

# **New Eyes on the World: Training Analysts, Their Managers, and Overseers**

G. Davidson Smith et Robert Fahlman

Volume 16, numéro 1, spring 1996

URI : [https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/jcs16\\_01art04](https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/jcs16_01art04)

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

The University of New Brunswick

ISSN

1198-8614 (imprimé)

1715-5673 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Smith, G. D. & Fahlman, R. (1996). New Eyes on the World:: Training Analysts, Their Managers, and Overseers. *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 16(1), 75–83.

Vol. XVI No. 1, Spring 1996

## **New Eyes on the World: Training Analysts, Their Managers, and Overseers<sup>1</sup>**

by *G. Davidson Smith and Robert Fahlman*

*G. Davidson Smith* is head of Strategic Analysis and Emerging Issues Section with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

*Robert Fahlman* is Officer in Charge of the Criminal Analysis Branch of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The prediction of trends and outcomes has always been an imprecise endeavour, probably more so now than at any other juncture in recent history. Dynamic economic and political developments around the globe have rendered the intelligence landscape more diverse, volatile and complex than it has been since the 1930s.<sup>2</sup>

### **INTRODUCTION**

A red-coated Mountie seated on a coal-black horse has traditionally symbolized the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). A trench-coated figure wearing a snap-brim fedora pulled low over the eyes is the popular conception of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). The standby of illustrators and editorial cartoonists, these images are increasingly fanciful when associated with current reality. In today's world, a much less colorful functionary is making a growing contribution to the operational success of both the RCMP and CSIS the intelligence analyst.

Radical change in the international environment, new technologies, and fiscal constraints Farson's "triple whammy," as rightly cited by Tony Campbell<sup>3</sup> have had a major influence on the responsibilities of the RCMP and CSIS. Instead of reaping the benefits of a "peace dividend," each agency has been called upon to meet greater challenges (e.g., organized crime, narcotics trafficking, weapons smuggling, proliferation, money laundering, terrorism, economic espionage), while coping with severe resource cutbacks. One means by which the RCMP and CSIS have managed an effective response has been through an increased reliance on intelligence analysis.

In keeping with the discrete mandates of the RCMP and CSIS, the nature of intelligence analysis differs with the requirements of each agency. On the one hand RCMP analysis supports the identification, investigation and prosecution of criminal activity pursuant to the enforcement of the laws of Canada. On the other hand CSIS analysis supports the collection and investigation of information on activities believed to constitute threats to the security of Canada, for the purpose of reporting to and advising the government.

The mandate dichotomy is reflected throughout much of the intelligence analysis process in the RCMP and CSIS. Subject matter, personnel selection, career progression and

training programs are designed for the particular needs of each agency. For example, because of its much larger size, the RCMP is able to recruit personnel to fill the specific role of criminal intelligence analyst, whereas intelligence analysis is but one stage of career progression for a CSIS intelligence officer.

## **APPROACHES TO ANALYTICAL TRAINING**

### **CSIS**

The production of ongoing analyses of global and regional trends and issues that could have an impact on the security of Canada and the safety of Canadians is central to the CSIS mandate. Within the service, the responsibility for the task rests principally with Analysis and Production Branch (RAP); RAP is also responsible for, inter alia, the distribution of various CSIS products (intelligence reports/briefs) to customers (government departments/agencies).

From the RAP perspective of intelligence analysis, production and dissemination, two major issues deserve urgent consideration. First, today's intelligence environment demands *well-educated* analysts with *sound training* in research techniques and information management. Second, there is a very real need at the producer/consumer interface for *mutual education*, which would include the participation of analysts, concerning intelligence requirements and products.

Intelligence analysis may be generically categorized at three fundamental levels: immediate operational reporting or analysis; current intelligence; and strategic intelligence. Each level of analysis has specialized needs in terms of training, education and experience. The distinction between training and education is purposeful, as explained throughout the text which follows.

Immediate operational analysis is detailed, rather precise in scope and related to on-going activity. Current intelligence is broader, less narrowly specific and is usually intended for the benefit of policy makers. Strategic intelligence generally involves longer-range forecasting, is subject-oriented and often provides background clarification or a lead-in for operational and current intelligence analysis. Analysts must learn to differentiate their approach, thinking and research to meet the demands of each type of product.

The scope and complexity of challenges now facing the intelligence community, including the rapid pace of events, the enormous volume of available data (compounded by the growing use of open source material at least 80 percent of the intelligence product in some cases), and the major technological advances for storing, distributing and retrieving information, are placing great stress upon the capability of analysts. Exacerbating the difficulties is the critical need to prepare meaningful, "value-added" intelligence products and to get them into the hands of consumers as quickly as possible, under growing pressure of resource constraints.

