

Studying the CIA: An Agenda for Research

by
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INTRODUCTION

As an area of inquiry the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has long been marked by an almost total absence of public and scholarly attention. This is no longer the case. The CIA has become the subject of a virtual information explosion. Revelations before the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, memoirs and exposés, and newspaper accounts have brought an end to the Agency's "splendid isolation." These writings have served as a valuable source of insights into the structure and operation of the CIA. Yet, on balance, one cannot help but feel that the insights produced to date are less than what they might be. A recent review of the literature by Roger Hilsman draws a similar and unencouraging conclusion.¹ Hilsman examines a broad range of recent writings on intelligence for their contribution to our understanding of intelligence as organization, information, knowledge, covert action, and of the role of secret intelligence in a free society. In his opinion, faults and shortcomings repeatedly negate the possible contributions that many of these works may have made to our understanding of intelligence.

These inadequacies are in a large measure due to the dominance of memoirs and exposés in the CIA literature.² A point of diminishing returns has been reached. The primary need is no longer for additional pieces of information, which memoirs and exposés are capable of providing but for frameworks and theories which will allow us to think creatively and thoughtfully about the CIA. This is not to say that very real data problems do not now exist or that they will not forever make research in this area difficult. These difficulties are well recognized and have often been cited by scholars and others as a reason for not studying the CIA. The position taken in this paper is that such an approach to intelligence policy generally, and the CIA specifically, is unwarranted and ill-advised in a democratic society.

As with the issues of nuclear power, arms control, and environmental health hazards, arguments for leaving the study of the CIA to the experts are based on a misreading of the nature of professional knowledge and the role of the professional in the policy process.³ Rationality and objectivity are commonly perceived to be the hallmarks of professional decision making. Yet, the process of "truth creation" engaged in by professionals is in reality quite similar to that frequently observed in the political arena. Frederick Mosher asserts that important decisions are likely to be the product of intra-professional deliberations and Morton Halperin adds that 'simple rules of thumb' (SOPs) and compromises often provide the basis for these decisions.⁴

Four related considerations point to the necessity of moving toward a more theoretically grounded and objective study of the CIA. First, additional facts will not make the correct answers any more self-evident. Facts are not self-interpreting. They gain meaning only when placed in a conceptual context which makes possible the categorization and ordered comparison of information. The development of conceptual frameworks is especially important in the study of the CIA because of the highly contradictory and often suspect nature of the assertions which can emerge from the "I was there when the decision was made" type of writing in international politics to which CIA memoirs and exposés belong.

Second, the limited amount of data available in the study of the CIA makes it imperative that frameworks and theories be employed to guide research efforts. The CIA will never be a subject as open to scholarly study as are other institutions in a democratic political system. To some extent data problems will always exist. They need not prevent research from being undertaken on the Agency, and there has already been a vast increase in the amount of information available. However, the use of theories and frameworks will further aid research, as the simplifying assumptions made in the construction of a theory or framework direct our attention to specific types and categories of information. Researchers are thereby relieved of the need to absorb all available information about the CIA; only that information relevant to the questions posed by the framework needs to be collected. Of course, this does not mean that the necessary information will be easily acquired, but it will serve to direct creative energies and thinking. Thus, researchers are more likely to emerge with answers to meaningful questions rather than to possess a surfeit of information relating only to trivial matters.

A third consideration relates to the needs of policy makers. Writing on the need for a policy science approach to the study of international politics, Alexander George notes that "it is all but impossible for short term problems to be taken truly *sui generis*; some amount of categorization, labeling, and comparison with past events is inevitable."⁵ Unfortunately, policy makers are not very good at learning from the past. They tend to apply oversimplified or irrelevant labels and concepts to the problem at hand.⁶ Well founded insights concerning the structure and operation of the CIA would be valuable to planners in a number of contemporary policy areas.

There are several areas which spring immediately to mind. For example, does controlling the CIA require a charter or are executive orders sufficient to guarantee compliance with laws and policy directives?⁷ Can a detailed charter be written given the nature of the intelligence function? Are there parallels between the problems of controlling the military and controlling the CIA which might help policy makers understand the options open to them and the consequences of their choices? Similar considerations relate to talk of "unleashing" the CIA. Unleashing would seem to imply that it has already

been brought under control, that its dynamics are properly understood, and that a consensus exists on the CIA's limitations and potential as an instrument of foreign policy. Taken as a whole, the CIA literature supports none of these inferences. There are also many problems associated with the arms control verification capability of the intelligence community.⁸ The competence and limitations of the United States' intelligence community in this capacity played a prominent role in the SALT II debate and are likely to remain a major point of dispute in future policy debates.

A final consideration in support of using theoretical frameworks to study the CIA is that, whether one acknowledges it or not, one makes use of theories in attempting to understand the world. The debate therefore should not be whether the CIA can be studied but what frameworks are best suited for adding to our knowledge of its underlying dynamics. Movement in this direction has begun, though, to date, the transition is incomplete.⁹ It has progressed furthest in the application of precepts drawn from psychology as the core framework for analyzing intelligence failure and strategic surprise. Elsewhere efforts continue to show the pull of the memoir and exposé approach to studying the CIA. This is most evident in the publication of conference and symposium papers.¹⁰ Contributions to these volumes, which are scholarly in approach and style, tend to be overwhelmed by articles which are almost completely lacking in references or theoretical frameworks. The conclusions drawn and the generalizations presented rely heavily on personal experiences. Often too, the articles and books are polemical in tone, being not so much studies of the CIA as pleas for the pro- or anti-CIA position.

