INTELLIGENCE IN AN INSECURE WORLD
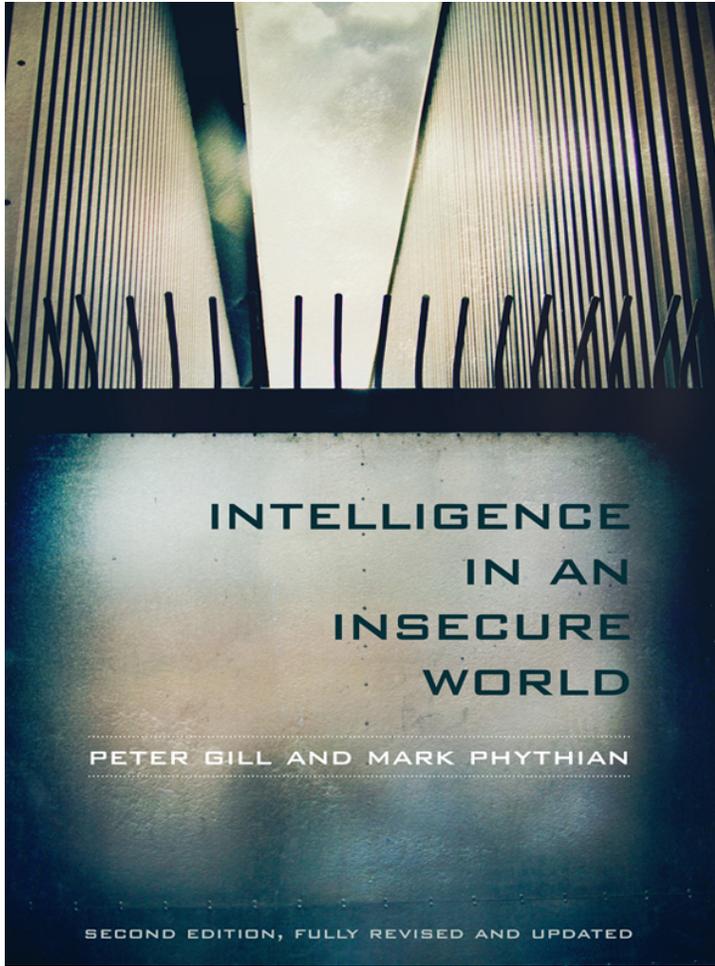
PETER GILL AND MARK PHYTHIAN

INTELLIGENCE IN AN INSECURE WORLD

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SECOND EDITION, FULLY REVISED AND UPDATED

Intelligence in an Insecure World

Second Edition

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Peter Gill: for Pen

Mark Phythian: to my parents, Vic and Mary Phythian

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Preface to the Second Edition

We commented in the preface to the first edition that intelligence is never far from the news headlines, and that continues to provide the context for this revision. We have sought to update the whole text but have also made some larger structural changes to reflect major developments in the study of intelligence. First, we have included a separate Introduction in which we describe the main developments in intelligence studies (IS) and try to assess the state of the art ten years after 9/11. Chapter 1 surveys the evolution of intelligence and considers how we define the term. One of the main developments discussed here is the extent to which scholars and practitioners are now challenging the model of the intelligence 'cycle' that has provided the bedrock for IS since serious studies began in the mid-twentieth century. The structure of chapter 2 remains essentially intact as we develop a conceptual framework for the study of intelligence. Chapter 3 provides an updated review of some of the main intelligence organizations both inside and outside the state as intelligence networks have continued to grow in scale and scope in recent years.

Chapter 4 examines the main methods of information gathering or collection. One of the main changes reflects the increasing significance of agencies accessing electronic information left by everybody in their daily lives; the other examines in much greater detail the major controversy generated by the US policy of extraordinary rendition of people suspected of being 'terrorists'. The kidnap and torture of 'enemies' in the search for information has a long and infamous history in intelligence, but its application on a

global scale under the name of 'international co-operation' has raised major legal and ethical questions. Chapter 5 deals with the analysis of information, the development of 'intelligence' and its dissemination. The analytical failures in relation to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq have led to much soul-searching in western intelligence agencies, and we examine that issue here as well as the attempt to make use of Web 2.0 technologies in order to enhance information sharing and analysis. We have 'upgraded' what was the final section of this chapter on action and policy into a more detailed consideration in chapter 6. In particular, this enables us to give due attention to perhaps the most significant development in security intelligence – the rapidly increasing use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs or drones) not just for purposes of monitoring or watching but also for killing those targeted.

