

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Coming in from the Cold War:

The Historiography of American Intelligence, 1945–1990

A new branch of history has arisen: the study of intelligence. Not that the topic has ever been ignored. In most decades of this century, some scholars referred to intelligence, their works augmented by a few semi-official accounts and a good many bad books.¹ Diplomatic and military historians often discussed espionage and used it for purposes of evidence or explanation. In *Russia and the Balkans, 1870–1880* (1937), for example, B. H. Sumner integrated intelligence and diplomacy as well as any subsequent writer.² Meanwhile, beginning in the later nineteenth century, the genre of spy fiction began to flourish. Old-hands-turned-hacks like Somerset Maugham, Ian Fleming, and E. Howard Hunt shaped that genre and general views about espionage: They publicized the secret services.³

The number of works, scholarly and popular, that referred to intelligence began to rise around 1960; in the early 1970s began a flood. The decision of Her Majesty's Government to release some—not all—of its records about "Ultra" during the Second World War transformed public attitudes as "Magic" never had. So, too, did the era of angst in the United States that culminated in the Watergate scandal. The secret world suddenly seemed central to the real world. It also became accessible to the public. Much

1. The base of writing is so small and, relatively speaking, so many new works are produced each year, that bibliographies or review essays in this field, even good ones, have a short shelf life. At present, the most useful of the critical bibliographies is Neal H. Peterson, *American Intelligence, 1775–1990: A Bibliographical Guide* (Claremont, CA, 1992). Two older critical bibliographies, George C. Constantinides, *Intelligence and Espionage: An Analytical Bibliography* (Boulder, 1983), and Walter Pforzheimer, *Bibliography of Intelligence Literature: A Critical and Annotated Bibliography of Open-Source Literature*, 8th ed. (Washington, 1985), offer intelligent comments on the literature up to the mid-1980s and are particularly useful about memoirs. Neither was in a position to cover the recent academic literature, whether on the period before or after 1945. The most useful review essays on American intelligence since 1945 are Kenneth G. Robertson, "The Study of Intelligence in the United States," in *Comparing Foreign Intelligence: The U.S., the USSR, the U.K. & the Third World*, ed. Roy Godson (Washington, 1988), 7–42; and Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, "Introduction: The Stirrings of a New Revisionism?" in *North American Spies: New Revisionist Essays*, ed. Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones and Andrew Lownie (Lawrence, KS, 1991), 1–30.

2. B. H. Sumner, *Russia and the Balkans, 1870–1880* (London, 1937).

3. This area has received much attention from scholars. A good introduction is Wesley K. Wark, ed., "Spy Fiction, Spy Films and Real Intelligence," special issue of *Intelligence and National Security* 5 (October 1990). Perhaps the best account to date is Keith Neilson, "Tsars and Commissars: W. Somerset Maugham, 'Ashenden' and Images of Russia in British Adventure Fiction, 1890–1930," *The Canadian Journal of History* 27 (December 1992): 475–500.

material about contemporary American intelligence was released through congressional committees, while the number of journalists interested in the field and old hands willing to speak about their careers increased. Facts sensational (that the Western Allies had read German codes during the Second World War), sinister (that the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] had attempted to assassinate Fidel Castro), and silly (the ways in which it had tried to do so) made secret intelligence a public obsession. Spying came to rival money, sex, and war as a topic in the popular market for history. All of this has produced a large literature, and an odd one.

There can be no conventional review of the writings on American intelligence since 1945 because there are no conventional writings to review. They begin in a literature of leaks, move toward works of fantasy and studies in paranoia, and culminate in articles as unreadable as the most demanding scholar could wish. On one side, a body of critical writers, many of them diplomats, has attacked American intelligence. As a retired junior member of the State Department wrote in 1971,

In something akin to Masonic ritual, top policy makers passively participate in the daily intelligence briefing, delivered with an aura of mystery and importance by little men with locked black bags or in more relaxed fashion by horn-rimmed senior officers with impressive maps, charts and photos. The romance of secrecy has a seductive intellectual appeal, perhaps even a narcotic effect, on the minds of many otherwise level-headed statesmen.

Reginald Hibbert, a more senior British diplomat, held that readers of intelligence ran the danger of "becoming absorbed into a culture of secrecy, a culture where secrecy comes to be confused with truth."⁴ Other writers have demonized American intelligence, assisted by a marvelously paranoid strain in popular entertainment.⁵ On the opposite wing, more conservative writers and advocacy groups, often linked to retired intelligence officers, have counterattacked with seminars, specialist periodicals, and summer schools. The center of the field is held primarily by journalists, some of whom have been little more than mouthpieces or have produced works that marry fistfuls of fact to shiploads of speculation. Others—especially, but not exclusively, John Barron, Duncan Campbell, Seymour Hersh, Thomas

4. John Franklin Campbell, *The Foreign Affairs Fudge Factory* (New York, 1971), 157; Reginald Hibbert, "Intelligence and Policy," *Intelligence and National Security* 5 (January 1990): 120, 125.

5. Representative examples of the critical literature, which often are also good works in themselves, include Morton H. Halperin, Jerry J. Berman, Robert L. Borosage, and Christine M. Marwick, *The Lawless State: The Crimes of the U.S. Intelligence Agencies* (New York, 1976); Leslie Cockburn, *Out of Control: The Story of the Reagan Administration's Secret War in Nicaragua, the Illegal Arms Pipeline, and the Contra Drug Connection* (New York, 1987); Jonathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott, and Jane Hunter, *The Iran-Contra Connection: Secret Teams and Covert Operations in the Reagan Era* (Boston, 1987); and William Blum, *The CIA: A Forgotten History: US Global Interventions since World War 2* (London, 1986).

Powers, Tom Mangold, and David Wise—have published excellent accounts.⁶ This change of attitudes was reflected in the mirror of academe. By 1990, courses on intelligence were taught at hundreds of universities throughout North America while a few dozen scholars had become serious specialists in the topic. An academic literature also emerged—a multidisciplinary literature, not merely the product of historians. The many political scientists who entered the field through concern with issues like the Cold War, strategic surprise, and deterrence theory have added no less than historians to our understanding of the effect of intelligence on American policy since 1945. The brief account that best defines the place of intelligence in the structure of American strategic decision making between 1945 and 1975 remains Richard Betts's *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*.⁷ The academic study of intelligence is marked by an unusually high integration of the topics and techniques of two disciplines, political science and history (more specifically, strategic studies and military history): The largest groups in the field are American-trained political scientists and British-trained historians. Although many academic periodicals have offered space for articles in the field over the past fifteen years, since 1986 *Intelligence and National Security* has dominated the area, augmented by such other specialist serials as *Cryptologia* and *The International Journal of Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence*. Several publishers currently are producing works or monograph series in the field, most notably Frank Cass but also the Cornell University Press, Edinburgh University Press, the University Press of Kansas, and the Pennsylvania State University Press.

This academic work has been limited in breadth and depth, and professional subgroups have incorporated it in entirely different ways. Michael Fry and Miles Hochstein have recently complained of the “remarkable and regrettable . . . failure to integrate intelligence studies, even in a primitive way, into the mainstreams of research in international relations.”⁸ Nor is the situation notably better with international history. In particular, as eminent scholars like John Lewis Gaddis and D. Cameron Watt have emphasized, intelligence has not been integrated into the study of the Cold War.⁹ But before scholars rush to fill this gap, they might note one fact. It has not proven easy to incorporate intelligence into any field of history.

6. John Barron, *KGB: The Secret Work of Soviet Secret Agents* (New York, 1974); idem, *KGB Today: The Hidden Hand* (New York, 1983); idem, *Breaking the Ring* (Boston, 1987); Duncan Campbell, *The Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier: American Military Power in Britain* (London, 1984). Other works will be cited in the text below.

7. Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises* (Cambridge, MA, 1977).

8. Michael G. Fry and Miles Hochstein, “Epistemic Communities: Intelligence Studies and International Relations,” in “Espionage: Past, Present, Future?” ed. Wesley K. Wark, special issue of *Intelligence and National Security* 8 (July 1993): 14–15.

9. John Lewis Gaddis, “Intelligence, Espionage, and Cold War Origins,” *Diplomatic History* 13 (Spring 1989): 191–212; D. Cameron Watt, “Intelligence and the Historian: A Comment on John Gaddis’s ‘Intelligence, Espionage, and Cold War Origins,’” *ibid.* 14 (Spring 1990): 199–204.

Consider the most mature part of the discipline. The study of military intelligence during the Second World War rests on a large and fairly complete documentary base in the public domain and on a long and lively debate between specialists. The lessons it teaches are balance, patience, and precision. In hindsight, even the best of the first-generation works in the field—equivalent in quality to all but the very best of the literature about American intelligence since 1945—seriously overestimated the significance of their topic. The more enthusiastic the account, the most misleading. Contrary to a well-known statement by Michael Howard, the history of the Second World War as a whole has not had to be rewritten. Nonspecialist academics routinely exaggerate the effect of intelligence on the war and its literature. Some specialists do the same. Nor does the mere act of incorporating intelligence into an analysis automatically improve its quality. Marc Milner, the leading authority on the antisubmarine campaign of the Second World War, has argued persuasively that studies of Ultra did not improve our understanding of submarine conflict. On the contrary, they reinforced the greatest weaknesses in the literature: the overwhelming tendency to focus on operational issues and to ignore the strategic, economic, and administrative issues that really won the submarine battle.¹⁰ Almost fifteen years after scholars first began to study Ultra, they have only just begun to assess with precision its function and effect.¹¹ The best studies, however, have fundamentally reshaped our understanding of key aspects of the Second World War. Scholars such as Ralph Bennett and Edward Drea have demonstrated in specific terms—instead of simply asserting in a general fashion—how Ultra shaped certain events and why. Just as important, they have demonstrated how irrelevant Ultra, one of the best sources of intelligence in history, was to other events.¹²

Intelligence cannot easily be taken from the Cold War and placed in its history. This task will be doubly difficult until scholars come to terms with the accepted views and unspoken assumptions about the topic that arose during the Cold War. Many facts about American intelligence since 1945 are already in the public domain, more so than with any other contemporary secret service except, perhaps, the Stasi, but this produced problems of its own. Writers write from their record. When this body of evidence is large, one can easily assume that the issues it illuminates are the only issues to be illuminated. That is far from true in this case. Some aspects of contemporary American intelligence are notorious, others neglected; much that we know is trivial, much that we do not is fundamental. We know all of what

10. Marc Milner, "The Battle of the Atlantic," in *Decisive Campaigns of the Second World War*, ed. John Gooch (London, 1990), 45–64.

