Intelligence and Diplomacy: changing environment, old problems

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In June 2013, journalists from *The Guardian* newspaper met an unnamed source in a central Hong Kong hotel. Their source – introducing himself only as 'senior member of the intelligence community', had requested the meeting, and to prove his credentials sent the journalists selected secret files from the US signals intelligence organisation, the National Security Agency (NSA).[i] The official, a contractor named Edward Snowden blew the lid on the operations of the NSA and its allies, with the eventual number of stolen files totalling an estimated 1.7 million – only a fraction ever published.[ii] Snowden's claims and the subsequent story led to debate on privacy and intelligence oversight, and resulted in condemnation from the US government and others. Speaking to the US Senate intelligence committee in 2014, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said the revelations caused 'profound damage ... [the US] is less safe and its people less secure'.[iii] But Snowden's leaks served to lift the lid on modern-day intelligence work, reminding us – with the growing focus on counter-terrorism – that states continue to spy on each other and that intelligence is important to modern diplomacy.

James Der Derian once referred to intelligence as part of the 'antidiplomacy',[iv] suggesting espionage and intelligence broke 'traditional' foreign policy norms. In reality, diplomacy – a process of 'dialogue and negotiation' allowing states to pursue aims 'short of war'[v] – and intelligence have had a long relationship. 'Good diplomacy goes hand-in-hand with good intelligence', writes Michael Rubin.[vi] Diplomats and intelligence officers both seek to collect and process information to shape policy but, since the emergence of permanent intelligence agencies in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the covert collection of information has increasingly been separated from the overt collection that forms part of normal diplomatic activity. Today, diplomats work to a set of international rules and are reliant on normal relations with other countries for their work, while the collection of secret information by agencies – or the conduct of 'covert action' to shape events – can often disrupt this function. Nonetheless, intelligence remains as vital to statecraft as it has always been, and many of the problems faced by diplomats today are timeless – something this chapter shows. Historical lessons can be important in understanding the issues facing modern-day diplomats, but this chapter also shows how contemporary intelligence and security have evolved and how the twenty-first century offers some change for an era of 'new' diplomacy.

Intelligence: What is it?

Throughout history the relationship between formal diplomacy and intelligence can be accurately summarised as one of love-hate. For some time, the making of foreign policy has been 'entangled in webs of intrigue and suspicion'.[vii] Although today's formalised relationship between diplomats and agencies can be traced to the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century, intelligence support for diplomacy is far older. 'The spy is as old as history', wrote journalist Phillip Knightley.[viii] Indeed, the title of Knightley's 1986 book *The Second Oldest Profession* was borrowed from former CIA Assistant General Counsel Michael J. Barnett's quip that espionage was 'the world's second oldest profession and just as honourable as the first'.[ix] If intelligence is the second oldest profession – to borrow the cliché, then diplomacy 'might rate as the third-oldest', suggests former State Department official Robert V. Kelly.[x] David Reynolds dates the origins of diplomacy to at least the Bronze Age; documents from Babylon show a fledging diplomatic

system with neighbouring states, and the exchange of envoys for trade and averting conflict.[xi] Likewise, ancient leaders were also reliant on espionage for information on enemies and friends alike. Much later, the city states of Renaissance Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth century marked the beginnings of resident ambassadors, spreading quickly across the rest of Europe.[xii] By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European statesmen were becoming increasingly adept at using intercepted correspondence to shape diplomacy, while spies and cryptography proved useful for their nineteenth century equivalents. But much of what we would now call 'intelligence' was ad hoc and it was not until the-late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries that the institutionalisation of intelligence or development of permanent peacetime organisations took hold.

In the twentieth century, intelligence has shaped diplomacy at important moments. During the First World War, the interception and decryption of the 'Zimmerman Telegram', promising Mexico territory in the US if she supported Germany, was one factor behind America's formal declaration of war in April 1917. 'No other single cryptanalysis has had such enormous consequences', wrote intelligence historian David Kahn, though few intelligence successes are as decisive.[xiii] During the Second World War, while much has been made of Britain's success against Germany's Enigma machine, GC&CS's diplomatic section were just as important in winning the diplomatic war against the Axis powers, producing large numbers of reports on German and Japanese traffic. Intelligence generally would become an important strand of international relations during the Cold War, allowing East and West to understand the intensions and capabilities of the other side.[xiv] For Gordon Barrass, a former Chief of the Cabinet Office's Assessments Staff, intelligence had a 'powerful impact, because each side had time to check whether its judgements were well founded'. Intelligence generally helped stabilise relations at moments of crisis and reassured policymakers that World War III was not about to break out. In giving insights into Moscow and Washington's thinking, Barrass argues that intelligence made a significant contribution to the 'peaceful ending of the Cold War'.[xv] Such conclusions should be caveated, however; western Cold War intelligence was especially good at estimating Eastern Bloc capability, but less effective at understanding 'intentions'. Cold War specialist Mark Kramer points out that intelligence effectiveness varied depending on circumstances. 'It would be ... incorrect to say either that foreign intelligence *always* had a large impact or that it *never* had much of an impact', he suggests.[xvi]

