Reflections on the Study of Intelligence

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Within a few years of the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1947, its leaders recognized that to advance intelligence tradecraft the agency needed an organized and accessible repository of knowledge. During those early years, the sources for knowledge on all aspects of the intelligence business not only were in records dispersed throughout CIA buildings but also largely rested in the heads of CIA's active and former practitioners. A body of literature devoted to the intelligence profession did not exist. With the creation of a Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) historical staff in 1951, the publication of the journal *Studies in Intelligence* in 1955, and the establishment of the Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI) in 1974, CIA's leaders set out on a path, rocky at times, to conscientiously devote resources to studying intelligence and building up a fund of knowledge.

Today, *Studies in Intelligence* and the scholarly research programs in CSI have paramount roles in sustaining and growing the fund of knowledge on the intelligence business. CIA senior leadership's attention to and support for these enterprises have had a direct impact on the agency's successful attempts to study intelligence. Throughout the agency's history, the resources and talent that its leaders have been willing to devote to capture and share knowledge have fluctuated for a variety of reasons. Yet, from the modest beginnings of the 1950s to the capabilities that exist today, there has always been a commitment to the study of intelligence. CIA's efforts have evolved and improved over the years as scholars and practitioners introduced innovative approaches and increasingly more sophisticated methods for studying intelligence and making the knowledge available to the workforce and leadership.

The study of intelligence as an official function is distinct from the type of research and writing university professors, students, and other outside scholars pursue. At CIA, this work is not carried out as an academic undertaking but rather as a means of directly contributing to the improvement of the agency's mission performance. This article traces the evolution of the efforts in CIA to study intelligence and build a useful and readily available body of knowledge. CIA has throughout its history supported a number of formal internal training schools going back as far as the early years of the Office of Policy Coordination and the Office of Special Operations. These institutions have served the agency workforce well in supporting its professional development. The courses taught at these schools have readily drawn upon the aforementioned fund of knowledge. The focus of this paper, however, is on the actual capturing, analyzing, and sharing of

World War II intelligence officer, lawyer, and investment banker William Harding Jackson served as deputy (October 1950–August 1951) under DCI Bedell Smith. Jackson was tasked with improving the professionalism of CIA and urged the agency to document its history. (Photo: Wikimedia)

knowledge that goes on outside the schoolhouses.

To expound on the essence of the study of intelligence at CIA, this article addresses the following questions: 1) Why has CIA devoted resources to this effort? 2) What aspects of intelligence have been the focus of study? 3) When in CIA's history did these pursuits take place? 4) Where in CIA has this work been performed? 5) Who has been engaged in the research, analysis, and writing on the intelligence business? and 6) How have CIA and IC professionals approached the study of intelligence?

The DCI History Staff

The foundation for the study of intelligence was set with a focus on current CIA history. DDCI Jackson in December 1950 recommended that the research and writing of CIA's current history be undertaken by a staff within the agency. Jackson wanted histories that were prepared on a current basis to familiarize future directors with the CIA's evolution.[1] Five months later, in May 1951, the DCI History Staff was created. The staff was led by the assistant to the director; its function was to produce a CIA history that covered the legislative background, the original organizational structure, and subsequent reorganizations.[2] Jackson wanted the first history to be an audit of the evolution of the concept of the "national intelligence system" that would be shared with members of the National Security Council (NSC) so they could benefit from the lessons of the agency's successes and "avoid repeating its failures."[3] Furthermore, DCI Walter Bedell Smith wanted a "dispassionate chronological type of history."[4]

The head of the History Staff hired an academic historian, Arthur B. Darling from Yale University to research and write the first in-house history. CIA leaders wanted an objective narrative of the agency's first three years, with a look at the reforms put in place to create a centralized intelligence establishment.[5] Darling drew on original source documents and interviewed individuals who played key roles in the establishment and development of the agency during those early years.[6]

Instead of a dispassionate history, Darling's work, *The Central Intelligence Agency: An Instrument of Government to 1950,* turned out to be an account of the bureaucratic battles waged by the early DCIs, with criticism directed against many of the officials involved. Allen Dulles succeeded Smith as the DCI by the time the history was completed. Instead of making it available to a broad readership, Dulles limited access.[7] Darling returned to academic life; the History

staff leadership also changed with the transition to the Dulles era.[a,8]

This ever-shifting environment was typical of the History Staff's next 50 years. The size, professional makeup, mission, output, and organizational alignment varied during those five decades. As the staff and CIA leadership navigated their way during this vacillating evolution, a number of prominent voices weighed in on the History Staff's roles. On April 29, 1966, Sherman Kent offered his own recommendations in a memo to the DCI titled "The Agency and the Business of Its History."

At the time, Kent was the longtime chairman of the Board of National Estimates and a highly influential IC leader and scholar. With a doctorate in history, he was a professor at Yale University until joining the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and CIA. Kent argued that CIA's History Staff should be led by a professional historian who would report to the director, deputy director, or executive director.[9] The rest of the staff could be recruited from among the talented officers within CIA. According to Kent, the staff should have two responsibilities: "the writing of finished history, that is, the reconstruction of the past of the Agency, and ordering of the day-by-day accumulation of the staff of archives from which tomorrow's finished history must be written."[10] The archives should include not just memos and documents but the testimonies of key actors.

Kent emphasized the importance of accurately capturing what happened not just for the purpose of maintaining an "official memory for its own sake, but for effective offensives and rear-guard actions in the great bureaucratic war within the Federal Government."[11] Kent's persuasive note served to keep senior leaders' attention on the importance of history and thwart any erosion in such activities. However, no immediate action was taken in response to Kent's recommendations.

