

Secret Intelligence, Shifting Power and the Global South

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The UKUSA intelligence alliance spends over \$100 billion a year on intelligence. Ten years after 9/11, the Western intelligence machine is certainly bigger - but not necessarily better. It continues to privilege old-fashioned strategic analysis for policy-makers. Leading commentators have focused on the panacea of top-down reform but these policy prescriptions perpetuate underlying Anglo-Saxon presumptions about what intelligence is. Although intelligence is a global business, when we talk about intelligence we tend to ignore new developments in the global south. This paper explains why this is and then explores the cases of China, India and South Africa to suggest how we might begin to rethink our intelligence communities and their tasks. Future success is less about reforming legacy organizations and more about practicing the art of 'intelligence among the people'. While the United States remains the world's most significant military power, its strategic culture is unsuited to the new security terrain and arguably other countries in the Global South do these things rather better.

During the last decade, American intelligence is widely perceived to have underperformed. Prominent examples are the 9/11 attacks and Iraqi WMD – but we might also include indifferent intelligence support for the military effort in Afghanistan underlined by the Flynn report. Policy-makers and seasoned academic commentators alike believe the intelligence machine to be in trouble. Richard Betts has argued that policy-makers should simply revise their expectation downwards, attributing current disappointments to unrealistic expectations.¹ Others, including Amy Zegart, believe meaningful reform is possible and have attributed recent difficulties to a kind of institutional arteriosclerosis. Gregory Treverton also favours structural change. Robert Jervis argues that if analysts had only deployed good political science methods they would have avoided some of their more lamentable recent errors.²

These eminent commentators are all pathologists of the strategic intelligence process. As yet we have failed to step back to ask the wider questions about America's intelligence culture. Is the continued focus on strategic intelligence for policy appropriate for the twenty-first century? In the real world, four modes of

intelligence now predominate. None of them are about strategic intelligence. The lead activity is a kind of globalised counter-terrorism enforcement operation which involves elaborate co-operation with new partners – mostly the internal security agencies of small states in the global south. This activity is largely operational and has called into question both the traditional intelligence cycle and the division between foreign and domestic intelligence activity. Not far behind is intelligence support on the ground for major wars in Iraq, Afghanistan - and more recently Somalia and Libya - which has increasingly seen national intelligence assets deployed to support tactical activities. A third area is covert action and disruption including vigorous activity against organised crime. Finally, we have a resurgence of counter-intelligence against state-based opponents, especially in cyber-space. Yet our current notions of intelligence are not attuned to these sorts of activities or what we can learn from rising powers.³

Intelligence as an extension of the Anglosphere

The majority of intelligence writing is strongly focused on the United States and its English-speaking allies. While this work is sophisticated, it has been produced by a community of Anglo-Saxon scholars who often presume that they are describing intelligence universally. Indeed, much academic writing on intelligence tends to view the subject as an adjunct to American foreign policy making, locating the focus of the debate firmly within Washington's Beltway.⁴ The predominance of American approaches in international security more generally and its tendency to ignore the Global South has been widely discussed, and in some quarters much lamented. In reality, this state of affairs is hardly surprising, given the genealogical inter-play of writing on international security with the complexities of nuclear strategy during the first three decades of the Cold War.⁵ By contrast, the predominance of the American paradigm in the field of intelligence is more of a puzzle, given that most states in the world have a substantial tradition of intelligence and internal security organisations, or else clandestine activity.⁶ This paper asks, what are the causes and consequences of this persistent Anglo-Saxon myopia? Moreover, would an approach that focuses more strongly on the Global South allow us to realise the true potential of intelligence?

