Review Essay: Strategic Intelligence

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Review Essay

Strategic Intelligence

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Although the use and misuse of intelligence has been a matter of front-page news since 9/11, the intelligence communities of America and nations around the globe have been fighting the silent war related to strategic intelligence long before those planes so vividly destroyed the future as we knew it. In a world where the use of information in war—the gathering of intelligence, conducting surveillance and reconnaissance—is central to winning, a tremendous void exists with regard to the roles and missions of intelligence agencies. The publishers at Praeger Security International have attempted to correct that omission for the general reader, as well as students of military affairs, with the publication of a five-volume series on strategic intelligence. This series offers unique insight into a world built on the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information. This comprehensive survey of how 16 major American intelligence agencies operate, how they collect and share information, and many of the “special” problems incurred along the way is edited by Loch K. Johnson, Regents Professor of Public and International Affairs, School of Public and International Affairs, at the University of Georgia.

The five volumes present empirical inquiries, historical views, theoretical frameworks, memoirs, case studies, interviews, legal analyses, comparative essays, and ethical assessments. The authors come from varying backgrounds, including academia, intelligence agencies, think tanks, Congress, the State Department, the National Security Council, the legal field, and from seven countries. Each author has different personal experiences and writes from his or her own perspective. The books provide an excellent reference for students of the military, political affairs, foreign policy, or strategic planning. The supporting notes at the end of each chapter are especially helpful and should not be overlooked by the reader.

Volume 1. Understanding the Hidden Side of Government (11 chapters and eight appendices)

Chapter 1. “An Introduction to the Intelligence Studies Literature” by Loch K. Johnson highlights the literature, identifies the authors and subjects, and in 136 notes identifies other related literature. The author’s stated objective “is simply to give the reader a sense of the chief topics and some of the major works that have addressed them.” He highlights the literature on intelligence history; structure and theory; intelligence missions; collection, analysis, and dissemination; counterintelligence; covert
action; accountability; ethics and reform; intelligence leadership and management; and “The Future Research Agenda.”

Chapter 2. “Cloaks, Daggers, and Ivory Towers: Why Academics Don’t Study U. S. Intelligence” is by Amy B. Zegart, an Associate Professor of Public Policy at the University of California, Los Angeles. The author is a specialist on national and homeland security and has served on the National Security Council staff.

Zegart notes that intelligence agencies are particularly difficult for outsiders to study due to the “over-classification of information” and because classification “has engendered a culture of secrecy inside the intelligence community that makes even unclassified information difficult to obtain.” The article details the difficulty in getting the government to comply with the 30 business days time requirement of the Freedom of Information Act of 1966. In particular, she notes that the “ticking tenure clock creates strong incentives for rising academics to research topics with data that is readily available so publication can be produced quickly. Those topics are found more often and more reliably outside the U.S. intelligence community.”

Chapter 3. “Studying Intelligence: A British Perspective” is authored by Timothy Gibbs, a final-year doctoral student in history at Robinson College, Cambridge University, and a member of the Cambridge University Intelligence Seminar.

This chapter focuses on four themes related to the study of intelligence in the United Kingdom and attempts to compare them with the American experience:

- A discussion of the British intelligence community and the three major civilian organizations, along with their involvement in some of the major intelligence operations of the twentieth century.
- An examination of the issue of access to British sources related to intelligence.
- A brief address of the historiography of intelligence in the United Kingdom.
- The appointment of an official historian for the Security Service and the debate surrounding this development.

Gibbs finds two major sources for writing about British intelligence: official British intelligence agency documents and first-hand information from those involved in the intelligence field, both members and politicians. According to Gibbs, references to intelligence by either group are “heavily discouraged.”

Chapter 4. “Democratic Deficit be Damned: The Executive Use of Legislators to Scrutinize National Security in Canada” is the work of Stuart Farson, a Lecturer in the Political Science Department, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver/Surrey. He served as Director of Research for the Special Committee of the House of Commons (Canada) on the Review of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and the Security Offenses Act. His coauthor is Reg Whitaker, a Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus, York University and Adjunct Professor of Political Science, University of Victoria, Canada.

