Fostering Creativity in the IC: Insights from Four Decades Ago

James D. Marchio

> ### *Ode to Creativity*
>
> *To be creative is oft taken for granted,*
>
> *If you're a Brahms, a Poe or a Rembranted . . .*
>
> *In Elysian fields, a muse may be hid,*
>
> *To inspire tomorrow's PDB, CIRL or NID.*
>
> *We report and write in prose Miltonic,*
>
> *Of agents run on gins and tonic,*
>
> *In Maputu, London, Quito, or Madras,*
>
> *We pledge to create or we'll cover our…*
>
> _____
> Written by students in a CIA midcareer training course ca. July 1977 and transmitted in a memo to the Acting Deputy Director of Central Intelligence.[a]
>
> _____
> a. For source, see endnote 3.

Creativity in a bureaucracy may seem to be an oxymoron, but it is an essential element of success for organizations large or small, including those in the Intelligence Community (IC) charged with tackling exceptionally difficult problems that demand innovative solutions. Scholars of bureaucracies have long highlighted the tension between control and innovation "as organizations rely on a certain level of bureaucracy, prioritizing establishing and sticking to a beaten track, while also desiring creativity—which by definition entails stepping off the beaten track."[1] Deliberate attempts to foster creativity often fail as they encounter formal and informal barriers or are unable to translate good ideas into concrete results, even with senior-level sponsorship.[2] These challenges were on display—together with some creative expressions of humor (see left)[3]—during one CIA effort in the 1970s to foster creativity in the workplace on the heels of a particularly damaging period for the CIA and the broader IC—with, I contend, lessons for today.[a]

Between November 1976 and March 1978, CIA held multiple symposiums and meetings addressing the issue of creativity. These sessions—initiated at the behest of Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (DDCI) E. Henry Knoche and involving all elements of the agency—emphasized how controls instituted in the wake of the congressional investigations were constraining creativity in its analytic and collection workforce. Despite the multiple reports and recommendations that resulted from these sessions, their impact was limited and ephemeral.

Continued calls to increase creativity in the IC workforce in the decades since attest to the reality that building and protecting an environment in which creativity is nurtured and rewarded is not a new requirement but rather an enduring challenge that has become even more important and daunting. At the same time, the lessons from the late 1970s remind us that success in fostering and protecting creativity in today's IC workplace will come only with a renewed sense of urgency, a shared understanding of what creativity is and is not, and sustained efforts targeting all echelons of the IC workforce. These initiatives must be part of a larger integrated effort to shape the IC's culture and leverage the new technologies and analytic tools now available.

Time of Troubles

Profound unease and uncertainty confronted the CIA and the larger

_____
a. I wish to acknowledge the valuable comments and insights Douglas Garthoff and Josh Kerbel offered on reading earlier drafts of this paper.

> *"It goes without saying that the future will require the most effective and imaginative efforts possible to give us good internal oversight while not stifling the creativity so essential to intelligence work."*—G. H. W. Bush

IC in the mid-1970s. Following a largely acrimonious relationship with President Nixon and his top national security advisers earlier in the decade, amid social strains at home and setbacks abroad, public confidence in the IC was rocked by the 1974 revelation of the CIA's so-called Family Jewels (a list provided by CIA to Congress of possible illegal activities carried out since its creation), multiple tell-all books written by former CIA employees, and revelations of domestic wiretapping operations by the then unacknowledged National Security Agency.[a] The ensuing hearings and investigations conducted by the presidential commission headed by Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller, the Senate's Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities led by Senator Frank Church, and the House of Representative's Pike Commission all exposed shortcomings in IC activities and ultimately led to increased congressional oversight and restrictions on its operations.[4]

When George H.W. Bush took the reins as director of central intelligence (DCI) in January 1976, he inherited an agency and a community reeling from multiple blows to its sense of purpose and morale and confronting new restrictions on how it executed its mission. Bush summed up the critical challenges facing CIA and the IC in May 1976:

It goes without saying that the future will require the most effective and imaginative efforts possible to give us good internal oversight while not stifling the creativity so essential to intelligence work.[5]

Bush's comments and the challenges he alluded to became even more evident in the ensuing months as CIA's senior leadership took steps to discern and gauge their nature and scale. The deputy director for administration (DDA) surveyed a random sample of 25 percent of CIA employees in the last half of 1976. The survey revealed that while 60 percent felt that CIA morale had been affected negatively by the congressional investigations, only 10 percent said they had had a serious negative impact on their feeling about employment with CIA.[6] Concurrently the CIA inspector general conducted a comprehensive survey of the four CIA directorates (at the time operations, intelligence, science and technology, and administration) to determine whether the agency was in compliance with the new legislative regulations and guidelines.[7] Lastly, the Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI), then under the Office of Training, took the lead in planning two experimental seminars to assess various problems facing the agency.[8]