11. John Ferris, "Ralph Bennett and the Study of Ultra," *Intelligence and National Security* 6 (April 1991): 473–86.

12. Ralph Francis Bennett, *Ultra in the West: The Normandy Campaign, 1944–45* (London, 1979); idem, *Ultra and Mediterranean Strategy, 1941–1945* (New York, 1989); Edward J. Drea, *MacArthur's ULTRA: Codebreaking and the War against Japan, 1942–1945* (Lawrence, KS, 1992).

we know because it fits one of several institutionalized means by which material about intelligence reaches the public domain, because it surfaced in scandal, was central to crises, or was assimilated in estimates.

The government has been far more willing to declassify assessments than raw intelligence—say, National Intelligence Estimates (NIE) as opposed to the solutions produced by the National Security Agency (NSA). In 1989, William Slany, the historian of the State Department, complained how “increasingly stringent requirements for safeguarding US government national security information” had hampered the postwar volumes in the series *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*. “Compartmentilization of information and hierarchies of security clearance,” he asserted, had “made the identification and assembly of a comprehensive historical documentary record increasingly formidable.” These problems were multiplied by dissension regarding the criteria used to determine what could or could not be published, the authorities who would define these criteria, and the means used to notify readers that *FRUS* could not even mention the fact that some material relevant to a decision had been left out.¹³ Although the National Security Archive (NSA) and the CIA have begun to release more material and the cryptological history section of the NSA is well disposed to scholarship, years will pass before this situation changes. Fortunately, the government’s extraordinary ability to define the public record has often been subverted by its need to shape public opinion. Given Washington’s rule of politics by publicity, the more widely a document is circulated, the more likely it is to be disclosed. Indeed, reflecting on his experience with the selective release of intelligence through official channels under Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt concurred that “intelligence leaks better than it disseminates.”¹⁴ Thus, much material originating from the intelligence services becomes public property almost immediately; but the most carefully guarded of secrets, and ipso facto the most important of them, are also those most likely to remain secret. Material from these highest branches of the decision-making tree may still be shaken loose by scandal, as with the Watergate or Iran-contra affairs, or be deliberately released by the government to affect public attitudes, as with the Cuban missile crisis or the KAL 007 incident. Otherwise, the richest fruit rarely reaches our hands. Subsequently, whenever intelligence officers or government officials publish memoirs or speak to journalists, they are far more likely to discuss matters that have already reached the public domain than those that have not. Nor can journalists, senators, or academics ask about

13. William Z. Slany, “Preparing the Official Historical Diplomatic Record of the United States: Problems and Possibilities,” in *FCO Historical Branch Occasional Papers 2* (November 1989): 48–50. While Slany was speaking specifically of material from other governmental departments, his comments certainly apply to intelligence material as well.

14. Zumwalt quoted in Roy Godson, ed., *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980’s*, no. 2, *Analysis and Estimates* (Washington, 1980), 212.

matters of which they are ignorant—a rather larger category of things than they would care to think.

We know less about American intelligence since 1945 than we think we do, and this missing context ensures that much of what we do know does not mean what we think it does. It is characteristic of attitudes on this issue that Stephen Ambrose, one of the first historians to assimilate intelligence into the history of American policy during the 1950s, assumed that it consisted essentially of coups and U-2s.¹⁵ Far more is clear about the CIA's scandals than its successes, about covert operations than analysis, about how intelligence briefly affected American policy toward a few small states—Albania, Guatemala, and Cuba—than toward any major power throughout the entire course of the Cold War. We know more about the CIA than the NSA, even though the latter probably had more influence on American diplomacy and strategy. Much is clear about the institutional structure of the intelligence services and the personalities and personal rivalries within them, relatively little about how and why these issues affected decisions. There is a small but excellent literature on how intelligence affected military and strategic matters, the technical background to signals intelligence and satellite reconnaissance, and the sociocultural background to the intelligence services. Beyond this narrow range of topics, the records are weak. So are the writings.

The existing body of work is politicized, written to shape a private and/or public debate about the intelligence community. There is nothing wrong with that fact—so long as it is recognized. But this has not always been the case. The literature is dominated (and thus distorted) by works of opposition or apology. Nor is that the only problem at hand. Students of intelligence are unusually open to manipulation; many of them have been. Defectors, memorialists, or authors working largely from “unattributed” or “unattributable” sources and privileged access to documents have written most of the books extant on intelligence during the Cold War. The methodology of such authors varies considerably. Where Seymour Hersh uses source references as if to the academy born, Bob Woodward's interviews for *Veil* were conducted on “background,” and the sources for his statements can be determined only by reading between the lines.¹⁶ Even then they are often unclear. In such cases, one has no choice but to accept or reject the honor of authors. Although many of them merit respect, this situation is filled with obvious dangers. The “war of the defectors” between various factions within the CIA, for example,

15. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, vol. 2, *The President* (New York, 1984); idem, *Ike's Spies: Eisenhower and the Intelligence Community* (New York, 1981). On the other hand, an indication of how far our knowledge has progressed can be provided by examining an account that was ground breaking in its time, Harry H. Ransom, *The Intelligence Establishment* (Cambridge, MA, 1970).

16. See the methodological statements and general practice in Seymour M. Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (New York, 1983), 9; and Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981–1987* (New York, 1987), 13–14.

distorted public views for a fifteen-year period of American intelligence and of issues such as the ability of the United States to verify an arms limitation agreement in the face of deception from the USSR.¹⁷ A senior CIA veteran of the battle has referred to its literature—a relatively good one—with these words:

With few exceptions, the information contained in these books is derived from interviews from retired CIA and FBI officials so that much of it is hearsay covering events which occurred decades ago. Thus it reflects the inevitable distortions caused by memory lapses, often colored by personal attitudes. In many cases, the statements on individuals and events contained in these books are simply not true.¹⁸

Any and every source with an axe to grind has had the chance to do so on paper, to become an established but anonymous authority. The intelligence services have been able to palm disinformation off as fact, to write their own history or to determine who will do so; the losers in official turf battles have had nothing to lose from hitting below the beltway. The literature on intelligence since 1945 is largely demi-official or inspired in nature. A similar tendency is emerging in the new writing about the old KGB, with the added disadvantage that its successor is deliberately shaping its disclosures so as to milk the market for popular intelligence history.¹⁹

Nor has the ivory tower provided a better view. Academic works about intelligence during the Cold War are small in number and often low in quality. Some are marked by the fashionable emphasis on machinery as an end rather than a means—on decision making rather than decisions, on process rather than product. Academics outside the field criticize those within for having a bizarre fixation on spy fiction and nuts and bolts, for distorting the significance of their topics, and for using slack methods. Unfortunately, there is truth to these accusations. Many works by academics certainly do violate the first rule for rabbit stew, “first, catch your rabbit,” and its corollary, “if you haven’t caught a bunny, you can’t bake it.” In this field, each step from the path of documented fact leads immediately to a wilderness of quicksand. During the 1980s, failure to recognize this

17. The best known exponent of this view was Edward Jay Epstein, “Disinformation: Or, Why the CIA Cannot Verify an Arms-Control Agreement,” *Commentary* 74 (July 1982): 21–28; and idem, *Deception: The Invisible War between the KGB and the CIA* (New York, 1989). Godson, *Analysis and Estimates*, 123–62, includes an interesting discussion of such views.

18. David E. Murphy, “Sasha Who?” *Intelligence and National Security* 8 (January 1993): 102–7.

19. For an illuminating account of relations between the ex-Soviet intelligence services and Western popular historians of intelligence see Philip Knightley’s commentary in *The London Review of Books*, 7 August 1993, 11–12. This background should be borne in mind by any reader of sensationalist works, such as Pavel Sudaplatov and Anatoli Sudaplatov, with Jerrold and Leona Schecter, *Special Tasks, The Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness—A Soviet Spymaster* (Boston, 1994).

danger swallowed up two dons who built elaborate conspiracy theories on the basis of more speculation than fact.²⁰

Not merely a path but a map is needed to cross this wilderness. During the Cold War, specialists painfully acquired such a method, which rests on two sources. The first is a didactic literature about how intelligence should be assessed and used, best exemplified by Sherman Kent's classic study, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*.²¹ This work of social science had some influence on history because, as head of the CIA's Board of National Estimates, its author put his principles into practice for thirty years and framed the method of professional analysts throughout the Western world. The second source, often called the "no-fault" school, arose in reaction to the theory and practice of the first. This academic literature—part empirical, part theoretical—about how intelligence actually is assessed and used, includes such influential works as Robert Jervis's assessments of the links among information, perception, and action, and the studies of surprise, deception, interpretation, and intelligence failure of Richard Betts and Michael Handel. Its classic work is Roberta Wohlstetter's study of the intelligence failure at Pearl Harbor.²² The didactic literature assumed that so long as a specific approach was followed, one that married rigorous social science method to proper institutional structures, such as the creation of Chinese walls between analysts and actors, intelligence could be assessed with a high and almost guaranteed level of accuracy and could produce material of an almost guaranteed level of value. Any failure to achieve these standards was a failure of

20. Anthony Glee, *The Secrets of the Service: British Intelligence and Communist Subversion, 1939–57* (London, 1987); R. W. Johnson, *Shootdown: Flight 007 and the American Connection* (New York, 1986).

