff at the Pentagon proper, and to represent the DoD at the United States Intelligence Board.³⁷ Only the

relatively nebulous requirement to provide “current intelligence” for the DoD even hinted at a direct support role, and the hint was indirect at best.³⁸ The Joint Chiefs even had to fight to be included on DIA’s product distribution, as initial dissemination was confined to OSD.³⁹

The DIA had proceeded as a policy support center, with various perturbations and permutations, until the *Goldwater–Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*. The Act designated DIA as a combat support agency, with associated warfighter support responsibilities.⁴⁰ The DIA performed well in this role, though at a headquarters-to-headquarters level, in support of Central Command during operation Desert Storm.⁴¹ Nonetheless, the mission was still relatively new when Lieutenant General Clapper reorganized the agency in 1993. The trauma of that reorganization left a distinctly negative corporate memory, and only strengthened the cultural bias against direct military support. Still, the bias was likely surmountable--the agency’s performance in the Gulf War certainly seemed to indicate the workforce was capable of great flexibility in support of warfighting requirements--but two follow-on organizational moves helped to cement the idea that DIA properly belonged in the decision-maker sphere. The first was the reversion of the 1993 reorganization by Lieutenant General Hughes upon his assumption of the duties of Director, DIA in 1996.⁴² This move, largely at the behest of DIA senior civilians, helped to establish what the Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper would call the “we-be” factor. Director Clapper postulated that senior civilians knew best, and that when confronted with a calamitous policy change from a military officer, they could say, “We be here when you got here, and we

be here when you leave,” or in other words, that they could simply wait for the military boss to move on and then revert any changes.⁴³

Spinning Off the Warfighter Mission: Joint Intelligence Centers

The second organizational move was the wholesale expansion of the Joint Intelligence Center (JIC) concept. In theory, the JIC concept should have actually drawn DIA more tightly into the realm of warfighter support. The idea, considered experimental at the turn of the decade and coalesced by a 1992 study, was for DIA-allocated personnel to operate a centralized intelligence center at Combatant Commander headquarters, amalgamating theater and operational intelligence activities, reducing overhead, and providing reach-back and direct support to the warfighter.⁴⁴ Most funding for JIC billets came from GDIP resources, directly tying them to DIA in terms of resources as well as policy.⁴⁵

Implementation of the concept was successful, and the mid-1990s witnessed a massive expansion of the JIC concept across all unified commands.⁴⁶ However, this did not draw DIA more deeply into the realm of warfighter support. While the JICs were GDIP funded and DIA managed, their geographic distance and variegated mission set caused them to become culturally separate entities, more beholden to their local headquarters than to DIA. The DIA, in turn, viewed the JICs as the proper place to handle warfighter support- after all, why were GDIP billets and dollars going to the JICs if not to meet the operational requirements of their co-located commanders?⁴⁷ Resource constraints and Congressional oversight, both of which argued against any kind of redundancy.⁴⁸

The establishment of the National Joint Military Intelligence Center (NMJIC) at the Pentagon in 1992 further reinforced DIA's role as the decision maker support

counterpart to the JICs' operational support.⁴⁹ Essentially the DIA's organic JIC, the NMJIC provided the Joint Staff with their own intelligence support cell. Located in the Pentagon and scant miles from the DIA campus on Bolling Air Force Base, the NMJIC quickly assumed the role of the Joint Staff J-2 section.⁵⁰ The resultant preoccupation with the upper echelons of joint command widened the cultural divide between DIA and the warfighter-oriented unified command JICs.

Sources of Friction: National Intelligence Support Team (NISTs) and Augmentees

Two other policy measures also had an influence on how the DIA workforce viewed warfighter support intelligence. These policies attempted to enhance DIA support to the fielded forces, but had the actual effect of making that support seem transitory and specialized, and introduced a confrontational component to DIA's relationship with the warfighter. The first of these policies was the implementation of the NIST, and the second was the individual augmentee requirement.

