

THE WINDING, BUMPY ROAD FROM ESPIONAGE TO INTELLIGENCE

By David S. Black

INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of this essay, I wish to define “intelligence” as information about, and assessments of, the capabilities and intentions of real and potential adversaries which can be used by government leaders and military commanders in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy and military strategy.

Intelligence is not a synonym for “truth” or some higher form of knowledge and enlightenment, but a reasoned estimate based on the fullest, most recent and credible evidence available, concerning a problem or situation of some urgency, about which only limited information, which is sometimes questionable as to its authenticity and pertinence, can be obtained by the time a critical decision must be made.

Intelligence is not knowledge for knowledge’s own sake, but rather a basis for decisions which must be made before complete and fully dependable information is available. The reason for the unavailability of complete and definitive information is that the presumed rival or adversary is deliberately concealing much of it for self-interested reasons.

Intelligence “failures” usually occur because: (a) the need for timeliness is apt to take precedence over the need for completeness, accuracy and thorough deliberation; and (b) intelligence “success” ultimately does not depend on the amount, quality and timeliness of information, or the insightfulness of analysis and estimates, as much as it does on the concrete decisions which a particular leader or commander may or may not make on the basis of the information and assessments which the intelligence collectors and analysts provide him. For better or worse, most senior political leaders and military commanders are very determined and strong-minded individuals, who are not always receptive to the tutelage of intelligence personnel.

Since the limitations of political and military intelligence result to a large extent from the deliberate efforts of presumed rivals and adversaries to conceal critical information about their capabilities and intentions, intelligence collection must often be carried out in a clandestine manner using one or more of the basic techniques of ESPIONAGE.

- a. Signals Intelligence, or the interception of written, electromagnetic and electronic communications and, if necessary their decipherment and decoding, as well as the extraction of pertinent information by different kinds of analysis relating to the message’s substantive content and format, and the circumstances and methods of its transmission or conveyance.

- b. Visual Reconnaissance, which since the earliest days of warfare has involved the use of static or mobile observers to obtain information about terrain, patterns of settlement, communications and transportation links in a particular area, as well as the size, location, and disposition of enemy forces and the kinds of armament and fortifications which they employ. During the wars of the 18th and 19th centuries, hot air balloons were used as a primitive form of aerial reconnaissance. During World Wars I and II, the spotter balloons were supplemented and eventually replaced by tactical aircraft outfitted with sophisticated photographic equipment. The Cold War brought major advances in the performance characteristics of spy planes, as well as the introduction of orbital satellites which were not only capable of detecting and monitoring hostile military forces on or near the front lines of a war, but also military, industrial and scientific research facilities of strategic interest deep inside hostile territory.
- c. Human Intelligence is obtained from interrogations of prisoners captured during wartime, interviews and debriefings of persons who have fled from, or traveled into, places of high interest but inaccessible for one reason or another, as well as “in-place” clandestine informants with first-hand knowledge of the inner workings of critical components of rival or adversarial governments.

Espionage is almost always conducted in a secretive or clandestine manner to protect one's own sources and methods, and to avoid making the target aware of the compromise of the information which he has been trying to conceal, since in this event he may alter his plans and modus operandi in ways that would reduce the practical value of our discovery of them. The three basic collection techniques listed above may be used to obtain either STRATEGIC or TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE depending on whether the product will be used to FORMULATE or IMPLEMENT policy or strategy.

ESPIONAGE AND INTELLIGENCE

While espionage in one form or another has often played a role in conflicts and rivalries between nations, governments, tribes and principalities since the beginning of recorded history, the business of “intelligence” as it is currently practiced by our own and certain other governments has existed only since the middle decades of the twentieth century. While almost every developed country with modern military and domestic security institutions also possesses some type of secret services for the collection and evaluation of information about possible external and internal threats to national security, only three countries – the U.S., Great Britain, and Russia – have developed official institutions whose size, organization, staffing, logistical capacities, presence in foreign countries, and level of involvement in the formulation of foreign, military and internal security policy, makes them what might be called “global intelligence services” in terms of their mission and the manner in which they carry it out.

The following characteristics help to distinguish “global” intelligence and espionage service from ones with a “regional” orientation.

- A large, though not always full, measure of administrative autonomy within the structure of the government.

- A leadership which reports directly to the most important government institutions and bodies responsible for the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, but whose personal involvement in policymaking is carefully circumscribed.

- Close collaboration with its country’s diplomatic service, armed forces and organs of state and public security without formal subordination to, or any other form of control by them.

- A global rather than regional orientation to its operations and logistical capacities.

- A workforce composed chiefly of civil servants who spend all or most of their careers inside the service in question, rather than being seconded to it on a long or short-term basis from other parts of the government. The service generally will have exclusive responsibility for the selection, training, assignments, career development and administrative care of its personnel.

