

# SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE IN THE POST-COLD WAR WORLD

Reg Whitaker

**'The end of the world's ideological division has not signified an era of peace and prosperity but has led to the emergence of a great empire, the Empire of the North, absolutely rich, which controls the most advanced forces of knowledge.'**

Fernando Collor de Mello, president of Brazil, July 1991

**'THE CIA: OUR BUSINESS IS KNOWING THE WORLD'S BUSINESS.'**

CIA recruiting slogan aimed at attracting Hispanic,  
Asian and native Americans.

The end of the Cold War raised a number of expectations, among them the prospect of a net reduction in the world's stock of armament overkill, whether nuclear or conventional. It quickly became apparent that these expectations were naive. To be sure, the Red Army may self-destruct or more or less disintegrate, as a by-product of the disappearance of the Soviet Union as a state. The United States, on the other hand, has shown no inclination to reduce significantly its military might. President Bush's declaration of a New World Order and the killing frenzy of Desert Storm in the Gulf showed that the end of the Cold War is a distinctly asymmetrical process.

## The Imaginary War

The Cold War was, in Mary **Kaldor's** inspired phrase, an 'Imaginary War'. The superpowers threatened each other with nuclear holocaust, but despite this – or rather, because of this – they never actually confronted one another directly in battle. The surreal quality of this 'war' (as Hobbes wrote, 'War consists not in battle only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend **by** battle is sufficiently **known**') lay in its juxtaposition of the apocalyptic threat of the more dire violence on the one hand and the mundane reality of accepted spheres of influence on the other. Politically, diplomatically and ideologically the two blocs were apparently ranged against each other in a death struggle, yet each politely refrained from placing its hands directly on the other's throat.

The effect of Cold War rhetoric on Cold War practice was like that of drink on lechery, as reported by the porter in Macbeth: 'it provokes the

desire but it takes away the **performance**'.<sup>3</sup> Although the 'Wizards of Armageddon', sheltered in their thinktank-sponsored armchairs, dreamed the deaths of millions in counter-strikes and kill-ratios,"the real fighters were handcuffed. The US Army fought against surrogates to a bloody stalemate in Korea and to a convulsive and debilitating defeat in Vietnam. The Red Army crushed the citizens of its own 'socialist' bloc in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and eventually gave up in despair in Afghanistan. Only once, during the Cuban missile crisis, did the USSR and the USA ever come to the brink of direct military confrontation – and that moment was so terrifying that both drew back chastened.

There was another side to the Cold War, a decades-long campaign in which assaults were made behind enemy lines, casualties sustained, battles won and lost. This was the shadow war of espionage, counter-espionage and covert actions. The armies were the security and intelligence agencies of West and East, the CIA and the KGB, and the multitude of other forces lined up on one or the other side. In the war that could never become a real war, espionage became a kind of prophylactic outlet for frustrated aggression. As an entire generation of spy novelists and film-makers understood very well, intelligence was the pornography of the Cold War.

The end of the Cold War raised surprisingly few expectations of multi-lateral disarmament of the security and intelligence establishments. Like the case of the military, the process has been decidedly asymmetrical. The former East Bloc agencies have dissolved along with their **Communist**-ruled states. The KGB was divided into three agencies following the disastrous role of the KGB head in the ill-fated coup of the hard-liners. Then with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, even these three new forces would appear to have further divided and devolved into smaller national security and intelligence forces along republican lines, of uncertain provenance and function.

In the West, however, there has been little rethinking. Despite a somewhat surprising call from Senator Daniel Moynihan to put the CIA to bed under the supervision of the State Department, few public figures have apparently given much thought to the problem, let alone suggested any major changes. Some spy writers have flailed about with public ruminations about the future visibility (and profitability) of their genre, but the real spymasters have carried on, business pretty much as usual.

As with the 'peace dividend' which was never paid, the failure to demobilise the security and intelligence apparatuses represents more than a simple case of bureaucratic inertia – although the latter ought not to be discounted as a factor. It is true that bureaucratic empires are congelations of vested interests which do not disappear simply because the reality on which they have been premised has disappeared. But there is a deeper reason why things are unlikely to change much. And this suggests that the Cold War was less a unique world order, than a phase, a 'tract of time', in

which persistent interests among capitalist states took on, for a prolonged historical moment, a particular pattern. With the collapse and disappearance of Soviet Communism, those persistent interests are reasserting themselves, unmediated by the Red spectre. Security and intelligence will continue to play an important role in the capitalist state system. Specifically, it is a powerful tool most readily available to the United States in its attempted reassertion of hegemony in the New World Order.

### What Is Intelligence?

The simplest definition of intelligence is the systematic and purposeful gathering of information by states about other states. It is assumed that states harbour potentially hostile intentions toward other states, along with the capabilities of inflicting actual damage – and that they wish, for obvious reasons, to conceal these intentions and capabilities. It is in the national interest of states to penetrate the secrets of their rivals (intelligence), while at the same time protecting their own secrets (counter-intelligence). In short, intelligence is a structural element of the modern state-system in which a Hobbesian state of nature is the fundamental international condition, limited only by balances of power – or in the recent Cold War era, by a balance of terror.

Intelligence is thus intimately connected to war, or to preparation or anticipation of war, and indeed is often seen by practitioners as war by other means. Modern espionage as an art developed first in the era of great power rivalry preceding the first world war and achieved its greatest technical advances in the hothouse atmosphere of scientific innovation during World War II. The unprecedented hyperdevelopment of **lavishly**-funded and technologically-oriented intelligence establishments which has characterised the past four decades has been, of course, intimately connected to the Cold War. Military intelligence in the narrow sense has always been associated with national armies and has even been **institutionalised** in the form of the 'military **attachés**' posted to foreign missions who are always, to some degree or another, spies (often tacitly, sometimes cheerfully accepted as such by all concerned). But characteristic of the modern era in intelligence rivalry is the much broader base of knowledge deemed ultimately relevant to the coercive capacities of states: science and technology; industrial potential and resource bases; the political strength and autonomy of the state elites and their relations with the dominant social forces; real foreign policy intentions and motives; the strength and durability of alliances with other states; domestic counter-intelligence and security capabilities.

