UNISCI Discussion Papers

INTELLIGENCE STUDIES AT THE DAWN OF THE 21ST CENTURY: NEW POSSIBILITIES AND RESOURCES FOR A RECENT TOPIC IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

AUTHOR:[1]	GUSTAVO DÍAZ MATEY UNISCI / University of Salford
DATE:	May 2005

Introduction

As a relatively new field of intellectual inquiry and scholarly debate, Intelligence Studies can be considered a stimulating discipline with a strong potential for development. Crucial background factors are in place for further progression. Vibrant debate, diverse subject areas, an increasing relevance and the opportunity to break new ground must be perceived as fundamental advantages to this field. Even perceived limitations can be interpreted positively, especially when discussing the nature of Intelligence Studies in terms of development.

The first few years of the twenty-first century have witnessed a transformation in the role of secret intelligence in international affairs. Intelligence and security issues are now more prominent than ever before, in Western political discourse as well as the wider public consciousness. Public expectations of intelligence have never been greater. As Christopher Andrew points out "during only a year, the threats posed by Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein had succeeded in transforming British government on the public use of intelligence"[2]. The relationship between policy makers and their intelligence advisors come under unprecedented public scrutiny in the United Kingdom and also the United States .The leaders of both countries were charged with purposefully distorting intelligence information in order to justify their decisions to declare war in Iraq in April 2003. The need for a better understanding of both the nature of intelligence process and its importance to national and international security policy has never been more apparent.

Considering that intelligence has been practiced in its different forms since the dawn of time it seems paradoxical that it has only been 'an academic discipline for half a century.'[3] Moreover, until recent years its historical acknowledgement has been at best, intermittent less still its further development as an academic discipline. Christopher Andrew succinctly

---

[1] Las opiniones expresadas en estos artículos son propias de sus autores. Estos artículos no reflejan necesariamente la opinión de UNISCI. The views expressed in these articles are those of the authors. These articles do not necessarily reflect the views of UNISCI.

[2] Andrew, Christopher: "Intelligence, international relations and under theorization", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 19, No .2 (Summer 2004), pp. 29-30.

[3] Kahn, David: "An Historical Theory of Intelligence", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 16, No. 3 (Autumn 2001), p. 79.

supports this assertion stating that, 'almost no historian of the Second World War nowadays fails to acknowledge the important role of signals intelligence (SIGINT). By contrast, most histories of post-war international relations omit (without explanation) all reference to Signal Intelligence (SIGINT)'[4].   Furthermore, the view of many scholars and intelligence professionals, succinctly espoused by Walter Laqueur that 'all attempts to develop ambitious theories of intelligence have failed'[5], would lead observers to a conclusion that Intelligence Studies suffers from chronic limitations. It has been nearly five decades since intelligence first emerged as a subject of serious academic study with the publication of Sherman Kent's *Strategic Intelligence for American Foreign Policy*. The development of intelligence studies as a sub-field of international relations has continued rising ever since.

The subject is firmly established in teaching and research centres in various countries within Europe and North America, as a result, the study of international security has been increasingly influenced by a better understanding of the role of intelligence in policy-making. Although certainly true in the embryonic stage of the discipline, this tenet seems unconvincing. The efficacy of applying this view to present and future developments seems highly contentious.

1. Intelligence and the study of International Relations.

The conceptual framework in which intelligence is studied must continue evolving and adapting to the new conditions and possibilities of the early twenty-first century. As more intelligence and intelligence related material than ever before enters into the public domain, scholars of international relations must take greater account of it and study of the role of intelligence.

Intelligence has attracted limited interest from scholars of political philosophy and international relations theory. Michael Fry and Miles Hochstein observed in 1994 that, while intelligence studies had developed into an identifiable intellectual community, there was "a noticeable failure to integrate intelligence studies, even in a primitive way, into the mainstream of research in international relations"[6]. Therefore it could be argued that Intelligence Studies, although relatively new, has the same self-perpetuating quality [7] that contemporary history and international relations can boast.

Intelligence is all but absent, in the work of most international relations theorists and it does not figure in any key International relations theory debates between realist, liberal, institutionalism, constructivist and postmodernist approaches. It is interesting to note that, while there exists an implicit assumption that the study of intelligence falls within the realist field, contemporary neo-realist writers have largely ignored intelligence in their reflections.

---

[4] Andrew, Christopher: "Intelligence and international relations in the early Cold War", *Review of International Studies,* No. 24 (1998), pp. 321-330.
[5] Laqueur, Walter (1987): *World of Secrets: The Uses and Limits of Intelligence*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson Twentieth Century Book, p. 8.
[6] Fry, Michael and Hochstein, Miles: "Epistemic Communities: Intelligence Studies and International Relations", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 8, No. 3 (Jul. 1993), p. 14.
[7] Wark, Wesley K: "Introduction: The Study of Espionage: Past, Present, and Future?", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 8, No. 3 (July 1993), p. 5. Also see: Wark, Wesley (1994): *Espionage, Past, Present, Future.* London, Frank Cass.

The neglect of intelligence is apparent in areas such as Humanitarian intervention; even though it is clear that intelligence has various roles to play.

