Towards the Comparative Study of Intelligence

by
Glenn P. Hastedt

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental assumption of the comparative method is that true insight into the nature of political ideas, institutions, and processes is not possible if a subject is viewed in isolation from similar phenomena. Only by making comparisons can one come to appreciate what is a unique or a shared characteristic. Where advocates of the comparative method differ is over questions of: first, what should be compared; second, the type of data needed to engage in comparative research; third, how the comparison should be carried out, that is, what is a proper framework within which to make comparisons; fourth, whether the stress should be on emphasizing what is unique versus what is common; and finally, the purpose that guides the analysis, should it be strictly empirical or should a normative dimension also be present?

The comparative study of intelligence is in its fledgling stages and nothing approaching a consensus exists on how to answer any of these questions. The questions themselves have barely been posed. The aim of this article is twofold. The first and principal aim is to bring these questions into clearer focus. This will be done by highlighting the key conceptual issues facing the comparative study of intelligence in each of these areas and indicating the way in which the field has answered them to this point in time. The second objective is to indicate avenues of future research. A discussion along these two lines is particularly timely given the increased interest in intelligence and the surge in writings on non-American intelligence organizations. Together these two developments provide a "window of opportunity" to move beyond the single country case study approach which currently serves as the dominant mode of inquiry in the field of intelligence.

The country studied most is the United States, and the CIA has received the lion's share of the attention. To the extent that questions of focus, purpose, framework, and commonality were raised, they were cast in terms of an analysis of phases in the study of US intelligence. In 1978 David Hunter identified three chronologically ordered periods: a pro-intelligence phase; an anti-intelligence phase; and a period of reform and reaction.[1] Writing in 1980, Harry Ransom divided the post-1974 literature on US intelligence into four categories: pro-intelligence memoirs written by former intelligence professionals; "whistle-blowing exposes"; efforts by social scientists to objectively analyze intelligence activities; and, governmental studies and reports.[2] Regrettably, these works did not build upon one another in any meaningful sense. Hunter concluded that with only a few exceptions the work reviewed tended to divide along moral lines with fervent true-believers both defending and attacking US intelligence agencies. Ransom concluded his review by observing that the functions of intelligence represent the largest gap in our under-

standing of how foreign policy is made. He struck a more positive note in a 1986 review of the literature on intelligence noting that an ample bibliography now existed which could support research on intelligence, but that "theory remains weak and tentative, and the secrecy of evidence remains a formidable problem."[3]

This heavy focus on US intelligence was a product of several factors not the least of which was the paucity of work done on non-United States intelligence services. This situation of a near US monopoly on the study of intelligence no longer exists. Treatments of British and Canadian intelligence have progressed to the point that Stuart Farson is able to speak of the existence of national perceptions on intelligence and to contrast them with the American school of thought.[4] Among other western democracies, data is also available on the activities and history of the French, West German, Australian, and Israeli intelligence organizations. More and more is known about the particulars of Soviet intelligence due to recent studies into its history, methods of operation, and relationship to the Communist Party. Tentative steps have also been taken toward analyzing intelligence organizations in developing states. While the quality of these efforts varies not only from country to country but from study to study, their emergence is an indication that the comparative study of intelligence can no longer be dismissed as an impossible task.[5]

Parallel to this increased academic interest in non-United States intelligence organizations has come a realization on the part of policy-makers and the informed public that intelligence-centered policy problems do not respect national boundaries. The comfortable fiction that illegal domestic activities were the product of a uniquely American setting crumbled in the face of revelations of lawlessness by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Israeli Shin Bet. The 1973 Yom Kippur War and the 1982 Falkland/Malvinas War demonstrated that the United States also does not have a monopoly on intelligence failures. Reversing the direction of this learning process, the "year of the spy" demonstrated to Americans two fundamental truths about intelligence. First, it is not only the British, French, or Germans whose intelligence services can be infiltrated by spies. Second, spies work not only for opponents (as John Walker did for the Soviet Union), but also for allies (as Jonathan Pollard did for Israel).

A final force driving the comparative study of intelligence is the rapidly changing nature of the international system. The study of modern intelligence organizations is a product of the post-World War II Cold War international system in which competition and the presence of a powerful and hostile enemy largely were treated as givens. More historically oriented treatments of intelligence tend to share this anchoring point as they are often cast in terms of negative consequences that the repeated neglect of intelligence in peacetime has had on American and British war efforts. The emergence of a post-Cold War international system and the very real fiscal constraints faced by most states raise many questions about the relevance, place, and operation of intelligence organizations in a state's foreign policy: who, or what, is the enemy; what is the role of covert action in defeating this enemy; what types

of surprise must be guarded against in this new international system; can the traditional distinction between domestic and foreign policy be maintained and if not what does their merger mean for the counter-intelligence operations of intelligence services; is there a "peace dividend" within the intelligence budget; and what type of control mechanisms are needed?

The following sections will address each of the questions about the comparative method raised at the outset of the paper in the area of intelligence.

WHAT IS TO BE COMPARED?

