Diplomacy And Intelligence

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'Intelligence' as a discrete institution is part of twentieth-century government. It combines the skills of covert collection with expertise on certain subjects. Its differentiation from legitimate diplomacy is on the whole clear: intelligence provides information by special methods, diplomacy uses it. Nevertheless, there are numerous operational overlaps. Intelligence's overseas liaisons interact with diplomacy and foreign policy. Embassies act as intelligence bases and are targets for local intelligence attacks. The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office plays a leading part in intelligence assessment. Some distancing between diplomacy and covert intelligence is desirable, but Western intelligence is less of a rival to diplomacy than has sometimes been portrayed. In Britain, in particular, intelligence's knowledge has not meant power.

Governments inform themselves through intelligence as well as diplomacy. The two interact and sometimes compete; indeed intelligence has been described as a new 'anti-diplomacy'.[1] This paper outlines intelligence's character; describes the boundaries between it and diplomacy; and discusses the relationships between the two.[2] The 'intelligence' considered here is mainly Western-style, though some of its features apply more widely, for example to Soviet intelligence and its Russian successor. 'Diplomacy' is here taken to include both diplomatic representation overseas and the institution of the national Foreign Offices and Foreign Ministries to which diplomats report and which in large measure they staff.

Modern Intelligence Institutions

Evolution

Intelligence can be regarded loosely as 'information'; diplomats used to speak of reporting 'political intelligence', and newspapers gave 'racing intelligence'. The classical definition from the late 1940s is of intelligence as knowledge, organization and activities.[3] However, it is by no means the whole of governments' knowledge or information-gathering. Government intelligence describes the specialized organizations that have that name, and what they do and produce. This circular definition is unavoidable unless intelligence is equated

Diplomacy & Statecraft, Vol.9, No.2 (July 1998), pp.1–22
PUBLISHED BY FRANK CASS, LONDON

with all governmental information and its collection and handling.

The evolution of intelligence as a separate institution is a phenomenon of the last century and a half. Of course governments have always collected 'intelligence' as 'information', with diplomacy providing some of it for more than the last four centuries. States have always also had a sub-category of 'secret intelligence'. Walsingham, the Elizabethan Secretary of State, is usually regarded as the first identifiable British intelligence chief, running his agents to penetrate Catholic threats to the monarchy at home and overseas. In the first half of the eighteenth century Britain had an agent network covering French and Spanish naval bases. In the same century the growth of diplomacy led all European countries to have their so-called 'Black Chambers' for intercepting and deciphering foreign diplomatic correspondence. Trying to read each other's mail became a support for diplomacy everywhere, as it has remained ever since.

However, intelligence barely existed over these centuries in the modern sense of permanent, professional institutions, separate from diplomacy and foreign offices. Diplomats were expected to run their own secret agents as part of their normal information gathering and political action; but, except through diplomacy's overt and covert collection, information gathering was relatively uninstitutionized and *ad hoc*. Armies and navies needed intelligence in war, but did not have systematic collection or permanent intelligence departments in peacetime. Kings, ministers and generals ran their own agents and evaluated their reports as a normal part of statecraft. The concept had not yet evolved of specialist intelligence staffs geared to producing information and forecasts.

This pattern changed after the middle of the nineteenth century, mainly for military reasons. The new technologies of the industrial revolution produced new forms of war, in which armies and navies needed pre-planning based on stores of information about potential enemies and their railways and topography. Permanent military and naval intelligence departments were established in Britain in the 1870s and 1880s and in America in the 1880s; rather earlier in continental countries. At first these did not impinge on diplomacy's position. Embassies provided information on foreign forces through their military and naval attachés. Military intelligence in the Victorian age of glasnost operated mainly on a mixture of these

reports and public information, plus some gentlemanly travelling and spying by officers on leave.

Nevertheless, secret intelligence grew in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The rate of technical and operational change in military capabilities increased, and the 'timetable war' of planned mobilization and deployment increased the value of getting 'the plans' of potential opponents; on both counts states became more secretive. Late in the day by continental standards, the British Secret Service Bureau was formed in 1909 for espionage and counterespionage. World War I subsequently magnified the scope for espionage, and the victory of Communism in Russia gave it a long-lasting peacetime importance and link with ideology and subversion.

World War I also saw two technological developments: radio interception or signals intelligence, following the introduction of radio; and the application of airborne photography. World War II was even more an intelligence war, particularly with the scale of Western successes in breaking enemy ciphers. The early years of the Cold War then saw intelligence collection develop on a quite unprecedented peacetime scale, even further increased by the introduction of American and Soviet satellite surveillance in the 1960s. Coincidentally, the Cold War also made diplomacy less valuable in antagonists' monitoring of each other. Western embassies in Moscow existed in a kind of quarantine, and reciprocal restrictions were imposed on Soviet Bloc diplomats in the West. The diplomatic right of 'freedom of movement and travel' became increasingly circumscribed by limitations in the interests of the receiving states' 'national security'.[4]

Two features of intelligence analysis also came to the fore over the same period. First, total war (and subsequent policymaking on the Soviet threat) needed total intelligence, not restricted to military matters, on the adversary as a whole and all his national capabilities. Second, national grand strategy in both war and peace needed intelligence presented for efficient top-level decisionmaking. British assessment by the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) and the similar postwar American machinery for producing national intelligence assessments (NIEs) developed the concept of bringing all relevant information together in an interdepartmental consensus over its interpretation, and presenting the results as a basis for policy deliberation, so that cabinets – ideally – would argue about what

should be done and not about the underlying intelligence. One of the differences between the Axis and the Western allies in World War II was that the Axis had no systems of this kind. Much the same applied to the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War, as is perhaps still the case in Russia.