In the century of total war and of permanent national security states maintained even in peacetime, everything is potentially relevant to national security. At least since World War II there has been a persistent

connection between intelligence and academia, both in terms of individuals crossing between the two worlds<sup>5</sup> and of parallel styles of work. Both industries are, after all, in the information business: how knowledge is gathered, processed and interpreted. The differences are that intelligence is targeted on information which is deliberately concealed or protected by other states, and that it is a product consumed exclusively in the first instance by the governments that sponsor it.

There are broadly speaking two kinds of sources of intelligence data: human and technical – or HUMINT and TECHINT in the jargon of the trade. HUMINT encompasses information gathered by or from people, ranging from traditional spies running networks of agents, to highly-placed dedicated 'moles' within targeted governments, all the way to occasional sources who may even be unwitting, or half-witting elements of an operation. TECHINT encompasses all means of gathering information through technology: this ranges from traditional signals intelligence involving the interception and decryption of encoded communications to recording and mapping of electromagnetic impulses and satellite-based imaging. Highly sophisticated surveillance of land, oceans and space is now possible through a wide variety of technical means, from electronic listening-posts to spy satellites.

Typically, HUMINT-based intelligence agencies (the CIA and M16) tend to be larger and more labour-intensive than TECHINT agencies (the National Security Agency [NSA] or the Government Communications Headquarters [GCHQ]), but with smaller budgets than their **capital**-intensive TECHINT counterparts. Of course, even TECHINT must be directed by people, for purposes set by people. Perhaps for this reason, it is also typical that HUMINT agencies tend to be at the top of the bureaucratic intelligence hierarchy. For instance, the head of the CIA is officially designated as the Director of Central Intelligence to whom the Director of the NSA is subordinate.

For many years there was considerable controversy within intelligence communities about the relative merits of HUMINT and TECHINT. The Israelis, proud of their alleged prowess in traditional HUMINT, were once scornful of American reliance on technology, but in recent years they have apparently joined in the TECHINT game with the launch of their own spy satellites. While it remains true that certain kinds of information can only be gained from human sources – particularly questions of motive and intent<sup>6</sup> – it is also increasingly obvious that espionage at the close of the twentieth century has become pre-eminently a matter of technological reach and capacity. The resultant huge capital investments and the advanced research and development infrastructure required for high-tech innovation entail serious political implications, to which I shall return.

## The Use and Misuse of Intelligence

The immediate impact of the ascendancy of TECHINT has been the exponential increase in the sheer volume of information available. To take one example: the dense electronic eavesdropping coverage of the former Soviet bloc carried out under the UKUSA agreements of 1947 directed by the NSA and the GCHQ was regularly scooping a vast amount of everyday communications out of the sky for over forty years. To take another example: the access of the NSA and thus the CIA to the computer networks of international airlines means that close monitoring of all movements of persons across borders by air is possible. The question is what sensible use can possibly be made of all this mind-boggling scope for accumulating bits of information, the vast majority of which is obviously 'noise'? While it is true that electronic data processing makes possible the storage and retrieval of a volume of information unimaginable in the pre-computer age, the most sophisticated and complex programmes cannot indicate what kind of information is worth looking for, nor can they decide what the accumulated information means, or what use should be made of it. In other words, *interpretation* is still a human prerogative. It is, however, unclear how much this prerogative is being exercised in practice, or to what extent the technology is blindly driving the intelligence machinery. The metaphor of the sorcerer's apprentice no doubt remains pertinent.

Intelligence is a product to be consumed by governments. The tasks of intelligence are in theory set by governments, and the intelligence machinery exists to fulfill the political agenda. In practice there are at least two limitations on this theory: first, governments rarely know what it is they want from intelligence; second, the bureaucratisation of the intelligence process creates significant inertia and rigidities which may prove resistant to even the occasional burst of activism on the part of the political leadership.

Ironically, the opposite effect sometimes has pernicious consequences: a government driven by an ideological demon may demand a particular intelligence product. The Reagan White House did not want to hear about the military and economic weakness of the Evil Empire since this would undermine its remilitarisation agenda. The 1991 confirmation hearings of Robert Gates as Director of Central Intelligence elicited copious testimony from former agency analysts detailing how Gates had perverted the interpretation of intelligence on the Soviets to 'fit' the Cold War preconceptions of Reagan's Director, William Casey. One consequence of this cooking of intelligence was that the Americans were caught ludicrously unprepared for the collapse of the Soviet state.

## Covert Action

Discussion has so far been confined to intelligence as information gathering. The notoriety of intelligence tends to attach much more to what the Americans call 'covert action', or what the former KGB termed 'active measures'. Covert action refers to attempts to actually influence events in targeted countries by surreptitious means. This could include a range of activities from concealed support for particular political forces, covert propaganda and disinformation, and indirectly instigated economic destabilisation, to covert support for paramilitary attempts to overthrow a regime, or even political assassination. In this way US intelligence helped overthrow governments in Iraq and Guatemala in the 1950s, Chile in the 1970s and Nicaragua in the 1980s, and sponsored or assisted untold mischief and suffering in other parts of the world on behalf of American policy goals (southern Africa and Indonesia being two grisly examples). Although outright bloodshed has been confined to the Third World, the CIA covertly intervened from time to time in Italy against the Communist party and has, of course, offered hidden subsidies and other forms of assistance to right-wing trade unions, anti-communist publications and cultural organisations throughout the world.' The KGB, despite a luridly exaggerated reputation thanks to anti-Communist extremists and Western intelligence, never came close to emulating the global reach of American covert activity. But it did try. French and British agencies have been active in their traditional spheres of influence abroad, and the Israelis have certainly not shrunk from covert activities within Arab states, and against Palestinian 'terrorists' (loosely defined) on the international stage.