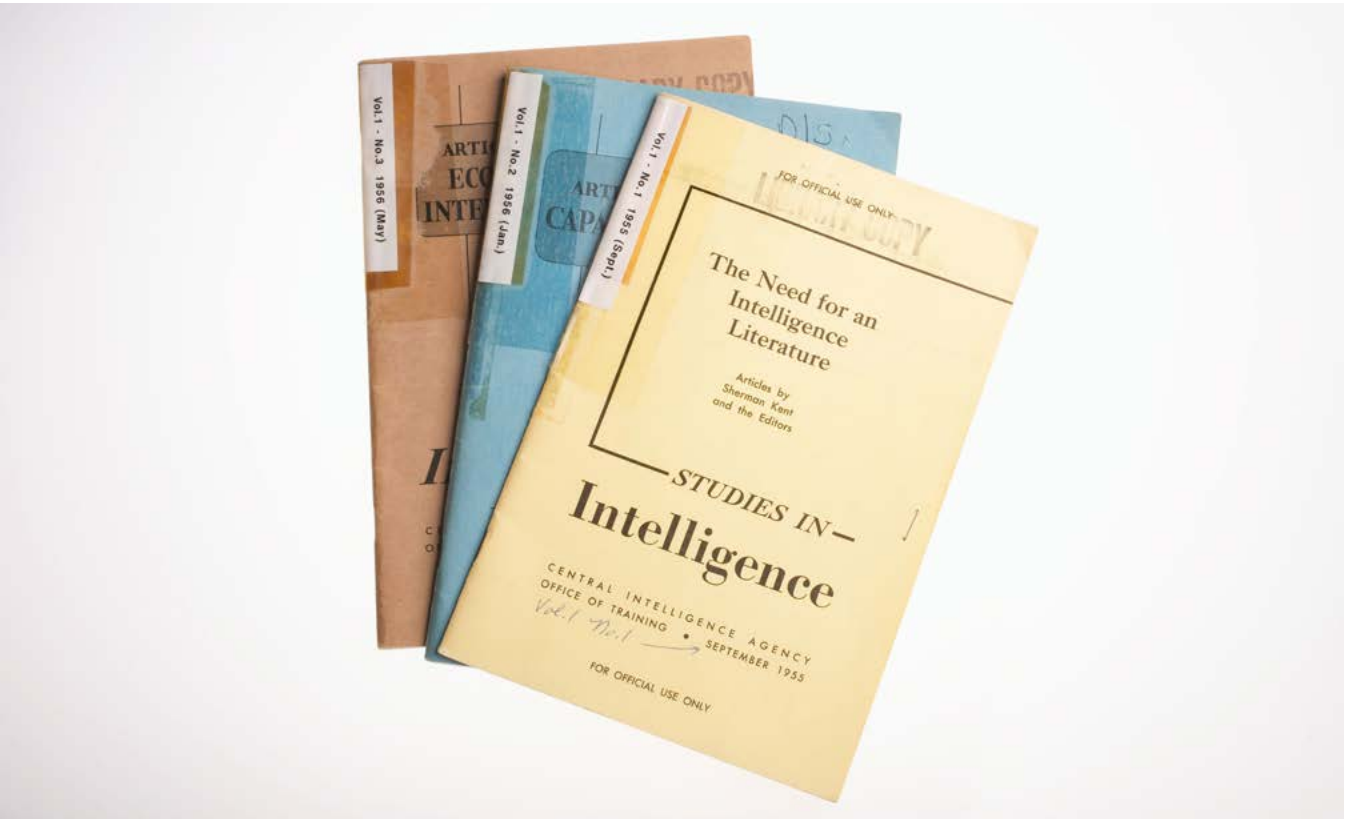
In early 1980, when the CIA history program was on the verge of being abolished, DCI Stansfield Turner set up a history advisory committee to review the past and present state of the history program and offer recommendations on the proper role and scope of the effort.

A year later, CIA's executive director asked retired university history professor Howard Ehrmann to offer thoughts on the history program.[12] Ehrmann proposed that in addition to the production of histories on agency activities, specific directorate histories should be written. He recommended that the directorate histories be done by historical writers from throughout the agency. DCI Richard Helms approved Ehrmann's approach and in 1969 hired him to implement the plan.[13]

Ehrmann's concept built upon an existing Directorate of Plans effort called the Clandestine Services Historical Program (CSHP). The objective of the CSHP was to record the first 20 years of the Clandestine Service history.[14] The CSHP produced more than 500 papers and monographs, which included histories of overseas stations.[15] Because the directorate historical writers were not trained historians and did not work directly with the History Staff historians, the quality of their products varied.[16] Furthermore, because of the sensitive nature of many of these histories, access was limited on a strict need-to-know basis. Thus, during that time, they were of little value to CIA's workforce. By 1973, DCI William Colby ended the directorate history program and scaled back the overall CIA effort.[17] Under Ehrmann, the History Staff had expanded to 10 permanent positions, in addition to the numerous directorate history writers, but by 1975, the staff comprised only a historian and a secretary.

In early 1980, when the CIA history program was on the verge of being abolished, DCI Stansfield Turner set up a history advisory committee to review the past and present state of the history program and offer recommendations on the proper role and scope of the effort.[18] To assist in their work, the committee sought the advice of historian Dr. Martin Blumenson, who prepared a report for the committee.[19] Blumenson's fundamental premise was that a historical activity is useful to the organization. Such an activity was not a luxury but rather an important function that could support and facilitate the agency's work. He argued that "a competent Historical Activity, if properly supported, directed, and managed can and should contribute to the Agency's missions, roles, and functions."[20] His bottom line was that the agency's history activity needed to be strengthened: "Such an Activity will, above all, serve the Agency by

a. Darling's history would resurface in 1964, when the first of six classified excerpts appeared in *Studies in Intelligence*; the remaining five appeared in separate issues into 1969. All six would be declassified in 1993. See endnote 8 for source citations.



Copies of the first three editions of *Studies in Intelligence*, brainchild of the legendary Sherman Kent. *Studies* has been in continuous publication since 1955. (CIA photo)

providing an institutional memory for internal use, being a point of contact with other governmental agencies and departments, and eventually enhancing the stature of the Agency in the public awareness."[21] The advisory committee drew heavily on Blumenson's general and specific recommendations in its report to the DCI.

While the committee was able to stop the erosion of the CIA's history activities, over the next decade the History Staff did not reach the potential laid out by Blumenson and the committee. Organizationally, the staff had many homes during its first 40 years; in January 1991 it moved into CSI.[22]

Regardless of organizational alignment, CIA historians have followed the same disciplined and learned practices as those of their professional colleagues in the academic world. The essence of the historians' work is the discovery, interpretation, and presentation of information about the past. When appropriate, they have adhered to the "Standards of Professional Conduct" maintained by the American Historical Association in order to gain trust and confidence in their work.

The body of historical works produced by CIA historians included monographs and books covering intelligence analysis, foreign intelligence collection, counterintelligence, intelligence support to national security policymaking, and organizational developments. Furthermore, the historians not only provided briefings and lectures at internal training courses but also regularly responded to inquiries from senior leaders and the Office of Public Affairs on aspects of CIA history.[23]

Studies in Intelligence

In September 1955, Director of Training Matthew Baird introduced the CIA workforce to a new internal, classified journal called *Studies in Intelligence*. In his introductory note to the first issue, he explained, "I believe that the production of these *Studies* will be a step in the direction of creating a literature of basic doctrine and methodology useful both to the training activity and to

the Agency as a whole. In sponsoring this endeavor, I therefore urge your active participation and support so that we may all benefit in advancing the profession of intelligence by this means."[24]

The idea for this journal first surfaced almost two years before, when in December 1953, Sherman Kent submitted a memo to the director of training recommending the establishment of an "Institute for Advanced Study of Intelligence." As part of his overall thinking on this matter, Kent also proposed the establishment of a journal devoted to "intelligence theory and doctrine, and the techniques of the discipline."[25] Other than pointing out that journal articles could be classified or unclassified, he did not, in that memo, further elaborate on his vision and reason for the journal.

The idea of establishing an institute for studying intelligence did not immediately generate much interest among CIA leaders, but in 1954 Kent was asked to expound on his proposal for a journal. Before a CIA gathering, he presented his case for the publication.[26] This presentation would turn out to be the essence of an article that appeared in the first issue of *Studies*, titled "The Need for an Intelligence Literature."