Thus intelligence became part of the twentieth-century growth of government. Britain now spends rather more on intelligence than on diplomacy, and about a twentieth of the cost of defence. America spends more, both absolutely and proportionately: very much more than on diplomacy, and about a tenth of its defence budget – a high figure which reflects American budgetary conventions over tactical military intelligence, and also the heavy costs of intelligence satellites. France has had a considerably expanded intelligence programme since the Gulf War.[5] The overall effect is that diplomacy's traditional task of knowing foreign countries is now shared by intelligence as a complementary and potentially rival institution, of comparable weight to diplomacy in western Europe, and greater weight in America. As Sir Reginald Hibbert, a retired British diplomat, described the result: 'secret intelligence, from being a somewhat bohemian servant or associate of the great departments of state, gradually acquired a sort of parity with them.'[6]

Components and Characteristics

This world of intelligence institutions – in Anglo-Saxon countries, the 'intelligence community' – has evolved with two interlocking components. The first is *collection* by special means, seeking information not otherwise available. This is 'covert intelligence' or 'secret intelligence' – from spies, radio interception, code-breaking, covert photography and the like. Intelligence collectors include the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), and in America the CIA's Directorate of Operations (for human sources) and its Directorate of Science and Technology (for advanced technical collection), the National Security Agency for signals intelligence, and the National Reconnaissance Office and National Imagery and Mapping Agency for imagery satellites. The essence of these *single-source* organizations is that they are experts on their particular *techniques*.

The second (much smaller) component is the evaluation of reports

from different secret sources against each other, and against non-covert ones: press reports, radio broadcasts, diplomatic reporting, and all the other information at governments' disposal. Its object is to provide the best available picture and make the best possible forecasts. All this is the activity of *all-source analysis*, and putting the output to decision-takers as *finished intelligence*. Secret intelligence is only a part of this totality, and does not necessarily have to be an ingredient. Thus all-source organizations like the British Defence Intelligence Staff and JIC, and the American Defense Intelligence Agency and the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence, are experts on particular *subjects*, sometimes foreign countries as a whole. In the same way military commanders' intelligence staffs everywhere are their experts on the foreign forces with which they have to cope.

In the West these two aspects of intelligence have often evolved as separate organizations, and sometimes in tandem, as in the CIA's development as both a single-source collector and an all-source analysis agency. But there is almost always a barrier of some kind between the two; thus even in the CIA its collection and analysis are virtually separate organizations. Hence the English-speaking countries have developed the concept, with some influence on Western intelligence as a whole, of intelligence as a two-stage process of single-source collection followed by all-source analysis, with the implicit principle that intelligence collectors should not have the responsibility for final assessment. This is quite contrary to what was the KGB's view of intelligence, as covert, single-source information fed direct to policymakers – perhaps still the philosophy of its successor, the SVR.

Intelligence in both its single-source and all-source aspects has also evolved since 1945 as a multinational activity. The USSR depended on its Warsaw Pact subordinates for about 30 per cent of its espionage. Elsewhere the Anglo-American and Commonwealth intelligence alliances and exchanges are well known, but after 1945 the Cold War and international terrorism each produced many other international intelligence connections. In the present decade the increasing volume of international action over Iraq, Bosnia, nuclear proliferation and similar subjects will have extended the scope of such exchanges. Arguably intelligence with its extensive and growing international networks is becoming an inchoate international system in its own right, alongside diplomacy.

Intelligence–Diplomacy Boundaries

Functions and Methods

Like any other governmental activity, intelligence has untidy and sometimes artificial institutional boundaries. But the separation from diplomacy is reasonably clear; clearer, for example, than between intelligence and military 'combat information' and electronic warfare on the battlefield. Diplomacy and its international legitimization go back to the Renaissance and the Treaty of Westphalia, and have always linked the dual activities of information gathering on the one hand and foreign policy formation and execution on the other. Intelligence as a separate institution is more modern, and has no more than tacit international recognition. Apart from its small and specialized component of covert action, its essence is providing information and forecasts for others to act on. Unlike diplomacy, it is not a decision-taking and executive institution.

