

These remarks on the 1999 paper by Gary Schmitt and Abram Shulsky on 'Leo Strauss and the World of Intelligence' come from a British perspective -- and also not from someone with any claims to intelligence expertise. It is clear from recent British experience that Straussians are in no way indispensable to intelligence disaster. However, when I first saw reference to Shulsky and Schmitt's polemic against Sherman Kent and the conception of intelligence as research, I began to suspect that there might be a resemblance between what Kent was saying and the argument of an essay published back in 1968 by Hugh Trevor-Roper, Regius Professor of History at Oxford and wartime officer with the Secret Intelligence Intelligence service -- otherwise known as MI6. The essay was an account of why MI6 had been so successfully gulled by the spy Kim Philby, and also of its other failures in dealing alike with Soviet Communism and German National Socialism. When Colonel Lang kindly provided me with the full text of what Schmitt and Shulsky wrote, and I compared their account of what Kent wrote with what he actually wrote, it became clear to me how dangerous their paper is. It provides a superficially plausible but actually fundamentally misconceived rationale for the creation of an intelligence system combining elements of the intelligence approaches of the former Soviet Union, National Socialist Germany, and the unreformed MI6 described by Trevor-Roper. Appointing Shulsky as director of the Office of Special Plans was an invitation to intelligence disaster. The fact that the OSP got Iraq so spectacularly wrong, was certainly comprehensively gulled by Ahmed Chalabi, and most probably was turned into an instrument of a brilliantly executed deception strategy which has massively increased the power of the theocratic regime in Iran, is I think no accident. Put Straussians in charge of intelligence and this kind of thing is what you will get. Their intelligence blunders follow from fundamental flaws in Strauss's intellectual method. It is I think useful to try to be clearer about some of the methodological issues, because they are relevant to the crucial question raised in the 'Bureaucrats and Artists ...' paper that Colonel Lang posted on this blog recently: that of how American intelligence capabilities are to be repaired.

It is a pity that Kent's 1949 study of 'Strategic Intelligence in American World Policy' is, for most people, not very easily accessible. For unless one compares what Schmitt and Shulsky (hereafter S&S) say Kent wrote with what he actually wrote, the peculiar quality of shamelessness which is one of the most striking features of their paper is apt to pass one by. In their paper, S&S make a number of charges against Kent. It is suggested that he argued that intelligence should be based upon a 'social scientific' method. It is further claimed that, because of this, he disparaged espionage and interception and codebreaking techniques. It is argued that he believed that this 'social scientific' method would make possible predictions akin to those achieved by the natural sciences. It is further suggested that he downplayed the role of deception, and that is a result of this American intelligence analysts were habitually gulled by the Soviet Union. We should, S&S suggest, learn from Leo Strauss that 'deception is the norm in political life, and the hope, to say nothing of the expectation, of establishing a politics that can dispense with it is the exception.'

As with the Niger forgeries, a few hours with Google may show that the inherent implausibility of the story. The CIA director who in 1950 brought back Kent to intelligence work -- he had returned to academic life after his wartime OSS service -- was

Eisenhower's former Chief of Staff, the formidably irascible General Walter Bedell Smith. From the North African campaign on, Bedell Smith had worked closely with Major-General Kenneth Strong, one of the best military intelligence officers Britain has ever had, who became Eisenhower's G-2 at SHAEF. As his deputy counterintelligence officer, Strong bought in Dick White of MI5, later to head both that organisation and MI6, and to be Philby's nemesis – and by this time a veteran practitioner of strategic deception. The 1968 essay by Trevor-Roper was written with the encouragement of White. They had been colleagues from early in the war. It was the work of Trevor-Roper and the physicist Ernest Gill (an unsung wartime intelligence hero) which by early 1940 allowed the British to read the hand ciphers of the Abwehr -- German military intelligence. As a result, MI5 was able to intercept all German agents landing in Britain, and -- when White and others succeeded in curbing Churchill's enthusiasm for executions -- most of these were turned. This was the foundation for later deception successes, culminating in the operation which persuaded the Germans that the Allies would land in the Pas de Calais, rather than Normandy.