Beginning with the premise that intelligence had become a recognized professional discipline with a developed theory and doctrine, Kent pointed out that the intelligence profession lacked a body of literature, a written fund of knowledge, that could be passed on to current and future practitioners. He explained that this body of literature should be produced by intelligence professionals. They would be creating what he called, "the institutional mind and memory of our discipline" that would become "the permanent recording of our new ideas and experiences."[27]

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Fostering an Elevated Debate

The body of literature that Kent sought to create would focus on the method and practice of the intelligence mission. This would be the starting point for what would be an "elevated debate" among practitioners.[28] He understood that given the nature of the topics, the contributions to the journal would have to be classified. In 2001, the phrase "Journal of the American Intelligence Professional" was added to the cover of *Studies*. That phrase clearly reflects what Kent had in mind when he submitted his proposal.

Studies in Intelligence had an unassuming beginning. The first issue only contained two entries: Kent's article and a piece by the editors that reinforced Kent's arguments and laid out the charter, process, structure, and focus of the journal. The next two issues, published in January 1956 and May 1956, clearly showed that the journal would contain articles written by intelligence professionals for intelligence professionals. Each of the two issues comprised two articles with common themes. The focus of the January issue was on foreign capabilities and national intelligence; the May issue was devoted to economic intelligence.

It was not until more than a year later that *Studies* emerged as what one typically sees in a professional journal. The fall 1957 issue was assigned a bibliographic reference point—Vol. 1, No. 4. It included a table of contents with a listing of 13 entries covering various aspects of intelligence. From that point on, *Studies* would be a quarterly journal. In the foreword, DCI Allen Dulles reinforced the fundamental purpose of the journal: "The *Studies in Intelligence* series provides such a medium for doctrinal expression in the profession of intelligence. . . . The *Studies* are designed to bridge the gap between experience and inexperience, between theory and practice, and to provide for professional growth."[29]

Introducing the Editorial Board

That issue also introduced the *Studies* Editorial Board and spelled out editorial policy. As stated up front: "The final responsibility for accepting or rejecting an article rests with the Editorial Board. The criterion for publication is whether or not, in the opinion of the Board, the article makes a contribution to the literature of intelligence."[30] This statement asserted the independence of the board. Neither the DCI nor any CIA senior leader alone would determine what to publish or not to publish. This editorial policy has remained in place throughout the life of *Studies*.

Kent served as the first chair of the Editorial Board and remained in that role until his retirement in 1968. During the early years, the board's composition was small, normally four or five members in addition to the chair. Board members came from the ranks of CIA leadership.

In 1992, however, as part of a movement in CIA to achieve greater transparency with the public, the* Studies *board agreed to publish a separate issue containing the unclassified articles that appeared in the four classified issues for that year or earlier.

The fall 1957 issue also specified who could submit articles for consideration by the editorial board: "Contributions to the *Studies* may come from any member of the Intelligence Community or, upon invitation, from persons outside the Intelligence Community."[31] Even though *Studies* was launched, managed, and supported by CIA, it was clear from the beginning that it was intended to be open to contributors from all of the IC.

During the early years, contributors came from outside of CIA, but CIA officers wrote most of the articles.[32] To accommodate a full discussion of doctrine, tradecraft, and a broad array of intelligence experiences, *Studies* was published as a classified journal. Yet even with the classification restrictions, Kent sought the broadest dissemination of the journal, in stark contrast to the tightly controlled access that DCI Dulles placed on the first publication of the History Staff.

Upon his retirement and departure from the board in 1968, Kent offered his own assessment of how well the journal had, up until then, met the goals he had in mind: "That *Studies* has in fact contributed to a richer understanding of the bones and viscera of the intelligence calling is beyond argument."[33] Acknowledging the journal's slow beginning, he noted that during the second half of his tenure as chair, the number and quality of the articles increased significantly.[34] Kent noted that the journal included articles on intelligence history, theory and doctrine, and methods. Furthermore, he was pleased to see that contributors came from a wide spectrum of CIA components and from intelligence officers outside of CIA.[35] Yet he would have liked to have seen a greater number of intelligence offers sharing their knowledge and insights.

Kent found the response from readers of *Studies* was very positive, and it came from all quarters of the IC.[36] On the negative side, Kent acknowledged that, given the nature of the topics covered in *Studies*, it was going to be a challenge to provide practitioners a journal they could take home and read. All editions of the journal during his tenure were classified. This meant that taking time to read *Studies* at work would always compete with the time devoted to mission. This would be a perennial challenge throughout the history of *Studies*.

Expanding Public Access

For its first 37 years, *Studies* was published quarterly as a classified journal, available only to those inside CIA and other elements of the intelligence and military communities. Despite the fact that some articles in the journal were unclassified, copies of the entire journal could not be taken home and were beyond the public's reach. In 1992, however, as part of a movement in CIA to achieve greater transparency with the public, the *Studies* board agreed to publish a separate issue containing the unclassified articles that appeared in the classified issues for that year or earlier. Several years after the publication of the inaugural unclassified issue, CIA released a set of originally unclassified or declassified articles, some of which would be published in *Inside CIA's Private World* (1995), edited by Yale Professor H. Bradford Westerfield.[37] His selection would only be a small sampling of the more than1400 articles from *Studies* CIA delivered to the National Archives and Records Administration in 1997, which today are retrievable from the NARA website.

The practice of publishing unclassified issues that began in 1992 continued, with variations in periodicity, until 2007. At that point, the *Studies* board agreed to publish separately unclassified extracts from each quarterly classified issue instead of releasing one or two compilations of extracts per year. This practice continues today.

With the efforts to generate accessible unclassified material, the *Studies* board had broadened its original targeted readership—intelligence practitioners and their partners and collaborators—to the public, including the population of users of the internet. (See facing page.) The intent of this expansion was to increase the public's understanding of the intelligence profession and dispel the many myths that had taken root about CIA and the IC. These changes would open the door for an increase in contributions from those from academia and private research institutions.

In 2005, in celebration of *Studies*' 50th anniversary, Nicholas Dujmovic, a CIA historian and then *Studies* board member, reviewed and assessed the five decades of the journal. He found that the journal remained