In practice there is a usually a clear separation between the intelligence and diplomatic professions. Modern technical intelligence collection – by Sigint and similar methods – is no part of the diplomat's curriculum vitae. Even where embassies contain intelligence officers running human sources under diplomatic cover, no one in the know confuses the functions of the two groups. Diplomats are the 'front door' people in the international system; intelligence officers of all kinds go figuratively (and sometimes actually) up the backstairs. Diplomats are insulted if labelled as intelligence collectors; and international intelligence relationships, however important, are usually veiled in a decent obscurity.

This diplomatic–intelligence separation is in fact a relatively recent development. A general assumption from the Renaissance onwards was that diplomats were licensed spies and would recruit their own secret agents, and this lasted until at least the first part of the nineteenth century. Even in the subsequent years of Victorian rectitude the British Foreign Office were not above obtaining Russian documents by bribery; Salisbury wrote in 1875 that 'we receive pretty constantly copies of the most important reports and references that reach the Foreign Office and War Office at St. Petersburg'.[7] No doubt some diplomats, in some countries, still indulge in covert collection

of this kind. Even Canada incorporates an 'Interview Division' as part of its Department of External Affairs; though there is no suggestion that this covers anything more than seeking information in Canada (albeit on a confidential basis) from travellers, refugees and similar non-covert sources.

Nevertheless, over the last two centuries the distinction has gradually evolved in diplomatic convention and protocol between acceptable and unacceptable methods of acquiring knowledge, and was encapsulated in the 1961 Vienna Convention's definition of a purpose of diplomacy as including ascertaining conditions in the host country *by all lawful means*.[8] Though these means have never been defined, it is usually fairly clear in practice where diplomacy stops and covert intelligence starts.[9] Diplomats cast their net widely in seeking information, but usually avoid infringing their host countries' laws; or at least think seriously before so doing. Even where questions of legality do not arise directly, potentially useful contacts with oppositions and dissidents may be off-limits to diplomats; so too may developing useful sources among the seamy sides of local life.

Intelligence officers on the other hand are less restricted in their contacts, and can use means denied to diplomacy. Even in Soviet embassies, genuine diplomats left agent-running and recruitment to their KGB and GRU colleagues. From his experience of British diplomacy Hibbert offered the generalization that about 50 per cent of a diplomatic mission's information comes from the public sources of the host country; 10–20 per cent from confidential contacts by virtue of a diplomat's special position; and 20–25 per cent from indiscretions and leaks of one kind and another; but he differentiated this last category from the remaining ten per cent or so of covert intelligence, characterized by him as information *bought and sold* from local sources, or otherwise obtained though professional intelligence work.[10]

Overlaps between intelligence and diplomacy exist, and will be discussed later. Nevertheless, an essential difference between the two types of information gathering is conveyed in Hibbert's description. Diplomatic sources may be confidential, but are not clandestine, and the same applies to the methods used to develop them. Unlike intelligence, diplomacy's acquisition of knowledge is an overt activity, notionally open to permanent surveillance, and employs

methods which its government is prepared to defend publicly; in the present British government's terms, it is consistent with an 'ethical' foreign policy.

Subjects

If the difference in functions and methods between single-source intelligence and diplomatic information gathering is reasonably clear, the distinction between intelligence's and diplomacy's subject matter is more clouded. Intelligence collection adds to the sum of government knowledge from other sources, including diplomacy. But for authoritative, all-source appraisals governments look to diplomats and Foreign Offices on some things, and to all-source, finished intelligence on others. On whom do they rely for what?

Often the answer is clear. Diplomats are not experts on foreign armed forces, insurrections or mixtures of regular and irregular fighting as in Bosnia. Intelligence carries special weight wherever violence, military power and secrecy are involved, as on current subjects such as armed conflicts, terrorism, international arms exports, nuclear proliferation, clandestine operations by foreign governments and other inputs to 'security policy'. But the position is more open when governments need political or politico-economic assessments. Intelligence studies Ruritania; but so also does the Foreign Office, the State Department and their equivalents elsewhere. Diplomats and foreign ministries are the natural foreign experts, and in the daily decisions in foreign policy they make their own interpretations of all the information to hand; international affairs could not be conducted otherwise. But on some matters and for some decisions governments seek more authoritative assessments and look to all-source intelligence for them. Especially if secret material is involved, intelligence assessment has then an authority that overrides departmental interpretations linked with policy commitments. If the assessment is interdepartmentally produced and agreed, it also helps to keep different ministers and their departments in step.

The general effect of this duality is for intelligence to be one of the modern specialist institutions that limit Foreign Offices' hegemony. Where all-source intelligence assessment is influential, intelligence ceases to be seen as just an input to diplomacy; on the contrary, diplomatic reporting becomes valued as an intelligence ingredient.

Things have changed from the time before World War II when the British Foreign Office could object to the formation of the JIC on the grounds that it (the FO) was the only authority for assessing foreign countries. As Hibbert, commenting on the present position of the Foreign Office and Treasury, put it

> There is now an invisible force exercising a certain pull on these great bodies [the FCO and Treasury], in much the same way as stars and planets invisible to the naked eye or even through telescopes can be deduced by astronomers to be influencing the courses of visible heavenly bodies, bending them from the trajectories that might be expected on the basis of visible data. The invisible force is exerted by the joint intelligence and assessment machinery in the Cabinet Office.[11]

The same can be said even more forcibly of the influence of the CIA *vis-à-vis* the State Department.