How credible then is the suggestion that Bedell Smith -- 'the greatest general manager of the war', according to Eisenhower, and in as good a position as anyone to know what could be done with deception and codebreaking -- put a complete dolt who disregarded both these crucial aspects of intelligence in a central position in the CIA?

But of course, this is not what happened. According to S&S, Kent 'disparaged' interception and codebreaking, along with espionage. But he didn't. He simply didn't stress their importance. But for anyone with the remotest knowledge of the history, this is unsurprising. At the time he wrote, American and British codebreakers were attempting to repeat with the Soviets earlier successes against the Germans. These successes had been heavily dependent on the failure of the Germans to realize that their codes were being read. So whatever Kent's actual view of the importance of codebreaking, he would not have stressed its importance. Accordingly, his failure to stress its importance establishes nothing about his real view. Either S&S are utterly incompetent at textual interpretation -- in which case, they should not be let near intelligence – or they are wilfully misrepresenting what Kent wrote, in which case they are themselves engaged in a kind of deception operation, and their readers should be aware of this.

What then about the suggestion that Kent 'disparaged' espionage? Some of the remarks which S&S take as indicating that Kent did not see espionage as important -- and also that he did not see deception as important -- come from the new preface he wrote for the 1966 reprint of his study. In this, Kent responded to criticism from the Soviet defector Alexander Orlov. What we now know, as Kent did not, is that Orlov had been instrumental in building on the initial recruitment of Philby to develop the Cambridge spy ring, which gave the Soviets a cornucopia of secrets in the wartime years. The view of intelligence which Orlov was putting forward was actually the orthodox Soviet view -- in which intelligence was essentially a matter of gaining access to secrets. It appears that George Tenet was also fond of explaining the activity of the CIA by saying 'we steal secrets'.

It is important to be clear as to what Kent was saying. The argument that the 'social science' method meant that Kent 'disparaged' espionage and codebreaking suggests that he conceived his method as an alternative to these. However, Kent's text makes it absolutely clear that he saw espionage as a means of what he termed 'research', not as an alternative to it. You steal documents, not for the hell of it, but because you are trying to find something out, by whatever means are appropriate to give you the information you want. In discussing the relationship between 'overt' and 'secret' or 'clandestine' intelligence, Kent writes that 'the reader who wishes to think up for himself a clearly-defined problem in intelligence work will be able to make a good guess as to how much of either technique would be required to solve it.' The argument is, quite simply, that one should first get clear what one wants to know -- and then work out what methods are appropriate to find it out.

This 'research' Kent distinguished from what he called 'surveillance' -- the general business of keeping aware of what is going on in the world -- although he suggested that the activities needed to be closely integrated. Obviously, it follows from his insistence on the need to be clear about the problems one is trying to solve that to give substance to any discussion of what methodologies are of most importance at any given time, it is necessary to have some view of the crucial problems one faces. Arguments about intelligence are of necessity linked to arguments about national strategy. As Kent himself remarked, 'the most important fact of man's struggle for existence is the fact of change.' And over the past two decades change has been such as to render the world in which he wrote virtually unrecognisable -- raising massive questions which ramify in unpredictable directions and become entangled one with another. Communism, in anything like its traditional sense, has disappeared: what forms can we expect relations between great powers to take in a world from which a central polarity of the twentieth century has been removed? Conflicts increasingly involve non-state actors, posing formidable challenges but ones very different from those posed by conflicts between states. Questions involving relations between major states, and also questions involving non-state actors, are alike involved with intractable dilemmas relating to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In turn, all these issues are related to issues of energy security, in a situation where there are new uncertainties about the scale of oil reserves. Massively unpredictable in their effects are the increasing volume and speed of interactions, both in the economic and other fields, notably the exchange of information. Some would add in to this litany of new issues global climate change, some would not. And this list is obviously not exhaustive.