In their introduction, the authors note that Canada has drawn on British ideas as well as those of the United States in developing governance systems. They highlight the fact that Canada has demonstrated a particular reluctance to follow the United States in the area of “oversight of intelligence.” The authors briefly discuss
the comprehensive inquiries into their respective intelligence communities by Canada and the United States during the formulative period of the 1970s.

Chapter 5. “Sources and Methods in the Study of Intelligence: A British View” is by Len Scott, Professor of International Politics at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, where he is the Director of the Center for Intelligence and International Security Studies.

Professor Scott’s chapter on the challenges and opportunities for the study of intelligence in the United Kingdom focuses on various aspects of intelligence organization and practice, specifically covert action and central intelligence machinery.

Scott highlights various laws and the history of intelligence and “openness” in Britain. The chapter is a good primer for those unfamiliar with the practices of disclosure in the United Kingdom.


Warner writes that there is no distinctly American form of intelligence; however, there are “idioms” for the practice of intelligence. According to the author, the discipline of intelligence developed from three prior disciplines: diplomacy, reconnaissance, and law enforcement. Warner does an excellent job of chronicling the challenges and opportunities for historical reporting of US intelligence.

Chapter 7. “The Challenges of Intelligence Analysis” by John Hollister Hedley, who for more than 30 years at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) edited the President’s Daily Brief, briefed at the White House, served as the Editor of the National Intelligence Daily, and was Chairman of the CIA’s Publications Review Board. Now retired, he serves as a consultant to the National Intelligence Council and the Center for the Study of Intelligence.

Hedley begins his chapter by writing: “Reporting an event is one thing; answering the question ‘what does this mean?’ is analysis.” This reviewer would note that the possible answers should be evaluated under various hypotheses.

I encourage the reader to carefully consider the author’s words related to mirror-imaging, mindset, groupthink, and linear analysis.

Chapter 8. “The Intelligence-Policy Nexus” is by James J. Wirtz, Professor in the Department of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California.

As Professor Wirtz notes in his introduction, “Policy makers rely on intelligence professionals for data about broad international trends and their potential consequences, the intentions and capabilities of friends and foes, and specific warnings needed to avert disaster.”

This reviewer agrees that in order to produce actionable intelligence, analysts have to maintain close working relationships with policymakers. “What policy makers require is information and finished intelligence reports that address the issues found in their inboxes. They would also benefit from long-term research that highlights emerging problems before they become crises or sources of embarrassment.”

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Wirtz concludes, “Intelligence reform, based on organizational changes, is the order of the day.” But he also notes: “For instance, providing all available information to analysts would overwhelm them; by contrast, restricting the flow of information creates the risk that they will not receive critical bits of information needed to make sense of emerging threats.”


Gill attempts to answer several questions related to intelligence failures. In the cases of 9/11 and Iraq, he presents possible reasons for failure, including the inability to analyze information correctly, a political failure based on preexisting beliefs, a failure due to its role in providing post hoc rationalization, and a messy mixture of both professional and political failures.

The author notes: “Since 9/11 there has been some soft-pedaling on oversight because of the false perception that this will somehow hinder greater intelligence efficiency: the Iraq debacle has reinforced the need for energetic oversight to reduce, though it cannot eliminate, the likelihood of future intelligence and political failures.”

Chapter 10. “Intelligence of the Past: Intelligence for the Future” is by Harold M. Greenberg. The author recently published research on covert CIA actions in the 1950s. He currently is a legislative aide in the US House of Representatives.

Greenberg begins his chapter discussing the historic 22 February 1946 cable from US Diplomat George F. Kennan to Washington in which he laid out the strategic groundwork of American foreign policy for the next four decades. From there, Greenberg’s chapter proceeds to a summary of the key elements in Sherman Kent’s classic 1949 book, Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy—a good starting point for “revisiting the fundamental tenets that guided our intelligence community at its birth.”

Chapter 11. “National Intelligence in the Age of Transparency” is authored by Kristin M. Lord, Associate Dean at George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs.

Lord’s well-executed chapter presents both the potentially positive and negative aspects of global transparency. According to Lord, global transparency may lead to a reduction in government corruption and more government accountability; however, it may also undermine deterrence, spotlight and spread hostility, and encourage vicious cycles of belligerent rhetoric and actions.

