

The Kent-Kendall Debate of 1949

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Sherman Kent's *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*, published in 1949, is probably the most influential book ever written on US intelligence analysis. Indeed, Kent's carefully drafted blueprint for meeting the challenges facing intelligence in the postwar world has regularly been cited by defenders and critics alike of the performance of the Central Intelligence Agency. Almost all experienced Agency analysts are generally familiar with Kent's themes, though probably more from informal discussions than from a careful reading.

One of Kent's most finely honed doctrines addresses the relationship between producers and consumers of intelligence analysis. Effective ties, while manifestly essential for the well-being of both groups, were difficult to achieve. Kent's recommended fix: to warrant scholarly objectivity, provide analysts with institutional independence; to warrant relevance, urge them to strive to obtain "guidance" from policymakers.¹

Willmoore Kendall's "The Function of Intelligence," a 1949 review of *Strategic Intelligence*, agreed with Kent on the importance of getting right the relationship between experts and decisionmakers but on little else. Kendall's bold and prescient arguments deserve more attention from both students and practitioners of intelligence analysis.

Kendall rejected what he depicted as Kent's ideal of bureaucratic scholars processing information to understand the outside world for the benefit of bureaucratic policy planners. The function of the intelligence as Kendall saw it was directly to help "politically responsible" leaders achieve their foreign policy goals in large measure by identifying the elements of an issue that were susceptible to US influence. In addition, Kendall observed that if the intelligence mission were to illuminate decisionmaking with the best expert knowledge can provide, Kent's aversions to taking account of domestic US politics and social science theory were self-defeating.²

This article first sets out the major lines of doctrinal disagreement between Kent and Kendall in the context of the late 1940's. It then sketches the impact of the opposing views on CIA doctrine and practice during the ensuing 40 years. Finally, it addresses requirements for effective producer-consumer relations in the 1990s, a period in which challenges to both policymakers and analysts are likely to increase even as resources committed to national security become scarcer. If for no other reason, doctrinal choices require thoughtful examination at this juncture.

Kent's Perspective

Kent, born in 1903 into a politically prominent California family, spent some 20 years before World War II at Yale University, as undergraduate and graduate student and as a faculty member. His major interests were the teaching of European history and the study of 19th-century French politics. His world and political views then and subsequently would characterize him as an eastern establishment liberal. A colorful one though, as indicated by the many references to his earthy vocabulary and humor.³

Kent was a 37-year-old assistant professor at Yale in 1941 when he answered the call to scholars for enlistment in the national defense. He joined the Research and Analysis Branch (R&A) in what started as the Office of the Coordinator of Information and was transformed in 1942 into the Office of Strategic Services. R&A was quickly dubbed the "Four-Eyes Brigade," whose most powerful weapon was the index card.⁴ At war's end though, Kent described it as an institution "of almost bewildering power, resourcefulness, and flexibility."⁵

Kent was proud as well of his own wartime achievements, especially the Herculean research effort in support of planning for the 1942 Allied invasion of North Africa. He won recognition for his bureaucratic as well as his research skills, especially his

ability to manage often reluctant fellow scholars to work as teams and to meet deadlines as well as standards. For the North African exercise, his unit worked around the clock for several days and impressed the military consumers with the wealth of useful information uncovered from R&A's perch in the Library of Congress.

For his efforts, Kent was recognized as the senior R&A division chief when, upon the abolition of OSS in 1945, the 1,500-strong research unit was moved to the State Department. He rose quickly to deputy and then acting director of the newly created Office of Research and Intelligence. No pride here; rather, dismay. His two bosses quit in response to State's gutting of R&A. Kent himself resigned in mid-1946. He was unable to accept the scattering of the research cadre to the various geographic policy bureaus, who went to work directly under the command of the assistant secretaries.⁶

Kent arranged for an extension of his leave of absence from Yale, in order not to cut loose either from the Washington scene or from his concerns about the future of "strategic intelligence." First, he spent a semester teaching at the newly formed National War College. Then, with the funds from a Guggenheim Fellowship and in an office at the War College, he proceeded to draft the book that, as he put it, "wild horses" could not keep him from turning out. If he had a priority goal, it was to preserve what he saw as the rapidly fraying bonds between first-rate scholarships and national defense.⁷

Kent relied mostly on his experience as historian and analyst, though he also read through the "infantile" student essays on intelligence at the War College library and conducted bull sessions and exchanges of letters with an impressive array of R&A, Yale University, and the War College colleagues. His third and final draft was completed late in 1947, at which time he did return to teaching history at Yale.

In 1950, in the wake of Korean War emergency, Director of Central Intelligence Agency Gen. Walter Bedell Smith in effect drafted Kent back into intelligence service. Kent was named deputy and heir apparent to his old R&A boss William Langer for the new Office of National Estimates (ONE). Kent

was recognized as one of the leading US authorities on intelligence research. Indeed, General Smith's deputy, William Jackson, had lobbied to have him named to the top ONE post.⁸ Kent served as head of ONE from 1952 until his retirement from the agency in 1967. As with his R&A experience, he impressed his colleagues with a talent for leadership as well as scholarship.⁹

Kent's Doctrine: 1949

One reason for the continued attention by academic specialists on intelligence to a book now over 40 years old is that little else of Kent's thoughts on the subject is readily available. Kent made a point of not talking or writing publicly about the "business," even after retirement.¹⁰ Those, including myself, who served under Kent and have access to others who worked with him during his 17 years with CIA have a handicap of their own. They have to take care to distinguish between the Kent of the book and the practicing Kent.