But what exactly is intelligence? American academic Michael Warner writes that the term is 'defined anew by each author who addresses it', and there remain challenges to finding a concise, all-encompassing definition. Governments and organisations have outlined intelligence according to functionality – what their agencies do, and definitions change from country to country. Sherman Kent saw intelligence as simply 'knowledge' acquired by government to ensure 'national welfare'[xvii], while, more recently, former CIA Inspector General Lyman Kirkpatrick described it as 'the knowledge – and, ideally, the foreknowledge – sought by nations in response to external threats'.[xviii] Warner himself went on to define intelligence as a 'secret, state activity to understand or influence foreign entities'.[xix] Although intelligence is not just restricted to the study of 'things foreign' and is increasingly a non-state activity, it can be argued that intelligence in its purest sense is the end result of a process of collection and analysis of information, with the final product or 'intelligence' shared to those who need to use it – a process called the 'intelligence cycle'. The collection of intelligence is usually done by dedicated agencies, employing a variety of specialist methods, including human intelligence (HUMINT), signals intelligence (SIGINT), and imagery intelligence (IMINT) to access mostly 'secret' sources. 'We steal secrets', said CIA Director George Tenet, a view echoed by a Chief of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS or MI6): 'Everything we do is secret – if it's not secret we shouldn't be doing it'.[xx]

Is this any different to diplomacy? Former US diplomat Robert V. Kelly suggests the formal difference between spying and diplomacy is that intelligence is a 'tactic used in political rivalry or actual military warfare', whereas diplomacy is for 'conflict resolution'.[xxi] Diplomats are also the 'front door'

representing their countries, while intelligence officials, with the exception of avowed representatives, work in secret.[xxii] Nevertheless, diplomats are just as important to intelligence formulation, as suggested by John Ferris, official historian of British signals intelligence. Although secrets are often linked to intelligence, non-secret sources are also vital – and this is why diplomats are essential. For Ferris, 'open sources, such as diplomats' form a key role as do 'secret ones, including agents and codebreaking'.[xxiii] Equally, Lord Butler's report on UK intelligence and Iraqi WMD, observes that government decision making is based on 'many types of information', the majority 'openly available or compiled, much is published, and some is consciously provided by individuals, organisations or other governments in confidence', supplemented by 'secret sources'.[xxiv] Often intelligence and diplomacy will interact. In his study of British foreign policy, Geoffrey McDermott explained a diplomat's first job was to gain 'accurate and full information about other countries'.[xxv] While much emphasis goes on 'secret' information, diplomats and officials have their own confidential or open sources from local news, contacts with friendly politicians and traditional diplomatic sources, that often feed into the same process as the secret sources – a process known as 'all-source' analysis.[xxvi]

Intelligence and Diplomacy in Practice

Intelligence and diplomacy work in tandem to understand the world around us. But the proportion of secret and non-secret information going into intelligence assessments is hard to estimate. Diplomats and other open sources will provide intelligence analysts with the context they need to properly evaluate the secret information collected. Sir Reginald Hibbert, who joined the Foreign Office in 1946, and enjoyed a long career, including a period as FCO Political Director, estimated that as much as half of all the information obtained by diplomatic posts drew on 'overt published sources – newspapers, radio and TV broadcasts, journals, books, pamphlets and lectures'. Hibbert estimated a further 30% came from 'confidential' sources open to diplomatic missions, suggesting that as little as 10% could be truly classed as 'secret'.[xxvii] Hibbert questioned the overriding reliance on 'secret' material, complaining of a 'culture where secrecy comes to be confused with truth'.[xxviii] More recently, US intelligence academic Loch Johnson suggests as much as 90 percent of all intelligence assessments are made up of OSINT – including diplomatic sources, with questions raised about the budgets devoted to secret intelligence.[xxix] In 2016, the US State Department had a budget of $50.3 billion, while the US intelligence community's funds – combining the national (NIP) and military (MIP) programmes – hit $70.7 billion. The UK picture also shows a similar pattern; while the Foreign and Commonwealth Office budget totalled an estimated £1.2 billion into 2018, spending on UK intelligence via the Single Intelligence Account was over double at £2.7 billion.[xxx] Even though the FCO's core budget was protected, forecasts suggested a cut of £62 million by 2020 with funds for UK diplomacy 'precarious'[xxxi] – at a time Whitehall sources suggest UK intelligence agencies could receive increased investment as part of a wide-ranging defence review, a trend likely to continue with demands for investment into new technology and resources.