Volume 2. The Intelligence Cycle: The Flow of Secret Information from Overseas to the Highest Councils of Government. (11 chapters and eight appendixes)

Chapter 1. “What’s Wrong with the Intelligence Cycle?” is penned by Arthur S. Hulnick, an Associate Professor of International Relations at Boston University, who served for seven years in Air Force Intelligence and later amassed 28 years in the CIA.
Hulnick has done an acceptable job in presenting his views concerning actions that should be taken, and the rationale for them, related to the intelligence cycle. One criticism would be his final paragraph, in which he discusses the intelligence cycle noting that it “... is a flawed vision, and thus poor theory. One need only to ask those who have toiled in the fields of intelligence.” The author notes that the defensive counterintelligence and covert action functions are not included in Appendix A, “The Intelligence Cycle.” In this reviewer’s own experience, these two functions were not ignored, although knowledge of them was often limited.

Chapter 2. “The Challenge of Global Intelligence Listening” is authored by Patrick Radden Keefe, a graduate of Yale University’s School of Law and currently a Fellow with the Century Foundation in New York City.

In his introduction, the author states: “On December 20, 2005, The New York Times revealed that under a new program initiated after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, America’s National Security Agency (NSA) had been conducting warrantless electronic surveillance inside the United States.” “James Risen, the Times reporter who broke the story, had learned of the program a year earlier, but under pressure from the White House the newspaper had held off publishing the piece.”

The incident highlights three critical questions: Why is signals intelligence (SIGINT) so secretive? How can SIGINT agencies effectively balance an aggressive pursuit of foreign adversaries with respect for legislative and constitutional constraints and rigorous protection of personal privacy? How effective is SIGINT as an intelligence tool?

Chapter 3. “Prometheus Embattled: A Post-9/11 Report Card on the National Security Agency” is authored by Matthew M. Aid, the Managing Director in the Washington office of Citigate Global Intelligence and Security, and coeditor of Secrets of Signals Intelligence During the Cold War and Beyond.

The last section of this chapter, “The Sum of All Parts,” is worth reading first. The author writes:

Today, the NSA remains a conundrum. It is by far the largest and most powerful intelligence agency within the U.S. intelligence community. It is today the principal intelligence collector for the entire U.S. intelligence community, accounting for the majority of the highest-level intelligence information going to the president of the United States.

Aid succinctly summarizes NSA’s challenges in effectively contributing to the fight against global terrorism, and the reaction to the domestic eavesdropping scandal.

Chapter 4. “Intelligence: The Imagery Dimension” is by Jeffrey T. Richelson, a Senior Fellow with the National Security Archive in Washington and author of The Wizards of Langley, The U. S. Intelligence Community, A Century of Spies, and America’s Eyes in Space.

The author’s opening paragraphs highlight the historical use of overhead platforms to observe events on earth, e.g., kites, balloons, and airplanes. Throughout
the remainder of the chapter Richelson addresses the use, benefits, and limitations of numerous types of imagery, and the various countries that utilize them. The chapter is an excellent primer for those not familiar with intelligence imagery.

Chapter 5. “The Importance and Future of Espionage” by Frederick P. Hitz, Lecturer (Diplomat in Residence) in Public and International Affairs, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University.

In his opening Hitz outlines three reasons why President Truman decided on the need for a civilian intelligence organization. The author then addresses various covert programs and operations over the last 50 years; and the importance of good, on the ground, contemporaneous human source reporting. In his conclusion, the author states some of the systematic reasons for concern.

Chapter 6. “Open Source Intelligence” is authored by Robert David Steele, chief executive officer of OSS.Net, an international open source provider. The author is also a former CIA case officer.

This chapter needs to be read more than once to fully grasp the potential value and cautions associated with using open source intelligence. In his final section, “OSINT and Strategic Budgetary Reform,” Steele states that the Department of Defense is relevant to only ten percent of the threat (state-on-state warfare), and is largely incompetent at small wars and homeland defense; “that we are, as a republic, not investing properly in peaceful preventive measures inclusive of the spread of participatory democracy and moral capitalism. The return on investment on our ‘big war’ military is not only not there, the existence of that big war force leads ignorant presidents and their mendacious vice-presidents to seek out wars, as an option for capturing ‘cheap’ oil (never mind the cost in blood, spirit, and treasure).”