21. Sherman Kent, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy* (Princeton, 1949). A work by a member of Kent's staff and later deputy director for intelligence in his own right, Ray S. Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars: Blueprint of the Essential CIA* (Washington, 1976), and *Strategic Intelligence and National Decisions* (Glencoe, IL, 1956), by Roger Hilsman, director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, offer intelligent refinements of Kent's arguments, which in some respects bring them close to the views of the "no-fault" school. This is also true of the most recent study in this vein, and a good one, Bruce D. Berkowitz and Allan E. Goodman, *Strategic Intelligence for American National Security* (Princeton, 1989).

22. Robert Jervis, "What's Wrong with the Intelligence Process," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 1 (Spring 1986): 28–41; idem, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, 1976); Richard K. Betts, "Analysis, War and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable," in *Power, Strategy and Security: A World Politics Reader*, ed. Klaus Knorr (Princeton, 1983), 37–46; idem, "Policymakers and Intelligence Analysts: Love, Hate or Indifference?" *Intelligence and National Security* 3 (January 1988): 184–89; Michael I. Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence* (London, 1989); idem, "Intelligence and Military Operations," in *Intelligence and Military Operations*, ed. Michael I. Handel (London, 1990), 1–98; Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford, 1962). See also Mark M. Lowenthal, "The Burdensome Concept of Failure," in *Intelligence: Policy and Process*, ed. Alfred C. Maurer, Marion D. Tunstall, and James K. Keagle (Boulder, 1985), 43–56; and Thomas Lowe Hughes, *The Fate of Facts in a World of Men: Foreign Policy and Intelligence-Making* (New York, 1976). A useful social science account of how statesmen learn, George W. Breslauer and Philip E. Tetlock, *Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, 1991), virtually ignores the role of secret intelligence and of intelligence organizations in that process.

intelligence. The “no-fault” school, conversely, assumes that some kind of error, whether of omission or commission, is unavoidable in intelligence, that no method can always lead to truth, and that the truth is often useless. Failures of intelligence, therefore, are common—in fact, unavoidable. The question is their nature and significance.

Most academic students of intelligence would probably accept a view like the following. In isolation, any single piece of information is useless and meaningless. Its effect depends upon its interpretation in the context of a set of conditions that govern expectation and usability. Statesmen, of course, can understand the world, and they do affect it. They are not mere prisoners of perception, unable to learn from error or to change their minds. The study of intelligence is a study of practical epistemology. It illuminates not merely why statesmen act but how they think. But decision makers are reluctant to change their minds, and they do tend to interpret bits of information on the basis of preconception. Nor is it ever easy to assess intelligence. A given event may well have an unambiguous meaning. Information about it rarely has an unambiguous interpretation. The meaning of some pieces of intelligence, as when a statesman outlines his imminent intentions, is intuitively self-evident against the framework of common sense. This sort of material is easy to understand, trust, and use, but hard to find. The typical piece of intelligence is not absolutely certain proof acquired two days after the fact that Adolf Hitler said on 5 November 1937, “This is my reading of the balance of power, my aims are X, Y, Z, and unless they are achieved I will start World War II on 3 September 1939.” Even the Hossbach memorandum did not reach that standard of precision and accuracy. Had Western intelligence services received an accurate account of Hitler’s statements at the meeting in question, they would have been correctly informed about his general attitudes but misled about specific issues, such as the earliest date that he thought war could occur.²³ Intelligence is more typically news provided five months after the event to His Majesty’s Government by British code breakers of a report from the French ambassador in Bucharest, which he received through the intermediary of a Greek journalist, of the views of Hitler’s aims offered by a drunken Japanese chargé d’affaires in Sofia. Intelligence services usually provide masses of material, often utterly irrelevant, of unknown accuracy, or on a tangent of relevance, drawn from the hearsay of third-hand sources.

The content of such material, by itself, is ambiguous. Its meaning can be determined only through two distinct, if simultaneous, processes, what Raymond Garthoff, a member of the Office of National Estimates in the 1950s and subsequently a historian of that topic, called “the interrelationships between personalized intuitive and formalized analytical assess-

23. *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: Series D (1937–1945)*, vol. 1, *From Neurath to Ribbentrop (September 1937–September 1938)* (Washington, 1949), 29–37.

ments,"²⁴ between the intuition of statesmen and the elaborate, and seemingly arbitrary and arcane, estimations of professional analysts. The second process is clearly described by an Australian analyst, R. H. Mathams:

The analyst must guide his reader as far into the future as the available facts permit; the business of intelligence begins, rather than ends, with an accurate description of the current situation. In some matters, particularly in political affairs where volatile human behaviour is often at the root of the matter, prediction can be a chancey and rather intuitive business. . . . In the main, judgements as to the future activities of a particular nation will result from consideration of its industrial, military and economic capabilities, which can be estimated with reasonable accuracy, combined with a review of its historical pattern of behaviour, which, in most instances, has been shaped by persistent influences rather than fleeting circumstances. The analyst appraises these factors in the light of his appreciation of the gain-versus-loss consequences of probable national policies; it is generally assumed that a nation will not risk a particular course of action unless it perceives some gain commensurate with the risk involved in that action. In those cases (and there are many) where intelligence assessments have successfully defined the future, it is because nations have acted in a sensible, if not an accustomed, manner to achieve reasonable objectives. Where intelligence analysis has failed, it has usually been as a result of a poor appreciation of the perceptions of the nation being studied or, more likely, because the nation's action was unprecedented or did not make for a sensible gain-versus-risk equation.²⁵

Similarly, a former director for intelligence at the CIA, Ray S. Cline, emphasized that assessment was

an analytical task, that is, an evidence-based description of the real world around us, with as much objectivity and accuracy as possible, taking a crack at commenting on the implications of the evidence available to us for the long stretch of future behaviour of the Soviet Union and other countries. At the same time we recognised that there are very clear limitations on the clarity and certainty with which one can make these predictions.

It does not surprise me that many of the predictions were wrong. . . . Certainly my experience in intelligence estimates is that intelligence estimators are always wrong, and there are always plenty of people around to tell them so. The questions that are brought up for public scrutiny and even scrutiny in the high levels of the government are never the simple

24. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Assessing the Adversary: Estimates by the Eisenhower Administration of Soviet Intentions and Capabilities* (Washington, 1991), 48.

25. R. H. Mathams, *Sub Rosa: Memoirs of an Australian Intelligence Analyst* (Sydney, 1982), 14–15.

questions on which intelligence can give clear and precise answers. They are the questions on which usually there are no clear answers and your judgement is all that you have to go on. . . . In a sense these NIEs are the dry bones, almost the archeological remains, of a big debate with real intellectual conflicts and attempts by many hundreds of people to express themselves in ways which were circulating in Washington at that time. And in the last analysis, a formal estimate is just a racetrack bettor's book on what he thinks is going to happen, "It's six-to-five this way." If it is six-to-five this way . . . it is five-to-six the other way. So it is not always an egregious error not to be able to predict which side of a close bet is going to pay off.²⁶

A preexisting body of ideas and expectations shapes both personalized and formalized assessment. These range from broad matters like social, political, or religious schools of thought to official doctrines about specific topics and the eccentricities of individuals. This whole process is dogged by problems, such as ethnocentrism and the tendency to project one's own way of thinking onto others, that produce such well-known errors as mirror-imaging and best-and-worst-case logic. Intelligence services, moreover, are often asked to explain not only how other states will behave at a given moment but to guess how they will do so years in the future: to predict decisions that have not yet been made. Above all, they have to determine not what another state should do but what it will do. If you know better than the party you are analyzing what line of policy it should follow, then if it makes a mistake so will you. Thus, after grossly misunderstanding Soviet intentions before the Cuban missile crisis, Sherman Kent said that he had not made a mistake, Khrushchev had.²⁷ Similar problems emerge with the use of intelligence. Bad intelligence can lead to good decisions. Good intelligence may not affect policy. It may be unusable or it may be used counterproductively or it may invalidate itself. If one accurately determines another side's intentions and forestalls them, one may force it toward a new and unexpected policy. Intelligence can fail by succeeding.

In any case, intelligence does affect the thoughts and actions of statesmen. The question is how. In theory, states need information in order to formulate and follow a grand strategy and a foreign policy: to determine which aims they can or must achieve, the means by which they can best do so, the options that are open to them, and the optimum way to allocate their resources and to elucidate the power and the policies, the intentions and the capabilities, of every player in the game. In practice, intelligence rarely affects the determination of policy – although this does happen. Frequently, however, it does affect the execution of policy. Intelligence shapes tactics

26. Cline recorded in Godson, ed., *Analysis and Estimates*, 76–78.

27. See *ibid.*, 76–81; and Raymond L. Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Washington, 1987), 110.

more than strategy. It is difficult enough to understand the capabilities of other powers: The answer to the question "what can X do," for example, varies with the questions "why?" "against whom?" and "where?" and with calculations about the outcome of the interaction among luck, types of tactics, styles of diplomacy, and untested pieces of technology. To uncover intentions is an even more ambitious undertaking. Governments often reach their decisions in literally unpredictable fashions—or, alternately, in ways that can be predicted only if one knows the aims and means of each element in their bureaucratic political processes. Statesmen frequently do not know what they will wish to do in the future; even should they think they do, they may change their minds or have their minds changed for them. Nor are all of their actions taken in order to achieve these intentions: Necessity may force leaders to march one step forward, two steps back; opportunity may alter one's calculus of aims and means. Intelligence officers are neither mind readers nor seers. It is rare for any state continually and certainly to know the central elements of another's policy, those that shape each of its specific actions. States usually understood the intentions and capabilities of their peers only in particular instances, and in a fragmentary way. This information can illuminate some aspects of a problem but cannot reconstruct the whole. These partial successes in intelligence are sometimes entirely counterproductive. Correct knowledge of capabilities but not intentions can easily lead to best- or worst-case assumptions; knowledge of the intentions but not the capabilities of a hostile but impotent power may produce hysteria or smugness. On the other hand, sometimes one really needs just partial successes: One need not know why an action is being taken so long as one knows that it is, or understand capabilities that are never used.