Given the growing imbalance in the funding of traditional diplomacy and secret intelligence, it seems valid to ask whether secret sources are as significant as the figures suggest. As history tells us, although secret intelligence carries significant benefits for diplomacy, we need to be cautious. Intelligence can provide answers to wider policy questions. 'Policymakers' lives are dominated by their "in boxes" and the crises of the moment', writes Richard N. Haas, a former Director of Policy Planning for the US State Department, and intelligence can often lessen the uncertainty for policymakers and officials alike.[xxxii] Adda Bozeman observes that secret information is a 'component of statecraft', of considerable importance, she argued, as 'knowledge or intelligence is valuable because it can provide information as well as foresight in policy-making and tactics'.[xxxiii] Intelligence can be particularly useful during summit diplomacy, finding out the bargaining position of opposing officials.[xxxiv] It was alleged that GCHQ intercepted the communications of foreign leaders and officials during the G20 summit in London in

2009, according to leaks by Edward Snowden.[xxxv] But there are limits to what you can do with this knowledge; if true, intelligence on the private views of G20 diplomats could help educate policy, yet acting on the intelligence could give away sources and tradecraft – an important lesson that generations of officials have found out to their cost. Nevertheless, secret intelligence is just part of a much wider range of sources. 'NSA [National Security Agency] can point to things they have obtained that have been useful', said former State Department official Herbert Levin, 'but whether they're worth the billions that are spent, is a genuine question in my mind'.[xxxvi] Another former senior State Department official questioned the growing emphasis on secret information: 'Today we are relying more on the CIA for information at a time when clandestine sources are in most cases needed less … the availability of open source information has grown exponentially'.[xxxvii]

Mostly, diplomatic intelligence is educational. 'More often than not, intelligence provides first-rate information on third rate issues, or knowledge which one cannot appl[y] to policy', writes Ferris.[xxxviii] In effect, eavesdropping on another country's communications might provide items of interest to regional specialists, but do little to answer the bigger questions of the day. As Ferris also warns, the most dangerous assumption is that of intelligence's 'influence'. Just because secret sources were available does not mean 'it must have affected his [or her] decisions; or because intelligence provided invaluable information, access to its records must transform our understanding of events'.[xxxix] In reality, officials (and policymakers generally) receive, as suggested earlier, more than just intelligence reports – a pattern likely to continue alternative information sources grow. In his experience, Robert Kelly suggests that too much emphasis went on information classified 'secret' which could have been obtained by other means, while the JIC's former chair and an Ambassador to Moscow, Sir Rodric Braithwaite is equally dismissive, comparing intelligence to the work of the UK Inland Revenue. 'To glamorise or mystify intelligence', he told an audience in 2003, 'is not in anyone's real interests'.[xl] Braithwaite later added that intelligence 'was in any case only ever one part of the picture, of varying importance in different cases. The judgements of individual political leaders were usually far more important'.[xli]

Although billions go into collecting secret information – as the figures earlier cited show, the irony is that much intelligence is ignored. Uri Bar Joseph's observation that the intelligence-policy relationship is essentially 'an ongoing obstacle race' where 'both sides express dissatisfaction with the actions taken by the other' is accurate. For policymakers intelligence needs to meet three important criteria, according to Loch Johnson: it needs to be timely, relevant, and accurate. History is littered with many so-called 'failures' where intelligence communities have 'failed' to provide the necessary information at the right time. While intelligence officials can certainly point to significant successes, agencies across the world face criticism for their shortcomings. Lack of warning about the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the dramatic collapse of Soviet communism in the late-1980s, Al-Qaida's attacks on 9/11, the Arab Spring and the toppling of Middle Eastern regimes, and US and South Korean agencies lack of reporting on the death of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in 2011, can be cited as examples of agencies being caught out. Yet talk of intelligence failure is too simplistic. While agencies are not immune from mistakes, many 'failures' result from the breakdown in intelligence-policy relations and should, on reflection, be called 'policy' failures. Many more can be classed as inevitable given what US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld once called the 'unknown unknowns', 'unexpected or unforeseeable' events. Those studying intelligence or diplomacy often forget that foreign policy is not separate from other actions in government. As Gill Bennett rightly observes, 'Even in cases where a foreign policy issue is handled by a small group of ministers, they must bear in mind other considerations, whether it be the views of their constituency and party, or the current electoral position or budgetary restrictions on their department, not to mention what might be going on elsewhere'.[xlii]

