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IARPA LAUNCHES NEW RESEARCH PROGRAM TO SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE ADAPTIVE REASONING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

WASHINGTON – The Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA), within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), announced today that it has embarked on a multi-year research effort to develop and test methods to improve reasoning and problem-solving in healthy, high-performing adults. If successful, proven methods developed under the Strengthening Human Adaptive Reasoning and Problem-solving (SHARP) program may enhance analysts' capacity to reason through complex, ambiguous, and often novel problems common to the Intelligence Community.

"The importance of adaptive reasoning and problem-solving abilities for success in many of today's work environments has been thoroughly documented," said Adam Russell, SHARP program manager at IARPA. "Interestingly, some recent research suggests these abilities might be improved in healthy adults, but conclusive proof has yet to be found."

The SHARP program is designed to rigorously assess whether innovative combinations of approaches can improve performance in high-performing adults such as those in the Intelligence Community. The researchers in this program will not only aim to improve adaptive reasoning and problem-solving, but also to understand how and why certain methods work. These results may also drive the ability to tailor tools and methods for individuals in order to better accommodate and leverage the natural differences found among people.

"The long-term goal of SHARP research is to develop evidence-based tools and methods that can improve the quality of human judgment and reasoning in complex, real world environments," commented Russell. "Any successful results from SHARP research could lead to significant benefits for the Intelligence Community, in particular, as well as society, in general."

Through a competitive Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) process, IARPA has awarded research contracts in support of SHARP to teams led by Charles River Analytics, Honeywell Corporation, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

IARPA invests in high-risk, high-payoff research programs that have the potential to provide our nation with an overwhelming intelligence advantage over our future adversaries. Additional information on IARPA and their research may be found on their web site: www.iarpa.gov.

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