

The History of Intelligence in the United States

Chapter 2

To understand why the intelligence community today is structured the way it is, one must first understand its history.

Chapter Objectives

1. Explain why the United States did not develop a robust, sustained intelligence capability until the twentieth century.
2. Trace the history of early American intelligence efforts from the Revolutionary War up until World War II.
3. Explain how the “strategic surprise” of Pearl Harbor convinced the United States that it needed to enhance its intelligence capabilities.
4. Describe how the Cold War was a “war of intelligence” and how it shaped the development of American intelligence agencies.
5. Explain how intelligence “failures,” such as the excesses of COINTELPRO and Operation CHAOS, and the spy scandals of the 1980s, affected intelligence efforts.
6. Identify some reasons why the United States was not able to anticipate and thwart the attacks of September 11, 2001.
7. Describe how historical events have shaped American intelligence efforts of today.

Revolutionary War to the Civil War

- George Washington: Nation's first
“Spymaster”
~Espionage Act
- Nathan Hale
~“I regret that I have but one life to lose
for my country.”

Civil War to World War I

- Allen Pinkerton
- Harriet Tubman
 - **Black Dispatches**
- Office of Naval Intelligence (1882) / Army Military Intelligence Division (1885)

Law Enforcement Intelligence: The Palmer Raids

- Early 1900s: Radical anarchists bombed government authorities and businesses.
 - Wall Street Bombing, 1920
- Attorney General Mitchell Palmer made the General Intelligence Division (GID) part of DOJ's Bureau of Investigation.
 - J. Edgar Hoover appointed director of GID, 1919
- The Bureau of Investigation spearheaded a series of raids against suspected anarchists.

Black Chamber

"Gentlemen do not read each other's mail."

~ Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson,
1929

Pearl Harbor and World War II

- An intelligence failure
- Intelligence developments were critical to the war effort
 - **Coordinator of Information** was created to integrate intelligence
 - The **Office of Strategic Services** – the first true intelligence service
 - The Bureau operated the **Special Intelligence Service**
 - **Project Ultra**

The Cold War

- America needed a permanent intelligence agency.
- The Communist Revolution
- Winston Churchill
 - **Iron Curtain**
- The philosophy of **containment**
- A series of proxy wars
 - **Mutually Assured Destruction**

The Cold War

- The National Security Act of 1947
 - CIA
 - It was not given law enforcement powers.
 - It was mandated to operate primarily outside of the United States.
 - National Security Council
 - It established laws relating to intelligence collection and covert activities.

The Cold War

- The Korean War
 - An intelligence failure
 - Identified specific gaps in U.S. intelligence
 - No communication within the military
 - The war led to the creation of the DIA - its mission included collecting, analyzing, and integrating intelligence and advising in matters pertaining to military intelligence.

Cold War

“When the fate of a nation and the lives of its soldiers are at stake, gentlemen do read each others’ mail — if they can get their hands on it.”

~ CIA Director Allen Dulles, 1963

The Cold War

- NSA
 - A super-secret organization whose mission was strictly SIGINT
- IMINT
 - The U-2
 - **Francis Gary Powers**
- Cuba
 - Castro assassination attempts
 - **Bay of Pigs**
 - The compromise of the **Cuban Missile Crisis**

The Cold War

- The Vietnam Era
 - The overthrow of Diem
 - The underestimated Vietcong and the North Vietnamese
 - An unpopular war – 1 million deployed; 56,000 killed
- The War at Home
 - **COINTELPRO**
 - **Operation Chaos**

The Cold War

- Watergate and the Pike and Church Committees
 - Nixon resigns
 - No trust in the government
 - Intelligence agencies under scrutiny
 - **Pike and Church**
 - **FISA (1978)**
 - Provided oversight
 - Regulated electronic surveillance and physical searches
 - FISC

The Cold War

- The Carter Years
 - The Shah of Iran
 - Iran's hatred for the U.S. grows
 - The Iran Hostage Crisis
 - U.S. assistance of the mujahedeen
- The Reagan Years: The End of the Cold War
 - Soviet troops defeated
- The End of the Soviet Union
 - The fall of the Berlin Wall

The Emergence of Terrorism

- A multi-polar world emerges
- Terrorism becomes the “new threat”
 - Suicide bombings against the American embassy and Marine barracks in Beirut
 - The bombing of Pan American World Airways flight 103
- The Mujahedeen turns against the U.S.
 - Osama bin Laden
 - Al Qa’ida
 - 1993 WTC bombings
 - Nairobi and Dar es Salaam
 - *USS Cole*
- Cold War mentality

Espionage in the 80s and 90s

- 1985 – the **Year of the Spy**
- Aldrich Ames
- Earl Edwin Pitts
- Harold James Nicholson
- Robert Hanssen

The Clinton Years

- Peace Dividend
- Domestic Terrorism
 - Timothy McVeigh
 - David Koresh and the Branch Davidians

9/11 and its Aftermath

- No one was prepared
- Terrorism was now THE threat
- Missions and roles changed overnight
- The findings of the **9/11 Commission**
 - No one understood the gravity of the al Qa'ida threat.
 - Agencies were not equipped.
 - The Cold War mentality would no longer work.

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 & the Creation of the DNI

- **PATRIOT Act**
- The creation of the **Department of Homeland Security**
- **IRTPA**
 - DNI
 - Vision 2015
 - NCTC
 - Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board
- The Reorganization of the IC

Recent Developments in the Struggle Against Terrorism

- Thwarted domestic attacks
- Capturing and killing of al Qa'ida leaders
- Osama bin Laden killed
- Rise of Islamic State (ISIS)
- Competition between ISIS and al Qa'ida

Recent Developments in the Intelligence World

President Trump and the Intelligence Community get off to a rocky start:

“Intelligence agencies should never have allowed this fake news to ‘leak’ into the public. One last shot at me. Are we living in Nazi Germany?”

~President Elect Trump Tweet, January 11, 2017

Conclusion

- The U.S. intelligence infrastructure today is a product of its history.
- Its evolution appears to have been driven by both its failures and its successes.
- It is a tricky business.
- The history that is being written today is creating the intelligence world of tomorrow.