Responding to the Challenge

One of the earliest and most significant DDCI initiatives to address these perceived challenges was a two-day session held in November 1976 identified as "Seminar on Creativity and Ethics in the CIA." Reflecting both a sense of urgency and the level of concern, it drew together more than a dozen senior officers from throughout the agency with the charge from DDCI Knoche to "brainstorm" the challenges facing it.[9] Knoche opened the session and asked the group to suggest ways to advance "innovation and creativity in the CIA under the constraining impact of inspection and controls."[10]

During the next two days, the senior officers spent most of their time discussing creativity and ethics in the agency. They also looked closely at what effect controls were having on CIA's foreign intelligence liaison relationships. As part of these discussions, senior leaders examined management structure and processes as well as avenues of dissent available to the workforce.[11]

Although views differed on the scale and impact of the proposals, the group acknowledged CIA was wrestling with multiple problems in the wake of the congressional investigations. For example, in discussing creativity it was noted, "Individual initiative down the line has been dampened in the past several years to the point where a lack of it is having serious negative consequences on our overall performance."[12] One participant blamed new outside authorities

---

a. This period in IC's history, known colloquially as "the time of troubles," has been explored frequently by the Center for the Study of Intelligence. For a contemporaneous view, see Timothy Hardy, "From the Inside Looking Out: Intelligence Reform in the Mid-1970s," *Studies in Intelligence* 20, no. 2 (June, 1976). For the recollections of one participant who would later become CIA general counsel, see L. Britt Snider, "Unlucky Shamrock: Recollections From the Church Committee's Investigation of NSA, *Studies in Intelligence* 43, no. 1 (March 1999).

"Creativity": In Search of a Definition

The IC did not have a standard definition of creativity in 1977; 44 years on it still does not. This void highlights in part the challenges of defining the term. CSI prepared talking points, based on issues raised at creativity seminars, for DCI Turner in February 1977. They asserted "creativity" should be seen as both "the ability to stimulate new and fresh ideas on what and how we do things" and a "willingness to take new initiatives and risks."

"telling us what we should be doing." Going even further, participants asserted; "Outside scrutiny of the agency has inevitably accelerated a trend toward centralization and a 'sucking upward' of the authority for decisionmaking in the CIA, undercutting at lower levels at least, the climate needed for creative initiative to flourish."[13]

Other factors perceived as diminishing creativity were internal to CIA. A paper written for the November conference bemoaned the fact that "we do not understand and adequately provide the necessary creative climate." Then it added: "For creativity to flourish, there must be a rather permissive climate within the organizational structure, with some autonomy for the creative individual. Most of our organization, however, is increasingly bound up in red tape and paper work, with increasingly structured and rigid rules of operation."[14]

Additional challenges were posed by leadership turnover, which had prompted "rapid changes and some contradiction in marching orders."[15] Management by Objective (MBO) procedures also were seen by some as contributing to both confusion and diminished initiative.[a]

Lastly, "frenetic distractions" were identified as "impinging upon the climate for initiative and innovation." Time spent on such things as the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and responses to investigation information requests were cited as examples. The threat from these perceived distractions was that "attention to form and artificial deadlines will outweigh attention to substance in our work."[16]

Nonetheless, the conclusions drawn by the senior officers from the November 11–12 symposium were relatively positive. The symposium report concluded on a hopeful note: "If creativity within the Agency is defined as the ability to stimulate new and fresh ideas on what to do and how to do it, then creativity is alive and well in the CIA today." The report cited the recent reorganization of the Directorate for Intelligence (DI) and its efforts to seek "a fresher, more effective product and a better climate for creativity," asserting "from this perspective, the challenge with creativity is probably that mainly of protecting the climate we have now and of encouraging it more."[17]

In that spirit the report singled out elements viewed as essential

to maintaining and improving the climate for creativity in CIA. These included clarifying aims and goals, reversing the tendency to "suck up to authority for decisionmaking," and encouraging a style of leadership that supported creative initiative and innovation. The need to improve the climate for "responsible dissent" also was noted.[18]

A second "Seminar on Creativity and Ethics in the CIA" was held in January 1977. The demographics for this seminar differed significantly from the November one, comprising a "relatively young group of agency officers, male and female, black and white."[19] That said, the sentiments expressed in this seminar "did not depart radically from the attitudes expressed in the first seminar," although some additional perspectives emerged.[20]

Participants in the January seminar were asked to review the first group's findings and recommendations pertaining to creativity and ethics and CIA's climate.[21] This group was much more concerned with the inadequacy of communications across bureaucratic and other compartmented walls. Beyond eliminating the bureaucratic isolation of the offices and directorates from one another, seminar participants called for a clearer statement of CIA's goals and "more feedback to individuals on the value of their professional efforts."[22] Lack of, or distortion of, information coming down from senior staff meetings was cited as "unnecessarily depriving lower ranking officers of the kind of stimulus they