Chapter 7 in the first edition was a case study of the intelligence 'failure' with respect to Iraq, and we still consider that here, but as part of a more general consideration both of how 'failure' is perceived and analysed and of its causes. The core of chapter 8 remains the issues of democratic control, but we have included a longer consideration of the question of how intelligence comes to be 'democratized' in former authoritarian regimes. We discuss also two cases in the UK which bring together a number of the book's themes. Both Binyam Mohamed and Rangzieb Ahmed found themselves subjected to torture in foreign jails with the apparent collusion of British intelligence agencies. Their cases illustrate starkly the challenge facing all of us in seeking to maintain some semblance of democratic control over enhanced intelligence networks. As before, chapter 9 seeks to draw our conclusions.

Our continuing involvement in seminars, workshops and conferences over the past few years, in which we have discussed many of the themes to be found here, leaves us

Abbreviations

Abbreviations are spelled out in full when they first appear. Those that appear at more than one point are listed here.

7/7	7 July 2005 London suicide bombings
9/11	11 September 2001 suicide attacks on New York, Washington, DC
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
AWACS	airborne warning and control system
BW	biological warfare
CBW	chemical and biological weapons
CCR	Center for Constitutional Rights (US)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
CoE	Council of Europe
COINTELPRO	Counter Intelligence Programs (FBI, 1950–1960s)
CSE	Communications Security Establishment (Canada)
CSIS	Canadian Security Intelligence Service
CTC	Counter Terrorism Command (UK)
CTC	Counterterrorism Center (US)
CTG	Counterterrorist Group (EU plus)
DCI	Director of Central Intelligence (US, 1947–2004)
DHS	Department of Homeland Security (US)
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency (US)

DIS	Defence Intelligence Staff (UK)
DNI	Director of National Intelligence (US, since 2005)
DoD	Department of Defense (US)
EP	European Parliament
EPIC	Electronic Privacy Information Center (US)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation (US)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency (US)
FRU	Force Research Unit (UK)
FSB	Federal Security Service (Russia)
GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters (UK)
GRU	Main Intelligence Directorate (military intelligence, Russia)
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (UK)
HUMINT	human intelligence
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICT	information and communication technology
IMINT	imagery intelligence
INR	Bureau of Intelligence and Research (US State Department)
IR	international relations
IS	intelligence studies
ISA	Intelligence Services Act 1994 (UK)
ISC	Intelligence and Security Committee (UK)
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence (Pakistan)
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee (UK)
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command (US)

JTAC	Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (UK, since 2003)
JWICS	Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System (US)
KGB	Committee of State Security (Soviet Union)
MASINT	measurement and signatures intelligence
MI5	Security Service (UK)
MI6	Secret Intelligence Service (UK)
NCCL	National Council for Civil Liberties (now Liberty, UK)
NCIS	National Criminal Intelligence Service (UK)
NCTC	National Counterterrorism Center (US)
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIC	National Intelligence Council (US)
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate (US)
NSA	National Security Agency/National Security Advisor (US)
NSC	National Security Council (US)
ODNI	Office of the Director of National Intelligence (US)
OEV	Operation Earnest Voice (US)
ONE	Office of National Estimates (US)
ORCON	originator control (the 'control principle')
OSINT	open source intelligence
PDB	President's Daily Brief (US)
PHIA	Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis (UK)
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PMC	private military companies
PROTINT	protected information

PSC	private security companies
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SIGINT	signals intelligence
SIRC	Security Intelligence Review Committee (Canada)
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service (also known as MI6, UK)
SOCA	Serious Organized Crime Agency (UK)
SSCI	Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (US)
TECHINT	technical intelligence
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicle
UDA	Ulster Defence Association (UK)
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission (on Iraqi WMD)
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