- Its key mission is the collection, evaluation and dissemination of strategic intelligence to senior policymakers and other government personnel with a specific need for the information in question. The service has the operational capability to collect without assistance from any other government component a large portion of the information which forms the basis of the finished intelligence which it disseminates to policymakers, even though it also relies on information and data collected by other parts of the government.

- It has the administrative and logistical capabilities to deploy a large portion of its operational personnel in foreign countries for long periods of time to conduct official business with pertinent components of the host governments and to carry out other sensitive tasks on behalf of its own government.

- Although most of its activities and inner workings are shrouded by official secrecy and sometimes exempted from particular laws and regulations which are binding in other parts of the government, the service’s mission, organization, and modus operandi conform to the fundamental principles of its country’s constitution and legal system. Credible safeguards exist to prevent the service from becoming a law unto itself or being used in an improper manner by an individual leader or political group.

- Detailed permanent records are maintained of all operational activities and significant administrative and personnel matters, but generally are not shared with other government components aside from designated oversight bodies.

Most of the criteria listed above may appear self-evident and banal, but to the best of my knowledge no government in the world before the Second World War had any kind of intelligence or other “secret service” which met the majority of them, and since

World War II there have only been three services which have met all or most of the them: CIA, the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS aka MI-6) and the

Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), as well as its predecessor the First Chief Director (FCD) of the Committee for State Security (KGB). I wish to emphasize that the above criteria do not constitute a definitive model for a professional intelligence service which can be copied in any country regardless of its political system in the same way that the high commands of most modern armies have adopted the general staff system first developed by Germany, France and other continental European countries in the nineteenth century. Despite a certain amount of imitation and emulation, as well as occasional attempts at enforced standardization like that which the Soviet Union imposed on the services of its East European satellites after 1945, most foreign intelligence and other kinds of secret services are highly idiosyncratic institutions whose specific missions, organizational structures, and methods of doing business have been determined by the interplay of the varied institutions which formulate and implement foreign and defense policies in their respective countries, the exigencies of particular diplomatic and military crises in the recent past, and also the personalities of individual leaders who played important roles in the conduct of the particular country's foreign policy. The personal factor is of enormous importance since no intelligence service can achieve its mission unless its country's leaders are willing to take notice and make use of the information which it has collected and evaluated for them.

In contrast to the American, British and Russian services which I have just mentioned, the majority of intelligence, information or secret services which exist now or existed in the past have had a regional rather than a global focus; have generally been components of their countries' defense, interior or other ministries responsible for state and public security; and have reported to the leader of their parent ministry rather than a cabinet level institution like our own National Security Council. While these distinctions may sound arcane and pedantic, I believe that they have important implications for particular services' operational capabilities and their overall impact on their countries' foreign policy. The creation and maintenance of intelligence services which meet all or most of the criteria which I outlined at the beginning reflects a desire to insulate foreign and national defense policy to whatever extent possible from the political rivalries and conflicts of interest which tend to shape domestic policies. Over the past several decades, both the British and American governments have entrusted the deliberation of foreign policy issues to cabinet or other high-level bodies staffed by senior civil servants, diplomats and military officers, as well as by "political appointees" whose personal views reflect those of current government leaders but who also possess knowledge and experience relevant to foreign policy. Although these deliberative bodies do not make the final decisions, they are expected to make authoritative judgments about the nature, gravity and urgency of foreign policy issues under review, delineate workable options for dealing with them, and assess the likelihood of success and/or unintended negative consequences of each of them. Since these bodies report directly to the particular country's chief executive, and are not subject to legislative control or influence in their day-to-day functioning, their existence helps ensure that the

country's chief executive retains a privileged position in the shaping of foreign and national security policy.

The National Security Council (NSC) which advises the U.S. President is the best known government institution of this kind, and bodies with analogous functions also exist within the British cabinet, but for varied historical reasons nothing quite like it exists in other major democratic countries such as the post-World War II Federal Republic of Germany or even the Fifth French Republic, notwithstanding the global aspirations of France's foreign policy and the predominant role which former President Charles de Gaulle and his successors have insisted on playing in the shaping of it. Despite the profound differences between the regimes and governments which have ruled Russia since 1917 and those of western democracies like the U.S. and Great Britain, Stalin did manage to create and bequeath to his successors a political system which affords its country's chief executive a primacy and autonomy in the formulation and implementation of diplomatic strategy comparable to that enjoyed by American presidents and British prime ministers in the twentieth century. This common emphasis on executive prerogative in foreign policy appears to be one of the essential reasons that the foreign intelligence apparatus of the Soviet Union and Russia since 1945 has evolved in ways which more closely resemble those of the U.S. and Great Britain than those of such continental European countries as France and Italy whose "secret services" are organic components of the defense and interior ministries, and the leaderships of which were under the control of their respective ministers rather than the head of government or chief of state.

