

Intelligence in Public Media

Intelligence Analysis and Policy Making: The Canadian Experience

Thomas Juneau and Stephanie Carvin (Stanford University Press, 2021), 223 pages, bibliography, notes, index.

Reviewed by Joseph W. Gartin

Thomas Juneau and Stephanie Carvin are on a roll. Juneau, an associate professor at the University of Ottawa, and Carvin, associate professor at Carleton University, collaborated on *Top Secret Canada: Understanding the Canadian Intelligence and National Security Community* (2021), a superb primer on the Canadian intelligence community.^a Carvin is also the author of the recent *Stand on Guard: Reassessing Threats to Canada's National Security* (2021). In their latest effort, *Intelligence Analysis and Policy Making: The Canadian Experience*, they look specifically at intelligence analysis in the Canadian system. Influenced by the US experience and approach, but with significant differences in customer engagement, capacity, personnel, and oversight, Canada can seem to the US intelligence practitioner both familiar and remote.

Much of the strength of *Intelligence Analysis and Policy Making* lies in the extensive use of interviews with current and former intelligence officials, which adds texture to what might otherwise be a familiar academic discussion about the intelligence-policy relationship. (5) Some readers might recognize Juneau's and Carvin's observations about Ottawa's standing within the Five Eyes (31–2), its efforts to add value in an inevitably imbalanced partnership (“Canada is a net importer of intelligence,” [101]), and the gap between policy and intelligence that can undermine any intelligence service (“intelligence analysts are policy blind to the point of being detrimental” [82]).

Juneau and Carvin open with a discussion of governance, focusing particularly on five key factors that shape how Ottawa manages its intelligence community: institutions, personalities, mandates, capabilities, and accountabilities. In all these areas, the small size of the Canadian community both in relative terms (dwarfed by the US but also many other counterparts or adversaries) and absolute terms is central to understanding the Canadian IC. To be

sure, there is a counterargument to be made about agility and focus, but as Juneau and Carvin make clear, the net effect is a community whose impact is constrained on multiple fronts.

They argue, for example, that the Privy Council Office (PCO, which acts as adviser to the prime minister) “lacks clout in its relations with policy and operationally focused line departments throughout the security and intelligence community. Its role is not to direct their work but to bring people together and coax them into coordinating policies and operations. Its main asset is its proximity to the prime minister, but it lacks the size and authority to play a more forceful coordinating role.” (15) Consider that in 2018, the latest figures available to them, the National Security and Intelligence Advisor had only about 90 people on staff. A certain level of resignation seems hangs over the issue: Juneau and Carvin acknowledge that their interviewees diverged over whether there was a need for a strong center, with a minority of views arguing that the situation is not perfect but is “more or less the best that can be hoped for.” (15)

The limited authorities of the PCO are mirrored by an over-reliance on the personal interest of the prime minister to drive engagement. (19) Here too there are echoes of the US system, where a president's appetite for intelligence might vary. Yet even when a US president has been ambivalent or even hostile toward the IC, the vast national security architecture in the US creates its own demand, like the relationship between mass and gravity.^b As Juneau and Carvin note, because institutions are “relatively underdeveloped in Canada's intelligence community, changes in leadership have a greater impact than in other contexts in which institutions are more mature.” (19)

Juneau and Carvin explore what Canada's lack of a human intelligence (HUMINT) agency means for analysis. Canada is “one of the few Western countries and the

a. Reviewed in *Studies in Intelligence – Extracts* 65, no. 3 (September 2021), 47–8.

b. See John L. Helgerson, *Getting to Know the President: Intelligence Briefings of Presidential Candidates and Presidents-Elect, 1952-2016*, 4th Edition (Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2021).

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only G7 country to not have a foreign human intelligence service.” (29) Instead, Canadian HUMINT is focused almost exclusively on domestic security intelligence, i.e., threats from terrorism, espionage, and organized crime. Whether Canada should have its own HUMINT service seems to be an unsettled question, judging from their interviews, and the hurdles to doing so from scratch seem formidable. To the extent this gap affects analysis, the focus of their book, Juneau and Carvin frame it within the construct of providing more to the overall Five Eyes intelligence effort.

Intelligence Analysis and Policymaking offers a helpful perspective on oversight in a Westminster context. They note that traditionally, “the oversight and review of the Canadian intelligence and national security community has focused almost exclusively on assessing operations and legal compliance rather than the functioning of analytical units.” (34) In that sense, they acknowledge, it might not have a direct impact on intelligence analysis in the Canadian system. They observe that oversight and review in Ottawa has evolved rapidly in recent years, including the creation of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians; the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency, an independent body with the authority to review the use of intelligence; and the Intelligence Commissioner, a “quasi-judicial role” with oversight and review powers. Juneau and Carvin conclude that resources, time, and trust will be required for these bodies to be effective. (35) The US experience beginning in the 1970s through the creation of the

Director of National Intelligence in 2004 certainly echo that observation.

Ottawa’s principal national-level, all-source analytic organization—PCO’s Intelligence Assessments Secretariat—in recent years has put substantial energy behind treating the policymaker (or other intelligence recipient) as a client to be supported. Similar efforts have paid dividends for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Communications Security Establishment, with Client Relations Officers embedded throughout the government. (91–4) Beyond such institutional efforts, much comes down to the personalities of both the policy customer (especially in the prime minister’s office) and leaders of the intelligence components.

The need to hire, develop, and retain a trusted, high-caliber, diverse workforce presents challenges for any intelligence community. As Juneau and Carvin make clear, Ottawa is constrained by lack of hiring, limited career paths, and turnover. Nonetheless, over the past several years the Canadian IC has made notable investments in training, often in collaboration with its Five Eye partners, and career development, including seconding officers with internal and external partners. (66–70)

For these and other topics, *Intelligence Analysis and Policy Making* is an essential reference for anyone who wants to know about how the analyst-policymaker relationship works, and doesn’t, in Ottawa.



The reviewer: Joseph Gartin is managing editor of *Studies*.