Intelligence and Diplomacy: Some Problems

In theory, the closely aligned roles of diplomats and intelligence officials necessitates close collaboration. However, this is not always the case, as the UK and US examples show. In Britain, the Foreign Office (from 1968 the FCO) has enjoyed tight control over the UK's foreign intelligence agencies, even if initially, the department had wanted to stay far removed from the work of the agencies; from 1919, the Foreign Office took responsibility for SIS as the 'only Government Department in a position to decide whether such operations may or may not conflict with the general foreign policy of H.M. Government', two years later, in 1921, it gained control of the national SIGINT agency, the Government Code and Cipher School (renamed the Government Communications Headquarters from 1946).[xliii] The importance of the Foreign Office's political input was reflected in the chairmanship of the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee (later the Joint Intelligence Committee), first created in 1936. The Foreign Office's chairing of the committee only ended after the Falklands War in 1982, when a report by Lord Franks recommended future chairs should be independent Prime Ministerial appointees, though many still enjoyed a diplomatic background. At lower levels, staff from the Foreign Office's Research Department (now Research Analysts) – effectively the FCO's all-source analysis department – also regularly attended meetings of the JIC's Current Intelligence Groups (CIGs) and wider Cabinet Office Assessments Staff feeding into the intelligence process, inputting diplomatic sources with the secret intelligence coming from the agencies.[xliv]

In the US, the situation is different; the Department of State has traditionally had less control and influence over intelligence thanks to the Department of Defence's power. Initially, proposals to put US foreign intelligence under the State Department were rejected and, as the Church Committee report identified, while responsible for shaping policy, State had 'no command over intelligence activities essential to its mission except the Foreign Service' – with the exception of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), the oldest and smallest member of the US intelligence community, responsible to the State Department. In their 2004 report on pre-war intelligence on Iraq, Senators found that INR's analysis of Foreign Service reports got it 'least wrong' and took a 'second, harder look' at worst-case assessments.[xlv] Beyond INR, America's diplomats essentially competed 'with the Clandestine Service in the production of ... intelligence'.[xlvi] Nonetheless, the US intelligence community still provides significant support for US policy. State Department officials also, like their UK counterparts, have input to debates on intelligence operations or 'covert action' that may upset work overseas.[xlvii] For US diplomats, the degree of control over CIA operations in their assigned country was a touchy subject. Initially, the CIA had complete autonomy on operations, shielding them from diplomats. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy ruled that ambassadors should be kept fully informed of the CIA's activities in their countries.[xlviii] President Carter tried to strengthen the influence of the diplomats by requiring CIA Station Chiefs to disclose information about sources the Ambassador was likely to meet – a practice handled with 'exceptional flexibility'. Some Station Chiefs only surrendered the information after the Ambassador had asked the 'right question'.[xlix]

Despite these natural tensions, diplomatic establishments continue to be vital to foreign intelligence collection. Although Article 3 of the 1961 'Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations' maintained that diplomats should only collect and report information on 'conditions and developments' in a host state by 'lawful means'[l] – ruling out the use of official diplomats as intelligence officers, diplomatic missions host a range of intelligence activities. For HUMINT agencies, diplomatic posts provide the necessary 'cover' – the special protection afforded to diplomats, so they enjoy diplomatic immunity. Without this, and caught carrying out illegal activity, intelligence officers face imprisonment or death. Embassies also host military or defence attachés, uniformed personnel who develop links to other militaries while gathering intelligence in the process. Diplomatic missions also provide the necessary secure communications and support technical intelligence collection such as SIGINT. In 1960s Moscow, the US and British Embassies housed secret intercept sites codenamed BROADSIDE and TRYST collecting valuable intelligence from the mobile phones used by the Soviet leadership in their official vehicles, codenamed GAMMA GUPPY.[li] By the 1970s, tipped off about the US-UK success by

newspaper reports, the Soviets responded by bombarding the missions with microwave signals.[lii] Similarly, Soviet intelligence developed a network of SIGINT sites; by 1989 the KGB and GRU had covert posts in up to 62 countries.[liii] Until it was closed in September 2017, Russia's Consulate in San Francisco was a hub for stealing tech developed and produced in Silicon Valley.[liv]