Introduction: The Development of Intelligence Studies

We thought it would be useful to include a new Introduction in this edition reflecting on the state of intelligence studies (IS). It is twenty years since Wesley Wark did something similar in his introduction to a special issue of *Intelligence and National Security* that was based on papers delivered at a conference in Toronto in 1991. Wark identified eight approaches to the study of intelligence: the research project; the historical project; the definitional project; the methodological project (applying social science concepts to intelligence); memoirs; the civil liberties project; investigative journalism; and the popular culture project.[1] Since then, we have seen steadily, at times rapidly, growing interest in and discussion of intelligence matters that has been driven not only by the pressure of events but also by greater academic research and increased teaching of relevant subjects. As we shall see, the term 'intelligence studies' is used advisedly since all those who have commented on its development agree that the field is multi- if not inter-disciplinary. This may reflect the relative youth of the field – until 1990 people outside the US will only have talked of 'intelligence history' – but it is also a strength. Many academic disciplines now contribute to IS by bringing their disciplinary concepts and methods to the party, and this is important in demystifying the study of intelligence. In its early days writing was dominated by ex-practitioners and the impression given was that intelligence was a unique

human activity. But intelligence is, at heart, an organizational activity and, with its special features such as secrecy, can be studied as such.

This survey is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the field but summarizes what seem to us to be the major currents in research. The recent growth in IS is reflected in a number of interesting articles examining the state of IS in various countries and languages. To a greater or lesser extent, the recent articles build on Wark's categories. Drawing on Wark, Scott, Kahn, Rudner, Denécé and Arboit, and Matey, we identify four main areas of work: research/historical; definitional/methodological; organizational/functional; and governance/policy.[2] The *research/historical* project continues to be dominant, at least outside the US, where the IS community has always been larger and more diverse. In the UK what has sometimes been described as the 'British school' of IS reflects not just the strength of the British community of historians but also that the two twentieth-century world wars provided much of the original raw material, as the strength of official secrecy ensured little on peacetime intelligence emerged before the 1990s and made the study of contemporary intelligence developments almost impossible. Academic writings based in part on released archives were supplemented by 'insider' accounts and memoirs of former practitioners, official histories, 'usually reliable sources' in which intelligence officers found willing journalists and writers such as Chapman Pincher and Nigel West to make their views public, and more critical accounts from writers such as Stephen Dorril.[3] Since the 'open government' initiative launched by Prime Minister John Major's administration in the early 1990s started to bear fruit, releases of files from the National Archives have accelerated, at least from MI5 and GCHQ, if not MI6.[4] There has been much more academic work, for example, by

former intelligence official Michael Herman, Richard Aldrich on UK/US co-operation in the Cold War and GCHQ, Phil Davies on MI6 and whistleblower contributions.[5] To celebrate their one hundredth anniversaries in 2009, both MI5 and MI6 commissioned official histories,[6] with all the potential and limitations that official sanction implies.[7] In some cases unofficial histories based on 'liberated' archives have been written, such as the collaboration between Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin on KGB material.[8] Finally, we would refer to the trove of information available in the reports of inquiries into intelligence on Iraq and 7/7 that we discuss in chapter 7.

David Kahn talks of a rebirth of French intelligence literature since the early 2000s, mainly regarding the Cold War and facilitated by new archive releases,[9] though Eric Denécé and Gérald Arboit note that IS is only in its infancy in France: intelligence has been viewed pejoratively and academics have approached it in a fragmentary fashion. They note the lack of a French intelligence culture and, very differently from the UK, that it is seen primarily as a domestic phenomenon – the problem of the 'enemy within'. Intelligence in France has been mistrusted since the Dreyfus affair and is still seen as subservient to political interests. Until the 1990s there were only memoirs and journalistic writings; even academic writing on French intelligence tended to be by foreigners, though subsequently academic output of history and other research subjects has increased.[10]

For Kahn the German intelligence literature is less extensive than the Francophone.[11] He notes the creation after reunification of the office for the administration of the Stasi archives, known as Gauck-Behörde; many volumes have been published and access to personal files is provided for victims and families.[12] The German literature is also primarily historical, and the International Intelligence

History group meets mainly in Germany and has published the *Journal of Intelligence History* since 2001. Gustavo Matey's discussion of IS in Spain is more normative in tone but notes a similar increase in interest since the end of the Cold War. Earlier IS was dominated by history and military studies, reinforced by books on intelligence scandals in the 1980s and 1990s. Matey suggests there are four broad main approaches to IS in Spain: the historical-military, the journalistic, the economic, and the international relations (IR)/political science (including philosophy and law).[13]