While the services of countries like France and Italy are certainly capable of doing very good work, their administrative dependence on the ministries of which they form an integral part, and the subordination of their leaderships to the heads of particular ministries rather than directly to the country's chief executive, may have a serious impact on their level of involvement in the making of foreign policy and their operational capabilities. This is particularly the case when the services in question are controlled by senior figures in the particular party or coalition on which the government in power is based, and whose personal power and influence derive not only from their official positions, but also from assorted electoral constituencies and other power bases which they have developed in the course of their political careers. Since the activities and decisions of defense and interior ministers often have significant impact on the economic and social life of their country, their policy decisions and administrative actions are sometimes conditioned more by concerns about their own power bases than larger considerations of national security and public interest. Politicians with the experience, savvy, influence and prestige usually required to become an interior or defense minister are often very strong-minded individuals with deeply held views about their countries' national interests and foreign policy. These views sometimes may be tightly interwoven with personal and political agendas of different kinds.

Interior and defense ministers are usually the chief “consumers” of the intelligence generated by the services under their control, and as such have considerable discretion in deciding just how widely and in what manner this intelligence will be disseminated to other government leaders and components. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that the “need to know principle” which is supposed to regulate the dissemination of sensitive intelligence may sometimes be exercised in an overly selective manner due to bureaucratic and political rivalries rather than for the protection of sensitive sources and methods. A related problem is that cabinet ministers whose personal power and influence make them political players rather than simply senior civil servants may be viewed by the head of government or other ministers more as rivals rather than colleagues, and in this situation the credibility and well-being of individual services may become a hostage to conflicts of interest among senior government leaders. Under these conditions, the leaders and personnel of particular services also may feel compelled to conduct their business in ways that promote the personal and political interests of the minister on whose continuing support and protection the future of the service depends, rather than on the basis of larger considerations of national security.

The possible institutional pathologies which I have noted in what might be called the “continental” approach to intelligence organization do not render most of the services concerned dysfunctional or unproductive. There are important historical reasons why France, Italy and many other powerful and important countries have adopted this approach rather than the “global” approach developed by the United States, Great Britain and Russia in the course of the last century. Although I do believe that individual services and intelligence communities organized and run in the “global” manner have greater capabilities and tend to play larger and more active role in their countries’ foreign policies than those organized in the “continental” manner, experience has shown that “global” services also can malfunction in serious ways which gravely damage their country’s interests. We should also keep in mind that the “continental” model has been utilized by many more governments and services around the world over a longer period of time than has the “global” model, which so far has been used only in three countries for a period of fifty to sixty years and emerged and developed in response to a single international conflict, the Cold War, whose nature and dynamics were very different from any other conflict in recorded history. If nothing else, “continental” intelligence services have significant advantages in terms of manpower and material resources, since the control which defense and interior ministries normally have over their country’s armed forces and police affords the intelligence collection entities attached to them access to kinds of indispensable technical and logistical support which it would be very difficult and expensive to duplicate in an independent service. The large workforces of defense and interior ministries, as well as the military and police services run by them, constitute sizeable pools of potential candidates for secret intelligence work who in many cases will have already acquired security clearances and kinds of skills and experience which are highly useful in the

collection and analysis of intelligence. “Global” services like CIA and SIS which select their career staff cadres not only from the armed services and other parts of the government, but also from private business and academic institutions, often have difficulty finding, recruiting and retaining adequate numbers of suitable persons with necessary skills who are prepared to work under difficult conditions for the salary and pension of a middle-level civil servant.

The “continental” approach to intelligence organization adopted by such countries as France and Italy is largely a reflection of the regional orientation of their foreign policies which derives from the self-evident fact that most of the foreign countries upon whom their economic prosperity depend, and which in the past have posed major threats to their national security, also happen to be close neighbors. The most important armed conflicts in which the leading countries of continental Europe have been engaged since the mid-1800’s were fought mainly on their own territory or the territory of countries with whom they shared a common land border. For several decades, many of these countries also had to live with the reality that large and well-equipped armies of potentially hostile neighbors were only a few days’ march -- or a few hours drive by tank -- from their most important population and industrial centers. In short, the geo-political imperatives which shaped the diplomatic and military strategies of most continental European nations in the twentieth century were considerably different than those of Great Britain and the United States, whose foreign trade was conducted mainly by sea, and whose homelands were separated by formidable expanses of water from any real or potential adversaries whose population size and levels of industrial and technical development were roughly comparable to their own