This being the case, the luxury of trial and error in the development of analysts can no longer be afforded. Analysts must arrive on the job well -schooled in research techniques, aware of the process of analysis and with a keen professional attitude; they must be computer-literate and knowledgeable about international affairs. Preferably they should have a broad general education, with a post-graduate specialization and a foreign language. A particular advantage would be a period of study or residence abroad. These criteria may appear utopian and elitist, but they reflect the reality of today. They represent the fundamental requirements of effective analysis within the intelligence community.

Individual organizations necessarily must continue to conduct their own specialized in-house courses and on-job *training* for those subjects peculiar to the organizations, for example, the trade-craft of specific report writing, the use of special formats and particular software and databases. The *education* of analysts, however, must be accomplished elsewhere, before their employment begins.

However, a parallel need exists for experienced analysts to retain an up-to-date status in their particular subject areas. This requirement calls for a closer degree of association between intelligence organizations and the academic community, including course work, seminars, conferences, internships and consultancies. Some development is taking place in that direction,<sup>4</sup> but much more is needed.

Another approach to broadening an analyst's education and training is through secondment and exchange arrangements, domestically and abroad. Secondments and exchanges of analysts can be organized within the intelligence community or elsewhere in the government infrastructure, as well as through appointments or liaison duties abroad. It is also important that analysts with regional geographic responsibilities domestically or abroad be afforded the opportunity to visit those locations on a regular basis.

One method by which the Service has approached specialist or long -range assessment needs is through RAP's Strategic Analysis Section. Among the responsibilities of the Section are the identification of emerging issues and the provision of both a long-range perspective and in-depth knowledge of particular subjects. The Section is staffed with recognized subject authorities, largely drawn from the academic community, who are engaged for periods of two or three years to provide the specialist knowledge and experience. Strategic analysis places the greatest demand upon depth of subject knowledge and experience; because of its specialist nature, it is not amenable to on-job training other than the learning of report formats.

Strategic analysts not only prepare intelligence products, but also provide background data or perspectives to analysts working on the other two levels of analysis: current intelligence and immediate operational/tactical intelligence. Strategic analysis is another area where much closer links should be forged with the academic world, although a closer relationship also could be established between the academic and intelligence communities at all three levels. The Strategic Analysis program, in combination with course, internships, seminars and conferences, could serve to keep both communities

better informed. Certainly this relationship would help to overcome the difficulties of keeping analysts knowledgeable and current, and would facilitate their ability to continue to provide useful intelligence products.

In regard to the second issue the producer/consumer interface a better understanding is needed between intelligence producer and consumer; a form of mutual education, as it were. Clients must be familiarized with the intelligence products and services available to them. From the intelligence standpoint, it is much more beneficial if the real needs of clients are known as opposed to feeding clients with intelligence the community *thinks* they need. There are occasions, however, when the community must provide products not necessarily called for by the client.

To this end the service has originated a Marketing and Client Liaison Section which meets regularly with clients, exchanges views, and responds to identified needs. Analysts frequently accompany the Client Liaison Officers to obtain a better appreciation of the client's intelligence requirements and to establish a working relationship that facilitates the provision of intelligence services. This is an area where exchanges and secondments also could be used to improve mutual understanding.

In summary, the provision of meaningful, value-added intelligence products demands a professional approach to the development of analysts. The intelligence community can no longer afford to pay lip-service to the concept, any more than the community can expect analysts to continue to be an all-singing, all-dancing aggregation of generalists.

## **RCMP**

The intelligence analysis needs of the RCMP are closely aligned with the agency's law enforcement mandate. In that regard, emphasis is placed on both operational and strategic analysis. While much of the former is carried out at divisional and headquarters level, the latter is largely a headquarters activity, in line with the rationale expressed by Stewart A. Baker:

Top law enforcement officials the ones that allocate resources and set strategy need the same kind of 'strategic' intelligence that other policymakers do. If Chinese gangs are planning massive alien smuggling drives, or if the Russian mob has turned Central Asian collective farms into opium factories, the [Commissioner and his deputies] need to know.<sup>5</sup>

To meet the needs for intelligence analysis resources in an organized, structured manner, the RCMP recently has established a formal in-house training program: the Criminal Intelligence Analyst Understudy Course.<sup>6</sup> The course is unique, and represents a significant departure from earlier programs, which treated analysis and assessment training in piecemeal fashion. Candidates for this course are members of the RCMP assigned to analytical positions within the Criminal Intelligence Program. These individuals must hold a Bachelor's degree from a recognized university or have equivalent work experience. Eligibility for the understudy program also is based on the

position requirements within the Criminal Analysis Branch, Criminal Intelligence Directorate or the Division Criminal Analysis Sections.