Intelligence studies can support a considerable number of diverse subject areas, and can be accurately described as multidisciplinary. Although it can be broadly couched in terms of politics and history, there is a great deal of cross-fertilization in Intelligence studies, with academics in sociology, law and ethics backgrounds, being well represented. Although in practice, appealing to a wider base of scholars is more important than enjoying a strong reputation, prestige will not be enough to sustain a developing subject. Accessibility and relevance will prove to be far more advantageous. Therefore, it can be convincingly argued that Intelligence Studies requires greater potency in the domain of academia as well as a significant appeal to a wider field of study.

In the 1980s, Stuart Farson[8] suggested that one could divide the study of intelligence into different national "Schools of thought", and he pointed in particular to an American tradition that said that the academic level tends to emphasize conceptual issues and organizational efficacy and that the British school is primarily historical. He also hinted that while there is no Canadian school of intelligence studies, it tends to be a hybrid; partly conceptual, partly historical, a combination that leads into its own direction quite different from either of the other two transatlantic origins.

2. A Starting Point. What is intelligence?

A satisfactory definition of intelligence remains a significant, if elusive, element of intelligence studies. For many scholars this lack of clarity is evidence of a field of study still in its infancy. Michael Warner supports this view, saying that "here is an opportunity: a compelling definition of intelligence might help us to devise a theory of intelligence and increase our understanding"[9].

It can be convincingly argued that despite the lack of a precise and agreed upon definition, the various theories of intelligence already formulated provide a theoretical framework to work with. The lack of consensus does not lessen the importance of the definitions already at hand. The problems that have arisen from most definitions are that they have failed to cover one or another element of intelligence. Therefore these definitions, although limited, do prove to be appropriate starting points for exploring the field of intelligence studies. The importance of eventually developing a consensus on a definition of intelligence cannot be lessened though. Lawrence T. Mitelman suggests that this is a crucial precedent and that "without some theoretical apparatus, it is immensely difficult to establish standards of relevance or levels of priority"[10].

Definitions carefully formulated by intelligence experts do exist, but all seem deficient in one respect or another. Whilst definitions from within the intelligence community are especially sound in an operational sense, for the development of theory they are sometimes

---

[8] Farson, Stuart: "Schools of thought: National perceptions of intelligence", *Conflict Quarterly,* Vol. 9, No. 2 (Spring 1989), p. 56.
[9] Warner, Michael: "Wanted: A Definition of Intelligence", *Studies in Intelligence,* Vol. 46, No. 3 (2002), p. 15.
[10] Mitelman, Lawrence T.: "Preface to a theory of intelligence", in http://www.cia.gov/csi/kent_csi/docs/ v18i3a03p_0004.htm.

unbalanced as 'each expert tends to view the term through the spectacles of his specialty'[11]. Although the intelligence community itself would acknowledge this fact, it remains clear that any consensus on a definition is damaging in an intellectual endeavour.

Intelligence services provide the basis for knowledge. They must also, at all times, be able to warn of impending crises and detect possible surprises, dangers, threats or attacks in advance. Professors Sherman Kent and Walter Laqueur[12] recognized that intelligence is both information and an organized system for collecting and exploiting it. It is both an activity and a product of that activity. In this sense as Kent pointed out *"Intelligence, as I am writing of it, is the knowledge which our highly placed civilians and military men must have to safeguard the national welfare".* Yet Michael Warner argues against this definition[13], expressing the view that intelligence is not simply information and that there is more to it.

The concept of secrecy is, as Abram Shulsky suggests, the main characteristic of intelligence[14]. Shulsky emphasizes the need for secrecy in intelligence activities and organizations. Indeed, he comes close to calling secrecy a constitutive element of intelligence work. We cannot forget that without some degree of secrecy, valuable intelligence and its methods can be jeopardized. This inherent secrecy creates difficult hurdles for those seeking to research intelligence. In intelligence, secret is a virtue as well as a necessity. The sources of information and the methods by which the information is gathered must remain unknown to the targets of intelligence. But in modern democracies intelligence services require public support and need to earn public trust to be completely functional. Hence, "Open discussion of intelligence questions is no longer a matter only for titillation or scandal, it is accepted as a normal part of the public debate concerning government activities generally"[15]

Intelligence seems little different from information, except for the fact that it is almost always secret. Mark Lowenthal suggest that "intelligence exists because governments seek to hide information from other governments, which in turn, seek to discover hidden information by means that they wish to keep secret"[16]. Although numerous aspects of intelligence are and deserve to be kept secret, this is not an impediment to describing basic roles, processes, functions, and issues. Intelligence is secret information regarding national security. Lowenthal provides an important approach to the definition of intelligence. "Intelligence refers to information that meets the stated or understood needs of policymakers and has been collected, refined, and narrowed to meet those needs"[17]

There are many ways to think about intelligence. Generally, intelligence services have three basic functions: *collection, analysis,* and intrinsic to the entire intelligence process counterintelligence. Another element of intelligence, *Covert action,* is increasingly disputed as an appropriate intelligence function in a modern democratic state. Intelligence can also be broken up into two categories: The concept and the methods of the term. The concept of intelligence has remained unchanged, understood as useful information for any leader. On the other hand the methods of intelligence (the way it is collected, analyzed, or disseminated) is constantly changing and developing.

---

[11] Laqueur, *op. cit.,* p. 8.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] Warner, *op. cit.,* p. 1.

[14] Shulsky, Abram N. and Schmitt, Gary J. (1993): *Silent Warfare,* Washington D.C., Brasseys´s.

