

STUDIES

IN INTELLIGENCE

A person in a red jacket stands on a rocky cliff overlooking the ocean. The cliff is covered in dark, jagged rocks and some sparse vegetation. The ocean is a deep blue, and the sky is a pale, hazy blue. The person is standing on a narrow ridge, looking out over the water.

GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

AUGUST 2025

SPECIAL EDITION

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Mission	<p>The mission of <i>Studies in Intelligence</i> is to stimulate within the Intelligence Community the constructive discussion of important issues of the day, to expand knowledge of lessons learned from past experiences, to increase understanding of the history of the profession, and to provide readers with considered reviews of public media concerning intelligence.</p> <p>The journal is administered by the Center for the Study of Intelligence, which also includes the CIA's History Staff, Lessons Learned Program, and the CIA Museum.</p>
Contact	<p>The <i>Studies in Intelligence</i> staff welcomes proposals for articles, book reviews, or commentaries and other communications from outside of the Intelligence Community. Proposals may be sent to the <i>Studies</i> staff through "Contact" on cia.gov or mailed to:</p> <p>Editor Studies in Intelligence Center for the Study of Intelligence Central Intelligence Agency Washington, DC 20505</p>
Awards	<p>CSI recognizes outstanding contributions to intelligence literature through its annual award ceremony. Members of the <i>Studies in Intelligence</i> Editorial Board are excluded from the competition.</p>

Writing for Studies

Studies in Intelligence is a journal for and by intelligence practitioners, educators, students, and the well-informed public. Sustaining any journal for seven decades is no small feat, and *Studies* has been able to do that because of a devoted cadre of writers wanting to contribute to the “elevated debate” envisioned by CIA trailblazer Sherman Kent. Many of these write for the journal one time on an issue or event important to them; a much smaller number authors join a cadre of regular contributors exploring the theory, history, practice, and future of intelligence. However you envision your role, we hope this guide to writing for the journal will encourage you to make your own mark in the literature of intelligence.

— John Charles, Chair, *Studies in Intelligence* Editorial Board, and Director, Center for the Study of Intelligence



EDITORIAL POLICY

Articles for *Studies in Intelligence* may be written on any historical, operational, doctrinal, or theoretical aspect of intelligence.

The final responsibility for accepting or rejecting an article rests with the Editorial Board.

The criterion for publication is whether, in the opinion of the board, the article makes a contribution to the literature of intelligence. Board members are all active or former Intelligence Community officers.

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STUDIES IN INTELLIGENCE

Contents

Author's Guide (August 2025)

Writing for *Studies in Intelligence*:

A Guide for Authors

Joseph Gartin and Andres Vaart 1

Article Exemplars

Beautiful in Another Context: A Counterintelligence Assessment of GTPROLOGUE

5

Alexander Orleans

Cambodia's Role in Shipping Arms to Communist Forces in South Vietnam, 1966–70: Competing CIA and US Military Estimates

23

Richard A. Mobley

Review Exemplars

Zhou Enlai: A Life

41

Reviewed by Matthew J.

Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf

45

Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake and others

❖ ❖ ❖



Covers of the first three editions of *Studies in Intelligence*.

Writing for *Studies in Intelligence*

A Guide for Authors

Joseph Gartin and Andres Vaart

The authors are the managing and production editors, respectively, of *Studies in Intelligence*.

In June 1955, intelligence trailblazer Sherman Kent made his case to CIA leaders for a journal that would contribute to the theory and practice of intelligence. The first issue of *Studies in Intelligence*, containing only Kent's essay, "The Need for an Intelligence Literature," would go to print a few months later.^a By 1957, *Studies in Intelligence* would become a full-fledged journal, and it has been in continuous publication ever since. Kent correctly anticipated that there would be contributors and readers eager to explore the history, present, and future of our vital profession. Today, the intelligence-journal field is crowded (and global) compared to Kent's singular effort of the 1950s, but *Studies in Intelligence* still occupies a unique place as an interagency publication written by and for the American intelligence professional.

a. <https://cia.gov/resources/csi/static/Need-for-Intelligence-Literature.pdf>

The views, opinions, and findings of the author expressed in this article should not be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations or representing the official positions of any component of the United States government.