Neither NISTs nor individual augmentations are unique DIA policies or structures, but their implementation had a chilling effect on national level agency attitudes toward military support. In the case of NISTs, several intelligence agencies jointly implemented the teams via memorandum of agreement in 1993.⁵¹ A NIST is usually composed of personnel from DIA, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the National Geospatial-intelligence Agency who deploy on request to provide a JTF commander with access to national intelligence resources and capabilities. The purpose of the NIST concept was to deliver temporary intelligence support in-theater until a JTF could firmly establish and provide for its own intelligence requirements, typically in a timeframe of 90 days or less.⁵² Unfortunately, NISTs lend themselves to misuse. Resource-starved JTF commanders tend to view NISTs as a permanent work force

supplement, and retain and repurpose them as such. In perhaps the most salient example, a NIST deployed to Naples to support operations in Bosnia stayed on site with its host command for five years, including two years during which the command no longer had any troops in Bosnia.⁵³ The retention of NISTs well beyond their intended deployment timeframes was widespread enough to give Washington agencies considerable pause when asked for to provide personnel for direct warfighter support.⁵⁴

To solve this conundrum, the IC developed individual augmentation schemes. Forward commanders suffering long-term shortfalls in low density, high demand intelligence fields could request augmentation personnel from national agencies on a rotational basis. While frequently thought of as a construct born of the Global War on Terror, the DIA was in fact already supplying forward commanders with at least 100 augmentees as early as 1999, a number which only increased after September 11, 2001.⁵⁵ However, by 2005 at least some DIA employees were reporting that the agency had grown fatigued from constant augmentation demands, and therefore DIA imposed an internal draft system to fill what had previously been seen as a volunteer mission.⁵⁶ These same reports cited mid-level managers as increasingly unenthusiastic with the support mission, and in some cases actively discouraging employees from signing on for augmentee rotations.⁵⁷ A full five years after these reports, Major General Flynn describes a “civilian surge” to Afghanistan in his 2010 paper, indicating that direct civilian support requirements had not only continued since 2005, but were poised for another uptick.⁵⁸

In sum, there were a number of indicators that DIA may have been culturally resistant to Lieutenant General Flynn’s plans to change its organizational direction. The

Agency began as a decision-maker support organization, imprinting that bias on its cultural DNA. There was significant institutional scar tissue remaining from the 1993 reorganization, at least some of which had been in the name of better military support. There was empirical evidence that managers could wait out a change-oriented Director, and obtain organizational reversions after the end of the Director's tour. The creation of the JICs had inculcated the idea of separation of direct support and decision-maker tasking, with DIA proper concentrating on national-level issues. Finally, the misuse of the NIST concept and the long-running demands of individual augmentation had both engendered distrust for the supposed needs of forward commanders, and induced fatigue in fulfilling those needs.

Major General Flynn in Afghanistan

Major General Flynn's 2010 assessment of combat support intelligence in Afghanistan accused the intelligence community of focusing too much on establishing "kill chain" intelligence for direct action. Conversely, there was not enough "support" information for combat commanders on subjects such as the populace, economics, power structures, interrelationships, and governments in their areas.⁵⁹ Furthermore, he believed there was a gaping chasm between the reality experienced by operators on the ground and the data sifted by analysts at higher headquarters.⁶⁰ While his assessment of the issue is open to debate, his proposed solutions shed light both on his thinking and on the moves he would make at DIA from 2012 to 2014. His 2010 review mandates face-to-face interaction between analysts and collectors, even at remote field locations, to encourage a full understanding by analysts of the conditions and sources on the ground.⁶¹ He excoriated the division of analytic intelligence along functional lines,

advocating geographic areas of concern similar to those exercised by units on the ground:

The importance of an integrated, district-focused approach is difficult to overstate. The alternative--having all analysts study an entire province or region through the lens of a narrow, functional line (i.e., one analyst covers governance, another studies narcotics trafficking, a third looks at insurgent networks, etc.) simply cannot produce meaningful analysis.⁶²