The understudy program consists of three major components designed to provide candidates with the theoretical knowledge and practical experience necessary to perform the duties of a criminal intelligence analyst within the RCMP. Initial topics focus on the introduction of knowledge and techniques required by the criminal intelligence analyst; subsequent topics address the specialized studies to be undertaken by the analysts in their area(s) of expertise. Also included are topics designed and selected to train the analyst simultaneously in effective writing and briefing/presentation techniques, followed by study and practice to qualify as an expert witness in courts of law.

At RCMP Headquarters candidates specialize in one area of responsibility, either: drugs, economic and computer crime, organized crime (including Customs & Excise/Immigration); or, security offences and criminal extremism/terrorism. At division level, the candidate specializes in one main area of responsibility for testing purposes. The area studied/tested should be the one for which the candidate will have an ongoing responsibility, and should be selected from those enumerated within the headquarters responsibility. Assignments are chosen according to priorities and to their suitability as training assignments for the module being completed.

Emphasis is placed on developing the analysts' capabilities competently and proficiently to employ the skills and knowledge required for the performance of duties with minimum supervision. Throughout the program the candidate is expected to comply with RCMP rules, regulations and practices. Upon successful completion of the course, the graduates will be able to first, discuss and apply the intelligence process, produce and present intelligence assessments. This means they will have the skills to describe the different stages in the intelligence process, the purpose of each, and the possible shortcomings to avoid; produce various types of intelligence assessments relating to the analyst's area(s) of expertise; and present and defend intelligence assessments to senior management and operational personnel. Second, they should be adequately prepared to present and defend their opinions as expert witnesses in Canadian courts of law in a concise, meaningful and professional manner. Specifically, they will be able to: consult with Crown counsels and investigators to discuss evidence and inform them on familiar aspects of law and jurisprudence regarding criminal intelligence; formulate, safeguard and refer to notes; present and defend their qualifications as an expert; enter exhibits into court evidence and defend their continuity; present and defend their methodology, observations and conclusions; effectively present and defend their expert opinions on matters within their realm of expertise; and provide expert *viva voce* evidence in Canadian courts of law in a concise, meaningful and professional manner.

A training period of between 20 to 24 months maximum should be considered as average for the Criminal Intelligence Analyst Understudy Training Program; the course training standard is designed accordingly. Approximately 30 weeks, of a total of 104 weeks, have been set aside for the additional training outlined under the rubric of "concurrent training requirements."

The training program is initiated immediately upon the candidate's commencement of duties. Initially, time will be devoted exclusively to study and training until the completion of Section I (Course Topics). This section begins with orientation to the Criminal Intelligence Directorate at RCMP Headquarters and a familiarization tour encompassing all sections of the Criminal Analysis Branch (Drug, Economic, Security Offences, and General Analysis). More formal "content-oriented" sessions introduce the candidate to the intelligence process and the Canadian intelligence community. These sessions include lectures, individual reading and research, and a written essay. The Intelligence Process portion is designed to familiarize the candidate with: basic principles and definitions of intelligence (e.g., strategic, operational, tactical); the process itself (the "intelligence cycle"); analytical tools and methodologies; intelligence failures; and intelligence in a law enforcement organizational context. The Canadian Intelligence Community portion identifies and explains the functions of the various components of that community (e.g., CSIS, Communications Security Establishment, Foreign Affairs, Department of National Defence, Privy Council Office, etc.). Their requirements and capabilities, products, and interdepartmental assessment processes are explained, as are intelligence sharing arrangements with allies.

With this broad familiarization behind them, the candidates begin their first specialty study the Legal Framework. This is designed to ensure that criminal intelligence analysts will understand the legislation the RCMP is required to enforce, the roles and responsibilities of other agencies involved, and the relevant sections of the Criminal Code, federal and provincial laws, and treaties to which Canada is a party. All of these topics are related to specific criminal activity themes (drugs, organized crime, economic and computer crime, security offences and terrorism).

Section I closes with the researching and writing of a report, and an oral presentation exercise. This section is normally completed by or before the end of the 12th week of training. For sections II through V, training is conducted concurrently with actual assignments.

Through sections II to IV, the candidate analyst is exposed to the subjects and criminal activity areas identified earlier in greater depth. In terms of analysis skills training, this includes: analytical tools and methodologies; a variety of computer programs; site visits to related RCMP sections/branches, other Canadian agencies, such as CSIS, DND, CSE, major municipal police forces, and American agencies represented in Canada, such as the FBI, the CIA, and the Drug Enforcement Administration; and the intelligence process. Progressive immersion in a criminal activity subject area, such as terrorism, includes, in section II: definitions, typologies and classifications of terrorism; strategies and tactics; Canadian and international experience; counter-terrorism strategies; and intelligence sources. Section III focuses on groups that have a presence in Canada. The candidate analyst studies aims and motivation, membership, recruiting, and organization, funding, training, past activities, and future trends.