But using diplomatic establishments as bases for intelligence work can be risky. Robert E. White, a US Ambassador to Paraguay and El Salvador went so far as to suggest that intelligence and covert action were alien to the open aims of the State Department, betraying values and undermining the 'trust and confidence with foreign governments'.[lv] Similarly, Robert Kelly writes that intelligence causes 'a host of problems, mostly to the detriment of our professional diplomats'.[lvi] China's Ministry of State Security viewed foreign diplomats as 'open spies' – a view partly attributable to Beijing's suspicion of outsiders.[lvii] In effect, diplomatic missions can fall into a siege mentality as rival intelligence and security agencies try and penetrate missions or compromise staff. Sir Brian Crowe, serving as a junior diplomat in 1960s Moscow, recalled the 'restrictions' imposed, especially regarding relationships for fear of 'blackmail' or *kompromat*. In the 1950s, at least a dozen US diplomats were sent home having admitted sexual encounters with Russian agents, and in 1989 State Department official Felix Bloch was found passing secrets to the Soviets having been blackmailed for his love of sadomasochistic sex. He was not the last to be caught out. In July 2009, a four-minute video was posted online showing a UK diplomat with two Russian prostitutes, and a month later a US official was caught in a similar 'honeytrap'.[lviii] In 2012, Canada's Security Intelligence Service warned the 'clandestine recording of an intimate encounter' would be used 'to blackmail or publicly embarrass the victim'.[lix] Embassies are also a common target for technical intelligence. Famously, the Soviet Union presented the US Embassy in Moscow with a carved wooden plaque of the Great Seal of the United States as a 'gesture of friendship', secretly containing a listening device (known as 'The Thing'), accidentally found in 1952, while State Department officials stationed in China and Cuba have complained of alleged 'sonic attacks' – a claim denied by the Cuban and Chinese governments. Despite supposedly being on the same side, in 2004 Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence viewed the CIA station in Islamabad as a 'hostile intelligence presence', tapping the phones of US diplomats and CIA operatives, with even locally recruited maids, cooks and porters believed to be on the ISI's payroll, with inevitable consequences for US-Pakistan diplomatic relations.[lx]

Such activities get in the way of day-to-day diplomacy, undermining the trust diplomacy needs to thrive. 'Foreign officials, ordinary citizens, and all other potentially useful contacts or interlocutors for a diplomat', Robert Kelly wrote, 'are likely to be wary of dealing with someone they think may be a spy'.[lxi] Another danger of affording diplomatic cover to intelligence officials is that legitimate diplomats are often targeted. A staple on the diplomatic scene has always been the reciprocal expulsions of diplomats following scandals. The poisoning of former Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, in Salisbury in March 2018, provoked a wave of expulsions as the UK's allies responded to the incident, resulting in a Russian response. A combined total of 342 diplomats – 189 from the US, UK, Canada, Ukraine and elsewhere, plus an additional 153 Russian officials – were expelled in April. In the worst cases, intelligence operations can undermine foreign policy. In June 2010, the arrest of a network of ten Russian 'illegals' – deep undercover agents – took place just seventy-two hours after President Obama and Russia's Dimitry Medvedev had met at the White House to help reset US-Russia relations with fears for the future relationship. For Obama the arrests were unwelcome; CIA Director Leon Panetta recalls the White House was more concerned it would 'undermine' efforts to 'work with the Russians because it would be so embarrassing'.[lxii]

Intelligence as Diplomatic Power

As well as its centrality in advising policy, intelligence can be just as significant as a form of diplomatic 'power'. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) dramatic political, economic and military ascendancy is

underwritten by the growing reach of her spying agencies. In the twenty-first century, China's agencies have a significant global reach, supplementing Beijing's growing 'soft power', in a concerted effort to expand its economic and security interests, stealing economic and military information to allow Beijing to grow in the fastest and cheapest way. As China's economy has expanded, so too has her spy network. Now China's operations are increasingly sophisticated, using a blend of traditional and tech-driven approaches, part of President Xi Jinping's vision for the 'Chinese Dream'. In 2015, the FBI announced it had seen an alarming 53 per cent increase in economic espionage against US companies.[lxiii] Analysis by former CIA and Defence Intelligence Agency official Nicholas Eftimiades, reveals nearly half of all Chinese espionage against the US targeted military and space technology, with almost 25 per cent targeting sensitive commercial interests to advance Beijing's military and economic growth in a 'vacuum cleaner'-like approach to intelligence work.[lxiv] In 1999, the 'Cox Report' identified China's goal of obtaining information on battlefield communications, space weapons, nuclear weapons, submarine technology, advanced weapons systems and guided munitions as on the PRC's shopping list of information – and the situation remains the same today, even if China's methods are more sophisticated.[lxv] As the US National Counterintelligence and Security Centre noted in 2018, the PRC's cyber operations target 'engineering, telecommunications, and aerospace industries', including companies 'Google, Microsoft, Intel, and VMware'.[lxvi] Additionally, China makes extensive use of students, expats and official diplomats to collect the information with the PRC's overseas operations going from a fairly amateurish start, with the Chinese intelligence agencies now larger than their long-established counterparts, equalling if not rivalling the US and Russian services for their sophistication, particularly on SIGINT and the cyber operations.[lxvii]

