



STUDIES IN INTELLIGENCE
70 YEARS OF THE CIA'S
FLAGSHIP PROFESSIONAL
JOURNAL

presented by Dan ROMAN

September 2025 marks the 70th anniversary of *Studies in Intelligence*¹, the CIA's authoritative publication dedicated to the art and science of intelligence. Since its founding, the journal has stood the test of time as a platform dedicated to reflection, debate, and the transmission of lessons learned within the intelligence profession. Over the decades, it has become not only a landmark for the American intelligence community but also a valuable source for scholars and practitioners worldwide. Through its articles, *Studies in Intelligence* has managed to bridge theoretical reflection with the practical lessons of intelligence work, contributing decisively to the consolidation of a professional culture based on learning, history, and institutional memory.

Origins and mission

The creation of the journal is closely linked to the vision of Sherman Kent, regarded as “the father of intelligence analysis”. Coming from an academic background (he was a history professor at Yale), Kent

¹ Please see the collection of the journal on the official website. The source for the image is <https://intelligencestudies.utexas.edu/news/isp-director-s-essay-on-intelligence-integration-in-studies-in-intelligence/>

believed that the success of intelligence work required more than clandestine operations or the collection of raw data. For him, the key lay in developing a solid conceptual and methodological foundation for analysis.

Thus, in 1955, he initiated *Studies in Intelligence* as an in-house journal designed to encourage critical reflection on intelligence practice, stimulate the exchange of ideas among professionals, and preserve experiences and lessons learned. From the outset, its mission was clearly defined: “to contribute to the understanding, improvement, and transmission of the art and science of intelligence.” More than a professional publication, Kent envisioned a body of specialized literature that, at that time, was virtually non-existent.

Structure and content

The journal is published quarterly and includes articles covering a wide range of topics:

- ✓ intelligence analysis – methodologies, forecasting techniques, comparative evaluations;
- ✓ operations and clandestine practices – generally presented as historical studies or lessons learned from past experiences;
- ✓ technology and innovation – the role of new tools in the collection and processing of information;
- ✓ the history of intelligence – case studies on the Cold War, regional conflicts, or key moments in the evolution of the CIA and other services;
- ✓ book reviews – designed to maintain the connection between the intelligence community and the relevant academic and literary environment.

Although a significant portion of the content is classified and circulates only within the American intelligence community, the CIA also publishes an unclassified edition of the journal, available to the general public on its official website. This edition allows researchers, journalists, and practitioners from other countries to gain a better understanding of the theoretical and methodological concerns of American intelligence.

The role in the CIA's professional culture

In an organization where secrecy is the rule, *Studies in Intelligence* has become a controlled but essential space for institutional self-reflection. The publication encourages the analysis of both successes and failures in a manner that allows organizational learning and helps avoid repeating mistakes.

Moreover, the journal reinforces the idea that intelligence is not merely a technical activity, but also an intellectual endeavor that requires the development of critical thinking, argumentative skills, and a constant dialogue between practitioners and theorists. In this sense, *Studies in Intelligence* plays a role similar to that of academic journals in political science or strategic studies, while remaining deeply rooted in the practice of intelligence services.

Through its open edition, *Studies in Intelligence* has become an important source for researchers worldwide. Numerous academic works on the history of the CIA, on strategic analysis, or on forecasting methodologies cite articles published in this journal.

In addition, the articles published between 1955 and 1991 are available almost in their entirety through the *CIA Reading Room* or, more simply, on the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) website, offering access to a particularly valuable archive for research into the history of American intelligence.

For the international intelligence community, *Studies in Intelligence* provides a model of selective transparency and continuous professionalization. The fact that the CIA has chosen to share part of its reflections and lessons with the broader public demonstrates not only its desire to build a positive institutional image but also its conviction that a modern intelligence service must engage in dialogue with society and with the academic environment.

Relevance in the context of the development of intelligence studies

Internationally, there is a growing trend in the development of intelligence studies as an academic and professional discipline. In universities, research institutes, and practitioner communities, intelligence is analyzed from multiple perspectives: historical, methodological, technological, and ethical.

In this context, *Studies in Intelligence* plays the role of a catalyst, offering a model of institutional reflection and serving as a bridge between secret practice and open debate. The lessons and approaches promoted in its pages can inspire not only American professionals but also academic communities and intelligence organizations around the world, which are in a continuous process of consolidation and modernization.

Conclusions

After seven decades of uninterrupted publication, *Studies in Intelligence* continues to stand as a central pillar in the professional architecture of the CIA. The journal has consistently demonstrated that intelligence is not confined to clandestine operations or secret reports, but is also an intellectual discipline with its own methods, theories, and debates. Seventy years on, it remains a unique forum for critical reflection and institutional learning, a bridge between past lessons and future challenges. For readers and researchers, CIA's *Studies in Intelligence* offers a rare window into how the world's most renowned intelligence agency cultivates its memory, strengthens its professional culture, and prepares for the uncertainties ahead. More than a publication, it is a laboratory of ideas that shows how national security is built not only through action, but equally through reflection.²

References:

1. Unclassified edition of *Studies in Intelligence*: CIA.gov – Studies in Intelligence.
2. Historical archive (1955–1991), available through the *CIA Reading Room*.
3. *National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)*: NARA – Studies in Intelligence.

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