It seems inevitable that intelligence as information-gathering will spill over into intelligence as covert intervention. Only small countries with relatively limited security stakes and no real external clout appear capable of confining themselves to simply gathering and interpreting information. To great powers, or to smaller powers with critical regional security concerns, the temptation to transform intelligence capacity from passive to active is overwhelming. It is not hard to see why. Intelligence even in the more passive sense involves the development of 'assets' in targeted countries. Why not convert these assets when the occasion demands from sources of information to active agents of influence, or at least elements of operations designed to influence rather than simply track events? The temptation has rarely been avoided, despite a questionable record of long-term political benefit to the intervening power. The overthrow of the Mossadegh government in Iran by the CIA in 1953 was for years accepted within the agency as a textbook example of 'how to', but the return of the Shah scarcely turned out to be in the long term interests of the United States. Much of the impetus in the 1970s and again during the Iran-Contra affair for greater Congressional oversight of US intelligence activities abroad arose from the perceived damage to US prestige and interests

caused by the cowboys of covert action. None of this scepticism can realistically be expected to do more than confine future covert actions within certain guidelines for the prior advice and consent of Congress behind firmly closed **doors**.<sup>8</sup> The existence of networks of intelligence assets at the disposal of big powers is similar to the maintenance of large standing armies: if they exist, they will likely be used.

### The Domestic Face of Intelligence

None of these various faces of 'external' intelligence are without domestic consequences, often of the most serious nature. The emergence of the national security state as a state form in the late twentieth century inherently blurs, if not obliterates, the distinction between external and internal surveillance. Eisenhower warned of the military-industrial complex which had arisen as a result of the Cold War. Of course, no state could practise militarism abroad and remain immune from the effects of militarism at home. The same is true for the kinds of permanent interventionism abroad represented by an intelligence establishment. Intelligence entails counter-intelligence. Counter-intelligence requires an intensive regime of internal security: censorship, propaganda, security screening, loyalty tests, surveillance and active discouragement of domestic political dissent, even the occasional political trial *pour encourager les autres*.

The more aggressive and intrusive a state's external intelligence activity, the more lurid its imagination about the covert threat posed by its enemies. The rise of McCarthyism in the United States in the late 1940s and early 1950s coincided with the high point of Western-sponsored disruptions, destabilisations and even armed banditry behind the Iron Curtain. By the time America had come to terms with the existence of an effective Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, McCarthyism was largely banished from the American public realm as an excessive and dangerous response to the Soviet threat. A more routinised and institutionalised form of the domestic security regime followed, in keeping with the institutionalisation of the Cold War as a relatively stable system. But even safely within the 'legitimate' sphere of state action, the domestic security regime remains one primarily of **repression**.<sup>9</sup>

Above all, the identification and isolation of security 'risks' rests on the naming of certain personal or group attributes – ideological certainty, but sometimes ethnic or religious – as inherently 'risky' by association with external enemies. During the Cold War era, 'Communist' beliefs, sympathies or associations (often defined pretty elastically) were in effect proscribed in countries like the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, or severely circumscribed within ineffectual ghettos in countries like Italy and France. The shrunken horizons of the universe of

political discourse under such regimes are obvious: we will live with the effects for generations.

More recently, with the end of the Cold War, there appears to be general agreement that the Reds-under-the-bed, for whom there had been a furious hunt for four decades, either never existed or long since expired unnoticed while under deep cover. With the threat of terrorism and the Gulf War, however, different kinds of 'risks' have risen to the notice of Western security establishments. As a series of judicial scandals has embarrassingly unfolded in Britain, it has become obvious that being an Irish Catholic in England can be potentially dangerous to one's health. Complaints have similarly been raised by people of Arabic origin or Moslem faith about being targeted as security risks. During the Gulf War a number of British residents of Arabic origin were rounded up for deportation, even though some of them were actually **anti-Saddam** Hussein in their politics. In the era of intelligence wars, there are always potential enemy agents within and thus always a need for political policing.

The implications of permanent political policing for the practice of liberal democracy need little elaboration – although large sections of the British parliament and press apparently see no problem in domestic spying. In the United States, Congress and the media have fitfully, but not without occasional effect, cast baleful eyes on domestic surveillance by the state. Other Western countries such as Canada and Australia have developed mechanisms for accountability of security agencies. "Freedom of information laws are also of some significance in focusing public attention through investigative journalism and scholarship. The British government remains obdurately against reform, despite evidence of **MI5** involvement in attempts to destabilise or discredit the Wilson Labour government, and perhaps even the Heath Conservatives." Legitimate criticism of British disregard for civil liberties **aside**,<sup>12</sup> there is probably not in practice a great deal of difference between the security regimes in any of the Western states. Where a persistent threat to public order and safety exists (as is the case in Britain with the IRA), the repressive potential will be extended. But the point about the domestic implications of intelligence establishments is that even in the absence of genuine threats, the machinery remains in place, to be activated when required.

### C'est La Guerre

The dramatic collapse of the Soviet Bloc is an epochal event in the history of modern intelligence. Intelligence on a global scale was organised around the central fact of the Cold War since the late 1940s. While there were regional conflicts which importantly shaped the goals of smaller players (most notably the Middle East), even these were tied inexorably to the bipolarities of the Cold War, given the insistence of the superpowers on

imposing Cold War alliances and antagonisms. The Third World was an extended battlefield over which the two blocs waged indirect intelligence wars over regional and local issues redefined in globally strategic terms. And the Third World was also a kind of Cold War Monopoly board over which the major players fought to directly control especially valuable properties upon which could be erected intelligence counters: strategic listening posts, staging bases for agents, points for disseminating propaganda and disinformation.