Thus intelligence and diplomacy are to some extent competing. Certainly they compete for national resources, though perhaps not very actively; Congress does not seem to compare the value of State Department's information gathering with the CIA's, and Britain has no established machinery for weighing the annual intelligence and diplomatic budgets against each other. But in the main their information gathering is complementary, and the basic intelligence–diplomacy relationship is not competitive, but is that of producer and customer. Intelligence produces foreign knowledge for which, at least in peacetime, diplomacy is one of its major customers and users.

There are also other, less straightforward links between the two institutions. Diplomacy makes use of intelligence's international relationships, but at the same time it reflects them; intelligence and diplomacy influence each other. Diplomacy also provides intelligence facilities, but at the same time constitutes a target for foreign intelligence attacks. Additionally, despite the general separation of intelligence and diplomatic functions and methods, there are institutional and operational overlaps of various kinds. These various connections are examined in the following survey.

Intelligence–Diplomacy Relationships

Diplomacy as an Intelligence Customer

Little needs to be said here of intelligence as an input to foreign policy making at the top level of strategy, where national and international security are involved.[12] Throughout the Cold War Western policies were driven (though to varying extents) by intelligence assessments of Soviet objectives and policies and East–West military balances, and by specific intelligence on Soviet activities. Policymakers look to intelligence for objective and accurate evaluations and forecasts, free of policy preconceptions. Intelligence may fail through reinforcing policymakers' received wisdom, through its own preconceptions, or through one of the many other causes of intelligence failure; or policymakers may just ignore it.[13] But in failure as in success it is one of the major elements on which foreign policy draws.

However – rather less obviously – intelligence also assists diplomacy at a more tactical level. Hibbert suggested that secret intelligence's addition to diplomatic information is mainly of confirmatory value:

> It is very rare for it to contradict what has already been deduced from non-secret information. Its great virtue is often that it gives immediacy, practicality and focus to general conclusions which have already been reached. Secret and top secret intelligence mostly has value only for very short periods. It tells you what is intended tomorrow or next week, not in the longer term. It gives you the negotiating ploy at the next meeting or the initiative which is to be launched next month. Its value is usually tactical: strategy depends more on the picture put together from the broader, non-secret, general intelligence material.[14]

Elsewhere this contribution of single-source material has been valued in terms of 'calibrating' policymakers' judgements reached by other means. If intelligence has helped Britain to 'punch above its weight' in the second half of this century, this contribution has been tactical as well as strategic; perhaps even more so.

Diplomacy is also an intelligence customer in a quite different

way: as the recipient of threat assessments and technical advice for diplomacy's defensive security measures. Diplomatic people, premises and communications have long featured as intelligence targets. Eighteenth-century ambassadors could be suborned by their receiving governments.[15] Embassy ciphers are traditional intelligence targets; thus Christopher Andrew has recounted how a British ambassador in St Petersburg between 1904 and 1906 complained of the way his staff were being bribed by the Russian Okhrana to hand over his diplomatic ciphers, to the extent that 'emissaries of the police are constantly waiting in the evening outside the Embassy in order to take charge of the papers procured'.[16] Intelligence attacks on embassies and their staff, using agent penetration, entrapment or other means of recruitment, and electronic attacks and other bugging, became a well publicized part of the Cold War.

Modern nations worry about having their ciphers broken, their embassies bugged or otherwise penetrated, and their diplomatic staff recruited as hostile agents; no government wants a public scandal over its diplomacy's defensive arrangements. Intelligence collection therefore also serves its own nation's diplomacy as the offensive poacher turned defensive gamekeeper, assessing threats, setting diplomatic security standards and bringing counterespionage and counterintelligence to bear on foreign penetration.[17] In this, again, diplomacy is an intelligence customer.

Intelligence as a Diplomatic Factor

Diplomacy mobilizes or exploits national assets in the formation and execution of policy; intelligence is one of them. National reputations for good intelligence carry international weight. The United States' possession of unrivalled intelligence, particularly from satellites, is accepted as an element in American hegemony and the influence that springs from it. British diplomacy similarly gains from being thought to be well informed on a worldwide basis. A nation's record of good or bad security, reflecting the quality of its defensive intelligence, has a similar influence; West Germany's penetration by East German espionage throughout the Cold War was always a factor in limiting its admission to the most sensitive Anglo-American counsels within NATO.

In more specific ways, intelligence may be a national requirement

– a second-order 'national interest' – of sufficient importance to influence foreign policy, or at least need handling at a diplomatic level. America's need for interception sites around the periphery of the USSR was one factor in the bargains struck with host countries for the creation of its worldwide system of Cold War alliances and bases. One element of the post-1945 UK–US 'special relationship' (though only one of many) has been the UK's position as convenient 'real estate' for intelligence facilities, adjacent to the European continent. Surveillance facilities meeting US as well as British needs were also a significant factor in the British decision to retain the sovereign base areas in Cyprus when the island was granted its independence in 1960.