In the final chapter of *Strategic Intelligence*, Kent characterized the relationship between "producers and consumers of intelligence" as "one of utmost delicacy." The relationship did not establish itself but required "a great deal of conscious effort, and is likely to disappear when that effort is relaxed." What could be counted on to work at the desk level became more problematic at higher levels. Indeed, the more "august" the issue, the less one could rely on effective ties.¹¹

Kent provided several reasons, the most prominent being the fact that policymakers do not naturally trust the quality and utility of the product of intelligence makers, nor the latter's readiness to take responsibility for their assessments. Kent quipped, "I will warrant that the Light Brigade's G-2 was high on the list of survivors in the charge at Balaclava."

What to do about it? Kent's recommendations are colored by his view of the mission of strategic intelligence as well as by his concern that the relationship required special handling. Kent believed that the function of the intelligence unit was to provide expert knowledge of the external world, on the basis of

which sound policy would then be made by those with expert knowledge of US politics. While the intelligence unit “wished above all else to have its findings prove useful in the makings of decisions,” its role had clear limits.

Intelligence is not the formulator of objectives . . . drafter of policy . . . maker of plans . . . carrier out of operations. Intelligence is ancillary to these; . . . it performs a service function. Its job is to see that the doers are generally well informed . . . to stand behind them with the book open at the right page, to call their attention to the stubborn fact they may be neglecting, and—at their request—to analyze alternative courses without indicating choice.

According to Kent, policymakers are very much in need of the intelligence unit’s service, which at one point he defines as knowledge about foreign countries that is “complete . . . accurate . . . delivered on time and . . . capable of serving as a basis for action.”¹² To be worthwhile, though, intelligence has to provide objective scholarship. Getting too close to policy would undercut the whole purpose of such an effort. In this context, policy did “not necessarily mean officially accepted high United States policy.”

. . . but something far less exalted. What I am talking of is often expressed by the words “slant,” “line,” “position,” and “view.”

Kent made much of the point that analysts had enough difficulty avoiding unsound judgements on tough issues without worrying about what conclusions a policymaking boss wanted to see in their intelligence assessments.

Other difficulties that would emerge if intelligence analysts worked directly for policy officials could be fixed at least in part by good administration: the tendency of operational bosses to put analysts to work as operators, to preoccupy them with trivial questions that precluded serious research, to permit research standards and coordination across regional desks to suffer. But in Kent’s considered judgement the problem of the skewing of analysis to fit the wishes and fears of the bosses had no solution.

Kent was well aware of the need for analysts to put something on the table for policymakers in addition to scholarship. Analysts, he averred, were not paid to pursue knowledge for its own sake but rather for “the practical matter of taking action.” He went one step further: intelligence that is ignored, for whatever reason, is “useless.” To avoid this, analysts have to bend every effort to obtain guidance from their customers. Today this is called tasking and feedback.

Intelligence cannot serve if it does not know the doer’s mind; it cannot serve if it has not his confidence; it cannot serve unless it can have the kind of guidance any professional man must have from his client.

Kent put the challenge of getting the relationship right into a well-known phrase: “Intelligence must be close enough to policy, plans, and operations to have the greatest amount of guidance, and must not be so close that it loses its objectivity and integrity of judgement.” He conceded that the danger to the relationship of intelligence being too far from policy was greater than that of being too close. But he could not leave matters there, warning instead that “the absorption of intelligence producers by intelligence consumers may prove too heroic a cure for both disease and patient.” Thus, Kent recommended what he called the customary compromise, in effect the “bargain” of his book:

Guarantee intelligence its administrative and substantive integrity by keeping it separate from its consumers; keep trying every known device to make the users familiar with the producers’ organization, and the producers with the users’ organization.

He ended chapter and book with still another expression of concern about the “delicacy” of the relationship between men of study and men of action. He warned policymakers that, if they ignored the intelligence arm when its considered judgements disagreed with their “intuition,” they would be turning their back “on the two instruments by which Western man has since Aristotle steadily enlarged his horizon of knowledge—the instruments of reason and the scientific method.”

Kendall's Perspective

Kendall's perspective on intelligence and policy is much more difficult to capture within the confines of a short paper than is Kent's. Kendall seems by far the more complex man. Unlike Kent, he left little or no commentary on his doctrine of intelligence; and some of his recommendations require understanding of his philosophical positions on broader matters of politics, government, and the Constitution.

Born in Oklahoma in 1909, Kendall was a child prodigy, who at the age of four began reading adult material to his father, a blind, circuit-riding Methodist minister. Kendall's education and world view had more varied stations than did Kent's. Kendall attended the Universities of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Northwestern, Illinois, and Oxford (as a Rhodes Scholar). After completing all course work for a doctorate in Romance languages, he switched interests and obtained his degree in political philosophy. In the mid-1930's, his ideology was leftist, perhaps even Trotskyite. In the 1940's, he became a staunchly anti-Communist conservative. At the time of his death in 1967, he was considered to have been a major (to some, the major) contributor to the postwar development of American conservative political philosophy.¹³

In 1942, Kendall was an assistant professor of political science at the University of Richmond when he made the move to Washington to join the war effort. Most of his wartime posts appear to have been as an operational official rather than as an intelligence analyst. He served, for example, in Washington and in Bogota, Columbia, with the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American affairs, which was engaged in propaganda and psychological warfare. This wartime creation was independent of OSS, but was moved to State's Office of Research and Intelligence in 1945 along with R&A.

