

# **Need to Know**

Eastern and Western  
Perspectives

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Władysław Bulhak, Thomas Wegener Friis (ed.)

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# Introduction

A couple of years ago, one of our reviewers noted that intelligence is a “dirty business” and that Intelligence Studies are somehow guilty by association. Is this true? Are Intelligence Studies a “dirty business”? And do you, interested reader, in effect sully yourself by opening this book? It is not possible to deny what is self-evident: Intelligence services deal with deception and betrayal. Spies lie for a living, feelings get hurt, and, sometimes, people even die. So wouldn't it be better for the rest of us to turn the blind eye to the world of spy craft and just carry on as if it did not exist?

Of course, this is not the position that is taken by the editors of this book. At the risk of being labeled “dirty,” and recognizing that we are dealing with the darker side of international relations, we believe that intelligence business is a normal part of modern politics. Ever since Moses sent out his scouts into the land of Canaan, decision-makers have relied on intelligence services to provide them with reliable information before choosing their direction – indeed, even if they are sometimes not inclined to believe or, for that matter, listen to the information presented. It is thus imperative to take Intelligence Studies seriously if one wants to fully understand either domestic or international politics.

The work life of an intelligence scholar can be especially challenging. While information is essential to the intelligence trade, intelligence services also tend to jealously guard information when it comes to themselves and their own history. They also naturally like to be in control when they share information – which they do openly and covertly – on foreign intelligence, security matters, and terrorism, with journalists often being their preferred channels for dissemination. This has resulted in a situation where information is not transparent, but is instead regularly planted by one or the other intelligence organization. This is an antagonistic environment in which to conduct research, for information generally cannot be verified, and in some areas of the Intelligence

Studies, standard academic practices such as footnotes do not apply. Working conditions like these have no doubt contributed to Intelligence Studies' relatively suspect reputation.

A couple of decades ago, the conditions in the field were even more deplorable. There were both interlopers without identifiable sources and experts with controlled information. Then, to the surprise of the general public and even to the intelligence community, something happened: Seemingly overnight, the communist regimes collapsed and the division in Europe disappeared. This peaceful revolution 25 years ago became a landmark for Intelligence Studies, for it also meant that researchers could gain access for the first time to an abundance of sources covering all aspects of the intelligence process. In the years that followed, researchers were able to investigate to an unprecedented degree the political process behind the scenes, the operational realities, and the analytical process. Such access became possible at least in the former communist dictatorships in Central and Eastern Europe.

The first steps to open the archives of the former security and intelligence apparatus were taken by a unified Germany. The East German citizens demanded to "see their files." Although not everyone in East and West was happy about this, the German politicians finally had little choice but to open the files. Scholars of Intelligence Studies were also granted a degree of access, as a special archive with the remarkable German name – *der Bundesbeauftragter für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* – was opened in Germany. The German approach to transparency was not unproblematic, for constituted to some extent it a new monopoly on information. The conditions for researchers also were far from ideal. Nonetheless, the undertaking was undeniably groundbreaking, since it created research conditions for Intelligence Studies that were "close to normal." Now, researchers could largely control their own research process from start to finish, use normal footnotes, and other scholars could ask for the same documents – albeit with mixed success.

The German transition from communist rule was different, of course, than the rest of the countries in Central- and Eastern Europe. Among other reasons, the Germans were able to replace the cadres of the GDR regime with West Germans. In other Warsaw Pact states, the new governments had varying degrees of continuity within the state apparatus, which also meant continuity among politicians, diplomats, army-, intelligence- and security officers. As a result, there was less motivation for an open and critical public and scholarly debate. This, in turn, caused the process of opening the archives of the communist era



to last longer. Be that as it may, there was also public and political pressure in these Central European countries, and, one after the other, they came to establish their own special archives or other similar institutions devoted to the recent past. A good example is the Polish Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), which is simultaneously an archive, research and educational center, public prosecutors' department, and vetting office. Most of the Central European institutions of this kind aimed to make the files of ex-communist secret services accessible to the general public, both directly and indirectly through media outlets, scientific research, exhibits, and educational programs.