Similarly the provision of intelligence support and intelligence facilities can be cards in the diplomatic hand: part of a bargain, or a political signal, or a means of influence on its own account. US supplies of real-time satellite imagery are said to have been part of the price of keeping Israel from entering the Gulf War. America has provided intelligence reports as a security and confidence-building measure as part of Middle East peace settlements.[18] Similarly it disclosed intelligence to both India and Pakistan in 1990 as a means of dissuading them from drifting into war; the former deputy director of central intelligence (and future DCI) of the day, sent by the US president to see the leaders of both countries, recalls that 'the card I played heavily was that I was not a diplomat but an intelligence officer by training and that the reason I was there was that the American government, watching the two sides, had become convinced that they were blundering towards a war and that they [might] not even know it'.[19] Britain moved quickly after the collapse of the USSR to establish liaison on security intelligence matters with the new central and east European governments, partly for professional intelligence reasons (particularly exchanges on terrorism) but also for political influence, *inter alia* through advice 'to help them establish a democratic framework for their [intelligence] work'.[20] In the same way, withdrawing supplies of intelligence can be a means of punishment, as in the American withdrawal from some intelligence services to New Zealand after its banning of port calls by US warships carrying nuclear weapons.

There is also a more subtle interaction between intelligence's own

overseas relationships and the wider political-diplomatic ones in which these are set. Like other professional exchanges, intelligence's liaisons have some insulation from international politics. The transatlantic exchanges of intelligence survived the Anglo-American breach over the Suez invasion of 1956; intelligence relationships between Britain and the Old Commonwealth were barely affected by the British entry into the EEC and the subsequent move towards European Union. On a wider canvas, Soviet espionage in the Cold War was sufficiently widespread to encourage counterespionage cooperation between unlikely allies.

Yet intelligence rarely operates as a completely free agent; political alignments set the general context of its liaisons. In their scope and intimacy these relationships reflect foreign policy; contrary to liberal mythology, British intelligence collaboration with South Africa under apartheid was severely inhibited by political considerations. Intelligence relationships reflect foreign policy in this way, but also influence it. The UK–US intelligence alliance is seen as one of the benefits flowing from the Atlantic pillar of British policy, but is at the same time one of its powerful supports. At one level the intelligence relationship brings a variety of professional and political benefits to both parties. At a different level, its intelligence sharing reinforces the general similarity of world views that in turn underpins the political alliance. An open question about the Cold War is who was the transatlantic persuader, and who the persuaded. Arguably the same question can be applied to intelligence sharing throughout NATO.

It should be added that intelligence can also be an agent of foreign policy in more specific ways, reinforcing diplomacy or sometimes as an alternative to it. Covert action is usually a small, specialized aspect of Western intelligence activities; but it is one of the mechanisms at government's disposal, over the wide spectrum from undeclared political influence to the clandestine use of force, and colours worldwide perceptions of the CIA, as well as the KGB. Similarly intelligence can be a back-channel for inter-government communication and negotiation, as when Jim Callaghan as Prime Minister asked SIS to ensure that the Argentine government were aware of his undeclared naval movements to protect the Falklands in 1977.[21]

Embassies as Intelligence Bases

The position of diplomats and their premises as targets for foreign intelligence services has already been noted. Its counterpoint is the role of embassies as professional intelligence bases. After diplomats ceased to recruit and run their own human sources, specialist agent runners and recruiters began to use diplomatic cover for the purpose. After the First World War the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) operated under the cover of passport control officers at diplomatic and consular posts, and other countries operated in similar ways. In the Cold War the extensive Soviet deployment of KGB and GRU officers under diplomatic cover was well attested; Britain expelled 105 such officers from London in 1971, and of the 20 Soviet civilian diplomats in Copenhagen in 1966 14 were intelligence officers.[22] The Cold War also saw embassies used as electronic collection bases; the Soviet Union was said to have such operations in some 60 diplomatic premises in the 1980s, and comparable American operations in Moscow and elsewhere have received some publicity.[23] One way and another, embassies in the Cold War came to resemble medieval castles – under a kind of intelligence siege, but with their sallyports manned for operations in the midst of the besiegers. From the incidence of diplomatic expulsions in recent years it would seem that embassies' associations with intelligence have not ceased.

Overlaps in Intelligence Assessment

Intelligence and diplomacy are institutionally separate, yet there are overlaps of various kinds. Though diplomats – or at least genuine diplomats representing well-behaved regimes – do not participate in covert collection or covert action, a feature of the British system is the considerable part played by diplomats in all-source intelligence assessment. The Foreign Office chaired the JIC for many years, and has tended to dominate it. After the Falklands War the chairmanship was made a non-departmental Prime Ministerial appointment to encourage independent judgement, but those appointed in this way were ex-diplomats – a former Permanent Under-Secretary remarked that 'Mrs Thatcher removed one Foreign Office chairman only to replace him by another from the same source'[24] – and in recent years there has been a reversion to the main feature of the previous practice.[25] Apart from the JIC chairmanship, the chief of the

Assessments Staff has almost always been a Foreign Office secondee, with a powerful Foreign Office element among his staff; and Foreign Office representatives attend all levels of the JIC's interdepartmental process. Commonwealth countries vary in the extent to which they follow these practices, but an active or seconded diplomatic presence of some kind is a feature of most of their assessment arrangements.