Kendall's hands-on experience with intelligence analysis apparently was limited to a year or so. For some months in 1946, he was chief of Latin American research in State's troubled intelligence office. In August 1946, Kendall moved to the newly created Office of Research and Evaluation (soon renamed Reports and Estimates) of the Central Intelligence Group (shortly thereafter, CIA). He served there as chief of the Latin

American Branch, one of several large units of that office. By the fall of 1947, he had joined the Political Science Department of Yale University as associate professor, the same time that Kent had rejoined the History Department as full professor.¹⁴

Little information is available on Kendall's brief experience in intelligence analysis. Two who served with him during his CIA tour remember him as contemptuous of his fellow branch chiefs and of his staff; ready to lecture those few he deemed capable of learning about political philosophy, effective argumentation, and the intelligence mission; and equally combative about bureaucratic perquisites and substantive judgments. He was not a particularly good "listener." And he was seen regularly as an obstacle to "getting the job done." If one reads backward from his subsequent endeavors—at Yale from 1947 to 1961 and as a senior editor of the *National Review* from 1955 to 1963—one also concludes that the promotion of teamwork and other bureaucratic values was not his strong suit. Yale administrators saw him as a disruptive force and were happy to purchase his tenure rights to have him off their campus. The story at *National Review*: Kendall was never on speaking terms with more than one fellow staffer at a time. One observer of his operating style in conservative intellectual circles claimed Kendall was without peer in his speed for turning a discussion into a shouting match.¹⁵

"Controversial," "isolated," a natural "aginner" are all characterizations Kendall would probably have proudly accepted. A memorial collection of his essays in fact was entitled *Willmoore Kendall Contra Mundum*.¹⁶ His brilliance, according to one observer was "his capability to think his way through convention and assumption finally to arrive at the irreducible and crystalline truth."¹⁷

Back to the 1940s. The future of American intelligence was a frequently discussed topic in the nation's capital. And whatever the extent of Kendall's direct experience, his "intellectual charisma," according to one observer, warranted an audience for his views in various circles. Kendall continued working in Washington for the government part-time after he took his appointment at Yale, once again on psychological warfare. But after his 1949 essay, he left little evidence of a continued interest in intelligence analysis.¹⁸

Kendall's Doctrine

Kendall's review of *Strategic Intelligence* praised Kent for his talent in describing the terminology and organizational map of intelligence. But he criticized Kent's recommendations for improving the performance of intelligence as well as of his underlying "general theory" of intelligence.

Apparently, Kendall was at least as alarmed as Kent over the postwar shortfalls of American intelligence, and he was much less willing to accept existing ("official Washington") compromises based on experience and expediency. He wished Kent would have carried his guarded criticisms about the declining quality of personnel, the misdirection of clandestine collection, the excessive concern with security to their logical ends, so that the reader might see the "intelligence arrangements . . . [Kent] would set up if all the resistances were removed."

As the book was written, Kendall concluded that:

. . . if all of Mr. Kent's reproofs were acted upon, and all his proposals adopted, the result would be an improvement in United States intelligence operations. But the improvement would, like the infant mentioned in Marx's famous footnote, be very small.¹⁹

Kendall charged Kent with a misguided view of the function of intelligence, in the first instance because of a preoccupation with an "essentially wartime conception" of the analysts' role. Excessive concentration on building knowledge about current and potential enemy countries diverts attention from support for "the big job—the carving out of United States destiny in the world as a whole."

Kendall also criticized Kent (and through him prevailing practice) for a "crassly empirical conception of the research process," one favored by historians. Kendall calls instead for:

. . . an intelligence operation built upon a conception of the research process in the social sciences that assigns due weight to "theory" as it is understood in economics and sociology and, increasingly one hopes, in politics . . .

Throwing in as well the charge of an excessively bureaucratic concept of how the US Government should work, Kendall would free intelligence officers from "the tidal wave of documents" Kent would have them process. Kendall would recruit a "considerable percentage" of the intelligence unit "precisely for its theoretical training and accomplishments . . . and enable them to work under conditions calculated to encourage *thought*" (emphasis in the original). He would supply the analysts, via telephone to the field, with "the data that really matter," information on currently developing situations, rather than with "out-of-date" traffic and documents.

Kendall's major salvos against Kent concern "the relation of intelligence to policy in a democratic society," a matter of vital importance "since it is American policy on which the future of the free world seems to depend." He agreed with Kent on the need for "guidance" from policymakers to get the intelligence job done, and on the absence of such guidance "as regards the great decisions about foreign policy." He chides Kent for not facing up to the danger to the nation from such an alarming state of affairs.

More specifically, Kendall charges Kent (and the reigning leaders of intelligence) with a "compulsive preoccupation with *prediction* (emphasis in the original), with elimination of 'surprise' from foreign affairs."

The shadow of Pearl Harbor is projected into the mists of Bogota, and intelligence looks shamefaced over its failure to tell Secretary [of State] Marshall the day and hour at which a revolution will break out in Colombia. The course of events is conceived not as something you try to influence but as a tape all printed up inside a machine; and the job of intelligence is to tell the planners how it reads.

