First Steps: Intelligence Analysis in Canada during the Second World War

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Abstract: At the outset of the Second World War decision-makers in Ottawa were entirely dependent on the United Kingdom for finished intelligence on foreign military and political developments. During six years of war the intelligence work carried out in Canada expanded in several areas, and included a growing capacity to carry out intelligence analysis in several fields. An analytic group was established to exploit the mass of detailed information collected by the postal censorship programme. The Department of External Affairs created a small unit that drew on signals intercepts and other sources to assess political issues for senior officials. In the Department of National Defence, the newly-created Joint Intelligence Committee took the first steps in producing strategic intelligence assessments from a Canadian perspective. These developments were all heavily influenced by Canada’s close intelligence relations with the UK and US. A major impediment to the development of an independent analytic capacity, however, was the lack of demand for Canadian-origin intelligence assessments from senior political and military leaders in Ottawa, who continued to look to allies for intelligence to inform national-level decisions.

Canada entered the Second World War with little capacity to collect or analyse foreign intelligence, and little interest in doing so. Any intelligence Ottawa needed to make decisions regarding its foreign and defence policies was provided by the United Kingdom. But as the war progressed, Canada came to recognise the need to create its own intelligence capacity, particularly the ability to collect signals intelligence. This wartime effort laid the foundations for Canada’s involvement in the post-war “Five-Eyes” intelligence partnership that
exists to the present day. The story of the birth of Canada’s signals intelligence organisation has sparked considerable scholarly interest.¹

Another aspect of the wartime development of Canada’s foreign intelligence capabilities has received less attention: Ottawa’s initial efforts in producing independent intelligence analysis. The collection of secret information is an important part of the intelligence process, but it is seldom sufficient in itself. While in rare cases such secret reporting can feed directly into government decisions, more often individual covert intelligence reports only provide fragmentary and often conflicting snippets of information that need to be organised, compared with other sources and analysed in order to draw out their full significance. At a higher level of complexity, intelligence assessments which make forward-looking judgements about likely enemy actions can play a major role in national decision-making. The lack of such a capacity can have significant consequences. As just one example, when Canada received a request from the UK in 1941 to send troops to reinforce the garrison of Hong Kong, Ottawa had no independent ability to gauge the risks involved and in making this important decision relied on London’s assessment.²

This article examines the various forms of intelligence analysis carried out in Canada during the Second World War in support of government decision-making or which contributed to the overall Allied intelligence effort. Canadians also carried out operational and tactical level intelligence analysis in the formations and units serving in active theatres overseas, but this activity took place within the framework of Allied intelligence structures and deserves its own study.³ In Canada, the war marked the beginning of efforts to

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² In the case of Hong Kong, it not clear that an independent Canadian assessment body would have come to a conclusion that differed from the flawed UK and US evaluation of the imminence of war with Japan, but the fact remains that Canada was entirely dependent on the judgement of others in making this decision.

³ S.R. Elliot, *Scarlet to Green: A History of Intelligence in the Canadian Army, 1903-1963* (Toronto: Canadian Intelligence and Security Association, 1981) provides a comprehensive account of the intelligence work carried out overseas by the Canadian Army.
carry out national-level intelligence analysis and to produce strategic intelligence assessments.

EXPLOITING CANADIAN INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION

During the Second World War Canada developed a limited capacity to collect intelligence through the interrogation of prisoners of war and postal censorship. To produce useful intelligence, this required an analytical component to identify and synthesise the relevant information from the mass of detail obtained from these sources. In 1939 Canada had no experience in such work and early efforts were hampered by a lack of clear direction and poor organisational coordination.

PRISONER OF WAR INTELLIGENCE

Most German prisoners of war in Canada were transferred from Britain, and as the detaining power the UK retained responsibility for many aspects of their treatment, including intelligence matters. Canadian officials gradually became more involved as the war progressed, but largely in a supporting role. Most intelligence work involving prisoners of war related to monitoring security in the camps and obtaining material for use in UK and later US psychological warfare operations. For most of the war any analysis of intelligence gathered from German prisoners in Canada was carried out by Allied officers to meet Allied requirements. The Department of External Affairs (DEA) was keen that Canada should play a larger role, but this was not a priority for the military. It was not until May 1944 that National Defence approved the establishment of a Prisoner of War Intelligence Section, subordinate to the Director of Military Intelligence. Some forty intelligence officers were assigned to camps in Canada to carry out interrogations largely focussed on obtaining order of battle and other military information to contribute to the

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overall Allied intelligence effort. Canadian naval intelligence also had a section dealing with naval prisoners of war. Little evidence remains of this work. The only report that appears to have survived in archival files is a staff list and description of the German naval training school at Flensburg-Mürwik. Whatever information of military value that German prisoners may have possessed was largely outdated by the time they arrived in Canada, and there was no effective analytical capacity to support the work of the officers carrying out interrogations.

**ANALYSING CENSORSHIP INFORMATION**

The collection of foreign intelligence via postal censorship eventually achieved greater success but at the beginning of the war it was hampered by a lack of direction and coordination. Departments were flooded with hundreds of unsorted reports derived from intercepted mail and telegrams from foreign countries. By December 1941 the file room in External Affairs had a backlog of thousands of unread postal intercepts. The department was not responsible for censorship but saw its potential value as a source of intelligence. By default, it took the lead in addressing the problem. George Glazebrook—an academic historian brought into the department for wartime duty who would go on to play a major role in the post-war Canadian intelligence community—put forward proposals for centralising and providing clearer direction to censorship operations. As a result, in May 1942 all aspects of the censorship function were brought under the authority of the Minister of National War Service. In addition to performing a security role by reviewing outgoing mail from Canada,

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6 Jensen, *Cautious Beginnings*, 80-82.

the censorship organisation made a concerted effort to derive foreign military and economic intelligence from correspondence arriving in Canada from enemy-occupied areas, especially letters to German prisoners of war and civilian internees. The analysis of the mass of detail to derive broader conclusions was essential to extracting the full value of this information.

By 1943 the postal censorship effort had expanded to 300 examiners reviewing tens of thousands of pieces of incoming correspondence each month. Through the adoption of a more systematic approach to managing the volume of mail and the hiring of university graduates to analyse the material, the postal censorship organisation was able to produce comprehensive reports on specific issues. A typical report from January 1943 drew on 500 letters over a two-month period to describe conditions in the Saar region of Germany, including information on air raids, food, health and morale. Regular monthly reports were produced on conditions in Germany. For the March 1945 issue 56,000 letters were reviewed. The report included a statistical analysis of German morale, tallying examples of “positive” morale (support for the leadership, faith in the prospect of victory, etc.) and “negative” morale (criticism of the authorities, war-weariness, etc.); a graph illustrated trends in morale over the previous six months. Postal censorship also prepared reports on other European countries, including France and Italy. One example was a report on France from June 1945 that described French attitudes towards the Allies, General de Gaulle and collaborators, among other subjects.

These assessed censorship reports went to a number of officials in Ottawa, but they were of limited use for Canadian purposes. The major recipients were the censorship organisations in London and Washington, where the reports contributed to the Allied psychological warfare campaign and the strategic intelligence analysis that was being

8 Jensen, Cautious Beginnings, 74-78.
10 Page, “Special DEA Wartime Assignments,” 44.
undertaken in those capitals. In 1943 some 800 Canadian intelligence reports a month—most of them derived from postal censorship—were being sent to Washington. The US Office of Strategic Services (OSS) valued the Canadian censorship reports as inputs to their own analysis of the situation in Germany. The Canadian postal censors worked closely with their US and UK counterparts; in August 1943 the heads of the three censorship programmes met in Miami to coordinate their activities.\(^\text{13}\) The Canadian postal censorship programme was very much a part of a larger Allied effort.

**INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS IN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

The Second World War marked Canada’s entry into the world of signals intelligence, the systematic interception and decryption of foreign telegram and radio messages. A small organisation known as the Examination Unit was established in June 1941 under the administrative umbrella of the National Research Council to decrypt and distribute the intercepted messages. The raw traffic came from military intercept facilities and encrypted messages obtained by the censorship authorities. As the new organisation gradually found its feet, a stream of transcripts of individual intercepted messages—mostly Vichy French and Japanese communications with their missions in the Americas—began to reach senior officials in External Affairs and elsewhere in government.\(^\text{14}\)

**CREATING THE SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE SECTION**

External Affairs, however, was not entirely satisfied with this new material. As an unpublished internal history of DEA’s wartime intelligence activities notes: “The problem with raw intelligence coming from the Examination Unit was that it was never placed in a broad context where its significance could be appreciated for making decisions. External Affairs needed analysed rather than raw

\(^{13}\) Jensen, *Cautious Beginnings*, 83-84.

intelligence.”¹⁵ In September 1942, at Glazebrook’s urging, External Affairs formed a Special Intelligence Section to meet this requirement. The Section was headed by E. Herbert Norman, a former member of the embassy in Tokyo recently returned from Japanese internment. A Japanese-speaker, he had solid academic credentials as an expert on the politics and economics of Japan. The new Section was responsible for “the preparation of intelligence reports, in which will be brought together secret information which comes in from various sources concerning Japan and the Far East.”¹⁶ In his short history of

¹⁵ Page, “Special DEA Wartime Assignments,” 17. The work of the Section is also briefly described in J.L. Granatstein and David Stafford, Spy Wars: Espionage and Canada from Gouzenko to Glasnost (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1990), 41-42.

the Section written at the end of the war, Norman describes his job as “selecting, editing and otherwise interpreting the material which was produced by the Examination Unit.”

In order to be close to the source of its main raw material, the Special Intelligence Section was housed in the same building as the Examination Unit on Laurier Avenue in Ottawa, but organisationally it remained part of External Affairs. It was never larger than two officers, supported by three clerks and secretaries. In November 1942 Norman was joined by Arthur Menzies to work on Vichy French traffic and, as Menzies commented in a later interview, to do anything that “Norman did not want to do.” Menzies was replaced by G.W. Hilborn in February 1944. Norman remained with the Section throughout its existence and was its driving force.

18 Jensen, Cautious Beginnings, 52.
19 Norman, “Special Intelligence Section,” 2.
THE SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE SECTION’S ASSESSMENT WORK

Initially, the reports produced by the Section primarily involved combining and summarising the intercepts received from the Examination Unit, often with added interpretive comments and cross-references to other reports.²⁰ Such “single-source” reports (i.e. reports derived from a single type of information, in this case signals intercepts) continued to represent an important product of the Section, but Norman soon also began preparing assessments based on a wider range of sources and addressing broader topics. In addition to the intercepts from the Examination Unit, the Section had access to Canadian and Allied censorship reports, transcripts of radio broadcasts, newspaper reports and occasional debriefings from civilians repatriated from enemy territory, as well as the regular diplomatic reporting available to External Affairs. The earliest such “all-source” report is an October 1942 summary of Japanese attitudes towards the repatriation of civilians; it was based on signals intercepts, radio broadcasts and censorship reports.²¹

Over the next two years the Section produced a stream of analytic reports, with the main focus being Japan. Some, such as a detailed nineteen-page list of key Japanese officials derived from the monitoring of Japanese radio broadcasts, were probably intended primarily as reference documents to assist the work of the Examination Unit and postal censors.²² Other reports consolidated factual information from a variety of sources to provide a broader picture of a given issue. Examples include descriptions of changes in the Japanese cabinet, Japan’s diplomatic “listening posts” in South America and Ireland, and the background of the Japanese politician Satoshi Akao.²³ In a covering note to a report on Tokyo’s reaction to the surrender of Italy, Norman remarked that he used diplomatic intercepts and broadcast monitoring reports and “tried to draw them all together to present

²⁰ Ibid., 3.
²¹ DEA Report, “Material Relating to the Repatriation of Americans, British and Canadians from the Far East,” 10 October 1942, RG25, BAN 2016-00628-5, Box 6, File AD-2, LAC. Unless otherwise noted, all of the Special Intelligence Section reports cited are from this file.
what still remains a very incomplete and fragmentary picture.”

The true value of Norman’s expertise was reflected in a number of assessments that sought to go beyond the available facts to reach forward-looking conclusions. An early example is a January 1943 assessment on the question of whether Japan was planning to attack the Soviet Union; based on his reading of all the available sources of information, Norman laid out the various factors likely influencing Tokyo’s decision, but ultimately he declined to make a judgement on this military question. More substantial conclusions were reached in Norman’s April 1943 paper on the likely impact on Japanese policy of the recent appointment of a new Japanese foreign minister, and a March 1943 overall assessment of “Japanese Prospects and Policy.”

A hand-written annotation on the latter paper indicates that Prime Minister Mackenzie King had passed it to British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden, an indication that Norman’s reports were read and valued at senior levels.

Arthur Menzies was also involved in writing reports on Japanese subjects, even if his main focus was Vichy and Free French traffic. In November 1942, just after arriving in the Section, he prepared reports on Japan’s economic situation and on Tokyo’s propaganda efforts. The reports, based on a range of sources, were largely descriptive as Menzies did not have Norman’s expertise on Japan that would enable him to reach broader conclusions.

The Section’s reporting on French activities included a description of Vichy negotiations with China over trade privileges, the visit of two Canadian journalists to Algiers at the invitation of the Free French authorities there, the Free French position concerning negotiations over a mutual aid agreement with Canada, and financial assistance from the Vichy regime to academic and religious institutions in Canada. The last three of these reports


27 DEA Reports, “Japan’s Economic Position,” 1 November 1943; and “East Asia Charter’ and ‘Bougainville Victory’ Climax of Japan’s Propaganda Campaign,” 22 November 1943.
were written by G.W. Hilborn who had replaced Menzies in the Section.\(^28\)

In addition to reporting on Japanese and French matters, the Section produced analytical reports on a range of other subjects. In two detailed reports in March and April 1944, Hilborn provided a comprehensive assessment of Anglo-American diplomatic efforts to pressure Spain to abide by its neutral status. The factual aspects of the report likely drew on intercepts of Spanish diplomatic communications as well as press reports. In his analysis Hilborn examined not only Madrid’s actions but also the policy differences between Washington and London that complicated the discussions.\(^29\)

In October 1943 Norman wrote a long report on the morale of the German population and prospects for political (i.e. psychological) warfare, based on Canadian and US censorship reports and media articles rather than signals intercepts.\(^30\) Nevertheless, most reports by the Section were on subjects related to Asia, including papers on the implications for East Asia of the restoration of the Orthodox Patriarchate by Moscow, Chinese internal politics, the Indian nationalist leader Subhas Chandra Bose, the issue of Burmese independence and a list of Burmese personalities. These reports, based on press monitoring and historical information, were largely descriptive since the Section did not have deep expertise in these areas or access to relevant signals intercepts.\(^31\)

The reports produced by the Section were distributed to a small group of senior officials in External Affairs and to the three service intelligence directors. At least some reached the prime minister. Copies were also sent to British Security Co-ordination (BSC) in New York, a key link between the nascent Canadian intelligence


\(^{29}\) DEA Reports, “Recent Anglo-American Negotiations with Spain,” 23 March 1944; and “Anglo-American Demands on Spain,” 5 April 1944.

\(^{30}\) DEA Report, “Morale in Germany and Opportunities for Political Warfare,” 26 October 1943.

community and its UK—and US—counterparts. The mechanism for the tasking of assessments is not clear; it is likely that many of the papers were written on the initiative of Norman, Menzies and Hilborn based on the available intelligence and their knowledge of departmental interests. Some requests for papers came direct from External Affairs, and BSC also had input into tasking.  

Norman sought to establish relations with allied analytical groups. In visits to Washington he met with US Army analysts, and on other occasions he was able to discuss developments in the Far East with American and British officers passing through Ottawa. The Section’s closest links appear to have been with the Research Branch of the US Office of Strategic Services. The OSS, a newcomer to the Washington bureaucracy, did not have access to US signals intercepts and was pleased to receive the Section’s summaries of Canadian intercepts (the verbatim texts were not shared). It is likely that the OSS received some of the Section’s analytical reports as well, since Norman had established direct working relations with OSS analysts and he received OSS reports on a variety of subjects. His October 1943 paper “The Japanese in the Netherlands East Indies” was partially based on discussions with OSS analysts during a visit he made to Washington. The OSS’s outsider status in the US Intelligence community likely meant that the Section’s analysis received scant attention from the other agencies in Washington and thus had little impact on the assessments prepared by the US Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC).