Accordingly, academic ideas of intelligence often bear little relationship to representative mainstream intelligence activity around the world. Several deleterious

consequences flow from this. First, in an era when intelligence is changing fast and unprecedented demands have been made on practitioners, we have an impoverished view of what new forms our own intelligence might take. Second, we have not fully appreciated the full consequences of a shift of intelligence focus from things to people. We might call this new challenge ‘intelligence among the people’ - an extension of the term used by General Sir Rupert Smith to denote a new paradigm in which ‘all the people, anywhere - are the battlefield’. People are the ‘objectives to be won’ - yet we remain largely technocratic and so we are behind the curve in the people business.⁷ Third, over the last decade, Anglo-Saxon countries have undertaken unprecedented effort to encourage security sector reform by supporting expansion and change amongst the intelligence and security services of the the global south. Yet the prevailing tendency to export advice based largely on our own models may be mistaken.⁸

The UKUSA intelligence alliance now spends close to \$100 billion a year. Reportedly, some 854,000 people hold top-secret clearances in the United States alone allowing them to see high-grade intelligence product, many of them provided by some 2000 private companies. No-one is really sure how much this sprawling enterprise costs or how many people it employs.⁹ Certainly the benefits derived from intelligence do not appear to be commensurate with the scale of American spending in this area. Arguably we need to ask different questions - and above all - more comparative questions about the nature of intelligence and what it can deliver.¹⁰ What is French intelligence culture, and why has Paris suffered no large-scale terrorist attacks since the mid-1990s, despite its large ethnic populations drawn from troubled regions in the Middle East and North Africa? And why have the British and the Spanish fared relatively poorly by comparison on counter-terrorism intelligence? What is the nature of Chinese intelligence culture and does this help us to explain why China seems has proved adept at aggressive intelligence collection in cyber-space? Why are the small intelligence services of countries like Indonesia, Jordan and South Africa highly-regarded amongst professionals and how do they conceptualize their activity?

In the West, the idea of ‘intelligence amongst the people’ is uncomfortable. One of the reasons that out-dated notions of intelligence persist in the West is because they seem hygienic. For the Anglosphere, with its satellites hovering two hundred miles or so above the earth, the ideal forms of intelligence are clean, uncontroversial

and focused on foreigners. Such dispositions provoke few conflicts between national security imperatives and core values. Meanwhile, the dystopian obverse has long been the ‘counter-intelligence state’, typified by the countries such as the former East Germany. Indeed, the Russian tradition has been to celebrate the “Chekists” as guardians of the people against both internal and external enemies.¹¹ This alternative security universe is now all but extinct, but many former Soviet states, including Putin’s Russia, have witnessed the emergence of a more complex state-private kleptocracy with security agencies at their centre.¹²

More broadly, across many of the countries of the Middle East, Africa Asia and Latin America, a case could be made for a general typology of intelligence that is more focused on regime security and upon covert action. Perhaps this post-colonial conception of intelligence, focused on what we might call the ‘globalised world of domestic security’, is the emerging model. Moreover, the inconvenient truth is that the intelligence services of semi-authoritarian countries are precisely those that the West has been most dependent upon for co-operation against terrorism over the last ten years. Either way, with the advent of the “Arab Spring” these are issues to which we will have to devote more attention. Across the Global South, how we conceive of security sector reform in this context is a fundamental challenge.

Analysing different intelligence cultures across the Global South is likely to be difficult. We often have little more than outline accounts of the more obscure national intelligence services, and where they are written by outsiders they are often tinged with “Orientalism”. We lack meaningful analysis of the majority of the world’s intelligence communities or their underlying conceptions of what intelligence means.¹³ Above all we lack alternative models of how intelligence might relate to individual human being and notions of community. This paper seeks to take a first step by using the concept of strategic culture to consider why an outdated idea of intelligence developed by the United States and its UKUSA partners remains pre-eminent. Our explanation also draws on the notion of ethnocentrism first outlined by Jack Snyder and later developed by Ken Booth. It explores in outline the possible sources of a reconceptualization of intelligence, including the approaches adopted by China and South Africa.¹⁴

Is there such a thing as intelligence culture?

