

## Intelligence in Public Media

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### ***The Image of the Enemy—Intelligence Analysis of Adversaries Since 1945***

Paul Maddrell, ed. (Georgetown University Press, 2015) 298 pp., notes, index.

#### **Reviewed by Jason Manosevitz**

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Are American, Russian, Chinese, Iranian, Israeli, or Saudi Arabian leaders using intelligence to make decisions about how to deal with their enemies? When, how, and why are leaders' choices influenced by intelligence reporting or analysis? What factors influence that intelligence and how do they interpret it? These are the kinds of questions the contributors to *The Image of the Enemy—Intelligence Analysis of Adversaries Since 1945* seek to address. To do so, they use case studies primarily from the Cold War from the United States, Soviet Union, Israel, Pakistan, and others to show how cognitive, organizational, and political factors color how leaders and intelligence services view the world.

The collection casts itself as following in the footsteps of Earnest May's 1984 work, *Knowing One's Enemies*, which focuses on how well intelligence services and policymakers assessed their adversaries before each of the world wars. The case studies in *Image of the Enemy* are welcome additions to the growing body of comparative work in the study of intelligence by showing common flaws across a range of policymakers and intelligence services. Key takeaways from the case studies include suggestions that policymakers may be most open to intelligence support when facing crises but are likely to ignore such support when they have fixed policy goals in mind and that many intelligence services struggle to identify and assess emerging, strategic issues.

The authors also highlight ideology as hobbling intelligence assessments and security decisionmaking, particularly for the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Pakistan. *Image of the Enemy* breaks little new ground in the broader security decisionmaking literature, however, and it suffers from an all too brief concluding chapter, which is a scant three pages. Readers should balk at the assertion that Western intelligence services achieved a greater level of objectivity than their Eastern counterparts because most of those services were not set up to provide analytic support.

The arguments in *Image of the Enemy* rest mostly on previously declassified documents and the authors keenly recognize the limitations of their findings. Paul Maddrell, the volume's editor and a lecturer in modern history and international relations at Loughborough University, assembled a mix of intelligence academics and former practitioners who lend authority to the collection. For example, Benjamin Fischer, who provides a trenchant analysis of US intelligence assessments on the Soviet Union, had a 30-year career with the Central Intelligence Agency. Raymond Garthoff, well known for engaging on US-Soviet intelligence and security issues, assesses Soviet policymakers and intelligence on the United States up to and through the collapse of the Soviet Union. Tamir Libel and Shlomo Shapiro, both academics focused on Israeli intelligence and security issues, coauthor a chapter examining the missteps of Israeli intelligence services in understanding Palestinian social movements that led to the first Intifada. Jullian Richards's chapter on Pakistan's views of India draws on his 20 years in British intelligence and record of critically examining intelligence issues. Chapters by Eunan O'Halpin, Mark Stout, and Matthias Uhl about British intelligence on Northern Ireland, US assessments of jihadist terrorists, and West Germany's Federal Intelligence Service views on East Germany similarly draw on professional and academic experience on intelligence matters.

The interplay among the case studies is fascinating and instructive for academics and intelligence professionals alike. The same cognitive biases, institutional issues, and leader policy preferences that feed intelligence failures and poor security decisionmaking arise again and again across states and intelligence services. Garthoff's retells how Khrushchev in 1961 rejected valid intelligence on US and NATO plans, which he believed were attempts to dupe the USSR. His rejection stemmed from his authorization of efforts to deceive the West by planting false information. Richards explains that Pakistani officials similarly rejected useful intelligence because they thought the Indians were attempting to mislead them, which the Pakistani themselves were attempting to do to the Indians.

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Fischer shows how rational actor biases and an institutional fear of being wrong led the CIA to inaccurately assess possible actions by the USSR and Warsaw in the early 1980s to deal with the Solidarity Movement, leading to two false warning memos and the withholding of a third that would have been accurate had it been released. Libel and Shapiro demonstrate that Israeli intelligence's focus on Arab state threats led them to initially miss the rise of Palestinian terrorism. These state-based blinders are central to Stout's argument about why US leaders were slow to recognize the threat of terrorism until the 9/11 attacks.