The remainder of this piece will suggest bodies of literature and appropriate issues which hold the potential for increasing our knowledge about the CIA. Two broad categories of inquiry, covert action and intelligence estimating, will be explored. In each case the discussion is not meant to be exhaustive. It is only intended to spark interest in studying the CIA and to point to research questions and opportunities not currently being considered. Naturally, this brief survey offers no assurance that these avenues of research will, if pursued, uniformly produce significant findings. As Karl Deutsch points out, a concept is a command to search; it is not a guarantee of what shall be found.¹¹

COVERT ACTION

As a tool of statecraft, covert action has not received the quality of attention which has characterized writings on the military, economic and diplomatic aspects of policy. When pursuing the general discussion of covert action as a means of accomplishing set foreign policy goals, two conditions segregate it from other areas of inquiry. The first condition is a sense of historical uniqueness. The very term covert action is an American creation. Roy Godson noted that even in translation the concept is difficult to find and that it is explicitly rejected

in the Soviet Union where the concept "active measures" incorporates both covert and overt means of influencing people.¹² In the 1950s and 1960s covert action was embraced by American policy makers without any real appreciation of its past successes and failures.¹³ When the efficacy of covert actions as a policy tool was questioned and restrictions were placed on it, American policy makers seemed to assume that other states would share their new definition of the proper place of covert action in international relations. They thus reacted with anger to covert Soviet support for Third World revolutionary movements.

The second condition which has marked the literature dealing with covert action is a high degree of emotionalism. Here, too, the pendulum has swung from one extreme to another. Paul Blackstock remarked that at one time covert action and political warfare were terms not associated with Western interventionism. Rather they were employed "often in a mildly hysterical context" to condemn or expose totalitarianism.¹⁴ Today this "mildly hysterical context" remains but the focus has shifted to attacking Western actions with little or no comment being made regarding Soviet undertakings.

What is lacking is a well-developed, conceptual framework within which covert action can be placed and, as a second step, cogent critiques of that framework. Of those frameworks that do exist, most are of the cookbook nature which specify steps to be followed, tactics to be used, or typologies of means available to influence secretly the internal affairs of other nations.¹⁵ The difficulty with this "how to" approach is that it does not provide either a normative or instrumental basis for evaluating many of the assertions currently being made about the technique of covert action. Consider, for example, the following:

If action capabilities take time to develop, it is also important that, once in being, they be used or they will atrophy.¹⁶

The effectiveness of any intelligence service is directly proportional to the degree to which it is prepared to break the laws of its adversaries.¹⁷

Political assassination in times of peace has . . . no place in the American arsenal.¹⁸

Normative Standards

The justification for the use of covert action as an instrument of foreign policy has generally taken one of two forms. It is either contended that covert action is consistent with American values or that it is consistent with the values of the societies targeted and is therefore acceptable. Ernest Lefever, in arguing the former, suggests that the 'just war' doctrine provides a point of entry into the Western moral tradition which can be used to evaluate the acceptability of a covert action undertaking.¹⁹ He suggests that the 'just war' doctrine provides three standards which should be used in making this evaluation. First, is the objective of the action just? Second, are the means employed

both just and appropriate? Third, will the chances for peace be enhanced if the action succeeds? Without necessarily rejecting the 'just war' standard, Lefever's formulation can be found wanting in a number of respects.

Firstly, Lefever's approach begs the question of what is justice. He acknowledges that different definitions exist. He chooses as his starting point Western values as embodied in the United Nations Charter. Given the general lack of consensus on the norms of international law and the recent intense hostility of Third World states to the Western value system, justifying actions on these grounds seems ill-advised. To many who reject Western values this may appear as yet another manifestation of Western cultural chauvinism. To others, it may serve as the starting point for retaliatory actions. If the West can engage in covert actions because they are consistent with its values, the Third World may feel free to engage in violence and terrorism because it is consistent with its own value system.²⁰

Secondly, Lefever may be too quick to speak of the "Western moral tradition" in this context. Writers on international relations consistently speak of the uniqueness of the American style of conceptualizing foreign policy problems. Contrasts with many European states are especially vivid in the areas of war, peace, and the nature of world politics. These areas are especially germane to an evaluation of the acceptability of covert action as an instrument of influence. Lefever's formulation also leaves the question of who should authorize covert action unaddressed. To James Johnson the question of proper authority is a central feature of the 'just war' doctrine.²¹ This same question has also come to occupy a central place in the charter writing debate. Answering the question of who may authorize covert actions will be more of a political than philosophical undertaking, yet an answer must be provided by any approach which seeks to justify or forbid covert actions.