The notion of strategic cultures commands wide consensus, and if states have strategic cultures then they most likely also have related intelligence cultures.¹⁵ Some of the first explorations of strategic culture were offered by Jack Snyder in 1977. In attempting to understand how Moscow thought about nuclear weapons, he suggested that we might consider how the total sum of ideas, conditioned behaviours and historic patterns of thought affected a national strategic community. The implication was that a nation's sense of its own politico-military experience over time was important.¹⁶ Despite these intriguing ruminations, Snyder eventually came to cast doubt on the value of cultural explanations, insisting that cause and effect were so distant that it would be difficult for political scientists to demonstrate any linkage in a rigorous way.¹⁷

The UK strategic theorist Ken Booth was less anxious about deploying strategic culture.¹⁸ In a classic monograph penned in 1979, he related both strategic culture and ethnocentrism to the problem of 'groupthink' with its subliminal tendencies towards bureaucratic consensus. He argued that while ethnocentrism does not automatically lead to groupthink, it increases the likelihood that groupthink will occur, with the desire for consensus overriding realistic appraisals of alternative ideas and courses of action.¹⁹ Booth asserts that ethnocentrism and groupthink work in tandem to produce stereotyped images of the 'outgroups' and a tendency for collective judgements to be self-confirming and therefore riskier than would otherwise be the case.²⁰ However, debates on strategic culture have become tied into *behavioural patterns* with respect to the use of force which derive from national historical experience.²¹ Accordingly, these notions have become caught up in a complex methodological debate about how far it is possible to use the concept in the context of strategy, while their relevance for intelligence has been neglected.²²

Booth was actually deploying the notion of intelligence and culture in two senses, one of them specific and one of them more general. In the specific sense, some of these issues about the impact of culture upon perception had already been raised by figures such as Robert Jervis.²³ Booth was also using the idea of strategic culture in a more general sense to capture the idea of a world-view. What we might call a fundamental cognitive orientation. Culture constrains how we think our intelligence institutions relate to a globalising world, what tasks they should perform and what we think intelligence might be.²⁴ In this wider sense, we are all potentially prisoners of

the ethnocentric dungeon. Moreover, while there is an emerging consensus that we need to take account of culture in the study of national security policy, it has not yet impacted upon realm of national intelligence communities.²⁵ Conversely, we might ask, can we Philip Davies is one of the few academics who have deployed the idea of culture in the context of intelligence, comparing the British and American analytic systems.²⁶ Arguably, the idea of culture has the potential to take us further in the realm of intelligence, explaining the role of institutionalised norms and values that countries associate with their intelligence communities, together with their place in the national psyche.²⁷ Escaping the cycle of pessimism, can we perhaps become conscious and strategic users of culture to achieve our intelligence goals.²⁸

Intelligence as Information: China and “Netspionage”

It is worthwhile asking how other major powers – particularly rising power - conceive of their intelligence effort, how does this relate to their national strategies and what do they prioritise? China is the epitome of a rising power, yet for Beijing, the strategic intelligence process to support policy-making is remarkably unimportant, while intelligence to implement policy means rather more. Mao Tse-tung was always sceptical about the value of intelligence and explained this to Kissinger: ‘...when your President issues and order, and you want information on certain question, then the intelligence reports come as so many snowflakes. We also have our intelligence service and it’s the same with them. They do not work well.’²⁹ Mao’s observations reflect the fact that the senior Chinese decision-makers tend to emphasise the strategic intentions of their opponents, and spend less time attempting to measure their capabilities or doing net assessments. Their self-conception is largely defensive and focuses on the perceived thwarting of China’s legitimate ambitions. This is a long term trend in Chinese foreign policy, currently reflected in the way that foreign policy think tanks have come to play an increasing role not only in policy making but also in intelligence analysis.³⁰

