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Book Review: The Future of Intelligence: Challenges in the Twenty-First Century

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Review of *The Future of Intelligence: Challenges in the Twenty-First Century*

Isabelle Duyvesteyn, Ben de Jong, and Joop van Reijn. *The Future of Intelligence: Challenges in the Twenty-First Century*. Routledge. 2014. ISBN: 978-0-415-66328-1. 165 pages.

Intelligence studies in the twenty-first century is quickly evolving from an amalgamation of prior thought and practice into a collusion of technology, knowledge management, and ethical probing. Not only are new questions being asked, new threats being presented, and emerging global disruptors being examined in a more dynamic security context, but practitioners within various iterations of the global intelligence community are beginning to explore a realm of novel options newly placed before them. The contributors to *The Future of Intelligence: Challenges in the 21st Century* seem to be rooted in parsing how the current threatscape differs from the bipolar struggle of the Cold War that their respective foundations were forged under. Perhaps the biggest question treated in this volume is one not directly posed by all the contributors collectively, although possibly in common consent. In an environment of increased intricacy that trends at an ever-quicken pace, have the threats become too blurred due to complexity—one to which there is no current solution?

What are the new security threats and do they also provide new opportunities? Does the development of technology (including social media) help or hinder the intelligence services? Is it possible to speak of a new intelligence revolution? To what extent do new developments require intelligence sharing, not only nationally but also internationally? And, as Michael Kowalski states in the Foreword, “last but not least: Do these developments pose new judicial and ethical challenges?” (p. xiv). Through a well-researched series of chapters from preeminent scholars and practitioners within the varying fields of intelligence studies, these central questions are adapted and explored. The chapters are broken into a mixture of forward thinking narratives that rely on the expertise and experience of the authors, coupled with pointed analysis on past missteps and an analysis of the organic evolution that has taken place within their respective fields.

To investigate this further, consider the discussion in *Threat, Challenges and Opportunities*, a chapter where Sir David Ormand notes that “Governments ideally need to be prepared to act as dangers begin to become clear, but preferably *before* the dangers become present. This task of helping to improve decision making through reducing ignorance is of course the very purpose of intelligence” (p. 21). The question paradigm then evolves to what are we solving for and is it relevant? Are we still fundamentally solving pre-9/11 problems? Most of the authors would say that the problem is *not* that we have *enough* information. Perhaps it hinges on the fact that the intelligence community is not reacting quickly enough. Observation and orientation are two crucial components that at times could be more salient in the various points

of view put forth in the text. Intelligence practitioners observe well, but do we draw the orientation to the decision makers or make the decision makers orient to the observations? A common thread in the post-9/11 threat environment is that we have reoriented to a shared proximate reality. Complexity lies in the response and the threat combined. This is where the contributors evoke a needed shift in orienting decision makers prior to an event. The history of intelligence is replete with how well practitioners observe. However, if the role of intelligence is not creating space for the insertion of decision makers to present opportunities before the threats occur, then in an open intelligence loop—predictions become useless.

This begs the question—are we too myopic on monitoring intent? None of the authors are saying that clairvoyance is an option. It's all value based, so when the path of intent and method cross for an adversarial force—where does intelligence monitor intent and provide potential solutions that are part of the attack landscape? This is part of a demand gap articulated by Monica den Boer framed in a discussion on intelligence-led policing. She states with regard to priority setting and decision-making spaces that “the lack of an effective response culminated in a demand gap: high volumes of crime persisted despite numerous law enforcement interventions” (p. 114). In a few short paragraphs, a potential model emerges—being proactive and innovative along respective lines of performance allows observation, orientation, and then *calibration*.

Reminiscence of intelligence theory and practice during the Cold War era is prominent in the variables of many of the contributors. Additionally, since the decision-making space that is necessary for proper orientation is part of a proposed paradigm shift, this volume could benefit from an analysis that combines both. For example, how did Valdimir Putin rise to where he is today given his background in intelligence? Essentially, does he understand how to leverage information as a decision maker? This could be historically framed with various examples seen predominantly in the European theater under the theory that greater is the fall thereof of people who manage their way up to complexity and then find that their confidence is inadequate for the task at hand.

The confluence analyses presented in *The Future of Intelligence* is much needed, well presented, and comes at a critical juncture for intelligence practitioners and theorists. It is a relevant and impeccable book for any academic collection. Collectively, the authors offer a strong line of reasoning regarding the needed change and proposed adaptation within the intelligence community.

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