When incorporating intelligence into the study of the Cold War, certain fallacies of evidence and argument should be avoided. The most common is the Bloomsbury syndrome, the focus on anecdote instead of analysis, as if the most important thing to know about the CIA was the average number of drinks consumed each day by James Jesus Angleton. The most dangerous of these errors is the assumption (as opposed to the proof) of influence, the idea that because secret intelligence was available to a statesman, it must have affected his decisions, and significantly so. Such arguments are not necessarily wrong, simply unproven, and therefore useless in themselves even if accurate. What really matters about intelligence is not what it is but what it does. Discussions about how intelligence affected decisions must rest on the strongest and most precise argument that the evidence will allow. Often this may be no more than a case by coincidence resting on circumstantial evidence, but that fact must at least be recognized and tested in the most rigorous fashion possible. Ideally, in order to determine the function of intelligence within the evolution of any event, one should define its causal status relative to all other relevant factors in the framework of cause and effect. This ideal, of course, is difficult to achieve, because of the peculiar and paradoxical effect of intelligence on decisions. Intelligence often leads

statesmen not to take specific actions that are carried into effect – thus letting one judge how information affected actions – but, instead, leads them to favor conflicting policies that stalemate decision, or to favor actions that ultimately were never carried into effect, or not to take certain actions at all. It is difficult to trace the causal significance of intelligence in such cases, which are characteristic of diplomacy.²⁸

Many commentators on American intelligence since 1945 have fallen victim to myths about the background to the matter. One is exceptionalism. Its victims assume that their topics are new or unique and ignore the historical and historiographical context. Covert action, for example, has been practiced for centuries. Although historians rarely look before American and British experiences in the Second World War, the topic is illuminated by works like Lamar de Jensen's study of Don Diego de Mendoza, a man who combined the modern roles of ambassador and CIA station chief for Philip II, and the amusing and accurate memoirs of Compton Mackenzie, chief of British counterintelligence in Athens between 1915 and 1917.²⁹ Similarly, the subsidy of political parties did not begin with the United States and Italy in 1948; during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Britain, France, and Russia eagerly financed newspapers and bribed statesmen abroad.³⁰ Few techniques of intelligence have been newly minted since 1945, but the size and structure of intelligence services have changed in revolutionary ways since that time. Other commentators have failed to recognize the latter fact. They have adopted a view, stemming from the cover story British intelligence officers gave their American colleagues during the Second World War, about a permanent and subterranean struggle between organized intelligence services that dates back to the days of the Virgin Queen. In particular, it is often assumed that for centuries before 1939, British intelligence had the same place and power in the world that the CIA and the KGB had after 1945. Such views are nonsensical and easily correctible. Many studies, especially accounts of the administration of European diplomacy, refer to the organization and effect of intelligence services over the past three hundred years. Even today, the best studied period of diplomatic intelligence is that between 1570 and 1630.³¹ This literature is

28. For a discussion of the methodological problems involved in the field, and the use of counterfactual logic by historians, see John Ferris, "The Intelligence-Deception Complex: An Anatomy," *Intelligence and National Security* 4 (October 1989): 719–34.

29. Lamar de Jensen, *Diplomacy and Dogmatism: Bernardino de Mendoza and the French Catholic League* (Cambridge, MA, 1964); Compton Mackenzie, *First Athenian Memories* (London, 1931); idem, *Greek Memories* (London, 1939); idem, *Aegean Memories* (London, 1940).

30. J. F. Chance, ed., *British Diplomatic Instructions, 1689–1789*, vol. 1, *Sweden, 1689–1727* (London, 1922) and vol. 5, *Sweden, 1727–1789* (London, 1928), illustrate this issue regarding Sweden in the eighteenth century.

31. Excellent studies of diplomatic intelligence between 1570 and 1630 include John Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair* (New Haven, 1991); Charles Howard Carter, *The Secret Diplomacy of the Habsburgs, 1598–1625* (New York, 1964); Jensen, *Diplomacy and Dogmatism*; idem, "The Spanish Armada: The Worst-Kept Secret in Europe," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (Win-

riddled with as many gaps as that on the contemporary American case, but the gaps are different. Comparison between the two illuminates American intelligence from the perspective not of the evidence that has been released but of the evidence that has been withheld. In particular, it reveals the glaring absence of evidence on and works about diplomatic intelligence and the overemphasis of military and paramilitary topics.

Walter Laqueur's *A World of Secrets* is the best general account of intelligence on the market. Its chapters about intelligence sources, organization, and assessment are excellent; unfortunately, its discussion of historical events is brief, superficial, and sometimes inaccurate. Although the specialist literature on American intelligence between 1776 and 1945 matches that of any other country in that period, there is no standard textbook on the topic. Works by Charles Ameringer and Nathan Miller come closest to the ideal, combining a reasonably thorough coverage of events with relatively few errors of fact. Two weaker works by G. J. A. O'Toole and Ernest Volkman and Blaine Baggett contain some useful observations but also some factual errors and ignore many important issues.³² Two books offer the best general introductions to American intelligence since 1945. Scott D. Breckinridge provides a broadbrush account of the structure of American intelligence, particularly its bureaucratic organization and its place in decision making. Jeffrey T. Richelson's *American Espionage and the Soviet Target in-*

ter 1988): 621–41; Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (New York, 1955); and Geoffrey Parker, "The Worst-Kept Secret in Europe? The European Intelligence Community and the Spanish Armada of 1588," in *Go Spy the Land: Military Intelligence in History*, ed. Keith Neilson and B. J. C. McKercher (Westport, CT, 1992), 49–71. While the literature on diplomatic intelligence between 1659 and 1945 is more scattered, some useful works deal with the topic: see Lucien Bely, *Espions et ambassadeurs au temps de Louis XIV* [Spies and ambassadors in the time of Louis XIV] (Paris, 1990); Alfred Cobban, *Ambassadors and Secret Agents* (London, 1954); D. B. Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1689–1789* (Oxford, 1961); Charles Ronald Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy, 1782–1846* (Durham, 1977); John Ferris, "Lord Salisbury, Secret Intelligence and British Policy toward Russia and Central Asia, 1874–1878," in Neilson and McKercher, eds., *Go Spy the Land*, 115–53; James Westfall Thompson and Saul K. Padover, *Secret Diplomacy: Espionage and Cryptography, 1500–1815* (New York, 1965); Edward A. Whitcomb, *Napoleon's Diplomatic Service* (Durham, 1979); and John C. Rule, "Gathering Intelligence in the Age of Louis XIV," *International History Review* 14 (November 1992): 732–53. Derek J. Waller, *The Pundits: British Exploration of Tibet and Central Asia* (Lexington, KY, 1990), is a useful introduction to the relationship between intelligence and exploration. The literature on diplomatic intelligence between 1900 and 1939 is particularly strong. Two useful introductions are Christopher M. Andrew and David Dilks, eds., *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1984); and Christopher M. Andrew and Jeremy Noakes, eds., *Intelligence and International Relations, 1900–1945* (Exeter, England, 1987). Bernard Porter, *Plots and Paranoia: A History of Political Espionage in Britain, 1790–1988*, 2d ed. (London, 1992), 1–24, raises important questions regarding the nature of intelligence services before the modern period.

32. Walter Laqueur, *A World of Secrets: The Uses and Limits of Intelligence* (New York, 1985); Charles D. Ameringer, *U.S. Foreign Intelligence: The Secret Side of American History* (Lexington, MA, 1990); Nathan Miller, *Spying for America: The Hidden History of U.S. Intelligence* (New York, 1989); G. J. A. O'Toole, *Honorable Treachery: A History of U.S. Intelligence, Espionage, and Covert Action from the American Revolution to the CIA* (New York, 1991); Ernest Volkman and Blaine Baggett, *Secret Intelligence* (New York, 1989).

cludes as systematic a discussion as the evidence allows of how the disparate sources of intelligence and services of assessment affected American policy in the key area of the Cold War.³³

The general literature on American intelligence since 1945 suffers from a fundamental imbalance. In 1968, Richard Bissell, a retired but senior veteran of the CIA, argued that the most important intelligence sources for the United States at that time were satellite reconnaissance, with signals intelligence ranking “slightly below” and human intelligence “considerably below” them both.³⁴ Bissell was notoriously indifferent to agents and attracted by high technology. Nonetheless, his statement is probably correct as a generalization about the Cold War as a whole. This immediately points to a major problem. We know far more about the organization that Bissell ranked least in importance than about his most significant one. We know very little about the bureau in the middle. The fact that the CIA is taking the lead among the intelligence services in declassifying some of its material from the Cold War era is increasing the scale of this problem.

