

NELCO
NELCO Legal Scholarship Repository

New York University Public Law and Legal Theory
Working Papers

New York University School of Law

5-20-2008

I Spy

Simon Chesterman

New York University School of Law, chesterman@nus.edu.sg

Follow this and additional works at: http://lsr.nellco.org/nyu_plltwp



Part of the [Public Law and Legal Theory Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Chesterman, Simon, "I Spy" (2008). *New York University Public Law and Legal Theory Working Papers*. Paper 74.
http://lsr.nellco.org/nyu_plltwp/74

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the New York University School of Law at NELCO Legal Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in New York University Public Law and Legal Theory Working Papers by an authorized administrator of NELCO Legal Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact tracy.thompson@nellco.org.

Forthcoming in Survival
available online at <http://journalsonline.tandf.co.uk>

Review Essay

I Spy

Simon Chesterman*

Sharpening Strategic Intelligence: Why the CIA Gets It Wrong and What Needs to Be Done to Get It Right

Richard L. Russell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. \$24.99. 214 pp.

Spying Blind: The CIA, the FBI, and the Origins of 9/11

Amy B. Zegart. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007. \$24.95. 317 pp.

Dealing with Dictators: Dilemmas of U.S. Diplomacy and Intelligence Analysis, 1945-1990

Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow (editors). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006. \$27.00. 227 pp.

The Quest for Absolute Security: The Failed Relations Among U.S. Intelligence Agencies

Athan Theoharis. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007. \$27.50. 320pp.

Democratic Control of Intelligence Services: Containing Rogue Elephants

Hans Born and Marina Caparini (editors). Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. \$99.95. 303 pp.

* Simon Chesterman is Global Professor and Director of the New York University School of Law Singapore Programme. His recent books include *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics* and (with Chia Lehnardt) *From Mercenaries to Market: The Rise and Regulation of Private Military Companies*.

The subject of intelligence attracts attention out of proportion to its real importance. My theory is that this is because secrets are like sex. Most of us think that others get more than we do. Some of us cannot have enough of either. Both encourage fantasy. Both send the press into a feeding frenzy. All this distorts sensible discussion.

– Sir Rodric Braithwaite, former Chairman of the
British Joint Intelligence Committee

Within the space of eighteen months, from September 2001 to March 2003, the U.S. intelligence community experienced two of its worst ever intelligence failures. The inability to prevent the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington D.C. has been compared to the strategic surprise of Pearl Harbour; flawed and manipulated intelligence in relation to Iraq has been blamed for the worst foreign policy decision in a generation, if not in the history of the United States.

Dozens of classified and unclassified reports and scores of books have since been written about these failures, generally focusing on one or more of the three broad questions that have dominated the literature on intelligence for half a century. The first, given the secretive nature of much of the subject, is simply to understand the phenomenon. Such books tend to cluster around the self-serving memoirs of former spies on the one hand, and the breathless accounts of outsiders on the other. The second question concerns how to make sure that intelligence services have adequate powers to do their job effectively, without acquiring so much power that they undermine or corrupt democratic government. These volumes lean towards either paternalistic expositions of the national security threats that civil libertarians cannot or will not understand, or the recitation of scandals and abuses of power that national security enthusiasts conveniently overlook. Thirdly, there is a growing body of what one might call ‘reform literature’ that identifies systemic problems of analysis and coordination between agencies in the hope of improving the output of intelligence services without necessarily increasing the input. Here the dominant themes tend to be the need to liberate agents and analysts from bureaucracy and encourage individual excellence, or else to strengthen that bureaucracy in order to ensure that coordinated and coherent advice reaches policymakers.

What is frequently lost in this burgeoning literature is the point raised by Rodric Braithwaite above: how important *is* intelligence, anyway? One lesson of the September

11 attacks may be that intelligence cannot always offer up clear and actionable warnings of attacks by asymmetric forces that will push a large government into action. One lesson of Iraq is that when such a government does move into action, improved intelligence may not be able to stop it.

Four of the five books reviewed here focus exclusively on the U.S. intelligence 'community' — a somewhat misleading term that suggests collegiality among sixteen organizations that employ around 100,000 people with a budget in the order of \$44 billion. September 11 looms large in all of them, though two take it as an opportunity to look forwards while the other two use it in part as a lens through which to look back. The fifth book is a broader examination of the challenges national security poses to the United States and other democracies.

