

A TALE OF TWO NIES

One good thing about the spectacular abuse of intelligence to get us into the Iraq war: the intelligence community is acquiring a habit of releasing key judgments from its NIEs (I understand we'll get an Iraq NIE in time for September's moving of the goal posts). And when I read the claim yesterday that half the content of last week's NIE on terrorism came from detainee interrogations ...

According to one senior intelligence official, nearly half of the source material used in the recent National Intelligence Estimate on the terrorism threat to the United States came from C.I.A. interrogations of detainees.

... I decided it would be useful to compare this most recent NIE with the NIE on terror produced in April 2006 and released in late September 2006. After all, the NIEs have been produced in fairly quick succession. But the NIEs were produced under different Directors of National Intelligence (Death Squads Negroponte for the last one, and Mike McConnell for this one) and under different majority parties. The previous NIE, unlike this most recent one, may have relied on intelligence gathered using torture. And the previous one was only declassified after it was leaked that the NIE contradicted public statements from the Administration; whereas this one was developed with the understanding an unclassified version would be released