5 Criteria to assess quality

What criteria can be formulated for an intelligence and security agency report? The issue of methodology (chapter 3), but also the do’s and don’ts mentioned in the intelligence literature (chapter 4), stress the need to formulate criteria which high quality intelligence and security agency reports have to attain. The idea to develop criteria and standards for intelligence activities is not just an academic one. It is also propagated by practitioners from within and around the intelligence community.¹

In this chapter, criteria – together with their specific indicators – will be formulated for high quality intelligence and security agency reports. Together, these criteria will compose a standard for intelligence and security agency reports to achieve.

In the two case studies – the Shipping Research Bureau and the BVD – these criteria are used to measure the extent to which the investigated reports meet this standard. In this way, not only is the quality of a report judged, but also a first insight is gained in aspects that need improvement.

The more deductive elements of chapter 3 and the more inductive elements of chapter 4 will serve as a source to formulate criteria that intelligence and security agency reports have to achieve.² To develop an instrument to assess the quality of intelligence and security agency reports, a decision has to be made concerning argumentation. To measure the quality of a report, a choice between a more formal argumentation and reasoning in context can be selected. In this study, the choice has been made to combine both.

To develop the more formal argumentation, criteria are derived from methodology in general. In addition, some relevant laws (5.1) are explored. The disadvantage of this formal approach is that a lot of data will remain unused because of the distance between the concept of the instrument (general methodology and law) and the context (the intelligence and security agency reports tested).

Consequently, reasoning in context is also used. For this, criteria are derived from literature within the agencies themselves. In this approach, a translation has to be made of the norms of that particular culture – from that particular expert group of intelligence practitioners – to the instrument to be developed (criteria to measure the quality of intelligence and security agency report). While this translation is not a strictly logical process, it prevents ending up with an instrument that is too blunt to investigate the quality of intelligence and security agency reports in-depth.

For criteria to be developed, those related to logic and to legitimacy have been chosen. Underpinning this choice is the idea that criteria derived from these will yield a correlation. In other words, the notions of logic and legitimacy support a

² On a few instances, this also includes material from chapter 2.
report that is judged as one of high quality. The implicit assumption is that a mix of criteria of such notions – and the combination of a formal argumentation, and of reasoning in context – will lead to the most optimal balanced set of criteria to assess the quality of intelligence and security agency reports.

5.1 CRITERIA – DEMANDS AND SPECIFIC INDICATORS

As noted in the beginning of 3.1, high quality intelligence designates information that is clear, timely, reliable, valid, adequate, and wide-ranging (Wilensky). A high quality intelligence and security agency report is then the written product presenting high quality intelligence in such a way that it addresses the issues of interest for the consumer, and is easily accessible.

Yet, how do you translate such general – and other – insights to high quality intelligence criteria? For this, a criterion has to be appropriate – and therefore some demands are placed on them. First, attention is paid to demands criteria have to meet. Second, criteria are formulated – together with their specific indicators.

Demands to select criteria

The idea is to develop a set of relevant criteria. Such criteria will result in variables, in which indicators that are more specific are built in to make a more precise assessment possible.

The criteria that will be formulated will have to meet certain demands. The aim is to develop a set of criteria that is as relevant and discriminating as possible. First, the demands are presented. Second, these demands are explained. Criteria to be formulated have to meet the following three demands:

- the criteria have to be characteristic for the field of intelligence;
- the criteria have to fit in and meet compelling societal demands, and;
- the criteria have to have a discriminating value concerning quality.

Characteristic

The first demand is that criteria have to be characteristic for intelligence research. The criteria to be selected are less relevant, if they are too general nature, and not specific for the discipline of intelligence studies. The characteristics of intelligence research have already been put forward – interdisci- plinary research, future oriented research, inaccessible data, research on small chance - high impact events, specific and applied nature of the research, intelligence in the position as a supplier, and the complicated control of intelligence. Yet, to be of more relevance to formulate criteria, there has to be an orientation on actual and expected (as from methodological insights) problems.