Within the two blocs, the superpowers imposed their hegemony over their smaller partners under a rigorous system of dominance and subordination in intelligence sharing. The UKUSA agreements of 1947 were the foundation for a global network of sophisticated electronic eavesdropping technology, but the **subtext**, as it were, of these agreements was the institutionalised hegemony of American TECHINT with its nervecentre at the Fort Meade, Maryland, headquarters of the NSA. The British were established as 'senior', but in practice subordinate, partners, while smaller countries like Canada, Australia and New Zealand are *de jure*, as well as *de facto*, junior partners. Other countries have been added later to the network but as 'third parties.'" There are a number of points to make about this arrangement. First, the entire world-wide network was always targeted at the Soviet Bloc: the intelligence objectives of all the partners have thus been congealed in a Cold War pattern. Second, American leadership has always meant that to a considerable extent, allies feed raw, or semi-finished, intelligence to the US. In exchange they receive back intelligence interpreted by Washington. This has always seemed like a good deal to junior partners since it allows them access to a finished product which they could never develop on their own, but needless to say it allows the United States to diffuse its own interpretation of the world. Finally, the sharing of intelligence brings with it an additional American lever of influence over its allies: American security standards and methods are imposed upon other countries as necessary protection for American secrets.

The connection is made all the more effective by the fact that it typically works at the interbureaucratic liaison level rather than at the politically sensitive level of elected governments. An embarrassing by-product of the murky and suspicious affair of KAL 007, the Korean airliner shot down over Soviet airspace in 1983, was the public disclosure of intelligence gathered from a US listening post on Japanese territory, which co-operating Japanese signals intelligence officers had agreed to keep secret from their own military superiors as well as government **officials**.<sup>14</sup> International intelligence 'communities' thus form a curious kind of bureaucratic Internationale operating under the noses of and sometimes even against the wishes of national governments. MIS's Charlie **McCarthy**, Chapman Pincher, once wrote that from the point of view of the British intelligence

establishment, dependence on the international connection is 'so great and cooperation so close that I am convinced security chiefs would go to any length to protect the **link-up**'.<sup>15</sup> Including, as Pincher has enthusiastically endorsed, actively destabilising a government elected by the British people.

Of course there have been tensions within the Western intelligence community. The Americans were enraged at the alleged laxity of the British following the series of spy scandals in the **1950s** and **1960s** involving Burgess, **Macleane**, Philby, Blake and others. For their part, the British have harboured feelings of resentment at American **presumption**.<sup>16</sup> The French have typically played their own game from time to time, within the limits of their resources, on occasion reportedly bugging and spying on American officials." And the Israeli-American intelligence connection is one which has drawn much curious attention, especially since the conviction of the American civil servant Jonathan **Pollard** for espionage on behalf of **Israel**.<sup>18</sup> Yet so long as the Cold War endured as the overarching framework for intelligence activity, these tensions were kept marginal. For instance, it has recently been revealed that 'for a decade and a half the United States has provided substantial covert assistance to the nuclear forces of France' – in violation of US law and in contradiction to France's public protestations of an autonomous military **stance**.<sup>19</sup> Even so egregiously bloody-minded an act of independence as the deliberate destruction by the Israeli air force, with the loss of 34 American lives, of the American surveillance ship the **USS Liberty**, which had been monitoring Israeli operations during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, was quickly swept under the carpet by both governments so as not to endanger the anti-Soviet alliance in the Middle **East**.<sup>20</sup>

### What To Do When The Enemy Vanishes

And then the global antagonist of the past half century simply vanished. There had been warnings of this strange disappearance, but the hardliners in Western intelligence agencies were quick to dismiss reports of imminent Soviet demise as clever KGB disinformation designed, in one of the favourite **clichés** of the Cold Warriors, to 'lull us into a false sense of security'. Reaching again into the old **cliché** bag, these same 'experts' declared that unlike squishy liberal appeasers, they harboured no 'illusions' about the Soviet beast. In fact it was precisely the **hardline** orthodoxy that turned out to be the greatest illusion of all. The intelligence community by and large believed the smoke and mirrors show put on by the Wizard of Oz and could scarcely credit their own eyes when a shrunken, unprepossessing and pathetic little figure finally crept out from behind the facade.

This reluctance is understandable when we consider how much is at stake. It is nothing less than the entire institutional and ideological underpinning of intelligence in the postwar world. And in particular it is **American** hegemony over the western intelligence **community**. Alliances, after all, work when there is a common enemy. There is moreover a huge capital and labour investment in Cold War-driven intelligence. TECHINT is like a gun; however sophisticated the technology, it must be pointed at a target. Reconnaissance satellites, for instance, have fixed orbits and cannot be simply and cheaply redeployed to new targets. But HUMINT too has its own 'inertial thrust' (to steal a phrase from E. P. Thompson). Years of painstaking work in building up networks of agents and sources will not be easily cast aside. Counter-intelligence targeted almost exclusively on the KGB has produced a substantial investment in personnel. Of course bureaucrats will be reluctant to start over again." But the point of no return has finally been reached. After the breakup of the **Soviet** Union, the 'Soviet threat' to the West no longer frightens even small children and impressionable generals.