UNTIMELY DEMISE OF THE SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE SECTION

Paradoxically, these efforts to build links to the US entangled the Section in the rivalries among intelligence agencies in Washington and ultimately led to its abolition. In mid-1944 the US military raised objections to the sharing of the Section’s intercept summaries with the OSS and threatened to end cooperation with the Examination Unit if it continued. Lester Pearson, then at the Canadian embassy

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33 Norman, “Special Intelligence Section,” 9.
34 Bryden, Best Kept Secret, 197.
35 Ibid., 231.
in Washington, was instructed to tell the OSS that it would cease receiving the summaries as they were no longer available. As historian John Bryden comments, “this excuse was given an aura of truth by closing Norman’s little office.”

In January 1945 the Section was shut down and the staff returned to External Affairs’ offices in the East Block of the Parliament Buildings. Norman and a colleague continued to read and summarise Japanese and French intercepts for the department, but this seems to have occurred on a more intermittent basis. In his history of the Section, Norman mentions that occasional memoranda based on the Japanese traffic were also produced. Two examples of such reports exist in the available archival record, compilations of secret information received on Indochina and Thailand. The production of such reports is unlikely to have continued for long, however, since the end of the war would have rendered such work superfluous in the view of External Affairs, and in September 1945 Norman was posted to serve as Canadian representative to the Allied occupation authority in Japan.

The Special Intelligence Section was later described as “the flagship of Canada’s codebreaking efforts” during the Second World War. But its abolition marked the end of External Affairs’ brief experiment with a dedicated intelligence assessment capacity. Canadian diplomats would continue to produce political analysis as part of their regular duties, but the department no longer had a centre where analysts with deep expertise and immediate access to all sources of information were able to provide broader context to

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38 Norman Roberson letter to C.J. Mackenzie, 11 January 1945, RG24, Vol. 29167, File WWII-33, LAC. In January 1945, as the Section was being dismantled and in the midst of deliberations on the postwar future of Canadian signals intelligence, Norman proposed the creation of a “Canadian Signal Intelligence Centre” which would continue Canada’s wartime interception and cryptographic work and include a Special Intelligence Section to prepare assessments based on this and other information (Bryden, *Best Kept Secret*, 253). However, such an all-source analytical unit was not included in the Canadian signals intelligence organisation which emerged after the war.
39 Norman, “Special Intelligence Section,” 9-10.
40 DEA reports, “Secret Information Received by the Department [...] Concerning Developments in Indochina,” 24 September 1945; and “Secret Information Regarding Recent Developments in Thailand,” 26 September 1945, both in RG24, Vol. 29167, File WWII-33, LAC.
41 Granatstein and Stafford, *Spy Wars*, 41.
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the raw intelligence and make informed judgements on questions of interest to the department and Canada. As the External Affairs official historian commented, the Section’s “usefulness depended on its ability to make sense out of the information derived from the [Examination] Unit’s decoded translations and to fit these into the broader context of the war.” He went on to add:

Precisely how important the Section’s work was for External Affairs is difficult to measure since like most intelligence information it became blurred with other factors in making decisions. It certainly gave officials a wider perspective on international happenings that [they] could not have otherwise acquired and advance insight on positions to be taken at important gatherings.42

Because of its premature demise, the wartime experience of the Section had little impact on the development of Canada’s strategic assessment capacity in the years following the Second World War, a process that was largely driven by the military. It was to be another three decades before External Affairs would begin to develop a dedicated political intelligence analysis capability.43

INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS IN NATIONAL DEFENCE

In the Department of National Defence, the three service intelligence directorates were responsible for providing intelligence to their respective Chiefs of Staff and the Chiefs of Staff Committee (CSC), but their capacity to do so was slow to develop and heavily dependent on allies. Canadian forces overseas received intelligence from the Allied formations under whose command they served, and National Defence Headquarters looked to the UK for strategic intelligence. Intelligence analysis was barely an after-thought for the military. Lloyd Kenyon, an Army officer deeply involved with post-war intelligence, later commented that during the war no intelligence analysis was done in Ottawa; there was nobody looking at the world situation

and making judgements about enemy capabilities and intentions. Intelligence collected by Canada was sent to the Allies for analysis, and in turn Canada received intelligence summaries, situation reports and assessed intelligence from London and Washington. In Kenyon’s recollection, officials in Ottawa were quite content with this arrangement. His blunt remarks overstate the case, but not by much. During the later years of the war, the Canadian military did make some tentative steps into the field of strategic intelligence analysis, as will be explored below.

Even before the war the limitations of having separate service intelligence directorates was recognised by some, and a half-hearted attempt was made to coordinate and consolidate at least some of the intelligence work at headquarters. In April 1938, the Joint Staff

Committee established a subcommittee to consider the feasibility of creating a “Joint Service Intelligence Section” that would combine some of the common functions of the service intelligence directorates. Mid-level officers representing the intelligence staffs met to discuss various ideas for establishing closer working relations, share information and cooperate in matters common to all three services, such as by setting up a joint central registry where information from all sources would be collated. The army and air intelligence representatives shared varying degrees of support for these ideas. The naval representative, however, was strongly opposed, concerned that any change would interfere with the integral role of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) in the British Admiralty’s worldwide intelligence network. Not surprisingly, after several inconclusive meetings, the idea was quietly shelved. The service intelligence directorates went on to fight the war very much as independent fiefdoms.

**MILITARY INTELLIGENCE**

The Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) was the largest of the three service intelligence staffs. At the outbreak of war the intelligence function was part of the Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence, but in June 1942 DMI was established as a separate directorate under the command of Colonel W.W. (Jock) Murray, a First World War veteran brought back into the Army in 1939 from his job as a Canadian Press parliamentary reporter to run the early telegram censorship programme. By the end of the war the organisation he controlled numbered just over 100 personnel, of whom forty-two were officers. The Foreign Intelligence Section, or MI-1, had nine officers and twenty-four support staff to cover foreign military forces and military operations worldwide. A larger number of DMI personnel dealt with security, and there were other groups responsible for overseeing the Army’s involvement in the signals intelligence effort, prisoner of war intelligence and administration. Much of the work of DMI was administrative in nature, including

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45 Documents on the proposed Joint Service Intelligence section can be found in RG24, Vol. 4052, File 1078-11-30, LAC, and RG24, Vol. 2696, File 5199-G, LAC.
the creation of the Canadian Intelligence Corps and overseeing the training of Army intelligence personnel. 47

MI-1 was responsible for keeping the Chiefs of Staff and senior civilian officials informed about the progress of the war. Initially, the section did little more than “cut up newspapers,” in the dismissive

47 “Mobilization Establishment – DMI,” n.d. (c. 1953), RG24, Vol. 19211, File S-2140-75/73, Part 1, LAC; and Elliot, Scarlet to Green, 438. This document includes a description of the wartime DMI organisation.
view of one of their naval colleagues. After Canadian troops landed in Normandy, DMI provided the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and the Chiefs of Staff with daily situation updates based on summaries provided by the UK and US. But rather than being intelligence reports, in the sense of dealing with enemy actions and intentions, these updates largely covered activities of Allied forces. MI-1 maintained an Information Room with maps of the battlefronts. Following a visit to the room, Minister of Defence Andrew McNaughton asked whether the information that Ottawa received was being properly interpreted, and stressed the need for officers capable of assimilating this information and using it to make forward-looking judgements. He received the faint assurance that the staff was doing the best possible job with the limited information

available and was warned of the dangers of making judgements without adequate information.50

DMI published a range of regular products, almost entirely derived from material received from allies or press reporting. All of these reports were sent to recipients in Ottawa and military commands in Canada; DMI had no responsibility for providing operational intelligence to Canadian forces deployed overseas. DMI products included twice-daily news digests, battlefield situation maps and a Weekly War Review. The Weekly War Review provided a compendium of factual items on worldwide naval, ground and air operations based on situation reports received from Canada’s allies, with no analysis of enemy intentions or judgements concerning possible future developments.51 DMI reproduced and disseminated UK and US reports on enemy organisation, equipment and tactics to headquarters and training establishments in Canada. It also produced occasional reports on specific subjects, such as economic intelligence reports on crop conditions in Europe and the economic significance of Sardinia, as well as descriptive papers on the history, geography and military forces of Siam and Persia.52 These descriptive reports recycled information received from allies rather than being original analysis. It is not clear who received these reports or what they did with them, as they hardly seem relevant to any decisions that Canadian officials faced.

NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

Naval intelligence in Canada was heavily influenced by the RCN’s strong historical, operational and personal connections with the Royal Navy. Since 1921 Canada had served as the “North American Station” in the British Admiralty’s worldwide intelligence

50 Elliot, Scarlet to Green, 453.
51 Colonel W.W. Murray memo to Chiefs of Staff Committee, “Foreign Intelligence in Peacetime, Annex E Background of NDHQ Intelligence, 1939-1945,” 26 September 1945, RG24, Vol. 6178, File 22-1-43, Part. 1, LAC. Weekly War Review reports can be found in RG24, Vols. 31018, and 31019, LAC.
organisation. It was “responsible, through the [Canadian] Chief of Naval Staff, to Admiralty for the collection of intelligence in the North American Area.” In return, the RCN received “intelligence for naval purposes on all parts of the world” from the UK. The other intelligence staffs in Ottawa regarded naval intelligence as “working for the Admiralty and not Canada.”

When war broke out, Commander E.S. (Eric) Brand, a Royal Navy officer seconded to Canada, was the Director of Naval Intelligence and Plans. After several organisational changes, in June 1942 naval intelligence became a separate directorate under Lieutenant Commander C.H. (Herbert) Little, the first Canadian to become Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI). By then it had grown from very small beginnings to an organisation of seven sections, dealing with security, censorship, naval prisoners of war and a photographic library. There were also three production sections, which prepared daily ship location reports, periodic summary reports—including the North American Station Intelligence Report (NASIR) for the Admiralty—and political intelligence reports. DNI’s analytical capacity was limited. The intelligence summaries it produced were largely compilations of information gleaned from press reports and its other limited sources of intelligence. For example, NASIR No. 8 from August 1941 included items on German and Japanese merchant ship movements in South America and on the US west coast and a large section on US defence policy and economic developments, all derived from press reports. By the end of the war DNI was producing occasional reports on specific subjects, such as key air targets in Japan, a description of the Yunnan administration in China and a paper on the likelihood of a Japanese peace offer. These reports

54 Gow, draft memo, n.d. (c. July 1938), RG24, Vol. 4052, File 1078-11-30, LAC.
55 Gow memo to Chief of the Naval Staff, 23 July 1938, RG24, Vol. 4052, File 1078-11-30, LAC.
57 Roach, “History of Canadian Naval Intelligence,” 536-37; and “Naval Intelligence in Canada,” Canadian Forces School of Intelligence and Security, CFSIS Précis 8-603, n.d.
58 North America Station Intelligence Report, NASIR No. 8, 1 August 1941, RG24, Vol. 31019, File Intelligence Reports, Nov 1940-Sep 1941, LAC.
59 “Naval Intelligence in Canada.”
appear to be aimed largely at meeting Allied requirements and it is unlikely that they were shared widely in Ottawa.

Unlike the other intelligence directorates in Ottawa, the RCN played a major role in providing operational intelligence to Canadian and Allied naval forces. After 1942, however, this activity took place outside of DNI. Commander J. de Marbois was the driving force in building the RCN’s capacity to locate enemy submarines through radio direction finding and traffic analysis. In 1942 he was instrumental in the establishment of an Operational Intelligence Centre (OIC) in Ottawa. This body, made up of staff transferred from DNI, was placed under the command of the Naval Signals Division, which was responsible for the radio intercept stations that gathered the raw intelligence. In April 1943, the RCN was given command of the Canadian Northwest Atlantic theatre of operations, the only independent theatre of war commanded by a Canadian. The existence of an effective OIC was a key requirement for the UK and the US to entrust Canada with this responsibility, which for the first time gave the RCN direct access to the ULTRA intercepts of German naval communications.

AIR INTELLIGENCE

In the lean years of the 1930s, when the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) had dwindled to almost nothing, the Directorate of Intelligence–Air (DIA) had for practical purposes been absorbed into DMI. With the outbreak of war, it regained its independent existence, but throughout hostilities it only numbered three intelligence officers plus various technical advisors and a small staff to look after maps, classified documents and other administrative matters. The leadership of DIA passed through several hands before Group Captain H.R. (Ronnie) Stewart was appointed to the position in June 1941. DIA was largely concerned with order of battle information and technical intelligence on enemy aircraft capabilities. As with the other service

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60 Roach, “History of Canadian Naval Intelligence,” 538; and Bryden, Best Kept Secret, 141-142.
61 Marc Milner, Canada’s Navy: The First Century (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 123.
intelligence staffs, it relied on intelligence it received from allies to support RCAF planning and training activities in Canada.  

Near the end of the war DIA became the home of a new collaborative experiment, the Inter-Service Topographical Section. This group was authorised by the Chiefs of Staff in November 1944 with the stipulation that this be done within existing resources. It was housed in DIA because that directorate had available office space. The section, with a planned strength of three officers and seven supporting staff, was responsible for collecting photographs, topographical studies and related maps to support all three service intelligence directorates. It inherited the photographic library previously maintained by DNI. Its civilian head, Dr. Diamond Jenness, a noted anthropologist with extensive knowledge of the Canadian arctic, made considerable efforts to tap into the equivalent UK and US topographical intelligence organisations for relevant reports to build up a topographical library. The Section was only gradually getting established when the war in Europe ended in May 1945, but it was to become deeply entangled in the debate over the postwar structure of the Canadian intelligence community.

**THE CANADIAN JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE**

In the early years of the war there was no formal mechanism to coordinate the work of the three service intelligence directorates, although they were all involved in the bodies overseeing various aspects of the government’s intelligence work, such as censorship and signals intelligence. On 5 June 1941 Norman Robertson, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (deputy foreign minister), hosted an informal meeting of officials involved in intelligence for the

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64 JIC Minutes, 16 November and 1 December 1944, and 27 February 1945, RG24, Vol. 33541, File 1274-10, LAC; and Glazebrook memo to Robertson, 4 April 1945, RG24, Vol. 29164, File WWII-8, LAC.
purpose of sharing “information as to intelligence activities and to
discuss means of improving co-operation and avoiding overlapping.”
At the meeting were the heads of the service intelligence directorates,
Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) intelligence and Tommy
Stone, the senior official in External Affairs responsible for
intelligence matters. The discussion appears to have largely focussed
on avoiding duplication of effort with the RCMP on security matters,
but broader issues were also considered, particularly the question
of the proper organisation of intelligence in Canada. A report on
this meeting prepared by the DIA representative includes a proposal
for a “Central Intelligence Committee” reporting to the Chiefs of
Staff Committee and composed of the service intelligence directors,
RCMP intelligence, External Affairs and the censorship organisation.
It would provide overall coordination for all of the bodies in Canada
involved in intelligence work, including security intelligence. It is
not clear whether this proposal was discussed at the June meeting
or formulated by DIA afterwards. In any case, no further action
was taken at this time to formalise the coordination of Canadian
intelligence.

FORMATION OF THE JIC

The entry of the United States into the war in December 1941 had
a huge impact on Canada, the military and the service intelligence
staffs. Until that time, they had looked to London for intelligence
reports, summaries and assessments, which were mostly provided
on a direct service-to-service basis. The intelligence staffs were now
desperate to increase the amount of information they obtained from
Washington, particularly on the situation in the Pacific. During
1942 service-to-service channels with the US Army and Navy were
established or strengthened, but this was not fully adequate. The
US had recently established a Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC)
based on the model of the British JIC. Made up of the heads of
Military and Naval Intelligence, and representatives of the OSS
and the State Department, it had a mandate to prepare strategic
intelligence assessments and daily intelligence summaries. Unlike the

65 Flying Officer W.A. Field memo, “Notes on a Conference on Co-ordination of
1, LAC.
British JIC, it had no responsibility for coordinating other aspects of the US intelligence effort. The problem for Canada was that there was no equivalent body in Ottawa to serve as a point of contact and receive US JIC reports. Initially, US JIC assessments were sent directly to the Canadian Chiefs of Staff Committee, but this route was not satisfactory for either side. Something had to be done.