Fundamental aspects of American strategic policy hinged on accurate knowledge of Soviet conventional and nuclear capabilities. For a decade after 1945, intelligence of this standard was lacking and strategy rested on ignorance. To make matters even more complex, American strategists knew that they were ignorant. Their thoughts and actions were marked by conscious uncertainty and a vulnerability to worst-case assessment and recurrent bouts of hysteria. Between 1956 and 1959, however, U-2s and from the early 1960s satellite reconnaissance monitored current Soviet strategic forces with extraordinary accuracy, ending fears of the missile gap and of a surprise and sudden Soviet ability to acquire strategic superiority. These sources provided a host of accurate and detailed strategic intelligence—more than the bureaucracy could handle. In some ways, they offer a classic example of the uselessness of good intelligence. Backlogs of unscanned photographs clogged channels and embarrassed intelligence officers. Photographic analysts often were six to twelve months behind in their examination of this material. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 surprised the United States; satellite photographs that were available but unscrutinized until after the event, however, did show the buildup of Soviet strength. The same problem emerged again with the Syrian-Jordanian war of 1970 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and subsequently in areas of tertiary concern, as is shown by the affair of the “Soviet brigade” in Cuba of 1979. Nonetheless, aerial photography greatly reduced the conditions of ignorance and conscious uncertainty in American strategic policy and moderated but did not eliminate hysteria. It gave

33. Scott D. Breckinridge, *The CIA and the U.S. Intelligence System* (Boulder, 1986); Jeffrey T. Richelson, *American Espionage and the Soviet Target* (New York, 1987).

34. Bissell cited in Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, rev. ed. (New York, 1980), 330.

the United States far more precise and current strategic intelligence than any other country in peacetime has ever had, including its main adversary of the Cold War. Satellite photography helped American diplomacy and conventional strategy in other ways. Without it, for example, the United States could not have known (and acted against) the deployment of Soviet nuclear missiles to Cuba in 1962 or conducted its diplomacy against possible Soviet intervention in Poland during 1979. The best studies of these topics are by William E. Burrows and Jeffrey T. Richelson, augmented by the accounts in works by Thomas Powers and John Ranelagh. Michael R. Beschloss has also provided a useful study of the U-2 affair of 1960.³⁵ This literature is extraordinarily good about technical details and program histories but weaker about interpretation and use. That gap will vanish with the normal process of declassification. Scholars are unlikely to want to see original photographs but simply to determine their influence. This should be possible. Cases where satellite photographs affected decisions probably will be clear in the documentary record, because no particular attempt will, or probably can, be made to hide it.

None of this is true of Bissell's second-ranking source. We know very little about American signals intelligence. Because its product was not circulated widely or referred to explicitly in intelligence summaries, its significance will be unusually hard to trace. The government may well be able to keep most of the evidence from the public record if it wishes to do so. The best work on the topic—virtually the only long one—is by James Bamford. *The Puzzle Palace* has received the finest review possible—in 1987, General William Odom, head of the NSA, rated it a major security risk. Works by Richelson, Burrows, and Desmond Ball illuminate the technical background to the topic, while Jeffrey Richelson and Desmond Ball, in *The Ties That Bind*, illuminate the web of international agreements that links the NSA to other Western services. Seymour Hersh's "*The Target is Destroyed*" incidentally offers much important material about military signals intelligence. *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* by Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks and memoirs by Peter Wright and Philip Agee discuss techniques used in support of cryptanalysis, such as the bugging of embassy code rooms.³⁶

35. William E. Burrows, *Deep Black: Space Espionage and National Security* (New York, 1986); Jeffrey T. Richelson, *America's Secret Eyes in Space: The U.S. Keyhole Spy Satellite Program* (New York, 1990); idem, *American Espionage and the Soviet Target*; Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms & The CIA* (New York, 1979); John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA* (New York, 1986); Michael R. Beschloss, *MAYDAY: Eisenhower, Khrushchev, and the U-2 Affair* (New York, 1986).

36. James Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace: A Report on America's Most Secret Agency* (Boston, 1982); for Odom's statement see Peter Grier, "Chief of the US's top-secret listening post says leaks have harmed security," *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 March 1987. See also Jeffrey Richelson and Desmond Ball, *The Ties That Bind: Intelligence Cooperation between the UKUSA Countries—the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand*, 2d ed. (Boston, 1990); Seymour M. Hersh, "*The Target is Destroyed*": *What Really Happened to Flight 007 and What*

For the United States, forms of signals intelligence provided much information on Soviet and other military forces and shaped diplomacy. A conservative assessment of American success can be derived from an analysis of the known facts. Communications intelligence was assisted by common practices like bugging offices of states and by the interception of traffic sent in plain language or in simple cryptographic systems on land or submarine cables though to be secure. Her Majesty's Government systematically bugged Lancaster House, the scene of many of its negotiations on decolonization, from 1957 until 1980.³⁷ Between the 1960s and the 1980s, the CIA did the same with such disparate locations as the main hotel in Quito, the offices of the presidents of South Vietnam and Egypt, the homes of Soviet diplomats throughout the world, and the code rooms of every embassy they could reach.³⁸ When properly used and not physically compromised, the most advanced cryptological systems of any year after 1945 were highly difficult (or impossible) to break through cryptanalysis. But all such systems were vulnerable through common means like surreptitiously copying cryptographic hardware and software, especially because many foreign offices, notably those in the Third World, used inferior systems that could be broken through purely cryptanalytical techniques.

It is not unreasonable to assume that at any time during the Cold War, the NSA read some of the important systems of half the countries on earth. Defectors from the NSA publicly claimed in 1960 that the United States was reading some of the systems of forty countries, including Italy, France, Yugoslavia, Indonesia, and Uruguay, and that the NSA's Near East Section read some of the diplomatic traffic of every country it handled (Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Iran, Greece, Ethiopia, and Lebanon).³⁹ Either Stansfield Turner or William Casey or both were sources for Bob Woodward's statement about the NSA's success in January 1980: "Of the twenty principal target countries, well, in summary it was possible to break some of the codes some of the time, but not all of them all of the time. . . . There were dozens of other countries that were not primary targets and the NSA could break their codes."⁴⁰ Other references in the open literature indicate that the United States read the diplomatic traffic of Egypt, France, Greece, and Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s, South Vietnam throughout the 1960s and 1970s,

America Knew about It (New York, 1986); Marchetti and Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, 161–65; Peter Wright with Paul Greengrass, *Spycatcher: The Candid Autobiography of a Senior Intelligence Officer* (Melbourne, 1987), 78–109, passim; and Philip Agee, *Inside the Company: CIA Diary* (New York, 1975), 351, 370, 475–76, 480, 489.

37. Wright, *Spycatcher*, 73.

38. Agee, *Inside the Company*, 162; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 212; Frank Snepp, *Decent Interval: An Insider's Account of Saigon's Indecent End Told by the CIA's Chief Strategy Analyst in Vietnam* (New York, 1977), 15, 294; Woodward, *Veil*, 87, 416.

39. Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace*, 189–90, 201.

40. Woodward, *Veil*, 88.

Japan in 1969, South Korea in the late 1970s, and Algeria, Iran, Libya, and Japan in the 1980s.⁴¹

The NSA had rather less success against its main adversaries. Small and incomplete amounts of current Soviet intelligence and trade department traffic were read between 1945 and 1948.⁴² During the 1950s and 1970s, the United States tapped Soviet cables carrying military traffic in lower cryptographic systems in Europe and at sea.⁴³ It always broke low-grade Soviet military traffic and acquired useful material through other forms of signals intelligence. Moreover, according to Seymour Hersh, between 1970 and 1973, "a series of NSA intercepts emanating from the Soviet Embassy" of an unspecified nature gave Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon "what they believed to be reliable intelligence on the attitude and activities of Ambassador Dobrynin and others in the embassy."⁴⁴ Beyond that, the NSA decoded Czech diplomatic traffic for several months in the late 1950s, various Chinese, North Vietnamese, and Viet Cong cryptographic systems in the 1950s, and Cuban intelligence messages in the 1960s.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Soviet signals intelligence was formidable in quality and probably at least the match of its Western rivals.

It is difficult to determine the significance of this material. Several sources report that solutions of the reports by foreign ambassadors of cocktail conversations in Washington were regularly received by American officials the following morning. The consequences of this information remain unclear.⁴⁶ Informed contemporaries certainly regarded much communications intelligence as useless. Joseph Smith, a CIA officer who received solutions of Indonesian police traffic for use in covert action during 1957, never "read any NSA intercepts . . . that were of much use to me. This may have been bad luck, but there was a growing suspicion by the time I left CIA (1973) that most of NSA's material was of little value."⁴⁷ Similarly, according to Peter Wright, a well-informed officer, when British intelligence bugged Nikita Khrushchev's room at Claridge's in 1956,

Khrushchev was far too canny a bird to discuss anything of value in a hotel room. . . . We listened to Khrushchev for hours at a time, hoping for pearls to drop. But there were no clues to the last days of Stalin, or to

41. Joseph Burkholder Smith, *Portrait of a Cold Warrior* (New York, 1976), 389-90; Hersh, *The Price of Power*, 74, 101, 183; David C. Martin and John Walcott, *Best Laid Plans: The Inside Story of America's War against Terrorism* (New York, 1988), 284-86; Woodward, *Veil*, 84, 165-66, 245-46, 387-88, 409; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 227.

42. The best account is in Robert J. Lamphere and Tom Shactman, *The FBI-KGB War: A Special Agent's Story* (New York, 1986), augmented by Wright, *Spycatcher*, 179-88, passim.

43. Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 155, 190-91; Richelson, *American Espionage*, 164.

44. Hersh, *The Price of Power*, 256-57.

45. *Ibid.*, 74; Mathams, *Sub Rosa*, 19.

46. Hersh, *The Price of Power*, 207-9; Woodward, *Veil*, 387-88; Marchetti and Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, 171-72.