Kendall sees the intelligence function as helping the policymakers "influence" the course of events by helping them understand the operative factors on which the US can have an impact. His most specific language appears in a footnote which starts with examples of "absolute" (and thus inappropriate) predictions: "General DeGaulle will come to power

this day six months'; or 'Japan will attack Pearl Harbor on the x-day at y-hour.' ” His example of a “contingent” or appropriate prediction:

“The following factors, which can be influenced in such and such a fashion by action from outside, will determine whether, and if so, when, General DeGaulle will come to power.”

Kendall had two additional criticisms of what he considered Kent’s flawed theory of producer-consumer relations. He sees Kent’s endorsement of the traditional separations of intelligence from domestic affairs as self-defeating, if the goal of the intelligence unit is to bring to bear the knowledge on which foreign policy decisions are to be made. According to Kendall, Kent’s definition of mission:

. . . puts [foreign affairs] in the hands of a distinct group of officials whose “research” must stop short at the 3-mile limit even when the thread they are following runs right across it, and yet which tells itself it is using the scientific method. (This ends up with intelligence reports that *never, never* take cognizance of United States policies alternative to the ones actual in effect, such problems being “domestic matters.”)²⁰

Finally, he charged that Kent, yet again endorsing current practices, would have the intelligence unit laboring for a mid- rather than top-level audience. Kendall rejected the intelligence function as research assistant to bureaucratic “policy planners,” such as George Kennan at the State Department.

The issue here is fundamental: if you conceive the intelligence function [as Kent does], you are excluding from its purview what this writer would call its most crucial aspect—i.e., that which concerns the communications to the politically responsible laymen of the knowledge which, to use Mr. [Walter] Lippmann’s happy phrase, determines the “pictures” they have in their heads of the world to which their decisions relate.²¹

Was There a Debate?

I have found insufficient evidence to conclude that a Kent-Kendall debate took place in the late 1940s—some kind of doctrinal shootout between champions

of the detached and close-support approaches to the producer-consumer relationship. The two did exchange views at least from time to time in Washington and in New Haven. In the preface to the 1949 edition of *Strategic Intelligence*, Kent thanks Kendall and three others “for readings of the manuscript and many kinds of advice.” The same preface, though, also expresses obligations to some 30 additional “friends, associates, and disputants.”²² Apparently, Kent did not think Kendall’s doctrinal rebuke worth taking into account either in his final draft for the book or in his subsequent writings on intelligence.²³

Whether or not the two debated much with each other, the future of American intelligence was a matter for frequent discussion in informed and influential circles during the early postwar years. First, a Central Intelligence Agency was proposed, opposed, blessed, and staffed. In addition to White House plans and disposition, Congressional hearings, and continuous conflict among bureaucrats representing various intelligence organizations, discussion was fueled by several major investigations of intelligence organization and performance (the so-called Eberstadt, Lovett, and Dulles-Jackson-Correa reports).

Most of the controversy, though, concerned what kind of central intelligence entity to construct and its relations with departmental intelligence organizations. The investigations, the recently declassified official CIA histories of the period, and—excepting Kendall—the reviews of *Strategic Intelligence* spend little or no time on policy relations per se.²⁴

The latter issue was not entirely ignored.²⁵ Kent’s deliberate argument in *Strategic Intelligence* took aim at those in the State Department and presumably elsewhere in Washington who saw no great value in an independent intelligence unit. His doctrinal standards (administrative independence and scholarly objectivity balanced by vigorous pursuit of guidance), if not the “official Washington” view as Kendall charged, probably seemed in the ball park to most discussants. Indeed, supporters of a strong central intelligence entity had a motive to play down, at least in public discussion, the influence of intelligence on policy: to ward off critics’ charges that such an organization would become too powerful and thereby threaten American democracy.

What of Kendall's doctrines? Some discussants, as indicated, probably thought the views espoused by Kent went too far in attempting to insulate intelligence practitioners from their policy counterparts. But did many stand with Kendall? In other words, did he too represent a major party to the debate, a large or at least respected faction? Or, as so often in his later career, was Kendall all but outside the contemporary lines of argument, a compulsive critic of conventional wisdom striving to have others see the issue as he saw it in his mind's eye? I believe the latter was the case.

After all, Kendall was calling for intelligence professionals to step over their own shadow—in terms of writing directly to the perspective of elected officials, taking account of domestic politics as well as policy prerogatives, and shedding such traditional preoccupations as staying on top of the traffic and investing in empirical research on potential enemy countries. At least some contemporary observers, probably including Kent, thought Kendall's juggling of the intelligence and policy roles to be "irresponsible."²⁶

Kendall's apparent recommendation that the intelligence unit serve the policymaking needs of congressional leaders is one indication of how far his views were from the mainstream in 1949. Kendall was an antagonist of the "imperial presidency" and an advocate instead of rule by "politically responsible laymen" in Congress.

Judging by the hard edge of mutual criticism, Kent and Kendall probably saw little that was complementary in their concepts about the function of intelligence; that is a belief that the national interest would benefit from both a detached and a close-support service, performed at different levels of the intelligence unit or under differing circumstances. This might make sense today, but in the context of 1949 the two seemed to be describing two separate functions. Kent's intelligence unit was to focus on "rolling back the inventory of ignorance" about an uncertain postwar world,²⁷ so that policy units would be effectively served when the need arose. His goal was to have the nation's best scholars make a career of being intelligence professionals, much the way in preceding generations they made their careers as part of the professoriate.