---

a. MBO, also known as management by results, was described in Peter Drucker's 1954 book *The Practice of Management*. MBO is a comprehensive management system based on measurable and participative objectives. It was widely adopted by both the government and private sector during the 1960s and 1970s. MBO was brought to CIA by DCI William Colby in 1974 as part of his larger effort to improve the performance and efficiency of the IC. See Douglas Garthoff, *Directors of Central Intelligence and Leaders of the US Intelligence Community, 1946–2005* (Center for the Study of Intellilgence, 2005), 94–95.

> **DDCI Knoche continued to show high-level support for efforts to address the creativity challenges as CIA transitioned from the supportive directorship of DCI Bush to that of Admiral Stansfield Turner.**

need for new approaches and creative ideas."[23]

Overall, the January seminar endorsed the conclusion of the November session: CIA had "a rich repository of creativity and initiative in our personnel today. But participants questioned "whether the environment of the Agency today really reinforces doing things creatively." They "suspected, rather, that the environment tend[ed] mainly to reinforce conventional wisdom as the proper approach" and that the "accumulation of rules, paper work, coordination, staffs, and the like often tends to institutionalize the avenues of inertia rather than creativity."[24]

The seminars also differed in the recommendations advanced to protect and nurture creativity in the agency. These differences largely reflected the perspective and seniority of participants. The more senior members of the November seminar urged CIA to "stress that individual officers should try to exercise their responsibility and authority to the fullest" while conveying the "interest in and receptiveness of management to individual initiative." Conversely, the more junior and diverse January group focused on fostering "better communications" and breaking down "the bars of isolation of office-level components." Their recommendations were more specific as well, calling for attendance of senior managers at lower-level staff meetings and greater participation of all office-level components across directorates.[25]

The January group also advanced multiple recommendations on how to use rewards—monetary and non-cost recognitions—to "foster greater flexibility in response to creative initiative and bolster management requirements for a climate of creativity." There was some convergence in the recommendations advanced as both groups urged a review of the application of MBO in the agency and each endorsed the recommendation to encourage "the further development of component-level 'developmental' or 'think' units."[26]

Follow-up Discussions and Issues

Knoche continued to show high-level support for efforts to address the creativity challenges as CIA transitioned from the supportive directorship of DCI Bush to that of Adm. Stansfield Turner, a leader more inclined to question CIA practices and professionalism. In discussing the November and January symposiums while serving as acting director before Turner's arrival, Knoche declared, "I believe the findings that have resulted are thoughtful and deserving of serious study regarding implementation." Consequently, he ordered each of the operating components to discuss the findings from the November and January seminars in "special staff meetings" led by their director or deputy.[27]

Describing the November and January symposiums in a memorandum to newly installed DCI Turner, Knoche wrote:

You will recall our discussion a few weeks back when I told you I thought our foremost challenge is to insure a spirit of creativity and willingness to consider risks. . . . Two important conclusions seem to suggest themselves: 1) the quality of leadership at all levels has as much influence on initiative, creativity, and morale as the burden of regulation and oversight, force of public criticism or frustration of leakage...2) concern should be focused on the longer trend not on the daily ups and downs.[28]

The follow-up discussions directed by Knoche took place over the next five months. These sessions hit many of the same issues identified and discussed in the November and January seminars. However, criticism and new topics and priorities also surfaced, reflecting in part the different missions and challenges confronted by each component.

Representatives of the Directorate for Operations (DO) and DI, for example, did not shy away from finding fault with the November and January symposiums. During their March session, DO discussants characterized the recommendations emerging from the earlier symposiums as like "motherhood."[29] DI representatives, on the other hand, criticized the composition of these sessions, stressing, "It would have been difficult to convene a less representative group than that put together by [CSI]."[30]

Despite this criticism, the core issues discussed in the follow-on sessions mirrored those raised in November and January: leadership, communications, rewards, dissent,

and organizational structure and procedures. DI representatives, for instance, argued that there was "a clear correlation between delegation of responsibility and increased initiative and creativity" and that "a response from below depends in part on a style of leadership that demonstrates receptivity to initiative, creativity, and reasonable dissent."[31] Participants from the Directorate for Science and Technology (DS&T) echoed these sentiments. "We agreed," the report noted, "that a key ingredient in fostering creativity was communications, both up and down the line [but] existing channels for dissent are not adequate."[32]