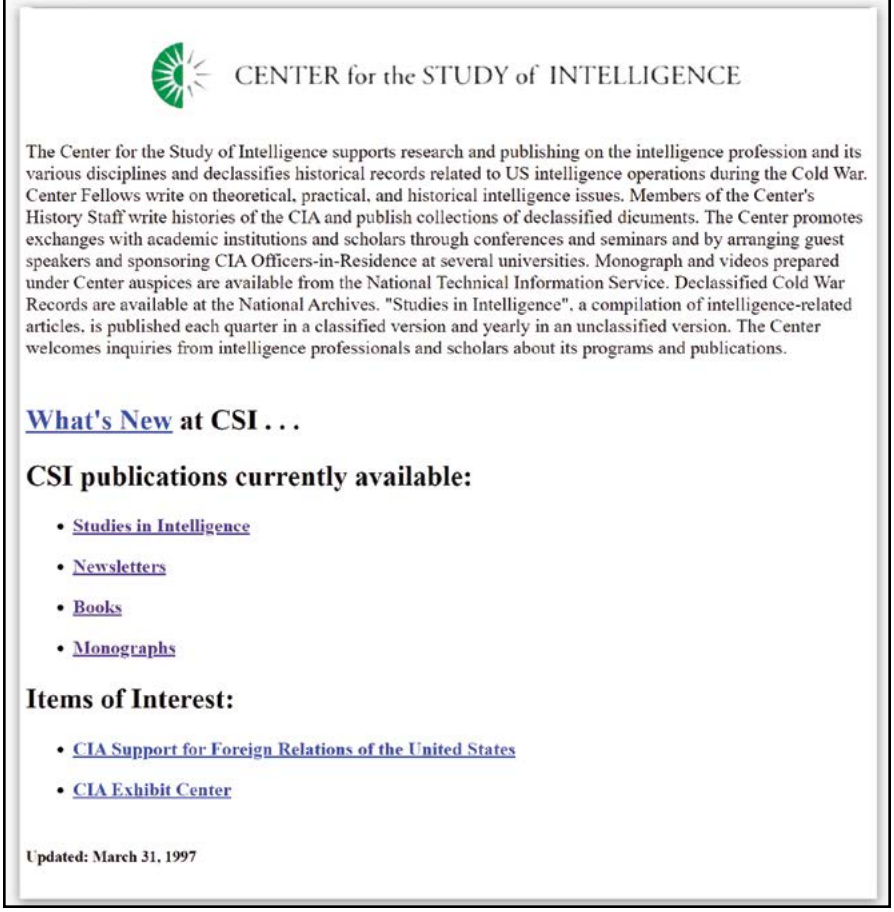
The Advent of CIA and CSI Presence on the Internet

The editorial board's intent to make more of *Studies'* material available to the public was not a simple matter in 1992, coming, as it did, before the full force of the internet was felt. When the first unclassified issue of *Studies* was published in that year, potential readers would either have had copies sent to them personally or would have had to purchase them through unclassified publication programs involving the Department of Commerce (National Technical Information Service) and the Library of Congress, which CIA had used for unclassified distribution of material since the 1950s.

It was not until October 1996, when CIA's first website appeared as www.odci.gov, that unclassified CIA and CSI products would appear on the web. The majority of the content listed then were the titles of printed products—along with instructions on how they could be obtained from Commerce or the Library of Congress and their cost. If one preferred to acquire hard copies of *Studies*, they were available for $27 each in 1996.

Buried in that first site was a home page for the Center for the Study of Intelligence (below). In it were posted two issues of unclassified *Studies* (1995 and 1996—31 articles), two declassified document collections, the first edition of what would become known as *Getting to Know the President* (four editions would be published through 2021), and two monographs.

The CIA website would evolve along with the internet, eventually becoming cia.gov. As it did, CSI's contribution to the site would grow exponentially, consuming a larger and larger share of the site's content. Today, cia.gov contains every unclassified issue published since 1992 (more than 1,000) as well as hundreds of older, archived articles and some 60 CSI-published books and monographs.



CENTER for the STUDY of INTELLIGENCE

The Center for the Study of Intelligence supports research and publishing on the intelligence profession and its various disciplines and declassifies historical records related to US intelligence operations during the Cold War. Center Fellows write on theoretical, practical, and historical intelligence issues. Members of the Center's History Staff write histories of the CIA and publish collections of declassified dicuments. The Center promotes exchanges with academic institutions and scholars through conferences and seminars and by arranging guest speakers and sponsoring CIA Officers-in-Residence at several universities. Monograph and videos prepared under Center auspices are available from the National Technical Information Service. Declassified Cold War Records are available at the National Archives. "Studies in Intelligence", a compilation of intelligence-related articles, is published each quarter in a classified version and yearly in an unclassified version. The Center welcomes inquiries from intelligence professionals and scholars about its programs and publications.

What's New at CSI . . .

CSI publications currently available:

- Studies in Intelligence
- Newsletters
- Books
- Monographs

Items of Interest:

- CIA Support for Foreign Relations of the United States
- CIA Exhibit Center

Updated: March 31, 1997

true to Kent's original intent in providing an outlet for sharing practical insights on the intelligence profession. Contributors ranged from senior leaders to subject-matter experts across a broad range of disciplines. Dujmovic concluded: "After 50 years, *Studies* is still accomplishing its mission of accumulating the 'best thinking' of intelligence thinkers and practitioners. That mission has remained unchanged. As Sherman Kent remarked during *Studies'* 25th anniversary year, 'The game still swings on the educated and thoughtful' intelligence officer."[38]

More Than Just CIA

Throughout the journal's life, CIA has funded and managed *Studies*. This has led to a perception that it is CIA's "in-house journal," a phrase commonly seen or heard in media mentions of the journal. From the beginning, *Studies* was intended to be the journal for the "American Intelligence Professional," not just for the CIA intelligence officer. A former director of national intelligence (DNI) and former Editorial Board member, Gen. James Clapper regarded *Studies* as the premier publication of its kind. To reinforce the fact that it was an IC journal, he suggested placement of the IC seal on the cover. Starting in 2011, all issues have the IC seal and the seals of all IC agencies on the back cover. (See next page.)

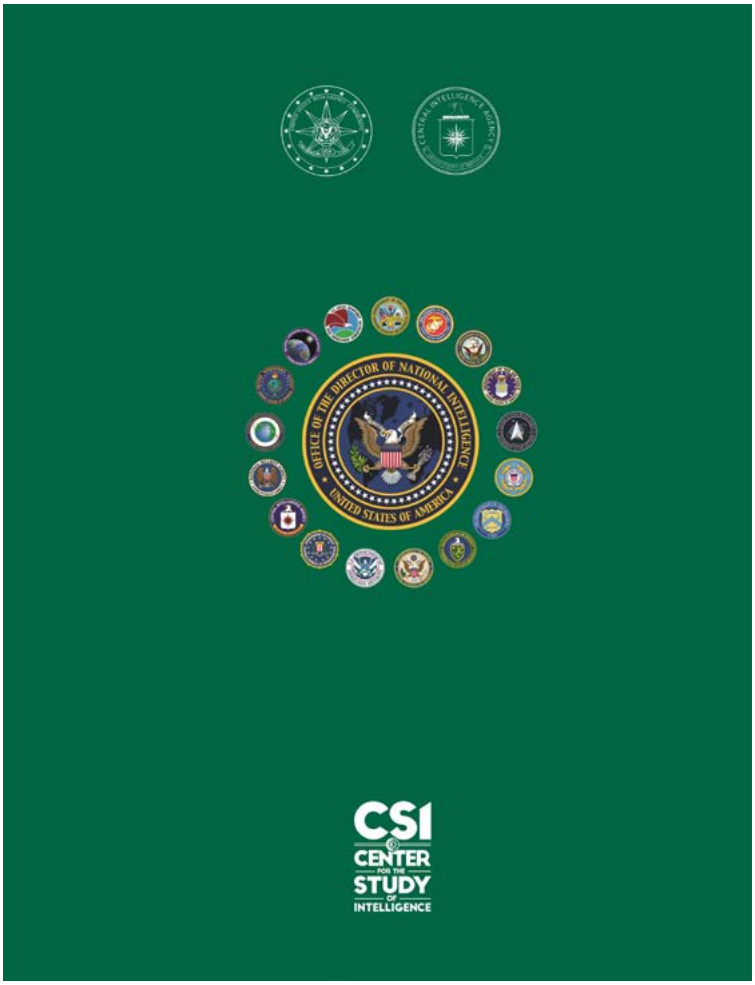
As a further reflection of *Studies* as an IC journal, the board membership evolved over time to regularly include representatives of other IC agencies, not just from CIA. Currently, the board is chaired by the director of CSI, and it includes members from CIA, the National Intelligence University, the ODNI, DIA, NSA, NGA, and