Richard L. Russell worked as a political-military analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency for seventeen years. He resigned from the CIA two months before the September 11 attacks in order to leave its 'oppressive bureaucratic environment' in favour of academia and the opportunity to 'think more strategically' (p. ix). The product of this extended reflection is *Sharpening Strategic Intelligence*. Much of it is an attack on the bureaucracy he left, with repeated reference to the CIA possessing more bureaucratic fat than analytic muscle. Extending his anatomical metaphors, the FBI is denounced in a single paragraph as, improbably, at once 'bureaucratically constipated' and 'bureaucratically ossified' (p. 73). Russell's particular concern is that reform of the U.S. intelligence agencies in the wake of two debacles has been limited to a revision in the organogram and the creation of a new layer of management in the form of the Director of National Intelligence. None of this, he argues, addresses the root cause of the recent failures.

His plea is for more strategic intelligence. The work of intelligence agencies generally includes two discrete functions: collection and analysis. Collection includes obtaining information from witting or unwitting subjects (human intelligence or HUMINT), communications and other electronic intercepts (signals intelligence or SIGINT), and satellite and other photographs (imagery intelligence or IMINT). Other '-INTs' that appear in the literature, but these are the main ones. Analysis is the process that draws on what has been collected but also other sources, most of which — indeed the vast majority — is normally publicly available or 'open'. The product of such analysis is known in the United States as an estimate; in Britain and Australia it is called an assessment. Another way of putting it is that collection enables the acquisition of 'secrets', while analysis

helps to understand ‘mysteries’. *Strategic* intelligence — as opposed to tactical or operational intelligence — draws on collection and analysis to offer policymakers timely warning of immediate threats to vital national security interests and assesses long-term trends of importance to senior government officials.¹

The CIA has never been particularly effective at any of these functions. Despite periodic claims that it won the Cold War, the Agency utterly failed to predict the break-up of the Soviet Union. Indeed, Russell argues, its few identifiable intelligence successes during the confrontation with Moscow drew on human intelligence from ‘walk-ins’ — notably Soviet and Polish agents who volunteered their services to the CIA, rather than being spotted, assessed, developed, and recruited in the manner of spy folklore. In the entire confrontation with the Soviets, the CIA never succeeded in running an agent deep inside the Kremlin, while the CIA was itself penetrated at least once with devastating effect by Aldrich Ames. *All* of its important Cuban sources appear to have been double-agents.

The poverty of human intelligence is not helped by promotion structures that favour quantity over quality of recruits. Russell offers anecdotal evidence of junior case officers who develop second- or third-rate assets whose information is of little value but whose recruitment advances the officer’s career. Elsewhere he describes reading a classified report on Iran and then hearing nearly identical comments from his Iranian taxi-driver on the way to the airport. Improving the quality of human intelligence requires understanding how ineffective it has been in the past, even in the days when one could meet potential contacts at a diplomatic cocktail party rather than in the tribal areas of Pakistan. His main recommendations are longer tours by CIA case officers, better use of walk-ins, more engagement with foreign intelligence services, and streamlining security vetting processes.

Improving analytical capacity requires hiring real experts, with the model being a strong university faculty or perhaps a think tank with government connections such as the RAND Corporation. His solution here is to hire fewer analysts on better terms, in particular bringing in more Ph.D.s with real expertise in relevant areas. (Russell earned his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia in 1997.) Greater language training is required,

¹ Loch K. Johnson and James J. Wirtz (eds), *Strategic Intelligence: Windows into a Secret World* (Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury, 2004), 2.

particularly in Arabic, Farsi, and Chinese — even in 2002 the CIA did not have a single case officer who spoke Pashto, the major dialect in Afghanistan. More effective use should be made of red teams or devil’s advocates, encouraging individuals to express an unpopular dissenting opinion in order to allow decision-makers to consider alternative views. More generally, the CIA needs to foster a culture of education and learning.