Issues not touched on in the November and January symposiums emerged from the DS&T and DI sessions as well. DS&T participants highlighted the resource constraints stifling creativity. These constraints forced "new programs to show an early (premature) observable pay off." Thus, the group argued, "agency management must be more imaginative and forceful in supporting a budget that allows for risk taking and innovative thinking."[33] Beyond fiscal constraints, the DS&T report cited the "lack of time for creative thought and planning" as a key constraint.[34]

The spring 1977 organizational discussions also revealed mixed views on the perceived value and effectiveness of recommendations advanced from the November and January sessions. How to recognize creativity and innovation was one area where differences surfaced. DI participants argued that "psychic awards," identified as more frequent feedback from senior management and policy-level consumers on the value of the' professional efforts of analysts, were far and

---

The points advanced from the follow-on discussions between March and June 1977 laid the groundwork for a larger symposium on "Creativity, Controls, and Ethics" in March 1978.

---

away the more important inducements to individual creativity and initiative than monetary rewards.[35] Another controversial recommendation was whether "think tanks" should be created. Some DI respondents believed "every unit should be a 'think' unit." On the other hand, some thought the very need for such a unit, be it formal or informal, implied that the "proper participation and stimulation is not being provided as a matter of normal policy within an organization." Still others worried such forums could potentially be a serious drain on scarce research and analytical talent but were amenable to the idea of holding occasional "retreats."[36]

Symposium on Creativity, Controls, and Ethics

The points advanced from the follow-on discussions between March and June 1977 laid the groundwork for a larger symposium on "Creativity, Controls, and Ethics" in March 1978. This two-day gathering—involving close to 100 participants—garnered high-level support and included prominent guest speakers such as distinguished Harvard Professor Graham Allison.[37] Defining the mission of the symposium, DDA John Blake urged participants "to provide a final distillation of the discussion of the topics so that the report of the [earlier] deliberations can be forwarded to the DCI for his comment and be given wide circulation within the Agency."[38]

The symposium included panels on "controls" and "creativity and

resources" as well as a small group discussion on "creativity and controls in CIA." However, the majority of the panels and discussion over the two days addressed various aspects of ethics and its application in the intelligence profession, not creativity. Even the panel on creativity and resources spent limited time addressing issues raised in the November 1976 and January 1977 seminars. The panel dedicated the bulk of its effort to discussing the need for more effective coordination and management of the CIA's activities and its products, highlighting challenges posed by the lack of coordination between the various intelligence disciplines and the need for better tasking mechanisms. However, the panel acknowledged "there was a disturbingly large number of instances cited of restraint on creativity in all directorates."[39]

The discussion directly addressing creativity echoed points raised in the preceding 15 months by different directorates. DS&T representatives cited financial limits, multiple approval levels, and paperwork requirements as constraints on "doing things in a new or better way." Analysts pointed to the strong pressures created by ad hoc requirements and the need for short-focus reports as contributing to "the inability to isolate analysts from all of these day-to-day pressures as well as a reluctance on the part of the analysts themselves to devote a substantial portion of time and effort to longer-range issues." In the DA, pressures for conformity and a desire for noncontroversial reporting were key factors. Restraints on creativity

> ### The recommendations advanced in the March 1978 symposium were lofty but impractical.

in the DO were attributed to "ad hoc pressures, personnel cuts, from a sense of professional and personal uncertainty, from difficulty in interpreting new directives, policies, and orders, as well as pending legislation, operational personnel changes, and continued impact of a changing social environment."[40] Also raised as part of the general discussion on creativity was the need for "clearer communication" to CIA personnel about their mission and role. "Without such clear statements and adequate communication," the report noted, "we are continuing in a period of uncertainty which is debilitating in terms of creativity, in terms of morale, and in terms of energy and esprit de corps."[41]

The recommendations advanced in the March 1978 symposium were lofty but impractical. Omitted were specific recommendations that had been advanced in previous sessions, such as the call for "think units" and actions to encourage individual initiative and push decisions downward. What was identified as "the most urgent and vigorous recommendation of the symposium," allegedly supported by "unanimous consent and call for prompt action," was to reaffirm "the character and purpose of national foreign intelligence as those in our profession today and the dedicated officers before us know them to be." This recommendation was followed by another arguing CIA needed "a clear perception of its role, mission, and mandate. On this basis it must communicate in a forthrightly manner

with the executive, the legislative, and with its own personnel."[42] While effective communication and a clear sense of mission were essential, they were not the only ingredients needed to nurture and protect creativity at CIA.