The most basic question to be answered in the comparative study of intelligence is what is to be compared. At issue is the definition of intelligence. Remarkably little agreement exists on how to define intelligence, with many accounts employing a type of atmospheric definition in which the term intelligence is left undefined but understood to include espionage, covert action, and analyzing information. As any review of the study of power in the field of international relations makes clear, this condition of key terms being left undefined is not unique to intelligence nor will it necessarily disappear with the passage of time. One of the most often employed undefintions of intelligence is to treat it as synonymous with organization. From one perspective this approach is perfectly valid. Both Harry Ransom and Sherman Kent, two pioneers in the study of intelligence, identify this as *one* way in which intelligence can be understood. The danger that must be guarded against in doing so is neglecting the other dimensions of intelligence that these authors identified. For Ransom they are process and product.[6] Kent sees them as being knowledge and activity.[7] As will be noted below, inattention to these other dimensions is justified only if all intelligence organizations operate in the same manner, respond to the same forces, and carry out the same tasks. If this is not the case then one's analysis could produce misleading comparisons between dissimilar intelligence organizations.

Disagreement over the meaning of intelligence is not lessened when the focus is on functions rather than structure. Where Ransom and Kent define intelligence largely in information gathering and processing terms, Roy Godson argues that properly understood intelligence involves the synergistic interaction of four elements: analysis, clandestine collection, counter-intelligence, and covert action. While acknowledging that intelligence organizations engage in covert action, many quarrel with its definitional inclusion as a part of intelligence. If Godson is correct, then the perspective adopted by many researchers must be broadened to include covert action in their analysis. But, if he is not, then covert action should be separated out. In that case, one option would be to treat covert action as a separate instrument of foreign policy in the same manner as diplomacy, economic sanctions, and the use of military force are studied.[8]

A major obstacle that the study of intelligence has had to overcome is the public's perception that intelligence and covert action are equivalent terms. Serious studies of covert action are still relatively rare. Yet, there is

no reason that this cannot be done, in a comparative context. For example, David Charters notes the tension between the operational style inherent in the clandestine collection of intelligence and that associated with covert paramilitary operations, and that both are housed within the same directorate in the CIA. He suggests the British approach, which assigns paramilitary covert action to the Army's special forces, might be an appropriate model for those who are seeking alternatives that would minimize intelligence failures brought about by the conflict between these two styles of thinking and acting.[9]

Though it has received less attention than the question of including covert action in the definition of intelligence, a case can also be made that counterintelligence should be separated out. The reason for doing so is that counterintelligence may be viewed as essentially a law enforcement undertaking and that this task should be given to law enforcement agencies. As Marion Doss notes in his discussion of the subject, counterintelligence has frequently emerged as an aspect of intelligence by historical accident.[10] Moreover, the proper definition and organization of counterintelligence has often been the subject of political and bureaucratic controversy. This was the case in the United States when the FBI and CIA both sought preeminence in the field, and when the Reagan transition team advocated the centralization of counterintelligence within the intelligence community, and also in Canada when the decision was made to remove counterintelligence from the purview of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Embedded in such debates are three issues which are seldom made explicit. First, who is the enemy? Is it other states; is it found among one's own people; or is it ideas? Second, is counterintelligence a passive, preventative, and reactive type of activity or does it also include an activist dimension in which one seeks to entrap an enemy or manipulate its performance? Third, what priority ought to be given to the counterintelligence function? Is it an absolute value in whose name civil liberties must be sacrificed or curbed, or is it a relative value whose merits must be decided on a case by case basis?

Adda Bozeman brings still another perspective to the problem of defining intelligence. She contends that breaking intelligence into functional categories and focusing on external threats to national security reflects a peculiarly Western and biased notion of the role intelligence plays in government. It is her view that intelligence stands for "knowing the enemy" and that because in non-Western societies knowing the enemy is synonymous with fighting him, "the conclusion is tenable that intelligence stands for warfare of one kind or another."[11]

WHAT TYPE OF DATA IS NEEDED?

Bridging the tasks of defining what is being studied and deciding upon how to study it is the requirement for data. The core of the data base for comparative studies of intelligence is no different from that in other areas of investigation: government documents, journal and newspaper accounts of events; and memoirs. Government secrecy in the national security area and

the habitual over-classification of documents are obstacles frequently encountered by researchers and are often cited as insurmountable barriers to the development of intelligence as a field of study. Christopher Andrew has spoken eloquently on this point in his account of historical research on the British intelligence community. He concludes, however, that the immediate priority for research on intelligence lies not with gaining greater access to government documents but with obtaining oral histories from those involved in intelligence work.[12] The documents will always be available, the intelligence professionals will not. Oral histories, however, are not necessarily a cure-all for the absence of documents (which may never become available). Intelligence professionals will disagree with one another and these accounts are as potentially unreliable as are memoirs and other sources.

Conceptual frameworks which demand data that cannot be obtained are of limited value and are soon abandoned by researchers in favor of less demanding ones. The requirement is not only for obtainable data but for reliable data. Even after information on the US intelligence community became more readily available, problems in this area continued (and still continue) to plague research on US intelligence. Particularly revealing is a reading of David Atlee Phillips' *The Night Watch* and Philip Agee's *Inside the Company*.[13] The former is a retired intelligence professional who founded the Association of Former Intelligence Officers to lobby on behalf of a strong intelligence establishment while the latter is a disillusioned CIA officer. Their careers crossed paths on more than one occasion and their autobiographies often present dissimilar accounts of the same event.