Kendall, in contrast, was indelibly antibureaucratic concerning both government and university. He did not believe "guidance" would come from policymakers, unless analysts put more on the table than Kent would have them commit. Thus, Kendall's intelligence unit was focused as much on operational "solutions" as on problems overseas. His description of the intelligence function—wise men who are part of the political and policymaking processes—sounds much like the role played in the 1940s by the "policy planners" he scorned. Perhaps even closer models to much of what Kendall had in mind are the regional and functional directors of the National Security Council staff as that institution developed in subsequent decades.

Four Decades of Doctrine and Practice

In my view, which is marked by years of labor within an "intelligence unit," the untidiness of practice is seen regularly to obscure the clarity of doctrines on producer-consumer relations. Leadership's attempts to set a standard by pronouncement, incentive, and example routinely evoke working-level pleadings on why said standard could not work on this subject, at this time, with this analyst, for this consumer. The history of producer-consumer relations demands and is worthy of book-length treatment, to determine what actually has worked, what has not, and why. Here only one point is developed: If on nothing else, Kent cannot be faulted for saying "a great deal of conscious effort" is required to extract the full potential of the producer-consumer relationship.

Over the years, diversity in practice on the part of CIA analytic units has been propelled by a parade of diverse personalities, opportunities, and obstacles. Thus, any attempt to characterize a decade is immediately put at risk to a large number of exceptions. That said, one can make the case that Kent's doctrine as projected in *Strategic Intelligence* had considerable currency in practice during the 1950s.

First, President Eisenhower's administrative style for national security issues—regularly planned NSC meetings to discuss if not to decide policy—provided an orderly place for the scholarship of intelligence.

Because National Intelligence Estimates were regularly included or taken account of in briefing books for meetings over which the President was to preside, policymaking officials had a stake in being informed on, and in trying to inform intelligence judgments. Second, both the intelligence and policy communities were staffed at high levels by people who regularly sought and gave “guidance.” The close ties between DCI and Secretary of State—first Generals Smith and Marshall and the brothers Dulles—are well known. But there were other valuable connections. For example, during part of the decade, CIA’s Deputy Director for Intelligence and State’s director of the Policy Planning Staff, who were former colleagues as Harvard law students, drove to and from work together.²⁸

During the 1960s, readymade opportunities for guidance were reduced, as President Kennedy’s more ad hoc operating style frequently left the intelligence analysts a day late and a dollar short. Ray Cline, who served with ONE during the 1950s and as CIA’s Deputy Director for Intelligence during the 1960s, used a sports metaphor to contrast the periods. Under Eisenhower, the making of policy was like a football game, with a play for intelligence analysts called in each huddle. Under Kennedy, it was like a basketball game with the players in constant motion.²⁹ The tendency to bypass intelligence judgments accelerated sharply in the 1970s, as a result of the antagonisms toward CIA analysis on the part of President Nixon and National Security Adviser Kissinger. Even when Kissinger became Secretary of State, his low regard for analysts continued to extend to State Department intelligence as well as CIA.³⁰

Removal of CIA quarters, in the early 1960s, from a central location in the District of Columbia to a much less accessible location in suburban Virginia added psychological as well as social distance between intelligence and policy professionals. As the analytic cadre at CIA became more substantively specialized, careerist, and bureaucratic during the 1960s and 1970s, it also became more introverted and self-satisfied. Thus, as a rule the absence of guidance was not viewed as an insuperable obstacle by analysts, who thought that the quality and integrity of their assessments would be sufficient to command the attention of the policy community.

Kent himself during the latter years of his service (until 1967) and in his lectures on intelligence in the ensuing decade seemed to place heavier emphasis on independence of judgment and less on seeking guidance.³¹ Some of his statements indicate a fear that extensive contact with policy officials, even with institutional independence, could corrupt the analytic process. He warned one colleague that “analysts and estimators who go downtown will become policy advocates and begin to serve power rather than truth.”³²

Kent was resisted by other Agency leaders and by members of his ONE staff in his retreat from his own prior insistence on the importance of guidance. This was undertaken apparently without direct knowledge of Kendall’s views. The Ray Cline story was part of his effort to increase emphasis on intelligence memorandums at the exposure of Kent’s National Intelligence Estimates, on the grounds that the former would more effectively meet the consumers’ needs. Chester Cooper, Cline’s appointment to the new position of Associate Deputy Director for Intelligence for Policy Support, also tried to wrest the doctrinal banner from Kent by emphasizing the importance of staying in close touch with the policy world.³³ And a number of analytic units and individual analysts, largely innocent of the doctrinal dispute, went about their business trying to maximize their service to consumers of intelligence by seeking tasking and feedback.

I believe, though, that most CIA analysts and managers during the 1960s and 1970s identified with Kent’s fear of corruption of objectivity and his aversion to close ties to policy officials. Kent’s final published words on the delicate relationship speak loudly of independence and say nothing of seeking guidance.

I suppose that if we in intelligence were one day given three wishes, they would be to know everything, to be believed when we spoke, and in such a way to exercise an influence to the good in the matter of policy. But absent the Good Fairy, we sometimes get the order of our unarticulated wishes mixed. Often we feel the desire to influence policy and perhaps just stop wishing here. This is too bad, because to wish simply for influence can, and upon occasion does, get intelligence to the place where it can have no influence

whatever. By striving too hard in this direction intelligence may come to seem just another policy voice, and an unwanted one at that.