Chapter 7. “The Shortest Distance Between Two Points Lies in Rethinking the Question: Intelligence and the Information Age Technology Challenge” is authored by Daniel S. Gressang IV, a Professor at the Joint Military Intelligence College (JMIC) in Washington and the National Security Agency/National Cryptologic School liaison to the JMIC.

The author addresses several topics related to technological challenges faced by the intelligence sector. He states: “Shifting from the collection resource-centric analyzing what’s collected mindset to the newly emergent information needs-centric analysis of what to collect mindset reorients our thinking at a fundamental level and, in doing so, opens up possibilities for effectively addressing the technological challenges of today and tomorrow.” This reviewer concurs with his concept.

Chapter 8. “Intelligence Analysis and Policy Makers: Benefits and Dangers of Tensions in the Relationship” is the contribution of Jack Davis, who served as an analyst, manager, and teacher of analysts in the CIA from 1956 to 1990. He is currently an independent contractor with the CIA, specializing in analytic methodology.

The author presents an excellent overview of the analysts’ perspective. Davis addresses several topics, but perhaps the most important section of his chapter is the section titled “The Analyst’s Response to Policy-maker Criticism: Best Practices,” in which he sets forth the best actions for analysts. Readers should consider it time well spent to read this section carefully.
Chapter 9. “The Customer is King: Intelligence Requirements in Britain” is authored by Michael Herman, a leading British intelligence scholar and author of Intelligence Power in Peace and War. He served in Britain’s Government Communications Headquarters, with secondments to the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Defense.

Herman uses his own recollections, as well as other documented evidence, to outline the British intelligence community’s requirements. His final section, “Effects and Lessons,” needs to be read several times to obtain a clear understanding of the author’s views. He discusses requirements and procedures, noting: “Yet it is difficult to recall that the requirements and procedures ever affected what intelligence actually did.” The author continues: “Lists of requirements and priorities were drawn up by intelligence and submitted to customers for collective review—the reverse of what strict logic might have suggested.”

This reviewer notes from his own experience as an intelligence officer at US Corps, Army, and Theater-level, that the intelligence cycle is effectively a cycle without a fixed beginning and end. Users and producers are constantly asking and answering the questions of: What’s happening? What does it mean? What should be done about it?

Chapter 10. “Global Economic Espionage: An Ancient Art, Now a Science” is the work of Minh A. Luong, an Assistant Director of International Studies at Yale University, where he teaches in the Department of History. He also serves as adjunct Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the Taubman Center at Brown University.

Luong’s chapter outlines several descriptive and interesting examples of economic espionage. In his conclusion, the author notes: “Economic espionage is an ancient practice that has evolved into a sophisticated science.” “If the global community can restore the incentives to innovate and raise the disincentives for engaging in economic espionage, then the global economy has a better chance of fulfilling its promise with innovations that will benefit every region around the world.”


This chapter needs to be read several times in order to gain a relatively clear understanding of the actions and postmortems related to the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Even after doing so, readers are likely to have unanswered questions related to the accuracy of the record. Four different postmortems are presented by the author: Lehman Report, IG (or Earman) Report, USIB Report, and PFIAB Report.

As the author notes in his conclusion, “The four post-mortems bring to mind Akira Kurosawa’s film masterpiece Rashomon. When each one is examined closely, it cannot be separated from the person(s) who wrote it and the external or extraneous circumstances involved in the production.”

Volume 3. Covert Action Behind the Veils of Secret Foreign Policy (nine chapters and eight appendixes)

Chapter 1. “Covert Action Forward to the Past?” is by Gregory F. Treverton, a senior analyst at the RAND Corporation. He has served in government for the first Senate Select Committee on Intelligence—the Church Committee. His latest book is an edited work; New Challenges, New Tools for Defense Decisionmaking.
Treverton has done a superb job of reviewing the history of US covert action since World War II and the circumstances that affected it. This reviewer believes the author’s closing words should be clearly remembered in any consideration of future covert action: “Now is the time to remember again those lines and draw them again, all the more so as the boundary between covert action and military special operations blurs.”