A new intelligence paradigm is required to replace the old. One outcome which can be ruled out of court at the outset is that intelligence will be phased out, having outlived its usefulness. Apart from the usual motives of bureaucratic survival, and the ingenious ways in which intelligence agencies with their privileged control over information can manipulate their own job descriptions, the disappearance of the old antagonist should not prove fatal. The preconditions for intelligence as a permanent government function lie in the modern state system. The Cold War was **simply** a particular configuration of this **system**. In gauging the effect of the end of the Cold War, it is imperative not to mistake the rhetoric of the Cold War for the reality. Ideological polemics and nuclear sabre-rattling aside, the Cold War had settled into a balance of power system by the early 1950s which fostered a great deal of stability and predictability in international relations. Part of this stability was based somewhat ironically on the 'war by other means' which was intelligence. Specifically, TECHINT in the form of a satellite reconnaissance regime became an important element of trust between the superpowers. As John Lewis Gaddis puts it, 'the fact that the Americans and Russians have actually *cooperated* in spying on one another was in itself, for many years, one of the better kept secrets of the Cold War'.<sup>22</sup> The ability of spy satellites to detect and thus prevent surprise attacks was tacitly recognised by both sides as useful; as a consequence, both sides cooperated to ban anti-satellite weaponry which could have threatened this element of stability. More recently, high-tech surveillance capabilities provided the basis for reductions in arms. The sticky point of on-site inspections was in reality just the icing on the cake. Now that the former **Soviet** Union has become an unprecedented international phenomenon, a decomposing nuclear power, American surveillance capabilities allow for relatively effective management of the reduction and

perhaps even elimination of the ex-Soviet atomic arsenal. Things could still go wrong, with horrific consequences, but American intelligence can at least track the movements of weapons and missiles with great accuracy. It is unlikely that any of the Soviet successor states can hide a nuclear capacity from the eyes in the sky.

The same, of course, goes for smaller states with pretensions to become nuclear powers (*viz.*, Iraq and Pakistan). Here too American intelligence will play a key role in policing the spread of nuclear arms. Politically, the American role might well be criticised as selective and hypocritical (the scandal of the Israeli bomb is one which will stick in many Third World, especially Arab, throats), but the extremely uncomfortable fact remains that with the end of the Soviet counterbalance, a jittery world can have little recourse but to rely on American self-interest to prevent further nuclear proliferation – and thus to rely on a continued American global surveillance regime.

Satellite reconnaissance was not the only area where Soviet–American cooperation in intelligence predated the end of the Cold War. Although the Reagan CIA had tried unsuccessfully in the early 1980s to force the phenomenon of international terrorism into a Cold War mould (the ludicrous 'Bulgarian plot' to kill the Pope being the most egregious item),<sup>17</sup> by the late 1980s, the tone had shifted significantly, with various American intelligence officials noting that both states had a common cause in working against international 'anarchy' perpetuated by unruly non-state actors. In October 1989, a group of retired top-level CIA and KGB officials met under the auspices of the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California to explore a 'dialogue' on co-operation against terrorism.<sup>18</sup> This was public, but it appears that more serious secret contacts may have been made between the two old antagonists.<sup>19</sup> It may be assumed, although there has been no official confirmation, that the Soviets shared intelligence on Iraq and on forces allied to Saddam Hussein with the Americans during the Gulf War.

All these cooperative glimmerings have, of course, been rudely superseded by the rush of events. There is perhaps little left in Moscow now for the Americans to cooperate with. The remnants of the KGB are now being gobbled up by the successor states. The hope of the professionals in the organisation in the aftermath of the failed coup against Gorbachev was that they could give up their odious role in internal repression and become a more 'legitimate' external intelligence agency like the CIA. The dismemberment of the Soviet state leaves such a prospect without a base. Yeltsin has already shown an appetite for incorporating an internal security force, and other republics may well follow suit – especially when power struggles like that in Georgia ensue, as they certainly will. Some of the least admirable elements of the old KGB may thus be recreated in a series of smaller internally-directed forces. But what is less and less likely is that any

external intelligence capacity with global reach will survive, certainly nothing remotely comparable to the KGB of old.

Even this development may have less significance than might appear on the surface. There is growing evidence that the once-vaunted reputation of the KGB (fattened long ago on the defections of ideologically-motivated spies like Kim Philby) was about as grotesquely overdrawn as the persistently alarmist reports of alleged Soviet military might. From at least the 1970s, Western intelligence was actually gaining far more high-level moles than they were losing in the other direction. One of the most important of these double agents, Oleg Gordievsky, has recently published, with Christopher Andrew, a documentary record of KGB instructions to its foreign operations in the late 1970s and early 1980s – the picture painted is of incompetence and stupidity on a scale almost derisory. The decline and collapse of the USSR was actually foreshadowed in the decline into senility of its intelligence establishment.

American intelligence was already preeminent on a global scale long before the end of the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet state does not mean an unexpected victory for the US; it does mean that US intelligence is now free to turn its power on targets of its own choosing without having to anticipate the moves of an antagonist who had long since lost his touch but lingered on in the game as a nuisance.

### Fighting the Next War

What will intelligence agencies do in the **post-Cold** War world? I have already suggested an important, indeed necessary, role for (US) **TECH-INT**: monitoring nuclear disarmament and policing nuclear proliferation. More controversial is the continued role of the US and other Western states in the Third World. There is little reason to anticipate any diminution of intelligence activity here. The imposition of Cold War definitions on regional Third World conflicts was always an artificial operation which masked the real material interests which the US was advancing. "These interests remain and, if anything, can now be pursued more nakedly than in the past, without having to pander to rhetorical contests with the Soviet about anti-imperialism and national liberation. This may mean that covert activity, as such, may give way to more overt use of force, as already in Grenada, Libya, Panama and Iraq. In this sense the intelligence arm may be relied upon less than the military arm when there is little fear of local interventions escalating into world war. Yet it remains true that military interventions are costly, risky, and require considerable priming of domestic public opinion. Covert activity is always tempting as an apparently cheaper and 'cleaner' means of getting something done; the political risks, although considerable, are more easily concealed in the short run – always a tempting prospect to governments. Thus we might anticipate continued

covert action in the Third World as an adjunct or accompaniment to greater reliance on the overt threat of military intervention.