In order to begin with actual problems – so as to reason in context – it is necessary to identify characteristic issues that give rise to biases, within
intelligence research. Causes of biases that were described in intelligence literature, as characteristic for intelligence research, include (4.1.1):

- key information that is often absent;
- data that is often ambiguous or non-perfect;
- a policy of deception by an opponent;
- security paranoia and the agency’s company culture;
- a lack of empathy and mirror-imaging.

Often, the triangulation of sources and producing a robust analysis will contribute to combating such biases. Subsequently, it is necessary to pay attention to these two elements.

Problems to be expected generally concern methodological aspects that give rise to a more formal argumentation. To make formal argumentation specific for the field of intelligence, problems based on methodological aspects can be best presented for the specifics of each of the three types of intelligence research – descriptive, explanatory, and prognostic research.

In descriptive research, the main problematic characteristics concerning the three primary sources of information – observation, interview, and document – are to gain access to these sources and a policy of deception by an opponent. These characteristics call for extra attention concerning the issue of reliability and validity. Often, the checking and double-checking of sources and the triangulation of sources are employed to combat such difficulties.

In explanatory research, non-optimal techniques may be used that exclude research options beforehand (4.1.2). A third factor that explains the co-occurrence of both cause and effect may be overlooked easily. To cope with such methodological difficulties, you may formulate competing hypotheses, choose a higher alpha- and a lower beta-chance, and make the conjectures robust.

In prognostic research, it is characteristic that risky events are often hard to predict, because of the small chance, the event will actually take place. Yet, if something happens, the impact is high. To cope with this, you can model the research, present unprejudiced possible futures and their width, and use different types of forecasting techniques.

Societal demands

The second demand is that the criteria have to fit in with and meet compelling societal demands. An intelligence and security agency report is not a product on its own. It fits in a wider societal context, in which also demands are placed on the product. The most compelling of these demands are found in laws. For a (public) agency, the most relevant Dutch laws include the Law regarding the Intelligence and Security Agencies (LISA)\(^3\) and the General Administrative Law

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\(^3\) In Dutch: Wet op de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten (of 2002).
Act (GALA). In these laws, we searched for the most relevant norms. Norms derived from law serve a more formal argumentation.

To begin with there are two issues, in relation to LISA, that are of prime interest concerning the quality of intelligence:

- an agency has to take care of facilities that promote the accuracy and completeness of data that is processed, and;
- the processing of data has to take place in a proper and meticulous manner. This implies – among others – that processed data needs a reference to the reliability or to the document or source.

In addition, there is administrative law – GALA. This is a relevant law, as agencies produce regularly reports for policymakers. Although you may not be able to predict which individual report will influence policy makers further on in the intelligence cycle, each has the potential to do so. Such action could explicitly imply the preparation of an order. Therefore, a report can be submitted to the general principles of proper administration.

To explain this in more detail: the general principles of proper administration apply to the action of an administration, especially concerning its orders. The administration has to take these orders in accordance with the general principles of proper administration. If preparatory procedures lead to an order, they are directly connected with the action itself. It is therefore justified to submit preparatory procedures to the same principles as the final order. These principles are set down in GALA. In general, this law applies to all kinds of action of an administration, including the preparatory phase. Intelligence and security agency reports may belong to this phase. Central to GALA (section 3:1 paragraph 2), is a connecting rule that links most principles to other action of the

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5 LISA, section 16 paragraph a.
6 LISA, section 12, paragraph 3 and 4.
7 An order (in Dutch: ‘besluit’) includes also a decision (in Dutch: ‘beschikking’). Nicolaï a/o, Bestuursrecht, 1997, 278-279. Compare: Van Buuren, a/o, Kroonberoep en Arobberoep, 1981, 50-51. De Moor-Van Vugt, Algemene beginselen van behoorlijk bestuur en buitenlandse equivalenten, 1987, 20. Sometimes, a judge can opt for the view that the advice is not only a preparatory act, but also a material juridical act. In such cases, the judge looks at the content of the advice (Addink, Algemene beginselen van behoorlijk bestuur, 1999, 214) A special kind of research concerns positive vetting in order to give clearance for a job. In such cases, it seems to be logical to give the interested party a hearing opportunity, based upon 4:8 GALA (:General Administrative Law Act) (Compare: Addink, Algemene beginselen van behoorlijk bestuur, 1999, 239). In that case, 4:8 GALA prevails 4:11, paragraph c GALA.
8 Nicolaï a/o, Bestuursrecht, 1997, 144.
9 The law deals with all kind of action of the administration, being action under both public and private law, or a conduct not aimed at a legal act (3:1 - 3:7 GALA). The only exception is the investigation and the prosecution of criminal acts, and the execution of criminal decisions (1:6 GALA). The existing laws in this field are meant to be exhaustive. Other action of the Public Prosecutor is also submitted to the General Administrative Law Act. As a result, the activities of agencies are submitted to this law (Addink, Algemene beginselen van behoorlijk bestuur, 1999, 8, 17; Nicolaï a/o, Bestuursrecht, 1997, 245-247, 252, 259, 261).
administration. Because of this connecting rule, most principles apply to the preparatory phase in GALA.  