Chapter 2. “Covert Action: The ‘Quiet Option’ in International Statecraft” is the product of Kevin A. O’Brien, a former research associate with the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies and currently a senior analyst for RAND Europe.

The author does an outstanding job, in an unclassified form, of discussing covert action, its varying categories, and its utility. He highlights examples of covert action throughout history. O’Brien’s section on “Covert Action Today” is well worth reading and re-reading; as are the supporting notes.

Chapter 3. “Covert Action: The Israeli Experience” is by Ephraim Kahana, Professor of Political Science and faculty member in the Western Galilee College, Acre, Israel.

While previous chapters in the series have dealt with the British intelligence community, Professor Kahana’s chapter is the first on Israeli covert operations. His chapter sums up ten Israeli covert actions. In the conclusion he writes: “In reviewing several of the literally hundreds of diverse covert missions carried out by the different branches of the Israeli intelligence community, it becomes clear that in defense of the homeland, the style and type of operations selected is only limited by the imagination of those involved.”

Chapter 4. “‘Such Other Functions and Duties’: Covert Action and American Intelligence Policy” is coauthored by James M. Scott, Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science, Oklahoma State University and Jerel A. Rosati, Professor of Political Science and International Studies at the University of South Carolina.

The authors’ words are instructive and insightful; recounting the passage of the 1947 National Security Act and its impact on covert actions, to include the CIA’s role. In this chapter, the authors provide an informative primer on covert operations from the 1940s to the present day. Table 4-3, “Guidelines for Covert Action Legitimacy and Effectiveness” is an excellent reference for any student of America’s intelligence operations and foreign policy.

Chapter 5. “Covert Action: An Appraisal of the Effects of Secret Propaganda” is authored by Michael A. Turner, a political scientist who has taught international relations and national security for the past 12 years. He also spent over 15 years in various positions with the CIA.

Turner’s chapter begins with the basics defining different categories of propaganda in a clear and well-thought format. He frequently uses historical examples to illustrate various effects or uses of propaganda. The only criticism offered relates to his last paragraph of the section titled “The Balance Sheet.” In this presentation the author states: “Secret propaganda that does not elicit broad-based elite support or that is designed poorly, such as the recent efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, will almost certainly backfire on the government and result in policy failure.” Unfortunately, he fails to provide specific examples supporting that statement.
Chapter 6. “Political Action as a Tool of Presidential Statecraft” is the work of William J. Daugherty, an Associate Professor of Government at Armstrong Atlantic State University. He is a retired senior officer of the CIA.

Professor Daugherty provides readers with an excellent discussion of covert action from the viewpoint of the presidency. He presents examples from the days of President Washington to those of President Reagan. The author notes that covert action “has been a policy staple of every post-World War II American president, Democrat or Republican, and most often employed against countries and organizations that were or are hostile toward the United States or U.S. interests.”

Chapter 7. “Covert Action and the Pentagon” is authored by Jennifer D. Kibbe, an Assistant Professor of Government at Franklin and Marshall College.

Kibbe provides readers with an overview of the “Evolution of SOCOM” and “Special Operations Forces Today.” She briefly describes the composition of Special Operations Command, noting that it is comprised of both units that conduct overt or “white” operations: Army Special Forces (Green Berets); Ranger units; Navy SEALs; and numerous aviation, civil affairs, and psychological operations units; in addition to units that conduct “black” operations (including both covert and clandestine missions) under the oversight of the Joint Special Operations Command. The chapter provides insight into the legal aspects of covert action and congressional involvement.

Chapter 8. “Covert Action and Diplomacy” is by John D. Stempel, a Senior Professor of International Relations at the University of Kentucky’s Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce. He served for 24 years in the US Foreign Service.

This reviewer found it helpful to focus his thoughts by reading the guidelines the author provides on page 153 and then re-reading the article from the beginning. Stempel’s article examines the topics “Covert Action: Methods and Operations,” “The New Terrorism,” “Covert Action Assessment,” and in his “Conclusion: The Future.”