This is all well and good but it is far from clear how any of it would solve the problems that Russell seeks to address. In his discussion of the failure of intelligence on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program, he attributes the flawed assessment that Iraq had an active WMD capacity not to politicization of intelligence but rather to the insistence of senior CIA officers on definitive ‘answers’, that required the removal of caveats and equivocation. He denounces this as ‘intellectual arrogance that permeates the CIA’s managerial culture’ (p. 85).

Such *faux naïveté* as to the well-documented efforts to shape intelligence around policy is unpersuasive, but for his own argument the rejection of calls for ‘answers’ appears especially problematic. Strategic intelligence, to be useful, requires clarity and clarity entails risk of error. What Russell advocates is in fact greater freedom for case officers and analysts, a form of academic freedom more like the university world into which he has moved but perhaps less likely to shape policy. As Paul R. Pillar — another Ph.D. who left the CIA for academia — has written, the most remarkable thing about pre-war U.S. intelligence on Iraq is not that it got things so wrong and misled policymakers; rather it is that intelligence played such a small role in one of the most important foreign policy decisions in decades.²

* * *

Where Russell repeatedly decries the ‘wire diagram’ approach to intelligence reform and seeks to free case officers and analysts from bureaucracy, Amy B. Zegart’s *Spying Blind* argues that good organizational structures matter and can have an impact on policy successes and failures that is greater than key individuals. As its subtitle indicates, this book is focused directly on September 11. Here it faces stiff competition from Lawrence

² Paul R. Pillar, ‘Intelligence, Policy, and the War in Iraq’ (2006) 85(2) *Foreign Affairs* 15, 16.

Wright's *The Looming Tower*³ and, indeed, the *9/11 Commission Report*⁴ — one of very few government reports to be selected as a finalist for a National Book Award.

Zegart's aim is to bring a scholarly eye not to what when wrong but *why*. An associate professor at UCLA's School of Public Affairs, she worked on the Clinton Administration's National Security Council Staff in 1993 and for three years at McKinsey & Co — perhaps explaining her emphasis on three takeaways. Her analysis focuses on what she claims is the single most important reason for the United States' vulnerability on September 11: 'the stunning inability of U.S. intelligence agencies to adapt to the end of the Cold War' (p. 3). This suggests a somewhat rosier interpretation of Cold War intelligence than Russell, but in fact many of the deficiencies Zegart identifies have their origins in the establishment of the U.S. intelligence architecture at the end of the Second World War, something she had described in a doctoral thesis at Stanford University supervised by Condoleezza Rice, who later became National Security Adviser before being appointed Secretary of State.⁵

The missed opportunities to prevent the attacks on New York and Washington, DC, are now familiar. The CIA observed an al Qaeda planning meeting in Kuala Lumpur in January 2000, among other things gathering information on Khalid al-Mihdhar, whom it discovered had a multiple-entry visa to the United States. Yet he was put on a State Department watch-list only on 23 August 2001 — months after he had entered the country, obtained a California photo identification card, and started taking flying lessons. The FBI, for its part, failed to act on a memo from a field agent in Phoenix who warned in July 2001 that Osama bin Laden might be using U.S. flight schools to train terrorists, and refused to seek a search warrant to investigate the computer files of Zacarias Moussaoui after he was detained. And there is the President's August 6 briefing from the CIA entitled 'Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S.'

Echoing the approach of the *9/11 Commission* — and the reason for its most vehement criticism — Zegart attributes blame for these failures not to individuals but to

³ Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Knopf, 2006).

⁴ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004), available at <<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/911/pdf/fullreport.pdf>>.

⁵ See Amy B. Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

systemic and organizational problems. The three broad deficiencies she identifies are a culture that is resistant to change, perverse incentives that reward the wrong behaviour, and structural deficiencies that prevent the CIA, FBI, and other members of the U.S. intelligence community cooperating effectively.

Though these criticisms are not new, one of the many strengths of Zegart's book is that she examines not only current problems in the intelligence services but past efforts to correct them. In the decade to 2001, for example, at least six classified reports and a dozen major unclassified studies sought to improve intelligence agencies work in counterterrorism. Hundreds of recommendations were made, the vast majority of which resulted in no action whatsoever. The various recommendations made in the 1990s broadly concurred on four major problems confronting the intelligence community: personnel problems that fail to recruit and keep those with the most needed skills, insufficient resources for and unnecessary barriers to human intelligence activities, lack of coordination within and across agencies, and inadequate leadership by policymakers in setting intelligence priorities. Oddly, her own catalogue broadly corresponds to the first three problems but doesn't adequately address the last — leadership by policymakers — except where she notes that presidents have had little incentive to spend the political capital necessary to make major reforms.