The preparatory stage is crucial in arriving at an order. Elements of the preparatory stage will be evident in the order itself. These will underpin not only the order itself, but also the consequences, that the order produces. Therefore, the preparatory research has to be carried out in a meticulous, accurate, and attentive manner. For intelligence and security agency reports, the most important principles of proper administration are:

- **Freedom from prejudice.** Analysts are not permitted to be prejudiced or to have a personal interest in a case.
- **Collecting intelligence:** a) necessary knowledge has to be amassed of the relevant facts. This implies relevant facts have to be taken into account, and facts have to be investigated sufficiently for the case in question; b) necessary knowledge has to be amassed and the interests have to be weighed.
- **Representation:** a) facts and interests are represented correctly; b) the evaluation of (complex) facts or interests must be correct. If facts are given a certain qualification, the acceptability of this qualification must be shown.
- **Method:** the method used must lead to an as objective as possible assessment. This condition is of extra relevance in the case of classified intelligence and security agency reports. These reports are generally not open to independent examination.

The mentioned principles and demands in both the Law on Intelligence and Security Agencies and General Administrative Law Act give a compelling argument for the Dutch legal context.

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14 In the General Administrative Law Act, there is no explicit reference to the method (Nicolaï, *Beginselen van Behoorlijk Bestuur*, 1990, 536). Yet, if the method of analysis was not accurate, it could result in a violation of the proper grounds, 3:46 GALA (other indirect links are found in 3:2 GALA – careful preparation – and section 3:4 paragraph 1 GALA – to weigh the interests. See also: President Court Assen, 25 January 1996: *JB* 1996, no. 95/1302).

An adequate method is needed to comply with the duty of carefulness principle. This method must lead to an objective as possible assessment (Nicolaï a/o, *Bestuursrecht*, 1997, 408; Nicolaï, *Beginselen van Behoorlijk Bestuur*, 1990, 336).

In the case of an intelligence and security agency report, the requirement of a sound method is even more relevant as such reports are often classified, and an opportunity is lacking to present counter-expertise as in administrative procedures.
**Discriminating value**

The third demand is that criteria have to have a discriminating value concerning the quality of the intelligence product. If they do not have such a discriminating value, they are too blunt to be used as a means of measurement.

With these three demands in mind – to be characteristic, to meet compelling societal demands, and to have a discriminating value – criteria are formulated to test whether intelligence analysis and reports are of high quality.

### 5.2 Criteria and Specific Indicators

In the previous section, the focus of attention, concerning the methodological aspect of an intelligence analysis, was on reliability, validity, and robustness of research and that the content of a report needs to be plausible and convincing.

This is very general and not specific for intelligence research. However, when we translate this to specific criteria for intelligence research – and when we meet the three demands of the previous section – the next six criteria can be formulated. Each of these criteria is completed with specific indicators to make a more precise assessment possible when a criterion is met. Often a specific indicator is developed for a characteristic of a certain research type, such as explanatory or prognostic research. The criteria are presented in such a way that they follow, to a certain extent, the sequence in a research process – except for the sixth criterion.

**Criterion 1. New intelligence research has to be subject to careful preliminary designing, a standard research is designed according to an established protocol.**

Concerning characteristic methodological demands, the following can be said. Intelligence is a difficult discipline, and can take many different turns; therefore extra attention needs to be paid to its design. Preliminary designing, needs to meet the demands set by reliability, validity, and when applicable also robustness. Preliminary designing will also enhance the research process in terms of being plausible and convincing.