the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. The current and former intelligence officers who make up the board have wide experience and expertise.

Since its inception, one of the core principles of the journal is that it is an independent, unofficial product of the *Studies* Editorial Board and its authors. Each article carries a disclaimer that the views expressed in each article are those of the authors and not those of CIA or any US government entity. In other words, *Studies* is not the official mouthpiece of CIA or any IC agency. *Studies* is not a "peer-reviewed" journal, as is commonplace in the academic world, but the rigor with which board members review, discuss, and debate each submission—often after consultation with experts in their domains—has ensured that the highest standards of scholarship are upheld and that each published article makes a significant contribution to the literature on intelligence.

A review of the articles in the 84 issues of *Studies* published between 2002 and 2022 reveals that the journal covered the full scope of the intelligence profession and its heritage: history; leadership and management; analysis; operations; the intelligence-policy relationship; military intelligence; broader IC issues; and the future of the intelligence business. History and analysis made up the greatest share of the articles. A longstanding challenge has been getting operations officers to share their experiences and offer insights on the tradecraft associated with the clandestine services.

Over the past decade, 217 different authors contributed articles. As has been the case throughout *Studies'* existence, a majority of articles were written by CIA authors, making up almost 60 percent of the total. Another 23 percent came from other parts of the IC. The remaining 17 percent were written by authors from outside the IC. *Studies* has also published interviews with former IC senior leaders. In an effort to further advance the sharing of knowledge and experience across the IC, the *Studies* board in 2016 and 2018 sponsored IC-wide conferences covering the challenging topics of data-driven intelligence and strategic warning. Classified issues of *Studies* are made available to the greater IC workforce in both hard copy and electronic formats.



Consistent with former DNI Clapper's request, the back cover of *Studies* features the ODNI seal surrounded by the seals of the other 17 organizations that comprise today's IC. The green field indicates that the edition is unclassified.

For the practitioners, the challenge today remains what it was in 1955—finding time in a busy schedule to spend with the rich content available in *Studies*. In doing so, the results can be rewarding. Former board member and senior CIA Directorate of Operations leader Frank Archibald once commented during a board meeting, "I have been a regular *Studies* reader from the time I entered on duty. Because I knew that when

I opened an issue of *Studies* I was going to find something in there that would help me do my job better."

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Creating the Center for the Study of Intelligence

The idea for the "Institute for Advanced Study of Intelligence" that Sherman Kent recommended in 1953 would finally become a reality 21 years later with the establishment of the Center for the Study of Intelligence. At an April 1973 meeting of the CIA's Management Committee, DCI James Schlesinger said that there was a need for an intellectual atmosphere in which the intelligence process could be viewed from every perspective by the best minds in CIA and the IC. He commented that "there is more thinking and discussion on the intelligence process outside than inside CIA" and wanted that imbalance corrected.[39] The lack of "an intellectual forum and an intellectual fermentation at an appropriate level of concern for the intelligence process" was discussed at the April meeting.[40]

A year later, a plan for such a component in CIA that would support research on the intelligence process and host programs to stimulate thinking on the fundamental issues of the intelligence profession took shape. A Headquarters Notice on July 22, 1974, informed the workforce of the establishment of CSI: "The principal mission of the center will be to foster rigorous and systematic inquiry into the purposes and processes of intelligence."[41] CSI would host a permanent staff from the Office of Training. Others from the CIA workforce would be invited to participate and contribute to CSI-sponsored discussions.[42]

The director of CSI prepared an initial workplan of research and discussion topics and a seminar schedule for the new center. The deputy director for administration weighed in on the specific proposed topics and noted that some made "a lot of sense" but others might be "items we would put to the bottom of the list for a rainy day."[43] CSI enjoyed some early success in both the quality and relevance of its papers and seminars and the caliber of individuals interested in serving as intelligence fellows at CSI.

Falkiewicz Report

By early 1977, however, the center had begun to languish on both fronts—identifying suitable topics and attracting qualified people to serve as intelligence fellows. Thus in August 1977, the acting deputy director of CIA asked the director of the Office of Public Affairs, Andrew Falkiewicz, to review the situation at CSI and prepare a report of his findings.[44]

The Falkiewicz report reinforced the need for and value of the center, pointing out that there was wide support in CIA: "The rationale for the existence of CSI is as valid today as it was when the Center was established three years ago."[45] Falkiewicz listed the completed intelligence monographs and seminar reports and concluded that the intent in establishing CSI, up to then, had been fulfilled. He stressed that CSI's work was relevant to real-life issues in CIA and that the center was not an "ivory tower" focusing on abstract issues and matters disconnected from the workforce. CSI protected its independence so it could provide a venue for free inquiry and an objective look at the intelligence business. But Falkiewicz noted that agency managers were less involved in CSI matters: "Agency-wide perception of a management stake in the Center has been almost completely eroded."[46]

Falkiewicz's recommendations addressed this tension between CSI's independence and senior management involvement. Recognizing the importance of free inquiry, the report nevertheless asserted that CSI and management must meet halfway. Falkiewicz recommended that the "DCI should give urgent consideration to regularly using resources of the CSI for the study of topics of particular relevance to the development of overall Agency policy. . . . By using the resources of CSI in the policy-making process, Agency management would strengthen its stake in the Center without endangering the basic concepts of independence and freedom of inquiry."[47] The basic idea was to ensure that CSI was focusing its efforts on the areas of highest concern to CIA management as they related to the intelligence profession.