Data problems become even more acute when the analysis is cast in comparative terms. What sources should one turn to for authoritative accounts of Soviet intelligence? Can pieces authored or co-authored by defectors be considered trustworthy? What happens when defectors disagree? The problem is not just one of making comparisons that involve non-Western states. It was also long evident in the literature on British intelligence. Because of the Official Secrets Act the majority of writings on British intelligence have been historical in nature and rarely dealt with the post-World War II era. When they did, there was a fixation on the Kim Philby affair and the search for spies within British intelligence.[14] Today this has changed. The "British school" is increasingly focusing its attention on such political topics as cooperation with the US, counterinsurgency campaigns, and British efforts to maintain its global or "imperial" intelligence networks in a period of imperial decline.[15]

While the limiting affect of data restrictions on the comparative study of intelligence must be acknowledged it cannot, and should not, prevent such inquiries from taking place. One cannot accept, for example, the negative attitude expressed by Russell Bowen, a retired intelligence analyst, who asserts that there are only four types of intelligence studies written outside the intelligence community: those written by academics interested in the subject but who know nothing about intelligence; accounts by former intelligence officers who know about intelligence but have an axe to grind; studies by journalists who have little background; and those of talented amateurs who

also have little background.[16] Not only is this position incompatible with the principles of popular control of government and political accountability but it also misreads the quality of the research currently being conducted.[17]

The challenge is not to get qualified academics interested in intelligence. It is to find meaningful points of comparison that do not place unrealistic data demands upon researchers. It also needs to be kept in mind that data limitations change over time. The veil of secrecy surrounding British intelligence was lessened somewhat with the publication of the Franks Commission Report on the Falkland Islands War.[18] Our understanding of the Cuban Missile Crisis, why it came about and why it unfolded as it did, has been changed significantly as a result of a 1987 joint Soviet-American conference.[19] The onset of the Gorbachev era and the changes that have come about in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have provided researchers with new insight into the affairs of communist intelligence agencies.

Rather than treat data limitations due to government-imposed secrecy and conflicting memoir accounts of events as reasons for not engaging in a research effort they might also be viewed as starting points. Multiple sources (documents, memoirs, oral histories) can be used to show how and why different interpretations exist (personality, the influence of bureaucratic position, social class, culture, etc). In a similar fashion they can also be used to generate competing hypotheses that seek to explain an event or pattern of behavior. Finally, by examining conflicting data one could seek to establish the most plausible or most likely correct accounting of events. One need not shy away from tentative conclusions in such an enterprise. The key is that the research be conducted so that others can build upon it.[20]

WHAT TYPE(S) OF COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK SHOULD BE USED?

If one moves beyond single country studies of intelligence which leave the making of comparisons to the reader, the most frequently found comparative approach, both in book length and shorter treatments of the topic, is the sequential treatment of the intelligence organizations of different states. An early example of this type of approach is David Wise and Thomas Ross, *The Espionage Establishment*[21] which deals with the American, British, Soviet, and Chinese intelligence systems. More recent examples include: Roy Godson, ed., *Comparing Foreign Intelligence*,[22] which has separate chapters on the study of intelligence in the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and Oman; and Jeffrey Richelson and Desmond Ball, *The Ties That Bind*,[23] which examines intelligence in the UKUSA countries — Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States.

Turning to chapter or article length studies of comparative intelligence that adopt this approach, one finds that Walter Laqueur's book, *A World of Secrets*[24] contains a chapter on "Secret Services in Open Societies" (Great Britain, Germany, and Israel) followed by one examining the KGB and the GRU. Likewise, both Angelo Codevilla,[25] who examines American, British,

Soviet, Israeli, Nazi, and West German intelligence organizations, and Adda Bozeman,[26] who has written extensively on intelligence in China, Africa, Persia/Iran, the Islamic Empires, classical India, and Venice, contributed comparative chapters to Roy Godson's series of books on *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s*.

The second and less frequently employed approach to comparative intelligence is to shift the focus of attention away from intelligence per se to a specific problem and then engage in a comparative examination of intelligence as it relates to that problem. Studies of strategic surprise and intelligence failures are often cast in these terms. Richard Betts looks at military surprise attacks in such diverse settings as the beginning of World War II, Korea, the Middle East, and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.[27] A roughly similar listing of cases provides the basis for Ephraim Kam's work on military surprise.[28] Comparative studies outside the military area are far less common. The one major exception is Michael Handel's comparative treatment of diplomatic surprise which examines Hitler's diplomacy of the 1930s, the announcement of Nixon's trip to China, and Sadat's Middle East diplomacy.[29]

Sequential accounts of different intelligence organizations are comparative only in the minimal sense of presenting the reader with information about more than one intelligence organization. Only when an integrative section precedes or follows the discussion, such as is the case in most of the chapters and articles cited above, does one truly begin to engage in comparative analysis. Still, the value of these studies remains limited by the restricted number of intelligence organizations or states being compared. Their value as building blocks for the comparative study of intelligence is further compromised by the absence of a shared definition or perspective on intelligence. For example, Richelson and Ball focus on institutional structures and technology, Codevilla is concerned with improving analysis and estimates, and in one of her pieces Bozeman only addresses covert action.

Examining intelligence within the context of a problem such as strategic surprise has an advantage over the more directly focused intelligence studies noted above by virtue of the fact that it can make use of conceptual frameworks developed in other fields. However, they too suffer from a number of drawbacks. Once again a problem exists with the limited number of cases that can be drawn upon for insight. Moreover, because the cases focus on only one aspect of intelligence, their conclusions do not represent a complete answer to questions about the fundamental uniqueness or universality of intelligence. A second analytical step must be carried out in which the findings from these studies are integrated into more comprehensive studies of intelligence.