47. Smith, *Portrait of a Cold Warrior*, 389-90.

the fate of the KGB henchman Beria. Instead, there were long monologues from Khrushchev addressed to his valet on the subject of his attire. He was an extraordinarily vain man. He stood in front of the mirror preening himself for hours at a time, and fussing with his hair parting.⁴⁸

The usual unnamed sources say the same of the NSA's interception of the radio-telephone traffic of Soviet leaders while driving in Moscow streets during the later 1960s: "We didn't find out about, say, the invasion of Czechoslovakia. It was very gossipy—Brezhnev's health and perhaps Podgorny's sex life."⁴⁹

Nonetheless, communications intelligence often provided precisely the material that decision makers wanted to know and could use. Breaks into NKVD traffic in the late 1940s cracked open the great Soviet mole networks of that era. Communications intelligence let American authorities monitor President Thieu's policy between 1968 and 1975⁵⁰ and follow the internal debate in Tehran and read the diplomatic traffic between Iran and the intermediary state of Algeria during the hostage negotiations of January 1980.⁵¹ In the 1980s, communications intelligence showed President Qaddafi's hostility toward Washington and his links with terrorist groups and sparked the bombings of Libya.⁵² Signals intelligence, then, was continually significant to American foreign policy. It was most successful against Third World countries. This was also true of American human intelligence.

Since 1980, American intelligence has been routinely criticized for emphasizing technical sources at the expense of agents. This may have been true in relative terms, but not in absolute ones. During the Cold War, the United States controlled more agents than any previous government in history. Soviet security, combined with the paralysis that internal factionalism wreaked on the CIA's recruitment of agents in the USSR, meant that the United States had few of them there. The figure usually given, in words attributed to a well-informed senator, Barry Goldwater, was that in the 1970s the United States "had only five sets of eyeballs there working for us."⁵³ Although France and Britain each had roughly as much success as the United States in this sphere, the Soviet bloc won the human intelligence struggle with the West. The real American successes and its best human sources lay in the Third World. They were sometimes in high places—Moraji Desai, King Hussein of Jordan, Manuel Noriega, and Bashir Gemayel. Sources so eminent were often an embarrassment, because of the need to tolerate their

48. Wright, *Spycatcher*, 73.

49. Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace*, 360.

50. Hersh, *The Price of Power*, 83; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 212; Snepp, *Decent Interval*, 15, 394.

51. Woodward, *Veil*, 84.

52. Martin and Walcott, *Best Laid Plans*, 284–86; Woodward, *Veil*, 165–66, 409, 444.

53. Goldwater quoted in Woodward, *Veil*, 209.

foibles and the risk that they might manipulate their paymaster. Thus, during the Indo-Pakistani war, Moraji Desai's information on Indira Gandhi's intentions was wrong and contributed to some ill-advised American actions.⁵⁴ Less exalted contacts often provided more useful information. Relatively insignificant agents like Jonathan Pollard, David Walker, and Aleksandr Ogorodnik sold foreign governments between fifteen hundred and two thousand top-secret documents on relatively narrow topics. The most important Western agent in place, Colonel Oleg Penkovsky, gave Britain and the United States ten thousand microfilmed pages of documents about Soviet strategic intentions and capabilities at the highest levels. The Walker spy ring as a whole—which ranks with the atomic bomb spies as the most successful agent network of the twentieth century—gave the USSR the means to read millions of radio messages and perhaps solve every cryptographic system used by the U.S. Navy between 1968 and 1985.⁵⁵ The two volumes of selections from the documents provided by Oleg Gordievsky during his thirteen years as a British mole in the KGB illustrate the volume, scale, and significance of the material provided by an effective agent in place.⁵⁶ And this material was often used for important purposes—for example, Penkovsky's papers guided the improvement of NIEs on Soviet strategic forces and provided important background information during the Cuban missile crisis.⁵⁷

The body of writing on the CIA is remarkably good. It is far and away the strongest part of the literature on American intelligence since 1945 and one of the brightest jewels in the crown of intelligence studies. The best general accounts are John Ranelagh's *The Agency*, despite the somewhat simplistic and traditional theme of the slow decline of the CIA from inspired origins into just another bureaucracy, and Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones's *The CIA and American Democracy*, despite the limits of its research and its overemphasis of the causal significance of the CIA's political and public relations standing in Washington and throughout the country. Three earlier studies, by Ray S. Cline, Thomas Powers, and Marchetti and Marks, retain much value. Although none of these works completely handles the topic, collectively they provide a broad and deep coverage of the history, techniques, structure, politics, and effect of the CIA, and with few factual errors.⁵⁸ Scott D. Breckinridge and Loch Johnson offer broad and accurate introduc-

54. Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 236; Hersh, *The Price of Power*, 450, 459–60.

55. Wolf Blitzer, *Territory of Lies: The Exclusive Story of Jonathan Jay Pollard: The American Who Spied on His Country for Israel and How He Was Betrayed* (New York, 1989), 228; Barron, *Breaking the Ring*, 148, 219.

56. Christopher M. Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, eds., *Instructions from the Centre: Top Secret Files on KGB Foreign Operations, 1975–1985* (London, 1991); idem, *Comrade Kryuchkov's Instructions: Top Secret Files on KGB Foreign Operations, 1975–1985* (Stanford, 1993).

57. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Intelligence Assessment and Policymaking: A Decision Point in the Kennedy Administration* (Washington, 1984), 8.

58. Ranelagh, *The Agency*; Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy* (New Haven, 1989); Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*; Marchetti and Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*.

tions to the topic, although neither of these works is particularly deep. Anna Karalekas's *History of the Central Intelligence Agency*, for over a decade the best book on the topic, is now showing its age, as is another work that had some value in its time, despite its often superficial analysis, Stephen E. Ambrose's *Ike's Spies*. Thomas Troy's *Donovan and the CIA* must now be read very critically.⁵⁹ Not surprisingly, the literature becomes weaker for the period after 1976, and every work on offer has serious drawbacks. Of use are Stansfield Turner's *Secrecy and Democracy*, the apologia of an officer who is widely viewed as being one of the least successful directors of central intelligence (DCI), and Bob Woodward's *Veil*, the accuracy of which is debatable. Joseph Persico's biography of William Casey is uncritical and unsatisfactory, while the hostile literature about American intelligence in the Reagan era must be taken with a grain of salt. Certainly, if mud is to be thrown, it must be thrown at specific men and institutions rather than indiscriminately. A quite good work, if somewhat tangential from the perspective of the CIA, by Theodore Draper, deals with a matter documented by Congress, the Iran-contra affair. David B. Newsom's *The Soviet Brigade in Cuba* is a reasonably well documented and analyzed account of one instance of the relationship between intelligence and politics.⁶⁰

This body of writing, in turn, is strongest about the period between 1940 to 1960. Here, alone in the literature under review, one can meaningfully use terms like revisionism and first or second generations of scholarship. This period saw the creation of the CIA and its founding myth. The myth emphasized heroism and charisma, the high quality of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the passing of the mantle of legitimacy from General Donovan to Allen Dulles—bypassing the chiefs in between—the necessity for a large, permanent, and specialist intelligence service after 1945, and the fashion in which this was foolishly misunderstood by the Truman administration.⁶¹ The second generation of scholars has entirely challenged this view, and with effect. It has, for example, become clear that the break in the continuity of American intelligence between 1945 and 1951 was far less radical than the CIA myth had suggested, while the reputation of Allen Dulles and of the tradition of bureaucratic and operational buccaneering that he embodied have been badly shaken. The pendulum of scholarship is swinging so far that it threatens to replace new myths for old, substituting

59. Breckinridge, *The CIA and the U.S. Intelligence System*; Loch K. Johnson, *A Season of Inquiry: The Senate Intelligence Investigation* (Lexington, KY, 1985); idem, *America's Secret Power: The CIA in a Democratic Society* (Oxford, 1989); Anne Karalekas, *History of the Central Intelligence Agency* (Laguna Hills, CA, 1977); Ambrose, *Ike's Spies*; Thomas F. Troy, *Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency* (Frederick, MD, 1981).

60. Admiral Stansfield Turner, *Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition* (Boston, 1985); Woodward, *Veil*; Joseph E. Persico, *Casey: From the OSS to the CIA* (New York, 1990); Theodore Draper, *A Very Thin Line: The Iran-Contra Affairs* (New York, 1991); David D. Newsom, *The Soviet Brigade in Cuba: A Study in Political Diplomacy* (Bloomington, IN, 1987).

61. For a good example of such views see the declassified work of an official CIA historian, Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*.

bureaucracy for charisma and incompetence for brilliance. That trend certainly is indicated by Burton Hersh's *The Old Boys*, the most revisionist work yet attempted on the topic, and an ambitious one. Its reach, unfortunately, exceeds its grasp. Its great advantage is irreverence. Its great disadvantage is sensationalism. While useful reading to the serious student, it is far inferior to other more balanced works and also less devastating.⁶²

In particular, Bradley F. Smith has demonstrated that after 1945 there was no break in the continuity of what, at that time, was the central element in American intelligence, signals intelligence; that the OSS's success was limited (but, within those limits, genuine); and that Truman shut down the OSS because of accurate reports of these limits and fears about its penetration by British intelligence.⁶³ Subsequent research suggests that no intelligence service on earth was penetrated so thoroughly by the NKVD as the OSS.⁶⁴ Smith, along with Danny D. Jansen and Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, has also shown that the Truman administration recognized the need for effective human intelligence and assessment services and created them.⁶⁵ Smith, Sallie Pisani, and Robin Winks have illuminated the social, cultural, and political background to American intelligence and its odd relationships to academe. Their works are of particular significance to readers of *Diplomatic History*: They integrate intelligence with Cold War culture and thereby illuminate subterranean aspects of American policy after 1945. Another recent work in this vein by Barry M. Katz has a similar merit, though of a lesser sort: It is far more useful to students of American academe and the German intellectual diaspora than to historians of intelligence or the Cold War.⁶⁶ Sallie Pisani has revolutionized our understanding of the intelligence services as a source of information and a tool of policy between 1945 and 1949.⁶⁷

All this has been assisted by the first fruits of the CIA's moves toward reclassification of documents, the release of two internal official histories by Arthur B. Darling and Ludwell Lee Montague.⁶⁸ These works are of

62. Burton Hersh, *The Old Boys: The American Elite and the Origins of the CIA* (New York, 1992).

63. Bradley F. Smith, *The Shadow Warriors: O.S.S. and the Origins of the C.I.A.* (New York, 1983); idem, "An Idiosyncratic View of Where We Stand on the History of American Intelligence in the Early Post-1945 Era," *Intelligence and National Security* 3 (October 1988): 11–23.

