

Preface

THIS BOOK PRESENTS an exposition and critique of U.S. intelligence analysis. A single author could not have written it as authoritatively or completely. When we decided to produce this kind of volume on intelligence analysis, we made two critical decisions at the outset: first, to commission new chapters, because what we were seeking was simply not available in the current literature; and second, to recruit the most qualified experts to write these original contributions. We also sought to bring these fresh perspectives together in a way that would yield a whole that is truly greater than the sum of its parts. We hope we have succeeded in these daunting collaborative tasks.

Collaboration is more than cooperation toward a common goal. For this project it has been a career-long sharing of ideas on how to make intelligence analysis a true profession. In a sense, it took more than two decades of contact between the editors to produce this volume, as we constantly crossed paths in our professional lives. Both of us studied international relations theory and political science before joining the intelligence community. Our analytic careers both began at the National Intelligence Council and converged again at the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) Directorate of Intelligence, Office of European Analysis. In these rather different organizations, we became well acquainted with how intelligence analysis is conducted at both the intelligence community and agency levels. Here we were first exposed to the talents of such phenomenal analysts as Hal Ford, a vice chairman of the National Intelligence Council and mentor of national intelligence estimates writers like ourselves. And we also encountered Jack Davis, at the time a national intelligence officer and later a career-long developer and teacher of tradecraft. Later, we were again privileged to serve at the National Intelligence Council, drafting and managing national intelligence estimates, where we were able to see the impressive skills of some of the best analysts in the U.S. government—and some of the frailties of the estimating process.

In these assignments and others, we had our share of triumphs and setbacks, along the way observing how intelligence analysis works in practice and how it might be made to work better. Seasoned by firsthand contact with intelligence at both its best and worst, we could not avoid developing ideas regarding how to improve analysis.

These combined experiences have taught us to be humble but also to be more demanding of intelligence. We came to believe that “lessons learned” must be shared with others; otherwise, changes in the analytic habits of others will not

occur. But we could not hope to provide a complete set of important lessons. Thus, the other contributors to this book have multiplied our own insights exponentially in understanding the origins, practices, problems, and prospects of the craft—and aspiring profession—of intelligence analysis. Above all, we aim to improve it.

Such ideas were also nurtured by our working on analytic tradecraft issues while serving in different parts of the CIA. One of us worked on preparing some of the early Alternative Analysis instructional materials for CIA analysts. The other became a student of denial and deception as a factor degrading U.S. intelligence and later served as a senior staff member on the President's Commission on the Capabilities of U.S. Intelligence Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (the Silberman-Robb WMD Commission). Most recently, we spent time together at the Sherman Kent School for Intelligence Analysis, where we were deeply involved in preparing new tradecraft primers and monographs to help overcome some of the cognitive biases and other tradecraft errors that played such a destructive role in the intelligence failure concerning Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

In pursuing this project, we have benefited tremendously from the insights gained in many conversations over the years—not always consensual—with our contributors as well as with other intelligence colleagues and critics. We cannot give enough credit to Richards Heuer, whose ground-breaking book *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis* set the standard for serious consideration of the impact of the cognitive dimensions of intelligence analysis. Likewise, working for and with many of the other contributors to this volume has enriched our professional careers as well as inspired us to try to capture what we have collectively learned about the art and science of analysis.

Both of us owe a debt of gratitude to a number of teaching institutions, two of which especially helped encourage our interest in preparing a book of this nature for future analysts. In particular, Georgetown University's Security Studies Program, where we are currently adjunct professors, has been a leader in graduate-level intelligence studies, both a source of eager and challenging students and an ideal incubator for the ideas found in this book. Likewise, the National War College, where each of us has taught at separate times, sets a high standard for professional education—a model, really, that we believe should be emulated in a future National Intelligence University.

This book would not have been possible without the generous support of Georgetown University's Center for Peace and Security Studies (CPASS), the research arm of its Security Studies Program. Through its director, Daniel Byman, and deputy director, Ellen McHugh, CPASS has provided indispensable resources as well as enthusiasm, advice, and many other forms of steady encouragement throughout our project. Richard Brown of Georgetown University Press has been especially understanding of deadlines along with the added burdens of working with intelligence practitioners, including the inconvenient but necessary “prepublication review” process at the CIA. In that regard, we appreciate the CIA's Publication Review Board's timely review of our manuscript as well as excellent guidance.

We also must thank our wives, Cindy and Penny, for their understanding and support, and also apologize to them for the many lost weekends, evenings, and early mornings, when we were crafting or correcting text and sending copious e-mails back and forth to coordinate research, rewriting, reformatting, and the myriad details associated with our drafting and editing responsibilities. For that, there is no way to repay our patient spouses but with love.

Last, but certainly not least, we thank Matthew Larssen, our able Georgetown University research assistant, whose careful manuscript preparation, fact checking, and mastery of style guides have made this book not only more presentable but also more sound because of his attention to detail. Perhaps more important, Matt was a sanity check on the themes and ideas contained in this book. And it is for his generation of intelligence analysts that we have written it.