In China, the boundary between centres of intelligence analysis and think tanks is notably thin. The core of China’s national security community in Beijing is focused upon by think tanks and other research entities with strong links to state institutions. PLA2, the military intelligence wing of the Chinese Army works closely

with a group of research bodies that analyse intelligence, undertake open source research and exchange and conduct outward facing roles. A good example is the China Institute for International Strategic Studies which is headed by the senior military officers who also oversee military intelligence. The rapid expansion and acceleration of Beijing's national security think tanks, and their ability to interact freely with overseas scholars is fascinating. On the one hand, these entities are genuinely fulfilling the role of think tanks, yet on the other hand their ties to the Chinese intelligence community are substantial. They appear to embody the advantages of both secrecy and yet relative openness.³¹

Connected to this, historically speaking, the Chinese vocabulary has not distinguished between "intelligence" and "information". Accordingly, their agencies operate differently from other espionage organizations by collecting large quantities of open material. They employ businessmen, academics or students who will be in their host country only a short time, rather than spending years cultivating a few high-level foreign sources or double agents. Where long-term espionage is conducted, the agents are often ethnically Chinese but well integrated into the society of the target country. The culture of Chinese espionage also reflects "Guanxi" the custom of employing personal networks for influence. Western counter-intelligence agencies find the traditional Chinese "human wave" technique of collection bewildering. This is not so much because of the numbers of people involved, but more because their activities focus on the painstaking collection of many pieces of "grey" technical literature which may be sensitive rather than secret. This challenges Western conceptions of what spying is. We know from recent defectors that some Chinese embassies abroad were forbidden to engage in what we might call classical espionage operations. At the same time there was an increasing distinction made between espionage *per se* and what was politely described as "general research".³²

Thinking about intelligence as "information" offers China notable advantages in an era characterised by the expansion of cyber-operations. The growth of Chinese "netspionage" is a good example of the widespread effort to acquire foreign military technology and scientific information. In order to fulfil its long-term military development goals, China plunders Western technology using a network of scientific, academic, and business contacts together with a sizeable programme of cyber-hacking.³³ In 2011, leaked State Department cables appear to have confirmed what some experts have been muttering about for several years, that China is now ahead of

the United States in the shadowy world of backdoor computer access. It appears that China has been able to access terabytes of secret information – ranging from passwords for a State Department database to designs for nuclear weapons.³⁴ This computer-based espionage is especially interesting since much of this appears to be carried out by networks of private hackers on behalf of, or alongside, government ministries. The ability of Chinese espionage to use privateers and to absorb the product seamlessly into its own industrial process reflects China's national economic complexion with its mixture of free-market and state corporatism.³⁵

Cyber-espionage has a strategic purpose, but does not constitute “strategic intelligence”. FBI Director, Robert S. Mueller, recently stated that: ‘China is stealing our secrets in an effort to leap ahead in terms of its military technology, but also the economic capability of China. It is substantial threat.’ By mining vast amounts of public data and accumulating information a drop at a time, even the West's secret programmes can be mapped in outline. The Chinese intelligence philosophy that underpins this approach emphasises that: ‘There are no walls that completely block the wind’.³⁶ Once access to computer networks has been gained, the hackers often implant software that logs keystrokes or else control programs which will permit access to further information. One of the most recent waves of computer attacks to be analysed is known as “Ghost Net” and has included the recording of sound and video over embedded microphones and webcams. “Ghost Net” successfully accessed some State Department computers. Nevertheless, the primary purpose of Chinese intelligence remains the acceleration of economic growth, rather than classical inter-state espionage. Their intelligence targets are focused on a long term-goal pursued over decades and is designed to exploit fundamental weaknesses in the security infrastructures of the West.³⁷

Conversely, Beijing has poured resources into counter-intelligence – a field which the West has sorely neglected since 2001. China probably spends more money on internal security than external security and while some would see this as oppressive, the Chinese would argue that this is less provocative than a pre-emptive strategy that seeks to address threats beyond her borders.³⁸ It is also worth noting that the conception of human security in Chinese translates not as “ren de anquan” or the security of the individual human being, but as “renlei de anquan” or the security of humankind. The collective idea of the group interest being more important than the

individual is significant, not least because it is suggestive of China's recent history as a constitutive part of its strategic culture.³⁹