In the Years Following

Lack of access to the complete classified record may obscure what resulted from 24 months of discussion and meetings on ways to increase and nurture creativity within CIA. However, I found no record of comparable large symposiums addressing this issue in the years that followed or, more importantly, evidence that the symposiums' recommendations were implemented. There was nothing to indicate "think units" were created or measures taken to systematically address management and communication issues. The only concrete step taken—likely spurred by the sessions held between 1976 and 1978—was in training, where the curriculum for midlevel managers was revised to include instruction on how to foster a creative climate and better articulate goals.[43]

Anecdotal evidence in the ensuing decades suggests that concerns over threats to creativity did not dissipate. For example, Richards Heuer published an article in 1981 on "Creativity and Intelligence Analysis" in the agency's internal journal *Analytical Methods Review*.[44] Heuer speculated some innate creative talent may be a necessary precondition for innovative

work, but he also argued that creativity could be learned and provided ideas on how analysts could improve their creative skills. At the same time, he emphasized the importance of the environment in which analysts worked. He cautioned that "new ideas are most likely to arise in an organizational climate that nurtures their development and communication."[45]

Larger efforts to improve the overall quality of CIA analysis tried to address issues that had been highlighted in the late 1970s symposiums. In 1982, Robert Gates, then deputy director for intelligence, launched a program to improve the quality of analysis that rested on three pillars, one of which was "stimulating creative and imaginative analysis by opening to an unprecedented extent a dialogue with experts in business, academia, and think tanks." This initiative, which Gates called "Letting in Fresh Air: Open Minds and Candor,"[a,46] went beyond outreach, encouraging diverse views and creating "an atmosphere in which differences of view and unorthodox approaches were encouraged and welcomed."

In November 1984, DCI William Casey established a top-level forum to review and react to "new ideas concerning ways to accomplish our mission better." Casey invited all employees to send their ideas for new or better ways to respond to critical intelligence problems directly to him, the DDCI, or the executive director, promising to "decide in short order on the merit and feasibility of such proposals and, if appropriate, arrange

---

a. The three pillars of Gates' program were: (1) improving the relevance of the product through a coherent research planning process and a dramatic increase in contacts with users of our analysis; (2) stimulating creative and imaginative analysis by opening to an unprecedented extent a dialogue with experts in business, academia, and think tanks; and (3) improving quality control within the directorate by intensifying the review of draft papers and increasing accountability up and down the line for the quality of the work.

to implement them rapidly."[47] Yet the absence of evidence as well as periodic calls for greater creativity suggest no sustained, high-level efforts continued in the years that followed.

### Growing Need for Creativity in the Post-Cold War World

The destruction of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and collapse of the Soviet Union two years later placed an even greater premium on the need for and value of creativity in the IC. In the 1990s, new and growing threats emerged: ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, genocide in Africa, terrorist attacks at home and abroad, and nuclear proliferation to name a few. The events of 9/11 and the failure to discover weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq in 2003 further highlighted a "failure of imagination" and the need for greater creativity. The 9/11 Commission argued that it was "crucial to find a way of routinizing, even bureaucratizing the exercise of imagination."[48] A year later the report on Iraq WMD echoed this sentiment: "A renewed focus on traditional tradecraft methods needs to be augmented with innovative methodologies and tools that assist the analyst without inhibiting creativity, intuition, and curiosity."[49]

On the horizon were more threats that would come into clear view in the 2010s, including a rising China, a more belligerent Russia, cyber warfare, and election interference. As Josh Kerbel and others have argued, "The past 30 years have seen complexity increase on a scale and a clip that far exceeds what came before."[50] Kerbel points to advances in technology, the speed of communication, and the rise of multiple nonstate actors

as key drivers.[51] He also was one of the first and most vocal critics of the IC and its seeming unwillingness to adapt to the challenges posed by complexity despite the efforts to do so by organizations outside its ranks.[52] Kerbel singled out the IC's continued reliance on analysis vice synthesis, its largely vertical and hierarchical structure, its culture, and even its analytic standards as inhibiting creativity and its ability to assess ongoing events accurately.[53]