On the other hand, if intelligence strives for omniscience and strives to be believed, giving a third place to influence, serendipity may take over. Unselfconscious intelligence work, even in the speculative and highly competitive area of estimates, may prove (in fact, has provided many times) a key determinant in policy decision.³⁴

With one final notice that characterizations by decades are an author's convenience, the 1980s saw a resurgence of emphasis, in both Agency doctrine and practice, on the obligation of analysts to see that their work in fact was useful to policymakers. For one thing, more and more managers and analysts came to take seriously the criticism of CIA analysis from vocal policymakers and to grasp the limitations of the "to whom it may concern" approach to the relationship that was routinely employed in the previous period.³⁵

More important, Robert M. Gates, as Deputy Director for Intelligence from 1982 to 1986, pushed a new doctrinal line that in effect reflected Kent's 1949 emphasis on seeking guidance as well as major elements of the activism recommended by Kendall. Gate's views on what kinds of analysis would be appreciated rather than scorned by policymakers were developed during his service on the National Security Council staff during the 1970's. He observed that CIA analysts knew how every government in the world worked—except their own. At a minimum, he wanted every intelligence assessment to make explicit the implications for US policy of its key judgments. Better yet, he wanted each assessment to highlight some opportunity or threat that the targeted policy audience faced. At one point, he echoed Kent's 1949 dictum that analysts could not earn their pay if they were not thoroughly familiar with the world of policymakers. In Gates's words:

Unless intelligence officers are down in the trenches with the policymakers, understand the issues, and know what US objectives are, how the process works, and who the people are, they cannot possibly provide either relevant or timely intelligence that will contribute to better informed decisions.³⁶

Gates, even though supported by DCI William Casey, met resistance at both the practical and doctrinal levels. Changes in practice were slow in coming, largely because many analysts preferred to continue doing what they were trained for and accustomed to doing. But doctrinal considerations were also brought to bear. I teach a course commissioned by Casey and Gates on intelligence successes and failures.³⁷ During the mid-1980's, the students, experienced CIA analysts and first-line supervisors, regularly raised the name of Sherman Kent to ward off Gates's efforts to close their distance from the policy world.

Resistance notwithstanding, bureaucratically impressive changes have taken place in CIA analytic practice in the past 10 years—toward both Kent's vigorous pursuit of guidance and Kendall's more activist policy-supported standard. The number of informal "typescript" memorandums written at the request of policy officials or to satisfy their specifically targeted intelligence needs has grown sharply. Oral briefings and especially informal exchanges with individual policy officials have also grown apace. The establishment of CIA centers for counterterrorism and counternarcotics that combine analysts with collectors and operational officers also serves to increase the ties between producer and consumer. At least one senior policy official gives CIA analysts high marks for their enterprise and substantive competence in supporting policymaking during 1989-90. (Though he also notes that *he* made a considerable effort to establish effective, professional relations.)³⁸ Finally, President Bush's readiness to ask questions of his former Agency provides, at least temporarily, guidance of the highest order.

Purists who will settle for nothing less than seeing Kendall's view's on close policy support become the dominant CIA doctrine will still find much to criticize on that score. The change has been from a weak to a substantial, but by no means an all-out, effort to make intelligence assessments more "user friendly." More specially, Kendall's recommended approach of pointing out the aspects of external situations that the US can influence is not broadly applied. The final issue for this article is the matter of what additional changes in the CIA's practices regarding relations with policymakers are needed to meet the challenges of the 1990s.

Producer-Consumer Relations in the 1990s

Currently, all aspects of US national security organization, priorities, and funding have come under uncommon scrutiny. The new decade already bears witness to the fact that external challenges to US well-being, while not as awesome as during the height of the Cold War, will be more numerous, more diverse, more nettlesome. And budgetary problems that will have an impact on national security resources sooner rather than later beg for more efficient use of intelligence expertise on foreign countries and global problems.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, in February 1991, launched a major review of the missions and functions of US intelligence agencies. The newly appointed chairman of the intelligence committee in the House of Representatives has also shown interest in reassessing practices and priorities.³⁹ I trust these and any other examinations will give due importance to producer-consumer relations. For those who would address the issue, I would like to table five recommendations for consideration.

First, pay attention to the latter-day evocation of Kendall's doctrine, as espoused by Roy Godson, the Coordinator of the Consortium for the Study of Intelligence. Every intelligence manager and analyst should understand why "opportunities-oriented analysis" appeals to those with experience on the staffs of top-level decisionmakers. Most simply put, assessments that address the factors that the US can influence to reduce threats to and enhance opportunities for our national interests provide besieged policy officers with the actionable insights they need to complete their arduous daily rounds. And I can understand the latter's irritation when the intelligence product is restricted solely to descriptions of the events and trends with which they must contend.⁴⁰ Intelligence analysts should be trained to deploy their expertise in a variety of more "user friendly" yet professional ways. I have argued elsewhere that the costs of such training will be considerable; some form of jump-start effort is called for that includes experienced as well as new analysts.⁴¹

Second, do not forget the Kent of the 1949 book. If intelligence analysts were made mere extensions of the various policymaking staffs, the nation would lose some important advantages it has heavily invested in over the past half-century:

- Cadres with the time and incentive to develop in-depth understanding of issues which suddenly become important, such as ethnic groups in the USSR and in the Persian Gulf, and who are committed to calling attention to "the stubborn fact" that could complicate policy initiatives.
- Members of the national security team whose primary interest is how foreign governments work, even as they mightily seek guidance on helping the US Government to work better.
- An intelligence unit that can provide a level playing field for the many policymaking contenders for influence on the President's decisions.