Concerning compelling societal demands the following can be said. Careful modeling ensures that data is processed in a proper and meticulous manner (LISA). It is also during the initial stage that methods and techniques are chosen. Careful designing ensures that the circumstances in which methods and techniques are chosen will lead to an objective as possible assessment (GALA).

Concerning specific indicators to assess whether this criterion is met, the following comments can be made. Attention is paid to the design of the investigation. Preliminary designing is used to gain a picture of the factors to be analyzed. It focuses on the research question and on the methods and techniques to be used. It pays attention to the terminology to be used and defines terms and
CRITERIA TO ASSESS QUALITY

concepts. Relevant literature is explored to identify the design. This extra attention is needed, because of the interdisciplinary nature of intelligence research.

This modeling is aimed at specific types of research. In explanatory research, for example, it takes a higher alpha- and a lower beta-chance than in scientific research. In prognostic research, for example, the research is aimed at issues such as estimating strengths and purposes, and the forces and factors working to influence the opponent’s decision-making. It shows what these will lead the opponent to do and focuses on the extent to which one can act. It is also aimed at identifying the factors at play that could lead to unexpected developments, signposts or indications of change, and events that could trigger a major shift in direction.

Criterion 2. Research is carried out by researching through relevant different angles of investigation, oriented at relevant options to be formulated.

To research from different angles is a necessary criterion because of the disadvantageous position of intelligence research, compared to most other disciplines. Focusing on different angles will support the research outcomes to be convincing and plausible. Triangulation of sources is more likely to increase validity and reliability than if one source was consulted. To apply different techniques enhances the robustness.

The different angles of the research will promote the completeness of data and accuracy of information presented (LISA). The different angles will serve the demand that necessary knowledge of relevant facts is amassed and interests are weighed (GALA).

Although the common issue is to carry out the research from different angles, the implementation will differ for each type of research. This leads to the development of a specific arrangement – specific indicators – for each research type.

In descriptive intelligence research, this means the triangulation of sources of information. Triangulation takes into account the possible biases of sources by identifying their problematic accessibility or by their specific characteristics.

In explanatory intelligence research, the different angles concern three issues:
1. Competing hypotheses – to approach a phenomenon from different angles in order to prevent missing a plausible explanation, and to work with multiple causes in a multiple variable model.
2. A higher alpha and a lower beta chance – to obtain relevant significant results and not to overlook weak but existing causal relationships.
3. Robustness – to make sure conclusions are not dependent on ad hoc circumstances multiple measures of dependent variables are taken to gain an indication of the robustness of a relationship.
Furthermore, attention is paid to the profoundness of the research – to uncover in-depth and relevant cause-and-effect relationships.

In prognostic research, the focus is robustness – in this case to use different types of forecasting techniques. This research has a certain width. All relevant conditions and their likelihood are considered – and thus, all relevant outcomes. It takes into account all possible developments of the conditions. The probability and the relevant conditions have both a certain width. This means analysts present options with a certain openness of the outcomes. They point out what contributed to these options and openness – and their strengths and weaknesses. They assess both the (subjective) maximum and minimum of the appearance of a certain phenomenon, and potentially give room to dissenting opinions.

Criterion 3. Data and information presented need to be correct, complete, and accurate.

In intelligence, data is often lacking or manipulated. At the same time, large interests are at stake. This makes this criterion even more relevant. This criterion is very much focused on the validity and reliability of the research.

It links up with the demand for accuracy and completeness of data, as stated in LISA, as well as with the GALA-demand that facts and interests are represented correctly. A special place is given to the issue of using a reference system. According to LISA, the processing of data has to be undertaken in a proper and meticulous manner. This implies – among others – processed data needs to be referenced to the reliability or to the document or source.

This criterion implies some implicit assumptions – and with it, some specific indicators. It assumes a sound processing of data and information presented. It implies that you take notice of the reliability of your material. By describing the likelihood, the producer does not use ambiguous words concerning the certainty. This also implies a critical approach towards the consistency of the material – for instance, is the consistency caused because the data or the information stems from a single source? Awareness of these issues secures correctness, completeness, and accuracy.

