

# Chapter 21

## Intelligence Studies, Theory, and Intergroup Conflict and Resolution: Theory and Beyond

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### ABSTRACT

*The study of intelligence traditionally relies on descriptive and case study approaches. However, the study of intelligence should shift from this reliance on case study approaches to one grounded in multidisciplinary theory. In particular, social psychological approaches should be fully integrated into an intelligence studies curriculum. These theories inform our understanding of intergroup processes, specifically intergroup conflict, so that we can begin to develop appropriate conflict resolution strategies.*

### INTRODUCTION

Intelligence Studies programs tend to emphasize descriptive approaches to the understanding of intelligence. This includes describing the evolution and function of intelligence bodies; aspects of intelligence roles, including how to effectively carry out these roles; processes; structured analysis techniques; and other pertinent information. The study of intelligence also focuses on case studies to illustrate various aspects of intelligence. Several authors provide good insight into the history of intelligence through the use of case studies (see Aldrich, 2002; Cockburn & Cockburn, 1991; Jakub, 1998). There is no doubt that having a solid foundation of the aforementioned descriptive aspects is important, and that the dependence on case studies using declassified documentation exposes students of intelligence studies to the various important aspects of intelligence. However, having this solid foundation in intelligence is no longer enough. Despite the benefits of using case studies, we must recognize that it runs the risk of

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creating well-versed historians of intelligence. Thus, overreliance on case study approach may result in intelligence analysts who become clouded in historical imperatives and are not able to extrapolate the historical lessons to current situations and events. Foundation in multidisciplinary theory is crucial to move the study of intelligence from a descriptive case study-based discipline to one grounded in theory that can analyze, interpret, explain, and even predict issues, events, and situations. Social psychological theories in particular help inform our understanding of both the reasons for conflict and appropriate avenues of conflict resolution.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 took great pains to enhance the concept of national intelligence. Traditional notions of intelligence, with an emphasis on a distinction between international and domestic concerns, are organized around specific sources and limited methods. The Act, instead, emphasized timeliness and accuracy, demanding that intelligence be organized around issues or problems, not solely sources:

*Paragraph (5) of section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 401a) is amended to read as follows:*

*“(5) The terms ‘national intelligence’ and ‘intelligence related to national security’ refer to all intelligence, regardless of the source from which derived and including information gathered within or outside the United States, that—*

*“(A) pertains, as determined consistent with any guidance issued by the President, to more than one United States Government agency; and*

*“(B) that involves—*

*“(i) threats to the United States, its people, property, or interests;*

*“(ii) the development, proliferation, or use of weapons of mass destruction; or*

*“(iii) any other matter bearing on United States national or homeland security.”. (Intelligence Prevention and Reform Act, 2004).*

Intelligence analysts must be able to assess a variety of situations through diverse perspectives, rather than just rely on source-based information. This in turn requires that intelligence analysts have the skills and knowledge to analyze, interpret, and explain issues, events, and situations based on a variety of variables. Unfortunately, based in large part on the focus on case studies and source intelligence, intelligence studies, unlike other disciplines, does not have a body of theoretical work on which to base this new and definitely necessary emphasis. However, there are a variety of theories from multiple disciplines from which intelligence studies can borrow that may immensely benefit the intelligence studies field. It is

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