Intelligence has been used as a bargaining chip with mixed results, especially in the case of the UK's exit from the European Union. In her formal letter triggering the Brexit process, Prime Minister Theresa May had warned that a failure to agree a comprehensive deal would weaken the UK-EU 'fight against crime and terrorism', leading EU figures to warn against using security as 'blackmail'. For the European Parliament's Brexit coordinator Guy Verhofstadt, security was 'far too important' to be an opening bargaining chip, with another source saying it was 'outrageous to play with people's lives … This was not a smart move'.[lxviii] Equally, efforts by the UK to use security and intelligence as a negotiating tool during the European Council summit in June 2018 did not go down well, and the issue of future security ties is a major sticking point for negotiators.[lxix] In part, Britain is 'Europe's leader' on intelligence – a point made by former SIS Chief Sir Richard Dearlove, and much intelligence is shared at a bilateral, rather than a multilateral, level, but the loss of access to Europe's intelligence databases would be problematic. UK national security has come to rely on institutions such as Europol, with its focus on law enforcement intelligence.[lxx] Equally, loss of access also lessons influence; in 2014 then Europol Director Rob Wainwright said the UK was 'one of the most influential Members States in shaping European internal security legislation'.[lxxi] As the example also shows, although the sharing of intelligence is not new, international cooperation and intelligence liaison is increasingly important as threats such as terrorism, serious organised crime and other global issues cross national boundaries. While former MI5 Director-General Sir Stephen Lander suggested that intelligence agencies and collection were 'manifestations of individual state power and of national self-interest', he rightly observed that intelligence was increasingly a multinational activity where the risks of sharing national information were 'outweighed by the benefits of access to others'.[lxxii] Indeed, cooperation is now at the heart of intelligence activity, bringing significant benefits in terms of access to information and tradecraft, underlying the argument that intelligence can be seen as form of power supplementing diplomacy.

Although intelligence can be a form of power, supplementing economic, military and diplomatic power, intelligence officers can sometimes be unofficial diplomats in their own right – a form of 'parallel diplomacy' – as several historical and contemporary examples show.[lxxiii] During 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland the UK government maintained a backchannel to the Republican movement, hidden

away from overt political discourse. More recently, documents unearthed in Tripoli in 2018 revealed that UK intelligence officials played an important role in developing a growing relationship with Muammar Gaddafi's Libya, previously a pariah state in the international community. In February 2004, after Gaddafi had written to Prime Minister Tony Blair, the then head of SIS, Sir Richard Dearlove, met with Libyan officials to discuss counter-terrorism, followed by FCO and Downing Street officials, with intelligence links providing an opening for a wider UK-Libyan détente lasting until the Arab Spring.[lxxiv] Other examples include the contribution of Israeli intelligence in promoting peace initiatives with Egypt and Jordan, the CIA's links to the Palestine Liberation Organisation and SIS's ties to Hamas. 'Depending upon our political assumptions and values', writes Len Scott, 'many would conclude that this role is intrinsically worthwhile'.[lxxv]

More generally, the sharing of intelligence between states can reinforce existing diplomatic relationships, sustaining relationships even at times of stress, as former GCHQ and JIC official, turned academic, Michael Herman has suggested. For Herman, intelligence does more than just inform. Over longer periods, working with close allies, it helps produce a hidden 'international cooperative system, rather like the other "expert" intergovernmental relationships which develop on the fringes of diplomacy'.[lxxvi] In many ways, these links cement existing diplomatic relationships, and gather their own momentum with the exchange of liaison officers, arrangements for the handling and processing of reports, divisions of responsibility against geographical targets, or the sharing of assessments forming, what Herman calls, a 'professional community'.[lxxvii] Equally, as with the trading of economic commodities or providing political good will, intelligence is a tool that can be bartered in exchange for favours elsewhere. The most significant of these intelligence alliances has been the Anglo-American intelligence 'special relationship' that first emerged in 1941 and matured during the Cold War. Creating these alliances have their own benefits. For Britain, close collaboration with the US ensured access to American financial and technological support, maintaining the UK's global presence and influence at the 'top table'. For the US, Britain's overseas imperial territories and her links to the Commonwealth gave unrivalled access to a chain of facilities serving 'US foreign policy interests'. Even today, the geography of intelligence, especially SIGINT, ensures these relationships continue, as the access to fibre optic cables, revealed by Edward Snowden, demonstrate. But beyond the mutual benefits come the role of intelligence in maintaining or re-establishing strained diplomatic relationships. For Herman, who experienced first-hand the benefits to US-UK liaison, intelligence relationships have their 'own momentum; once well established, considerable political weight is needed to disrupt them', with intelligence also 'compartmentalised' or insulated from wider political differences – even twenty-first century Twitter spats with President Donald Trump.[lxxviii]

The New Diplomacy: new problems?