At the same time, China's own internal security policy is changing. Over several decades it has moved from a strategy of widespread security prosecutions to one of deterrence, with less than 0.5% of court actions now focusing upon counter-revolutionary activity.⁴⁰ This is not to suggest that the West should emulate China and begin a campaign of wholesale computer espionage against commercial targets or praetorian security policing. However, China's radically different definition of what its security priorities are, what intelligence is and how it might benefit national purpose is worth reflecting upon. Moreover, China's mixture of state and private activity is beguiling. Despite the predominance of state political control, its ability to harness private providers of intelligence and its ability to disseminate the product to corporate users is impressive.⁴¹

Indian and Covert Action Culture

More than any secret service of a rising power, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's foreign intelligence agency, reflects the long tradition of covert action evinced by services in the Global South. Created in the late 1960s in the wake of India-China confrontations, the fact that India did not operate a proper overseas service until twenty years after its impendence also underlines the extent to which intelligence in the global south has tended to be inward facing and obsessed with domestic security. Indeed, one might venture the observation that an intense focus on domestic security (including the activities of exile groups), together with covert action and destabilisation might be as aid to be the frequent hallmarks of post-colonial security states across the Global South.⁴²

RAW has been most active with a range of interventions within the region for forty years. RAW was involved in the separation of East Pakistan to create Bangladesh in 1971 which is often cited as one of RAW's great success stories. In the 1980s it was heavily involved in the instability in Sri Lanka, initially assisting LTTE Tamil Tigers until it lost control of this group.⁴³ RAW has co-operated closely with Israel's Mossad - another agency that privileges covert action - and together they have been influential in Africa.

RAW's main focus is now a war of covert action with Pakistan's secret agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) focused on the dispute in Kashmir. This has been intensified by a perceived closeness between the ruling regime in Afghanistan and India. ISI sees India's growing presence in Pakistan as a potential launch-pad for RAW activities into Pakistan. India has been accused of aiding rebels in Pakistan's Baluchistan Province along the Afghan border.

RAW's focus on covert action has reflected the intense war in Afghanistan. RAW developed a close liaison relationship with Afghan intelligence agencies, since Pakistan was a mutual target. RAW valued Afghan assistance in tracking the activities of Sikh militants in Pakistan's tribal areas. During the covert war against Soviet occupation, which was often barely covert, ISI received a great deal of resource from Saudi Arabia, the USA, China and the UK for arming the Afghan mujahedeen against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. The ISI used some of this largesse to support instruments in the Punjab and Kashmir and even perhaps in Assam on the border of Bangladesh.⁴⁴

RAW responded by setting up its own proxies that carried out attacks inside Pakistan. These groups were suspected of carrying out bombings in major Pakistani cities, notably Karachi and Lahore. Several rounds of negotiation occurred between ISI and RAW in an attempt to end such activities.⁴⁵ The increasing evidence connecting ISI to groups responsible for the attacks in Mumbai underline the extent to which these efforts to rein in covert action across south Asia have not worked.⁴⁶ The Mumbai attacks also remind all states in the Global South, not only the toxicity of covert action but also the increasing difficulty of carrying out large-scale covert action with any hope of plausible deniability.⁴⁷ The same might be said of the operation against a Hamas leader in Dubai in 2010, which almost certainly was carried out by Mossad and which was retrospectively chronicled in remarkable detail.⁴⁸

As a result, one of the shifts we might see in the Global South is a move away from traditional covert action towards aggressive cyber war and what we might call electronic covert action. Countries such as India boast growing expertise in ICT and software industries, giving them real potential capability in this area. To what extent will we see India harness cyber power as part of a range of covert action capability over the next decade? In July 2013, the Indian government published its first ever National Cyber Security Policy (NCSP) but the possibility of setting up a cyber-

command with an offensive capability was considered too sensitive to be mentioned in this public document.⁴⁹