Organization theory is invoked to explore intelligence agencies' apparent failure to adapt. There are, however, significant limitations to applying theories designed for the private sector to the public sector, and in particular to the work of intelligence agencies where the imperative of secrecy adds a further complication. One of the insights of organization theory is that organizations frequently do not adapt, instead *groups* of organizations do. This form of Darwinian selection is possible only when there is significant turnover — far more applicable to the private sector than the public. Failure to adapt will only rarely lead to the abolition of a government entity, and there may be few other incentives to change: the U.S. Army, for example, maintained a horse cavalry until the Second World War; until the mid-1990s customs forms required ships entering U.S. ports to list the number of cannons on board.

Certainly, both the CIA and FBI suffer from fundamental structural problems. The CIA is at once tasked with being the lead agency for human intelligence activities outside the United States through its National Clandestine Service (previously the Directorate of Operations), and the body that undertakes all-source analysis to provide national security and foreign policy through its Directorate of Intelligence. In many other

countries these functions are performed by different agencies in a vertical relationship that passes collected information up through analysts to policymakers — rather than setting them up in a horizontal relationship that causes predictable tension between ‘cowboys’ and ‘Ivy leaguers’.

The head of the CIA, until April 2005 also the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), notoriously had responsibility for all sixteen intelligence agencies but little power over any but his own — in particular, the DCI had no budgetary controls over those agencies located in the Defense Department that consume the lion’s share of the budget. In 1998 George Tenet produced the first strategic plan for the U.S. intelligence community since the end of the Cold War. Only a handful of agency heads ever received it; all of them ignored it. Even within human intelligence, its traditional sphere of dominance, the CIA has been resistant to change. Resources continue to be invested in agents under official covers, serving as U.S. government employees in embassies around the world and working the diplomatic and local political circuit to recruit spies. As the threat shifted from the Cold War to terrorism, greater reliance needed to be placed on non-officials covers (NOCs), unconnected to the U.S. government but more likely to penetrate small non-governmental groups such as terrorist cells. There is little evidence that this has happened.

The FBI, for its part, has a far deeper identity crisis as between its domestic law enforcement and intelligence responsibilities, combining functions that in many countries are located in separate organs of government. Law enforcement long ago won this battle and J. Edgar Hoover’s ‘G-men’ and today’s ‘Feds’ have long placed far greater emphasis on solving crimes than preventing terrorist attacks. The Phoenix memo, referred to earlier, was forwarded to a Portland FBI field office as it appeared pertinent to an ongoing criminal investigation — but never shared with the CIA despite an explicit request within the document itself to do so. Around the same time, during a period of intensifying warnings about possible terror attacks, the FBI’s acting director held a conference call with all field office special-agents-in-charge in which he mentioned the heightened threat levels but recommended only that each field office have its evidence response teams ready to investigate an attack at short notice *after* it occurred.

Even more mundane reforms have been difficult. FBI efforts at information technology modernization are, rightly, the subject of ridicule. Its main information system, the Automated Case Support (ACS) system, cost \$67 million and was launched in 1995 with 1980s technology; it proved so unreliable that many agents simply didn’t

use it, preferring to keep case files in shoeboxes under their desks. Even in 2001 the ACS system was incapable of performing a data search using more than one word. One could search for the word ‘flight’, for example, or ‘schools’ — but not ‘flight schools’. FBI Director Louis Freeh had his own computer removed from his office entirely because he never used it. The September 11 attacks provided new energy to the technology reform process, but in February 2005 Robert Mueller, who had taken over as Director of the FBI just a week before September 11, abandoned the new electronic case filing system Trilogy as a \$170 million failure.

As for relations between the CIA and the FBI, even the limited provision for temporary secondments came to be known as the ‘hostage exchange program’.