Section III will be completed before the end of the 12th month of training, and Section IV some six months later. In section IV, the candidate analyst specializes in one of the

criminal activity areas. By the end of section IV, it is expected that the candidate will have acquired both the skills and the knowledge to handle increasingly complex analytical tasks, and to report on them effectively, in written and oral form. Section V, which will be completed before the end of the 24th month of training, covers ground related to the RCMP's role in support of judicial proceedings. This includes expert testimony; law and courts; the presentation of evidence (qualifications, methodology, observations, conclusions and opinions); and concludes with a formal mock trial. But this is not the only training the candidate receives during this time. Concurrently with the Understudy Training Program, s/he is expected to participate in a variety of other specialized courses, including: Intelligence Analysis; Criminal Intelligence; Investigative Technique related to specific crime areas (e.g., terrorism, computer crime); and additional skills training in effective writing and presentation, instructional techniques, and computers (e.g., *WordPerfect*, *Windows*, and *Harvard Graphics* ).

To pass the Criminal Intelligence Analyst Understudy Training Program, the candidate is required to successfully complete all the course topics contained in the Course Training Standard of Criminal Intelligence Analyst, with the exception of those topics identified as optional. S/he must receive a mark of at least 75 percent on all of the report writing assignments, presentations, oral or written tests for each course topic, and the mock trial.

A candidate will fail the Criminal Intelligence Analyst Understudy Training Program under the following circumstances: first, a failure of the same objective more than once in any course topic. The candidate will be given an opportunity to repeat the failed objective by submitting a written essay/report on the topic, but only one repeat per object is allowed. Failure to pass the first repeat will result in the failure of the Understudy Training Program. Second, the initial failure of more than five objectives will result in the failure of the Understudy Training Program. The training program follows the sequence identified in the training syllabus. Once the failure of an objective has been identified, the program will be interrupted to provide the candidate with the opportunity to repeat the failed objective. The amount of time allocated for the repeat will be at the discretion of the tutor, who will be guided by the amount of time initially allocated to the course topic and by the scope of the objective to be repeated.

The candidate is informed of the results of each test and/or assessment as soon as the candidate's tutor has had the opportunity to complete the evaluation. Every effort is made by the tutor or the tutor's delegate to mark the test/examinations at the earliest date possible. The tutor will then review the results with the candidate, both orally and in writing. The review must identify the strong points of the tests/examinations, but particularly, it must identify weaknesses to allow the candidate an opportunity to remedy such weaknesses.

The candidate's progress (good or poor) is monitored using the test /examination results, performance as documented on RCMP Form #1004, trimester progress reports and/or Performance Evaluation and Review Reports. Progress reports are completed and forwarded for review to the Officer-In-Charge (OIC) Criminal Analysis Branch every four months. The final examination is marked by the tutor and by the OIC Criminal



Analysis Branch (or designated Chief Analyst), independently. The aggregate mark will be considered the official mark.

The authors believe that the RCMP's previously fragmented approach to intelligence analysis and assessment training had to be abandoned. The new program offers a more comprehensive system. It acknowledges the importance of having both a theoretical and a practical component within a training program. The integration of theory and practice in analyst training produces a better intelligence analyst and, ultimately, a better intelligence product.

### **Endnotes**

1. The text which follows is a synthesis of oral presentations made by panellists Rob Fahlman (RCMP) and Dr. Tim Smith (CSIS) during the October 1994 CASIS Conference on Intelligence Analysis and Assessment, on which occasion they individually described the analysis requirements of their respective organizations and the methods by which those needs are being addressed. Prior to the moderator and individual panelists addressing the topic, each took a moment to congratulate the conference organizers for including the issue of analysis training as part of the conference program; the subject is of considerable interest and importance for the intelligence community, especially in times of growing demands and shrinking resources.
2. T.J. Devlin, CSIS Strategic Analyst and former long-time Canadian Foreign Service Officer, unpublished speaking notes for an in-house seminar, October 1994.
3. Tony Campbell, "Training Analysts, Their Managers and Others: An Assessment," paper presented at the 1994 CASIS Conference, quoting Stuart Farson.
4. This is best exemplified by the joint Department of National Defence/Carleton University effort entitled: The Directorate of Strategic Analysis/Carleton International Security Seminar Series.
5. Stewart A. Baker, "Should Spies be Cops?," *Foreign Policy*, no. 97 (Winter, 1994-95), pp. 47-48 [author's insert].
6. This and all subsequent references to the course are drawn from, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Criminal Intelligence Analysis Understudy Course Training Standard* (Ottawa: RCMP Headquarters, April 1995).