   Of course, the largest community of intelligence scholars is in the US, where historical research has also played an important part in the development of the field. Whereas in most countries history dominates, however, in the US it has been complemented by other concerns. Although the study of intelligence everywhere is hindered by the ubiquity of secrecy, as Jim Wirtz notes, compared to elsewhere, Americans are remarkably open about discussing intelligence processes.[14] He suggests this 'culture of openness' derives from a number of factors: the tradition of official post mortems into intelligence failures – there have been ten official inquiries into Pearl Harbor; investigations into intelligence 'scandals', such as those during 1975–6 into CIA and FBI operations and in the 1980s into the Iran–Contra affair; official use of classified information to justify policy – most recently and infamously, Colin Powell's highly misleading presentation on Iraq to the UN Security Council in February 2003; serial commissions and inquiries into how to 'fix' the US intelligence community; and leaks, of which the 2010 WikiLeaks case was on an especially massive scale.

   Martin Rudner notes that out of 1,800 research chairs in Canadian universities, there is not one in IS.[15] Nevertheless, in many respects the scholarly and research community in Canada is better developed than in any other country

outside the US. This can be seen in the very active Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies (CASIS), whose annual conference exceeds in size and interest anything that could be organized currently in Europe. There have been similar motivations for historical research to those in the US, including investigation of scandals – McDonald and O'Connor – edited work on historical archives such as those on *RCMP Security Bulletins* by Greg Kealey and Reg Whitaker,[16] and Wesley Wark's official history of the community – long completed but as yet unpublished because of opposition from one of the agencies.

The US contribution has been greater when it comes to the second project: *definitional/methodological*. Reflecting the youth of the field, definitional debates are still taking place.[17] While these seem overly pedantic to some, and others may well prefer the well-known 'duck' definition, these debates matter to the extent that they reflect serious questions of clarifying what is to be studied and why. For example, one key question is whether 'intelligence' should be defined purely as an information or knowledge process or whether it is also a power process involving policy and action. We take the latter view, but there are those who prefer the former (see chapter 1). Another important question is prompted by Wilhelm Agrell's observation that 'if everything is intelligence, then nothing is intelligence':[18] is 'intelligence' any different from the 'knowledge management' that is the bedrock of all state and corporate activities? If the answer is 'yes' then we must be able to specify what is different about intelligence. Similarly, what, if anything, is the difference between the intelligence process and the more general 'risk-assessment' process that accompanies everything from business takeovers and foreign investment to organizing school trips for children? We discuss these questions in chapter 1.

Before the 1990s, some researchers were already seeking to apply concepts from elsewhere in the social sciences to understanding intelligence, to explain its successes and failures – especially the latter – and to examine intelligence organizations and processes, especially with the normative aim of improving them.[19] The central concept of 'cycle' or process was developed as a mechanism for analysing how intelligence worked, or not, at various 'levels' – individual, organizational, societal (see further discussion in chapter 2). As we have noted, much consideration has been given to the issue of 'failure', starting with Betts' classic article,[20] which arguably provides a theoretical handle on our subject equivalent to the 'causes' of war in IR.[21] More recently, more researchers have applied other social science concepts; for example, Michael Herman, Phil Davies and Amy Zegart deploying ideas of organizational process; Gill using 'information control';[22] and our use of 'surveillance' as an underlying concept for the study of intelligence (see chapter 2). The main point is that intelligence is a pre-eminently social and political phenomenon and, therefore, there is no need for IS to reinvent the wheel.

Most of the historical work discussed above was essentially descriptive, but it provides the basis for the third project: the *organizational/functional*. Looking at the potential population of intelligence agencies that might have been written about, it is striking that some have received much more coverage than others. Probably reflecting the historical interest in international politics and war, foreign intelligence agencies are best covered, especially those gathering human intelligence and also involved in covert operations. More ink has probably been spilt on the CIA than on any other agency in the world.[23] Why is this? The analytical directorate of the CIA provided a home for many intellectuals who, on retirement, took the opportunity to reflect on and contribute to the debates

about the study of intelligence and intelligence reform. The operational side of the CIA, on the other hand, provided much of the material for discussing the more kinetic side of intelligence throughout the Cold War and after. Domestic agencies have received less coverage, although the counter-intelligence efforts of the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover have been much written about.[24] Outside of liberal democracies, agencies such as the Soviet KGB and GDR's Stasi combined foreign and domestic intelligence duties which were best described in the context of their respective 'counterintelligence' states.[25]

