Making an impact on security and intelligence

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The debates around academic engagement with the security community are yet to be resolved. Whilst the current government yearns for scholars who are ‘more useful’ in ‘the real world’ there are undeniable tensions between the dissemination of academic knowledge into academic outlets and engagement with policy communities. There is also a large vocal community of colleagues who suggest that there should be little place for this work in an academia’s professional life. Amongst the unresolved questions are those which verge on ethical considerations, much as there were for anthropologists and the so-called Human Terrain System, and whether the creation of ‘pure knowledge’ is more valuable than knowledge shaped for a policy audience. The debates within the intelligence studies community are, of course, a microcosm of those that exist within the wider International Relations and Studies community, and until a coherent position is reached on the subject, individuals and groups will continue to pragmatically choose where and how to engage with the stakeholder communities they value.

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