Today, intelligence scholars working in Central European countries have gained almost unlimited access to piles of previously top secret material and data. They pertain to all the processes of acquisition, analysis, and use of intelligence information, described most often in the form of the so-called intelligence cycle. This has meant a fundamental change to Intelligence Studies. Previously, most intelligence scholars (at least those not working as "in-house historians") were forced to use rather sophisticated methods (such as the analysis of the so-called social networks and advanced statistics) in order to reconstruct specific spy networks or terrorist organizations. Such methods were in fact designed to fill gaps when the available information was of a vestigial character, which was almost inevitable when describing various kinds of secret or underground activity. These methodological tools, however, are now no longer necessary – at least not when it comes to the above-mentioned piles of information. Today, a researcher reviewing the intelligence services of Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, or Poland rather faces the opposite problem, namely, a proverbial *embarras de richesse*.

However, one should keep in mind that there are some limitations to this abundance, from mere language problems and gaps in the intelligence archival collection (for various reasons like damage caused by the revolutions of 1989-1991) to the perennial issue of information stored in secret Russian archives. While it is only a matter of time before the Bulgarian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak and Polish archives, respectively, have been deeply penetrated, the post-Soviet intelligence sources are almost inaccessible at present. In all communist states (with the exception of Romania), the so-called "security apparatus" and its intelligence services were elements of a larger system whose headquarters were at the Lubyanka (or alternatively in Yasenevo near Moscow). It is therefore important to bare this cooperation aspect in mind and recognize that the Eastern Europeans were all pieces of a larger puzzle.

The process of archival openness in Central and Eastern Europe – often referred to as “the archival revolution” – has also impacted the “old democracies” in Western Europe. The reluctance to invite scholars to evaluate past failures and successes was not specific to the KGB offshoots on the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain. Indeed, the opening of the new archive institutions in Central Europe revealed a grave research asymmetry. While it became possible to study the intelligence service of the former dictatorships, the archives in “Old Europe” remained difficult to access, and in some cases, like the Danish intelligence service, countries did not even hesitate to destroy documents. Thankfully, upon the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War and European division, steps are being taken in Western Europe toward instituting normal academic standards in Intelligence Studies.

In the Anglo-American world, where scholars and practitioners have published both empirical studies and theorized about intelligence, there has been a long tradition of Intelligence Studies. Numerous universities and colleges have not only recognized the field, but also included it in their curriculum. In the United States, archives have had some degree of success in declassifying intelligence material, especially with regard to final intelligence. On the other hand, the empirical side of operative intelligence research has traditionally been weaker. The manner in which information was collected remains a question of national security for many countries and specific types of information, for instance, human intelligence (HUMINT), is scattered and might derive from such varied sources as parliament proceedings or defectors.

In the Central European countries, documents concerning the operative process have generally been made accessible. This represents a unique step forward in Intelligence Studies that has a direct qualitative impact on the research. Today, it is possible to undertake large-scale studies on HUMINT, for instance, in which the scholars themselves – not the intelligence services – formulate the questions and choose the material. The work being done in Central Europe thus constitutes a new paradigm within Intelligence Studies, albeit one that is only at its beginning stage since scholars still need to find their feet and discuss methodologies. A new chapter, however, has clearly begun. No longer is research dependent, as it was earlier, on materials based on operative exceptions such as court cases or information from defectors. These sources may have been adequate in a situation where there were no alternatives, but they were by no means representative.

One might expect scholars from the Anglo-American tradition and from Central Europe to rapidly come together and exploit the new possibilities in

this field. While they certainly have, this has not in fact been the general trend. Instead the field of Intelligence Studies has to a large extent seen the development of two parallel paradigms, which coexist, but seldom interact. There might be several explanations for this, with language barriers certainly being one of them. Much of the research in Central Europe is written in languages like German, Polish, or Czech, making it difficult for having a wider discussion even on a European level, and is almost invisible internationally, even though prominent research on this level has helped to bridge the gap.

The general acknowledgement of this dilemma gave a boost to the annual conference series “Need to know.” The first conference took place in 2011 in Brussels, Belgium and the fourth conference, organized by the IPN and the University of Southern Denmark (SDU), will once again take place in Belgium, specifically, at the Catholic University of Leuven in October 2014. In the interim, the conference has been held in Denmark and Sweden. The fact that the conference is returning to Brussels is no coincidence, for the philosophy behind the conferences was from the very beginning to create a European platform for discussing, in particular, foreign intelligence. The conference series aims to make the new research results coming out of central Europe available to researchers all over Europe, and the conferences themselves are designed to bring researchers together from different national and scientific traditions.