The precise nature of the agenda of problems which need to be confronted, however, is not the point. What is the point is that in assessing both Kent and S&S's criticism of him, it is necessary to ask how far the fact of change, which he himself stressed, renders his arguments out of date. Let us then look further at this question of the 'social scientific' method. It turns out that what Kent said is rather different from what S&S suggest of the he said. One might perhaps have expected that the Straussians, who draw so heavily on classical philosophy, would be aware of the basic ambiguity in the use of the word 'science' in contemporary English. In one use of the word, it means the natural sciences,

or other studies whose methodology attempts to emulate theirs. In a more traditional usage, however, going back to the days when Latin speakers translated the Greek episteme as scientia, it means any organised body of knowledge.

In Kent's usage, 'social science' is an umbrella term covering a wide range of forms of scholarship involving the study of human beings: he included military science and anthropology, as well as his own discipline of history. It will be apparent that if 'social science' is given this wide definition, the notion of a single 'social science method' is palpable nonsense. It was true when Kent wrote, and remains true today, that a wide range of methods are used in the study of human beings, and there are fundamental arguments both between and within disciplines as to what methodologies are fruitful or indeed legitimate. What S&S suggest is that in Kent's conception 'social science' method was meant to be a means of predicting the future, by calculating 'correlations between particular actions and particular features of the context in which they occurred'. It is certainly the case that Kent, in a footnote, while noting the 'enormous difficulties' that 'social sciences' face in 'running controlled and repetitive experiments and achieving sure bases for prognosis', suggested that its practitioners 'go on striving for improvements in their method which will afford the exactnesses of physics and chemistry.'

However, his actual definition of the kind of 'social science' method he sees as relevant to intelligence has nothing whatsoever to do with emulating the exact sciences. It involves the appearance and analyses of problems; the collection and critical evaluation of data bearing on these; the formation of hypotheses on the basis of these data; further collection and critical evaluation of data to test these hypotheses; and a selection between hypotheses as 'the best present approximations of truth.' Let us then look at the passage from Kent which S&S use to buttress their argument. The italicized sentence – which they omit – is actually crucial to its meaning.

Research is the only method that we of the liberal tradition are willing to admit is capable of giving us the truth, or a closer approximation to truth, than we now enjoy. *A mediaeval philosopher would have been content to get his truth by extrapolating from Holy Writ, an African chieftain by consultation with his witch doctor, or a mystic like Adolf Hitler from communion with his intuitive self.* But we insist, and have insisted for generations, that the truth is to be approached, if not attained, through research guided by a systematic method. In the social sciences which very largely constitute the subject matter of strategic intelligence, there is such a method. It is much like the method of physical sciences. It is not the same method but it is a method none the less.

Quite clearly, what unifies 'social science' in Kent's account is *not* the practice of a method closely resembling that of natural science. It is rather the use of a systematic method -- precisely what unites the sciences in the broader and more traditional usage. The contrast which is actually crucial to understanding the whole argument, but which S&S obscure, is with an approach which repudiates any kind of systematic method. By the time S&S's misconceptions were recycled by David Brooks in his *NYT* column in February last year, the rejection of systematic method was close to comprehensive.

'Most of all, I'd trust individuals over organizations,' he tells us: 'Individuals can use intuition, experience and a feel for the landscape of reality.' In the course of a vigorous discussion of the CIA's supposed 'scientism', Brooks restates S&S's claim that the fundamental problems of American intelligence go back to Kent's flawed method. And, rather than the 'conference-load of game theorists or risk-assessment officers' whom, he seems to believe, are all the CIA can provide, he tells us he would prefer to trust 'politicians, who, whatever their faults, have finely tuned antennae for the flow of events'; or alternatively 'Mafia bosses, studio heads and anybody who has read a Dostoevsky novel during the past five years.'