Chapter 9. “From Cold War to Long War: Covert Action in U.S. Legal Context” reflects the efforts of James E. Baker who happens to sit on the US Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. He previously served as Special Assistant to the President and Legal Advisor to the National Security Council.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first places covert action into a contemporary policy and legal context. The second raises three legal policy issues: “(1) Will the president’s wartime authority as commander-in-chief eclipse or marginalize the statutory framework for addressing covert action? (2) Does the statutory definition of covert action remain viable in light of the evolving use of ‘liaison’ and ‘traditional activities’ to combat terrorism? (3) Is the measure of executive preview and review adequate to address the policy and legal risks inherent in covert action, as well as those contemporary activities that bear comparable policy and legal risks?” The latter addresses several questions regarding presidential policy and the role Congress plays in covert actions. Baker does not provide specific answers, but rather sets forth the issues to be addressed.
Volume 4. Counterintelligence and Counterterrorism: Defending the Nation Against Hostile Forces (nine chapters and seven appendixes)

Chapter 1. “Definitions and Theories of Counterintelligence” is by Stan A. Taylor, Emeritus Professor of Political Science at Brigham Young University. Professor Taylor provides readers with a comprehensive understanding of “counterintelligence (CI) theory that explains the existence of counterintelligence practices in any state.” The author begins his chapter with a brief discussion of intelligence theories and then describes various counterintelligence techniques derived from them. This chapter should be required reading in every US intelligence school.

Chapter 2. “VENONA and Cold War Counterintelligence Methodology” is authored by Nigel West, a military historian specializing in security and intelligence matters. He is the European editor of the World Intelligence Review and is on the faculty at the Center for Counterintelligence and Security Studies in Washington.

West’s chapter on VENONA (code name for SIGINT intercepts against Soviet spying in America) details the many benefits and flaws inherent in that program. This chapter requires careful reading. The chapter immediately launches into a discussion of VENONA and its role in detecting espionage, without providing the reader with appropriate background related to the program. While there are readers who may be familiar with VENONA, others might have trouble following the discussion. All in all, this chapter is well worth the careful reading required. Readers may wish to read it again after digesting Chapter 3.

Chapter 3. “Catching Spies in the United States” is the work of Katherine A. S. Sibley, Professor and Chair of the History Department at St. Joseph’s University. Professor Sibley presents a brief history of individuals caught spying on the United States from the time of the American Revolution through October 2005.

Chapter 4. “The Successes and Failures of FBI Counterintelligence” is by Athan Theoharis, Professor of History at Marquette University. His research is focused on government secrecy, Cold War politics, and the history of the FBI. Professor Theoharis begins with a brief history of the FBI. The author captures the thesis of his chapter by stating, “This narrative does not recount the totality of FBI counterintelligence operations. Because of continued classified restrictions, it is impossible to ascertain whether these and other known counterintelligence operations are representative.” He then adds: “Nonetheless, the known history of FBI counterintelligence successes and failures permits some qualified observations.” The author provides readers with numerous insights.

Chapter 5. “The Idea of a European FBI” is authored by Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, Professor of American History at the University of Edinburgh. Jeffreys-Jones’ misstatement in his opening sentence where he refers to the FBI as the Federal Bureau of Information can perhaps be overlooked due to his residence in Scotland. Aside from that one error, the author provides readers with an informed understanding of the problems faced during the establishment and operation of Europol. The chapter includes quite a bit of FBI history. It does, however, leave the reader desiring more information related to both organizations.
Chapter 6. “Washington Politics, Intelligence, and the Struggle Against Global Terrorism” is the work of Glenn Hastedt, until recently, Professor and Chief of the Political Science Department at James Madison University. He is now Chair of the Justice Studies Department there.

Hastedt examines the relationships between American foreign and domestic policy. He provides readers with the understanding, “American foreign and national security policy is always made in response to domestic political considerations. It cannot be otherwise.” He then presents a detailed analysis of these imperatives or obligations.

The author introduces “four political games that are continuously played-out within the intelligence policy area.” He refers to these “political games” as symbolic politics, resource politics, agenda politics, and accountability politics.