Thirdly, Lefever's treatment of appropriateness requires elaboration. While acknowledging that certain uses of force are categorically wrong, he presents no detailed outline for evaluating appropriateness. More than one path may be followed in constructing such a measure. The 'just war' doctrine suggests that standards be developed restricting the means employed (the principle of proportionality) and the targets of that violence (the principle of discrimination).²² Theodore Shackley takes a more instrumental approach. In speaking about the conduct of covert action in the incipient phase of a para-military conflict he states that his prescriptions might be termed cost effective because they "can save a significant loss of life in later phases . . . not to mention the independence of a sovereign state."²³

Finally Lefever fails to address the question of whether the 'just war' standard can be applied in conflict situations falling short of declared war. If the concept is not restricted to time of war, it easily degenerates into a rationalization for policy makers bent on using force. The CIA's (covert) support for the mining of Nicaraguan har-

bors illustrates the extent to which the 'just war' standard loses its supposedly universalistic moral grounding when applied outside of war. To United States policy makers the mining of the harbors was necessary to accomplish the nation's goals *vis-à-vis* the Sandinistas. The action was pictured as limited in nature and as not posing any danger to the civilian population. Nonetheless, to other states, and to many people in the United States, this action was an obvious violation of international law.

Adda Bozeman has adopted the opposite approach in seeking to find a justification for covert action.²⁴ She asserts that the U.S. relied too much on models and has over-generalized the American value system in formulating and carrying out foreign policy. Rather, the proper test of the fitness of an action lies with the context and the cultural and psychological properties of each particular controversy. For example, she chides William Colby for not recognizing that his Vietnam program was bound to fail "if it had to be carried out in strict compliance with American moral and legal standards." She then questions his prohibition of assassination or other violations of the rules of land warfare while engaging in a guerrilla war where such actions played an integral part.²⁵

Bozeman's approach to justifying covert action gives rise to two problems. The first involves diffusion. What will the impact of such actions be on American society? Will there be a return flow of ideas and actions developed in one cultural context back into the United States? If intelligence is viewed as a seamless web involving the interaction of intelligence estimating, collection, covert action, and counterintelligence, what will the impact of such activities be upon each of these activities? A second problem concerns the United States' actual ability to act in the manner which Bozeman suggests. Statecraft, she observes, "is in its entirety and everywhere a reflection of a given society's sustaining culture and value system." Is the U.S. capable of repeatedly stepping outside of its own sustaining culture and value system and adapting to the demands, opportunities, and restrictions of the world's many cultures without losing all sense of its own identity and purpose? If U.S. statecraft is rooted in the American value system, to what extent is it possible for Americans to act in ways alien to their nature without changing the entire value structure of American society?

Tactical Perspectives

The tactical literature on covert action is largely journalistic and argumentative, and is preoccupied with the para-military and guerrilla warfare aspects of the issue. A fundamental weakness of this literature has already been noted, namely, an inability to provide independent standards by which it can measure its own assertions. Further, there is a tendency to address questions of tactics in isolation, without reflecting on the broader policy issues which bear directly on the use and effectiveness of tactics. This is particularly notable in four

areas. First, control and responsibility are assumed, when, in fact, such assumptions appear to be unwarranted. The nature of the governmental and societal settings in which these operations tend to occur, added to organizational and personality factors, make slippage in the command and control process inevitable.²⁶ Similarly, the mechanics and conditions under which a covert action should be terminated is a topic in need of further study. Memoirs and exposés provide an overabundance of evidence indicating that very real problems exist in these areas.

Second, there is the question of the interaction between covert action and other forms of conflict such as conventional warfare and nuclear war. Does covert action forestall nuclear confrontation as Shackley suggests or does it speed a conflict up the escalation ladder?²⁷ Third, what is the mechanism by which one state becomes so involved in the affairs of another state that it undertakes a major program of intervention and how does this affect the selection and effectiveness of the tactics adopted.²⁸ Finally, how do the tactics of covert action and mechanisms for seizing power relate to the acquisition of legitimacy and credibility by those placed in positions of power?²⁹

One research strategy capable of providing answers to these types of questions is the use of focussed comparative case studies. Their use has already provided new insights into the areas of deterrence and the use of force as a political instrument.³⁰ For the reasons already noted, case studies of covert action have fallen short of the standards set by research in these areas. Movement in this direction, however, has taken place. Richard Immerman's recent study of the CIA-assisted overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala, while dealing essentially with only one case, contains insights into the strategy and tactics of covert actions upon which future studies might profitably build.³¹

Immerman's research reveals that neither the CIA nor American policy makers held any illusions about the difficulty of the task they were attempting or of the high risks it entailed. His work also reveals a capacity for clear thinking and an attention to detail on the part of American officials in putting together the covert action plan. From the outset the operation was seen as psychological and political rather than military. In selecting a leader for the "revolution" an effort was made to avoid too close an identification with either the old rightist regime or the military. Efforts were carefully targeted at the group upon which Arbenz was most dependent: the wealthy urban class which made up most of his officer corps. Attention was given to establishing an international climate supportive of an anti-Arbenz coup. Lastly, detailed control was exercised over all facets of the operation from gaining Eisenhower's approval for additional planes for bombing Guatemala City to engineering a series of juntas and resignations in order that the "right" candidate would emerge as the victor in the wake of Arbenz' resignation.

From Immerman's account we can identify not only the reasons

for success but also those for later failures. For all of their careful planning, United States policy makers made one fatal mistake in drawing lessons from their successful operation to remove Arbenz. They confused the necessary and sufficient conditions for the success of their operation against Arbenz. The careful attention to the details of the covert action plan, the control exercised over it, and the appreciation of the risks involved, were necessary for the success of the plan but were not sufficient to guarantee success. American policy makers did not appreciate the extent to which the success of their efforts were dependent upon circumstances within Guatemala. The CIA "reaped the harvest" of Arbenz' failure to institute real agricultural reforms which would have cemented ties between the regime and the oppressed Indian majority.