Those who interpret government in terms of bureaucratic politics can see the British arrangement as the Foreign Office's means of containing the threat posed by the JIC – by capturing it. Be that as it may, the influence of the (non-intelligence) Foreign Office in the (intelligence) JIC process helps to ensure that its output is accepted as a genuine interdepartmental product. More important, by tapping diplomacy's professional foreign knowledge it increases assessment's chances of being right. It contrasts in these ways with the small part that the Foreign Service professionals in the State Department seem to play in the American intelligence assessment process.

It is true that the British practice introduces problems of balance. Alhough they are trained observers of many things, diplomats do not have good track records in perceiving threats of surprise attack. (Military men on the other hand are given the stereotype of producing 'worst case' assessments of foreign capabilities, for the good reason that they have to bear the brunt if situations go wrong; it has been said that the British system works because the military overestimate threats and the diplomats underestimate them, though reality is more complex.) Too much diplomatic influence may also overemphasize the 'policy-relevance' of intelligence assessments, perhaps discouraging 'inconvenient' papers which do not fit policy making assumptions and timetables. Nevertheless the intelligence–diplomatic linkage is a fact in the British system and less formally in some others; surely it is a strength.

Overlaps and Dual Roles in Embassies

Intelligence's 'diplomatic cover' in embassies conceals operations quite separate from diplomacy. Yet in the nature of things there is some overlap between covert intelligence collected in this way and normal embassy information gathering. Covert sources developed by intelligence using this diplomatic cover may overlap with diplomats' own more confidential ones; it may sometimes be accidental whether

a line of information gets handled as sensitive diplomatic reporting or covert intelligence. Even where this does not apply, intelligence officers may contribute to normal embassy coverage through perfectly overt contacts and discussions while acting out their diplomatic cover.

There are also the situations in which the local intelligence and security authorities are a key part of the host country's governing regime. The intelligence liaison with them – if there is one – then becomes a key part of the political relationship, indispensable for accurate embassy assessment and reporting. Understanding the regime and influencing it may then depend on the intelligence relationship rather than orthodox diplomacy.

These are, however, overlaps between institutionally separate activities. Military and other defence attachés on the other hand are genuinely of two worlds, combining their diplomatic status and representational functions with potentially important intelligence roles and allegiances. Military and naval attachés were appointed in the course of the nineteenth century essentially as information gatherers; the first of them was appointed by Prussia in 1817, and British attachés' appointments began after the Crimean War.[26] In the relatively open conditions of that century their information gathering was largely by non-covert means, though they ran agents when necessary. With the increased military secrecy of the early twentieth century, they made more use of covert methods. In the special conditions of the Cold War, attachés indeed operated in the Eastern and Western blocs virtually as full-time licensed spies, and unscheduled observation of the host countries' forces was their highest priority. The long-standing connection of military attachés with intelligence is indeed recognized in the Vienna Convention's stipulation that nominations for them are subject to the agreement of the receiving country, a provision that applies to ambassadors but not to other diplomats or other specialist attachés.[27]

Yet the connection with intelligence is very variable; in many overseas posts the requirement to report on local forces is unimportant compared with military liaison and export promotion. Even in the extreme conditions of the Cold War, attachés steered clear of recruiting spies; their intelligence collection consisted primarily of observations. These often entailed defying local

regulations and surveillance intended to prevent them, with attachés pushing their luck against the risk of being declared *persona non grata* (PNG); but the threat of being PNG-ed exercised some curb upon the risks taken and methods used. Though sometimes an embarrassment to diplomats (and sometimes restrained by them), the attachés retained their position as part of institutionalized diplomacy.

In the far more open post-Cold War world their observation has fewer connotations of covert intelligence gathering (though the activity or suspicions of it remain, as when US officers were PNG-ed by China in 1995 for observing military installations),[28] but attachés' value as licensed observers remains, as contributors not only to intelligence analysis but also to international openness and confidence building. Indeed, at a time in which the British Defence Secretary has cited 'defence diplomacy' as a growing armed forces' commitment, the scale of military liaison with diplomatic status may increase. It may be a pointer to the future that the national military inspection teams created through the arms control and confidence building treaties of the 1980s and 1990s are protected by the Vienna Convention.[29]

Conclusions and Reflections

Intelligence and diplomacy share an objective: seeking knowledge and understanding of foreign countries. But they have evolved as separate institutions, with rather different perceptual lenses; only the defence attachés retain institutional links with both of them. For intelligence, information and understanding (plus the presentation of the results to users) are sought as ends in themselves; for diplomacy they are adjuncts to policy and action. Intelligence and diplomatic information gathering differ in most of their methods, and even in the use of human sources they operate under different conditions and constraints.