Apart from largely descriptive histories of agencies and the occasional attempts to explain how they function in terms of organizational processes that we referred to above, another goal of this project is the normative one of improving agency performance in terms of effectiveness and, hopefully, propriety. The balance between these goals is likely to be determined by the context. Where agencies are deemed to have failed, such as in the US in not preventing the 9/11 attacks, there has been great concentration on the inability of the FBI and CIA to co-operate. Efforts are likely to concentrate on recruitment and training – more people with broader language skills and cultural understanding of 'the other' must be recruited – and seeking organizational and/or technical solutions to problems of information sharing. Within the broader context of 'democratizing' agencies in former authoritarian regimes, emphasis has been placed on increasing the professionalism of intelligence officials. This involves replacing loyalty to a party or ideology with that to a notion of national security and public safety that reflects a genuine assessment of a country's needs rather than merely the security in office of a specific faction. Though the existence or not of such professionalism is a factor that normally distinguishes between intelligence agencies in democratic and

authoritarian regimes, agencies in some 'older' as well as 'newer' democracies have had to reassess the ethical component of professionalism in the wake of the extraordinary rendition scandal. A range of scholars, some ex-practitioners, have discussed these issues,[26] and the issue is considered throughout this book.

Given the fact that, compared with the rest of state bureaucracies, intelligence agencies have segregated themselves behind walls of secrecy, if their own methods of working were to change it would need to be because of their own internal dynamics. However, few organizations change themselves easily and, if reform or regression takes place, it is very likely to be the result of external pressure from other, government or civil society, actors. This relationship is the subject of the fourth project: *governance/policy*. This might be summarized in the questions: 'What impact does intelligence have on government, and what impact does government have on intelligence?' The first of these is part of the intelligence process referred to above. While much intelligence that is developed within agencies may go no further, the reason that states fund intelligence at all is so that they are better informed. Therefore, one central aspect of the literature, especially in the US, is the extent to which intelligence does or does not actually affect government policy. In the wake of the Iraq weapons of mass destruction (WMD) controversy, of course, there has been much study of the reverse: when policy determines what is defined as 'intelligence'. We discuss this in chapter 7. Not surprisingly, more of the work on this project has been conducted by IR and legal scholars. For most of the twentieth century the answer to the question of how much control and oversight of intelligence agencies was exercised by elected governments was: 'Not a lot.' But since the mid-1980s, a great deal more attention has been given to these questions, both in the older democracies where scandals

about the abuse of intelligence have led to reforms, and in post-authoritarian states where more democratic intelligence architectures have been constructed.[27]

Most of this governance literature to date, following on the historical research into single countries and single agencies, is concerned with issues of control and oversight of *state* intelligence. Current developments throw up new challenges for future research, however. First is the rapid growth of corporate intelligence represented mainly by the increased role of private security and military companies working on contract for governments or companies. While much of this work is clearly related to security as conventionally defined, much of it will also be in the area of 'economic intelligence', which has received less attention in the Anglo-American literature than in the more recent European literature, as we saw above in the cases of France and Spain. A second key area is international intelligence collaboration. The earliest work here discussed the post-war UKUSA Signals Intelligence Agreement between the US, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand,[28] but there is little literature on this question, mainly because it is one that all countries and agencies keep very secret. New urgency has been injected into the subject by the post-9/11 surge in collaboration, mainly at the behest of the US, vis-à-vis the perceived global threat of terrorism and the subsequent controversies around rendition and torture. Current arrangements for the control and oversight of international intelligence co-operation are, to put it mildly, underdeveloped.[29]

Finally, we come to the question: at whom is IS aimed? Within UK universities there are some courses in intelligence for undergraduates that usually reflect the interests of a specific member of staff and sit within broader courses on IR and politics. The main increase in security-related courses since 9/11 has been in 'terrorism' – for example, within law, criminology and IR – some of which may well include

aspects of intelligence. Paul Maddrell's 2003 survey of IS at UK universities identified twelve universities with an undergraduate module in some aspect of intelligence, studied by *c.*1,000 students.[30] We should note that different academic courses have different emphases: on the one hand, there are those seeking to advance the social science analysis of security intelligence as a social and political phenomenon – which is what we set out to do in this book; on the other hand, there are courses with a higher training component aimed at those already working in intelligence or hoping for such a career.

