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978-0-521-51857-4 - National Intelligence Systems: Current Research and Future Prospects

Edited by Gregory F. Treverton and Wilhelm Agrell

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS

Current Research and Future Prospects

A series of investigations, especially in the United States and Britain, has focused attention on the performance of national intelligence services. At the same time, the onset of an era of terrorism and a broad span of transnational security challenges have highlighted the crucial role of intelligence. This book takes stock of the underlying intellectual substructure of intelligence. For intelligence – as for other areas of policy – serious intellectual inquiry is the basis for improving the performance of real-world institutions. This volume explores intelligence from an intellectual rather than an organizational perspective. Instead, the aim of the book is to identify themes that run through these applications, such as the lack of comprehensive theories, the unclear relationships between providers and users of intelligence, and the predominance of bureaucratic organizations driven by collection. A key element is the development – or, rather, nondevelopment – of intelligence toward an established set of methods and standards and, above all, an ongoing scientific discourse. Here, in the transformation from an experience-based protoscience to a science of intelligence in-being, the book argues, lies perhaps the most fundamental challenge for a field of immense impact on the international community, on nations, and on individuals.

Gregory F. Treverton is Director of the RAND Corporation's Center for Global Risk and Security. He previously directed RAND's Intelligence Policy Center and its International Security and Defense Policy Center, and he was associate dean of the Pardee RAND Graduate School. His recent work has examined terrorism, intelligence, and law enforcement, with a special interest in new forms of public-private partnership. He has served in government for the first Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, handling Europe for the National Security Council and, most recently, as vice chair of the National Intelligence Council, overseeing the writing of America's National Intelligence Estimates. He holds an A.B. *summa cum laude* from Princeton University and a master's in public policy and a Ph.D. in economics and politics from Harvard. His most recent books are *Intelligence for an Age of Terror* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); *Reshaping National Intelligence for an Age of Information* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); and *New Challenges, New Tools for Defense Decisionmaking* (2003).

Wilhelm Agrell is Professor in Intelligence Analysis at Lund University, Sweden, and visiting professor at the Swedish National Defence College, Stockholm. His background is in Swedish intelligence and military service in the Middle East. As an academic scholar, with a Ph.D. in history from Lund University in 1985, he has written more than 20 books that deal mainly with Cold War history and Swedish security, including an account of the aborted Swedish nuclear and chemical weapons programs in the 1950s and 1960s. He has been active in establishing intelligence analysis as an academic field and became the first professor in the subject in Scandinavia in 2006. He has also written nine novels, some of which have been translated into other Scandinavian languages, Finnish, and German.

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Preface

This book was part of a project of the Centre for Asymmetric Threat Studies (CATS) at the Swedish National Defence College. It was sponsored by the Swedish Emergency Management Agencies (SEMA), which in 2008 were combined with another agency to form the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). SEMA and MSB had the wisdom, from our perspective, to see benefit for their operations in asking deeper questions about what is required of intelligence for homeland security and the fight against terrorism.

In this portion of the project, we sought to ask about the state of serious, academic research on intelligence. Our purpose was, first, to improve understanding and lay out suggestions for where additional research might fill gaps or enrich our understanding. To that end, we assembled a distinguished set of experts on various facets of intelligence, and in particular sought to reach beyond the native English speakers that dominate so much of the literature on intelligence. The result is a book that is different from many other recent volumes on intelligence. It is a little more academic in style and international in composition.

Yet, our second purpose was to build better understanding in the hope of improving the practice of intelligence. A theme that runs through the entire book, and is turned to explicitly in the conclusions, is where intelligence stands as a profession. Is it an experience-based activity or a science, or something in between? How might better understanding of its current practice, along with suggestions from relevant adjacent lines of intellectual activity, enable its conduct to become more professional, if not more scientific, in methods?

Our primary debt is to the distinguished authors who did drafts, convened in Stockholm to work through them in the presence of interested Swedish thinkers and practitioners, then revised their chapters more than once in

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response to comments – for which we thank our anonymous reviewers. CATS and the Defence College have been both a happy sometime home for Gregory Treverton, during his stints as a visiting Fellow, and a venue that makes it easier to attract an impressive international group for discussions of intelligence issues. We express our thanks to all the people at CATS and the College who have made this possible, especially our immediate colleagues Lars Nicander, the director of CATS, Jan Leijonhielm, and Magnus Ranstorp, and finally Catharina Jönsson, who solved all practical problems as they appeared. We are also grateful for both the financial support from SEMA and MSB, and for the collegiality of their officers.

To be sure, the usual caveat remains: we are responsible for any remaining errors or gremlins in what follows.

Gregory F. Treverton
Wilhelm Agrell
May 2009