The report also included a recommendation to align CSI and *Studies in Intelligence* more closely, starting with unified leadership "headed by one director, with the title of Director of the Center for the Study of Intelligence, in cooperation with a Board of Advisors based on the editorial board of *Studies* as currently

In another step to consolidate the CIA's scholarly research and writing, DDCIA Richard Kerr, in January 1991, transferred the DCI History Staff to CSI.

constituted."[48] While both elements would retain their independence and respective missions, both should look to collaborate for "mutual benefit." The report concluded with a reference to the importance of staffing CSI appropriately in order to send a strong message to the workforce on the stature of the center and the importance of its work.[49]

DCI Turner Weighs In

In response to the Falkiewicz report, DCI Stansfield Turner, in a memo to the deputy director for administration, spelled out his support for CSI and emphasized that the agency needed a capability for "looking objectively at ourselves and our performance."[50] Turner wanted CSI to be closely linked to CIA's decision-making process. He admitted he was unfamiliar with the work being done at CSI and suggested a number of ways in which he could stay informed on what was going on and how he could better interact with the staff. In order to encourage talented officers to work in CSI, he agreed to issue a call to the workforce to serve on short-term assignment to the center as DCI Fellows. Furthermore, he endorsed the recommendation to have CSI manage *Studies in Intelligence*.[51]

In approving changes for CSI, Turner believed the center would provide "a unique forum for selected professionals from the agency and other IC components to make substantive contributions to the study and development of long-range issues of doctrine and policy."[52] Accordingly, Turner approved a new charter for CSI. Under this charter, in addition to the study of doctrine and policy that Turner emphasized, CSI was to document the institutional memory of the intelligence professionals, provide a forum for informed dissent, and support professional development opportunities through research, reflection, and articulation of ideas.[53]

Persistent Staffing Struggles

Despite Turner's strong support, CSI struggled over the next several years to attract talented professionals to the program. In September 1981, DDCI Bobby Inman urged CIA management to provide the support needed to enable CSI to reach the potential originally envisioned when it was established. He gave it one more chance to deliver.[54]

Five months later, Inman approved a new charter that emphasized CSI as a CIA and IC body for "developing a theory of intelligence, for stimulating the growth of a body of intelligence literature, for providing the means to research professional issues, and for providing senior management with innovative, topically directed studies that contribute to problem solving, policy development, and effective resource allocation."[55]

The charter listed specific CSI programs, its internal organizational structure, and its leadership. While the appropriate organizational alignment of CSI would continue to be debated in the following years, the question of whether or not CSI should continue to exist would not resurface.

In another step to consolidate the CIA's scholarly research and writing, DDCI Richard Kerr in January 1991 transferred the DCI History Staff to CSI. In a note to the workforce announcing this change, Kerr reaffirmed the mission of the History Staff "to help preserve the Agency's historical records and institutional memory, to provide a specialized reference service, and to research and write the history of the Agency."[56] He also pointed out that even with the organizational change, the History Staff would still be responsible to the DCI and DDCI for carrying out CIA's history program.

Historical Review Group

A year later, CSI would take on responsibility for managing another key agency document-related program. As part of an organizational move that put CSI under the Office of the Executive Director, the Historical Review Group (HRG) was established in the center. This new group took on the responsibility of the Historical Review Program that had been part of the Office of Information Technology. The HRG was responsible for the review and declassification of documents 30 years old.[57] The establishment of the HRG in CSI would affect the History Staff's work up to that point.

Instead of carrying out original historical research and publishing classified histories for the CIA workforce, the history staff partly diverted its attention to compiling and publishing collections of declassified documents for release to the public. As a whole, CSI shifted its efforts to the publication of such collections and sponsoring of conferences that highlighted the release of the thematically compiled documents.[58] This change in focus lasted until 1998, when the HRG transferred to the Office of Information Management,

thereby consolidating all declassification functions.

With the transfer of the HRG, CSI and the History Staff returned to a more focused effort on publishing classified studies of interest to current intelligence practitioners. Without the pressure of the HRG mission, CSI was also better positioned to fully take advantage of an initiative beginning in 1996 to interview intelligence officers. As part of its mission of documenting the agency's past, the history staff employed a regular practice of capturing the first-hand experiences of CIA employees through oral interviews. This capability in the years ahead would be an important element in the growth of CSI's knowledge fund.

Intelligence and Policy

In 2000, with the intent of providing intelligence officers greater insight into how policy officials use intelligence, CSI launched its Intelligence and Policy Project. Instead of only capturing the experiences of intelligence practitioners, this oral history interview project gathered input from former senior policymakers of administrations that had just left office. The objective of this series was to help CIA and other IC professionals better understand the types of intelligence senior policymakers use and value, or conversely, found unhelpful. This intelligence policy research would remain an important feature of CSI's ongoing work.

Lessons Learned Program

Six years later, DCIA Michael Hayden further broadened CSI's mission. At the December 2006 *Studies in Intelligence* annual awards ceremony he announced, "I've asked CSI to serve as our Agency's center for lessons learned. This will help ensure that CIA is a true learning organization, one where significant experiences and knowledge are captured, preserved, and shared appropriately with those who can benefit from them. It is critical that we pass along to our thousands of new officers the accumulated wisdom and decades of experience that have made CIA the world's premier intelligence service."[59]

DCIA Michael Hayden in December 2006 charged CSI with overseeing CIA's Lessons Learned Program. (CIA photo)

During its first 30 years, CSI had produced a number of studies that included lessons and best practices. The establishment of a formal lessons-learned program, however, was a major turning point in how CIA approached the study of intelligence. The key to CSI's Lessons Learned program has been its methods of collecting ethnographic data, which are collected at the source. Team observation during an activity, event, or operation being studied is preferred where possible. In the absence of such collection methods, the study team relies on unstructured

The congressional oversight committees have been among CSI's biggest champions and supporters of its Lessons Learned Program.

and semistructured interviews of participants.

These interviews aim to capture firsthand perspectives from participants, partners, and witnesses. Document collection is also a critical part of the methodology. With all of the data in hand, the study team conducts an objective interpretation and analysis to dispassionately describe what actually happened and generate findings that offer both lessons learned and best practices. The work is done by current and retired practitioners, including former senior leaders. CSI receives direct tasking from CIA's senior leaders and the congressional oversight committees for specific studies.

The program differs from that of the Office of Inspector General's (OIG's) Inspection Staff. Inspectors apply the same rigor in collecting data and assessing the sufficiency and appropriateness of information. Unlike the CSI program, the Inspection Staff focuses more on systemic challenges and known problems, and they make recommendations for corrective actions. Inspectors must also ensure that agency programs and activities are in compliance with laws, executive orders, and regulations.

In contrast, CSI's studies rarely offer recommendations. The center lacks the organizational authority to direct and enforce specific changes. Nevertheless, when the findings of a lessons-learned study are well grounded, the implications are evident and subsequent recommendations are best shaped not by the study team but by the stakeholders. CSI's approach examines both successes and failures and connects the workforce in ways that strengthen its professionalism and enhance organizational performance. The steady increase in the number and scope of requests for new studies by CIA seniors since the program was first launched reflects the value they now place on this approach to the study of intelligence.

Congressional Support

The congressional oversight committees have been among CSI's biggest champions and supporters of its Lessons Learned Program. The committees have advocated investments in self-examination and introspection through formal lessons learned studies as a way of improving internal processes. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in the 2009 Intelligence Authorization Act noted, "The Committee firmly believes that for the CIA to truly become a learning organization—one in which knowledge is captured, preserved, and shared with those who can benefit—the CIA must institutionalize the lessons learned process and develop policy supporting that effort."[60]

With DCI Hayden directing CSI to assume responsibility for a more focused and disciplined approach to identifying lessons, the center's scholars would continually improve and refine the methodological approach to their studies. The results of these efforts would become a big part of CSI's overall knowledge fund.