Security Sector Reform and the Arab Spring

Many Arab security agencies have suffered something of a bouleversement in the last five years and others are “on notice”. The private laments of CIA officers for the decline of their friends in the “Mukhabarat”, the feared security services of the Middle East, sit uncomfortably with the West’s public rhetoric concerning democratisation and security sector reform.⁵⁰ Approaches to co-operation with such services oscillate between two extremes. First, the utopian view that engagement with such services is beyond the pale and that Western intelligence co-operation should be limited to the Anglosphere, together with the agencies of a few other hygienic countries such as Switzerland and Norway. Second, the view taken by some former CIA practitioners that the hard-nosed services that once characterised Egypt, Libya and Jordan, and which are still in place in countries like Saudi Arabia are admirable because they brook no restriction and that we must become more like them.⁵¹ Neither attitude constitutes a sensible approach to intelligence across the global south.

Alliances with formidable services have provided the United States with much of its security intelligence since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, many of these relationships are much older. The United States is one of the few countries in the developed world with the resources to sustain truly global intelligence gathering operations. However, its focus on technocratic intelligence to support policy and large-scale military operations has led to a historic neglect of human espionage. Recently retired intelligence officers have revealed that the CIA still has few Non-Official Cover Officers and relatively few long-term penetrations overseas. Culturally, the CIA remains a curious foreign intelligence service with most of its staff based in Washington trapped behind byzantine layers of management.⁵² Meanwhile, the CIA’s increased drone operation over Pakistan and the Arab Peninsula are a perhaps symbol of this technocratic approach, constituting an activity that is carried out “above” rather than amongst the people.⁵³

Arguably, the US conception of intelligence in the Global South has been realist and transactional. The United States had tended to trade other security commodities with exotic allies in return for human intelligence provided by services that are the veteran agent runners in remote regions. As a result, Washington has the recurrent problem of depending too heavily on information obtained through liaison with foreign services rather than taking the time and making the effort to develop its own sources. Across the Mediterranean, the Middle East and North Africa the intelligence services of Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, France and Israel have filled the gap. More recently the CIA has developed a close relationship with the intelligence services of the Sudan, despite the fact that Sudan is itself on the State Department list of state sponsors of terrorism.⁵⁴

The “Arab Spring” has changed the landscape. The Egyptian and Libyan intelligence services are in disarray and even those still in business have been dismayed by America’s public disavowal of authoritarian leaders. Jordan’s long-feared security chief has been removed by the King as a gesture in the direction of democratisation. Perhaps the “Arab Spring” will succeed where endless blue-ribbon panels of intelligence reformers have failed – forcing the United States to reappraise how it conducts intelligence business across a vast swathe of the global south.⁵⁵ If we are indeed entering a new period of democratic transitions it is worth considering some of the recent unsung successes of intelligence and security sector reform. Although the public tend to perceive intelligence in these countries through the one-dimensional prism of press stories about general thuggery, in reality, there have also been some substantive achievements here. The West has exported good governance to countries as afar afield as Romania and Indonesia, not just in the narrow area of intelligence oversight, but also in the wider domain of security practices, resilience and counter-terrorism legislation. Arguably this should be a two-way street and there are things that we might consider importing from countries that boast radically different intelligence cultures.⁵⁶

Democratic Reform in South Africa

In the 1990s the post-apartheid government declared that change was ‘not only a matter of organisational restructuring’ it was instead about seeking to ‘establish a new culture of intelligence’ indeed even a new ‘philosophy of intelligence’.⁵⁷ Moreover, it

tells us much about the perils and promise of intelligence during democratic transitions. Transitions are periods of fragility and often require an increased rather than reduced intelligence capacity, yet this must be reconciled with democratic oversight, public confidence and an anticipation that intelligence should now support the rule of law. In the 1990s, the narrow state security focus of South African intelligence was broadened to encompass criminal targets as a result of concerns about poverty, unequal distribution of resources and even unemployment. Indeed, some African states have proved to be admirably creative in re-defining the mission of intelligence communities in socio-economic terms in the expectation that helping to support human security will help to rehabilitate these services whose past reputations were less than enviable. This was a conscious change of style in the direction of community ownership and has delivered some successes.⁵⁸