The fact that most continental European countries have been compelled to fight most of their wars on their own territory or that of neighboring countries has had a discernible impact on the organization, administration and operational conduct both of their military establishments and their apparatuses for state and public security. In contrast to the clear separation of the armed forces from domestic law enforcement agencies in both the U.S. and Great Britain, the police and public security establishments of many continental European countries include large and well-equipped paramilitary services such as the border police, the French Gendarmes, and the Italian Carabinieri who in wartime are expected to work closely with the regular armed forces not only in the maintenance of law-and-order and enforcement of emergency security measures, but also in the armed defense of their national territory. Just as the military strategy of continental governments tends to assume that future wars will likely be fought on their own territory or that of close neighbors, the components of the defense and interior ministries which collect foreign intelligence are organized and staffed to conduct most of their business on their own territory or that of neighboring countries, and historically have not deployed as large a portion of their operational personnel in

countries outside their own region as have the British, American and Russian services.

There are of course significant historical reasons which prompted Great Britain, Russia and the United States to adopt a global rather than regional (or "continental") approach to foreign policy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Great Britain during much of the past two hundred years has sought to distance itself to a considerable extent from the conflicts and rivalries of continental Europe for the sake of developing its maritime commercial empire in India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The Russian empire created by the Romanovs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and continued in different ideological garb by Lenin's successors in the twentieth century, became a global power because its central position on the Eurasian land mass made it a force to be reckoned with in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. After 1917, these geographical considerations were compounded by the ideological imperative of "global revolution," which however unachievable as a foreign policy objective, was an essential source of legitimacy for the Soviet Union's one-party dictatorship and highly novel and economic system.

Despite its isolationist traditions and earlier focus on the western hemisphere and Pacific basin, U.S. foreign policy acquired a global orientation in the late 1940's and early 1950's because the collective self-destruction of the major powers of western and central Europe between 1914 and 1945 made the United States the only country in the world capable of resisting the expansionist pressures which the Soviet Union began to exert in different parts of Europe, Asia and the Middle East after the defeat of Nazi Germany. As it happened, several of the areas in which the U.S. felt compelled to respond to direct or indirect assertions of Soviet political or military power -- for example Yugoslavia, Korea and Southeast Asia -- had not previously been of serious strategic or economic concern to the US, and very little knowledge and practical experience dealing with them had been acquired by the small foreign policy establishment which the U.S. maintained before World War II. U.S. foreign policy makers during the Cold War had to determine not only the nature and extent of the Soviet threat to a particular area and the appropriate way of responding to it, but also the real importance of the country or region in question to U.S. and western strategic interests. The unusual circumstances of its "rise to globalism" help to explain why the United States became the first major world power in history to treat "intelligence" as something larger and more ambitious than the acquisition and compilation of secret and non-secret geographical, political, economic and military information about areas of concern to senior U.S. policymakers and military commanders. This peculiarly American approach to foreign intelligence is evident both in the scale of the resources and manpower which the U.S. government has invested in the development of its aerospace, signals, and human collection capabilities since the late 1940's, and in the creation of large, well-trained and carefully organized cadres of analysts with highly developed knowledge of different countries and regions, whose mission is to inform and educate senior U.S.

policymakers about what is happening in the rest of the world on a day-to-day basis.

THE GENESIS OF MODERN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES BEFORE AND DURING THE TWO WORLD WARS

Although espionage in one form or another has been practiced since the beginnings of recorded history, the first official spy services began to appear in different parts of Europe in the mid-to-late nineteenth century as appendages of newly created professional police services and permanent military command institutions such as general staffs. Before the appearance of these early spy services, individual rulers with strong concerns about potential foreign and domestic threats availed themselves of quasi-official “black chambers” (such as the one which Sir Francis Walsingham ran on behalf of Queen Elizabeth I), which were usually financed by non-accountable personal funds at the disposal of the sovereign, and did not become permanent fixtures of government but disappeared after the departure of the ruler who had established them. The permanent intelligence and internal security organs which began to appear in the late 1800’s, and which it is probably more appropriate to call “offices” rather than “services,” were usually very small, poorly financed, and staffed not by appropriately trained career cadres but instead by an assortment of personnel on loan from other parts of the particular country’s armed forces or national police. They seldom accomplished any significant tasks, and were usually looked upon with condescension by the upper echelons of the government of which they were part. They had little if any contact with senior military and government officials, and their contributions to decisions about foreign policy and military strategy were usually negligible.

None of the great powers had properly organized and staffed intelligence institutions at the outbreak of the First World War, and the role of intelligence in the strategic planning and the conduct of military operations was quite limited throughout the conflict. There were however major advances in aerial reconnaissance, owing to the use of fixed-wing aircraft and sophisticated photographic equipment, and especially in signals intelligence due to the introduction of radios into military communications. Thanks to the remarkable achievements of code-breakers from different Allied countries before and after 1939, signals intelligence in the Second War World became a greater strategic and tactical asset for Great Britain and the United States than any other form of intelligence collection had ever been in any previous war. The Allied successes with communications interception and code-breaking during World War I and even more during World War II can be said to have turned intelligence into a “business”, since the collection, analysis and dissemination of signals intelligence is an industrial process which requires large amounts of sophisticated and expensive equipment operated and maintained by highly skilled and specialized technicians, as well as code-breakers, linguists and substantive experts, and an

array of administrative and logistical support personnel to look after all of these people.