The oldest example of the latter, and the most extensive programme for undergraduates, is found in the US at the private university at Mercyhurst, where courses were developed specifically for those looking for a career in intelligence. In 1995 a non-profit Centre for Intelligence Research and Training was created to go after contracts, collaboration and grants, in part to give students experience of working with open sources through internships with companies such as Kroll. After 9/11 both the availability of jobs in the public and private sector and those willing to take them increased dramatically: the US intelligence community initiated a 'Center of Academic Excellence' programme in 2005 that involves ten US universities.[31] These are also mainly private – there is more resistance on the campuses of public universities to teaching intelligence.

Outside of the US, most courses are at postgraduate level. As part of the Spanish 'intelligence culture' project, Rey Juan Carlos III University in Madrid established a National Intelligence Centre and in 2005 established a Chair of Intelligence Services and Democratic Systems. In 2006 an Institute of Intelligence for Security and Defence was set up at Carlos III University in Madrid. These initiatives are sponsored as part of a broader 'intelligence culture' project by the Spanish intelligence service, the Centro Nacional de

Inteligencia (CNI). The first cohort of thirty graduates on the MA in intelligence analysis was taught by the two universities in 2009–10. There are still only six UK universities with specific postgraduate courses in intelligence – Aberystwyth, Birmingham, Brunel, Buckingham, King's College London and Salford – and something like 120– 50 students. The most recent additions to this list – Brunel and Buckingham – market themselves more explicitly towards existing practitioners or those who are aiming for a career in intelligence, while Salford deploys distance learning for part-time students already employed in military intelligence. Part of the programme at King's has been developed in response to the Butler Report's recommendations for reform of analyst training.[32]

This brief survey indicates that IS represents a healthy and growing activity of great relevance to contemporary security governance. At the same time IS faces continuing challenges. First, Anglo-American authors and subject matter continue to dominate the Anglophone literature. Take, for example, the eight volumes published by Praeger (*Strategic Intelligence*, 5 volumes, 2007), Routledge (*Handbook of Intelligence Studies*, 2007, and *Intelligence (Critical Concepts in Military, Strategic and Security Studies)*, 2010) and Oxford University Press (*The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*, 2010), all edited by Loch Johnson, which collectively can be regarded as the best guide to the state of the art. Some authors appear in more than one of these, but there are over 219 authors of the 205 articles; 75 per cent of the authors are US-based (94 per cent of the authors are US, UK or Canadian) and roughly 68 per cent of the articles concern US intelligence alone. Even allowing for recent history and the size of their respective intelligence and university sectors, we suggest this shows we are only slowly moving away from the Anglo-American-centrism that characterized the early

development of IS. As we have seen in this Introduction, there are increasing communities of scholars elsewhere and it is important that their work be recognized within the IS mainstream. Single-country studies still constitute the bulk of historical and current work; they provide the bedrock for IS, but we suggest a globalized world and increased intelligence co-operation cry out for more comparative work so that we can avoid simplistic assumptions about the relevance of the US or UK experience to countries with very different economic, political and social conditions.[33] In writing this revised edition we would have liked to draw more on literature other than the US and UK, but the significance of intelligence developments, especially regarding counterterrorism, has militated against that.

   In several European countries there is an explicit attempt to construct an 'intelligence culture' which reflects post-reform openness and seeks to develop not just increased awareness of the importance of a 'democratic intelligence' but also greater readiness by academics and other professionals to lend their expertise to the intelligence community.[34] In two countries, Romania and Spain, reformed agencies themselves sponsor these efforts through journals, conferences and academic courses; for example, *Inteligencia y seguridad: Revista de análisis y prospectiva* first appeared in 2006. Relations between intelligence agencies and academic institutions have not always been easy; indeed, relations between operations people and analysts *within* agencies have often been fraught. Discussing the CIA in its earliest days, Roger Hilsman noted: 'And they [practitioners] distrust the research man – they see the researcher as a long-haired academic, poring over musty books in dusty libraries far from the realities of practical life.'[35] And it does not seem that much changed in the following half century: in her analysis of the CIA's contribution to the 9/11 failure, Amy