[15] *Ibid.,* p. xi.

[16] Lowenthal, Mark (2003): *Intelligence from Secrets to Policy*. Washington D.C, A Division of Congresional Quarterly Inc., p. 1

[17]*Ibid.,* p. 2

It is important to note that the basic characteristics of intelligence have changed in recent years: There has been a massive increase in the amount of information available to be collected and analyzed in the world today. In particular there has been a growth of eight hundred percent in the volume of international communications. Not only is there a very real risk of information overload but once collected the analysis must be available faster and at more frequent intervals for policy makers to keep up with events. Furthermore the rate, at which private industry is investing and developing new communications technologies, is far ahead of similar efforts by governments. This inevitably may lead to problematic situations in which the targets of intelligence have access to secure and advanced technologies that circumvent the collection capabilities of states.

It is surprising how little academic attention has been devoted to the changes that technology and globalization have produced in the intelligence services. In this sense the first few years of the twenty-first century have witnessed a transformation in the role of secret intelligence in international affairs.

Technology was the key driver in the intelligence revolution of the twentieth century. The fast access to a global stockpile of knowledge assisted by increasingly sophisticated search engines, has transformed the characteristics of intelligence capabilities and methods. The technological revolution can of course be a double-edged weapon, as it affects the domain of intelligence as much as elsewhere. The introduction of advanced technologies into the public sphere will often create changes in the nature of society itself. This generates not only new expectations but new threats. In the information age "intelligence" has become less about penetrating secrets, and more a matter of separating useful information from the flood of open information. Avoiding information overload and separating the wheat from the chaff is crucial in providing "just in time" decision support to the intelligence consumer.

3. Popular Culture and Intelligence.

Popular culture has often played an important role in shaping both official and public attitudes towards intelligence. Fictional representations of international politics have played an important role in the conceptions of the public. "There is a demonstrable overlap between authentic intelligence operations and the way they have been portrayed in works of fiction"[18].

Intelligence Studies' greatest advantage is its increasingly relevant application to modern living. It provides a link between the intelligence community and the public which will be even more fundamental after the Cold War. As David Gries has pointed out, "Intelligence is starting to acquire a new look"[19]. Intelligence has always been a fascinating subject for film-makers and audiences, although as a U.S intelligence officer has pointed out: "Spy movies are to real life intelligence work what Donald Duck movies are to understanding the Environment"[20]. By far the most effective manner of accomplishing the task of public education is by letting the public benefit directly from the products of intelligence, its information and assessments. In addition to a favourable public attitude towards intelligence,

---

[18] West, Nigel: "Fiction Faction and Intelligence", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 19, No. 2 (Summer 2004), pp. 275-289.
[19] Gries, David: "A new look for Intelligence", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 10, No. 1 (January 1995), p. 171.
[20] Stempel, John and Pringle, Robert: "Intelligence and the cinema", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 15, No. 1, p. 115.

which is both desirable and needed in democracies, public collaboration is also important. In fact the prerequisite for making democratic oversight work is an intimate knowledge of the purpose, role, functions, and missions of intelligence services. Such knowledge and understanding is also needed for making intelligence smarter and for any reform of intelligence services commensurate with democratic norms and standards.

In many cases, Institution-based analysis ignores the role that intelligence plays in the broader social and political context. The effects of intelligence failures often stretch beyond governments; they influence public opinion and force governments to react through pressure from below[21]. In such circumstances public opinion will often speculate with conspiracy theories due to the inherent secrecy surrounding intelligence activities. It is here that Intelligence Studies can play an important role in educating society and correcting such common misunderstandings[22].

The contentious issue of intelligence accountability is very closely associated with the public perception of intelligence. Ethical concerns regarding civil liberties and intelligence collection are important issues, in addition to the fact that huge intelligence budgets such as that of the U.S. need stringent oversight (the US intelligence budget amounted to more than 27 billion dollars[23] in 1997, around 35 billion dollars after September 11, and is now currently around $40 billion[24]).

4. Is secrecy the main characteristic of intelligence and the main limitation of intelligence studies?[25]

As Bruce Berkowitz suggests "intelligence is not a 'necessary evil' that democracies must engage in. Intelligence policies are not fundamentally different from other kinds of policies, and intelligence operations are not inherently different from other kinds of operations democracies carry out"[26]. Nowadays more than ever, intelligence is not only about secrets. Secrecy is an important element of intelligence, but as Sherman Kent has indicated, intelligence is about information and knowledge that is vital to national survival[27].

Though some grade of secrecy is necessary to protect sources, in this profession there are a complex code of integrity in the pursuit of knowledge; at the same time, a very ambiguous and complex relationship exists that limits the disclosure of older intelligence material[28].

---

[21] Díaz Matey, Gustavo. "Methodological Approaches to the concept of the Intelligence Failure", *UNISCI Discussion Papers,* No. 7 (January 2005), in http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/Gustavo.pdf.

[22] Goldberg, Robert Alan: "Who profited the crime?: Intelligence failure, conspiracy theories and the case of September 11", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 19, No. 2 (Summer 2004), pp. 249-261.

[23] Weiner, Tim: "Voluntarily, CIA Director Reveals Intelligence Budget", *New York Times,* 21 March 1998, p. A11.