In this author's view, while Kerbel's criticisms are largely valid, the IC has

also taken steps over the past 15 years to encourage and foster creativity. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) spearheaded the creation in 2006 of the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Agency (IARPA). Modeled after the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, IARPA is charged with conducting cross-community research, targeting new opportunities and innovations, and generating revolutionary capabilities by "drawing upon the technical and operational expertise that resides within the intelligence agencies."[54]
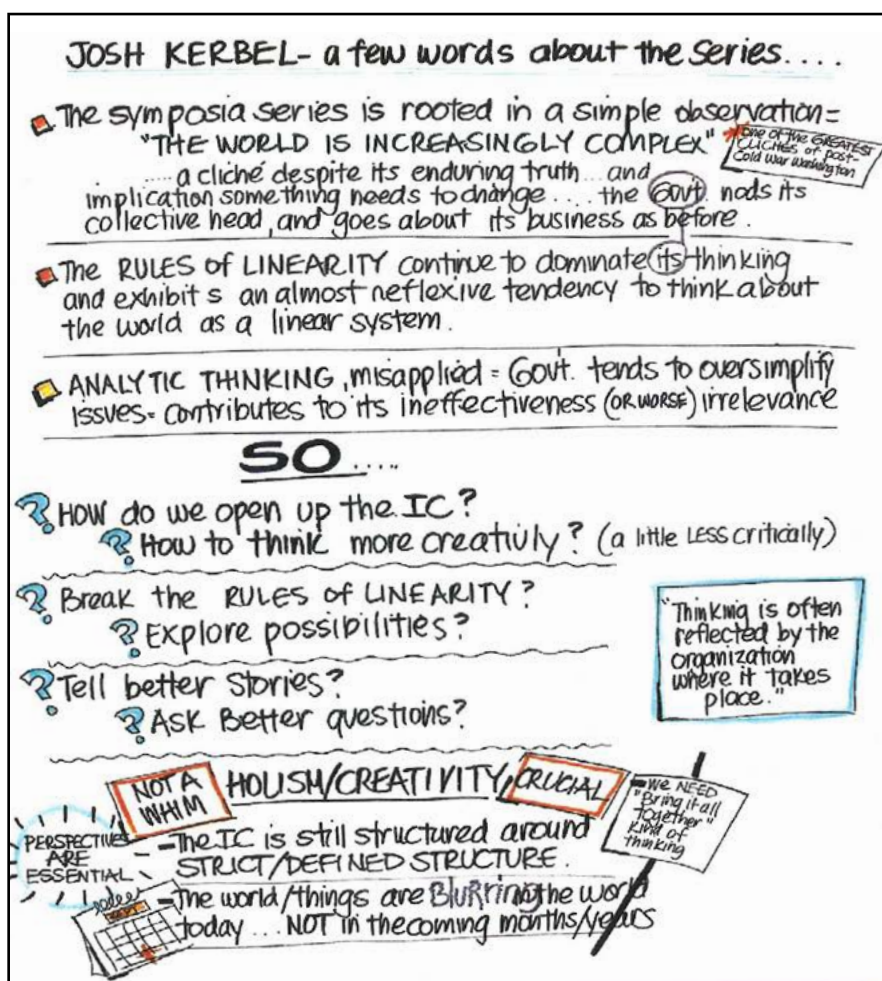
During September 2010–January 2011, Josh Kerbel of the ODNI Lessons Learned office led a four-part exploration of creativity in a bureacracy during a new era of complexity. The above is Kerbel's introduction in graphic form.

CIA's efforts to foster creativity more than 40 years ago illustrate this is not a new requirement but rather an enduring challenge that remains as urgent now as then.

At the same time ODNI initiated the Galileo Awards to "find bold, innovative ideas and creative solutions to our nation's intelligence challenges," with awards to the best submissions. [55] A 2007 award winner—*To Improve Analytical Insight Needed: A National Security Simulation Center*—typifies the hoped-for outcome from this competition.[56] The IC also held a series of four symposiums in fall and winter 2010–11 titled "Creativity in Bureaucracy." The first session focused on "Using Creativity to Confront Complexity", the second on "Organizing for Creativity", the third on "Where Good Ideas Come From", and the last "Using the Right Tools and Metrics to Ensure a Creative Organization". (See graphic on previous page.)[57]

Training, as in the 1970s, is perhaps where the IC has most directly tried to address the challenge of fostering creativity. CIA's Sherman Kent School for Intelligence Analysis has been offering a course on creativity for almost two decades.[58] Establilshed in the aftermath of 9/11, "Creativity in Intelligence" teaches students how to think more divergently, exploring all possibilities to get a solution with few or no limitations on time and imagination. Of note, this course—previously an elective—is designated now for credit toward the CIA's advanced analytic training program.[59]

Insights for Today

CIA's efforts to foster creativity more than 40 years ago show this is not a new requirement for the IC but rather an enduring challenge that

remains as urgent now as then. As in the mid-1970s, CIA and the IC confront an operating environment characterized by scrutiny, criticism, controls, and uncertainty about resources as the United States reemerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and untangles from its long military and intelligence war in Afghanistan. The historical record also reminds us that encouraging and nurturing creativity is a tough challenge. Despite CIA's actions to stimulate and protect creative thinking after the time of troubles in the 1970s, the impact of these actions was limited and short lived.

History offers insight, as well, into the ingredients essential to building and protecting an environment for creativity. The discussions conducted in the November 1976 and January 1977 symposiums and subsequent directorate sessions highlighted the importance of effective communication, decisionmaking pushed downward vice "sucked upward," and the need to foster a "permissive climate within the organizational structure, with some autonomy for the creative individual." The sessions also revealed the need for adequate resources to support innovative ideas and training as well as simply time to think and to think differently.

