NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SCIENCE – *Beyond the Great Divide in Analysis and Policy* - Review-

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At the beginning of 2015 the volume *National Intelligence and Science – Beyond the Great Divide in Analysis and Policy* (240 pp.), authored by two renowned scholars in the field of intelligence studies, Wilhelm Agrell and Gregory Treverton, was published by Oxford University Press. Wilhelm Agrell is a Professor within the Lund University, where he teaches courses focused on Intelligence Analysis; and Visiting Professor at the Swedish National Defence College. Author and editor of several volumes on intelligence, his research interests include topics such as intelligence transformation, the use and limits of scientific methods in intelligence analysis, the history of early Cold War intelligence.

Gregory Treverton is currently holding the position of National Intelligence Council Chairman. He has held several leadership positions within the American executive; he was a Director within RAND Corporation and at the time of this volume's writing he was Visiting Scholar at the Swedish National Defence College. His areas of expertise include intelligence transformation, countering transnational risks, prospective analysis, the public-private partnership, and the role of social media in the cooperation and analysis process.

The objective assumed by the two authors is to analyse intelligence from a perspective that has been less debated within the specific literature – as one of several modes of knowledge production for action, along with other fields, and especially scientific research. Thus, intelligence becomes "a way to define problems, structure data, formulate and test explanations, and manage uncertainty in a social context" particularly complex.

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Uncertainty is the *leitmotiv* of this volume and the main factor influencing the development and convergence of the two fields that are permanently analysed from a mirror reflection perspective within the book's nine chapters – intelligence and science.

According to the authors, the point of departure for this book is the observation of two simultaneous, and possibly converging, trends, with a common denominator in the rise of complex societal risks, characterized by a high degree of uncertainty. Thus, if during the Cold War period, assessing the enemy seemed to have a more clearly defined framework, as the elements upon which there was a certain uncertainty decreased as new data was collected, nowadays, we are witnessing an opposite process: as new data becomes available, de degree of uncertainty related to the evolution of the new type of ricks, complex and novel, seems to increase.

The first trend is referring to the increasing pressure for the evolution of intelligence to a more "scientific" form, for developing and leveraging analytic skills and using lessons learned within intelligence structures. As early as 1955, Sherman Kent advocated for the development of intelligence analysis into the direction of a scientific discipline included in the sphere of positivist social sciences. However, 60 years later, "the epistemological basis for intelligence assessments tends to consist of a rather unsophisticated mixture of common sense, brainstorming, and established practice within a closed profession – and as such not comprehensible to outsiders".

In order to respond to the demand of using scientific methods to handle uncertainty and validate the analytic products elaborated, intelligence structures need to move away from the organizational culture based on secrecy and the need to know principle and to foster intra and inter-organizational cooperation, processes metaphorically called by the authors "*inter-intelligence*" and "*trans-intelligence*", concepts similar to those of inter-disciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity, which are characteristic for the scientific community, that is faced with managing similar challenges in adapting its structures and *modus operandi* to the more and more complex problems it must find solutions to.

The second trend is related to the shift of scientific researchers' focus from disciplinary research to the multi-disciplinary one, as a consequence of the public pressure for getting scientific results that are socially relevant, and can support the achievement of some public policies objectives.

If during the last century scientific knowledge was characterized by disciplinary specialization and the lack of cooperation between experts from different disciplines (similar to the intelligence activity undertaken at the same time frame), as the stakeholders' requests grew in number and

complexity, a major restructuring of the scientific field was achieved, in terms of activity organization and mode of knowledge production. Thus, in fields like urban studies, health, environment, or climate change, the dividing line between natural and social sciences had to be crossed, as researchers are forced to draw conclusions and supply scientific advice under increasing uncertainty.

In this framework, the authors of the book assume as their main hypothesis the fact that we are witnessing a process in which intelligence is becoming more "scientific", resembling more the new type of scientific efforts that have a complex and trans-disciplinary nature, and are target-oriented. Simultaneously, the new type of inter- and trans- disciplinary scientific research, focused on problem solving, is becoming more like intelligence in focusing its efforts on risk assessments and probabilities, and elaborating warnings and communicating not only the results attained but also the uncertainties identified with the stakeholders. As Agrell and Treverton underline, we are witnessing not so much to a bridging of the traditional divide between intelligence and Academia, but rather to "a development that is moving beyond both these traditional modes of knowledge production, thereby addressing the divide between the knowledge producers and the knowledge users, (…), between those responsible for assessments under uncertainty and those who have to comprehend, value, and act on those assessments".