The information outputs of intelligence and diplomacy are often complementary, though intelligence includes coverage and expertise on matters such as warning, military forces, war, limited conflict and terrorism, in which diplomacy is not geared to specialize. In general terms, top-level foreign policy formation leans on intelligence, rather than purely diplomatic assessment, when the subjects have a 'national security' content.

Despite their common functions of information gathering and building up knowledge, the principal relationship between intelligence and diplomacy is of producer and customer. Diplomacy uses intelligence not only for strategy but also for tactics, as well as in the specialized area of its defensive security. But this primary producer–customer relationship is accompanied by a variety of subsidiary interactions, influences and overlaps. Intelligence as a national institution and international system has some weight in its own right, but is by no means insulated. Diplomacy uses national intelligence capabilities as an element in power and influence, a card in the negotiating hand; sometimes, on the other hand, it needs to negotiate to meet intelligence needs. Diplomatic and intelligence relationships with foreign countries interact, usually reinforcing but sometimes modifying each other.

Given the expansion of intelligence in the last half-century relative to diplomacy, two questions arise over the alignment of the two institutions. One is whether there should be greater separation between them. Diplomacy provides intelligence cover and facilities, and is an intelligence target, hence needing defensive intelligence support. Arguably some distancing between intelligence and diplomacy is desirable, at least to the extent that the association between them (and the targeting of foreign diplomats and premises) should be kept within reasonable limits, and not expanded to a renewed Cold War scale.[30]

The other question is how far intelligence should be seen as diplomacy's rival: the 'anti-diplomacy' cited at the beginning of this paper. It is part of the regimes and government systems it serves, and it gets its character from them. With its role of defending the Soviet system against enemies at home as well as overseas, the KGB was active as a foreign policymaker, as in its influence in the final decision to invade Czechoslovakia in August 1968.[31] Soviet diplomacy overseas was always in competition with Soviet intelligence's use of diplomatic accreditation and premises, and with the KGB's and GRU's presentation of material their officers had routinely gathered through their diplomatic cover and local press reading as if it were the specially authoritative product of secret agents and 'confidential contacts'. Intelligence was in effect a powerful rival to diplomatic reporting. In this as in other things the Soviet regime got what it wanted.

By contrast, the record of English-speaking intelligence, and indeed Western intelligence as a whole, is of only limited competition with diplomacy. It is true, especially in Washington, that intelligence attracts resources and attention that diplomacy might otherwise have commanded. But intelligence on the whole has not sought to become either a maker of foreign policy or a diplomatic system in its own right. The competitive nature of American foreign policy making might have been expected to encourage the CIA in both these roles, and it is true that some DCIs have had full Cabinet status; that one (Casey) pursued policies of covert action with a very personal imprint; and that the position of the CIA has been one factor in the decline of the State Department. CIA stations overseas have also sometimes operated as an embassy within a embassy, with their heads of station virtually as alternative heads of mission. Yet considering intelligence's strength and its status, and the fluidity of American policymaking and execution, the overall record of the CIA is of considerable restraint. One of the most unjust verdicts on it is that it was a 'rogue elephant'; as the critic in the 1970s who coined the phrase (Senator Church) admitted shortly afterwards, the real rogue elephant had been in the White House.[32]

The restraint has applied even more in the different conditions of the UK. There has never been a 'Minister of Intelligence' who could become a rival in foreign policy, and two historical accidents have caused intelligence to remain under Foreign Office influence to an extent not found elsewhere – in the USA, France, Germany or Israel, for example. The first was the post-1918 reorganization whereby the SIS (and, with it, GCHQ's predecessor organization) became vested under Foreign Office control.[33] The second was the Foreign Office's assumption of the chairmanship of the JIC in 1939, even though the committee was (and remained) basically an armed forces' subcommittee of the Chiefs of Staff. Intelligence has never been regularly represented in Whitehall's interdepartmental coordination machinery at an official level, and has never sought to develop as a alternative to diplomacy.[34]

Of course it has not been devoid of policy influence. The Head of SIS had some weight with the prime minister as a policy adviser in the years just before the Second World War, and at the time of the Munich crisis his service produced an important policy paper with

the title 'What should we do?' as the 'views of SIS', advocating ceding the Sudetenland to Hitler.[35] Heads of agencies still have a ritual 'right of access' to the Prime Minister (though it is doubtful whether they use it to try to form foreign policy). At all levels a close producer–customer relationship can and should involve discussion of policy and policy options. Additionally, covert action and back-channels are available to ministers as complements to diplomacy or alternatives to it. But there is no evidence that British intelligence has sought to intrude on diplomacy, even in the 1980s when the Prime Minister was at loggerheads with the Foreign Office.

British readers take this for granted, yet it is surprising in the light of modern intelligence's budgets and status. However often it is quoted, the dictum that 'knowledge is itself power' has not actually guided intelligence's institutional development. Its professionals have developed and maintained a professional ethic akin to that of statisticians and other information experts, not diplomats or others who exercise power or advise on its use. This is one of Britain's important intelligence legacies, to some extent to the West as a whole, certainly to the Commonwealth, and – most crucially, and with occasional reservations – to the United States.