Security and intelligence services in emerging democracies certainly require clear mandates provided by legislation, central co-ordination, together with both judicial oversight and parliamentary accountability. However, in transitional or fragile states these mechanisms are often imperfect and need to work in tandem with a free press, civil society and traditional community networks to provide checks and balances.⁵⁹ Increasingly, informal mechanisms operate as the cutting edge of intelligence oversight, with the more formal mechanisms tending to follow along in their wake examining abuses uncovered by others. As such, intelligence and security sector reform in itself is unlikely to work without the wider context of democratic transition. Equally, major structural change represents the best opportunities for intelligence reform and for seeking to combine intelligence effectiveness with new conventions focused on ethical behaviour. David Omand has emphasized the importance of achieving public confidence in the intelligence community in a world of increasing respect for human rights and concern for personal privacy.⁶⁰

These sorts of agencies actually have much that is positive to contribute to new democracies. Visible reform of the intelligence services is an important symbol of regime change and is a crucial element if populations are to offer wholehearted support to new state structures. Yet in numerous cases, in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa, the retention of former intelligence officials from the old regime has caused difficulties. These can manifest themselves in the creation of old factions within the principal intelligence services and the creation of parallel intelligence organs. South Africa is a valuable case study precisely because all has not gone well.

Some have worried over the placement of ANC loyalists in key positions within the intelligence services and a tendency of officers to align with rival factions within the ruling ANC. Certainly we have seen periodic spates of resignations - first amongst inspectors general in the 1990s and more recently amongst intelligence chiefs. Arguably these problems should be taken, not as evidence of failure, but instead as a signal that a local form of constitutionalism is working and evolving.⁶¹

In South Africa, sensitivity to local requirements has been combined with selective policy transfer in the area of oversight and accountability, producing a hybrid model that is locally grounded and yet aspires to meet international expectations and norms.⁶² Intelligence oversight in South Africa incorporates both formal and informal mechanisms, creating a robust system that has served as a reference point for other the countries in the region as they have puzzled over matters of democratic governance and international intelligence co-operation.⁶³ In South Africa, together with Kenya and Ghana there is now a considerable body of law placing the intelligence services on the statute books and regulating their powers and behaviours of the intelligence services. The systems for supervision and oversight are improving and there are clear lines of control of budgets.⁶⁴ Perhaps the most impressive aspect of intelligence development in Africa is the creation of the establishment of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) in 2004. Proposed by the Angolan Foreign Intelligence Service, this group encourages cooperation between different African services with a focus on countering mercenary activity and terrorism. CISSA works increasingly closely with the African Union's Peace and Security Council on current conflicts in the region and seeks to radiate out common conventions and professional practice - not unlike cognate bodies within Europe.⁶⁵

In Sub-Saharan Africa we are seeing the emergence of genuine hybridity. Laurie Nathan has rightly criticised the polarised debate over the nature of the relationship between the constitution and the intelligence services, a battle between "intelligence exceptionalism" and "strict constitutionalism". It is obvious that during a democratic transition effectiveness will be measured in terms of adherence to democratic principles, practices and ideals, but it should also be born in mind that there are alternative roads to be followed by countries when moving towards good governance and democracy. What is acceptable operationally and the parameters in

which intelligence services are allowed to operate are a product of values, beliefs and interests of the society in which they operate.⁶⁶