Writing Articles

This special edition contains examples of the kinds of articles published in *Studies in Intelligence*. The journal's audience includes practitioners, scholars, and others seeking insights into the history, practice, theory, successes, and challenges of intelligence. These insights can take many forms, as the exemplars in this collection suggest: first-person narratives, historical inquiries, and strategic perspectives. This list is not exhaustive, and we take an expansive approach to the topics that *Studies* covers. If it is of professional interest to intelligence officers, it is probably suitable for *Studies in Intelligence*.^a

Our readers look to the journal for original, thoughtful, and objective scholarship and perspectives that contribute to what Kent famously called an “elevated debate” among experts to improve the craft of intelligence. *Studies in Intelligence* is not a current-in-intelligence or political-opinion publication. There are many other platforms, classified and unclassified, for discussing ongoing world events or offering advice to decisionmakers.

You have decided to write an article for the journal—what comes next? We encourage potential contributors to reach out early to the editorial staff and to review the substantial holdings available on CIA's public website (see the cover verso for a guide) and classified websites before they begin writing. A clear thesis statement and a survey of the literature are the starting points for every successful author. We seek to create new knowledge, not to repackage existing works.

Articles are generally 5,000–6,000 words; longer is possible if the topic warrants, and shorter is appreciated by busy readers. Submissions should be in a plain Microsoft Word document, Calibri 11, double-spaced. Avoid pull quotes, watermarks, colored fonts, and other creative formatting. Our primary guides for usage, grammar, and spelling are the *Chicago Manual*

of Style, Webster's New College Dictionary, and the CIA/ Directorate of Analysis *Style Guide*. Footnotes and endnotes should adhere to *Chicago* guidelines.

The Editorial Board's Role

Submissions are accepted for consideration as they are received. After review by the editorial team, they are delivered to the editorial board in time for quarterly meetings. The board, comprising about a dozen current and former Intelligence Community officials, meets in March, June, September, and December; as needed, drafts can be reviewed out of cycle. Board deliberations cover the gamut: accuracy, clarity, argumentation, originality, and scholarship. Members strive, consistent with readability and economy of language, to give authors considerable latitude in the expression of their messages.

As it has since its inception, the editorial board has sole decisionmaking authority. Members may approve, remand with needed changes, or reject articles. Most often, articles are approved with suggestions for improvement; the editorial team will then work with authors to respond to the feedback.

Once a draft is ready for formal editing, the editors work with the authors on high-level edits (e.g., structure and clarity) and detailed style and formatting changes. This is an iterative process; authors will have multiple opportunities to revise and review before an edition is finalized.

Writing Media Reviews

Book reviews (and broadly, media of all types) are an integral part of the *Studies* mission. We publish several dozen a year, a mix of short- and long-form reviews. Walter Pforzheimer helped cement the importance of brief reviews, now known as the Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf penned by Hayden

a. See Nicholas Dujmovic, “Building an Intelligence Literature: Fifty Years of *Studies in Intelligence*,” *Studies in Intelligence* 49, No. 4 (December 2025).

Peake and others. Short reviews focus on a single book and generally run about 500 words. Long reviews give contributors the space to go deeper or, often, to review more than one book on a topic. These review essays run to 1,500–2,500 words.

How do you write a media review? First, of course, is read the book, watch the movie, listen to the podcast series, and so forth. Consuming media for a review is different than doing so for pleasure. Take notes, observe critically, and organize your thoughts.

We have a general formula for reviews that serves both the reviewer and reader. You need not adhere slavishly to it, but veering too far off course will bring heartache. We're using a book review as an example, but this applies generally to other forms of media.

- What's the book about? Orient the reader quickly and clearly.
- Who's the author? Tell the reader about the author. What have they written before, what's their specialty, are there any biases we need to know about?
- Why read it? This middle section is the longest, most important, and often the hardest to craft. You need to hit the key points of the book, not reprise every chapter.
- What's it missing? Here you can insert your own voice. Does the author live up to the book's promise? What might have made it better?
- Bottom line: do you recommend it?