Constructing serviceable frameworks for the comparative study of intelligence requires placing intelligence at the center of the study. It is also necessary to construct them in such a fashion that encourages the development of hypotheses and theories that can be tested. As noted above this means that the framework must be sensitive to data limitations. How much data is necessary is likely to remain an unresolvable question. It is also one that tends

to find political scientists and historians adopting conflicting positions, with political scientists willing to go forward and make conclusions based on far less evidence than historians find adequate. This would appear to be especially the case in studies that focus on the day-to-day analysis of intelligence and its use. Andrew, a historian, contends that "much work by political scientists on intelligence is based at present on a dangerously narrow data base." He also asserts that contemporary analyses of intelligence tend to place "too much emphasis on what is known and make too little allowance for what is not."[30]

One way of exploring the possibilities available for constructing a comparative framework is to think in terms of levels of analysis. At the most basic level of analysis comparisons can be framed in terms of individuals. Many histories of British and American intelligence are written in terms of the efforts or exploits of individuals. The rationale for this can be found in Phillip Knightley's observation that "the spy is as old as history, but intelligence agencies are new,"[31] and Michael Handel's remark that it is only with the revolution in military technology in the second half of the nineteenth century that intelligence organizations grew rapidly and it became impossible for leaders to serve as their own intelligence officers.[32]

A focus on individuals need not be abandoned once intelligence has become bureaucratized. Rather, its focus must shift. Rather than assuming that individuals are the important variable for explaining intelligence policy, the question becomes one of identifying those circumstances in which either (or both) intelligence consumers and intelligence producers are important. Studies already done on political leaders suggest that responses to new or unprecedented policy situations, in cases where individuals are deeply involved, and over issues which occur early in one's tenure in office, are particularly likely to reflect individual personality traits. Alternatively, the focus of one's attention can become the role orientations of intelligence professionals or the ways in which they define their work.[33] The guiding assumption here is that individuals holding different role orientations will respond to situations differently. Similarly, two individuals in different political systems holding the same role orientation to intelligence should respond to like situations in a similar fashion.

One of the most daunting challenges facing researchers working at the individual level of analysis is the acquisition of the necessary data. Biographies and autobiographies are a primary source of data for all studies of intelligence and are especially important here. However, as is abundantly clear from a reading of the literature, they are often written as much to promote a cause or an interpretation of events that reflects well on the central character, as they are to inform and enlighten. This casts doubt on the value of these works as the basis for constructing a comparative framework. Works that seek to assess the values or attitudes of intelligence professionals as a whole rather than individual intelligence officials also face formidable data problems. Unable to conduct surveys or issue questionnaires, accounts such as those by Thomas Hughes in which he identifies three attitudes toward

intelligence (the butcher, the baker, and the intelligence-maker) will strike many readers as having a ring of authenticity to them but will always fall short of being truly replicable.[34]

A second level of analysis focuses on intelligence as an institution. The concern here is with delineating and comparing organizational standard operating procedures, lines of accountability, grants of authority and jurisdiction, and the bureaucratic culture which exists inside of intelligence organizations. Having strong roots in the political science literature, examples of the institutional approach to analyzing intelligence organizations are readily found either as the basis of an entire study (such as Richelson's account of the US intelligence community, and Richelson and Ball's overview of the UKUSA countries) or as a major component of it (such as is often found in treatments of Soviet intelligence).[35] The allure of studying intelligence at this level of analysis is that data about organizational structures is often readily available. Offsetting this positive feature is the tendency for organizationally-focused studies of intelligence to pull back from attempting theoretically significant statements linking organizational structure and intelligence: Are competitively organized intelligence agencies more effective than centralized ones; is it preferable to place covert action in a separate organization from intelligence analysis and estimates; should counterintelligence be centralized?

Attitudes are split on these questions. On the first point, Richard Betts argues that there is little reason to believe that organizational changes will have any great impact on the quality of intelligence produced because the fundamental causes of strategic surprise lie in the basic nature of the intelligence function. Yet, he goes on to note that policy makers are routinely dissatisfied with the performance of their intelligence organizations and are prone to engage in round after round of organizational tinkering.[36] The second and third questions are often debated yet little systematic research has been done on them.

Institutional level studies of intelligence can also focus on the informal side of the organization. The data problems here are far greater but conceptual completeness would seem to demand that this aspect of intelligence organizations also be examined. The memoir-exposé literature contains numerous references to the existence of organizational value systems and their impact on intelligence. They are vividly captured in such phrases as "intelligence to please" and "the clandestine mentality."[37] Carl Builder in his *The Masks of War* places a great deal of emphasis on different service value systems and patterns of thinking in his discussion of how the American military establishment goes about preparing for and fighting wars. Of particular interest is his observation that the Army, Navy, and Air Force have very different approaches to analysis in the areas of operations, systems, and requirements.[38]

A third level of analysis anchors the study of intelligence in a societal context. The focus here is on the manner in which intelligence is shaped by societal values, norms, political structures, and the amount of power possessed by the state. Because most studies of intelligence are single country oriented a tendency exists not to make explicit what it is about the societal setting that

is important. Instead, they are either treated as background factors in weaving a story of how intelligence developed or their relevance for the comparative study of intelligence is only mentioned in passing as a minor theme in the account. Important exceptions do exist. Tom Polgar's study of West German intelligence[39] and Bozeman's previously cited work on non-Western intelligence agencies both secure their studies in clearly articulated visions of how the structure of a society affects intelligence.