There is some truth in this – enough to obscure the fact that Brooks is failing to come to grips with the difficulties. The need for intuition among intelligence practitioners, and the difficulty of fitting those with it into bureaucratic structures, is indeed a central concern of Colonel Lang's 'Bureaucrats and Artists ...' paper. However, it remains the case that -- as Kent stressed -- intelligence necessarily involves organisations. And this is all the more so, given that espionage is not quite as easy as S&S seem to think. What they suggest Kent 'disparaged' was 'information that could only be gathered by spies able to penetrate the foreign government's inner circle and/or steal its documents'. Evidently, penetrating the 'inner circle' of Stalin would have been child's play, had Kent not had this bizarre prejudice in favour of 'social science'. It may help, however, to look at some of the strengths of the Soviet intelligence approach, as well as some of the weaknesses. This was a political movement much of which was rooted in the conspiratorial underworld of the late Tsarist empire. It was unsurprising that the Cheka chief Feliks Dzerzhinsky managed, by creating the fiction of a vast conspiratorial organisation, 'The Trust', effectively to fool both emigre organisations and foreign intelligence services. By the same token, the largely closed Soviet Union of the Stalinist period, in which mere contact with foreigners could be fatal, was not exactly an easy target for direct penetration.

However, it is not necessary for sources of information to be within the 'inner circle' for them to be of value -- the relevant point is the information to which they have access. This was a matter on which Kent touched, in discussing the intimate interdependence of counterespionage and intelligence. Referring to the dismantling of the Canadian spy ring following the defection of the Soviet cipher clerk Igor Gouzenko in 1945, Kent suggested that through such a counterespionage operation the Canadians 'must have learned things about Soviet policy which it could not have learned except by itself trying clandestinely to penetrate the Politburo -- which task would have had its difficulties.' Stressing the need to piece together information from different sources, Kent suggested that what Franco was considering 'might be less available from Madrid sources than from those of Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Lisbon, Bayonne, and Rome.' In fact, in the case of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, failure to foresee which is certainly one of the great British intelligence failures of the twentieth century, information about Stalin's possible intentions had been leaking out in all kinds of different places. While Stalinist security may not have been capable of direct penetration, the Soviet defector Walter Krivitsky had warned a pact was likely. And indeed, warnings came from inside the German Moscow Embassy. And they were received in MI5, where White's informants included 'Klop' Ustinov, father of the

actor Peter. The elder Ustinov was in a particularly good position to provide information and leads to other sources on developments in Soviet-German relations, as he had been press attaché to Ribbentrop during the latter's disastrous ambassadorship in Britain. On his return to Germany, this disillusion led to Ribbentrop becoming an impassioned advocate of alliance with the Soviet Union. His idea was that if the power against which the Anti-Comintern Pact was directed could actually be incorporated in that Pact, Germany, Italy and Japan could slake their territorial ambitions at the expense of the British Empire. It is not impossible that this might have happened, and obviously the possibility posed a mortal threat to Britain. It was effectively reported by MI5, not MI6, but their reports were ignored by the Chamberlain government.

The example points us back to the fact which Kent was trying to stress -- that intelligence is indivisible. Information collected from vastly different sources and in a whole range of ways must be capable of being reconciled into a single coherent picture: and in particular, information from covert and overt sources must be reconciled. Often, as with the Niger forgeries, information from overt sources demonstrates that information from covert sources is unreliable. On other occasions -- intelligence on the German-Soviet relationship being a case in point -- the reverse is true. A proper analysis of the covert information available to the British government would have established that the conventional belief that Hitler and Stalin were irreconcilable enemies was actually very questionable.

A corollary of this is that inevitably there are going to be problems of integrating different kinds of 'research' in intelligence work. Sometimes, obviously, potential sources open up with relative ease, as a result of the existence of dissent within the target group. Such was the case with Ustinov and the other anti-Nazi Germans who provided so much information to the British both about Hitler's plans in general and about the negotiations with the Soviet Union in particular. Such was also the case with many of those who entered the service of the Soviet Union in the Thirties. But the securing of information is obviously much of the time a matter of playing on less elevated motives: it is commonly the more disreputable human characteristics which make human beings potential sources of information. Accordingly, the successful pursuit of 'humint' is liable to require both insight into many of the shadier aspects of human nature, and the ability to exploit these. Expertise on the Seven Deadly Sins may be putting it a bit strongly, but there is a Mephistophelean element, which of course also has its own dangers. If moreover sources sometimes become available very suddenly, on other occasions they bear major fruit only after a long time: as was the case with Orlov's recruitment of the Cambridge spies. So the development of humint is necessarily in substantial measure a matter of 'surveillance', in Kent's terminology. As a result, elements of it require patience and a long-term view -- features which are not necessarily among the strong points of democracies.