The conferences promote new cooperation, but also try to make the field of Intelligence Studies visible in a European context. Intelligence will not go away, and better Intelligence Studies give decision-makers better tools to understand intelligence and security issues. It is therefore especially gratifying to see that intelligence research is gradually finding its way into the larger EU research program.

This anthology presents a selection of some of the best papers from the Brussels “Need to know” conference. It was entitled “Eastern and Western perspectives” to highlight that the history on foreign intelligence is a common story. Today, the Cold War dominates the field of intelligence history because the bulk of the existing source material comes from this period. In Europe, the Cold War is a story of division, and yet the history of foreign intelligence unites researchers because it is by nature transnational. Since East German spies needed to go to West Germany to do their jobs, the history of this activity is equally relevant to both East and West. Writing the full history of this phenomenon can only be achieved if researchers from the “old East” and the “old West” work together, leaving the Cold War blame-game aside to focus instead on a common scholarly objective.

This book begins with an article which looks at the different perspectives and research traditions in Intelligence Studies. Władysław Bulhak gives an overview of the most important work that has been done in Britain, the United States, and under the KGB sphere of influence. Bulhak demonstrates the ways in which the different theoretical approaches relate to each other.

One of the leading researchers in the new Central European research school is Helmut Müllers-Enbergs, who is a senior researcher at the Stasi-archives (BStU) in Berlin and honorary professor at the University of Southern Denmark. As mentioned above, the Stasi archives were pioneers when it came to archival openness. Müller-Enbergs has been working with the agents of the service both inside and outside the GDR, and thus has had an enormous amount of source material to analyze HUMINT – exactly the kind of intelligence to which Western scholars usually do not have access. Today, Müller-Enbergs is not only the leading researcher on East German foreign intelligence, but also within the subject of HUMINT. In dealing with intelligence, one often encounters generalizing statements, such as “the world’s best intelligence service.” This claim has been attributed to the Catholic Church, the Mossad, the CIA, and the East German foreign intelligence service HV A. But, as Müller-Enbergs makes clear, scholars need to ask what this really means. What are the parameters for such a determination? And can we test them on the basis of empirical material? Helmut Müller-Enbergs not only attempts to define such parameters, but also does so specifically in relation to the East German foreign intelligence service using the material of the Stasi archives.

The articles of Kimmo Elo and Douglas Salvage also draw on the resources of the Stasi archives. Finnish political Scientist Elo, like Müller-Enbergs, deals with the East German HV A. One of the practical problems with this work is that, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the HV A did everything it could to destroy the evidence of the East German espionage in the West. While it certainly can be argued that the East Germans were not “the world’s best intelligence service,” they were nonetheless thorough when it came to covering their tracks. The job of reconstructing and analyzing the East German foreign intelligence therefore presents a formidable puzzle. One of the most important keys to solving that has emerged is the database known as SIRA. In his research, Elo set out to use network analysis to identify the most important sources and determine the deliverance frequency with regard to Finland.

As a scholar at the BStU in Berlin, Douglas Salvage enjoys privileged access to the archive. Nonetheless, in his article “Operation Synonym. Soviet-Bloc Active Measures and the Helsinki Process, 1976-1983,” he does not fall prey to

the temptation to only use East-German material. Salvage rather has a broader focus: Dealing with the process of détente from an overall Warsaw Pact perspective, he uses archival material from both the GDR and Czechoslovakia. The CSCE posed a dilemma for Eastern bloc countries. On the one hand, it offered them increased stability; on the other, they were afraid of being tricked by their Western counterparts. The intelligence services in Eastern Europe were called upon to assist both in diplomacy and propaganda. Salvage's focus is primarily on the latter, and how the junior partners of the KGB were called upon to "unmask and paralyze the objectives of unfriendly secret services and political-ideological diversionary centers" and to support the Eastern bloc goals.