Despite the changing environment of modern diplomacy, many of the issues raised earlier will continue. The need for diplomats and intelligence officials to work side by side means that tension is inevitable. Nonetheless, the networked world and the environment the 'new diplomacy' operates in exacerbates age-old problems. Zakia Shiraz and Richard J. Aldrich observe that globalisation has already accelerated a 'wide range of sub-military transnational threats', with international borders 'increasingly porous'. Like their governments, intelligence agencies 'cannot meet the improbable demands for omniscience'. In effect, intelligence failure becomes ever more likely as events are harder to predict.[lxxix] While global communications have made it easier and cheaper to communicate, the security of diplomatic communications is challenging; the proliferation of new technology makes it possible for countries such as Iran to conduct their own offensive SIGINT operations. Another problem is the communications security (COMSEC), especially in an age when government no-longer holds a monopoly on communications. The decision taken by the UK's National Security Council to allow Chinese

telecommunications company Huawei to help develop 5G networks in non-critical parts of the network provoked condemnation from Washington and other UK allies, fearing that Huawei offers a backdoor into critical national infrastructure. Huawei, founded in 1987, has enjoyed major growth to become one of the world's leading telecommunications companies, helped by a 'gigantic business intelligence apparatus', and finds itself locked in an economic struggle between Washington and Beijing over its links to Chinese intelligence operations, with knock on effects for UK diplomacy. Although Britain's National Cyber Security Centre, an arm of GCHQ, maintained the threat could be mitigated, the White House was said to be 'apoplectic' while Secretary of State Pompeo urged an urgent rethink, citing intelligence-sharing concerns.

Huawei is a perfect illustration of modern-day concerns about communications security in a globalised world. Although the making and breaking of codes and ciphers is nothing new, the growing capabilities of rival states, non-state actors and even individuals to compromise communications and leak secrets, has proven to be embarrassing, especially when states are found to be spying on friends and allies. Although diplomacy often relies on trust, secret intelligence operations can undermine it, as several contemporary examples show. The publication of State Department cables by Wikileaks in 2010 and 2011, a leak referred to as *Cablegate*, included over 251,000 diplomatic cables. They revealed the work of over 270 US embassies and consulates, showing unguarded comments on foreign diplomats, intelligence and security activity and much more, in one of the largest dumps of information ever.[lxxx] Wikileaks led many officials, including former UK Ambassador to Lebanon, Tom Fletcher, to argue that the new threat came from 'modern-day Kim Philbys, [sic] information anarchists motivated not by creed or crusade but by a desire to get back at the system'.[lxxxi] The effect was to make diplomats 'more cautious'.[lxxxii] In July 2019, the leak of diplomatic cables by Britain's ambassador to the US Sir Kim Darroch criticising Trump as 'inept', 'insecure' and 'incompetent' proved just as damaging.[lxxxiii] Worse still, were the Snowden leaks, revealing the exploitation of fibre-optic cables and use of 'big data' by NSA and GCHQ. Both Wikileaks and Snowden showed what many had already guessed – that allies spy on each other. In 2015, Wikileaks revealed that NSA had run a 'decade-long policy of economic espionage against France', spying on 'the French Finance Minister, a French Senator, officials within the Treasury and Economic Policy Directorate, the French ambassador to the United States'.[lxxxiv] Leaks also revealed US officials spied on three French Presidents, while the Snowden claims suggested other allies were monitored. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's phone had been tapped, according to files. Merkel later told President Obama that 'spying between friends just isn't on'.[lxxxv] In November 2013, Britain's Ambassador to Berlin was also called to Germany's Foreign Ministry to explain allegations that GCHQ ran a secret post from the UK embassy, reportedly targeting German politicians.[lxxxvi] More widely, claims that the US and UK spied on friends provoked condemnation and unwelcome investigations. Ironically, it later emerged that Germany's foreign intelligence agency had spied on Poland, Denmark, Croatia and the Vatican.[lxxxvii] In each example, intelligence activity undermined traditional diplomatic ties and trust that diplomacy needs to thrive.