NOTES

Adapted with major modifications from the author's *Intelligence and Diplomacy, Keele Research Paper No.12*, 1995; published in substantially this form in March 1998 as Leicester Centre for the Study of Diplomacy Diplomatic Studies Programme Discussion Paper no.39.

1. J. Der Derian, *Antidiplomacy: Spies, Terror, Speed, and War* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).
2. For more extensive discussion of intelligence's development and characteristics see M. Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War* (Cambridge University Press and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996).
3. S. Kent, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1965 edition), p.xxiii.
4. For the basis of these rights and restrictions see Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), Article 26.
5. British and French figures are quoted in chapter 1 of the author's *British Intelligence towards the Millennium: Issues and Opportunities* (London: Centre for Defence Studies, King's College, 1997).
6. R. Hibbert, 'Intelligence and Policy', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.5, No.1 (Jan. 1990), p.115.
7. J. Ferris, 'Penny Dreadful Literature: Britain, India and Strategic Intelligence on Russia and Central Asia, 1825–1947' (Paper given at US Army War College Conference on

Intelligence and Strategy, May 1989), p.21.
8. 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, Article 3 part 1.
9. It is interesting that the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations reproduces the reference to ascertaining conditions and developments 'by all lawful means', but qualifies these conditions and developments as in the 'commercial, economic, cultural and scientific life of the receiving state' (Article 5). There is no reference to military matters, though the convention authorizes 'any other functions entrusted to a consular post' provided that they are 'not prohibited by the laws and regulations of the receiving State or to which no objection is taken by the receiving State'.
10. Hibbert, 'Intelligence and Policy', p.112.
11. Ibid., p.117.
12. Discussed in Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*, Parts III and IV.
13. For intelligence failure see ibid., chapters 13 and 14.
14. Hibbert, 'Intelligence and Policy', p.113.
15. For an example see J. Black, 'British Intelligence and the Mid-Eighteenth Century Crisis', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.2, No.2 (April 1987), p.216.
16. C. Andrew and O. Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story of its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990), p.11.
17. Discussed in Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*, chapter 10.
18. Details in ibid., chapter 9.
19. C. Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), pp.516–17.
20. S. Rimington, *Security and Democracy – Is There a Conflict?* (Richard Dimbleby Lecture 1994) (London: BBC Educational Developments, 1994), p.5.
21. For this episode (still not fully explained) see A. Danchev (ed.), *International Perspectives on the Falklands Conflict* (London: Macmillan, 1992), pp.138–9; and J. Callaghan, *Time and Chance* (London: Collins, 1987), p.375.
22. O. Gordievsky, *Next Stop Execution* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p.152.
23. D. Ball and R. Windrew, 'Soviet Signals Intelligence (Sigint): Organization and Management', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.4, No.4 (Oct. 1989), p.621. For press and other claims about American operations see J.T. Richelson, *The US Intelligence Community* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 3rd edn. 1995), pp.191–2.
24. D. Greenhill, *More by Accident* (York: Wilton 65, 1992), p.126.
25. The last few chairmen have been Foreign Office officials on temporary secondment to the Cabinet Office's Overseas Secretariat, with responsibilities for policy coordination in the Cabinet Office, doubled with JIC chairmanship. For criticism, see Sir Percy Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests* (London: Murray, 1997), pp.46–7. Cradock himself, and his immediate successor, combined the chairmanship with acting as the Prime Minister's foreign policy adviser, but this interesting arrangement has not been continued.
26. P. Towle (ed.), 'Introduction', *Estimating Foreign Military Power* (Croom Helm, 1987), p.86.
27. 1961 Vienna Convention, Article 7, discussed in M. Hardy, *Modern Diplomatic Law* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), p.28.
28. *The Times*, 24 Feb. 1995.
29. Stockholm Document (September 1986), repeated in subsequent CFE documents. Note, however, that in the Cold War the British Military Mission (BRIXMIS) to the Soviet forces in East Germany operated with no reference to diplomatic immunities (except for its couriers and despatch riders). The Robertson–Malinin agreement of 1946 under which it operated provided the missions with reciprocal rights of 'freedom of travel' (with qualifications) and immunity for their buildings, but not with the range of other diplomatic immunities.
30. Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*, pp.370–75.
31. See *Cold War International History Bulletin*, Issue 3 (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center, fall 1993), pp.6–8. KGB influence in the Soviet invasion of

Afghanistan in 1979 is discussed in Issues 8–9 (winter 199697), pp.128–32.
32. Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*, p.421.
33. F.H. Hinsley with E.E. Thomas, C.F.G. Ransom, and R.C. Knight, *British Intelligence in the Second World War* Vol.I (London: HMSO, 1979), p.17.
34. Though see note 25 about the position of recent JIC chairmen.
35. C. Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (London: Sceptre edition, 1986), pp.561–2.