[24] Priest, Dana: **"**CIA Moves to Second Fiddle in Intelligence Work", *Washington Post,* 27 February 2005, p. A09, in http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A56278-2005Feb26.html?sub=AR. Also see Nicola, Thomas J.: "9/11 Commission Recommendations: Intelligence Budget". CRS Report for Congress, 27 September 2004, in http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL32609.pdf.

[25] Thomas Patrick, Carroll, "The case against intelligence openness", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 559. Also see: Moynian, Daniel Patrick (1998): *Secrecy the American experience.* London, Yale University Press, p. 154.

[26] http://www-hoover.stanford.edu/publications/digest/031/berkowitz.html.

[27] Kent, Sherman (1949): *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, p. vii.

[28] Pfaltzgraff Robert and Milberg, Warren (1981): *Intelligence Policy and National Security* London, Macmillan.

However, nowadays it is fundamental to discover the correct relationship between intelligence services and democracy, which in many cases is incompatible. In democratic countries the free flow of information is the rule, and its denial, by means of classification, the exception, but this view is probably the exception rather than the rule, as far as history goes. As Abram N. Shulsky points out in *Silent Warfare* "Until recently, the more common tradition has been that of governmental secrecy, broken when the government itself sees some advantage in disclosing information"[29]. However, to obtain information that others would deny or keep secret, the government must rely on intelligence services that require capabilities and authorities which are unavailable to other government agencies. Intelligence services must not only use intrusive techniques, but must also have the legal power for their use. What is more, they have to do much of their collection and analysis in secret.

Thus, secrecy is an invaluable resource. The need for secrecy means that the activities and performance of intelligence services cannot be as transparent as those of other government bodies, nor can they be subject to the same degree of public scrutiny and debate. Publishing information on the allocation of resources or the successes of intelligence services would risk revealing their capabilities and targets and, in so doing, might seriously compromise their effectiveness. Thus, for intelligence services to carry out their business effectively there are some sensitive domains of activities which have to be and to remain secret.

After the Cold war it was not clear what the modern threats were, and what information really needed to be protected. International relations in peacetime consists partly of threats: "Each state exists in a sense, at the core of a whole universe of threats… They vary enormously in range and intensity, pose risks which cannot be assessed accurately, and depend on probabilities which cannot be calculated"[30]so it will be fundamental to identify the proper range of threats for a country to know what information will be necessary for national security. Gregory Treverton pointed out that "Intelligence is no longer in the secrets business but rather in the information business"[31]

At the same time, the doctrine of efficiency will remain a concern for the intelligence community. When writing on the function of intelligence, Kahn cites O'Brien's principle that 'Intelligence optimizes one's resources'[32].In this sense Intelligence maximizes other defence capabilities. An extension of the idea introduced by Harry Hinsley who suggested that ULTRA intelligence shortened "World War II by several years"[33]. Quality case studies such as Hinsley's assessment of ULTRA allow the development of revisionist theories. This marks an important level in the evolution of a subject as it demonstrates another aspect of self-perpetuation.

---

[29] Shulsky and Schmitt, *op. cit.,* p. 101.

[30] Buzan, Barry (1983): *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations.* Brighton, Wheatsheaf, pp. 88-89.

[31]Treverton, Gregory (2001): *Reshaping National Intelligence for an Age of Information*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. xii.

[32] Kahn, *op. cit.,* p. 87.

[33] Hinsley, F. H.: "The Counterfactual History of No Ultra", *Cryptology,* Vol. 20, No. 4 (October 1996), pp. 308-324. And: Hinsley, F. H. (1993): *British Intelligence in the Second World War,* abridged version. New York, Cambridge University Press / London, HMSO, p. 217. Also see: http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/Research/Security/Historical/hinsley.html.

5. The open source revolution (OSINT).

Open-source information has long been collected and analysed by intelligence organizations to complement information gathered on a clandestine basis for reasons of national security. This has risen to prominence as a result of several factors: the growth of the Internet and geopolitical changes. Horizontal knowledge networks have developed and undermined existing approaches that privilege vertical integration, compartmentalization (stove-pipes) and classification. As an example, 80% of all US intelligence is derived from open sources. Robert Steele believes that "OSINT can serve as a foundation for reinventing and reorienting the clandestine and technical disciplines."[34] OSINT is distinct from academic, business or journalistic research in that it represents the application of the proven process of national intelligence to a global diversity of sources, with the intent of producing *tailored* intelligence for the policy-maker or the military commander.

OSINT is changing the traditional conception of intelligence; by 2015 most small or medium sized states will be able to acquire intelligence from a diverse range of commercial satellites. This development will progressively lead to the importance of the private sector in intelligence. The technological revolution in general and OSINT in particular are multiplying the competition in intelligence production. There are now more actors in intelligence, which has consequently led to the concept of an "intelligence factory".[35]

OSINT can sometimes provide key information more quickly and efficiently than classified capabilities because it relies more on expertise than already resides in a private or an academic sector. Open-source databases can also be researched quickly to check if information already exists in the public domain, thus potentially eliminating the need to declassify unnecessary information. In this respect, open sources can provide important political, economic and military context for initial orientation to a specific crisis. Country studies, for example, can provide indications of national intentions or cultural attitudes. The human expert is often the most efficient and the most inexpensive means of creating new open source intelligence that is responsive to a specific requirement from the commander or his staff.