Equally challenging is the new environment that intelligence officials and diplomats operate in today. The end of the Cold War marked the changing nature of international relations and the end of the bipolar order that had existed since 1945. As CIA Director James Woolsey remarked in 1993: 'We live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes'.[lxxxviii] The proliferation of non-state threats presented a paradigm shift, with terrorism rising up the international agenda following the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent 'War on Terror', forcing a rethink in how most Western intelligence agencies operated in the new era. Although it remains true that much intelligence work still involves the collection and analysis of information, intelligence activity is moving beyond Michael Herman's belief that intelligence is just 'information and information gathering'. Writing in 2004, Herman saw intelligence and covert action - the secret use of propaganda, economic sabotage, paramilitary operations and assassination - as separate functions.[lxxxix] Now, the dividing lines are increasingly blurred, although the

history of some agencies has always included such activity. The CIA has always used paramilitary activity in South America, the Middle East and Asia, while Soviet intelligence conducted similar actions, especially the use of targeted assassination, otherwise known as 'wetwork'. Even Britain, despite Herman's view, has carried out 'special operations' – admittedly on a smaller scale.[xc] Traditionally, intelligence officials and diplomats have diverged over what happens with the intelligence; only in a small number of cases would intelligence officials ever have to act on the information and implement policy through 'covert action'. Now, what Marc Sageman memorably called the 'leaderless jihad' –groups of small, local, self-organised groups linked by the internet – requires a global approach, and, for some, drastic responses.[xci]

In 2004, former CIA officer Charles 'Chuck' Cogan argued officials in the twenty-first century needed to 'become hunters, not gatherers', calling for a sea change far beyond just sitting back and gathering 'information that comes in, analyse it, and then decide what to do about it'. Cogan went on to argue that future officials 'will have to go and hunt out intelligence that will enable them to track down or kill terrorists. This will involve sending operatives into countries with which we are not at war'.[xcii] The growing reliance on assassination, Special Forces raids, and remote killing through drone strikes can muddy diplomatic relations even with friendly states, as such activities infringe territorial boundaries, international laws and cross ethical red lines. The CIA's programme of 'extraordinary rendition' – the illegal transfer of terrorist suspects to black sites around the globe – led to extensive condemnation at home and overseas. Indeed, even US allies such as the UK came under fire as it was alleged that intelligence officials and diplomats were 'complicit' in torture. Equally, long-established norms of international diplomacy are now challenged; Russia's 'active measures' or 'hybrid warfare', combining military and non-military means to influence events, are just one example.[xciii] Currently, writes Mark Galeotti, Russia's spies are 'active, aggressive, and well-funded' having 'considerable latitude in their methods, unconstrained by the concerns of diplomats or the scrutiny of legislators'.[xciv] Of all the Russian agencies, the GRU ('Main Intelligence Directorate') has been particular active, gaining a reputation as a 'swashbuckling and risk-taking organisation', most notably with the poisoning of Sergei Skripal.[xcv] The changed nature of international affairs also tells us that activities often easily hidden in the past, now have global implications; the Mossad killing of Hamas's Mahmoud Abdel Rauf al-Mabhouh in a Dubai hotel in January 2010, while a tactical success, was a 'strategic failure' after it was revealed that the assassins had used falsified western passports, with the UK launching a 'full investigation' and Australia expelling a senior Mossad official.[xcvi] Events once hidden under a shroud of 'plausible deniability' are now an open secret (described as 'implausible deniability') as states brazenly deny operations in a web of lies, half-truths and competing narratives.[xcvii] The killing of US-based Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi at a Saudi consulate in Istanbul drew widespread condemnation, but did little to impact long-term western policy to Riyadh.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that intelligence officials and diplomats will continue to face the same age-old problems, exacerbated by the context of the 'new' diplomacy. Diplomats and intelligence officials will always have to work together to achieve their common goals. Intelligence officials will provide information that supplements the overt material gathered by diplomatic establishments and other open sources, guaranteeing some degree of influence on foreign policy. By their very nature, intelligence agencies will always have a monopoly on secret information. Equally, intelligence officials will always have to rely on the diplomats for overseas cover and the provision of hubs for technical forms of collection, and intelligence analysts will always need the wider context provided by diplomats to understand the 'secret' information from specialised agencies. Yet although much intelligence is not secret, traditional diplomacy – other than being challenged by the wider proliferation of information in the internet age – faces budget demands and cuts, while intelligence funding is on the increase as new security threats

emerge and new technologies are needed on the intelligence frontline. Although history tells us that diplomats and intelligence officials have always fallen out, it can be suggested that the era of the 'new' diplomacy exacerbates age-old problems, while presenting news ones. Now, intelligence agencies are increasingly asked to implement policy rather than stand by and collect and analyse information as they had done in the past. While covert action and special operations have always gone on, calls for modern-day agencies to increasingly 'become hunters, not gatherers' challenges traditional diplomacy as intelligence operations cross national boundaries and breach legal and ethical red lines, problems that diplomats will often have to solve. Wikileaks and Snowden show that the leaking of confidential diplomatic communications or secret intelligence activity can undermine the trust needed for diplomats to work, especially when allies are involved. In future, then, intelligence and diplomacy will continue to be two sides of the same coin.

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