To a large extent, the problems of analysis at the societal level are one's of plenty: too much data or too many variables; and too many potential theoretical linkages to be explored. The work of these two authors serves to illustrate these problems. There is no agreement on what characteristics of society are relevant to the comparative study of intelligence. Bozeman would have us examine virtually every aspect of society. She states the "the whole of a given society or culture must be explored before one can reach tenable conclusions about the meaning/content of one particular manifestation of the whole."[40] Polgar's study is much more clearly focused on specific elements of post-war Germany. He cites the influence of the Western allies in the immediate post-war period as a moderating force on traditional German values and the German historical experience. Still, there is no indication that this interaction of cultural or historical forces could be used as the basis for comparative analysis. It is left to the reader to abstract its insights and relate them to other intelligence systems. Interestingly, Dale Eickelman's study of Oman points to the importance of these same variables. He suggests that in studying Third World intelligence organizations an especially crucial period of time is the transition from a foreign-trained and supervised intelligence organization to a national one. He asserts that the role orientations of intelligence professionals, their proclivity to involve themselves in politics, the nature and pattern of personnel recruitment, and feelings of organizational loyalty are all influenced by this change.[41]

Finally, comparative studies of intelligence might be cast in terms of international system influences. Questions that might be posed here center on whether the nature of the intelligence function, its organization, or practice varies with the distribution of power in the international system; its level of stability; the presence or absence of war; or the rate and direction at which power ranking of a state changes? The most significant concrete studies of intelligence pitched at this level of analysis involve strategic surprise. The orthodox view holds that surprise is virtually inevitable given the inherent uncertainty in interpreting events, the pathologies in the communication process, and the political nature of the response process. Recently, a revisionist perspective has emerged which argues that surprise is not inevitable and that high-quality warning can produce responsive action on the part of policy-makers. A major point of contention in this debate is over the selection of cases with the orthodox school arguing that surprise at the beginning of a war (i.e. in peacetime) is a fundamentally different problem for intelligence systems and policy-makers than is surprise during a war. In making their case, the revisionist school makes no such distinction between the type of international environment in which surprise attack takes place.[42]

WHICH DOMINATES: UNIQUENESS OR COMMONALITY?

More so than with other studies of intelligence, those cast at the international system level of analysis are likely to stress the universal or commonly shared features of intelligence. Although he notes that the actual conduct of intelligence varies from state to state, Walter Laqueur also asserts that "the aims of intelligence are the same all over the world," and that human emotions and behavior have not changed since the first intelligence operations began, and they, not technology, are the source of the problems as well as the achievements of the craft.[43] The presumption that intelligence organizations (or intelligence functions) in different states are more alike than they are different is far from universally shared. In fact, many who write on intelligence, including former practitioners, maintain that there is very little that can be learned from examining the experiences of other intelligence services or that meaningful theorizing is impossible. Bozeman concludes that "it is unlikely that there can be one theory that would do justice to the world's varieties of intelligence."[44] Writing nearly a decade before the fall of the Berlin Wall, General Jan Sejna, a former member of the Defense Committee of Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, argued that intelligence organizations in Communist states are "in an absolutely different position" than they are in Western political systems.[45]

In between these end points of universality and uniqueness lie those who believe that intelligence and intelligence organizations can be grouped together according to key variables. Among those identified in the literature as being of potential significance for the comparative study of intelligence are: whether the state is on the strategic offensive or defensive; the degree to which political leaders are expert or amateurs; governmental or regime characteristics; whether the state is a regional or global power; and the existence of war or peace. In some cases one can see the beginnings of tentative hypotheses that could be tested in a comparative study. Christopher Andrew maintains that the major problems of coordination, utilization, and accountability in the West are due to government neglect.[46] Eickelman argues that differences in scale preclude making inferences about the intelligence organizations of small states based on the findings of studies of US, Soviet, or British intelligence organizations.[47] Walter Pforzheimer, a former legislative council for the CIA, proposes that central intelligence organizations must exist in states facing great global problems.[48]

The comparative study of intelligence can contribute to reconciling these perspectives in several ways. First, it can establish whether or not meaningful differences on any of the above dimensions exist. Second, it can suggest the existence of meaningful variations and points of similarity not yet considered. With the opening of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany and Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union, many commentators have begun to speak of a return to multipolarity and "more normal" international politics. What does this mean for intelligence? Is the proper point of reference for studying the CIA, KGB, and MI-5 their post-World War II history, or should one focus their attention on pre-World War I and inter-war

intelligence problems and organizations? For example, Michael Handel argues that where diplomatic surprise is the exception in bipolar systems, it is the norm in multipolar ones, serving as a regulator in the balance of power system.[49] Third, the comparative study of intelligence can place variations and similarities in a broader context thereby allowing us to avoid the temptation to dichotomize the range of positions variables may assume.

THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INTELLIGENCE: FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

Finally, there is the question of the ultimate purpose behind a comparative study of intelligence. Is it strictly empirical, to provide a better description of intelligence or to come to a better understanding of it, or is there also a normative dimension in which questions of value, worth, and advantage are addressed? Both policy-makers and academics appear divided on this point. Within the academic community one again tends to find a split among historians and political scientists. Perhaps because of the focus of their discipline and the social science models that they employ, writings by political scientists are far more likely to contain a clearly stated and policy-oriented normative thrust than do those by historians.