And one more thing that Kent did not pay much attention to: an intelligence unit with sufficient independence of the administration's policymaking teams to command the respect and trust of Congress.

Third, recognize that the doctrines of Kent and Kendall are not mutually exclusive. A growing number of intelligence veterans believe that analysts and their managers can maintain their basic identities as men and women of study while playing cameo roles in direct support of the policymaking process. For example, a time-honored tradition allows intelligence analysts to be seconded to a policymaking unit for a tour of a year or two, during which time they carry out the normal duties of that unit and, incidentally, learn much about its requirements for intelligence support. When the national interest requires and the benefits exceed the risks, why cannot an intelligence professional take a one-week or one-day tour to bring expertise more immediately to the task of drafting or implementing policy? Such initiatives require the understanding and support of both intelligence and policy leaders so that the analyst's policymaking activities are not paraded as intelligence assessments.

Fourth, promote enhanced analyst utility to the policymaking process and eliminate wasted efforts in all corners, but do not underestimate the tenacity and cleverness of bureaucracies under siege. Any program of changed priorities that does not take account of the need to encourage serving professionals to accept new ways will be a long time in paying off. As indicated above, enhanced and improved training is an essential ingredient for effective change of organizational norms. Top-down management, rather than analyst coverage of the risks of innovation in producer-consumer relations and explicit top-level recognition of achievement, say in employing new art forms, will also speed the spread of change through the ranks.

Lastly, because policymakers ultimately determine the relevance of analysts, get the consumers of intelligence to identify their priority needs as clearly as possible. I expect in a period of diminishing resources at least some policymaking units will press upon intelligence units for all kinds of time-consuming support previously provided by in-house staffs. Other units will likely prefer to criticize intelligence's shortcomings rather than to take steps needed to encourage cooperation.

While the intelligence unit has to take the major share of responsibility for improving relationships, large steps forward also require that policymaking units take seriously any efforts to redraw the lines of engagement. This really has to start with clear and persistent signals at the level of the Office of the President. Indeed, formal training in making the relationship work would suit policymakers as well as intelligence makers.

NOTES

1. *Strategic Intelligence* was published in 1949 and reprinted in 1951 and 1965. Except for minor adjustments for two footnotes added in 1951, the page content of the text is identical in all editions. A second substantive preface was added in 1965. The book also was published in several paperback and foreign language editions.
2. Kendall's review appeared in the then new journal *World Politics* (Vol. 1, No. 4, July 1949). The journal was published by the Institute of International Studies, then located at Yale University, where both Kent and Kendall served on the faculty.
3. The most complete source on Kent's life and career is contained in the transcripts of a dictated draft memoir, executed in the 1970s and available in the Sherman Kent Papers at the Yale University Library. The two most informative published accounts are Harold P. Ford, "A Tribute to Sherman Kent." *Studies in Intelligence* (Winter 1958), pp. 1-8; and Robin Winks, *Cloak & Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939-61* (1987), especially pp. 82-96, 449-450.
4. In today's terms, OSS would be an "agency," and the R&A Branch would be equivalent to an "office." The constituent units of R&A were "divisions," probably what they would be called today. Kent's version of his R&A service is found in Kent Papers, Series II, Tapes 4-7. See also Winks, pp. 62-115.
5. Kent to Harold Nicholson, 31 December 1946, Kent Papers, Box 5, 112.
6. Kent's strong feelings about the experience at State are recorded in Kent Papers, Series II, Tapes 7-8; and in "How Effective Is Our Intelligence?" an article published in *The Reporter*, Vol. 3, No. 6, 12 September 1950), pp. 17-19, in which Kent avers that R&A was "not demobilized but demolished" by the old hands at State.
7. Kent's brief depiction of his work on the book is found in Kent Papers, Series II, Tape 8, pp. 18-19 and Tape 9, pp. 8-9.
8. Jackson had served along with Allen Dulles on a group commissioned by the National Security Council to review CIA practices in 1948, at which time he had access to part of Kent's draft manuscript. (William Darling, The DCI Historical Series: *The Central Intelligence*