Signals intelligence required large cadres of analysts to process and disseminate to appropriate “consumers” the highly varied kinds of raw data obtained through the wholesale interception of operational and administrative radio traffic generated by the military and diplomatic services of target countries. Another new species of intelligence personnel which appeared with the widening use of signals intelligence by U.S. and British forces in World War II were liaison officers assigned to military headquarters in different theaters who personally distributed this highly compartmented reporting to the small number of senior commanders and staff aides authorized to receive it, and ensured that they utilized it in ways that did not compromise the sources and methods from which it had been obtained. Despite their relatively junior ranks and pre-war civilian backgrounds, these liaison officers were usually treated with considerable deference by senior commanders owing to the importance of the materials of which they had custody, and to the independent channels which enabled them to send messages to higher command echelons without review by the commander to whom they reported locally. In the persons of these liaison officers, intelligence “intruded” into the deliberations of senior military commanders to a degree that was seldom possible in earlier armed conflicts. The significant tactical and strategic successes which the western allies achieved with the help of signals intelligence and aerial reconnaissance led to continued massive investments in these collection techniques by the leading world powers after 1945, and their technical sophistication and importance in the conduct of foreign relations and defense policy has grown accordingly.

Intelligence obtained from spies and other human sources played a much smaller role than that obtained from technical collection in the planning and conduct of military operations in the two world wars. At the outset of both wars, none of the belligerent powers on either side possessed many agents with access to information of strategic significance in enemy countries, and none of them had reliable techniques for communicating with the few assets that they did have once diplomatic relations with their adversaries had been severed. The Soviet services in World War II collected more useful intelligence from human sources than any other service in the Allied or Axis camp, and the majority of these agents were members or sympathizers of foreign communist parties who assisted Soviet intelligence for idealistic reasons. Few of these agents, however, survived very long under wartime conditions. The legendary Richard Sorge, who lived and worked in the German Embassy community in Tokyo, was arrested and beheaded by the Japanese authorities in the fall of 1941, and the Red Orchestra Germany led by a Luftwaffe intelligence officer named Libertas Schulze-Boysen was exposed and liquidated by the Nazis a year later.

The most valuable Soviet espionage operations in World War II were carried out not against Axis countries, but instead the Soviet Union’s two main western

allies Great Britain and the United States. The most famous (or infamous) of the Soviet spy networks in the west was of course the “Cambridge Five” – Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, John Cairncross and Anthony Blunt – recruited while undergraduates at Cambridge, and who obtained sensitive positions in the British diplomatic and intelligence services during and after World War II. The Soviets also had a network of collaborators in Washington whose members included Assistant Treasury Secretary Harry Dexter White, as well as several promising mid-level officials such as the White House staff aide Lauchlin Curie, State Department official Alger Hiss, and Duncan Lee, the personal aide to General “Wild Bill” Donovan, the head of the CIA’s wartime precursor, the Office of Strategic Services.

THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF ESPIONAGE AND INTELLIGENCE IN THE COLD WAR

By far the most important Soviet espionage achievement during World War II – and conceivably the greatest spy success in human history – was their infiltration of the secret British and American projects to develop the atomic bomb which enabled them to construct and test a weapon of their own two or three years earlier than had been predicted by U.S. and British experts, and in doing so greatly alter the East-West balance of military power shortly after the outbreak of the Cold War. Owing to its geopolitical impact, the information which the Soviets obtained from their successful penetration of the Manhattan Project had a strategic – and historic – significance as great as anything obtained through sophisticated communications intercepts and overhead reconnaissance techniques, neither of which were suitable ways to acquire the kinds of highly detailed and arcane scientific research data which helped to advance the Soviet nuclear weapons program. The World War II Atom Spies demonstrated to both the Soviets and their Anglo-American Cold War adversaries the necessity of maintaining traditional espionage capabilities in their post-war intelligence services, as well as the need for sophisticated counterintelligence services to detect foreign efforts to infiltrate sensitive parts of their own governments.