What I have tried to show is that S&S not only consistently misrepresent Kent, but fail to confront difficulties about which he was thinking seriously. There is patently not going to be any perfect solution to the problems of incorporating the skills required for the effective development and exploitation of spies within a large bureaucracy which is also

involved in collecting information by all kinds of other means. But simply to ignore the problems is potentially catastrophic. It was a failure to grasp the potentialities of the application of mathematical analysis to cryptography, compounding earlier incompetent encryption, which vitiated German attempts to secure humint from Britain. Moreover, the example illustrates that an incompetent attempt to secure humint is worse than no humint at all, in that it is liable to leave one wide open to deception operations practised by more skilled operators. Recalling the disasters of the Abwehr, the OSP's failures have a familiar ring.

On the dangers of overreliance on intuition, Kent developed his argument in an elaboration of his contrast of 'research' with the approach practised by Hitler. He stressed that he had no wish to claim infallibility for the method he was advocating, or to suggest that hunches and intuitions were 'uniformly perilous'. There were, he wrote, 'hunches based upon knowledge and understanding which are the stuff of highest truth.' What he wished to reject, Kent suggested, was 'intuition based upon nothing and which takes off from the wish.' Developing his argument, he noted that on a number of occasions Hitler was indeed proved right and the advice of his experts wrong. But he went on to catalogue the long list of misjudgements by which Hitler which contributed to Germany's ruin. And recalled how Ribbentrop, as Foreign Minister, had expressed scepticism about the feasibility of the goals for aircraft and tank production set out by Roosevelt in January 1942, on the basis of a failure to grasp that the steel production figures he had been given were calculated in millions of tons rather than thousands.

Concluding his discussion, Kent noted the disastrous effect of Hitler's disregard for advice on the German intelligence services. When, he commented, 'intelligence producers realize there is no sense in forwarding to a consumer knowledge which does not correspond to his preconceptions, then intelligence is through. At this point there is no intelligence and the consumer is out on his own with no more to guide him than the indications of the tea leaf and the crystal ball. He may do well with them, but for the long haul I would place my money elsewhere.'

It is, I suggest, precisely this kind of situation which is the natural nemesis of the approach to intelligence advocated by S&S and by Brooks. The encomium to the intelligence insight of politicians by the latter writer perhaps needs little comment in the light of subsequent events. However, the more theoretical argument produced by S&S does merit comment. They suggest that even before World War II had ended, Kent and other analysts 'had reached the conclusion that the positivist approach to analysis -- resting on Max Weber's fact-value distinction -- should be reflected institutionally in a sharp division between intelligence analysis and policy-making organizations.' But the argument for intelligence independence does not depend on belief in the possibility of a value-free social science. Without doubt, people's views on the Middle East are going to be influenced by their more general positions -- whether one is a religious believer, and if so of what kind, is likely to influence one's attitude, as also are one's views on questions of political philosophy. But evidence concerning the putative acquisition of uranium from Iraq cannot be evaluated on such grounds. Fundamental questions to do with matters of fact were answered wrong, and this was quite patently a matter of lack of

objectivity -- of the intuition which 'takes off from the wish' against which Kent warned. And if one looks at the Strategic Intelligence study, there is no mention at all of Max Weber, positivism, or the 'fact-value distinction'. What Kent has a great deal to say about is indeed objectivity, and about the problems of reconciling the need for intelligence analysts to be responsive to their 'consumers' with the need for it. The problem has not gone away.

Of course, the fact that the objection in principle which S&S make to the whole idea of intelligence as research is misconceived does not establish that the practice either of Kent himself or his successors at the CIA was unobjectionable. And here, it may be conceded that S&S raise a very real question. How far intelligence analysts are prone to ignore fundamental differences between cultures and political systems is a real issue. However, once again one finds that they distort his argument. They write that Kent 'whimsically' named his hypothetical antagonist 'Great Frusina', putting together the names of the four members of the Security Council. This, they suggest, was 'as if to suggest that it didn't matter whether one was dealing with a constitutional monarchy, a chaotic republic, a mature totalitarian tyranny or a revolutionary dictatorship.' Let us however look at the questions which Kent suggested it was necessary to have answered about 'Great Frusina'. He argued that it was important to try to assess what he described as 'Great Frusina's 'strategic stature', and its 'specific vulnerabilities'. The first was a matter of the 'objective situation' in which the country found itself, and of the 'non-military instrumentalities' available to it, and of its 'war potential'. In relation to this last, Kent distinguished between 'military force in being' and 'mobilizable military force'.