Especially concerning the issue of completeness, this criterion implies that you are not permitted to ignore data that is not in line with your own argument. On the contrary, if you evaluate hypotheses, it should focus on data that denies your hypotheses. Furthermore, it should identify data that is missing.

There are three more comments to make concerning this criterion. First, this criterion can be met when collectors also analyze new information to see if it is significant, reliable, accurate, or unambiguous. Second, acknowledging sources, through a reference number, enhances the possibility of meeting this criterion. Third, the producer does not ascribe viewpoints to people who are not represented.
Criterion 4. The analyses and presentation of data, arguments, and conclusions need to be plausible and convincing – replicable and verifiable.

Secrecy in intelligence research – and the impossibility to check information – demands that the aspects of this criterion receive extra attention, especially in terms of the aim of the report. This criterion is primarily aimed at ensuring that the research outcomes and conjectures are as plausible as possible. To be convincing refers to validity of the research – the correctness of the argumentation, but also that the research is constructed well and uses the correct (data) analysis techniques (both are already dealt with in criterion 1).

This criterion links up with the demands of the GALA that the evaluation of facts or interests is correct; and that if facts are given a certain qualification, the acceptability of this qualification is shown. The issue of using a reference system is already mentioned in the previous criterion.

To be plausible and convincing is enhanced by several factors that function as specific indicators to assess if this criterion is met. First, the information is the best and most balanced at that moment. If a bias is unavoidable, this bias – if possible – is made explicit. Second, the content of the report is consistent, and elements in it do not contradict each other. Third, the consumers understand what the producers mean, and the producers write what they mean. Fourth, the producer shows established knowledge and the underpinning judgment – including its degree of certainty. Fifth, arguments and accompanying information are of relevance for the conclusion. If not, the producer explains why that information is presented. Sixth, in the report there is a clear use concerning reliability and probability. Seventh, the report has a clear structure, as does the argumentation of the report.

In explanatory research, the strength of a causal relationship is demonstrated – as is the plausibility of the findings. Alternative explanations are eliminated. An additional element for both explanatory and prognostic research is that an analytical judgment rests on carefully defined and clarified assumptions. Implicit in being plausible in prognostic research is the idea that you need to depart from sound, actual descriptions of the existing reality (principle of continuity) in order to support the argumentation. The argumentation is made explicit, and patterns are drawn. To be more plausible, general insights – based on theory or theoretical frameworks – can be used in the research process.

Criterion 5. The information, conclusions, and options presented needs to be of relevance for the consumer it is written for.

Intelligence and security agency reports are usually written for a specific group of consumers. This group place specific demands on these reports concerning its relevance. This criterion is very much connected to the intelligence literature. Contrary to the first four criteria, this criterion is not oriented at methodological
needs. Concerning the LISA, this implies that the research must fall within the legal competence of the agency.\textsuperscript{15}

This criterion can be supplemented with some specific indicators. First, consumers place general demands on reports in terms of brevity, clarity, direct and in time. To be policy relevant, research focuses on danger, threats and, risks – which is the locus of intelligence as a discipline. There are limitations to brief reporting. What is unknown and unknowable is explained. Statements are supported by arguments – unless the producer has a sound rationale this support can remain absent.

In explanatory research, cause-and-effect patterns are presented. In prognostic research, the producer indicates in the reports factors that can be manipulated concerning possible future developments, as the analysis is about an activity about how to affect the future. Yet, the test of prognostic research does not lie in whether the possibilities actually occur, but in whether forces of whose existence intelligence are unaware come into play, or if their speed of intervention exceeds the intelligence forecast.

**Criterion 6. The timely and well-urged warning makes clear the nature, gravity, duration, and timing of the threat, as well as the likelihood the threat will become reality.**

This criterion is designed for one specific, but very characteristic, intelligence product – the warning. It is an extra criterion, on top of the previous five criteria made for intelligence analysis in general. This criterion is very much connected to the intelligence literature.\textsuperscript{16} It is not oriented at the methodological needs. It follows from the legal task of logically functioning within an agency.