The advances during the 1950’s and 1960’s in the technical sophistication of signals intelligence and aerospace reconnaissance, while of enormous value in the formulation and implementation of foreign and defense policies, eventually brought home to government leaders certain inherent limitations of these techniques, as well as the potential advantages of traditional espionage employing human sources. Only through the recruitment and handling of human sources were the Soviet services able to obtain from western countries the sizeable amounts of embargoed western technologies which constituted their most important contribution to Soviet national security during the later decades of the Cold War. Human source reporting was also a vital, though not the exclusive, means by which NATO and Warsaw Pact countries attempted to keep track of possible advances by their adversaries in various technologies that might alter the global balance of military power. Though highly labor intensive, the

artisanal work of recruiting and handling human sources generally has been less expensive and its long-term costs much easier to calculate and manage than the highly capital-intensive techniques of aerospace reconnaissance and signals intelligence, whose costs tend to rise greatly with every technological advance. Human source reporting generally has required smaller amounts of processing and analysis before dissemination to senior policymakers than do the highly varied kinds of data acquired with technical collection techniques. With proper direction and validation, well-placed and well-motivated agents have sometimes provided not only factual information, but also very shrewd and penetrating analyses and estimates about areas of their country's national life of which they have first-hand knowledge.

Information obtained from human sources within hostile governments or organizations usually can be more widely disseminated, and is often easier for senior policymakers and commanders to utilize in a secure and discreet manner, than information obtained through the interception and decoding of radio communications, since all an adversary needs to do if he suspects that his codes have been broken is to change them. Even when human leaks have been detected inside highly disciplined institutions, the process of identifying them is often very complicated and time-consuming, and in some cases unsuccessful since the leaker may get wind of the molehunt and suspend contact with their handlers until the danger had passed. While signals intelligence and aerospace reconnaissance generally detect the threatening actions of an adversary only after the adversary has made the final decision to embark on the particular course action and may actually be in the process of implementing it, well-placed and astute human sources can sometimes report the potential threat before the final decision has been taken, and thereby make it easier to deal with the problem in a non-alerting manner through subtle kinds of diplomacy.

Although the strategic value of human intelligence had become apparent to the leaderships of the East and West blocs by the late 1940's, the professionalisation of this collection technique took at least a couple of decades to accomplish and proved to be as slow and difficult a process for the Soviets as it did for the western powers. The main obstacle to the professionalisation of Soviet intelligence were the recurring homicidal purges of service personnel at all levels which, from the mid-1930's until Stalin's death in 1953, caused long-term damage to morale and professional standards in these institutions by the massive elimination of experienced cadres and constant disruptions in operational activities and essential administrative functions. Soviet successes infiltrating sensitive components of the US and British governments in the 1930's and 1940's resulted less from the proficiency of the Soviet services than the strong sympathy for the Soviet regime which existed in important segments of US and British society, as well the weak counterespionage services and lack of effective security screening for government employees in both countries. The contact and communications procedures which Soviet intelligence personnel employed with members of their networks in the U.S. and U.K. during the 1930's

and 1940's were highly insecure, and by the end of 1940's the British and American authorities had identified most of their important agents. The public exposure in the late 1940's and early 1950's of the witting collaboration of the leaderships of western Communist parties with Soviet intelligence before, during and after World War II seriously damaged the political credibility of these parties in western democratic countries, and thus reduced their value as a tactical asset of Soviet intelligence. Henceforth, it became increasingly difficult for the Soviet and other East Bloc services to recruit agents on the basis of politics and ideology, and most of the agents they did acquire in the remaining forty years of the Cold War were motivated by financial gain or other personal issues of a non-political nature. The rapid expansion and increasing technical sophistication of the American and British counterintelligence and security services in the 1950's and 1960's made it almost as difficult for Soviet Bloc intelligence personnel to conduct clandestine intelligence activities inside the US and UK as it was for British and American intelligence officers to work inside the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

Despite a few successful agent operations against Axis countries, neither the American nor British foreign intelligence services acquired a large amount of institutional experience in this type of activity during World War II. The professionalisation of clandestine human intelligence collection by the U.S. and British services during the early decades of the Cold War also was impeded to some extent by the emphasis which their respective governments placed on covert action and paramilitary activities in response to real or presumed Soviet and communist subversion in different parts of the world. Eventual successes by the American and British services in the clandestine collection of strategic intelligence about the Soviet Union and its allies, beginning with the joint handling of GRU Colonel Oleg Penkovsky in the early 1960's, also required a maturing of the counterintelligence capabilities and cultures of these services in order to render them less vulnerable to Soviet infiltration and enable them to devise techniques for the secure handling of their own penetrations of communist regimes with large and sophisticated counterespionage apparatuses.