This anthology has a relatively high number of Polish researchers, a natural consequence of the conference series' aim to create a platform for the latest European – especially Central European – research. Beyond this, the field of history and the general historical debate in Poland continues to be very lively. To a large extent, the high number of publications there can be attributed to the fact that the sources – including the sources to intelligence history – are easily accessible. Not all of this activity is attributable to the IPN, however, for historians and political scientists at the Polish universities are also making strides. Indeed, this anthology includes two prominent professors, Jacek Tebinka from the University of Gdansk and Jakub Tyszkiewicz from the University of Wrocław, who have both drawn on material from outside Poland to look at their home country through the eyes of foreign intelligence services. Tebinka used reports from the British Joint Intelligence Committee from the end of the Second World War until the Early 1980s. Tyszkiewicz, for his part, evaluated the NIE and SNIE of the American intelligence community in the Gomułka years. The British appear to have been well-informed about both the military and the intelligence services in Poland, whereas Polish politics seems to have been less transparent. By contrast, the American intelligence community followed politics with great interest, partly because Gomułka at the beginning of his leadership seemed to constitute a potential alternative direction within the Eastern bloc and, later on, a lesser evil.

Along with the editor of this volume, Władysław Bułhak, three researchers at the Institute for National Remembrance have contributed to this book: Patryk Pleskot, Przemysław Gasztold-Seń, and Sławomir Łukasiewicz. Each one of them has used the archives of the former Polish State Security to shed new light on various aspects of Polish intelligence and counter-intelligence. Pleskot presents the structures and guidelines of the counter-intelligence department of the People's Republic of Poland (PRP), and thus opens the way for

further studies of Western embassies and agencies during the Cold War. In the article “Between Geopolitics and National Security,” Gasztold-Señ examines Polish “anti-terrorism.” The Eastern bloc countries had their own approach to international terror in the 1970s and 1980s. The communist governments actually supported international known terrorist groups, allowing some to travel freely within their borders and others to meet there in safety. In return, the host countries were able to hold off potential terrorist actions and their intelligence services managed to gain inside information. Gasztold-Señ shows, in particular, how famous terrorists were able to pass through or stay in Poland. He devotes special attention to arms deals and documents how millions of dollars found their way from the Middle East to the Polish state at a time when “hard currency” was sorely needed. Documents held by the IPN permitted Gasztold-Señ to put a spotlight on the Abu Nidal Organization. In his article, he argues that the cooperation with terrorists was likely much more extensive, but that it is difficult to prove due to the destruction of documents. Gasztold-Señ’s research convincingly shows that greater international cooperation and archival work is needed if the actual history of international terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s is to be told.

When the original conference was held in Brussels, Sławomir Łukasiewicz, the last of the IPN contributors to this anthology, presented a preliminary study entitled “Spying on Europe” on Polish intelligence and the European institutions. Even though the communist intelligence services had problems understanding what the European integration process was all about from an ideological standpoint, the institutions in question became gradually more interesting to them from the 1970s onwards. Despite the fact that the files relating to the EEC also suffered shredding during the time of transition from socialism to democracy in Poland, Łukasiewicz is able to identify operations of the Polish intelligence service in Brussels.

The files of the former Czechoslovak intelligence, which today rank amongst the most accessible in the world, have been an invaluable asset to Slovak historian Matej Medvecký. These documents have enabled him to draw a detailed picture of how Czechoslovakia started its espionage program against Great Britain. Medvecký deals with the period from the end of the Second World War to the early 1950s. This period is all the more interesting because Britain and Czechoslovakia changed from being allies to enemies. It was also the time when communists took over the Czechoslovak administration and, along with it, the intelligence and security apparatus. This transition was anything but smooth and ultimately disrupted the early operative work of the Czechoslovak service.

Although the majority of the conference papers and the selected articles deal with Central and Eastern Europe, the Western perspective has not been forgotten. Bringing researchers together from different traditions has been essential to the “Need to Know” conference series. In this anthology, the “Western side” is represented by Idesbald Goddeeris from Belgium, Kurt Jensen and Don Munton from Canada, Dieter Bacher from Austria, and Thomas Wegener Friis from Denmark.

The Belgian historian Idesbald Goddeeris has examined Polish intelligence in her home country of Belgium. Goddeeris focuses on the case of Eryk using both material from the IPN archive and personal interviews. Eryk was a Polish exile and thus a natural target for his home country’s intelligence services. His story is not only important as an individual encounter with the system. For Goddeeris, it also provides an opportunity for a methodological discussion of intelligence files.

Jensen and Munton describe the special cooperation between the United States and Canada. The two North American countries have had intelligence cooperation since the Second World War. Though it has been mutually beneficial, it is obviously not an equal relationship. The Canadian researchers look at how the relations were re-established in the early Cold War and examine the cases of Indochina, Cuba, and Iran, where Canada, as the junior partner, contributed to the common efforts with critical intelligence.