### The Future of the Counter-Terrorism Industry

Another intelligence requirement, to which I alluded earlier, is counter-terrorism. The threat posed by non-state actors to international order has been greatly magnified by those with a stake in puffing up a post-Soviet threat which can mobilise public support for increased security expenditures. Notorious atrocities like airliners blown out of the sky have raised understandable fears on the part of ordinary citizens for their own safety. The actual incidence of terrorist assaults on innocent third parties is extremely low (more Americans die annually from dog bites than from terrorist attacks), but as acts designed for maximum publicity they elicit a **public frisson** out of all proportion to their incidence. A counter-terrorism industry (partly in government but also located in the private sector) has done very well by exploiting these fears." Characteristically, the 'experts' insist that the political causes of terrorist actions are irrelevant but that resources should be spent on maximum force, especially of a technological kind, to prevent the effects of **terrorism**.<sup>29</sup> This operational principle allows the US to attack progressive movements in the Third World as 'terrorist' and even to claim the moral support of the 'international community'. The invention of 'narco-terrorism' (Noriega) and 'techno-terrorism' (**Saddam Hussein**) as made-in-Washington constructs allow considerable scope for intrusive American penetration of the national sovereignty of Third World states, just as 'state-sponsored terrorism' justified the air attack on Libya.

The Americans, however, have a problem with counter-terrorism. The weapons and methods available to violent non-state actors tend to be peculiarly resistant to surveillance by the favoured means of TECHINT. Reconnaissance satellites can yield astonishingly detailed information about many things, but they cannot indicate much about movements of small numbers of terrorists planning, say, to assemble and detonate a bomb at a location known only to them. And technology will go only so far in permitting detection of bombs and other terrorist devices. Only human agents are likely to yield the kind of specific intelligence which can actually prevent actions by infiltrating and countering terrorist cells. There does not seem to be strong evidence of Western success in this regard. One shortcut which has tempted American counter-terrorism has been to strike alliances with elements already operating in the shadowy world of terrorist activity – with dangerous consequences, as evident from American disasters in Lebanon. Worse yet is American sponsorship of right-wing forces eager to employ terrorist methods against left-wing movements. The Frankenstein monster of Renamo in Mozambique is a case so

egregious that the State Department has actually felt compelled to denounce that group's barbarities.

The search for effective counter-terrorist methods has very much strengthened the ties between United States intelligence and the hard right in Israel, centred in the military and intelligence establishment and the Likud party. This in turn creates dissonance and conflict within the American state in the making of Middle Eastern policy. Although the State Department would obviously like to see an Arab-Israeli settlement that would protect oil supplies while allowing the Americans to turn their attention to other parts of the world, the influence of the Israeli hardliners not only on US public opinion but on those elements of the national security apparatus with which they have formed tactical alliances, forms significant blockages. Other, less dramatic, rigidities are similarly imposed in other regions by parallel alliances.

Although terrorist activity seems to have gone into some abeyance since the late 1980s, it may well return to prominence in the decade ahead. American military hegemony, and American willingness to use its power directly and nakedly in the new unipolar post-Cold War world, may displace frustrated national movements onto the desperate plane of international terrorism. This will force the US to expand its human as well as its technical intelligence capacities, and will inevitably entangle US policy in the complex snares of tactical alliances with dubious forces, both state and non-state. In short, the counter-terrorism industry has a future which it certainly does not deserve on its own merits. And we can anticipate the maintenance, even the enhancement of many elements of the repressive domestic security regime that came as part of the Cold War package.

### Intelligence in a World of Shared Hegemony

If the demise of the Soviet bloc means the end of bipolarity in the old sense, it does not mean the end of divisions over hegemony within the capitalist world. One of the functions of Western intelligence cooperation during the Cold War, as I tried to make clear earlier, was integrating the Western bloc under American hegemony through inter-bureaucratic linkages. Relatively effective as this was, it cannot survive the end of the Cold War unscathed. The distrust between states that underlines the very existence of intelligence was only partially repressed within the Western alliance by a common anticommunist ideology. Without this glue, divisions of interest will widen. Whether or not NATO remains intact in one form or another, the NATO allies will increasingly spy on one another, especially when economic and commercial secrets are at stake. And in the context of global capitalist competition, America will find increasing reason to spy upon Japan, and vice versa, while Europe will remain

suspicious and watchful in regard to both the North American and Far Eastern economic blocs.

This scenario might seem to indicate an end to American intelligence hegemony, but this is not necessarily the case. As Stansfield Turner, former Director of Central Intelligence under President Carter, has written in a recent piece on 'Intelligence for a New World Order': '... we live in an information age... Information always has been power, but today there is more opportunity to obtain good information, *and the United States has more capability to do that than any other nation*'.<sup>30</sup> Turner is right. Just as America remains the dominant military power in the world, overshadowing Europe and Japan in sheer might, so too the US has by far the greatest espionage capacity. In HUMINT, decades of global CIA involvement has left the US with by far the most extensive networks of human assets. This is also the case in the capital-intensive area of TECH-INT. Other countries have gone into the satellite reconnaissance business, but the cost of matching the US capability is prohibitive." Moreover the US has a big technological lead derived from its years of specialisation and the high priority granted research and development of imaging technology by the American state. Americans may not be able to produce automobiles and home entertainment equipment to compete commercially with the Japanese, but they can take on any comers in high-tech espionage.

At the outset of the Cold War, America held combined military and economic hegemony over the capitalist world. At the outset of the New World Order, America has lost much economic ground to its Japanese and European competitors, but retains its military hegemony. A key question for American policy-makers is how to use this military superiority to maintain its broader leadership. The kind of costly adventure represented by the Gulf War in which American arms were bankrolled by Japanese and German money seems a dubious means of maintaining hegemony: playing global rent-a-cops only confirms America in its addiction to a Pentagon capitalism which further erodes its commercial competitiveness. Is *fin de siècle* America then locked into a vicious cycle of decline? This is too large a question to be addressed here, but I would like to point to some implications of the role of intelligence.