Action was spurred by the planned visit to Ottawa in November 1942 of a senior delegation of US intelligence officers representing the US JIC. The service intelligence directors realised that there was a need to establish a reciprocal structure in Ottawa to manage Canadian relations with the US JIC. On 3 November Colonel Murray put forward a proposal for such a body to the CSC on behalf of the three service intelligence directors. His memorandum began by declaring that “the operations of the present Directorates is characterised by a collaboration which is so close and so mutually co-operative that it is difficult to see how it can be bettered,” but went on to concede that “nevertheless it would be advantageous to give this close liaison official sanction in the form of a CANADIAN JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE.” He proposed that the terms of reference of the US JIC, with slight modification, be adopted for its Canadian counterpart. The CSC formally authorised the new committee on 10 November. The JIC was established as a sub-committee of the CSC, to consist of the three heads of service intelligence with the senior member serving as chair. Its mandate was “to conduct intelligence studies and to prepare such special information as may be required by higher authority, or as may be indicated by the situation.” The committee was authorised to create a sub-committee to assist in its work and to exchange intelligence with

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67 DIA memo to DMI and DNI, 19 November 1942, RG24, Vol. 33541, File 1274-10, Part 1, LAC.
68 Canadian Joint Staff (Washington) telegram to NDHQ, 9 October 1942; Stewart memo to Little, “US Intelligence Officers 16-18 November 1942,” 14 November 1942; and other documents on the visit of the US delegation, all in RG24, Vol. 33541, File 1274-10, Part 1, LAC.
69 Murray memo to Secretary CSC, “Canadian Joint Intelligence Committee,” 3 November 1942, RG24, Vol. 5183, File 15-19-30, LAC.
the US JIC and the UK JIC (Washington). The JIC at its creation was very much a military entity: it reported through the military chain of command and was made up entirely of military officers. Its structure and purpose paralleled that of a number of other “joint” (i.e. tri-service) military committees that coordinated a range of activities at National Defence Headquarters. Unlike both its UK and US counterparts, during the war years it had no representative of the Department of External Affairs.

The JIC first met as a formal body on 24 November 1942 with Group Captain Stewart in the chair. Its initial act was to appoint a Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee, whose duties were defined as “maintenance of inter-service liaison and collaboration in matters relating to operational intelligence generally, and to undertake such special assignments as may be referred to them.” The Committee also discussed the recent visit of the US JIC delegation which had prompted the creation of its Canadian counterpart. The second meeting dealt with procedures for exchanging information with the US JIC. The Intelligence Sub-Committee began its work on 30 November.

WORK OF THE JIC

The weekly meetings of the JIC soon established a regular routine. Much of the Committee’s attention was taken up with consideration of security issues, such as censorship, protection of information, security

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70 CSC Minutes, 10 November 1942. Wartime minutes of the CSC can be found in RG24, Vols. 8081, 8082 File 1272-2, LAC; RG24 Vol. 21813, LAC, contains an additional set. The UK JIC (Washington) was part of the UK military liaison staff in the US.

71 Throughout its history the official name of this body was the Joint Intelligence Committee, abbreviated JIC. Occasionally the informal abbreviation C[anadian] JIC was used but this never had official sanction. If it was necessary in official correspondence to distinguish the Canadian JIC from its allied counterparts the form JIC (Ottawa) or JIC(O) was sometimes used.

72 JIC Minutes, 24 November 1942. Wartime JIC minutes held by LAC can be found in several files including: RG24, Vols. 2468-2469, File 715-10-16-1-3 (DMI copy) and RG24, Vols. 33541-33542, File 1274-10 (DMI copy), LAC.

73 JIC Minutes, 1 December 1942.

74 Lieutenant W.P. Wallace memo to DNI, “First Meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Canadian Joint Intelligence Committee,” 30 November 1942, RG24, Vol. 8088, File 1274-10-2, LAC. Most minutes of the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee can be found in this file.
of maps and charts, restrictions on photography and the updating of security regulations. Reflecting the burden of this security-related work, in April 1943 the CSC authorised a second JIC sub-committee to deal with security issues. In March 1944, Little, now a Commander, assumed the chair when members proposed that the position should be rotated annually. The Intelligence Sub-Committee met once or twice a week to exchange information among the three service intelligence staffs. It also took responsibility for establishing an Inter-Service Contact Register of persons in Canada who had knowledge of the Far East. It became the practice for the Secretary of the JIC—generally an officer appointed by the JIC chair from his directorate—to serve as the chair of the Intelligence Sub-Committee.

In May 1943 the JIC was alarmed by reports of German activity in Greenland, fearing that the enemy could make similar inroads into remote parts of Canada. A key problem was obtaining accurate information from US forces in Greenland. It directed the Intelligence Sub-Committee to address the situation and considered its report on 24 June. The “Greenland Report,” the first substantive paper prepared by the Sub-Committee, was a policy document rather than an intelligence assessment. No copy of this report has survived, but it appears to have largely comprised recommendations for obtaining information from the US. The problem was not a US unwillingness to share information, but rather a lack of an effective mechanism to do so. The Sub-Committee recommended the establishment of a “Northern Information Centre,” but this idea found little favour with the Chiefs of Staff. The JIC remained sporadically engaged with the Greenland situation during the fall of 1943. DMI was unsuccessful in obtaining more information via its channels with the US Army. It was not until February 1944 that the US JIC provided Canada with detailed reports on the interrogation of a German officer captured in

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75 CSC Minutes, 6 and 27 April 1943.
76 CSC Minutes, 3 March 1944; and JIC Minutes, 7 March 1944.
77 Air Vice Marshal W.A. Curtis memo, “Canadian Joint Intelligence Committee,” 19 May 1944, RG24, Vol. 5190, File 15-9-73, LAC.
78 CSC Minutes, 29 June 1943.
Greenland over six months earlier. By this point Greenland was no longer a priority for Canada and took up no more of the JIC’s time.79

Despite this considerable activity, in its early existence the JIC did not address its primary mandate: to “conduct intelligence studies”—that is, to prepare strategic intelligence assessments—for “higher authority.” The Canadian JIC was ostensibly modeled on the US JIC, which had as its clear purpose the preparation of strategic assessments for the US Joint Chiefs. To accomplish this, the members of the US JIC sub-committee were employed full-time in preparing intelligence assessments. In Canada, the work of the Intelligence Sub-Committee was very much a secondary responsibility for its members and consisted primarily of the exchange of information among the service intelligence staffs, not the preparation of assessments.

It is not surprising that this was the case. Senior levels of government and the military made no demands for Canadian-origin assessments and there was no expectation that strategic analysis would be carried out in Ottawa. The Chiefs of Staff continued to rely on Allied assessments for decisions regarding plans for the defence of Canada. It was the Joint Planning Committee (JPC, responsible to the CSC for preparing military plans) that was tasked with determining the likely “Forms and Scales of Attack” that Canada faced, not the JIC. In its consideration of the threat, the JPC looked to allies for guidance. In early 1943 it was the UK assessment—with modifications suggested by Washington—that formed the basis for recommendations to the Cabinet War Committee concerning revisions to Canada’s defence plans. Later in the war the CSC looked primarily to the UK-US Combined Intelligence Committee in Washington for its assessment of the threat.80 The Chiefs of Staff appear to have been content to leave the intelligence directors to get on with their secretive work with minimal interference and few demands.

79 JIC Minutes, 31 May, 9 and 24 June, 5 July, 7 September 1944, 19 and 24 January, 12 February 1945; and US Army interrogation reports, “Information from documents and statements of a German officer captured in Greenland 23 July 1943,” 2 September, 2 October, and 16 November 1943, RG24, Vol. 33541, File 1274-10, Parts 1 and 2, LAC.

80 See RG24, Vol. 6168, File 15-24-10, LAC and RG24, Reel C-11673, File 9042-1-3, Part 1, LAC [both files are entitled “Forms and Scale of Attacks”].
JIC INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS

The available records are silent on what prompted the JIC in mid-1943 to take its initial steps towards fulfilling its mandate of producing strategic assessments. At its meeting on 12 August 1943, the Committee for the first time discussed the production of “joint appreciation[s].” It directed the Intelligence Sub-Committee to “conduct a study and prepare a survey on enemy capabilities, potentialities and intentions” in the Pacific Theatre and as they affected the east coast of Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador; these assessments would come to be known as the Pacific and Atlantic Reports.81

This action appears to have been taken by the JIC on its own initiative: there is no indication that it was responding to direction from the CSC or individual Chiefs. But it is interesting to note that the decision took place at the same time that Defence Minister J.L. Ralston had asked for an updated assessment of the enemy threat to the east and west coasts. In responding to this request the JPC had turned to the Combined Intelligence Committee in Washington for the intelligence assessment that formed the basis for its recommendations to the Cabinet War Committee.82 The Canadian JIC played no role. Faced with this situation, the JIC members may have felt the need to begin taking the Committee’s mandate seriously and develop Canada’s own capacity to produce strategic intelligence assessments or else remain forever in the shadow of the Allies.