Likewise OSINT presents some problems. In some cases, open sources information contains inaccuracies, biased perspectives, irrelevant data or even disinformation. The information that came from open sources took longer to produce, required validation, and failed to cover many key aspects of the situation important to policy-makers. In open societies, numerous open sources will be available with data on political, military and economic affairs, in closed societies, however, much less information is available, and the print and broadcast media will be subject to state control and propaganda. But that is not all; an important element of successful OSINT is to know where to look. It means for example that 80% of the information needed to create OSINT useful to the US DoD is not on line, not in English and not available in the USA.

The expansion of Internet as a veritable mine of open sources has exacerbated the problem of overload. Although much invaluable material is available on the Internet, there is also abundance of worthless data. Information overload both swamps the end-user with worthless

---

[34] Steele, Robert David: "Open Source Intelligence: What is it?", in http://www.oss.net/MILITARY. "Strategic Assessment 1996: Instrument of US Power", pp. 66.

[35] Understood as, the massive production of intelligence in the cold war; primarily focused in the Soviet Union. However today intelligence must be regulate by budgets and have to justify their operations to the congress in democratic countries. See Dupont, Alan: "Intelligence for the Twenty-First Century, *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 18, No. 4 (Winter 2003), p. 26.

and repetitive information as well as wasting valuable time and raising costs. However large an assessment staff a given agency may have, it must deal with more and more varied data than it can possibly handle. As the world and governments become more complex and interdependent, more data becomes relevant to decision-making. Simultaneously, the volume of information available increases at an even faster rate. Hence intelligence analysis is increasingly a process of selecting a tiny number of relevant facts out of the quasi infinite material available. Once this has been done the information must then be placed into context and the appropriate policy makers informed quickly enough so that relevancy is not lost.

The conclusion on OSINT is clear: an abundance of open sources is available today, but open sources will rarely provide the complete answer. The expansion of the Internet has exacerbated the problem of information overload. Governments do not support intelligence services just to conduct academic research. There is always something else in their work. Secrecy remains a fundamental part of the intelligence community.

In any event, it is clear that open sources do provide a substantial share of the information used in intelligence analysis. With more and more information becoming available by electronic means, its use in intelligence analysis can only grow. Indeed, knowing what is publicly available enables producers and collectors of intelligence to better focus their efforts on that which is not. But in many countries an adequate computer infrastructure to tie intelligence analysts into open source information does not appear to exist.

6. Declassification[36]

Policies on accountability and oversight have been accompanied by greater transparency in Western government and intelligence services[37]. Historians should be encouraged that this liberalization will allow them to access more declassified materials. Securing documentary evidence is an important aspect in the development of this subject.

In this sense the opportunity to explore new and varied research areas is a significant benefit consistent with the declassification of different archives after the Cold War. The work of Ian Nish[38] and J. M. Chapman[39] on Japanese intelligence emphasises this point. Although there are linguistic difficulties and the usual problem of documentation is exacerbated by the burning of military documents in 1945, great progress has been achieved and there is optimism that even more will be possible. The opening of the Stasi archives provides a great deal of research material[40], as does the declassification of KGB files and those of the East European states.

---

[36] Thornton, Richard: "The Unfulfilled Promise of Declassification", *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence,* Vol. 11, No. 4 (Winter 1998-1999).
[37] Cohen, Edmund: "The CIA and the Historical Declassification of History Programs", *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence,* Vol. 12, No. 3 (Fall 1999).
[38] Nish, I. H.: "Japanese intelligence and the approach of the Russo-Japanese war", in Andrew, C. and Dilks, D. (eds.) (1984): *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century.* London, Macmillan, pp. 127-144.
[39] Chapman, John W. M.: "Tricycle Recycled: Collaboration among the Secret Intelligence Services of the Axis States, 1940-41", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 7, No. 3 (July 1992), pp. 268-299, in http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/is/IS475.pdf.
[40] Andrew, *op. cit.,* p. 324.

The Gaddis-Watt[41] debate was primarily concerned with this issue and it remains open to conjecture. Although the release of CIA files on the Cuban Missile Crisis would seem to suggest that Gaddis was over-pessimistic in his assessment of the limitations of research, his view still commands attention. There is a proliferation of different arguments to which varying degrees of importance must be attributed, in order to analyze to what extent Intelligence Studies is limited.

K.G. Robertson and Peter Gill have espoused some cynical views on the British process of declassification and oversight. Robertson supposed that intelligence declassification 'is more a process of risk management than democratization'[42]. He considered legislation such as the 1994 Intelligence Services Act to be an attempt 'to prevent anything more drastic being imposed as a result of scandal, rulings of the European Court or by a change of government'[43]. Robertson's assertions can be supported by the convincing argument of Peter Gill, who introduces the concept of 'burying'[44]. He suggested that British information policy has seen a distinct 'shift from a defensive to an offensive strategy'[45]. Burying comprises a part of this strategy, it is 'a technique whereby agencies might attempt to overload outside inquiries, giving them large amounts of information much of which might by entirely irrelevant'[46]. These theories resonate with the early 90s reign of the 'spin doctor' and would certainly impede the study of the British archives. However the more open American system of declassification seems to be beset by the same difficulties.

