

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

Newport, R.I.

SOCIAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS: THE FUTURE OF OPERATIONAL

INTELLIGENCE?

By

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature

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15. Abstract: Does social systems analysis provide an advantage over a potential adversary? Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) believes the answer is "yes" by virtue of experiments and concept development work, to include that accomplished in MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE 2002. They assert that adding this type of analysis to more traditional forms of intelligence products (e.g. - Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace) provides the Joint Force Commander (JFC) more options in which to employ lethal and non-lethal forms of national power. Academics and complex adaptive systems experts are not as hopeful. They cite the inherent unpredictability of human-centered activities, whether they are at the individual or group level. While the idea of incorporating social systems analysis in the JFC's intelligence toolkit is appealing, it has significant risks. Systems dynamics experts believe social theory is too imprecise and subjective to provide a sound foundation for systems analysis. Moreover, social systems analysis often blends theories, assumptions, and facts. This results in knowledge bases and representative analytical models that appear valid, but may not account for either unknowable facts (e.g. - human perceptions) or assessments that are based on social systems analysis. The critical patterns and trends that underlie adversary systems can be modeled. The challenge is to segregate subjective analysis from facts. A well-designed model that does so may provide the JFC the ability to visualize the otherwise abstract idea of effects-based operations.	
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