How can the IC avoid the shortcomings of these earlier efforts and improve the chances for success now, particularly given the increasing need for creativity to confront our ever more complex intelligence environment? The IC needs to regain the sense of urgency and high-level engagement CIA had in 1976, when DCI Bush acknowledged the

importance and centrality of creativity to our profession and its ability to execute its mission. This sense of urgency must be shared at all levels in the IC if efforts are to succeed.

There must be a recognition as well that this is an enduring problem, not one resolved by the creation of a single "think tank" or a new training course. Attacking the issue requires sustained effort and support at multiple levels, with different groups targeted with tailored initiatives. This is not simply a leadership problem or a challenge limited to analysts and operators.

If initiatives to foster and increase creativity are to succeed, they must be integrated into larger efforts to change the IC's culture. Part of this push for change should be to continue and expand on measures initiated since the passage of the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act. IARPA, CIA and other IC creativity training programs, and crowd-sourcing challenges like the Galileo and SPARK programs that encourage innovative solutions are fostering creativity and reinforcing its value. IC directives that encourage alternative analysis and dissenting views also have been valuable in facilitating an environment conducive to creativity.

However, more needs to be done to set aside time for analysts and operators to think. The "distractions" preventing analysts and operators from doing more than "putting out fires" in the 1970s pale in comparison to those limiting deep and strategic thinking today. Attention should be given as well as to how IC professionals think, the methods they employ, and the tools used to aid them. In a

world where artificial intelligence, machine learning, and big data play a greater role, we need to ensure that creativity is not delegated to technology while human creativity and innovation are allowed to atrophy.[60] In sum, creativity must not be merely an encouraged quality or a niche activity practiced by few, but rather a core value central to IC thinking, organizational structures, and leadership practices.

❖　❖　❖

The author: James D. Marchio is a retired Air Force officer, former product evaluator in the Office of Analytic Integrity and Standards in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. At the time of this writing, he was on the faculty of the National Intelligence University.

Endnotes

1. Giles Hirst, Daan Van Knippenberg, Chin-Hui Chen, and Claudia Sacramento, "How Does Bureaucracy Impact Individual Creativity? A Cross-Level Investigation of Team Contextual Influences on Goal Orientation—Creativity Relationships," *Academy of Management Journal* 54, no. 3 (June 2011): 624–41.
2. Theodore Levitt, "Creativity Is Not Enough," *Harvard Business Review*, August 2002, accessed at www.hbr.org/2002-08/creativity-is-not-enough.
3. "Discussion of Creativity, Controls, and Ethics in Midcareer Course No. 57," 30 August 1977, CIA-RDP80M00165A000300130004-4. This and all other declassified CIA documents cited in this study can be found at the CIA Reading Room at: www.cia.gov/readingroom/
4. For a brief review of the Church and Pike hearings and investigations, see Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only* (Harper, 1996), 402–405, 410–420.
5. Letter from George Bush, May 13, 1976, CIA-RDP79M00467A000200150037-4.
6. Note for the Director, March 14, 1977, CIA-RDP80M00165A002500050005-8.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Note for the Director on Creativity and Ethics, ND, CIA-RDP80M00165A000300050012-4.
10. "Seminar Report: Two Seminars on Creativity and Ethics in the CIA," Center for the Study of Intelligence, 15 February 1977, CIA-RDP82-00357R000500110004-5," hereafter "Seminar Report 1977."
11. Ibid. The agenda for the two-day symposium featured sessions on "Assessing the nature and extent of present constraints on creativity within CIA" with consideration of external constraints (legal, legislative, external budgetary) as well as internal constraints (budgetary, bureaucratic, security). Sessions also explored the "climate of public opinion about CIA" as well as assessing CIA's "basic standards and values today in agent recruitment, liaison, and production of finished intelligence." Also see Memo for Deputy Director for Administration on Status Report on the Leadership Development Group, November 24, 1976, CIA-RDP80-00473A000800010003-4.
12. "Seminar Report Report 1977."
13. Ibid.
14. "Toward Improved Creativity in the CIA," November 10, 1976, CIA-RDP80-00473A000800010006-1.
15. "Seminar Report 1977"
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Memo for Director of Training on Second Seminar on Ethics and Creativity in the CIA, January 19, 1977, CIA-RDP-80M00165A000300050018-8.
20. Ibid.
21. "Seminar Report 1977."
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. EH Knoche, memorandum, "Recommendations of Seminars on Creativity and Ethics," February 25, 1977, CIA-RDP-80M00165A000300050017-9.
28. Note for the Director, 14 March 1977, CIA-RDP80M00165A002500050005-8.

29. Draft Memo for Chief, Plans Staff/OP, "Creativity and Ethics Group Recommendations," April 6, 1977, CIA-RDP82-00357R000500110002-7.