The collection suggests policy leaders rely on their intelligence services most in times of crises or when their views are inchoate. Garthoff relates that Soviet leaders turned to the KGB to gather as much reporting as possible in the early 1980s "war scare," during which they believed the US was preparing to attack. Stout shows that US leaders greatly relied on the US Intelligence Community (IC) and sought as much reporting as possible following the 9/11 attacks. Under the Russian program RyAN and a US terrorist threat matrix, both services collated and passed on nearly all reporting, however farfetched, with little analysis or filtering, according to Garthoff and Stout.

Policymakers and intelligence professionals alike would be wise to resist the urge to follow these past practices and encourage more attention to analysis—not less—during crises. It is easy to see how a deluge of unanalyzed information and a collection posture focused solely on threats could lead to an inflated sense of threat, an overestimation of one's enemy, and ultimately poor decisionmaking. This problem is particularly wicked since the information overload comes at a time when intelligence analysis may have its greatest impact, while policymaker views are still forming. Stout, for example, shows that CIA analysis through the "Ziggurat of Zealotry" had a powerful impact on policymakers in the early years after 9/11. This framework provided them a means to comprehend the Islamic jihadist threat facing the United States by delineating it from Islam in general, helping to scope the threat facing the United States and reducing inflated policymaker fears.

*Image of the Enemy* also suggests that, when policymakers have specific policy goals in mind, they are less likely to consult or listen to their intelligence services and that poor strategic analysis is common among leaders and intelligence services. Libel and Shapiro's discussion

of Netanyahu's moves to open the Hasmonean Tunnel in 1996 parallels Garthoff's narrative of Khrushchev's effort to put missiles in Cuba. Both leaders based their policy goals on their own reading of circumstances and neither consulted their respective intelligence service until after their moves provoked intractable crises. The implication here is that there will be times when, no matter how good the intelligence reporting or analysis is, policymakers will set their own course—for better or worse.

Showing the difficulties of strategic analysis, underestimating and overestimating one's enemy, Garthoff argues Soviet intelligence downplayed US willingness to cooperate as Gorbachev set a new course in the 1980s while Fischer reviews how the US IC and policymakers struggled to see the USSR as a political entity crumbling under its own weight during the same period. Richards explains how Pakistani intelligence repeatedly underestimated Indian fighting capabilities and willingness to confront Islamabad. This was particularly true in Pakistan's misreading the Sino-Indian clash and peace agreement in 1962, which reaffirmed Islamabad's flawed view that New Delhi's "Hindu" mentality made it weak. The prevalence of these strategic problems raise questions about the ability of leaders and intelligence services to see things from their adversary's point of view and to forecast how future events might unfold.

A flaw in the volume's comparative approach is the assertion that Western services were superior to Eastern ones because they conducted more analysis and achieved a higher degree of objectivity. Several of the authors demonstrate that Eastern services often merely served to report intelligence in a way akin to the "news." However, many of these services were not set up specifically to provide analysis. Soviet leaders, for example, tended to rely on think tanks for analysis, which Garthoff lightly references, albeit KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov did try to change this. Moreover during crises or for high profile policy priorities US services often provide daily situation reports made up of intelligence reporting with scanty analysis.

*Image of the Enemy* is well worth reading to acquire a broad view of how several intelligence services and leaders are plagued by very similar problems leading to intelligence failures. The danger of focusing on intelligence failures in this area of the study of intelligence, however, continues to need close scrutiny. By reviewing only the negative aspects of mindsets, organizational structures,

and policy priorities we end up with a skewed sense of what leads to particular intelligence and security decision-making outcomes. As former acting CIA Director Richard Kerr in a study of CIA analysis from 1950 to 2000 clearly showed, these same issues played important roles in both intelligence successes and failures.<sup>a</sup> Therefore in trying to

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a. Richard J. Kerr, “The Track Record: CIA Analysis from 1950 to

understand when, how, and why policymakers use intelligence or to improve the analysis they receive, we need to examine a broad range of outcomes or risk adopting cures when we do not fully understand the disease.

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2000,” in *Analyzing Intelligence: Origins, Obstacles, and Innovations*, Roger Z. George and James B. Bruce, eds. (Georgetown University Press, 2008) 35–55.