Emerging Trends Program

In 2010, CSI took another leap forward in broadening the scope of its mission by turning its attention to the future of intelligence. It published a study that looked at the emerging trends that would likely have an effect on the business of intelligence. *Where Tomorrow Will Take Us: The New Environment for Intelligence* introduced intelligence professionals to the trends in technology, business, and society to raise their awareness of the rapid and far-reaching changes they would face in the next three to five years.[61]

Shortly afterward, CSI established the Emerging Trends (ET) Program with a commitment to continually monitor these trends and inform the workforce so that the CIA could be best postured to confront the challenges or take advantage of the opportunities arising from the expected changes. Using an array of rigorous foresight activities, ET researchers and writers produced an impressive collection of short essays and longer monographs on a wide range of potentially disruptive changes such as ubiquitous technical surveillance, artificial intelligence, identity in the digital age, a world of abundant data, synthetic media, neurodiversity at work, the internet of things, and organizational transformation.

Support to ODNI

When General Clapper became DNI in summer 2010, he sought to streamline the size of ODNI and establish more efficient operations. Accordingly, he asked DCIA Leon Panetta to take on the responsibility of managing ODNI's modest lessons-learned and history programs.

DNI James Clapper (right), with Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, chief of engineers and commanding general of the US Army Corps of Engineers, visiting the museum at the Intelligence Community Campus–Bethesda in October 2015. Clapper was a strong proponent of IC history and lessons-learned programs. (ODNI photo)

From his experience in the IC, Clapper had viewed CSI as the gold standard for capturing and sharing knowledge on the intelligence business. Panetta agreed, and in fall 2011 CSI formally took on the role as the executive agent for the ODNI's programs.

As the office responsible for managing *Studies in Intelligence*, CSI already had a role to play in supporting the entire IC. CSI used the ODNI's existing intelligence-related studies as a foundation and began to systematically build up a knowledge repository that would address ODNI and IC areas of interest. ODNI senior leaders provided CSI with specific guidance on topics they wanted addressed, either as a history or a lessons-learned study. As the ODNI executive agent, CSI accordingly furthered its reach to the professionals at ODNI and other IC agencies.

Knowledge Management

Since its creation, CSI has, in a centralized fashion, served as an enterprise capability for knowledge management. Yet much of the historical and current information on the agency's business operations and practices is retained in a decentralized fashion across the various components. With the goal of bringing CSI's knowledge-management practices directly into the agency's directorates and mission centers, the center in 2017 established the Knowledge Management Referent Program.

Under this program, CSI deploys referents—typically senior annuitants—directly into component workspaces to survey existing knowledge holdings, identify gaps in relevant knowledge, and support the knowledge-management efforts already under way. Component referents also interview individuals involved in recent important intelligence activities and carry out after-action reviews. The referents strive to connect people within the component to ensure that relevant knowledge is captured and shared when needed. Given that much of a component's specific knowledge would have application across the agency, the overall goal of the program is not only to ensure that component professionals have ready access to such knowledge but also that these holdings can be made part of an enterprise repository available to the entire CIA workforce where appropriate.

Academic Literature

CIA's overall approach to building a knowledge fund that advances the professional development of the workforce and contributes to the agency's performance offers a contrast to that which prevails in academia. Before the 1980s, little was written about intelligence by academic scholars. This was partly due to the fact that no journals were devoted exclusively to the business of intelligence. Articles on intelligence could occasionally be found in social science, history, and political science journals as well as publications devoted to foreign policy and national security such as *Foreign Affairs.*

As interest in intelligence matters grew in US colleges and universities, so too did the outlets for publishing serious writings on the topic. The journal *Intelligence and National Security* appeared in January 1986. As stated in the first issue's editorial, "*Intelligence and National Security* is the first scholarly, interdisciplinary journal devoted to the past history of intelligence work, to the analysis of its contemporary functions and

Academic writing on intelligence has, for the most part, fallen into four categories: historical, theoretical, organizational, and governance.

problems, and to the assessment of its influence on foreign policy and national security."[62] As a peer-reviewed journal, *Intelligence and National Security*'s major contributors were academics.

Shortly thereafter, the *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, was launched in spring 1986. The editor-in-chief at the time, F. Reese Brown, articulated the objective of this new quarterly journal: "The *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* is devoted to exploring the methods and techniques used in the various facets of intelligence work as well as investigating the processes used in developing national estimates and other forms of finished intelligence."[63]

Over the next 15 years, no other non-US-government–sponsored journal on intelligence would emerge. But academics' interest in the topic slowly increased. For example, the number of panels devoted to discussing intelligence matters at the International Studies Association annual conventions recurrently expanded with academics participating in growing numbers.

Increased Focus

The 9/11 attacks and the controversy over Iraq's WMD programs spurred much greater attention in the academic world on intelligence. Scholarly writings appreciably increased, and new journals devoted to intelligence such as the *Journal of Intelligence History* (beginning in 2001) were published. In addition to the scholarly exploration of intelligence, courses and even formal degree programs began taking root in colleges and universities.

Academic writing on intelligence has, for the most part, fallen into four categories: historical, theoretical, organizational, and governance. Intelligence histories or case studies provide a descriptive look into intelligence analyses and operations. Theoretical works explore intelligence definitions and methodologies in the abstract. Organizational writings cover the functions and evolution of intelligence institutions. Governance looks at the role of intelligence in national security policy making and the place of intelligence in society. British scholar Michael Goodman breaks down the academic writing even more simply: "In its purest form, the study of intelligence can either be predominantly historically case-study-based or it can be primarily abstract in nature."[64]

The contributors to the academic literature on intelligence vary widely. Historians, political scientists, psychologists, anthropologists, and other social scientists have explored various aspects of intelligence. Journalists and former practitioners have also added their insights on current and past intelligence activities.

The growth of academic research and writing on intelligence has also led to a greater focus on how the academic world should approach intelligence as a field of scholarship. For example, in 2019 Stephen Coulthart, Michael Landon-Murray, and Damien Van Payvelde published a collection of essays called *Researching National Security Intelligence: Multidisciplinary Approaches*.[65] Their aim was to provide guidance to intelligence scholars and draw attention to the various methods and perspectives that have been used in the field of intelligence scholarship.