Faced with its new and unfamiliar assignment, the Intelligence Sub-Committee approached DMI for advice on how to proceed. At his recommendation, it struck an ad hoc committee made up of members of the three service intelligence directorates to prepare draft reports for the consideration of the Sub-Committee.83 In practice, over the following months the line between the Intelligence Sub-Committee and its drafting group was frequently blurred, since neither of these roles was full-time and both drew on the same small pool of officers in the intelligence staffs.

81 JIC Minutes, 12 August 1943.
83 Intelligence Sub-Committee Minutes, 13 and 16 August 1943.
The Intelligence Sub-Committee first turned to the matter of assessing enemy capabilities and intentions as they affected the East Coast of Canada, since this task was more limited in scope than examining the situation in the Pacific. A draft of the Atlantic Report was tabled at a meeting of the Intelligence Sub-Committee on 20 August and discussed by the JIC three days later. A revised draft was prepared in mid-September. After spending its full meeting on 20 September discussing the paper, the JIC approved the final version on the 24th.

“Enemy Capabilities in the North Atlantic Area” thus became the first strategic intelligence assessment produced by the Canadian JIC. The report totalled twelve pages, beginning with a page-and-a-half summary of its key findings. The Committee judged that Germany was capable of launching a raid by a limited number of surface vessels or submarines, or a raid by long distance aircraft carrying bombs or paratroopers. In its preliminary draft, the Intelligence Sub-Committee judged that “the chances of any of the participating craft returning are so small that the possibility of [such raids] being undertaken may be disregarded.” In the final version, however, the JIC left the door slightly ajar by concluding: “It is doubtful that Germany would be able to carry out [such raids] except on an extremely small scale.” It went on to speculate that the Germans might consider the airfield at Goose Bay, Labrador or the aluminium smelter at Arvida, Quebec to be of sufficient strategic importance to warrant an attack. In addressing the question of likely German intentions—as opposed to theoretical capabilities—the report concluded that these “would appear to be limited to” the use of submarines to attack shipping in Canadian waters or landing agents or saboteurs in Canada.

The body of the report was divided into sections prepared separately by each of the intelligence directorates. The longest section, dealing with the naval threat, described the current state of the German fleet and concluded that it was “very improbable” Germany would send

84 Intelligence Sub-Committee Minutes, 20 and 24 August, and 14 September 1943; and JIC Minutes, 23 August, and 20 and 24 September 1943.
a surface naval force to attack Canada, although submarines would probably continue their attacks in Canadian waters and could land agents and saboteurs. Under “Military Considerations” the Army had little to add other than to reiterate the possibility of submarine-landed saboteurs. The air section provided information on the status of the German air force, and considered the possibility of using refuelling points in Greenland as well as potential targets in Canada. It concluded that “a German air attack on Canada […] is technically possible” and might occur if the Germans determined that an attack on a target in Canada was more “strategically or psychologically” significant than on a closer target. The appendices provided detailed tables on the deployment and status of the German fleet, as well as performance characteristics of German ships and aircraft. A map of the northern Atlantic and north-eastern Canada indicated areas within range of German long-range aircraft.\footnote{JIC Assessment, “Enemy Capabilities in the North Atlantic Area,” 24 September 1943.}

The report was important in that it marked the beginning of Canadian efforts to produce strategic intelligence assessments, but it nevertheless fell short in many areas. The paper focussed mostly on theoretical German capabilities. Lacking any secret reporting on Berlin’s intentions, its findings were largely based on the assumption that its future actions would look much like its past actions—a sound but unsurprising conclusion. The naval, military and air aspects were dealt with separately, in order of service seniority rather than their relevance to the assessment. This separate treatment of the problem led to some duplication and minor inconsistencies among these sections and the paper’s conclusions. The paper demonstrated that even after the creation of the JIC, the service intelligence directorates were still working as a loose confederation of independent agencies rather than a coordinated whole.

The JIC submitted the report to the CSC for its consideration. The Chiefs noted the report at their meeting of 22 October and directed that any future JIC assessments should first be submitted to the Joint Planning Committee, which would then forward it to the Chiefs with their comments. The CSC stressed that the Joint Intelligence and the Joint Planning Committees should work closely together rather than operate as separate entities.\footnote{CSC Minutes, 22 October 1943.} It is not clear what
further distribution the report received, but it likely remained limited to members of the CSC, JPC and JIC; there is no indication that the report was shared with other government departments in Canada or with London or Washington.

Almost a year later, the JIC considered and approved a revised version of the Atlantic Report at an ad hoc meeting on 14 July 1944. This was a slightly shorter assessment—numbering four pages plus appendices—but covered much the same ground, often using the same wording. In the “Conclusions” the JIC “considered [it] improbable that Germany will make any attack on the east coast of North America.” However, it then seemed to make a fine distinction between an “attack” and a “raid,” saying that Germany was still capable of carrying out maritime raids by a small number of surface vessels or submarines, or air raids by a limited number of long-range aircraft. But, as with the first report, it went on to say that such raids were “doubtful […] except on an extremely small scale.” Its judgement about likely German intentions—that they were limited to the use of submarines to attack shipping in Canadian waters or landing agents—was unchanged from the earlier report. The naval section in the body of the report stated that it was “very improbable” that Germany would risk “almost certain” destruction of major vessels in a raid on Canada; the naval threat therefore remained confined to submarines shelling Canadian targets, attacking shipping in Canadian waters or landing a small number of agents or saboteurs. The military section declared that “German military operations [against Canada] can be ruled out” and, as in the first report, reiterated the possibility of saboteurs landed from submarines. This report included a new section on “Psychological Considerations” which assessed that “[i]n her desire to pave the way for more favourable peace terms, Germany may attempt to influence public opinion in Canada by subversive propaganda methods. To this end a limited number of Nazi agents or contact men could be landed by U-boat or long-range aircraft.” The air section was shorter than the earlier report but it repeated the same wording in its bottom-line judgement on the threat of air attack. The report was distributed to members of the CSC, JPC and JIC.88

This version of the Atlantic Report—along with the Pacific Report—was also sent to the UK JIC, the first time Canadian

strategic assessments had been shared with allies. It was reviewed by members of the UK Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee, the full-time body that drafted papers for the UK JIC. In their comments on the report, the British analysts downplayed the German threat to Canada. They felt that an attack by naval surface vessels was “extremely unlikely,” and that while a raid by long-range aircraft was “technically possible, it is very unlikely.”

Two further revisions of the Atlantic Report were produced, on 22 November 1944 and 11 January 1945. These were much shorter assessments: two pages with no appendices. Both concluded that “the danger that Germany will make an attack against the east coast of North America is negligible.” The reports nevertheless assessed that Germany continued to be “theoretically” able to launch naval and air raids against Canada. In the JIC view, German intentions continued to be focused on submarine attacks in Canadian waters and the landing of agents and saboteurs. The January 1945 assessment added the judgement that the Germans also aimed to “keep our present convoy and air search organisations functioning, thus denying large forces to European operations.” Both reports were sent to members of the CSC, JPC, JIC and UK JIC. No copies were sent to other Canadian departments or to the US JIC.

**PACIFIC REPORT**

The tasking that the Intelligence Sub-Committee received in August 1943 to prepare a report on the enemy’s capabilities and intentions in the Pacific Theatre involved a much more extensive effort than the Atlantic Report. Rather than assessing the threat to Canada, the Pacific Report entailed an evaluation of all aspects of Japan’s

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89 Secretary [UK] Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee memo to Secretary JIC, 3 August 1944, RG24, Reel C-11673, File 9042-1-3, Part 1, LAC; and JIC Minutes, 17 August 1944.
91 The planning staffs compared the JIC assessments with the “Forms and Scales of Attack” used for defence planning and recommended that no changes be made to Canada’s defence posture. (Director of Military Operations and Plans memo to Chief of the General Staff, 6 December 1944, RG24, Reel C-11673, File 9042-1-3, Part 1, LAC).
92 JIC Minutes, 22 November 1944, 11 January 1945.
strategic capabilities and intentions. The Sub-Committee received little guidance from the JIC on how it should approach this task, and in its internal discussions grumbled about the “great difficulties involved in compiling so general a report.” The drafters also suffered from a lack of information on the strengths and locations of Allied forces in the Pacific, which would clearly be a key factor in assessing Japan’s likely actions. Unfortunately, no copies of the various versions of the report exist in the archival files currently open to researchers. Nevertheless, the available records that refer to this report allow for at least a limited discussion of its contents.