64. Christopher M. Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story of its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev* (London, 1990), 302, 309.

65. In addition to the sources cited in footnote 63 see Danny D. Jansen and Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, "The Missouri Gang and the CIA," in Jeffreys-Jones and Lownie, eds., *North American Spies*, 123–42.

66. See the sources cited in footnote 63, along with Sallie Pisani, *The CIA and the Marshall Plan* (Lawrence, KS, 1991); Robin W. Winks, *Cloak & Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939–1961* (New York, 1987); and Barry M. Katz, *Foreign Intelligence: Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services, 1942–1945* (Cambridge, MA, 1989).

67. Pisani, *The CIA and the Marshall Plan*.

68. Arthur B. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency: An Instrument of Government, to 1950* (University Park, PA, 1990); Ludwell Lee Montague, *General Walter Bedell Smith as Director of Central Intelligence, October 1950–February 1953* (University Park, PA, 1992).

narrow value—they say virtually nothing about the collection of intelligence, for example. Neither will ever be read for pleasure, and only the most dour of students will embrace all of Darling. There is reason to think that Darling never understood the subject he should have been dealing with—intelligence—as opposed to the one with which he did deal—bureaucracy, while both of these writers contribute to the personality cults that seem to surround DCIs. Nonetheless, these works do illuminate the politics and organization within American intelligence between 1946 and 1953 and throw much incidental light on details.

A number of specialist works on the CIA discuss, accurately enough, specialist topics. For the “war of the defectors,” one of the most illuminating events in the history of the CIA, the pioneering work is David Martin’s *Wilderness of Mirrors*. Tom Mangold and, to a lesser extent, David Wise have also offered excellent accounts of this topic, although not necessarily accurate in every aspect; Edward Jay Epstein’s *Legend* rests on inaccurate assumptions, but much of the detail about the techniques of counterintelligence is good.⁶⁹ Alfred McCoy and Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall have provided useful introductions to the topic of the relationship between postwar American intelligence and the international drug trade. This literature is controversial: Much rubbish has been printed on this topic, and even more shown on the screen. Although McCoy and Scott and Marshall try to avoid sensationalism, their political views are clear, and details of their arguments may well be wrong. Moreover, of course, the CIA and even the Church Committee rejected such claims.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, it seems clear that on occasion the CIA has tolerated the drug trade conducted by its local allies, and for the reason identified by McCoy—“radical pragmatism.” William M. Leary, *Perilous Missions: Civil Air Transport and CIA Covert Operations in Asia*, and Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe*, address well-known aspects of the CIA’s work: the infrastructure for covert action and its work in the cultural Cold War.⁷¹ Above all, the body of writing on covert action is particularly substantial. This is far and away the topic most frequently referred to in the academic and popular literature on the CIA—so much so as to grossly imbalance our understanding

69. David Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors* (New York, 1980); Tom Mangold, *Cold Warrior: James Jesus Angleton: The CIA’s Master Spy Hunter* (New York, 1991); David Wise, *Molehunt: The Secret Search for Traitors that Shattered the CIA* (New York, 1992); Edward Jay Epstein, *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald* (New York, 1978).

70. Alfred W. McCoy with Cathleen B. Read and Leonard P. Adams II, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia* (New York, 1972); Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall, *Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies, and the CIA in Central America* (Berkeley, 1991).

71. William M. Leary, *Perilous Missions: Civil Air Transport and CIA Covert Operations in Asia* (University, AL, 1984); Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York, 1989). Coleman’s account should be augmented by the memoir of the CIA officer most involved in this campaign, Cord Meyer, *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA* (New York, 1980).

of the nature and significance of American intelligence since 1945.⁷² Any reader of this literature should always ask two questions: Why did this matter? and to whom?

There is also a voluminous memoir literature by members of the CIA, more than with any other espionage service in history or with veterans of American technical sources of intelligence during the Cold War. One can easily illustrate the various genres of this literature with good works. Joseph B. Smith and Frank Snepp represent the disillusioned and tell-all spirit of the 1970s. William Colby offers a strain of pride and apology. Philip Agee represents the extreme of revisionism – not surprising, from the CIA's only ideological defector to communism.⁷³ This literature covers all aspects of the CIA's history, especially the more sensational elements. It must be examined by any serious student of American intelligence during the Cold War.

For intelligence, the proof of the pudding is interpretation and use. Fundamental to that test is the need not to mistake the size of surviving documentation for significance. If and when all of the documents reach the public domain, historians will be swamped by daily and weekly, regular and

72. John Prados, *President's Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations since World War II* (New York, 1986) is the best specialist monograph. Gregory F. Treverton, *Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World* (New York, 1987), is also useful, if written from the "liberal" perspective. Valuable and accurate accounts of American covert action in Europe during the decade following 1945 are Trevor Barnes, "The Secret Cold War: The C.I.A. and American Foreign Policy in Europe, 1946–1956. Parts I and II," *Historical Journal* 24 (June 1981): 399–415 and 25 (September 1982): 649–70; James E. Miller, "Taking Off the Gloves: The United States and the Italian Elections of 1948," *Diplomatic History* 7 (Winter 1983): 35–55; David Smiley, *Albanian Assignment* (London, 1984); Michael W. Dravis, "Storming Fortress Albania: American Covert Operations in Microcosm, 1949–54," *Intelligence and National Security* 7 (October 1992): 425–42. Especially useful is Pisani, *The CIA and the Marshall Plan*. Specialist studies of covert action in the Third World are found in Douglas Little, "Cold War and Covert Action: The United States and Syria, 1945–1958," *Middle East Studies* 44 (Winter 1990): 51–75; David W. Lesch, *Syria and the United States: Eisenhower's Cold War in the Middle East* (Boulder, 1992); H. W. Brands, Jr., *Cold Warriors: Eisenhower's Generation and American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1988), 48–68; and idem, "The Limits of Manipulation: How the United States Didn't Topple Sukarno," *Journal of American History* 76 (December 1989): 785–808. There is a truly extraordinary volume of material on two cases. For Guatemala in 1954 see Richard H. Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin, TX, 1982); and Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Garden City, NY, 1982). The argument currently rests with Frederick W. Marks III, "The CIA and Castillo Armas in Guatemala, 1954: New Clues to an Old Puzzle," and Stephen G. Rabe, "The Clues Didn't Check Out: Commentary on 'The CIA and Castillo Armas,'" *Diplomatic History* 14 (Winter 1990): 67–95. Good introductions to the literature on the Bay of Pigs are Trumbull Higgins, *The Perfect Failure: Kennedy, Eisenhower, and the CIA at the Bay of Pigs* (New York, 1987); *Operation Zapata: The "Ultrasensitive" Report and Testimony of the Board of Inquiry on the Bay of Pigs*, intro. Luis Aguilar (Frederick, MD, 1981); Lucien S. Vandenberg, "The 'Confessions' of Allen Dulles: New Evidence on the Bay of Pigs," *Diplomatic History* 8 (Fall 1984): 365–75; and Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story* (New York, 1979), augmented by E. Howard Hunt, *Give Us This Day* (New Rochelle, NY, 1973).

73. Smith, *Portrait of a Cold Warrior*; Snepp, *Decent Interval*; William Colby and Peter Forbath, *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA* (New York, 1978); Agee, *Inside the Company*.

special summaries produced by dozens of bureaus on thousands of topics. Many of these estimates were waste paper, highest common denominator manuscripts written simply for the sake of form. In themselves, the writings of analysts indicate precisely nothing about the true motivations behind the actions of real decision makers. One has to prove the influence of these writings by thoroughly investigating the relations between staffs and statesmen. Professional analysts are well informed, but not necessarily important. And this fact produces a fundamental danger: that the significance of individuals and intelligence, and thus the nature of a whole decision-making process, will be distorted simply because we take some surviving historical artifacts to be the whole of historical decisions. This problem dogs even good and well-regarded studies of assessment.

Influence was a function not just of the accuracy of analysts but also of the politics of analysis. Competition between bureaus was continual, whether evinced in recurrent differences over analyses or in behavior during high-profile issues when, as Stansfield Turner put it, “the name of the game was getting credit for the scoop,” when an air force chief of intelligence could pursue “a best-seller.”⁷⁴ Although DCIs like Walter Bedell Smith, Allen Dulles, and William Casey found a steady market, others were less effective salesmen for their wares. Even Dwight Eisenhower, a president who respected professional assessments, reached his conclusions about the missile gap, in the words of one senior analyst, through “his reading of the available evidence (from U-2 photography and other sources) and feel for the Soviet Union.”⁷⁵ In cases where NIEs or less formal estimates are already available, as is often true of *FRUS* or the documents published by the National Security Archive, one can trace the effect of intelligence and assessments on strategic decisions. During the Cuban missile crisis, for example, the documents appear to indicate that intelligence was used in the classic fashion. It offered objective data that high-level decision makers queried to their own satisfaction, and once decision makers had defined their views, largely following expert opinion, intelligence fell silent.⁷⁶ None of this, however, was necessarily a general rule. Many presidents and their senior advisers loved to serve as their own analysts of raw material, especially communications intelligence. This stemmed in part from a mistrust after 1968 of the accuracy and value of the CIA’s analysts. Richard Nixon held that the CIA was crippled by a “muscle-bound bureaucracy which has completely paralyzed its brain” and by personnel drawn primarily from the “Ivy League and the Georgetown

74. Turner quoted in Newsom, *The Soviet Brigade in Cuba*; Hersh, “*The Target is Destroyed*,” 86.

75. Garthoff, *Assessing the Adversary*, 42.

76. Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (New York, 1992), 86–87, 97–99, 123; Scott A. Koch, ed., *CIA Cold War Records, Selected Estimates on the Soviet Union, 1950–1959* (Washington, 1993); Michael Warner, ed., *CIA Cold War Records, The CIA under Harry Truman* (Washington, 1994).

set.”⁷⁷ Stansfield Turner offered similar criticisms and, along with Zbigniew Brzezinski and two Ivy League academics who received privileged access to the files of CIA analysts, Robert Jervis and Richard Pipes, damned them for complacency and mediocrity.⁷⁸ Less damning but still damaging criticisms were made by analysts. Two retired senior veterans, Raymond Garthoff and Michael Herman, have attacked Western analyses during the Cold War era for focusing too narrowly on military matters, for making sweeping and crude assumptions about Soviet behavior, for ignoring diplomatic possibilities and Western strength, and for adopting a “consistently worst-case view of intentions.” Others, like David Sullivan, have seen the opposite phenomenon.⁷⁹ The estimates in question are now being released in increasing numbers. Anyone using these artifacts as evidence should remember the comments of those who produced and used them.