Studies of how policy-makers learn from the past strongly suggest that they wear blinders which lead them to disregard the experiences of other states in searching for analogies and solutions to problems.[50] This perspective is at the heart of an observation made by General Shlomo Gazit, a former director of Israeli military intelligence. He argues against adding a normative perspective to the comparative study of intelligence because there is "little one can learn from the way intelligence is organized in other countries."[51] But examples of cross cultural learning can be found. Canadian legislators in their mandated review of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act met with American and Australian officials to discuss control-related questions. It could even be argued that prior to the US involvement in World War II the British engaged in a comparative study of intelligence in order to foster the establishment of an American intelligence system.

As early reviewers of the literature on intelligence noted, normative works played an important role in early writings on US intelligence, with many of the most popular works either condemning intelligence agencies and calling for an end to all covert action, or praising their efforts in confronting a hostile enemy in an anarchic international system. For many, the greatest problem with this early literature was that it was too long on opinion and too short on facts. With the failure of US charter writing efforts and the changed national mood in the 1980s, wide-ranging normative essays on intelligence became less pronounced. As Laqueur correctly observes, the enthusiasm has gone out of efforts and hopes that either conceptual or organizational breakthroughs will solve the crisis of intelligence.[52] Describing the intelligence cycle, chronicling the history of congressional oversight, or the evolution of the organizational structure of the intelligence community has become an accepted function of articles on intelligence. The normative dimension has

not disappeared. It has become reformist rather than absolutist in outlook. Codevilla holds that the starting point for any effort to improve the performance of US intelligence is to understand the circumstances that are peculiar to it. This, he suggests, is best done using a comparative framework.[53]

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A FURTHER SYNTHESIS

Comparisons among intelligence organizations, covert action undertakings, spy scandals, and intelligence estimates are made on a regular basis. The problem is that they are not made in a systematic fashion. As a consequence, their findings are not easily verifiable or useful for generalization. Moreover, it is likely that potentially significant insights have gone unseen because the right questions were not being asked and that inaccurate "truths" have become part of the accepted wisdom.

In some respects the literature on intelligence has progressed through a first stage of growth. The pro- and anti-intelligence accounts that Hunter, Ransom, and other reviewers found so prevalent in the 1970s and early 1980s has given way to a synthesis which stresses the pursuit of insight over the furthering of a political agenda. Cast in the language of the dialectical process, the central theme of this essay is that this synthesis contains within itself inconsistencies and contradictions which must bring forward an antithesis. The most glaring of these problems is that the literature has tended to be single country oriented and that the writings have often been structured with too little thought having been given to how the subject under study might be compared with similar phenomena. A comparative focus must be brought to bear on the function of intelligence and the operation of intelligence organizations. It is not too much to expect that the interaction of single country studies with attempts at comparative investigation will benefit both lines of inquiry and eventually lead to a further synthesis regarding the nature of intelligence and the most effective ways to go about studying it.

It is difficult to predict the actual substantive focus which future studies of intelligence will take. As Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach note in their critique of the literature on international relations, studies rarely build upon one another or follows a linear path. They argue that this is because international relations scholarship grows out of the social milieu in which it occurs and this milieu is constantly changing.[54] Intelligence is very much a part of this intellectual tradition. As the tenor of the times change so does interest in covert action, strategic surprise, counterintelligence, and questions of control. For similar reasons it is understandable that scholars in different countries or those studying different intelligence organizations will have different research agendas. Consequently, in looking to the future attention must be placed less on what will be studied than on how it is studied.

Thus, it is with the selection of a research design — the third question around which this essay has been organized — that this essay will conclude. In a recent survey of the state of the comparative method David Collier summarizes several innovations which have taken place since the early 1970s.[55] Five of these lend themselves particularly well to the development of a

comparative study of intelligence because they all accept the legitimacy of case studies as a starting point for inquiry but see their findings as limited unless refinements are made.

The first option would be to engage in what Alexander George characterizes as focused and structured comparisons.[56] He argues that one of the primary reasons case studies have contributed unevenly to the development of theory is their lack of a clearly defined and common focus. George asserts that in conducting research involving case studies one must be "focused" in that only those parts of the case study relevant to the research objective are examined and "structured" in that standardized data requirements and questions are asked of each case. Studies of strategic surprise have come the closest to fitting George's requirements.

A second research strategy that builds upon the logic of focused and structured comparisons would employ what Alexander George and Timothy McKeown refer to as "process tracking" research design.[57] The focus here is on "identifying the decision process by which initial conditions are transformed into outcomes." Researchers try to reconstruct actor's definitions of the situation and develop a theory of action that explains the conditions under which distinctive patterns of behavior occur. Attention is directed at such features of the decision-making process as the stimuli actors respond to, and the effect of institutional arrangements on perception and behavior. Approached in this fashion, the comparative use of case studies should highlight what features are truly unique to a given case and which patterns of behavior can be accounted for by theoretically-grounded generalizations.