Zachary Karabell and Timothy Naftali provide some interesting views focused on the concept of expectation regarding CIA archives, they fear 'there may be a tendency to expect too much and to place too much weight on the information they do or do not provide'[47]. This is a valid point but it is assumed that historians accept that there will always be documentary gaps and that speculating on those gaps would be distorting their work and damaging their field. Karabell and Naftali frame declassification as being more official confirmation rather than new revelations. This idea can be supported by John Ferris who wrote that, 'given Washington's rule of politics by publicity, the more widely a document is circulated, the more likely it is to be disclosed'[48].

J. Kenneth McDonald has a more positive view, he cites DCI Robert Gates who stated in 1992, that a new CIA Historical Review Program would 'have a bias toward declassification'[49]. This optimism is contrary to Karabell and Naftali's citation of the CIA's Historical Review Board guidelines[50]. However, McDonald may be more accurate due to his background. His point of view on the document release itself is also more positive, 'the CIA's

[41] Gaddis, John Lewis (1992): *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, And Provocations.* New York, Oxford University Press.

[42] Robertson, Kenneth G. (1987): *The Politics of Secret Intelligence: British and American Approaches to Intelligence.* Basingstoke, Macmillan, p. 144.

[43] *Ibid.,* p. 266.

[44] Gill, Peter: "Reasserting control, recent changes in the oversight of the UK Intelligence community", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 11, No. 2 (April 1996), p. 315. See also Gill, Peter (1993): *Policing Politics: Security Intelligence and the Liberal Democratic State.* London, Frank Cass, p. 312.

[45] *Ibid.,* p. 314.

[46] *Ibid.,* p. 316.

29. Karabell, Zachary and Naftali, Timothy: "History Declassified: The Perils and Promise of CIA Documents" and McDonald, Kenneth J: "Commentary on 'History Declassified'", *Diplomatic History,* Vol. 18, No. 4 (1994). Also see: http://whitehousetapes.org/pages/res_jfk.htm, p. 626.

[48] Ferris, John: "Coming In from the Cold War: The Historiography of American Intelligence, 1945-1990", *Diplomatic History,* Vol. 19, No. 1 (Winter 1995), pp. 87-115, 91.

[49] McDonald, *op. cit.,* p. 629. See also: http://www.cia.gov/csi/bulletin/csi6.htm.

[50] Karabell and Naftali, *op. cit.,* p. 621.

new covert action documentation will do more than fill a few gaps or confirm earlier conjecture from fragmentary evidence'[51]. These conflicting and interrelated theories show primarily, that at present the slow process of declassification inhibits further study. These arguments also represent a microcosm of an extremely vibrant subject. In a perverse way, policy that is constricting further research is simultaneously creating another area of discourse and analysis. Furthermore, these arguments purport a great deal of potential for improvement, in this sense declassification and Intelligence Studies are in an advantageous position.

If it is accepted that America and the United Kingdom have strong intelligence potential, this implies that a tightening of declassification policies must have an even greater potential. Jonathan Haslam puts forth the argument that the recent opening of the Russian archives will provide 'sufficient information to provoke further debate on the origins and evolution of the Cold War'[52]. Odd Arne Westad would concur, (he suggests that as Intelligence Studies develops) historians will have to travel to Russia and Eastern Europe to re-evaluate Soviet policy and get a more balanced impression of the West[53]. The opportunity to research new areas is an advantage that very few well-established disciplines can legitimately offer.

There are many influential historians who offer more short-term solutions to problems of documentation. In addition to Watt, Wesley Wark advances some poignant views on questions of further development, in his essay "Communication in Never-Never Land? The British Archives on Intelligence"[54]. After highlighting the well-known pitfalls and absurdities of the declassification system, Wark suggests some alternative research sources. He cites collections of private papers and memoirs including Admiral Hugh Sinclair[55]. However, he acknowledges that 'sooner or later the archival sources will be exhausted or yield diminishing returns'[56]. He refers to expansion of definitions, to include a broader scope of resources available and to focus more on intelligence policy and a wider intelligence community[57]. This again can be seen as an advantage as it draws Intelligence Studies closer to international relations and broadens its base of subject matter.

Evidently, access to sources is an important limitation to be considered, but it is less important than the self-inflicted damage caused by bad literature and conspiracy theory. Two key issues lie at the heart of this limitation. Firstly, popular culture has embraced the spy novel and conspiracy theory genre and in so doing, made the process of integration more challenging for the Intelligence Studies community. This limitation has been apparent throughout the infancy of the subject.

In recent years J. C. Masterman's *The Double-Cross System* significantly added to the spy fiction genre and helped play down Cold War defections. Secondly, the assumption that there is a 'smoking gun' somewhere in intelligence archives ultimately reinforces misconceptions. The JFK assassination provides a succinct example, gaps in records are seen as stonewalling, 'it is assumed that if documents are being withheld, they must contain sensitive information,

---

[51] McDonald, *op. cit.,* p. 633.
[52] Haslam, Jonathan: "Russian Archival Revelations and Our Understanding of the Cold War", *Diplomatic History,* Vol. 21, No. 2 (Spring 1997), p. 217.
[53] Westad, Odd Arne (2000): *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretation, and Theory.* London / Portland, Frank Cass, p. 7.
[54] Wark, Wesley K: "In Never-Never Land? The British Archives on Intelligence", *Historical Journal,* Vol. 35, No. 1 (1992), pp. 195-203.
[55] *Ibid.,* p. 200.
[56] *Ibid.,* p. 201.
[57] *Ibid.,* pp. 201-202.