An important stimulus to the professionalisation of human intelligence collection by the American services was the development of the CIA'S Directorate of Intelligence, whose size, sophistication, prestige, level of institutional autonomy, and impact on senior policymakers were unmatched by the analytical components of any other intelligence service in the world. Although its analysts work closely on a day-to-day basis with members of the agency's operational component, the DI in many respects functions as a separate service and its personnel have a strong sense of their own institutional identity, mission and professional ethos. DI personnel as a rule have felt as little obligation to endorse questionable information collected by their operational colleagues as they to defer to the opinions of senior policymakers when drafting their analyses and estimates. Since DI analysts are usually recognized experts in their specialty areas, and have access to all information and assessments which are acquired

and generated by all other parts of the U.S. government concerning matters of concern to them, they do much to maintain the professional standards of their operational colleagues by their severe and penetrating judgments of the authenticity, accuracy and pertinence of the information obtained by field collectors.

CONCLUSION – WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF COLD WAR ESPIONAGE IN A POST-COLD WAR WORLD?

However competent or incompetent the foreign intelligence services of the western and eastern blocs may have been, it is undeniable that far greater amounts of manpower, resources and effort were devoted to espionage during the Cold War, both in absolute and relative terms, than during any other international conflict in human history. This naturally begs the question as to why the previously disreputable and occasionally bizarre trade of espionage came to play such a large role in the political and diplomatic history of the Cold War. For most of its duration, the basic dynamic of the Cold War was that of a two-way global siege in which the U.S. and its allies attempted to resist, sometimes successfully sometimes unsuccessfully, the expansion of Soviet power and influence beyond the borders of the USSR and neighboring European and Asian countries which acquired communist regimes shortly after World War II.

Spies have been familiar figures in siege warfare since the Trojan War, given each side's natural desire to end the deadlock by finding a chink in the enemy's defenses before the enemy can do the same to them. The basic conditions of siege warfare during the Cold War were of course greatly complicated and compounded by a nuclear arms race in which both sides by the early to middle 1950's had developed the capacity to inflict unacceptable damage on the civilian populations and industrial capacities of their respective opponents in a matter of days – or even hours – after the outbreak of military hostilities. While the nuclear balance of terror tended to discourage the leaderships of both sides from seriously contemplating the use of military force to end the global stalemate of the Cold War, neither side could discount altogether the possibility of a surprise attack by its opponent since each side had to maintain a sizeable portion of its nuclear and conventional forces in a high state of readiness and alert if "mutual assured destruction" was to have the hoped for peaceful effect. Without these lingering concerns about the possibility of surprise attack – which were probably reinforced in the minds of leaders of both the U.S. and USSR by traumatic memories of the major losses which the Germans and Japanese had inflicted on them by surprise attacks in June and December of 1941 – it would very hard to account for the staggering resources which both sides of the Cold War dedicated to signals intelligence and aerospace reconnaissance.

The accelerating pace of scientific discovery and technological development in the second half of the twentieth also aroused fears in the leaderships of both sides of the Cold War of possible technical breakthroughs by their respective

adversaries which would render their own strategic weapons systems obsolete or deprive them of their psychological deterrent effect, and these fears helped stimulate the expansion of both technical and human collection capabilities. It is also worth noting that the two great spy services of the Cold War, the CIA and the KGB, were organized in ways that rendered them totally independent of their respective countries' military leaderships and defense ministries, and this suggests that the civilian leaderships of both the US and Soviet governments, in keeping with Clemenceau's famous dictum that "war is too important to be left to the generals," were taking some pains to ensure that their respective armed services did not obtain a preponderant role in the collection and analysis of intelligence.

Besides the peculiar political-military dynamic of the US-Soviet global conflict after World War II, certain fundamental characteristics of the Soviet regime appear to have given additional impetus to the remarkable development of the spy business in both the opposed camps of the Cold War.

(1) The regime's obsessive secrecy and mendacity which rendered even the most mundane political, economic and social realities impenetrable not only to foreign observers but its own citizenry as well.

(2) The regime's equally obsessive surveillance of its own population through a vast network of informants which extended into almost every significant economic, social and government institution. The foreign intelligence and counterintelligence directorates of the KGB were relatively small, and the bulk of KGB resources and manpower was directed against Soviet citizens and institutions. Soviet intelligence collection and espionage abroad was in a sense an extension of the apparatus for surveillance and control of its own population.

(3) The Soviet Union's habitual employment of conspiratorial techniques in its conduct of diplomacy prior to the Cold War as seen in its covert support and manipulation of foreign communist parties and political front groups by means of the Comintern leadership in Moscow and the foreign relations department of the CPSU Central Committee.

While most of the behaviors noted above have been exhibited by oligarchical despotisms in other periods, as well as revolutionary dictatorships such as the one which the Jacobins attempted to establish during the French Revolution, the Soviet regime employed these techniques to an extent which cannot be fully explained either in terms of the concepts and values of traditional statecraft or the Machiavellian-utopian premises of Marxism-Leninism.