Security sector reform is often viewed as part of state-building by the international community, a kind of externally-driven social engineering project. Instead we need to view transitional states as hybrid political orders with the potential to generate new options for security. The set of expectations placed on formal constitutional mechanisms for intelligence accountability in developing countries is probably too great at present, while community values such as trust are undervalued. Moreover, wholesale introduction of external systems risks losing the vernacular approaches that deliver the most effective routes to ‘intelligence amongst the people’. We need to combine state mechanisms, customary institutions together with new elements of citizenship and civil society in networks of security which are embedded in local societal structures.⁶⁷ It has been suggested that we are moving towards “postmodern intelligence”, but a case might also be advanced for the postcolonial intelligence.⁶⁸ Such a model might offer genuine hybridity, challenging Western ways of thinking, delivering good governance but also strong regime security at a time of state fragility.⁶⁹

South Africa has also recognised that, in the twenty-first century intelligence is no longer the preserve of a few obscure agencies. Intelligence, security and resilience activities now suffuse all areas of government, even local government. The corporates, including the banks, airlines and the telecoms, are all consumers of intelligence and increasingly important producers of intelligence. Even individual citizens are exhorted to be ‘alert not alarmed’ and to report what they see. The boundaries between intelligence and information, between state and citizen are dissolving amid a new kind of knowledge intensive security. Intelligence in the twitter age will not be owned by government and in what has already become a much more inclusive environment, confidence and trust will be crucial. If security sector reform is about increased public confidence and trust in the security agencies then the Anglosphere needs security sector reform no less than the transitional states. Certainly some African services understand the importance of cultivating public trust rather better than we do.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Can we escape from the Anglosphere? Change and improvement is not impossible. The South African story – a narrative of hybridity - shows us that intelligence cultures are far from immutable. It also suggests that challenging security situations can be addressed by intelligence and security services without the abandonment of our core values. However, first of all we will need to know more about how others think about intelligence and we will then need to rethink our own assumptions about what intelligence ought to be. We should not expect instant results. Precisely because our habits of thought about the nature of intelligence are culturally determined they are deeply engrained and hard to challenge. It is unlikely that the United States and its Anglo-Saxon allies will learn to think differently about intelligence in the short term, partly because our agencies tend to be cautious and conservative. Meanwhile we will continue to live within a set of alternatives and analogies mostly drawn from our own experiences.

¹ Richard Betts takes a self-confessedly ‘tragic view’ of intelligence failure, R.K. Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence: Knowledge and Power in American Security* (New York: Columbia, 2007), p.13.

² A. Zegart, *Spying Blind: The CIA, the FBI, and the Origins of 9/11* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); G. Treverton, *Intelligence for an Age of Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Robert Jervis, *Why intelligence fails: lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

³ Stevyn D. Gibson, ‘Future roles of the UK intelligence system’, *Review of International Studies*, 35:4, 2009, pp.920-22.

⁴ It is often asserted that intelligence studies as an academic subject is ‘under-theorized’ and it is certainly unevenly theorized. On intelligence and under-theorisation see: James De Derian, ‘Anti-Diplomacy, Intelligence Theory and International Relations’, *Intelligence and National Security* 8: 3, 1993, 29-51; Christopher Andrew, ‘Intelligence, International Relations and "Under-theorisation"’, *Intelligence and National Security* 20: 1, 2004, pp.29-31; Adam Svendsen, ‘Connecting Intelligence and Theory: Intelligence Liaison and International Relations’, *Intelligence and National Security* 24: 5, 2009, pp.700-702.

⁵ Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Amitav Acharya & Barry Buzan, (eds.), *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia* (London: Routledge 2009); Pinar Bilgin, ‘The “Western-Centrism” of Security Studies: “Blind Spot” or Constitutive Practice?’ *Security Dialogue* 41: 6, 2010, pp. 615-22; Ole Wæver, ‘The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations’, *International Organization*, 52:4, 1998, pp.687-727.

⁶ “UKUSA” was a signals intelligence agreement signed after the Second World War. The classic account of this Anglo-Saxon network is Jeffrey Richelson and Desmond Ball, *The Ties that Bind: Intelligence cooperation between the UKUSA countries, the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985).

⁷ Rupert Smith’s concept emphasises deterritoriality, Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force. The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Penguin, 2005), pp.3-5.

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