The United States paid a high price for confusing the necessary and sufficient conditions for success in the later Bay of Pigs invasion. Conventional accounts of the Bay of Pigs episode focus on the irrationalities and inconsistencies of the plan. Immerman argues that the CIA plan failed not because of deficiencies inherent in the plan but because of Castro's reaction to it. Castro and Che Guevara had both concluded that Arbenz' critical mistake was not pursuing reform forcefully enough. This left him vulnerable to pressure because he lacked a strong base of support from which to challenge the CIA sponsored revolutionaries. With such backing they were confident that the political and psychological impact of the CIA's operation would not have been sufficient to bring down the regime.

The potential offered by studies firmly grounded in the types of frameworks suggested in this essay for improving our understanding of intelligence estimating is also illustrated by two recent pieces of deception (an integral aspect of covert operations in all of its forms). Utilizing experimental evidence, mathematical models, and cognitive principles, the findings of Robert Axelrod and Richard Heuer point to conditions under which deception is likely to have its biggest payoff.³² Axelrod suggests that the rational timing of surprise requires that it be held back and used only when the stakes are high and the event is rare. One implication of this is, as he notes, that we must resign ourselves to having many of our assets wither away if our efforts at surprise are to succeed at the critical moment. Heuer suggests that deception is most likely to succeed when its purpose is to reinforce existing views rather than to alter them. He also asserts that because of cognitive biases perfect security is not necessary for deception to work. The very sensitivity to the possibility of deception makes people believe that strategic deception is more common than it really is. Both suggest that the use of Bayesian statistics is one means by which we can update our existing beliefs with new information and lessen the likelihood of surprise.

INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATING

Policy makers face an international system full of ambiguities and uncertainties. Intelligence estimating is an attempt to extract enough certainty from this ambiguity to allow policy makers to act. Bureaucratic behavior, misperceptions, wishful thinking, and the nature of world politics all combine to make this task a difficult one.³³ The historical record certainly suggests that "threat perception is rarely done well."³⁴ Even when the estimate is correct, there is no guarantee that policy makers will act in accordance with its findings. Placing intelligence into the policy process is easier said than done. Differences exist over the definition of intelligence (raw facts or evaluated information) and the place of intelligence in the policy process ("on top or on tap"). Difficulties such as these have led observers to conclude that intelligence failures will always be with us³⁵ and that the best we can expect is a "moderate improvement of average performance" in the intelligence process.³⁶

However, all agree that corrective measures, marginal though they may be, must be undertaken. The consequences of intelligence failures in an age of nuclear weapons and economic interdependence necessitate it. Though the information they contain is highly unstructured, CIA memoirs and exposés are a potentially rich addition to our understanding of intelligence estimating. Their use would provide a needed corrective to the all too frequent tendency to equate intelligence estimating with a formal document such as a "National Intelligence Estimate." Intelligence estimating is better viewed as a process in which the preparation of a document is only one step. Also involved are: setting of collection requirements, collecting information, processing and evaluating it, and disseminating the produce.³⁷ CIA memoirs and exposés provide some of the data needed to follow this process from its inception to its conclusion.

Strategic Surprise and Threat Perception

Strategic surprise and threat perception are the research concerns which have received the most systematic attention by those concerned with intelligence estimating. The first efforts in this area were case studies of specific instances of strategic surprise.³⁸ Since then work has proceeded on a number of levels. Michael Handel has sought to establish the outlines of a theoretical framework for investigating strategic surprise.³⁹ Klaus Knorr has also addressed this problem while adding a historical dimension to the study of threat perception.⁴⁰ An important recent contribution is provided by Lawrence Freedman's study of post-war United States estimates of the Soviet strategic threat.⁴¹ By investigating the process of threat perception over a long period of time and under conditions of "normalcy," his work provides a counterweight to studies which focus on a single event where the onset of hostilities is imminent.⁴² His work also provides a useful context in which to place the work of those who have focussed more narrowly on the debate over the accuracy of recent CIA estimates of the Soviet strategic threat.⁴³

Two important themes run through these works: the crucial role of psychological predispositions and the political nature of threat perception. Together they provide a point of entry for bringing studies of the CIA and society to bear on intelligence estimating. Cooper notes that forecasters and planners must operate within "the system" and that the crisis mentality of Washington makes their task difficult.⁴⁴ Freedman expands on this theme by noting that the willingness of an intelligence analyst to change his image of the adversary will depend on the political environment of the intelligence community.⁴⁵ Avi Shlaim broadens this observation one step further, asserting that the very image of the adversary and the perception of threat will be affected by the existing national consensus and prevailing social and political views.⁴⁶

Such forces can clearly be seen at work in the establishment of Team B.⁴⁷ Logically there is no reason not to have established, or now establish, a team which would operate from the assumption that the Soviets are nonexpansionist or concerned only with self protection. The Team B model of Soviet politics is not the only alternative model available. John Reshetar identifies three types of theories of Russian political behavior as well as five persistent syndromes to their behavior.⁴⁸ Used in conjunction with public documents, CIA memoirs and exposés offer the opportunity to observe the impact of perceptions and political influences on an intelligence estimate as well as to trace their roots back to broader societal and institutional influences.