30. Note for Special Assistant to the DCI, "Directorate Reports on Discussions of Findings of the Two Seminars on Creativity and Ethics," 18 July 1977, CIA-RDP80M00165A000300050010-6.

31. Ibid

32. Memo for Deputy Director of CIA, June 13, 1977, CIA-RDP80-00473A000800010015-1.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Note for Special Assistant to the DCI, "Directorate Reports on Discussions of Findings of the Two Seminars on Creativity and Ethics."

36. Ibid.

37. Seminar Report: Symposium on Creativity, Controls, and Ethics, Center for the Study of Intelligence, March 29-30 1978, CIA-RDP-85B01152R001101440079-3. For a statistical breakdown of invitees to the conference by gender, directorate, years of experience, and previous symposium participants, see Memo from Acting Deputy Director of CIA on Conference on Creativity, Controls, and Ethics, 17 November 1977, CIA-RDP80M00165A000300060012-3.

38. Seminar Report: Symposium on Creativity, Controls, and Ethics.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Note for the Director, March 14, 1977, CIA-RDP80M00165A002500050005-8; see "Memo for the Record on Seminar on Intelligence Analysis No. 3," August 3, 1979, CIA-RDP83-00156R001100010013-1, which concludes: "Our application of creativity is fundamentally sound."

44. "Analytic Methods Review," August 1981, CIA-RDP83M00171R000300220002-9. This entire article was later incorporated into Heuer's classic work *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis* (Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1999).

45. Ibid.

46. DDI Newsletter on Improving the Quality of Intelligence, December 11, 1985, CIA-RDP95M00249R000801140004-4.

47. Memo for All Employees, "Creative Problem Solving," November 28, 1984, CIA-RDP87M00539R002404050053-6.

48. 9/11 Commission Report (Barnes & Noble Books, 2004), 344.

49. *The Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, Report to the President of the United States*, March 31, 2005, Recommendation 8, 409.

50. Josh Kerbel, "The US Intelligence Community's Creativity Challenge," *National Interest*, 2010, 3, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-us-intelligence-communitys-creativity-challenge-11451

51. For additional work by Kerbel laying out the case for an increasingly complex world and the IC's failure to adapt quickly enough, see "For the Intelligence Community, Creativity is the New Secret," *World Politics*, March 2010, https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/5329/for-the-intelligence-community-creativity-is-the-new-secret

52. Kerbel, "The US Intelligence Community's Creativity Challenge" 2010, 4.

53. See Kerbel "For the Intelligence Community, Creativity is the New Secret," March 2010, 2; "The US Intelligence Community's Creativity Challenge" 2010, 4, and "The US Intelligence Community Wants Disruptive Change as Long as It's Not Disruptive," https://warontherocks.com/2016/01/the-u-s-intelligence-community-wants-disruptive-change-as-long-as-its-not-disruptive/

54. "About IARPA," https://www.iarpa.gov/index.php/about-iarpa

55. ODNI, "Policy & Strategy – Who We Are, Galileo Awards Program," https://www.odni.gov/index.php/who-we-are/organizations/strategy-engagement/ps/ps-who-we-are?highlight=WyJnYWxpbGVvIiwiYXdhcmzIiwiYXdhcmQiLCJhd2FyZGVkIiwicHJvZ3JhbSIsInByb2dyYW1taW5nIiwicHJvZ3JhbXMiLCJwcm9ncmFtdGJyb2dyYW0nIiwiYmIwcm9ncmFtcyIsImdhbGlsZW8gYXdhcmRzIiwiZ2FsaWxlbyBhd2FyZHMgcHJvZ3JhbSIsImF3YXJkcyBwcm9ncmFtIl0=

56. Richard K. Hanig and Mark E. Henshaw, "To Improve Analytical Insight Needed: A National Security Simulation Center," https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol52no2/to-improve-analytical-insight.html

57. IC Lessons Learned, Institute for Analytics, and Monitor 360, "Creativity in Bureaucracy: Session Summaries-Graphic Recordings, Recommended Readings and Key Issues (ODNI, undated).

58. Jessie Manniato, "The Creative Intelligence Agency: A Conversation with a CIA Creativity Instructor," https://www.thirdfactor.org/the-creative-intelligence-agency/

59. Ibid.

60. ODNI, "The AIM Initiative: A Strategy for Augmenting Intelligence Using Machines," https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/reports-publications/item/1940-the-aim-initiative-a-strategy-for-augmenting-intelligence-using-machines
CJwcm9ncmFtJyIsInByb2dyYW0nLiIsInByb2dyYW0ncyIsImdhbGlsZW8gYXdhcmRzIiwiZ2FsaWxlbyBhd2FyZHMgcHJvZ3JhbSIsImF3YXJkcyBwcm9ncmFtIl0=

❖ ❖ ❖