Stansfield Turner makes an interesting point in this regard when he asserts that in the New World Order

**the preeminent threat to US national security now lies in the economic sphere. The United States has turned from being a major creditor nation to the world's largest debtor, and there are countless industries where US companies are no longer competitive. That means we will need better economic intelligence. The United States does not want to be surprised by such worldwidedevelopments as technological breakthroughs, new mercantilist strategies, sudden shortages of raw materials or unfair or illegal economic practices that disadvantage the country.**

There needs to be, Turner adds, a 'more symbiotic relationship between the worlds of intelligence and **business**'.<sup>31</sup> The retired CIA director may

have put his finger on the most important new development for the immediate future.

Each of the three capitalist economic blocs will have traditional political security concerns. Europe will be particularly concerned about the politically and economically unstable transitions to market systems in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Japan will have a strong interest in political developments in China, Korea and southeast Asia. And America will maintain a keen interest in the stability of pro-American regimes in Latin America and the Caribbean. Effective intelligence will be an obvious requirement in each case. But beyond these concerns are the direct economic rivalries among the blocs. Intelligence is already employed extensively in the private sector: industrial espionage is a specialised corporate function." There are at least two broad areas where economic intelligence can be of utility in the new era of capitalist competition. States can offer intelligence assistance to their own nationally-based corporations in spying on foreign competitors, stealing technology, offering sophisticated 'risk analysis' to corporations operating abroad, and so on. On the other side, governments will find it expedient to privatise or contract out to the private sector elements of their intelligence operations which they wish to keep at arm's length (viz. the Iran-Contra affair). This is Turner's 'symbiotic relationship' between intelligence and business. It presents the prospect of a new and enhanced role for the national capitalist state in the era of global competition as well as a further blurring of the lines between the public and private sectors. It also raises interesting questions about the nationality or home base of multinational corporations. American **policy-makers**, for instance, will have a delicate problem when dealing with American-based business taken over by Japanese capital. These are new and unprecedented problems for the intelligence world which were rarely glimpsed in the old Cold War days.

The second area of economic intelligence is the production of what might be called macro, as opposed to micro, economic information. International competitiveness can be enhanced by the availability of detailed world resource inventories, long-range forecasting of shifting weather patterns, the impact of new technologies, global migration movements, demographic transformations, impending environmental problems and their implications, and so on. The awesome capacities of TECHINT allied to electronic data processing might actually be put to better use when applied to these kinds of problems than to the massing of vast amounts of trivial bits of information about the Cold War 'enemy'.

In relation to both macro and micro economic intelligence, the Americans are much better placed than their European and Japanese competitors. Both the latter start from weaker technological bases and lack the existing global reach of American intelligence. The Europeans have particular problems of diseconomies of scale. Despite the growing economic integration of the European Community, intelligence remains

fragmented into national services, divided by traditional jealousies, with little immediate prospect of pooling their resources on a community-wide basis. Yet without such pooling, they cannot hope to offer the kind of assistance to European corporations that the US intelligence community can offer its corporations. Japan also suffers from an underdeveloped intelligence arm, which it is currently trying to beef up. Japanese corporations are good sources of economic intelligence but they apparently do not always share this with the state and Japan thus lacks an effective coordinated public-private intelligence capacity. One Japanese official recently described Japanese intelligence as 'half a century' behind its competitors." Efforts to catch up run into resistance both at home and abroad, given Japan's past history of militarism and expansion.

Intelligence does offer America an advantage in the economic competition between the three blocs. Whether it can use this advantage over the long run is another matter. After all, it must still produce the goods that will sell on world markets. But beyond the competitive advantage of blocs, there is a broader and grimmer perspective in which to place the role of intelligence in the service of wealth. The capital-intensive, high-technology control of information at the end of the twentieth century is yet one more formidable power of the capitalist blocs over the Third World, as well as over the former Communist states.

As the gulf between the rich and poor nations widens and the helplessness and despair of the wretched of the earth deepens, we can appreciate the prescience of the Brazilian president in discerning a post-Cold War 'Empire of the North', 'which controls the most advanced forces of knowledge'. Intelligence is one more weapon in the hands of the strong.

#### NOTES

1. Mary Kaldor, *The Imaginary War: Understanding the East-West Conflict* (Oxford 1990).
2. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I, Chapter 13.
3. *Macbeth*, Act 2, Scene 4.
4. Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (NY 1983); Thomas Powers, *Thinking About the Next War* (NY 1983); Gregg Herken, *Counsels of War* (NY 1985).
5. For American examples: Robin Winks, *Cloak & Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1937-1961* (NY 1987) and Barry M. Katz, *Foreign Intelligence: Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services, 1942-1945* (Cambridge, Mass. 1989). In Britain, the code-breaking triumphs of **Bletchley Park** were only made possible by the active recruitment of academics.
6. One of the best examples of the irreplaceable value of **HUMINT** was a colonel attached to the Polish General Staff in the early 1980s who was working for US intelligence. Although satellite and other **TECHINT** intelligence pointed to a large Soviet military buildup near the Polish border during the intensification of the Solidarity-inspired legitimization crisis of the regime, this informant was able to tell the Americans that the Polish generals intended to pre-empt a Czech-style Soviet intervention by their own military coup, which was of course carried out with the declaration of martial law in 1981.
7. John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon covert operations since World War II* (NY 1986); William Blum, *The CIA: a Forgotten History. US Global Interventions Since*