Chapter 7. “The Intelligence War Against Global Terrorism” is authored by Richard L. Russell, Professor of National Security Studies at the National Defense University. He previously served as a political-military analyst for the CIA.

The author highlights some of the problems and shortcomings in the American intelligence community. However, on occasion, his presentation leads the reader to believe that the author is prone to seeing things only in black and white; without contemplating the gray of the intelligence world. Aside from these dichotomies, Professor Russell presents an excellent chapter.

His final two pages on “Strengthening Intelligence Collection, Analysis, and Covert Action for the War on Terrorism” should be read a number of times, not because they are unclear, but because they are so insightful.

Chapter 8. “Intelligence to Counter Terror: The Importance of All-Source Fusion” is the product of Jennifer Sims, Director of Intelligence Studies and Visiting Professor in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University’s Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service.

Professor Sims is an accomplished writer who unfolds her chapter in a clear and concise manner. In her analysis of the “Role of Intelligence,” the author emphasizes that the best intelligence is obtained when the capabilities of technical intelligence, human intelligence, and open-source or unclassified intelligence are combined.

This reviewer believes Professor Sims has done an exceedingly fine job of identifying the challenges and opportunities for the US federal government and our state governments. Her conclusion provides tremendous insight into the relationships of various government agencies in the war on terrorism.


Katharina von Knop’s chapter is superbly executed. She writes regarding the motivation of women terrorists, their role, the reasons behind the rise of female involvement in terrorist activities, and many of the misinterpretations of why women become terrorists.

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Volume 5: Intelligence and Accountability: Safeguards Against the Abuse of Secret Power (nine chapters and seven appendixes)

Chapter 1. “Congressional Oversight of the CIA in the Early Cold War, 1947-63” is authored by David M. Barrett, an Associate Professor of Political Science at Villanova University and author of Congress and the CIA.

Professor Barrett begins with the following statement: “A democratic nation-state in a dangerous world faces two obvious dilemmas that might be labeled ‘openness versus secrecy’ and ‘fair play versus dirty tricks.’” Barrett provides a superb overview of the CIA during the Cold War. He includes highlights for each of his topics and identifies, via the notes, excellent sources and references.

Chapter 2. “Intelligence Oversight: The Church Committee” is by Frederick A. O. Schwarz, Jr., who holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School. From 1975 through mid-1976, he served as Chief Counsel to the Senate Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (the Church Committee).

Schwarz provides illustrative examples of when the US government violated the law and the Constitution in its efforts to gain intelligence during the 1960s and 1970s. His role as counsel to the Church Committee permits personal insight into a number of important events in intelligence history.

Chapter 3. “A Conversation with Former DCI William E. Colby, Spymaster During the ‘Year of the Intelligence Wars’” is authored by Loch K. Johnson, editor of the series.

This chapter is one of the more unique in the entire series. It reflects exactly what the title says, a conversation. The author includes a transcript of a conversation with William Colby. The essence of their thoughts, especially those related to oversight, human intelligence, the role of Congress and the White House, and the future of intelligence remain as valid today as they were in 1991 when the conversation took place.

Chapter 4. “The British Experience with Intelligence Accountability” is penned by Mark Phythian, Professor of International Security and Director of the History and Governance Research Institute at the University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom.

Sometimes, it is helpful for readers to digest the introductory summarization at the beginning of a chapter before continuing; this is one such instance. This reviewer also believes that readers would find it easier to understand the information in the chapter if they first read the author’s conclusion.

Mark Phythian explains the British experience with intelligence accountability by examining legislation and ISC (Intelligence and Security Committee) reports. He notes that, “When the Intelligence Services Bill was unveiled in 1993, tacked on to the end was provision for a form of parliamentary scrutiny of MI5, MI6, and the Government Communications Headquarters.” The author then outlines the rationale for Prime Minister John Major’s move to introduce an oversight body.

Chapter 5. “Documentary Evidence for Differences Between American and British Approaches to Intelligence” is authored by Lawrence J. Lamanna, a doc-
toral candidate in the School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Georgia.

Mr. Lamanna identifies British and American differences observed in his study related to majority and minority views, levels of confidence, historical and narrative formats, assessments and analytical opinions of foreign governments and experts, and the cooperation and collaboration among intelligence agencies and government departments. He notes that American intelligence reports include explicit levels of confidence; British reports do so only vaguely. British intelligence reports, however, provide greater historical context and take a more narrative form than do American reports.