Forecasting Literature

The policy relevance of many of the concepts, variables, and measurement techniques developed in academia have long been questioned by practitioners and scholars. Intelligence estimating is no exception. Knorr observes that taken as a group intelligence officers are not enthusiastic about social science contributions to their work, especially in the areas of interpretation and generalization.⁴⁹ Angelo Codevilla, of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, argues that "intelligence is a practical matter not a theoretical one."⁵⁰ Richard Pipes, head of the B Team, asserts that it is dangerous for intelligence analysts to search for models. A historian himself, he feels that history and the humanities are the proper training grounds for intelligence analysts.⁵¹ Michael O'Leary's study of the applicability of quantitative social science skills to the concerns of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research reaches similarly pessimistic conclusions about the policy relevance of scholarly research efforts in this field.⁵²

With observations such as these in mind, it is easier to understand why insights rooted in the heavily quantitative forecasting literature have been met with skepticism by those concerned with understanding and improving intelligence estimating. This rejection may be premature. William Ascher, in a recent review of forecasting efforts in such diverse forecasting fields as population, economics, energy, transportation, and technology, concluded that the choice of a meth-

odology is only of secondary importance or obvious after one's core assumptions are selected.⁵³ He maintains that these are the major determinants of a forecast's accuracy for two reasons. First, in line with our previous discussion, the expectations attached to sophisticated methodological techniques have exceeded their actual performance. Second, a technique or approach is rarely used alone or in isolation from other techniques or approaches. This produces a 'cancelling out effect' which reduces the unique contribution of any one technique. Following this logic, he concludes that different forecasts tend to emerge from different organizational settings, not because of any greater methodological accuracy, but because of different institutional biases. Approached from this perspective, the ability of forecasting literature to add to our understanding of intelligence estimating should not be readily dismissed. Both Lee and Freedman found assumptions played a central role in their studies of CIA estimates of the Soviet strategic threat⁵⁴ which suggests that much might be learned by systematically examining the ways in which core assumptions are developed, maintained and changed.

The Politicization of Intelligence

The utility of employing conceptual frameworks to study intelligence estimating can be illustrated by examining the charge frequently leveled against the Reagan administration, namely, that it has politicized the relationship between the policy maker and the analyst.⁵⁵ An understanding of the dynamics of the intelligence estimating process and of the governmental and domestic context within which the CIA operated reveals this charge to irrelevant. Intelligence estimating is and always has been politicized. What is occurring instead is the publicizing of intelligence estimating.

The intelligence function, even when narrowly defined, requires more than simply presenting policy makers with information. It requires that the information be analyzed and evaluated for its credibility and accuracy. In carrying out the intelligence function a division of labor between the analyst and policy maker is typically held to exist. The former uses professional expertise to evaluate information while the latter decides upon the appropriate course of action. Reality is quite different. Intelligence and policy are intrinsically linked. An apolitical relationship cannot and has not existed between the policy maker and the intelligence analyst.

Two forces guarantee that the relationship of the policy maker and the intelligence analyst will be political. The first force lies with the fundamental characteristics of bureaucracy. Harold Wilensky has observed that in all organizations hierarchy, specialization, and centralization are major sources of intelligence blockage and distortion. As definitive characteristics of bureaucracy, the inescapable conclusion is that intelligence failures are to some degree unavoidable. Policy makers clearly cannot accept such a fatalistic conclusion and must seek to extract high quality intelligence from their intelligence bur-

eaucracies. Wilensky suggests that typically this will require bypassing the organization's conventional ranking system. American presidents have taken Wilensky's observations to heart. While solutions have varied, the lesson learned is the same; the normal place of division of labor, SOP's, and areas of operational autonomy will often need to be displaced by the injection of overriding political considerations into the decision making process.⁵⁶

The second force is the nature of management in a public bureaucracy. Management in a public bureaucracy is unlike that in a nonpublic organization.⁵⁷ The distinguishing factor is the effect of political contact and influences on the internal structure and operation of the organization. This is especially true when examining the role of the president in the administrative process. An examination of presidential priorities and perspectives over the last several decades reveals two important developments for understanding the political nature of the relationship between policy maker and analyst. First, they have tended to be significantly different from those represented elsewhere, yet contemporaneously, in the political system. Second, in order to govern each president has felt compelled to use the White House as a base for mobilizing and building the equivalent of a presidential party.⁵⁸

These managerial considerations impinge on intelligence estimating in the evaluation of the intelligence product. Information may be accepted by the policy maker as true or false, but it will not be treated as neutral.⁵⁹ Information is a political resource; it does more than simply rationalize the decision making process. Information enhances authority, shapes careers, and is an instrument for building public support for policies. Most importantly, it is a source of power for both the policy maker and the analyst and is recognized as such by both. The result is that policy makers tend to adopt a defensive attitude toward evaluation and to stress politically oriented evaluative criteria.⁶⁰ Two evaluative considerations contemplated frequently by politicians deal with constituency reaction and mobilization of support for favorite policies; neither has much to do with intelligence.

Politicization is inevitable. Publicization as it currently exists is not. Steps can be taken to redress the imbalance between secrecy and publicity currently characterizing this policy area. Because the altered policy environment is, at best, only partly under the control of policy makers, efforts to curb the publicization of intelligence estimating directed at this level will not be likely to yield significant returns. Attention must be directed at altering the tactics and strategies employed by policy makers and analysts.