A third option stresses care in the selection of the cases under investigation. Collier urges researchers to develop research strategies which at the outset group together cases that are "most similar" and "most different" according to some predetermined list of key variables and then proceed with one's investigation. This approach turns on its head the research strategy most frequently employed today in examining multiple cases of strategic surprise and covert action. The tendency to date has been to sequentially investigate all available cases and then search for commonalities and differences. Collier argues that using the opposite approach would allow researchers to better identify key casual variables because they would stand out in sharp relief against the controlled backgrounds of similar and different contexts.

A fourth strategy centers around the construction of a research cycle.[58] Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers note that three different logics are used in the field of comparative history: macro-causal analysis, parallel demonstration of theory, and contrast of contexts. They argue that rather than concentrate efforts on one logic to the exclusion of the other two, the most fruitful way to proceed is to see these logics as linked together in a cycle of transitions. Parallel comparative histories can be used to develop theories. They can be followed by contrast oriented studies which are able to shed light on the limits of overly general theories. Next, macroanalytic studies can be undertaken to test the validity of existing hypotheses and develop new ones. Because macroanalytic studies require theories as a starting point for their inquiry, they

point to the continued need for parallel inquiries which generate theories. Thus, the cycle repeats itself.

Employing the logic of a research cycle would move the comparative study of intelligence forward in at least three ways. First, it would provide an avenue for linking studies of intelligence in different countries and at different periods of time. Second, it would encourage the investigation of the same case study or case studies from multiple perspectives and purposes. Finally, if followed rigorously, it would require researchers to be more self-conscious about the methodologies they employ and how their research efforts fit in with the agendas being pursued by others.

A final strategy that might be employed is to use a research methodology rooted in the logic of quasi-experimental designs.[59] Where all of the above research strategies concentrate on what George calls "within-case" analysis, quasi-experimental approaches treat each case as a unitary whole and do not try to disaggregate it. Quasi-experimental research designs were formulated in an effort to cope with the lack of control and randomness that social scientists encounter in conducting their research. They provide researchers with a tool for rejecting inadequate hypotheses by focusing attention on possible external and internal sources of invalidity. Since time series analysis is central to the quasi-experimental research strategy, this approach would seem to hold special promise for studies concerned with determining whether learning has occurred (did the event — an intelligence failure, covert action, violation of civil rights — produce a change in behavior on the part of individuals or organizations) and with assessing the consequences of organizational and personnel changes on the intelligence function.

The challenge facing those writing in the field is to cast their research in terms that allow for the development of meaningful comparative statements. Without that, work on intelligence will continue to run the risk of being ethnocentric and written without an appreciation for the broader history of intelligence and the role it plays in both the policy-making process and international politics.

Endnotes

1. David Hunter, "The Evolution of Literature on United States Intelligence," *Armed Forces and Society*, 5 (Fall 1978), pp. 31-52.

2. Harry Ransom, "Being Intelligent About Secret Intelligence Agencies," *American Political Science Review*, 74 (March 1980), pp. 141-48.

3. Harry Ransom, "Review Essay," *American Political Science Review*, 80 (1986), pp. 985-91.

4. Stuart Farson, "Schools of Thought: National Perceptions of Intelligence," *Conflict Quarterly*, 9, no. 2 (Spring 1989), pp. 52-104.

5. For examples of recent treatments of intelligence organizations outside of the Anglo-American context see Amy Knight, *The KGB: Police and Politics in the Soviet Union* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990); Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *The KGB:*

The Inside Story of its Foreign Operations (New York: Harper Collins, 1990); Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman, *Every Spy a Prince: The Complete History of Israel's Intelligence Community* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1990); and Roger Faligot and Pascal Krop, *La Piscine: The French Secret Service Since 1944* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989). Also see recent issues of *Intelligence and National Security* for such articles.

6. Harry Ransom, *The Intelligence Establishment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

7. Sherman Kent, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949).

8. See, for example, Glenn Hastedt, *American Foreign Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988).

9. David Charters, "The Role of Intelligence Services in the Direction of Covert Paramilitary Operations," in Alfred Maurer, et. al., eds., *Intelligence: Policy and Process* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1985), pp. 333-54.

10. Marion Doss, Jr., "Controlling the Security Threat," in Glenn Hastedt, ed., *Controlling Intelligence* (London: Frank Cass, 1991), pp. 134-53. On the general point of the relationship between intelligence and law enforcement see Stuart Farson, "The Influence of Criminology on the Study of Security Intelligence," paper presented at the 32nd Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Vancouver, 19-23 March 1991.

11. Adda Bozeman, "Political Intelligence in Non-Western Societies," in Roy Godson, ed., *Comparing Foreign Intelligence* (Washington, DC: National Strategy Information Center, 1985), pp. 115-55.

12. Christopher Andrew, "Historical Research on the British Intelligence Community," in Godson, ed., *Comparing Foreign Intelligence*, pp. 43-64.

13. David Atlee Phillips, *The Night Watch* (New York: Anteneum, 1977), and Philip Agee, *Inside the Company* (New York: Bantam, 1976).

14. See, for example, Peter Wright, *Spy Catcher* (New York: Viking, 1987).

15. See for example, Anthony Cavendish, *Inside Intelligence* (London: Collins, 1990); and Keith Jeffery, "Intelligence and Counter-Insurgency Operations: Some Reflections on the British Experience," *Intelligence and National Security*, 2, no. 1 (January 1987), pp. 118-49.