Three versions of the Pacific Report were produced. The first, “Japanese Capabilities, Potentialities and Intentions,” was dated 10 November 1943. It was subsequently revised as “Estimate of Japan’s Present Position and Its Potentialities” on 3 April 1944, and “Estimate of Japan’s Present Position and Intentions” on 8 September 1944. These were very substantial reports, comprising a “Conclusions” section which provided an overview of Japan’s military capacity and its strategic intentions, eight text sections and up to ten appendices. Subjects addressed in the text included the “Political and Economic Situation in Japan” (including issues such as oil, food and armaments production), “Relations between Japan and Russia,” “Japanese Policy in China,” “Japanese Intentions in South-east Asia,” the “Situation in the Netherlands Indies,” and the “Strategic Importance of the Kuriles.” The appendices included detailed information on Japanese raw materials, the strength and deployment of Japanese military, naval and air forces, and topographical and logistic information on Formosa and the Kurile and Nansei Islands. Lacking a complete copy of the report, its overall conclusions on Japanese intentions are not known. But it is likely that the paper was largely descriptive, with only limited and cautious judgements on Tokyo’s future actions. It is not clear who was the intended readership. The report may have

93 Intelligence Sub-Committee Minutes, August 1943.
94 LAC does not hold a copy of the report. The Privy Council Office continues to hold wartime JIC documents; it has so far refused to release the copy of the Pacific Report in its possession.
95 JIC Minutes, 2 November 1943, 6 April, 15 June, 8 September, and 22 November 1944; and summary list of JIC files, n.d. (c. 1944), all in RG24, Vol. 2469, File 715-10-16-1-3, Part 3, LAC.
96 Intelligence Sub-Committee Minutes, 19 June 1944; and Secretary [UK] JIC letter to Secretary JIC, 1 August 1944, RG24, Vol. 33541, File 1274-10, Part 3, LAC.
been of some use to military planning staffs by bringing together a wide range of information on Japan’s capabilities, but this level of detail was probably less relevant for senior officials.

The preparation of the initial report and its two revisions placed heavy demands on the Intelligence Sub-Committee and its *ad hoc* drafting group over a period of more than a year. The sections of the report were assigned to individual drafters and the completed sections discussed as a group. Herbert Norman of External Affairs’ Special Intelligence Section—probably Canada’s foremost expert on Japan at that time—and Dr. Jenness of the Inter-Service Topographical Section provided input into this work, but neither appears to have been directly involved in the discussion of the drafts. Because much of the report comprised detailed factual information and the drafting and revision process was spread over several months, the drafters had to continually update the paper as new information was received. Although the work of the Intelligence Sub-Committee was ostensibly a part-time responsibility, in practice the chair (who also served as Secretary of the JIC) was required to spend all of his time working on the paper in the weeks before it went to the JIC for discussion. His challenge was to reconcile conflicting information and judgements in the text sections and appendices with each other and with the overall conclusions of the report.97

The first version of the Pacific Report was not sent to Canada’s allies, but when the JIC decided in December 1943 to produce a revised report its main reason for doing so was to have a version that could be shared with the British JIC.98 When reviewing the revised paper on 28 April 1944, the CSC rejected the JIC’s recommendation that copies be sent to the UK and US JICs, saying that “nothing was to be gained by such action, as the information in the report was readily available to these organisations.”99 In their subsequent discussion of the matter, the members of the JIC concluded “that it was important to maintain the channel which had been opened with the British J.I.C., and [...] that there should be some return to the U.S. J.I.C. for the papers which they make available to the Canadian services.” The Committee decided to individually lobby their respective Chiefs

97 Intelligence Sub-Committee Minutes, 27 March, 3 April and 12 June 1944; and JIC Minutes, 2 November 1943.
98 JIC Minutes, 29 December 1943.
99 CSC Minutes, 28 April 1944.
to reverse their decision. In this they succeeded, and copies of the revised report were sent to London and Washington in May.\textsuperscript{100} The British JIC responded with six pages of detailed comments which the Intelligence Sub-Committee considered during the drafting of the next version of the report.\textsuperscript{101} In Washington, however, the Canadian Joint Staff—the tri-service group responsible for liaison with the US military—raised concerns about Canada producing its own strategic intelligence assessments:

> What we wish to avoid, of course, is anything that may give the U.S. J.I.C. the impression that we are trying to compete with them in the preparation of high-level intelligence studies. We feel it would be more to our advantage to encourage their view that we look to them for all possible information on the Pacific area. In this way we may obtain from them more intelligence than they would be disposed to release, if they assumed that we are in a position and prepared to duplicate the work they are doing. [...] In these circumstances we think it is the part of wisdom for us to remain, so to speak, in the wings. The Americans hold the Pacific stage and we incline to the view that it is wise to refrain from encroaching on it.\textsuperscript{102}

The JIC minutes do not record the response of members to this proposed abandonment of a vital national intelligence function, nor is there any record of Washington’s reaction to the Pacific Report.

No further efforts were made to update the Pacific Report after the third version was produced in September 1944. By this time, Canada was receiving assessments from the UK/US Combined Intelligence Committee on Japan’s capabilities and likely future actions, as well as papers on a range of other subjects.\textsuperscript{103} The JIC may have felt that continuing to produce a Canadian version of this assessment no longer served a useful purpose, especially given the

\textsuperscript{100} JIC Minutes, 1, 10 and 23 May 1944; and CSC Minutes, 14 May 1944.
\textsuperscript{101} Secretary [UK] JIC letter to Secretary JIC, 1 August 1944, RG24, Vol. 33541, File 1274-10, Part 3, LAC.
\textsuperscript{102} CJS(W) letter to Secretary JIC, 10 June 1944, reproduced in JIC Minutes, 15 June 1944.
heavy demands it placed on the Intelligence Sub-Committee and the difficulty in keeping up-to-date on the rapidly changing situation.

**OTHER JIC ASSESSMENT WORK**

In addition to these broader strategic analyses, the JIC also produced at least one narrowly-focussed intelligence assessment during the war. In December 1944 External Affairs contacted the Chiefs of Staff over concerns about Japanese moves toward Chungking, the location of the Canadian embassy in China. The request was passed to the JIC, which assembled a group headed by Dr. Jenness to draft an immediate assessment to assist in making a decision on whether to evacuate the embassy. In creating this *ad hoc* group, it is clear that, unlike in the UK and US, the JIC did not consider its Intelligence Sub-Committee to be a standing body for the preparation of assessments. The drafting group, meeting over two days, prepared a two-page assessment that concluded: “It is not considered that the Japanese are intending to attack Chungking in the near future.” The JIC, in their meeting on 17 December, produced a condensed one-page version of this report as their reply to External Affairs.104

This paper demonstrates that the JIC could produce intelligence assessments in response to specific requests at relatively short notice, although it appears it was rarely called upon to do so. On another occasion, when the Director of Civil Defence in Newfoundland asked for an assessment of the potential threat of rocket or “V-bomb” attacks against Newfoundland, it was the Director of Military Operations and Plans who responded; he concluded that such an attack was “possible but not probable.”105 The JIC had clearly not yet established its position in the minds of the Chiefs of Staff as the obvious place to turn for such an assessment.

