

**Herman, Michael. Intelligence Services in the Information Age.
London: Frank Cass, 2001.**

Miles Markovic

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Book Reviews

Herman, Michael. *Intelligence Services in the Information Age*. London: Frank Cass, 2001.

University students are often told that they don't live in reality. They work, live and play in a world that routinely fails to consider realities such as budgets, public opinion, elections, and other aspects of the "real world." However, occasionally the immensely wide chasm between academia and reality is linked by a well-written text that allows students of a specific subject to understand the importance of incorporating reality with theory. For the young academic subject of intelligence, Michael Herman's *Intelligence Services in the Information Age* is such a text.

Herman continues to impress readers by offering exclusive insight into Cold War intelligence and examining the British Intelligence Services, their problems, and arguments for reform. The text is comprised of a number of independent papers which when combined expose the reader to an accurate picture of the intelligence community. Since publication, many of Herman's topics have been discussed in a variety of different publications and while they do provide some insight, many intelligence professionals or students of the subject are familiar with the points raised by Herman. Problems, such as inter-service rivalry and lack of constructive communication between foreign and domestic intelligence services, are known to have contributed to the general intelligence failure of 11 September 2001.

Of particular interest is Chapter 9 entitled "The Cold War: Did Intelligence Make a Difference?" While considering the effects of intelligence in the Cold War, two schools of thought are outlined by Herman. He outlines that Cold War intelligence either produced a better understanding of enemy intentions and developments and thus reduced the possibility of misinterpretation, or intensified the confrontation between East and West. While the academic debate over this chapter will no doubt produce some heated discussions, individuals or countries who suffered a direct loss from such incidents as the shoot down of Korean Airlines Flight 007 will have a negative opinion of Cold War intelligence successes. The value of this chapter for university classes presents itself in the endless debate the section can trigger.

By far, the most engaging chapter to this reviewer is Herman's discussion of Intelligence and International Ethics in Chapter 13. Ethics and intelligence is a combination seldom seen. This rarity can be attributed to the nature of the clandestine services, but Herman expertly illustrates the relationship between the perils of information gathering and the assurances provided by the gathered information. The world of intelligence is one where the ends justify the means in the vast majority of cases. The cost-benefit analysis is up to the reader to decide. Herman further considers the domestic problems of intelligence services tailoring their information or situations in such ways as to ensure increased expenditure thereby bringing their integrity into question.

The chapter on ethical behaviour continues by examining the idea of treating intelligence as an international commodity. The post-Cold War era has become an unstable and dangerous place. State to state relations are no longer the sole targets of intelligence services. Rogue or isolated nations, non-state actors and industrial espionage are threats that transcend international borders, ignore styles of government and threaten peace-loving nations. Treatment of intelligence as a commodity could place real strength behind increased intelligence cooperation.

Having enjoyed Herman's views and arguments one critique came to mind in reflecting on the content of this work. Those who either directly contribute to the intelligence services or study the academic subject, will generally agree with Herman's arguments and perspectives. However, perhaps a more simple and direct effort should have been placed on the overall benefits of intelligence to government decision makers. It is the decision makers who should be made to understand the uses and purpose of intelligence. We already know.

This book is particularly beneficial as a university level reader to both introduce a student to intelligence studies and to build on existing knowledge on the nature of intelligence. In very easy to understand language, Herman manages to help bridge the gap between academia and reality, theory and practice. Overall, *Intelligence Services in the Information Age* is an excellent source on British and Western intelligence. My only hope is that such a text becomes required reading for the decisionmaking executive of current governments who are threatening to unleash the dogs of war without first successfully establishing the basis for degrading mankind to warfare.

Miles Markovic completed a Master of Arts degree in political science at the University of Guelph in 2002. His graduate thesis examined the benefits and necessity of providing senior decision makers with timely and accurate intelligence on which to base their foreign policy decisions.