Major General Flynn went on to suggest the DIA was the primary U.S. source of expertise and personnel that should deploy to help establish analytic teams in Afghanistan.⁶³ He also suggested the formation of regional stability operations information centers to house these teams.⁶⁴ He also related two examples of battalion-level success on which others should model their behavior, both of which involved HUMINT collection by local forces. In the first example, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines used widely disseminated analysts and collectors to produce a continually refined picture of the situation on the ground, eventually identifying powerbrokers and social dynamics that remote analysis might have missed. Eventually, the battalion used the intelligence to reach an accord with local elders that significantly assisted in stabilizing the area.⁶⁵ In another case, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry, used a similar method of personal engagement with local elites to drastically reduce attacks on U.S. soldiers in the area.⁶⁶ In Major General Flynn's mind, this forward deployed, human-focused, geographically oriented approach supported by regional centers was the recipe for success. However, beyond the required systemic changes, he opined, the more important changes needed to be cultural. Analysts had to change their customer focus to center on the combat forces to truly provide adequate intelligence support.⁶⁷

Lieutenant General Flynn at DIA: Setting Expectations

It was with this mindset that Lieutenant General Flynn took over the helm at DIA in 2012. Very early in his tenure he made it clear he intended to make changes. From a change process point of view, his straightforward manner seemed well purposed to initiate the organizational redesign. Between his 2010 report and his early remarks as Director (in one interview, when asked what he would do about internal resisters, he replied, “Move or fire them”), Lieutenant General Flynn demonstrated Kotter’s first step, “Establish a sense of urgency,” without hesitation.⁶⁸ He even went so far as to publically denigrate defenders of the status quo as members of a bureaucracy who, “Like their little worlds”.⁶⁹ He also initiated a major reordering of DIA priorities, moving Afghanistan support and the Defense Clandestine Service (DCS) to the top of the list, while at the same time pushing regional expertise over functional. As Kotter writes, even if employees did not agree with the changes, “Crises can be enormously helpful in catching people’s attention and pushing up urgency levels. Conducting business as usual is very difficult if the building seems to be on fire.”⁷⁰ A combination of heavy leadership pressure and organizational changes may not have set the building on fire, but it certainly let everyone know that there was a new Director in charge.

Lieutenant General Flynn’s top-down approach to establishing a sense of urgency, while effective, may have worked against his ability to move to the second step of *establishing a guiding coalition*.⁷¹ To manage change across a complex organization requires a team of empowered, high-credibility leaders who can implement that change and overwhelm inertia and counter-messages from naysayers.⁷² Amongst the coalition there must be trust, not crisis, so that each element can work toward the common goal against resistance. A change strategy centered on a single leader is predisposed to

failure. One man cannot efficiently handle decision and communication complexity in a large organization.⁷³ When Lieutenant General Flynn left DIA in 2014, reports surfaced of an “old guard” of managers that undermined him from within.⁷⁴ This indicates the change coalition, if it ever formed, was insufficient to counteract the messages of resistance.

Lieutenant General Flynn may have been the victim of a paradigm shortcoming in this regard. In a combat organization, one can usually simply order subordinate officers to conform, and thus create a change coalition almost by default. In an organization with less operational immediacy, decentralized supervision and workplace habit make it is necessary to co-opt and then build a team of change agents- a work and time intensive step that seems to have been incomplete.

Despite having potentially failed to form a sufficient guiding coalition, Lieutenant General Flynn seemed to have done well with Kotter’s Steps three and four-- “developing a vision and strategy” and “communicating a change vision.” Certainly, there was no one at DIA unaware of where Lieutenant General Flynn stood or the direction he wanted the organization to go. Lieutenant General Flynn remained relatively consistent in his outlook between his 2010 article and his takeover at DIA. In 2010, he stressed the importance of HUMINT, regional alignment, forward deployment, and overall improved support to Afghanistan. In 2012, shortly after arriving at DIA, he proclaimed the centrality of the DCS (HUMINT), a more regionally aligned DIA, more deployments for DIA staff, and the primacy of support to Afghanistan.⁷⁵ His unclassified variant of the DIA organizational chart, while only depicting the top levels of the organizational structure, showed five new regionally aligned centers and the creation of

a Directorate of Operations.⁷⁶ This regionalization of the analytic force and consolidation of HUMINT into a directorate-level body would seem to indicate that Lieutenant General Flynn's actions as Director were consistent with his vision. This consistency indicated that Lieutenant General Flynn both developed and communicated his vision quite clearly. However, if the guiding coalition to implement this change was insufficient, then the clarity of the Director's message may have only galvanized organizational opposition.