The policy maker must come to accept that a certain amount of bureaucratic "subversion" is inevitable. The bureaucrat faces multiple, and often competing, pressures in formulating a policy or course of action. Whether it be conceived of in terms of different types of responsibility (objective versus subjective) or competing imperatives (legal, bureaucratic-rational, consensual) tension between the policy

maker and the bureaucrat is inevitable. Rather than seek to eliminate these tensions or drive them underground, the policy maker must seek to channel and direct them into certain areas and to minimize their impact in others.

The intelligence analyst must come to accept as legitimate political directives in the structuring of the intelligence estimating process. They cannot nor should not be rejected out of hand. An acceptance of these realities by both parties would go far in limiting the pressures in publicizing the intelligence estimating process. Disagreements would not be ended but the "rules" for dealing with them would effectively eliminate the more negative consequences which publicization has had.

The unprecedented publicization of intelligence estimating can be traced to developments operating at two different levels. One set of forces grows out of the altered environment in which intelligence estimating is carried out. No matter how powerful they may appear, governmental agencies are only part of a larger political system and do not operate independently of it. Changes in the formal structure or norms of the political system will have an impact on how bureaucratic politics are played. The first change involves a dramatic shift in the conventional wisdom on the proper direction of organizational reform efforts. The move has been away from expanding bureaucratic autonomy and toward curtailing it. The goal is to make bureaucracies more responsible by bringing them back into the political system. A second and related change involves a generalized weakening of public faith in professional expertise. Scientific or technological measures are no longer readily accepted as the answers to modern problems. To many, they have become the source of problems rather than solutions. A third change stems from American policy in Vietnam and its impact on the elite consensus on the nature and purpose of American foreign policy. A fourth change lies in a reordering of the relationship between the media and government in the national security area. As was recently highlighted by the invasion of Grenada, the long-standing pattern of mutual trust and cooperation has been replaced by confrontation. Clandestine activity was among the first targets of this new breed of investigative journalism and has remained one of its staples.

A second level of explanation centers on the leadership styles developed by recent policy makers. While pursuing widely differing policy priorities, Presidents Carter and Reagan have followed a similar tactical path. Both successfully campaigned on anti-Washington themes and each has used the White House as a pulpit from which to preach his own political faith. Further, both attempted to overcome governmental resistance to their programs by going directly to the American people for support. An important element in this strategy has been the use of intelligence estimates to bolster a given case. The Reagan administration, for example, has relied on intelligence material in arguments about the presence of a Communist threat in Central

America and for Russian culpability in the shooting down of the Korean airliner. This has produced the inevitable reaction on the part of its opponents who publicly challenge these estimates and put forward competing ones.

The net result is that intelligence estimating has become a different type of issue than it had been in the past. Categorizing it, however, is not easy. Intelligence estimating had been traditionally viewed as a step in the policy process and did not fit neatly into any of the conventional typologies used to characterize public policies. The standard logic behind these typologies now suggests that a change has occurred as the key factor defining them is almost universally agreed to be the stakes involved.⁶¹ The distribution of winners and losers plus the division of costs and benefits among them is largely held to determine the decision making pattern and the allocation of influence.

In intelligence the stakes have changed. At a minimum, intelligence estimating has been transformed from an issue area in which: there existed a limited number of like minded actors, professional expertise dominated political directive, and, internal control mechanisms were relied upon. It has altered to one in which: a large number of actors are present who often hold conflicting value orientations, the dominance of professional expertise has become problematic, and, greater reliance is placed on external control mechanisms. Winners and losers have become easier to identify. The distribution of costs and benefits now fluctuates between zero sum and non-zero sum conditions. No development better symbolizes this change than the unprecedented inclusion of sections on intelligence in the 1976 Democratic Party and 1980 Republican Party platforms.

This movement toward the publicization of intelligence represents a real corrupting influence on the policy maker/analyst relationship. The negative impact of excessive secrecy on the quality of decision making is widely acknowledged.⁶² Excessive publicity holds equally undesirable consequences for intelligence estimating. It increases the likelihood that the potential abuses inherent in any political relationship will surface by expanding the range of permissible behavior and by altering the incentive structure for each party. Periodic outbursts of publicity—and the corresponding behavior patterns—have taken place with a great deal of regularity. The 1950s saw a very public intelligence debate over the “bomber gap” and then the “missile gap”. The 1970s saw highly contentious public intelligence debates over the ABM and Soviet MIRV capabilities.⁶³

Judging whether or not the Reagan administration has accelerated the process of publicization or is just blending it with an ongoing trend is less easy to establish conclusively. Still, the impression has been created that an acceleration has occurred. Two factors distinguish the Carter and Reagan administrations which reinforce this impression. First, there is the point in the life of the administration at which publicization began. While from the outset the Carter ad-

ministration sought to make intelligence estimates more available, it did not immediately go public with them on any highly controversial issues. Virtually from the outset the Reagan administration began publicly to use intelligence estimates to build a case for its foreign policy initiatives. Responsibility for yellow rain, the destruction of KAL 007, Soviet support for international terrorism, and Soviet and Cuban support for insurgencies in Central America are all topics which have been highly publicized during the Reagan administration.