Zegart’s conclusion is bleak: September 11 was not enough to bring about a major transformation of U.S. intelligence agencies, and future adaptation to address new threats is unlikely. This pessimistic finding was echoed by the Silberman-Robb Commission, established by President Bush to investigate intelligence failures with respect to Iraq. It concluded that the U.S. intelligence community was ‘dead wrong in almost all of its pre-war judgments about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction’.⁶ It also noted, however, that that same community boasts an almost perfect record of resisting external recommendations for change.⁷

* * *

If change from without is impossible, what about change from within? *Dealing with Dictators*, edited by Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, grew out of an executive programme for senior CIA managers at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. Between 1986 and 2002 the Intelligence and Policy Program developed 40 unclassified case studies designed to intelligence managers how to think about their relationship to policymakers. Two of these cases developed into standalone books;⁸ this

⁶ The Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (Report to the President of the United States) (Washington, DC: Laurence H. Silberman and Charles S. Robb, co-chairs, 31 March 2005), available at <<http://www.wmd.gov/report>>, preface.

⁷ Ibid, 6.

⁸ Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow (eds), *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Ernest R. May, *Strange Victory: Hitler’s Conquest of France* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000).

new volume brings together six smaller cases on the uncertainties of dealing with brutal leaders. Each focuses on the relationship between the United States and an undemocratic but possibly helpful leader. In three cases, support for a leader could not be sustained: China's Chiang Kai-shek, ultimately driven from power by Mao Zedong's communist forces in 1949; the Shah of Iran, whose fall at the end of 1978 continues to affect U.S.-Iranian relations; and Nicaragua's Anastasio (Tacho) Somoza Garcia, famously 'our son-of-a-bitch' until he was forced to flee to Miami in 1979. One case, the Philippines' Ferdinand Marcos, was the subject of unusually ambivalent U.S. support in the mid-1980s until he finally stepped down in 1986. In two further cases, U.S. policy facilitated leaders remaining in power but this was at best of short-term benefit: Congo's Mobutu Sese Seko, whom U.S. assistance in the early 1960s enabled to build one of the most despotic and corrupt regimes in Africa; and Iraq's Saddam Hussein, whom the U.S. sought to moderate through 'constructive engagement' in the period 1988 to 1990, after he had gassed his own people and before he invaded a second neighbour.

The book is presented as a teaching tool with little editorial comment. The cases are presented in the manner of factual accounts but students are intended to imagine themselves in the position of key U.S. participants or their advisers and determine what action they would take or recommend on the basis of no more evidence than is presented. As a text it is therefore somewhat unsatisfying, but opens up interesting questions about how intelligence managers that take the course conceive their relationship with policymakers and for what purposes the national security powers at their disposal should be deployed.

If Athan Theoharis is to be believed, those purposes are unlikely to be anything good. His book, *The Quest for Absolute Security*, takes the longest view of the books considered here. It looks back over a century to the origins of modern U.S. intelligence and the tension that has always existed between the desire of the executive to have intrusive and coercive powers at its disposal, and the periodic revelations of the scandalous uses to which those powers have been put. His central argument is that the asserted justification for expanding national security powers — the possibility of 'absolute security' — is a dangerous myth. Moreover he argues that the major policy reform advocated in the wake of the September 11 attacks, of greater centralization of U.S. intelligence services, is something that has been repeatedly considered and rejected or aborted.

Theoharis, now a professor emeritus of History at Marquette University, has written extensively on the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, and U.S. intelligence more broadly. This book retreads some old ground but is filled with examples of abuse of power — at one point Lyndon Johnson personally solicited information from the FBI on his daughter's boyfriend — and the efforts by the FBI and CIA to avoid or deflect scrutiny. His conclusion is that neither the agencies nor the executive can be trusted to oversee themselves, arguing half-heartedly that Congress might have more success.

A more thorough examination of the possibilities of oversight is offered by Hans Born and Marina Caparini in their edited volume *Democratic Control of Intelligence Services*, a product of meetings at the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces in 2002. They bring together a range of scholars and practitioners to survey the various ways in which democratic states — well-established and transitional — have sought to establish and maintain accountable intelligence services. As they acknowledge, effective intelligence, which requires a degree of secrecy, poses particular difficulties to democratic theory, which is premised on the public consent of the governed. At the same time, the possible abuse of national security powers also poses significant threats to political life.