Lieutenant General Flynn at DIA: Clear Guidance, Skeptical Recipients

Communicating the vision only goes so far if the workforce is skeptical of their management.⁷⁷ Lieutenant General Flynn's message likely collided with counter-messaging from managers closer to the workforce. This certainly happened to then-Lieutenant General Clapper in 1993, when managers with little reason to invest in his change vision offered lukewarm support at best.⁷⁸ While the individual personnel Lieutenant General Flynn dealt with at DIA were likely different, the cultural factors remained similar.

Communicating a change vision is a two-way process. Organizational members adopt ideas only after they have had the chance to examine them.⁷⁹ The questioning, challenging, and arguing produces better support for the change when an available coalition of change agents reinforce and explain the message. Otherwise, the members reject and resist the effort. This would be doubly true at DIA, where the culture was predisposed to skepticism about increased force support measures. Lieutenant General Flynn, who was demonstrably top-down in his approach to his message, seemed unamenable to much in the way of argument, and apparently failed to win over an effective quorum of managers to do the arguing by proxy.

If the promulgation of a vision can be undermined by an inadequate change coalition, then achieving steps five and six--“empowering employees” and “creating short term wins”--become far more difficult. Employees, “Will neither take advantage of their empowerment nor put in the effort to guarantee the wins,” if they remain unconvinced that the guiding vision is correct.⁸⁰ Lieutenant General Flynn certainly attempted to remove structural barriers to his vision through reorganization, as indicated by his creation of regional centers and a directorate of operations. While the performance goals for employees at DIA are not a matter of public record, the Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System under which DIA operates provides at least yearly opportunities to shift employee performance criteria.⁸¹ It therefore seems likely that employee performance criteria realigned easily to the new structure and organizational priorities. Unfortunately, even if organizational structure and performance criteria did not disempower employees, then the changes may have discouraged them. DIA’s traumatic history with reorganization, coupled with a less-than-enthusiastic response from at least some portion of the managerial force, would have worked against wide scale employee empowerment not through systemic friction, but simple lack of morale.

Lieutenant General Flynn at DIA: Opportunities Unrealized, Steps Cut Short

Counterintuitively, despite the adverse factors for creating a change climate, DIA employees did manage to generate material for what should have been short-term wins. DIA provided advanced strategic warning on Russian moves into Ukraine, and had a strong analytic case on future developments in Syria.⁸² In theory, these successes might have demonstrated the efficiency of greater regional focus. However, one artifact of more strongly regionalizing the analytic force is that each region team was likely less

aware of work other in other areas. As a result, unless there was a concerted effort to promulgate analytic successes, many employees likely never heard of good work done elsewhere in the organization.

Furthermore, the public narrative for DIA was not going very well at the time. Lieutenant General Flynn was embroiled in a very messy fight with Congress over the fate of his HUMINT initiative, the DCS.⁸³ While analysts might have remained compartmentalized from successes within DIA, they suffered relentless exposure to press reporting that seemed to highlight DIA's poor relationship with Capitol Hill.⁸⁴ Congressional resistance to DCS did not necessarily interfere with Lieutenant General Flynn's broader plans for DIA, but the coincident timing between a negative public narrative and Lieutenant General Flynn's efforts were not helpful.