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104 JIC Minutes, 15 and 17 December 1944; and “Report of Ad Hoc Committee” [assessment of Japan’s military intentions in China], 16 December 1944, RG24, Vol. 2469, File 715-10-16-1-3, Part 4, LAC.
105 CSC Minutes, 19 January 1945.
CANADA’S WARTIME EXPERIENCE OF INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Canada began the war with no ability to analyse intelligence on foreign issues. By the end of the war the censorship programme had developed a considerable analytical capacity and in External Affairs, Herbert Norman’s small team had gained experience in producing all-source analysis of political issues. Much of this reporting—especially by the censorship programme—was aimed at supporting the overall Allied intelligence effort rather than meeting specifically Canadian requirements. In National Defence, the newly-formed Joint Intelligence Committee commissioned the first Canadian strategic intelligence assessments. In all of these organisations, analysts were learning on the job with few precedents and little organisational guidance. Measured against the tradecraft standards of later years, their work could be criticised in a number of areas. Their judgements were often cautious and vague. The JIC reports were frequently burdened with excessive detail which obscured their analytical conclusions. Lacking information on enemy intentions, the reports fell back on assessments of enemy capabilities—sometimes in theoretical terms—rather than attempting to make judgements on likely enemy actions. Many of these same comments could be made of the UK and US wartime assessments; all Allied analytic groups were dealing with the same learning curve.

With time and experience such methodological shortcomings could be addressed; more difficult to fix were fundamental challenges that affected Canadian strategic analysis throughout the war. Foremost among these was the lack of demand for strategic assessments from senior Canadian political and military leaders. As C.C. Crean—an External Affairs officer and key figure in the postwar Canadian intelligence community—later commented on the wartime work of the JIC: “no demands were made on the Joint Intelligence Committee [...] for appreciations, upon which war plans were based, and as a consequence the intelligence organisation in Canada remained relatively unimportant and in large measure neglected.”106 Ottawa had decided largely to avoid making decisions on issues where intelligence assessments might have made a useful contribution. Canada, through choice and circumstance, was not involved in the formulation of Allied

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106 G.G. Crean presentation to National Defence College, “Canada’s Intelligence Organization,” 31 May 1951, RG24, BAN 1997-98/281, Box 1, File 4883, LAC.
war strategy. The decisions taken by Prime Minister Mackenzie King’s government dealt primarily with issues around the provision of military forces and material resources to the Allied coalition rather than on how those resources should be employed in winning the war.\footnote{For an overview of King’s determination to avoid any role in strategic decision-making, see Tim Cook, *Warlords: Borden, Mackenzie King, and Canada’s World Wars* (Toronto: Allen Lane, 2012), 220-221, 299-300, 303-304, 315-316, 325. For a broader discussion of Canada and the Allied direction of the war, see C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970), 137-202.} With no call for strategic intelligence assessments from senior officials, the JIC was left to decide on its own what it might do in this area. The few assessments it did produce do not appear to have been received by the Chiefs of Staff with particular enthusiasm. It is hardly surprising then that the JIC was not more active in producing such assessments.

Another factor affecting the development of a capacity to carry out independent intelligence analysis was the role that the UK and US played in assisting, guiding and shaping Canada’s intelligence effort. Canada benefited enormously from its intelligence links with its two closest allies, but these relationships had negative as well as positive effects on Canada’s efforts to develop its own intelligence capacity. A key element was the assumption in Ottawa, particularly among senior military officers, that all necessary intelligence would come from the Allies. Therefore, anything that might affect this vital flow of intelligence had to be avoided. The concern expressed by the Canadian Joint Staff in Washington—that Canada should not be seen to be trying to compete with its allies in producing strategic intelligence assessments—was probably shared widely in Ottawa. Canadian interests could also be affected by the vagaries of its intelligence relationships and internal rivalries among allied agencies. The decision to close Norman’s Special Intelligence Section showed that maintaining good relations with allies and safeguarding the continued receipt of signals intercepts trumped the production of Canadian political intelligence assessments.

Some key figures in the wartime intelligence community sought to make a distinctive Canadian contribution to the Allied intelligence effort. In particular, officials in External Affairs took pains to see that Canada’s role in prisoner of war intelligence, censorship and
psychological warfare was recognised. 108 Individual military officers also viewed the relationship with allies as being between partners and sought to maintain an independent Canadian posture. On a visit to London, Commander Little was invited to attend a meeting of the British JIC, where he was dazzled by the “brass around the table” but “spoke as the head of the Canadian organisation, willing to co-operate but proud of our own identity and with our own responsibilities.” 109 Nevertheless, most senior military officers in Ottawa appeared quite willing to subordinate the Canadian role in intelligence to the wider good of alliance interests. There was little understanding or appreciation of the value of independent Canadian intelligence assessments. For these officers, the most important contribution that Canada could make was aiding in the collection of intelligence to meet Allied requirements as a quid pro quo for the continued receipt of Allied secret reporting and assessments. In this view of Canada’s role, the production of strategic intelligence assessments in Ottawa contributed little to the Allied effort and in some circumstances might even undermine other more important elements of the intelligence relationship.

The creation of the Joint Intelligence Committee, a key step in the development of the Canadian intelligence community during the war, was itself primarily driven by the need to safeguard relations and information flows with allies. As we have seen, its mandate—which assigned it responsibility for producing strategic assessments—was modeled on that of the US JIC. However, despite this surface resemblance, the wartime Canadian JIC was a rather different creature than its US and UK namesakes. Unlike both the UK and US JICs, the Canadian JIC played only a very limited role in producing strategic assessments during the war. Unlike the corresponding sub-committees in the US and UK, the Canadian JIC’s Intelligence Sub-Committee was not principally a drafting group for strategic assessments. Unlike the UK JIC, the Canadian JIC had no responsibility for coordinating the broader intelligence community in Ottawa. Even within the Department of National Defence, it played only a limited role in coordinating intelligence matters; it was careful not to encroach on the mandates of the service intelligence directorates and consequently only dealt with issues that all three agreed should

109 Little, “Now it Can All be Told,” 222.
be handled jointly. For the most part, this meant that during the war the Canadian JIC dealt primarily with security and administrative issues, and its Intelligence Sub-Committee was largely occupied with the exchange of intelligence among the service intelligence directorates. Nevertheless, the Canadian JIC did accomplish its true—albeit unstated—purpose: to provide an effective conduit for the receipt of strategic intelligence from the US and UK JICs. The overwhelming requirement for Canada was to facilitate the vital flow of intelligence from allies. In this the Committee succeeded.

In the waning months of the war there were some signs that the JIC recognised a need to broaden its role by bringing non-military organisations into its ambit. On 25 June 1945 the Chiefs of Staff approved a recommendation from the JIC that representatives of the Department of External Affairs and the RCMP be invited to join the Committee as associate members.110 This provided a broader view of Canadian intelligence requirements and a more comprehensive structure to address them. It also brought the organisation of the Canadian JIC closer into line with that of the UK and US JICs, which included representatives from the Foreign Office and State Department. The JIC now looked very much like the “Central Intelligence Committee” that had been mooted four years earlier. Time would tell whether this expanded body would grow into the wider role it had implicitly created for itself.

By mid-1945 discussions were taking place concerning the postwar shape of the Canadian intelligence community. Much of this focussed on the organisation and management of signals intelligence.111 But some members of the intelligence community were also thinking in broader terms about the need for a capacity to carry out intelligence analysis and to produce independent strategic assessments to inform Canadian policy. This argument was put forward in a September 1945 memorandum to the Chiefs of Staff written by Colonel Murray on behalf of the JIC on the subject of “Foreign Intelligence in Peacetime.” Murray flagged Canada’s almost complete dependence on intelligence from the UK and US, warning that it “virtually compels us to accept the assessment of others” on key issues of importance to Canada. His memo proposed the creation of a “Joint Coordinating Bureau of Intelligence” which would be the “nerve centre for the collection and

110 CSC Minutes, 25 June 1945; and JIC Minutes, 6 July 1945.
111 Jensen, Cautious Beginnings, 117-136.
digestion of Foreign Intelligence.” He went on to say: “There can be no useful or intelligent digestion of information unless it goes through a stage where it is analysed and examined alongside other relevant information of a like nature, that is available from other sources.” However, this view from within the intelligence community was not backed by any call from policy-makers for such a Canadian analytical capacity or for Canadian-origin strategic assessments. The question of the level of demand in Ottawa for strategic analysis would be an important issue affecting the development of a Canadian intelligence assessment capacity in the years following the Second World War.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Note on Sources: Digital copies of the archival sources cited in this article are available to collaborating research partners in the database of the Canadian Foreign Intelligence History Project (CFIHP). For more information on the CFIHP, see: https://carleton.ca/csids/canadian-foreign-intelligence-history-project/.

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113 See Barnes, “A Confusion, not a System.”