More specifically, the timely and well urged warning focuses on two issues. First, the timing of a warning is important. The best moment to avoid harm is when evidence provides a reasonable basis for action, not when the likelihood of harm occurring is beyond a reasonable doubt – and damage will occur. Second, the advice refers to when an agency not only warns, but also urges for measures to be taken.

The other specific indicators refer primarily to the content. Of course, the danger is not the product of someone’s imagination. A warning is about a danger that concerns nature, gravity, and probability of occurrence, timing, and duration. The producers are aware of the overproduction of warnings with a bias towards worst-case scenarios. Therefore, they deliberate whether a threat is mandatory or optional; whether the threat is unambiguous, or whether the actions of the opponent serves other purposes; what indicators are available which observe the threat, and what are the intentions of the opponent. A warning is not a summing up of all the dangers possible.

\textsuperscript{15} LISA, section 6, 7, and 13.

\textsuperscript{16} Most components of this criterion stem from chapter 2 – the section on warning in 2.2.3.
Criteria and cases

In the case studies, the criteria are used to test the quality of the intelligence and security agency reports investigated. Some of the specific indicators of the criteria seem to be obvious. Nevertheless, they are mentioned for they may not be met in the case studies. In the case studies, earlier sections are referred to in order to recall the proper context and conditions of a criterion – or of a specific indicator.

In the above, no attention was paid to the discriminating value of a criterion – the third demand. The problem of explaining or defending means that only in the actual following case studies can a criterion show whether it has enough discriminating value – or not.

Through the criteria, the quality of a report is judged and insight is given in aspects that need improvement. The criteria may also be helpful to trace factors that cause differences between a low and a high quality intelligence and security agency report. The criteria may be of limited use for this last issue, however, because not all the relevant factors that will lead to a low or a high quality report can be set down as criteria. For example, the absence of a fully developed forum, such as in science may have a negative influence of the quality of secret reports produced within a closed and compartmentalized organization. In the case studies, attention is also paid to such factors. They may lead to recommendations (Chapter 14.4).

5.3 Criteria – conclusion

In this chapter, criteria were developed to test the quality of intelligence and security agency reports. These criteria are a mix of formal argumentation and of reasoning in context.

Each criterion had to meet three demands. First, it had to be characteristic for the field of intelligence. Second, it had to meet compelling societal demands, the demands of relevant laws. Third, a criterion had to have a discriminating potential. A criterion incorporated specific indicators to make a more precise assessment possible.

By reflecting on the material of chapters 2, 3, and 4, six criteria have been developed. In the next table 5.1, these criteria are presented.

The first five criteria are aimed at the research and presentation. The sixth criterion is exclusively reserved for a special and typical type of intelligence product – the warning.

The six criteria will be discussed in the following two case studies, the Shipping Research Bureau and the BVD. Reports from these organizations will be investigated. An assessment is made of the extent to which these reports meet the criteria – and thus their quality is indicated. This standard is not meant as an
absolute norm in which all factors must always be met completely. The quality of a report is defined by the extent criteria are met. If several criteria are not met on different instances in a report, and if this applies to different specific indicators of those criteria, a report is judged as one of poor quality. If the criteria are generally met, and if nearly all the applicable specific indicators are met, a report is judged as one of high quality. If all aspects are met, a report is judged as one of very high quality.
### Table 5.1 The six criteria and their specific indicators