The last two steps of Kotter's process, "Consolidating gains and producing more change" and "anchoring new approaches in culture," are culminating steps predicated upon success in earlier stages, and Lieutenant General Flynn never had a chance to reach them.⁸⁵ As DIA resisted the overall change effort and Lieutenant General Flynn's problems with the DCS dragged on, he appeared to lose the confidence of his seniors, and eventually was pushed out a year before his tour was scheduled to end.⁸⁶ However, it is worth noting that his successor, Marine Corps Lieutenant General Vincent Stewart, does not appear to have reverted Lieutenant General Flynn's organizational changes. Furthermore, Lieutenant General Stewart intends to implement a rank-in-person promotion scheme at DIA, which encourages stability by allowing analysts to promote without changing jobs. This feature may specifically target workforce morale and look to earn more employee "buy-in" after a contested period of changes. If successful, this

initiative could be a step toward completing the organizational transformation that Lieutenant General Flynn started.⁸⁷

DIA: What *Should* It Do?

Lieutenant General Flynn walked into an organization that believed its primary mission customer was the Washington decision-maker and tried to tell it otherwise. He ostensibly failed, but that failure may have been more an issue with change leadership than a foreordained outcome. The DIA has been slowly migrating toward increased combat support ever since the end of the cold war. While many negative cultural factors have come to be associated with that support, it does not change the fact that DIA has fielded NISTs, augmentees, and reach-back support for multiple decades. Yet, Major General Flynn's 2010 paper clearly targeted DIA to do more. The question at hand is whether it should.

While Major General (and later Lieutenant General) Flynn pushed DIA to provide more deployed personnel--this fits in a pattern that has been exposed by the NISTs and individual augmentation: the view that the DIA is a manpower pool for fielded forces. The needs that spurred the creation of DIA for an integrated manager of military intelligence, and a storehouse of national-level expertise for support to the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs still exist. If fielded forces require additional direct support, there are constructs already in place at the unit and theater levels to provide that support. While it may be a tough decision for the DoD to make, the MIP is an "unfenced" account- in other words, it is within the Secretary's authority to not pay for a fighter aircraft and instead pay for more military intelligence.⁸⁸ DIA's primary funding stream, the GDIP, is a dedicated account for national-level intelligence activities. It seems disingenuous (yet natural) for the DoD to continue to underfund intelligence relative to

requirements, and then place demands on a national-level entity with a “combat support agency” label to make up those shortfalls.

From a resource perspective there is some justification to DIA’s cultural reticence toward direct combat support. Furthermore, there is probably some cultural value to an organization that views itself as a decision-maker support agency. DIA has been described by some as having “too many responsibilities and too many masters.”⁸⁹ This is an accurate reflection of the tension between direct combat support and a more Washington-oriented decision-support mentality. Rather than forcing DIA to accommodate additional demands from fielded forces, might it not be better to adequately resource those forces in the first place, and allow DIA to concentrate on the role that sparked its creation? Such a move would play to the cultural inclinations DIA has already displayed, and potentially avoid yet another well-intentioned reorganization donnybrook. Unfortunately, this course of action seems highly unlikely given current resource constraints.

Conclusion

While one can debate the suitability of Lieutenant General Flynn’s proposed changes for DIA, it seems likely that his implementation of those changes conflicted with cultural norms, and did so to such an extent that his tour was cut short. It would appear that his failure to co-opt a sufficient team into a change coalition left his plans vulnerable to counter-messaging and workforce skepticism, and that this critically weakened his later organizational progress. This is an important point for military commanders. It is always tempting, especially when faced with a crisis that seems to require urgent action, to try to implement a solution through fiat and force of will. When facing an issue bounded in time, limited in scope, and backed by appropriate authorities, such a method

can work. When dealing with a large, complex organization with significant organizational memory and cultural bias, however, there can be a great deal of friction generated by a centralized and directive approach to change. Lieutenant General Flynn likely possessed the sense of urgency and vision required to achieve his objectives. That very sense of urgency, however, may have driven him to over-direct and under-convince, and prevented the diffusion of his vision to a sufficient degree to sabotage the eventual outcome. As resource and operational pressures on the military lead commanders to reorganize to meet new realities, that lesson should resonate.

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