Dieter Bacher from the Ludwig Boltzman Institute for Research on War Consequences describes the struggle among foreign intelligence services in Austria from 1945 to 1953. Like Germany, the country was divided after the Second World War between the main allied powers, including the capital Vienna. Both the Western powers and the Soviet Union had an obvious military interest in Austria. The country also gave the occupational forces an operational basis for their intelligence services in the heart of Europe. Austrian citizens were also naturally enlisted into this work. Bacher balances both Eastern and Western perspectives by using American and Soviet sources for his selected cases.

Just as the book begins, it also ends with a historiographical article. Thomas Wegener Friis presents an overview of the research on intelligence in Denmark. For some time, the country has been experimenting with a kind of controlled openness, taking its first uncertain steps into the 21st century. A future with more or less free access to information can be unsettling for any intelligence service. For scholars and the public, however, such openness offers new and better ways to understand how international policy and democracy operate

behind the scenes. With archival access both at home and in the former adversarial states in Eastern Europe, a small state like Denmark holds great promise as a case study. Being equally mindful of Eastern and Western perspectives, it is possible today to produce comprehensive empirical studies, even in an area such as HUMINT.

The editors would like to acknowledge a number of persons and institutions without whose active support the “Need to Know” initiative in 2011 and this book would not have been possible. First of all, we have to thank our home institutions, the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) and the University of Southern Denmark (SDU). Without the unwavering institutional support we received, none of this would have been possible. A special thanks to the president of the IPN, Lukasz Kaminski, who opened the conference in Brussels and who has continued since then to promote the idea of presenting the latest Polish research to an international academic audience.

To present the most recent findings to the European public, we choose to arrange the first “Need to Know” conference in “Europe’s capital.” Although arranging such an event would have understandably been easier in Warsaw or Odense, we were fortunately able to draw on the experience and support of both Danish and Polish politicians and diplomats in Belgium. We greatly appreciate all the help we have received from our fellow countrymen. In planning the conference, we conferred with MEP Britta Thomsen from Denmark. Originally, we planned to hold the conference in the House of the region of Southern Denmark, which was immediately willing to open its doors to a group of international scholars. However, as the number of conference participants grew, we eventually had to seek a new venue. Again, we were lucky enough to find enthusiastic partners in our home country, with the beautiful EU office of Upper Silesia housing the conference. Since it was the year of the Polish Chairmanship, the head of Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to the European Union, Ambassador Jan Tombiński invited all conference participants to a final dinner. During the conference, we were able to have our dinner in the European Parliament thanks to the friendly invitation of MEP Pawel Zalewski from Poland.

Neither the conference nor this anthology would have been realized without the broad interest of relevant researchers. Our “call for papers” received a stunning number of abstracts, demonstrating that a large number of researchers from all across Europe and America desired such a forum. We had to make some tough choices, however. In the end, we were able to put together a program of intriguing research that is conducive to promoting vibrant discussion.



A number of the conference papers also made their way into this book, and we would like to express our thanks here to all presenters, chairs, and authors. We would especially like to thank Sir Rodrik Queintin Braithwaite and Professor Mark Kramer. For decades, Sir Braithwaite has been a central actor in British diplomacy and in the intelligence community as chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). Even though he retired several years ago, he gladly accepted our invitation to chair our first conference. He also served as a vital link to both former practitioners and the Anglo-American world of research. The same can also be said about Mark Cramer, with whom the organizers have had many fruitful discussions. Cramer is not only one of the finest experts in the field, but a regular speaker at our conferences. He unites different research environments from all across the globe. Conferences, moreover, are not only made possible because of passionate researchers. If the infrastructure is not in place, even brilliant contributions can be overshadowed by practical difficulties. In this regard, Anna Piekarska has been the driving force behind every conference and an anchor of support for both the organizers and the conference participants. Dear Anna, if we have not said it clearly enough, it certainly bears repeating: Thank you for your outstanding dedication and indomitable spirit. Without you, this would not have been possible.

Finally, we would like to thank Christopher Reid for proofreading support and Asbjørn Riis-Knudsen for the layout. We are also grateful for the generous financial support for this publication from “Ingeniør N. M. Knudsen's Fond” and from the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Southern Denmark.