Book and media reviews are typically unclassified, so don't introduce classified content. If you are reviewing works of fiction (and we encourage this), focus on elements like the storytelling, plot, and character development. Avoid the "well, actually..." rejoinder

unless it's absolutely vital. Similarly, if you're reviewing movies, podcasts, graphic novels, and other forms of media, the reader is looking for your insights into the artwork, cinematography, direction, production quality, music, etc. Do not include spoilers.

Be aware of writing your own article rather than a book review. This is a particular temptation with the longer form. As James Parker, a reviewer for the *New York Times*, wrote, "There is an art to book reviewing. Or a craft, I should say—because if the reviewer tries to be artistic, if he once abandons the secondary zone of criticism for the primary zone of creation, he's sunk."^a

Another option is to review an important academic article or a collection of related articles. This kind of review is a service to the busy intelligence practitioner who might not be able to stay abreast of intelligence scholarship.^b

Frequently Asked Questions

How often is Studies published?

Studies in Intelligence is published in March, June, September, and December, in hard copy and digitally on CIALink and Intelink. Since 1992, we have regularly produced unclassified editions; today, these are published quarterly as *Extracts* and are available on www.cia.gov/resources/csi. Included with this package are recent exemplars, two articles, a stand-alone media review, and a handfull of short "Bookshelf" reviews. Browse our websites for many more examples.

How do I contact the editors?

Contact links can be found on the CSI page on CIALink (*Contact*) and Intelink (*Feedback*), and on the main page of CIA's public website www.cia.gov (*Contact*).

a. James Parker and Anna Holmes, "Is Book Reviewing a Public Service or an Art?" *New York Times*, February 8, 2015.

b. See Joseph Gartin, review of "Collective Discussion: Toward Critical Approaches to Intelligence as a Social Phenomenon," *International Political Sociology* 14, (2020), 323–44, by Hager Ben Jaffel, et al., *Studies in Intelligence* 66, No. 3 (September 2022).

May I use visuals?

We welcome graphics, charts, and images, and we can assist authors in creating or acquiring them. Visuals must be high-resolution files in standard formats (.jpg, .jpeg, etc.). We adhere to copyright restrictions. We will not publish graphically disturbing images (such as dead or severely injured people or animals, violent or sexual content, or depictions of extreme fear or dread). (See the artificial intelligence FAQ below.)

May I use artificial intelligence?

AI is rapidly becoming ubiquitous, and authors may be using AI (e.g., in internet searches) without even realizing it. AI editing tools are helpful to create outlines and to improve grammar and readability, and AI can rapidly create visual elements. The most powerful AI tools can create content that mimics human writing or artistic styles with remarkable verisimilitude. At the same time, AI remains prone to “hallucinating,” including the creation of fake citations and data, and to generating sexualized or stereotyped images of people. Authors should be transparent in their use of AI when it extends beyond basic editing, and they are responsible for ensuring the authenticity and accuracy of quotations, references, data, and visuals.

Who is responsible for prepublication classification review?

For unclassified articles and reviews that will be published in the *Extracts*, authors with prepublication classification review requirements must follow their employer’s guidance. Editors may request documentation that an article is approved for public release. For classified manuscripts, authors must obtain any permissions needed to downgrade material to non-restricted handling levels.

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Do I need to clear my article with my employer?

Separate from prepublication classification review, which is mandatory for some individuals, authors should exercise good judgment in informing relevant components, peers, or supervisors and in considering corporate equities. Although no content in *Studies in Intelligence* represents the views of any US government agency, authors should be aware that some readers may perceive otherwise.

May I use a pen name?

Yes, authors may use pen names that are approved by the editors. We strongly recommend that authors who aspire to be regular contributors are consistent in their use of pen names.

May I cite leaked intelligence in an unclassified article?

The short answer is generally no. *Studies in Intelligence* adheres to IC policy that unauthorized disclosures remain classified absent a formal determination by a classification authority. There are times, however, when authors will be unable to recognize if information they have uncovered in open-source material has been “leaked” or been declassified and released. We therefore encourage writers to meticulously provide sources for their findings; such sourcing will also help classification reviewers reach appropriate decisions. ■