Meaningful oversight is difficult: agencies tend to be overly secretive of their activities, lack of information makes it hard to ask the right questions, close scrutiny of security activities may lead to regulatory capture — such as when a select parliamentary committee becomes more of an advocate of an agency than an independent overseer. Caparini in her introductory chapter argues that legislation and other formal constraints are an overly narrow way of thinking about accountability: it is more important for an agency to internalize democratic political values. These include respect for dissenting ideas, human rights, and privacy; a concept of national security that is limited to core political values and societal interests; and strict requirements for justifying the holding back of information from parliament and the public and restricting the rights and freedoms of citizens.

The book is loosely organized around four themes: the reform of intelligence services in Eastern Europe, comparable developments in the West, the role of parliaments in intelligence oversight, and particular questions posed by data protection. The chapters on Eastern Europe suggest the possibilities and the limits of reform. About a decade after the 1989 revolution, Romania's dreaded *Securitate* had been replaced by domestic and foreign intelligence services that enjoyed wide public support, with three-quarters of the

population even believing that those agents who remained from the pre-revolution agencies should be kept in place. Once-repressive states such as Bulgaria found, when seeking entry into NATO, that they were required to *strengthen* their classified information laws. At the same time, there is evidence of ‘transition fatigue’ and diversion of the intelligence services towards political influence of their leaders, as seen in Romania, or in the interests of informal power networks, as in Poland.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is the manner in which it tracks the impetus for reform, with major transformations happening either due to transition to democracy (Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania), scandals (Norway, United States), and legal challenges (United Kingdom). Ensuring that those reforms are not marginalized or derailed requires adroit use of the opportunity for reform, with a few generalizable lessons emerging. These are not new but worth repeating. First, intelligence services should have a framework grounded in law.⁹ Secondly, collection and analysis should be isolated from politics. Thirdly, and more interestingly, a range of checks from parliament, the judiciary, the media and so on are important, but internal oversight — for example in the form of an inspector general — is particularly helpful in preventing abuses and as part of the long-term project of changing the culture of an organization.

* * *

Two years after the 2003 war in Iraq, London’s *Sunday Times* published the classified minutes of a meeting of British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s senior foreign policy and security officials. Convening eight months prior to the invasion, their discussion focused more on Britain’s relationship with the United States than on Iraq itself. John Scarlett, head of the Joint Intelligence Committee, began the meeting with a briefing on the state of Saddam’s regime. This was followed by an account of meetings with Bush Administration officials by Sir Richard Dearlove, head of Britain’s Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), known as ‘C’. His report was summarised in the memorandum as follows:

C reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and

⁹ Remarkably, this was not until recently the case in the United Kingdom, which until 1989 traced authority for its intelligence services to a six paragraph administrative note from the Home Secretary known as the ‘Maxwell-Fyfe Directive’.

[weapons of mass destruction]. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy. The [US National Security Council] had no patience with the UN route, and no enthusiasm for publishing material on the Iraqi regime's record. There was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action.¹⁰

The disconnect between what intelligence offers a leader and the choices he or she makes is hardly new: during the Second World War, Stalin is said to have ignored eighty-four separate warnings from his intelligence services of the German invasion that took place in June 1941.¹¹ Good intelligence will not guarantee success but bad intelligence frequently contributes to failure.¹² In different ways, each of the books considered here seek to improve the quality of intelligence available to policymakers — or to minimize the harm that it can do. The danger, however, lies frequently in how that intelligence will be used. All too often this is in the way that a drunk uses a lamp post — for support rather than illumination.¹³

¹⁰ Iraq: Prime Minister's Meeting (Memorandum by David Manning; Secret and Strictly Personal - UK Eyes Only) (London: S 195 /02, 23 July 2003), available in 'The Secret Downing Street Memo', *The Sunday Times* (London), 1 May 2005.

¹¹ Barton Whaley, *Codeword Barbarossa* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973).

¹² Murice R. Greenberg and Richard Haass (eds), *Making Intelligence Smarter: The Future of U.S. Intelligence* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1996), 13.

¹³ Cf. Thomas L. Hughes, *The Fate of Facts in a World of Men: Foreign Policy and Intelligence-Making* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1976), 22.