<table>
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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| **1** | New intelligence research has to be subject to careful **preliminary designing**, a standard research is designed according to an established protocol.  
- a) preliminary designing: research question, methods & techniques, initial literature exploration, to define terms and concepts;  
- b) explanatory research: high alpha- & low beta-chance;  
- c) prognostic research: to estimate strengths & purposes, forces & factors to influence opponent, room to act, factors leading to unexpected developments, indicators of change, events to trigger major shifts |
| **2** | Research is carried out by researching through relevant **different angles of investigation**, oriented at relevant options to be formulated.  
- a) descriptive research: triangulation of sources, biases by problematic accessibility;  
- b) explanatory research: competing hypotheses, high alpha & low beta chance, robustness, profoundness;  
- c) prognostic research: robustness, width, options & openness (& their strengths and weaknesses), dissenting opinions |
| **3** | Data and information presented need to be **correct, complete, and accurate**.  
- a) sound processing (collectors also); take notice of reliability; be unambiguous on certainty; be critical on consistency;  
- b) pay attention to missing data; do not ignore deviant data; aim at denying a hypothesis;  
- c) acknowledgment of sources; correct representation of viewpoints |
| **4** | The analysis and presentation of data, arguments, and conclusions need to be **plausible and convincing** – replicable and verifiable.  
- a) information is best and most balanced of that moment;  
- b) make unavoidable bias explicit; content of report is consistent; consumer understands what producer means; producers write what they mean; show what is established knowledge, and what is an underpinned judgment; arguments and information are relevant for conclusion; clear use of reliability and probability; clear structure of argument and report;  
- c) explanatory research: show strength of causal relationships, and plausibility of findings; eliminate alternative explanations;  
- d) explanatory & prognostic research: a judgment rests on defined and clarified assumptions;  
- e) prognostic research: principle of continuity; argument is made explicit, patterns are drawn; if possible make use of theory |
| **5** | The information, conclusions, and options presented need to be **of relevance for the consumer** it is written for.  
- a) policy relevant: directed towards danger, threats, and risks;  
- b) report: being in time, brief, clear & direct;  
- c) explain what is unknown; support statements by arguments;  
- d) explanatory research: present cause-and-effect patterns;  
- e) prognostic research: sketch possibilities of (width of) future developments, indicate factors that can be manipulated; be aware of relevant forces & speed of intervention |
| **6** | The timely and well-advised warning makes clear the nature, gravity, duration, and timing of the threat, as well as the likelihood the threat will become reality.  
- a) warn when evidence is a reasonable basis for action, not when harm will occur; do not only warn, but also urge that measures are taken;  
- b) danger is not a product of the imagination; avoid bias of worst-case scenarios; a warning is not a summing up of all the dangers possible;  
- c) indicate nature, gravity, probability of occurrence, timing, and duration; what indicators are available to observe a threat; what are the intentions of the opponent; is the threat unambiguous, or does an opponent’s actions serve other purposes; is a threat mandatory or optional  
- d) make recommendations |
5.4 HYPOTHESES – SUMMARY

Besides criteria, chapters 2, 3, and 4 also contributed to the formulation of hypotheses. Hypotheses were formulated for those issues in which the literature is ambiguous – because of ambivalence, or implicit assumptions may be present. The next hypotheses may lead to additional insights on relationships concerning quality of intelligence.

Ambiguity is especially present in two issues. The first one concerns several factors in the relationship between openness and secrecy, as discussed in 2.4.3. This issue was discussed again to some extent in discussing bias and forum function (4.1.1 ‘Results’), and in discussing quality and feedback/forum (4.2.2). To assess the effects of some factors on the quality of reports, three hypotheses were developed.

**HYPOTHESIS 1**: If the dominant forum function is performed by political or diplomatic feedback, this will influence the quality of the intelligence and security agency report in a negative way.

**HYPOTHESIS 2**: If intelligence and security agency reports are publicly shared, this will lead to a worsening of the information position caused by a decrease of and manipulation of sources – especially of secret sources.

**HYPOTHESIS 3**: If intelligence and security agency reports are publicly shared, their quality will increase because the positive effect caused by the feedback from different forums will dominate.

The second issue is the relationship between deception and organizational aspects, as described in 3.3. The effects of the ideas Angleton and Wilensky are unknown if they are combined and transformed for the quality of intelligence and security agency reports. To assess these effects, two competing hypotheses were formulated.

**HYPOTHESIS 4**: If an opponent has a policy of deception – disconnected from the fact if this is or is not discovered by your agency – this will influence the quality of your analysis in a negative way.

**HYPOTHESIS 5**: If an opponent has a policy of deception – and this policy of deception is discovered – this will trigger off such additional or different activities within your agency, that in the end better analyses are produced than if the opponent did not employ a policy of deception.

While the criteria focus on the normative issue, the hypotheses deal with the analytical aspect. For the composition of this study, the criteria set the structure. The elements to evaluate the hypotheses are woven in between, and will be returned to in chapters 12 and 13.