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## Intelligence Elsewhere: Spies and Espionage Outside the Anglosphere

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Reviewed by LTC Joseph Becker, Faculty Member at the National Intelligence University, Washington, DC

Cultural analysis is an academic tool that holds considerable potential for understanding complicated issues outside an analyst's normal frame of reference. However, within the intelligence community, this tool is often misunderstood or misapplied, producing disappointing results that tend to discredit the discipline as a component in the production of quality intelligence analysis. The authors and editors of *Intelligence Elsewhere: Spies and Espionage Outside the Anglosphere* provide a different view. They claim that cultural analysis is beneficial and possibly vital to understanding both allies and adversaries. They build their argument by using comparative analysis to examine case studies written by multiple authors about a wide selection of intelligence services from non-Western countries. This book serves as both an example of how cultural analysis might be applied by practitioners of intelligence as well as an insightful collection of case studies about intelligence services that have often been neglected in the body of Western intelligence research.

This book devotes four early chapters to examining ancient intelligence traditions arising from China, the Maurya Empire in India, the Byzantine Empire, and the foundation of Islam. The authors and editors believe these traditions have a profound, but often unrecognized, impact on a swath of modern states and their security services. The book continues to describe individual countries and their security apparatus in terms of historical layers, each of which contributes a portion to the explanation of their organization's current status. As asserted by multiple authors throughout the text, the study of culture cannot predict what action a country or its leaders will take in any given circumstance, but it can offer great insight into how they will carry it out. Furthermore, even the individual actors themselves may not be fully aware of the influences that color their own decisionmaking processes.

The chapter on Russian security services, entitled "Protecting the New Rome," is a high point in the book. Russia's tilt away from the West since the end of the Soviet Union towards an authoritarian model has tended to baffle many Western observers. However, an examination of Russia's Byzantine influences provides a fascinating perspective on the culture that underlies this process. President Putin's patriarchal behavior toward the Russian Orthodox Church draws parallels to emperors of a millennium past, but far from being an isolated anachronism, this chapter demonstrates elements of this pattern have perpetuated, even during the Soviet Union. This culminates today in a security culture that has allowed Russia's intelligence services to weather extreme political change with surprisingly little impact.

Also of note, the authors of this work provide illuminating insight into the security services of both Iran and Japan. In the case of Iran, the chapter describes a "shatterbelt" of competing tensions, both internal and external to the current Iranian regime. This leaves Iran's intelligence

services in a position of crucial importance, while tying their hands so that none individually can threaten the political status quo. A combination of Islamic and Persian cultural influences defines an intelligence culture designed to protect a government whose very foundations seem to define the word “paradox.” Japanese culture, on the other hand, would seem straightforward by comparison. However, a number of cultural biases continue to relegate the field of intelligence to a second-class status in Japan. Furthermore, the traditional value placed upon the attainment of consensus in every major decision means that even the best intelligence information might be brushed aside once agreement has been reached on a course of action or policy.

For countries with freely and democratically elected governments, the authors use the term “democratization of intelligence” as a basis by which to compare and contrast the progress that certain intelligence services are making in their evolution toward supporting the institutions of democracy and accountable governance in those countries. In several cases, authors trace a given country’s political evolution side-by-side with its primary security services. It is interesting to note, as in the case of Argentina, that in spite of major political changes, elements of a country’s intelligence apparatus often have tremendous staying power and seem to run much deeper than the roots of any given organization or personality. This book demonstrates that intelligence culture is a product of history and changes to a given culture take considerable time.

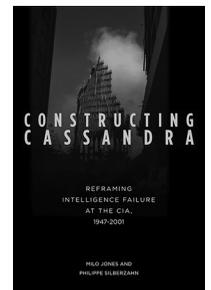
Although *Intelligence Elsewhere* is written by a group of authors, the style is academic throughout. It is well-sourced and precise in its assertions. Cultural analysis is a broad field of study encompassing a number of variables and a tendency toward ambiguity. Therefore, in order to scope their arguments, the authors have loaded some portions of the book with qualifications and nuanced deliberations, which can make for cumbersome reading, especially for the casual reader. However, for students and practitioners of intelligence, this will be a valuable addition to their collection. It is also worth mentioning that many of these case studies could stand alone as primers or reference material on individual countries and intelligence services.

## **Constructing Cassandra: Reframing Intelligence Failure at the CIA, 1947-2001**

By Milo Jones and Philippe Silberzahn

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The Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) shroud of secrecy allows for its effectiveness in addressing the nation's security problems. On 22 September 1947, President Harry Truman created the CIA under the auspices of the National Security Act of 1947. Under this act, the CIA's primary goal was and remains not only to evaluate intelligence related to US national security but also prevent strategic surprises that threaten US national security. The CIA's occasional intelligence failures and the potential reasons behind these inabilities are the topic of this book.



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