and that if the information is sensitive, it is probably incriminating'[58]. The only plausible counter-argument is the opinion that as long as bad literature makes intelligence accessible to more people it reinforces intelligence in terms of relevance. However, in an academic sense this argument is somewhat self-defeating and would concur that historians do not regard Intelligence Studies as prestigious.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)[59], which was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 1966, established public access to government information in the United States. Information not exempted from public disclosure was deemed available to virtually anyone regardless of nationality. Laws were passed requiring that U.S. government agencies release their records to the public on request. The act provides for court review of agency refusals to furnish identifiable records. A vast bulk of information controlled by the federal government was made available under the act, but many exceptions are applied. These include classified national defence and foreign policy information, privileged or confidential trade and financial information, internal personnel records and documents, information concerning certain law enforcement matters, and geological and geophysical research information concerning wells.

While 9/11 was the presumed catalyst for the revamped FOIA guidelines, the policy change was actually in keeping with Bush's historical aversion to the release of government papers. In this sense under the Bush administration, the information available has been insignificant[60], including many aspects of National Security. Following the September 11th terrorist attacks, the Bush Administration passed the Oct. 12.2001 Directive to Federal agencies to purge a wide array of potentially sensitive data from their Web sites a decree that, for a time, removed the entire online presence of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and which ultimately resulted in hundreds of thousands of pages being deleted from sites maintained by the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Archives and Records Administration, and other federal entities.

On March 25, 2003, President Bush signed an order that postponed, by three years, the release of millions of twenty-five-year-old documents slated for automatic declassification the following month. What's more, Executive Order 13292, which amended a Clinton Administration order, granted FOIA officers wider powers to reclassify information that had already been declassified and further eliminated a provision that instructed them not to classify information if there was "significant doubt" about the need to do so.

And there was the 'Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act' of 2001, better known by its acronym: USA PATRIOT ACT, decreased the ability of American citizens to obtain information about their government and, at the same time, gave the government the means to pry into the personal lives of those same citizens[61]. In essence, the Patriot Act authorized a host of new law-enforcement and intelligence-gathering provisions sought by Attorney General John Ashcroft and the Bush Administration. For example, the Act includes changes to the laws regulating surveillance, making it easier for the government to surreptitiously gather information about

---

[58] Karabell and Naftali, *op. cit.,* p. 621.
[59] http://www.foia.cia.gov.
[60] Smith, R. Jeffrey: *Washington Post,* 1 March 2005, p. A02.
[61] Milchen, Jeff: "Patriot Act II Bush Administration Escalates Its War on Americans", *Freedom Pacific News Services,* 11 February 2003, in http://news.pacificnews.org/news.

individuals[62]. In November, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13233, "Further Implementation of the Presidential Records Act," to restrict access to historical presidential papers. Notwithstanding of the measures after the 9/11, the cuts in the freedom of information under Bush Administration are a step back to the correct understanding of the requirements of secrecy in a democratic society to protect the National Security, and not to increase the power of the state.

FOIA presents serious problems for its application. If it is true that "anyone" can apply for a FOIA, the waiting time is substantial, as any discretionary decision to disclose information protected under the FOIA should be made only after full and deliberate consideration of the institutional, commercial, and personal privacy interests that could be implicated by disclosure of the information.

But we cannot forget that the process is very expensive, "The Justice Department says a group that wants to see secret documents about the detention of people jailed after the Sept. 11 attacks first must pay nearly $373,000 to cover the cost of searching for the information"[63].The advance payment doesn't guarantee anything found will be released, and in many cases the trouble is not worth it.

Conclusion

As Intelligence deals with information it has been greatly affected by the "information age". The effects of these changes show in several different ways. At one level, they suggest new ways in which information can be more rapidly circulated and used, but not only for the government; society has also been affected by increasing information availability.

In September 2002 Tony Blair's government issued a now–celebrated 55 page dossier on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, the first published official document based on detailed Joint Intelligence committee (JIC) assessments. Tony Blair said in his introduction that "It is unprecedented for the government to publish this kind of document"[64].Tony Blair finally rested the traditional taboo that the British government does not mention their intelligence services. Officially the secret services did not even exist. We can argue that after September 11 the threats posed by Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein had succeeded in transforming British government policy on the public use of intelligence. Today intelligence is more deeply and visibly embedded in the conduct of international relations than ever, over a whole range of issues from counter-terrorism to UN peacekeeping.

The advantages of Intelligence Studies as a relatively new field of intellectual enquiry far outweigh the limitations. The opportunity to break new ground, the multi-disciplinary quality of the field gives a distinct advantage over many academic subjects. Whilst some historians would argue against the full inclusion of the Intelligence Studies community into the wider spheres of international relations and contemporary history, their arguments are likely to become more tenuous over time. The quality of intelligence literature of the last fifty years has made it starkly apparent that the decision making process and intelligence have an

---

[62]Schulhofer, Stephen (2002): *The Enemy Within: A Century Foundation Report.* New York, The Century Foundation Press, p. 1.
[63] "U.S demands pay for records search", *Chicago Tribune,* 1 February 2005, in http://www.chicagotribune.com.
[64] *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government.* London, The Stationery Office, 24 September 2002.

interconnected relationship. Considering this point of view, it would not be implausible to suggest that the more established historical fields would significantly benefit from the inclusion of Intelligence Studies.