There was nevertheless a certain method to the madness of Soviet international behavior which made it possible, though never easy, for the US and its allies to arrive at a modus vivendi with this regime by diplomatic means to an extent that proved impossible with Nazi Germany. Although Stalin and most of his successors dealt with the outside world in a compulsively assertive and aggressive manner, none of them were pathological gamblers like Hitler. In the words of Churchill, Soviet leaders did not seek victory in war, but the fruits of

victory without war. At the same time, the Soviets' repeated demonstrations of their readiness to use military force in a determined and ruthless manner whenever they could do so at an acceptable level of risk made it apparent that dealing with them exclusively with traditional methods and instruments of diplomacy was as unlikely to produce an acceptable outcome as an exclusive reliance on military force. The predictable unpredictability of the Soviet regime suggested the possible utility of new and enlarged institutions for intelligence collection and analysis which, even if they never produced a "magic bullet" for dealing with the Soviet challenge, might reduce the number of disturbing surprises which the Soviets caused the leaderships of the US and its allies.

A wide range of judgments may be made about the activities and accomplishments of the intelligence services of the great powers during the Cold War. For example, the late British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge, who had served in SIS during World War II, offered this assessment in an essay written in 1968:

"In both the United States and Britain expenditure on Intelligence has gone up by leaps and bounds; we spend millions, America spends billions. Are we really the better, or even more secure for it? Before the 1914-18 War the United States had no Intelligence setup at all, and we had at most a score of ex-Indian Army colonels in London and a few eccentric figures dotted about the world who concentrated their attention on bribing charladies to go through War Office wastepaper baskets, or on seducing the wife of an undersecretary or chef de cabinet in the hope that she might babble state secrets in bed. Now we have great hordes of agents and double agents, phony attaches and passport-control officers, vast archives and complex screening procedures, spy ships and spy aircraft, radio interception and cipher-cracking enterprises. Not even Education, the great mumbo-jumbo of the twentieth century, has produced quite such an edifice of parasitism and pretence."

While I bow to no one in my esteem and affection for Muggeridge's exuberant and elegant iconoclasm, I feel compelled to give an impertinently affirmative answer to the rhetorical question, "Are we really the better, or even more secure for it?" As futile or misguided as many of the activities of the principal intelligence services of the U.S., Great Britain and the Soviet Union during the Cold War may have proven to be, these services seem to me to have made the world in the decades following World War II an appreciably less violent and unstable place in the second half of the twentieth century than it was in the first half, despite the profound antagonisms and suspicions which divided the East and West blocs during that period, as well as the readily apparent military capacity of both sides to annihilate one another in a matter of hours.

This is not to say that the Cold War was a painless or a bloodless contest, or that the intelligence services of the opposed blocs proved to be infallible guides and counselors to their respective political leaderships, or that the activities of these

services always had a benevolent and rational purpose. While my personal feelings about the intelligence services of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries have never been cozily collegial or warmly sentimental, I do believe that the majority of personnel in these services between the death of Stalin in 1953 and the collapse of the Soviet regime in 1991 were serious, honest and competent professionals who through most of the Cold War were telling Warsaw Pact policymakers that (a) neither the U.S nor any other western country was seriously contemplating an armed attack or any other attempt at a forcible overthrow of any communist regime in Eastern Europe; and (b) NATO had both the political will and military strength to withstand a major attack by the Warsaw Pact against any member of the western alliance. Such estimates of the capabilities and intentions of the Atlantic Alliance were rather similar to what I and most of my colleagues in western intelligence services were telling our own leaders about the capabilities and intentions of the Warsaw Pact regarding NATO. Despite several major changes in the leaderships of both alliances and the ebb and flow of east-west tensions during the four decades of the Cold War, the leaders of both the Soviet and our own governments seem to have accepted without serious reservations their intelligence services' generally cautious and non-alarmist estimates of the capabilities and intentions of their opponents. As a result, neither side in the Cold War ever sensed an urgent defensive need, or providential "window of opportunity" to undertake some kind of preemptive military initiative which could have triggered the Third – and doubtless last – World War during a period of elevated tensions.

As self-evident as this assessment of the balance of geopolitical power between NATO and the Warsaw Pact may seem to us now (and indeed seemed to the majority of sane and reasonably well-informed people during the Cold War itself), it is worth recalling that the major powers of Europe went to war in 1914 and 1939 because the leaderships of one or more participants in the conflict erroneously believed that they had a "window of opportunity" to vanquish a troublesome rival or adversary at an acceptable cost, or that one of their real or potential opponents was nurturing such thoughts in respect to them. However mixed the accomplishments of western and eastern intelligence services may have been, the overall historical record does seem to suggest that most of the blunders, follies and crimes of which different governments of the opposed sides were culpable at different times in the cold war (as well as a number of so-called "intelligence failures" for which their services were blamed at the time) resulted not from the counsel or instigation of their secret services, but instead from particular leaders' neglect or deliberate misuse of these services.