To cite this article: Jack Duffield (03 Jan 2024): Military Intelligence as a Dual Professional Identity: A Response to “Military–Intelligence Relations: Explaining the Oxymoron”, International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, DOI: 10.1080/08850607.2023.2292944.

This is the author-submitted manuscript. The version of record of this article is published at: https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2023.2292944.

Military Intelligence as a Dual Professional Identity

A response to “Military–Intelligence Relations: Explaining the Oxymoron”

Author: Jack Duffield (ORCiD 0000-0003-1578-156X)

Flight Lieutenant Jack Duffield commissioned into the Royal Air Force in 2018. He has deployed operationally in both counter-terrorism and counter-state threat roles. He holds an MA in International Relations, and is a Chief of the Air Staff’s Fellow. His research is focused on covert action, intelligence, special operations and air and space power.

This work represents the views of the author and not of His Majesty’s Government.

Military intelligence as a dual professional identity

The *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* has energized academic discussion of military intelligence with the publication of seven new articles this year in a dedicated special section.[1] I am particularly grateful to Dr Jeffrey Rogg for his contribution, *Military-Intelligence Relations: Explaining the Oxymoron*, which has ably charted the professionalization of intelligence and the relationship between intelligence institutions and the military.[2] It is only because of his comprehensive study of conflicts between the military and intelligence professions that I may now offer an alternative perspective that considers military intelligence as a dual professional identity in its own right.

Rogg and others note that military intelligence has been repeatedly referred to as an oxymoron, although often humorously so.[3] Rogg argues that this "old joke" exposes the cultural gap between the military and intelligence professions.[4] His analysis of the differences between these two disciplines is insightful, and I would like to explore this in a different context. Rogg identifies seven "tensions" between the professions: the management of violence and the management of secrets; collectivism and individualism; pessimism and optimism; caution and risk-taking; obedience and innovation; violence and guile; overtness and covertness.[5] These tensions reveal three key areas of difference between the intelligence and military professions: organizational differences, procedural differences and cultural differences. Rogg used these to frame a further discussion about the areas of conflict between the military and intelligence communities. However, the areas of overlap that this creates also merit exploration. For example, the military organization priorities creating a change in the operating environment, which intelligence supports, while

intelligence organizations generally prioritize collecting data from the environment rather than changing it. Similarly, a military procedurally begins with an end state and works to achieve it, while an intelligence approach begins with a problem and works to understand it. In each case, these differences introduce a range of possible approaches in military and intelligence interest areas. The cultural differences are perhaps the most interesting, as the hierarchy and expectation of obedience in military culture does not mesh easily with the requirement for independence in intelligence.[6] I'm afraid I have to disagree with Rogg's characterization of military culture in some areas. For example, Huntington does not urge a culture of caution so much as restraint in the use of violence, and risk-taking is in fact central to military decision-making.[7] Nonetheless, taking the broader point of cultural differences forward, this also offers a third area where there are potentially a range of acceptable approaches.

I concur with Rogg's argument that military-intelligence relations are a valuable area for future research, however, I would like to draw attention to the area where the overlap between them manifests, in military intelligence.[8] For military intelligence personnel, these organizational, procedural, and cultural differences are an everyday reality. This creates a unique area of convergence between the military and intelligence professions. Military intelligence itself fulfils many of the common characteristics of a profession in its own right. It requires a specific Phase 2 training, entry to military intelligence is tightly controlled through recruitment and selection processes, it is governed by service-level and in some cases national bodies, and it has its own system of standards.[9] Considering this in the context of Rogg's analysis, military intelligence is best described as a

profession with a dual identity, spanning both the military and intelligence communities.

This is a far less pessimistic characterization of military intelligence than as an oxymoron and better reflects the reality of the military intelligence profession. Reconsidering Rogg's tensions in this context, the areas of overlap instead create opportunities where military intelligence professionals may adopt aspects of both professions to achieve their aims. This has indeed taken place, and historical records have identified how military intelligence officers have been noted to have a distinctive organization, procedures and culture compared to the rest of the military while nonetheless achieving both military and intelligence objectives.[10] From this, Rogg has unlocked another fertile area of study, on how the military intelligence profession navigates this dual identity.

I hope that drawing attention to the military intelligence profession builds upon Rogg's research and allows further observations to be made from his work. Rather than calling it an oxymoron, I implore scholars to consider military intelligence instead as a dual identity, which allows its practitioners to operate in areas between the organizational, procedural and cultural norms of the military and intelligence communities.

References

[1] Sebastiaan Rietjens and Peter De Werd, 'Intelligence and the Military: Introduction', *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 22 June 2023, 1–6, https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2023.2215690.

[2] Jeff Rogg, 'Military–Intelligence Relations: Explaining the Oxymoron', *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 3 April 2023, 1–18, https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2023.2187191.

[3] Philip H. J. Davies and Kristian Gustafson, 'Intelligence and Military Doctrine: Paradox or Oxymoron?', *Defence Studies* 19, no. 1 (2 January 2019): 19–36, https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2018.1538698; David H. Schimmelpenninck Van Der Oye, 'Russian Military Intelligence on the Manchurian Front, 1904–05', *Intelligence and National Security* 11, no. 1 (January 1996): 22, https://doi.org/10.1080/02684529608432341.

[4] Rogg, 'Military–Intelligence Relations', 1080.

[5] Rogg, 'Military–Intelligence Relations', 1068–69.

[6] Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 'Analytic Standards' (ODNI, June 2007), 2, https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICD/ICD%20203%20Analytic%20Standards.pdf .

[7] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil–Military Relations* (Harvard University Press, 1957), 79, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjf9wx3; R. J. Knighton, 'The Psychology of Risk and Its Role in Military Decision-Making', *Defence Studies* 4, no. 3 (January 2004): 309, https://doi.org/10.1080/1470243042000344786.

[8] Rogg, 'Military–Intelligence Relations', 1080.

[9] Henrik Nilsson, 'Professionalism, Lecture 5: What Is a Profession?' (Nottingham University, 2007), 2,

https://web.archive.org/web/20070926100028/http://www.cs.nott.ac.uk/~nhn/G52GRP/LectureNotes/lecture05-4up.pdf.

[10] Clive Jones, 'Anthropologists, Topographers, Diplomats, and Spies: Royal Air Force Intelligence Officers in South Arabia 1954–1959', *Middle Eastern Studies* 58, no. 3 (4 May 2022): 402, https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2022.2047656.