- Agency: An Instrument of Government, to 1950*, written in 1953, declassified 1989, p. 54). Jackson met Kent in 1949, in conjunction with writing a favorable review of his “very remarkable book.” (*The New York Times Book Review*, 1 May 1949, pp. 4, 20). Some accounts have Kent seeking to return to intelligence work, but Kent’s own account indicates his return 1950 was at General Smith’s insistence (Kent Papers, Series II, Tapes 10 and 13).
9. Ford, pp. 1-8.
 10. Thomas Powers reports that Kent was one of only three CIA veterans who refused to be interviewed in connection with his *The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA* (1979), p. xi, 312.
 11. Unless otherwise indicated, all citations for this section are from *Strategic Intelligence*, pp. 180-206.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 13. George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (1976), pp. 227-248, 402, 410, provides informative coverage of Kendall’s early life and his subsequent political writings, but almost no coverage of his intelligence period in the 1940s.
 14. I am indebted to Ambassador Charles Lichtenstein, who met Kendall as a student at Yale and remained a colleague until Kendall’s death in 1967, for information on the 1941-46 period (interviews, 9 and 19 November 1990). See also the entry under Kendall in the 1961 *American Political Science Association Biographical Dictionary*, p. 131.
 15. Interviews with Gen. (R.) William Tidwell and Russell Jack Smith, May 1991. Tidwell was Kendall’s deputy in the Latin America branch. Smith was deputy chief of the current intelligence staff. Without naming Kendall, Smith describes his perceived limitations in *The Unknown CIA: My Three Decades With the Agency* (1989), pp. 31-33.
 16. Nash, pp. 230, 247, 403-404.
 17. Edited by Nellie D. Kendall (1971). The introductory chapter by Jeffrey Hart, “Willmoore Kendall: American,” is an informative short essay on Kendall’s persona and philosophy. The quotation is from *Ibid.*, p. 9.
 18. Lichtenstein interview, 19 November 1990; interview with Howard Penniman, 5 February 1991. Penniman was a colleague of Kendall’s starting in the late 1930’s. Neither man could recall Kendall mentioning his views on intelligence.
 19. All citations are from *World Politics*, Vol. I, No. 4 (July 1949), pp. 542-552.
 20. Emphasis in the original.
 21. Emphasis in the original.
 22. *Strategic Intelligence*, 1949 edition, p. x.
 23. The Kent Papers show no major changes in the three drafts of the chapter on producer-consumer relations. Kent kept a torn-out copy of the *World Politics* review, on which he mocked Kendall’s reference (p. 547) to his experience as an intelligence “official.”
 24. The Darling volume (note 8) contains much useful and interesting information. The first volume of Ludwell Lee Montague’s five-volume history of the Bedell Smith period (*The DCI Historical Series: Gen Walter Bedell Smith As Director of Central Intelligence, October 1950-February 1953: Volume I, The Essential Background*, written in 1971, approved for release, 1990) is easier to read for broad trends and probably more reliable.
 25. William Langer’s review of Kent’s book, *Knowledge for Security*, *Yale Review*, Winter 1950, p. 366, refers to “the relationship of intelligence work to policy-making” and other aspects of the intelligence task as “still a burning issue in Washington that deserves deep and prolonged thought.” The Eberstadt and Dulles reports recommended that analyst-generated reports be replaced with reports dedicated to the requirements of policy officials (Darling, pp. 101-102).

26. Ambassador Lichtenstein (interview, 19 November 1990) recalls characterizing Kendall's views as "irresponsible," in a discussion with Kent during the early 1950s.
27. The phrase comes from Edward Proctor, as a characterization of what attracted him and other scholars to CIA in the early 1950s. Proctor later became Deputy Director for Intelligence. Interview, October 1988.
28. Robert R. Bowie, "Analysis of our Policy Machine," *The New York Times Magazine*, 9 March 1958, pp. 16, 68-71. Interview with Bowie, January 1991. Chester L. Cooper, "The CIA and Decision-Making," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1972 (50:2), pp. 223-236. interview with Cooper, 5 March 1991.
29. Cline's remarks were delivered at a staff meeting in 1963 attended by the author. Cline remembers trying to make the point, but not the metaphor. Interview, December 1989.
30. Ray S. Cline, "Policy Without Intelligence," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1974-75, pp. 121-135, takes Kissinger to task for ignoring intelligence assessments. Cline had recently resigned from his position as director of State's intelligence bureau.
31. Recalling practices in ONE in his draft memoirs (Series II, Tape 12, p. 1.), Kent seemed proud of the fact that he never bothered to know the positions of key policymakers on the issues under assessment in National Intelligence Estimates.
32. Ford, p. 8, and interview, January 1991.
33. Cooper, 234-236. Interview, 5 March 1991. Cooper had been Kent's Deputy Director in ONE in 1962, and shifted to working as Cline's deputy in good measure because of disagreement with Kent on the issue of producer-consumer relations.
34. *Foreign Service Journal*, April 1969. The article was adapted by Kent from his presentation before an Intelligence Methods Conference in London in September 1966. Kent's subheading for the two paragraphs was "Truth Before Power."
35. Robert M. Gates, "An Opportunity Unfulfilled: The Use and Perception of Intelligence at the White House," *Washington Quarterly*, Winter 1989, starts with the citations of high-level displeasure with intelligence analysis. The article was first published in 1980, in a classified version, in *Studies in Intelligence*, a quarterly CIA journal founded by Sherman Kent. On increased self-criticism, see also L. Keith Gardiner, "Dealing with Intelligence-Policy Disconnects," *Studies in Intelligence*, Summer 1989.
36. Roy Godson, Editor, *Intelligence Requirements for the 1990s: Collection, Analysis, Counterintelligence, Covert Action* (1989), p. 111. See also, Robert Gates, "CIA and the Making of American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter, 1987/88.
37. Letter from Director, Public Affairs, CIA, *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1985, p. 171.
38. Ambassador Robert Blackwill, then a Senior Director of the National Security Council staff, in remarks at Harvard University, March 1990.
39. *The Washington Post*, 6 February 1991, p. A-17; *The New York Times*, 8 February 1991, p. A-18.
40. Godson, pp. 4-7.
41. Jack Davis, review of Godson, *Intelligence Requirements for the 1990s*, in *Studies in Intelligence*, Winter 1989, pp. 69-71.