Scholars looked to advance the theoretical and practical understanding of intelligence by applying the scientific methods and other rigorous methodologies of social science disciplines to their studies. Michael Kobi and Aaron Kornbluth from the Institute for National Security Studies have noted, "The approach taken to study the multi-dimensional subject depends largely on the academic department in which intelligence studies is nestled. An intelligence program within a history department will approach intelligence differently than an intelligence program that studies it from a political science lens. The interdisciplinary nature of intelligence allows it to behave this way and for the different schools of intelligence to emphasize one approach over another."[66] Coulthart, Landon-Murray, and Van Payvelde suggested that a multi-disciplinary approach will encourage the broadest possible study of intelligence in a university setting.[67]

Broad Audience

Given today's numerous outlets for sharing the results of research, analysis, and reporting on the business of intelligence, the audience for such writing is very broad. Academics have many considerations to take into account as they approach any serious research and writing—achieving tenure being one of them. At a 1993 symposium on teaching intelligence, Columbia Professor Richard Betts also pointed out, "Most academic research is 'relatively

incestuous,' appearing in journals primarily read by experts like oneself."[68] The late Harvard Professor Ernest May also weighed in on the circumscribed nature of early academic writing on intelligence: "The revolution in intelligence scholarship, however, has been largely self-contained. It has not so far had much effect outside its own inner circle. Writing on intelligence rarely appears in other learned journals."[69]

In the 30 years since Betts and May made their observations, the reach of the academic scholars has expanded. Beyond the academic world, intelligence scholarship plays a valuable role in keeping the public informed of a government activity that has been shrouded in secrecy and the subject of many myths and misunderstandings. Finally, scholars and writers on intelligence hope to reach the intelligence practitioners with the insights they uncovered in the course of their research.

Obstacles to Scholarship

Scholars who pursue intelligence face a number of challenges not found in other academic disciplines. Access to information is the most formidable. Because of the protection of sources and methods, academics acknowledge that they will not have the complete documentary record on any sensitive topic they are researching. For example, obtaining source material on most covert operations is rarely possible. Also, because of their lifelong obligation to protect classified information, former intelligence officers are not free to disclose and discuss such matters with academic researchers. Academics, thus, will be constrained in the information they can obtain from interviews of former practitioners.

The declassification of material through Freedom of Information Act requests, documents made available through 25-year and 50 year declassification mandates, and the release of thematic document collections by CIA's Historical Programs Group have provided some of the material that academic scholars need.

The declassification of material through Freedom of Information Act requests, documents made available through 25- and 50-year declassification mandates, and the release of thematic document collections by CIA's Historical Programs Group have provided some of the material that academic scholars need. Serious scholars, however, might understandably view such releases as handpicked and insufficient to their needs.[70]

Furthermore, the released papers alone do not provide academic scholars with the necessary orientation and context from which those documents emerged. Scholars who have never served in any of the IC agencies will lack insight into the respective organizational cultures and how those cultures change over time and influence intelligence practices. Former DCIA Hayden, in looking at the intelligence-policy relationship, highlighted the different tribes—the policymakers and the intelligence professionals—and how difficult it was for one tribe to understand the other. For the outside intelligence scholar, penetrating and appreciating these tribes are even more difficult. Former National Intelligence Council Chair Greg Treverton observed, "The institutional culture of intelligence in general and of the CIA in particular is not easy for scholars to understand, but without such an understanding it is difficult to comprehend what has happened and is happening in foreign affairs."[71]

Scholars can also take advantage of leaks, although they present their own challenges in verifying such information but also in understanding who leaked and why?[72] Furthermore, scholars must weigh the national security costs of citing information that, even if verified, is still regarded as classified by the government.

Even with these prevailing constraints, the growth in the academic study of intelligence has not slowed. This type of research and writing reaches beyond the borders of the United States to include the United Kingdom and Canada, among other nations. As noted earlier, scholars from various backgrounds are employing different methodologies and exploring a wide variety of intelligence-related topics.

A number of former intelligence officers have pursued second careers as university professors. Consequently, their academic colleagues have benefited from discussions on matters that the formers are free to talk about. A thorough accounting and review of the academics' work can reveal basic facts as to who is writing, what they are writing about, and where they are publishing. The influence and impact of academic scholarship on intelligence on those both inside and outside the IC have yet to be determined. Nevertheless, the academic approach and subsequent body of literature have, to some degree, supplemented the study of intelligence as carried out at CIA.

Greg Treverton, shown here discussing the launch of the unclassified NIC report *Global Trends* in January 2017, has stressed that scholars need to understand the culture of intelligence. (ODNI photo)

Conclusion

For more than 70 years, CIA leaders have allocated resources and assigned personnel to studying the intelligence profession and documenting CIA's history. Even though the level of effort expended against these activities has varied during that time, the uninterrupted focus on capturing and sharing experiences and insights on the intelligence business has enabled the development of increasingly more thorough and advanced research methods and the creation of a valuable and accessible body of knowledge. While the organizational alignment and size of the units devoted to the study of intelligence have shifted and changed over time, the one constant has been their independence and ability to carry out their work objectively. To that end, the support of the DCIA, and recently the DNI, has been imperative.

CIA has primarily turned to experienced intelligence officers, both current and former, to study the intelligence profession. Their familiarity with intelligence tradecraft and practices, critical thinking skills, and exposure to IC cultures provide them with the necessary background and qualifications to effectively capture, analyze, and share knowledge on intelligence. Outside historians and other scholars, to a lesser degree, have also been part of the overall effort by writing intelligence histories and drafting articles for *Studies in Intelligence*.

Over time, CIA and IC officers have covered all aspects of the intelligence profession. Their access to IC records and their ability to draw upon the experiences and insights of fellow practitioners have enabled them produce in-depth studies that address a wide range of operational, analytical, administrative, organizational, and leadership challenges. Topics that were once left unexamined when resources and staff personnel were limited, such as covert action programs, have in recent years been studied in great detail for lessons and best practices.

The results of the studies on these important issues have been made available in variety of ways. Books, monographs, articles, and short essays make up the vast portion. But

other communication forms such as video documentaries, audio interview segments, museum artifacts and exhibits, conferences and seminars, lectures and briefings, and interactive multimedia products have been introduced to make the available knowledge more accessible.

The work of those who study intelligence is designed for intelligence professionals. Histories, lessons-learned studies, and other insights are captured with this audience in mind. The focus of the study of intelligence has been on topics of interest and value to IC leaders and practitioners. Well-documented histories and the identification of lessons and best practices from a wide range of intelligence operations and activities provide intelligence officers with learning points to avoid repeating mistakes and take advantage of relevant and adaptable successes.

Specific articles, studies, histories, and trend reports have had a direct impact on individuals and organizations. The progress made by CIA in this field of study, however, cannot be judged solely by the completion of any one product or collection of histories and studies, but rather by looking at the cumulative insights, experiences, lessons, and best practices on all aspects of intelligence. Sherman Kent recognized 70 years ago that intelligence, as a developing discipline, had no permanent institutional memory and lacked a literature. The long-term goal behind the study of intelligence has been to create and grow a body of knowledge that ultimately contributes to mission success. The knowledge fund that Kent envisioned now exists, but it requires constant attention to ensure that its holdings remain relevant to current and future challenges.

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The author: Dr. Peter Usowski was, except for a brief interlude, director of CSI and chair of the *Studies* editorial board from 2011 into early 2023. He has also been a contributor to the journal, with his first article on the subject of geospatial intelligence, appearing in March 1990. He retired from CIA in 2023.

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