Second, there is a difference in the vehemence with which controversial policies have been pursued. The Carter administration did not pursue a hard and fast line on foreign policy issues. The difficulties which it had in deciding upon a course of action dulled the impact of any one estimate. No position was ever the final one and compromises were always forthcoming. The Reagan administration has been far less yielding regarding its interpretation of intelligence or the policies it deems necessary. This has increased the importance of intelligence estimates in the policy process and made them a focal point for opponents. Challenging the premises of a policy becomes one of the few tactics holding any likelihood of influencing the development of policy.

SUMMARY

Covert action and intelligence estimating do not exhaust the range of issues which merit attention in studying the CIA. The nature of the relationship between the CIA and American society is a subject needing investigation. The literature on civil-military relations, the diffusion or spread of institutions and process from one society to another, and science, technology, and public policy are three potentially valuable sources of conceptual material for examining this relationship. Also worthy of additional study is the organizational nature of the CIA. Noticeably absent in the literature on the CIA are rigorous efforts to understand its organizational dimension. Instead one finds an overabundance of references to the presence of bureaucratic politics. An organization theory based perspective would provide an opportunity for a thorough examination of the interaction between the CIA's structure, decision making process, and product. To repeat the point made earlier, "being intelligent about secret intelligence agencies"⁶⁴ requires movement beyond memoirs and exposés. Along with public documents, they have substantially increased our knowledge about the CIA.⁶⁵ They cannot, however, take us as far as we need to go. For this we must begin integrating studies of the CIA into the broader literature in the political and social sciences. Whether pursued from one perspective or many, the results of studies of the CIA such as those suggested above cannot be expected to provide conclusive answers. The task now is to raise questions, nurture meaningful debate, and point the way for additional studies of the CIA and the intelligence community.

Footnotes

1. Roger Hilsman, "On Intelligence," *Armed Forces and Society*, 8 (Fall 1981), pp. 129-144.
2. For the dominance of the memoir and exposé literature see the review of the literature pieces by Harry Howe Ransom, "Being Intelligent About Secret Intelligence Agencies," *American Political Science Review*, 74 (March 1980), pp. 141-148, and David Hunter, "The Evolution of Literature on United States Intelligence," *American Forces and Society*, 5 (November 1978), pp. 31-57.
3. Dorothy Neklin, "The Political Impact of Technical Expertise," *Social Studies of Science*, 5 (February 1975), p. 36.
4. On these points see Frederick Mosher, *Democracy and the Public Service* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968) and Morton Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1974).
5. Alexander George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 616-642.
6. Ernest May, *Lessons of the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).
7. For two views on the charter writing effort see Angelo Codevilla, "Reforms and Proposals for Reform," in Roy Godson (ed.), *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s: Elements of Intelligence*, revised edition (New York: National Strategy Information Center, 1982), pp. 93-112, and Grayson McCouch, "Naming Names: Unauthorized Disclosure of Intelligence Agents' Identities," *Stanford Law Review*, 33 (April 1981), pp. 693-713.
8. For a general discussion of the verification issue see Jasper Welch, "Verification," in Robert Pfaltzgraff, Uri Ra'anan, and Warren Milberg (eds.), *Intelligence Policy and National Security* (Hamden, Connecticut: Anchon Books, 1981), pp. 313-142. For a controversial argument about planned deception in the verification process see William Harris, "Counterintelligence Jurisdiction and the Double Cross System by National Technical Means," in Roy Godson (ed.), *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s: Counterintelligence* (Washington, D.C.: National Strategy Information Center, 1980), pp. 53-82.
9. For two recent examples of such research efforts see William Waegel, M. David Ermann, and Alan Horowitz, "Organizational Responses to Imputations of Deviance," *Sociological Quarterly*, 22 (Winter 1981), pp. 43-56; and Dan Felsenthal, "Applying the Redundancy Concept to Administrative Organizations," *Public Administration Review*, 40 (May/June 1980), pp. 247-252. The memoir literature continues to flourish. The most recent major addition is James Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1982).
10. See, for example, the series *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s* edited by Roy Godson; Pfaltzgraff, et al., *Intelligence Policy and National Security*; and, Robert Borosage and Jon Marks (eds.), *The CIA File* (New York: Crossman, 1976).
11. Karl Deutsch, *The Analysis of International Relations* (2nd ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1978), p. 14.
12. Roy Godson, "Covert Action: An Introduction," in Roy Godson (ed.), *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s: Covert Action* (Washington, D.C.: National Security Information Center, 1981), p. 2.
13. Paul Blackstock, *The Strategy of Subversion: Manipulating the Politics of Other Nations* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. 23.
14. *ibid.*, p. 36.
15. For two of the most recent efforts of this kind see the paper by Angelo Codevilla in *Intelligence Requirements for 1980s: Covert Action*, pp. 79-104; and Theodore Shackley, *The Third Option* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1981). An early example of such an approach can be found in the appendix to Victor Marchetti and John Marks (eds.), *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* (New York: Dell, 1975) where the minutes from Richard Bissell's 1968 meeting with the Council on Foreign Relations are reproduced, pp. 357-376.