16. Quoted in *Insight*, 12 February 1990, pp. 62-63.

17. The critique being put forward here differs from Bowen's in that I am not questioning the quality of current writings on intelligence. My point is that the literature needs to become more comparative in focus.

18. "Falkland Islands Review," *Report* CMD 8787 (London: HMSO, 1983). An analysis of its findings are presented in Robert Cecil, "The Assessment and Acceptance of Intelligence," in Ken Robertson, ed., *British and American Approaches to Intelligence* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 166-83.

19. See Raymond Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, revised edition, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1989).

20. On these points see John Lewis Gaddis, "Great Illusions, the Long Peace, and the Future of the International System," in Charles Kegley, Jr., ed., *The Long Postwar Peace* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), pp. 25-55. Gaddis writes on the methodological problems inherent in coping with conflicting data and multiple theories in studying the Cold War.

21. David Wise and Thomas Ross, *The Espionage Establishment* (New York: Random House, 1967).

22. Roy Godson, ed., *Comparing Foreign Intelligence*.

23. Jeffrey Richelson and Desmond Ball, *The Ties That Bind* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985).

24. Walter Laqueur, *A World of Secrets* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), pp. 201-32.

25. Angelo Codevilla, "Comparative Historical Experience of Doctrine and Organization," in Roy Godson, ed., *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980's: Analysis and Estimates* (Washington, DC: National Strategy Information Center, 1980), pp. 11-36

26. Adda Bozeman, "Political Intelligence in Non-Western Societies;" and "Covert Action and Foreign Policy," in Roy Godson, ed., *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s: Covert Action* (Washington, DC: National Strategy Information Center, 1981), pp. 15-78.

27. Richard Betts, *Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1982).

28. Ephraim Kam, *Surprise Attack: The Victim's Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

29. Michael Handel, *The Diplomacy of Surprise* (Cambridge, MA: Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1981).

30. Andrew, "Historical Research on the British Intelligence Community," pp. 57 and 55.

31. Phillip Knightley, *The Second Oldest Profession* (New York: Penguin, 1988), p. 3

32. Michael Handel, "Leaders and Intelligence," *Intelligence and National Security*, 3, no. 3 (July 1988), pp. 3-39.

33. Glenn Hastedt, "Controlling Intelligence: The Role of the D.C.I.," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence*, 1, no. 4 (1986), pp. 25-40.

34. Thomas Hughes, *The Fate of Facts in a World of Men* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Headline Series #233, 1976).

35. For example, see John Barron, *KGB*, (New York: Bantam, 1974), pp. 95-126; Cord Meyer, *Facing Reality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 312-30.

36. Richard Betts, "American Strategic Intelligence," in Robert Pfaltzgraff, Uri Raanan, and Warren Milberg, eds., *Intelligence Policy and National Security* (Hamden, CN: Archon Books, 1981).

37. For an attempt to link the informal side of intelligence organizations to intelligence failures in the American context see Glenn Hastedt, "Organizational Foundations of Intelligence Failures," in Maurer, et. al., eds., *Intelligence: Policy and Process*, pp. 140-56.

38. Carl Builder, *The Masks of War* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 104-11.

39. Tom Polgar, "Intelligence Services of West Germany," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence*, 1, no. 4 (1986), pp. 79-96.

40. Bozeman, "Political Intelligence in Non-Western Societies," p. 138.

41. Dale Eickelman, "Intelligence in an Arab Gulf State," in Roy Godson, ed., *Comparing Foreign Intelligence*, p. 109.

42. For a leading example of the revisionist school see Ariel Levite, *Intelligence and Strategic Surprise* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987). Also see the exchange between Betts and Levite in *International Studies Quarterly*, 33 (1989), pp. 329-49.

43. Walter Laqueur, *A World of Secrets*, pp. 201-02.

44. Bozeman, "Political Intelligence in Non-Western Societies," p. 149.

45. Jan Sejna, "Comments," in Ibid., p. 43.

46. Christopher Andrew, "Governments and Secret Services: A Historical Perspective," *International Journal*, (1979), pp. 167-86.

47. Dale Eickelman, "Intelligence in an Arab Gulf State," p. 108.

48. Walter Pforzheimer, "Comments," in Godson, ed., *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980's: Analysis and Estimates*, p. 40.

49. Handel, *The Diplomacy of Surprise*, pp. 9-13.

50. Ernest May, *Lessons of the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

51. Shlomo Gazit, "Comments" in Roy Godson, ed., *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980's: Analysis and Estimates*, p. 39.

52. Laqueur, *A World of Secrets*, p. 10.

53. Angelo Codevilla, "Comparative Historical Experience of Doctrine and Organization," p. 11

54. Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach, *The Elusive Quest: Theory and International Politics* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988).

55. David Collier, "New Perspectives on the Comparative Method," in Dankwart Rustow and Kenneth Erickson, eds., *Comparative Political Dynamics* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), pp. 7-31.

56. Alexander George, "Case Studies and Theory Development," in Paul Lauren, ed., *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1979).

57. Alexander George and Timothy McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making," in Robert Coulam and Richard Smith, eds., *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations*, II (Santa Barbara, CA: JAI Press, 1985).

58. Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Study of Society and History*, 22 (1980), pp. 174-97.

59. See Donald Campbell and H. Laurence Ross, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963); and Donald Campbell and H. Laurence Ross, "The Connecticut Crackdown on Speeding," *Law and Society*, 3 (1968), pp. 35-53.