The structure of the book reflects the cognitive oscillation between the "main characters". The first chapter starts by analysing a TV show where the participants are Nobel Prize winners, and the conclusion of the debate is that science has the duty to create the premises for innovation development, simultaneously with that of elaborating warnings about long term complex risks, such as global warming. Negative issues were also debated: the oversized demand for deliverables, the conundrum between expectations and uncertainty, and the disastrous consequences of losing the trust of the general public, which will turn to other so-called knowledge and alternative risk assessments providers.

Then, the authors imagine a similar debate, but this time the participants are the best intelligence analysts in the world. The debate topics would be different, but in the same time it would tackle similar problems: the loss of public trust as a consequence of highly broadcasted intelligence failures (the terrorist attacks from 2001, the war in Iraq, the Breivik case), the need to intensify intelligence cooperation and upgrade analysis, a wider public outreach and a better public communication, in order to legitimize the restriction of certain rights and liberties in the view of ensuring security.

The second chapter particularizes the divide between the scientific and intelligence realm, by analysing how the Second World War drove the two fields together, and how the Cold War drifted enhanced the initial gap. The authors ask themselves if we are witnessing a new convergence of the fields, especially as science becomes more entwined with the process of public policy substantiation.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to intelligence analysis, laying out some fundamentals of the process: types of problems, needs and beneficiaries. A particular focus is laid on the approaches of Clausewitz (he sees uncertainty as a precondition) and Jomini (he seeks to remove uncertainty and find the right answer) related to managing uncertainty. Also, the efficiency of the traditional intelligence cycle, focused on collection, is put under question, and alternatives to improve it are presented.

The next chapter is dedicated to science and looks at a series of failures in this field, thus identifying problems similar to those detailed in the case of intelligence analysis: the inadvertent establishment of a divide between risk and threat; the inability to communicate uncertainty in a visible, easily comprehensible, and actionable way; and the pitfalls of consensus assessments. Dealing with similar problems thus represents an argument for the cooperation between the two knowledge producing fields and the transfer of know how. As enhanced by the volume "intelligence has much to learn from science…operating in a fluid network structure, interacting with the public, stakeholders, and the policy domain in a way traditionally unthinkable in intelligence". On the other hand, science has numerous lessons to learn from intelligence analysis about the classical structural and conceptual roots of failed assessments.

Chapter 5 is drawing a series of analogies between intelligence and other fields. Although the literature in the field focused more on the comparison between intelligence analysis and medicine, and social and natural sciences, the authors identify several novel perspectives, and describe styles of analysis, ways to communicate uncertainty and collect data in fields such as sociology, anthropology, archaeology, journalism or weather forecasting.

The next chapter analyses three common issues that intelligence, medicine and public policy are facing: uncertainty; the focus on self-actions and their implications; and the need to enhance public transparency and outreach. The authors also analyse the role of social media instruments in transforming intelligence. These technologies "completely blur the distinctions between collectors, analysts, and operators, or between producers and consumers… they completely upset existing notions about what intelligence's "products" are."

The advantages of the new collaborative technologies such as wikis, blogs, platforms, and so on, and their impact on reforming the intelligence process are detailed in Chapter 7, which is also tackling the issue of intelligence failures and the reasons why often post event enquiries have not led to the expected transformations of the field, and the avoidance of new failures. In addition, the authors advocate for an intelligence paradigm shift, as intelligence beneficiaries are no longer treated as plain receivers of products but more like clients, to which intelligence services offer advice and help.

The penultimate chapter takes up a risk that seems to affect all fields: politicization. By analysing some case studies from the British, American or Nordic space, the authors conclude that this risk does not manifest itself as a subordination under the political which gives orders, but rather through the fact that intelligence analysts, or any other knowledge producer, are distorting the results, as they self-deter from presenting hypotheses contrary to the response expected by the intelligence beneficiaries.

The concluding chapter returns to the recurring theme of uncertainty. As science and intelligence are increasingly called upon to legitimize and guide the management of complex societal risks, new institutional forms are emerging, and old processes are yielding to new approaches. For instance, the sequential steps of the traditional intelligence cycle are becoming obsolete, and in a world of "mass data, we are less and less likely to start with requirements or formulated hypotheses and more to begin with bits and pieces that might, but only might, constitute part of an answer to questions not yet posed and perhaps not yet even thinkable".

The volume represents a plea for enhancing the cooperation between the intelligence community and the scientific one, as they are the main elements capable of efficiently managing the challenges of the current society which stands under the sign of risks.

The expertise of the authors, the concise language, the plethora of case studies and novel perspectives recommend this volume
development of an intelligence theory.

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