16. Hugh Tovar, "Covert Action," in Roy Godson (ed.), *Intelligence for the 1980s: Elements of Intelligence* (Washington, D.C.: National Strategy Information Center, 1979), p. 75.
17. Ladislav Bittman, "Soviet Bloc 'Disinformation' and Other Active Measures," in *Intelligence Policy and National Security*, p. 214.
18. Cord Meyer, *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), p. 219.
19. Ernest Lefever, "Can Covert Action be Just," *Policy Review*, 12 (Spring 1980), pp. 115-122.
20. On the centrality of violence to most of the world's cultures see Adda Bozeman, *The Future of International Law in a Multicultural World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).
21. James Johnson, *Ideology, Reason and Limitation of War: Religious and Secular Concepts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 26.
22. Francis Beer, *Peace Against War* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1981), pp. 88-97.
23. Shackley, *The Third Option*, p. 75.
24. Paper by Adda Bozeman in *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s: Covert Action*, pp. 15-78.
25. *ibid.*, p. 23.
26. John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies* (New York: Norton, 1978), illustrates such problems in his account of CIA activity in Angola.
27. Shackley, *The Third Option*, p. 13.
28. K. J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis* (3rd ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977), p. 278.
29. Blackstock, *The Strategy of Subversion*, p. 159.
30. On deterrence see Alexander George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press). On the use of force as a political instrument see Barry Blechman and Stephen Kaplan, *Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1978).
31. Richard Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).
32. Robert Axelrod, "The Rational Timing of Surprise," *World Politics*, 31 (January 1979), pp. 228-246, and Richard Heuer, Jr., "Strategic Deception and Counter-deception," *International Studies Quarterly*, 25 (June 1981), pp. 294-327.
33. For a thoughtful discussion of these problems see Richard Betts, "Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable," *World Politics*, 31 (October 1978), pp. 61-89.
34. Klaus Knorr, "Threat Perception," in Klaus Knorr (ed.), *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1976), p. 97.
35. See, for example, "Analysis, War and Decision."
36. Klaus Knorr, "Strategic Intelligence: Problems and Remedies," in Lawrence Martin (ed.), *Strategic Thought in the Nuclear Age* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 84.
37. Harry Howe Ransom, *The Intelligence Establishment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).
38. The pioneering work here is Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962). The most significant recent addition to this literature is Richard Betts, *Surprise Attack* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1982).
39. Paper by Michael Handel, in *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s: Analysis and Estimates*, pp. 85-111.

40. Knorr, "Threat Perception," in *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems*, pp. 78-119.
41. Lawrence, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977).
42. In addition to Wohlstetter's Pearl Harbor study the other leading work is Barton Whaley, *Codeword BARBAROSA* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973).
43. See for example William R. Lee, *Understanding the Soviet Military Threat: How CIA Estimates Went Astray*, Agenda Paper 6 (New York: National Strategy Information Center, 1977).
44. Chester Cooper, "Micawber versus de Jouvenel: Planning and Forecasting in the Real World of Washington," in Nazli Chourci and Thomas Robinson (eds.), *Forecasting in International Relations* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1978), pp. 337-351.
45. Freedman, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat*, p. 185.
46. Avi Shlaim, "Failure in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Yom Kippur War," *World Politics*, 28 (April 1976), pp. 348-380.
47. For an overview of Team B see the article by David Binder in the *New York Times*, December 26, 1976. It is reprinted as Appendix B in Lee, *Understanding the Soviet Military Threat*, pp. 63-69.
48. John Reshetar, Jr., *The Soviet Policy* (2nd ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1978).
49. Klaus Knorr, *Foreign Intelligence and the Social Sciences*, Research Monograph 17 (Princeton: Center of Intelligence Studies, 1964).
50. Codevilla, in *Intelligence Requirements of the 1980s: Analysis and Estimates*, p. 12.
51. Pipes, *ibid.*, p. 172.
52. Michael K. O'Leary, et al., "The Quest for Relevance: Quantative International Relations Research and Government Foreign Affairs Analysis," *International Studies Quarterly*, 18 (June 1974), pp. 211-238.
53. William Ascher, *Forecasting: An Appraisal for Policy Makers and Planners* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).
54. Lee, *Understanding the Soviet Military Threat*; and, Freedman, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat*.
55. A fuller treatment of this issue is found in Glenn Hastedt, "Intelligence Estimating in the Reagan Administration," paper presented at the 44th American Society for Public Administration Conference, New York, 1983.
56. Harold Wilensky, *Organizational Intelligence* (New York: Basic Books, 1967).
57. Stephen Hess, *Organizing the Presidency* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1976), p. 147.
58. Hugh Heclo and Lester Salamon, *The Illusion of Presidential Government* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), pp. 9, 239.
59. Wilensky, *Organizational Intelligence*.
60. Robert Nakamura and Frank Smallwood, *The Politics of Policy Implementation* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1980), pp. 68-76.
61. Theodore Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies, and Political Theory," *World Politics*, 16 (October 1964), pp. 677-715, and Randall Ripley and Grace Franklin, *Congress, the Bureaucracy, and Public Policy* (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1980).
62. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*.
63. John Prados, *The Soviet Estimate* (New York: Dial Press, 1982).
64. From the title of Ransom's review of the literature article cited in fn. 2.
65. One excellent volume of public documents needs to be mentioned in this regard. It is Tyrus Fain, *The Intelligence Community, History, Organization, Ideas* (New York: Bowker, 1977).