A lack of archival resources is often invoked as being the chief obstacle to research in intelligence. No doubt, compared to other subject areas of international relations, the available files from intelligence organisations amount to no more than a sad trickle. However, this lack of intelligence sources is nothing unusual. Except for the CIA and a few others, intelligence organisations all over the world refuse to declassify their files. Nor should this obstruction on their part be a reason for reusing to ask research questions and ignoring other source materials. In this sense the lack of source material, especially outside of the United Kingdom and America, is a limitation which must be in place, as secrecy is a fundamental component of intelligence. However, the volume of material will increase as holding limits expire. The technological developments of microfilms[65], electronic storage, the Internet and reforms such as the Freedom of Information Act will eventually allow information to flow more effectively, despite the declassification practices of the Bush administration being a step backwards. These days, definitions can be expanded creating more potential sources and documentary evidence. However the single biggest threat to the progression of the field remains the multitude of bad literature and conspiracy in relation to the relative paucity of high quality, reliable work. At present, this tenet may be precluding further development and academic acknowledgement. However, a positive stance must be taken on this point, as an increasingly relevant and visible facet of current affairs.

The progress over the declassification archives has different advantages, as the confirmation of current hypothesis in history and international affairs. In this sense declassification is based upon what those declassifying know and what they perceive in the documents affecting the present situation. In fact, those declassifying may change their judgement over the course of time based upon perceived threats or upon new information received, developing with it current hypothesis or bringing new ones.

Nonetheless, researchers who choose current topics in sensitive areas are likely to be working with incomplete records[66]. For intelligence topics, the period of sensitivity of records is long, and it may be a number of decades before a complete and accurate picture of events may be expected to come to light, provided that accurate records were ever kept. As we have seen after 9/11 the declassification of information has taken a step back but we cannot forget that the release of information is independent of what is in the public realm from other sources and it is independent of the individual making the request. Once released, information is available to anyone for whatever purpose. Put in post-11 September terms, once information is released it is available to anyone, including potential terrorists.

On the other hand open sources bring the opportunity to develop intelligence studies as a subfield of international affairs. After all, scholars and researchers routinely work on questions where sources are hard to find. Furthermore, any student of contemporary history of politics knows that government files are far from being the only sources of value to the researcher. Autobiographies and published diaries of intelligence officials, as well as masses of press accounts, parliamentary documents and criminal court records are available today, which deserve careful study for those who are interested in the field of intelligence. The development

---

[65] Wark, Wesley K.: "Introduction: The Study of Espionage: Past, Present, and Future?", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 8, No. 3 (July 1993), p. 2.
[66] Krieger, Wolfgang: "German Intelligence History: A field in search of scholars", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 19, No. 2 (Summer 2004), pp. 185-198.

of intelligence studies is a question of creating an academic culture for intelligence as a fundamental part of the modern state machinery.

Traditionally the study of intelligence was a practice of after actions reports. For further development it will be fundamental that intelligence studies takes a longer view, and looks for deeper patterns. Definitions of intelligence cannot be appreciated without a sense of the past; that sense of the past must call attention both to things that must be overcome, and aspects of established intelligence practice that must be preserved or acknowledge as essential elements of continuity.

After 9/11 under the Bush administration "Public Intelligence"[67], as Wesley Wark pointed out, has emerged in the context of an unprecedented and open-ended war on terrorism. Perhaps the political and strategic conditions that have given rise to it will disappear, and intelligence will return to the relative safety of its traditional doctrine of secrecy and its traditional role as a discrete provider of special information to government decision-makers. Yet in the Twenty–first century intelligence has to find its place in a democratic system, and the concept of secrecy has to be justified for the protection of national security, but it will be fundamental not only to develop an appropriate definition of intelligence under a democratic system but a proper definition of the national threats for a specific country. We can never forget that intelligence is in the business of information rather than secrecy alone.

The Open Source Revolution has pervaded every aspect of society; from theology to entertainment. This discussion has highlighted the ways in which the Internet is both revolutionising the threats that Intelligence Services face and producing new methods (and new angles on traditional methods) of conducting intelligence operations. This revolution is compelling Intelligence Services to update and transform their tradecraft, thinking and attitudes. OSINT does not represent an opportunity only for the intelligence services itself, but for the studies on intelligence within international affairs as a whole. Many of the applications of the Internet serve a dual purpose as both a threat to the security of Intelligence Agencies and a potential means of intelligence gathering. Open Source collection is being revolutionised by the Internet. In essence, the Internet has impacted on almost all areas of intelligence tradecraft and on intelligence studies. From the perspective of Intelligence, the Internet is set to become of as much importance as the end of the Cold War. New methods, thinking and attitudes are needed in order to accomplish the revolution in intelligence required to deal with this new factor.

Now more than ever, Intelligence Studies has the opportunity to take its place as a research area outside the realm of intelligence services and government commissions. It deserves to be studied deeply to achieve not only a better understanding of the functions of the most secret parts of government, but also as means to educating the citizens of a country; as intelligence services will always be an element of governments in democratic societies.

---

[67] Wark, Wesley: "Learning to live with Intelligence", *Intelligence and National Security,* Vol. 18, No. 4 (2003).