- World War II* (London 1986); Gregory Treverton, *Covert Action: the Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World* (NY 1987).
8. Loch K. Johnson, *A Season of Inquiry: Congress and Intelligence* (Chicago 1988); Frank J. Smirst, Jr., *Congress Oversees the United States Intelligence Community 1947-1989* (Tennessee 1990).
  9. See an earlier article of mine in *The Socialist Register* (1984), 'Fighting the Cold War on the home front: America, Britain, Australia and Canada', 23-67.
  10. Reg Whitaker, 'The politics of security-intelligence policy making in Canada 1, 1970-1984', *Intelligence and National Security* 6:4 (October 1991); 'The politics of security-intelligence making in Canada 2, 1984-1991', *Intelligence and National Security* 7:2 (April 1992).
  11. Steve **Dorrill** and Robin **Ramsay**, *Smear!: Wilson and the Secret State* (London 1991); David Leigh, *The Wilson Plot* (London 1988); Paul Foot, *Who Framed Colin Wallace?* (London 1989).
  12. Paddy **Hillyard & Janie** Percy-Smith, *The Coercive State: the Decline of Democracy in Britain* (London 1988); K. D. Ewing & G. A. **Gearty**, *Freedom Under Thatcher: Civil Liberties in Modern Britain* (Oxford 1990); Clive Ponting, *Secrecy in Britain* (London 1990); Patrick **Birkinshaw**, *Reforming the Secret State* (Bristol 1990).
  13. Jeffrey T. Richelson & Desmond Ball, *The Ties That Bind: Intelligence Cooperation between the UKUSA Countries* (Boston 1985); James Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace* (NY 1983).
  14. Seymour Hersh, *The Target is Destroyed* (NY 1986) 57-62; 139-49.
  15. *Inside Story* (NY 1979) 38.
  16. Perhaps the most subtle rendering of the tensions between British intelligence and the American 'cousins' can be found in the novels of John **LeCarré**.
  17. Roger **Faligot** and Pascal **Krop**, *La Piscine: the French Secret Service Since 1944* (NY 1989); Jeffrey T. Richelson, *Foreign Intelligence Organizations* (Cambridge, Mass. 1988) 151-90.
  18. Two recent books query aspects of this relationship: Andrew and Leslie Cockburn, *Dangerous Liaison: the Inside Story of the US-Israeli Covert Relationship* (Toronto 1991) and the controversial *The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* by Seymour Hersh (NY 1991).
  19. Richard H. **Ullman**, 'The covert French connection', *Foreign Policy* 75 (Summer 1989) 3-33.
  20. For details of this little known but chilling incident - an astonishing example of biting the hand that feeds - see James M. Ennes, Jr., *Assault on the Liberty* (NY 1979). The attack was implausibly passed off by the Israelis as an 'accident'.
  21. As late as November 28, 1991 the Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service told puzzled parliamentarians that Soviet espionage remained the leading counter-intelligence preoccupation of the agency (Geoffrey York, 'No reduction yet in Soviet spying, CSIS head reports', *The Globe & Mail*, 29 Nov. 1991). Within a couple of weeks, the Soviet Union had disappeared.
  22. 'Learning to live with transparency: the evolution of a reconnaissance satellite regime', in Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (NY 1987) 1%.
  23. The appearance of the preposterous **Terror Network** by Claire Sterling in 1981 occasioned one of the more amusing examples of self-destructing intelligence. Not known for his wide-ranging reading, Ronald Reagan did peruse this piece of anti-Soviet hysteria, and told CIA director William Casey he should too. Casey was impressed enough to order the agency to get on the tail of the Soviet connection as elucidated by Sterling. Appalled professionals in the agency had to point out that Sterling was merely regurgitating disinformation carefully spread by the CIA itself. This became known in the trade as a case of 'product **blowback**'.
  24. This meeting has been reported in a volume edited by John Marks and Igor **Beliaev**, *Common Ground on Terrorism: Soviet-American Cooperation Against the Politics of Terror* (NY 1991).
  10. **LeCarré**, always a sensitive barometer of such matters, has George **Smiley** sitting on a joint committee on terrorism with the KGB in his most recent novel (*The Secret Pilgrim*) published at the end of 1990.

26. *Instructions from the Centre: Top Secret Files on KGB Foreign Operations, 1975–1985* (London 1991). At one point Gordievsky was required to leave a giant artificial brick – large enough to accommodate 400 £20 notes in a cavity – on a path in Coram's Fields in Bloomsbury, to be picked up by an illegal newly landed in Britain. It was lucky for the KGB that this Keystone Cops operation did not end with a passer-by tripping and injuring themselves on this object.
27. 'The irony of US policy in the Third World is that while it has always justified its larger objectives and efforts in the name of anticommunism, its own goals have made it unable to tolerate change from *any* quarter that impinged significantly on its interests.' Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy, 1945–1980* (NY 1988) 292.
28. See Edward Herman and Gerry O'Sullivan, *The 'Terrorism' Industry: the Experts and Institutions that Shape Our View of Terror* (NY 1989).
29. For a sensitive and discriminating discussion of the causes of terrorism, see Richard Rubenstein, *Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World* (NY 1987), a book either ignored or rejected by the counter-terrorist industry.
30. Stansfield Turner, 'Intelligence for a New World Order', *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1991) 151 [emphasis added].
31. Michael Krepon, 'Spying from space', *Foreign Policy* 75 (Summer 1989) 92–108; Jeffrey T. Richelson, 'The future of space reconnaissance', *Scientific American* 264:1 (January 1991). 38–44. The British *Zircon* spy satellite project had to be shelved when journalists revealed its existence – and its **cost**. The **clumsy** attempt to ban a television **exposé** demonstrated that the real reason for secrecy was to conceal the project from the British taxpayers, not the Soviets, who would certainly have noticed when it went into orbit.
32. Turner, 'Intelligence', 151–2.
33. Richard Eells & Peter Nehemkis, *Corporate Intelligence and Espionage: A Blueprint for Executive Decision Making* (NY 1984); Herbert Meyer, *Real World Intelligence: Organized Information for Executives* (NY 1987).
34. David Sanger, 'Japanese expanding intelligence services', *The Globe & Mail*, 2 January 1992.