Raymond Garthoff has argued that scholars have paid “too little attention . . . to the subject of assessing the adversary.”⁸⁰ This claim is not entirely accurate. There is a useful literature on international assessments of strategic capabilities and intentions between 1900 and 1941.⁸¹ Although much work remains to be done on the period after 1945, the body of writing is large and good. The most promising sign of its maturity is, perhaps, the way in which the topic has been incorporated into a mainstream work. Melvyn P. Leffler’s recent and magisterial study, *A Preponderance of Power*, pays close attention to intelligence as a source of evidence and influence; his index includes entries for the CIA and for such concepts as “Threat Perception.” By comparing the record of assessment with that of decisions, he shows the relationship between the two in a thorough and sophisticated fashion—which, in the end, is the only way to determine the relationship between evidence and interpretation, perception and policy in the Cold War. Leffler’s study, a model for future work, integrates the literature on and evidence about intelligence into the Truman administration’s formula-

77. Bruce Oudes, ed., *FROM: The President: Richard Nixon’s Secret Files* (New York, 1989), 448.

78. Jervis cited in Woodward, *Veil*, 28, 108–11; Pipes cited in Godson, *Analysis and Estimates*, 175; Turner, *Secrecy and Democracy*, 194–204; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor, 1977–1981* (New York, 1983), 367.

79. Garthoff, *Assessing the Adversary*, 43–52; Michael Herman, “Intelligence and the Assessment of Military Capabilities: Reasonable Sufficiency or the Worst Case?” *Intelligence and National Security* 4 (October 1989): 765–99; David S. Sullivan, “Evaluating U.S. Intelligence Estimates” and “Discussion” in *Analysis and Estimates*, 49–83. These works also offer useful comments on the method of Western analysts, as do Michael Herman, “Intelligence and Policy: A Comment,” *Intelligence and National Security* 6 (January 1991): 229–39; Reginald Hibbert, “Intelligence and Policy,” *ibid.* 5 (January 1990): 125–39; Garthoff, *Intelligence Assessment and Policymaking*, 5; and Berkowitz and Goodman, *Strategic Intelligence*.

80. Garthoff, *Assessing the Adversary*, 52.

81. The best introduction is Ernest R. May, ed., *Knowing One’s Enemies: Intelligence Assessment before the Two World Wars* (Princeton, 1984).

tion and execution of American strategic policy.⁸² Several able studies, if by necessity resting on a weaker documentary base than Leffler's, have examined how such assessments affected general American policy toward nuclear weapons and the Soviet Union during large swathes of the Cold War. Specialist studies by Raymond Garthoff and Barry Steiner have augmented the classic works by Lawrence Freedman and John Prados.⁸³ This material is of fundamental importance to scholars of American policy after 1945. It illuminates American knowledge, information, and preconceptions and thus the entire perceptual root of the Cold War. Garthoff has concluded, for example, that during the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. government never understood the intentions behind Soviet nuclear policy.⁸⁴ That probably was true throughout the whole Cold War. American understanding of Soviet capabilities is a more complex matter, because this included not merely current deployed strength and characteristics of weapon systems but also current growth and technical developments of Soviet forces and thus their power at some point in the future. Between 1953 and 1961, the United States grossly exaggerated the existing size and current increments in Russian strategic forces. From the mid-1960s, it understood current deployed strength with tolerable accuracy but could not be sure of future strength or issues such as the throw-weight of weaponry more than a few years ahead. Thus, during the middle 1960s, the United States was grossly overoptimistic about growth rates in Soviet nuclear forces. Conversely, from the early 1970s the known unknowns about many highly technical issues remained a major source of controversy in American strategic policy.

The literature on American assessments of Soviet nuclear forces is quite good. The weakness in studies of intelligence estimates lies everywhere else. The few useful studies of the effect of assessments on American diplomacy since 1945 have focused on intelligence failures of a classic sort, such as with Tito's break with Stalin or the Iranian Revolution, rather than on successes, let alone the ambiguous realm in between where most cases of diplomatic intelligence fall and in which it has a subtle and odd influence.⁸⁵ There is ample room for further work in this area. Knowledge of the intelligence dimension will be necessary for any student of American foreign policy as a

82. Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, 1992).

83. Garthoff, *Intelligence Assessment and Policymaking*; idem, *Assessing the Adversary*; Barry H. Steiner, "American Intelligence and the Soviet ICBM Build-up: Another Look," *Intelligence and National Security* 8 (April 1993): 172–98; Lawrence Freedman, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat*, 2d ed. (Boulder, 1986); John Prados, *The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Intelligence Analysis and Russian Military Strength* (New York, 1982).

84. See the sources cited in footnote 79.

85. For well researched and analyzed instances see Robert M. Blum, "Surprised by Tito: The Anatomy of an Intelligence Failure," *Diplomatic History* 12 (Winter 1988): 39–57; Zachary Karabell, "'Inside the US Espionage Den': The US Embassy and the Fall of the Shah," *Intelligence and National Security* 8 (January 1993): 44–59; and Amir Taheri, *Nest of Spies: America's Journey to Disaster in Iran* (London, 1988).

whole, especially in the Third World. The same, of course, will be true for the military and strategic dimensions of American foreign policy, and here the literature is more advanced. The literature on American assessments of Soviet military spending is polemical in nature and rests on a fragmentary base of evidence.⁸⁶ There is virtually no academic literature on military intelligence services after 1945: The main exception is Patrick Mescall, "The Birth of the Defense Intelligence Agency."⁸⁷ Conversely, a small but good literature is beginning to emerge about American military assessments of conventional and guerrilla opponents, whether in Korea, Laos, or Western Europe. These works rest on a solid empirical basis and on a commendable attempt to explain clearly and precisely how such assessments affected decisions. In particular, though much remains to be said about American espionage during the second Indochina war, James Wirtz and Ronald Ford have offered powerful and revisionist examinations of American intelligence before the Tet Offensive. Their works combine an analytical framework derived from the strategic science and historical study of intelligence and a good base of primary research. They have demolished the idea that a corruption of intelligence led the American army to misunderstand the coming storm in late 1967. They have also addressed the causes and nature of the intelligence failure before the Tet Offensive, although they reach different conclusions on the topic.⁸⁸

Whatever its gaps, the literature on American intelligence during the Cold War is excellent by the standards of the study. It provides a surprisingly good picture of the structure, size, work, techniques, and internal politics of the intelligence services and of their relationship with decision makers. It also offers some hints as to how this material affected decisions, but not enough, and this territory for the first time is falling open to exploration. It is clear that much of the material provided by the intelligence services to their masters will fall into the public domain, at a time when

86. Useful introductions to this issue are Steven Rosefelde, *False Science: Underestimating the Soviet Arms Buildup: An Appraisal of the CIA's Direct Costing Effort, 1960-80* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1982); Franklyn D. Holzman, "Politics and Guesswork: CIA and DIA Estimates of Soviet Military Spending," *International Security* 14 (Fall 1989): 101-31; and idem, "Correspondence," *ibid.* (Spring 1990): 185-98.

87. Patrick Mescall, "The Birth of the Defence Intelligence Agency," in Jeffreys-Jones and Lownie, eds., *North American Spies*, 158-202.

88. James J. Wirtz, *The Tet Offensive: Intelligence Failure in War* (Ithaca, 1991); Ronald Ford, "Tet Revisited: The Strategy of the Communist Vietnamese," *Intelligence and National Security* 9 (April 1994): 242-86; idem, "Intelligence and the Significance of Khe Sanh," *ibid.* (forthcoming). See also Eliot A. Cohen, "'Only Half the Battle': American Intelligence and the Chinese Intervention in Korea, 1950," *Intelligence and National Security* 5 (January 1990): 129-49; Peter S. Usowski, "Intelligence Estimates and US Policy toward Laos, 1960-63," *ibid.* 6 (April 1991): 367-94; John S. Duffield, "The Soviet Military Threat to Western Europe: US Estimates in the 1950s and 1960s," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 15 (June 1992): 208-27; Rosemary Foot, "The Sino-American Conflict in Korea: The United States Assessment of China's Ability to Intervene in the War," *Asian Affairs* 14:2 (1983): 160-66; and Timothy N. Castle, *At War in the Shadow of Vietnam: U.S. Military Aid to the Royal Lao Government, 1955-1975* (New York, 1993).

scholars can still question some of the participants. This record may well be incomplete, especially regarding communications intelligence and its effect on diplomacy, but it probably will be a good record. There was an intelligence dimension to every aspect of American policy during the Cold War; historians have scarcely even begun to come to terms with it. This, the realm of assessment and use, is the area that merits most attention from scholars of American intelligence during the Cold War. It will concern all students of American policy.