Chapter 6. “More Perfect Oversight: Intelligence Oversight and Reform” is by Cynthia M. Nolan. She holds a doctorate from American University in the School of International Service. Dr. Nolan is a former officer in the Directorate of Operations in the CIA and has published in the International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence.

The author’s chapter examines congressional oversight of intelligence and how it differs from congressional oversight of other agencies. She reviews the oversight literature to determine the evolution of the conduct of congressional oversight. Dr. Nolan then ascertains whether intelligence oversight is conducted differently from the oversight of other bureaucratic offices. She concludes by addressing the 9/11 Commission’s “ten specific proposals for the reform of congressional oversight of intelligence.”

Chapter 7. “Intelligence Accountability: A Comparative Perspective” reflects the work of Hans Born and Ian Leigh. Hans Born is a Senior Fellow in Democratic Governance of the Security Sector at the Geneva Center for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces. Ian Leigh is Professor of Law and Codirector of the Human Rights Center at the University of Durham.

The authors glean the critical elements of government accountability by examining how various nations develop and implement their restrictions and safeguards. The authors focus their discussion around three basic points: The first being, “National security is not only a powerful argument against democratic oversight in dictatorial or one-party-states but also until recently, in established democracies such as the United Kingdom and the United States, where oversight legislation was adopted in 1989 and 1974, respectively.”

Born and Leigh focus their second point related to oversight on the propositions: “A first issue is the problem of gearing national oversight institutions toward the oversight of international intelligence cooperation. This problem is aggravated by the lack of democratic oversight of intelligence on the international level.”

The authors’ final point is developed in their conclusion: “Whether the systems of checks and balances are strong enough to ensure a proper and lawful control of the services eventually will be known. This brings us to the last and third point. It is important to note that the intelligence agency is included in the framework of the four layers of accountability. The agency properly understood is itself not just an object for control.”
Chapter 8. “The Coin of Intelligence Accountability” is authored by A. Denis Clift, President of the Department of Defense Joint Military Intelligence College. He has served in military and civilian capacities in ten administrations, including 13 successive years in the Executive Office of the President and the White House.

As the chapter’s title indicates, intelligence accountability is the “coin” or, in an architectural and real world sense, the indispensable and fundamental basis of US intelligence. The chapter is divided into six sub-topics; beginning with the history of intelligence in the United States from the time of George Washington through 2005. Clift expands the discussion to explain how various presidents dealt with the use of intelligence and their accountability to Congress.

Chapter 9. “A Half Century of Spy Watching” is the work of Harry Howe Ransom, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. His books include Central Intelligence and National Security, Can American Democracy Survive Cold War? and The Intelligence Establishment.

Professor Ransom readily admits that he does not have any “hands-on” government experience or access to classified intelligence. Despite this, he presents a well-thought and engaging chapter on government secrecy, its reliability, and its role in democracy. He relates his experience of the past half-century in attempts to understand this secret side of government and how the CIA interacts with the American political system. His thesis is focused on the premise that government secrecy and disinformation, media sensationalism, imprecise vocabulary, and fictional romanticism combine to obscure comprehension of intelligence, both for the public and even for a scholar who seeks to clarify the subject.

The author concludes: “One of the beauties—and perhaps vulnerabilities—of American democracy is that secrets are hard to keep. Undeniably leaks of sensitive classified information can do harm. The principle of a free press invites such danger. But an effective intelligence oversight structure will mitigate that danger. What we don’t know can harm us. The challenge is always that of knowing what to do with what we do know.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The Reviewer: Colonel Arthur C. Winn, USA Ret., retired from the Strategic Studies Institute at the US Army War College in 1979 after more than 30 years of active service as an Engineer, Special Forces, and Military Intelligence officer; with tours in Japan, Korea, Germany, and as the Assistant US Army Attaché in Israel. Following retirement from active duty, he worked for 20 years for civilian professional service firms as a program manager and senior analyst in DOD- and Army-sponsored targeting and intelligence systems programs.