Perhaps here it may help to bring into the picture another writer who stresses the importance of the conception of intelligence as research, from a dual background as practitioner and scholar. In writing his 1996 study 'Intelligence Power in Peace and War', Michael Herman drew on thirty-five years' experience in British intelligence. This combined service at GCHQ, successor of the wartime codebreaking operations, and in intelligence assessment in the Defence Intelligence Staff and in the Cabinet Office, including service as secretary of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which is responsible for coordinating information from different sources. As he notes, the origins of the conception of intelligence as research lie in developments in warfare in the second half of the nineteenth century. What was involved was what the Israeli military historian and theorist Martin van Creveld, drawing on Clausewitz, calls 'trinitarian' warfare, focusing on the three elements of people, army, and the government. The problems which concerned Clausewitz were defined by successive Prussian defeats at the hands of Napoleon. So Clausewitz was convinced that governments needed to harness societies as well as armies to conduct war on the same scale as the French.

With the application of new technologies in warfare in the second half of the nineteenth century, it became necessary for command to adapt itself to handling new orders of scale and of complexity -- and, not least important, the new opportunities which opened up for strategic surprise and concentration. The response was the creation of permanent military -- and later naval -- staffs, with the highly competent General Staff developed by the Prussian army being the influential model, particularly after that army's decisive victories

over Austria and France in 1866 and 1970. (That the incoherence and incompetence of German alliance under the Nazis meant that we had to face a vastly less formidable opponent than might otherwise have been the case was, to put it mildly, a blessing.) As Herman puts it, the raw material of these staffs 'was information about their own and foreign forces, topography, the railways and other factors relevant to battle.' The method of this new military intelligence, he stresses, was 'not the *ad hoc* search for secrets, but the methodological collection and assimilation of all relevant information, and its presentation in military "appreciations" for rational command decisions.'

We can then perhaps begin to see more clearly some possible reasons why Bedell Smith might have had a higher regard for Kent than do S&S and Brooks. At the time of Pearl Harbor, the United States had not, on the pattern of European states before 1914, had a General Staff which had exhaustively analysed all the information relevant to possible mobilization, be it by its enemies or itself. But in November 1942 -- less than a year after the American entry into the war following the unanticipated attack on Pearl Harbor -- American armies were landing in force in North Africa. One use to which the scholars mobilised into the OSS were put was in essence to do staff work. So one of Kent's contributions was in the deployment of academic expertise to produce studies of the ports and railways of North Africa in preparation for the invasion. Subsequently, the Research & Analysis division was involved in other essentially 'General Staff' tasks -- such as working out systematic targeting plans for strategic bombing. If strategic bombing is to be anything more than a blunt instrument of terror, it does help to attempt to work out systematically which targets one should hit in what order, in order to achieve maximum damage both to the enemy's ability to counter bombing offensives, and also its war-making capacity in general. On such matters, it really does help to be able to employ some economists -- 'intuition' and a reading of Dostoevsky are of limited use.

The question of the ability of 'social sciences' to make predictions was and continues to be a vexed one -- not least in relation to economics. It is however distinctly marginal to the kind of prediction with which Kent was primarily concerned in the Strategic Intelligence study. This had to do with the familiar business of establishing intentions and capabilities -- in relation to the latter, Kent used the more general term 'instrumentalities', to make plain that what was involved was not simply military power. But, as noted, in his treatment of 'Great Frusina', Kent was overwhelmingly concerned not with intentions but with 'instrumentalities', and in particular with those which related to military power in being and military potential. Why was this? Let us put the book in context. As Kent explains in the introduction to the 1966 edition, it was finished in May 1948. By this time, he writes, 'it was clear that the Soviets had in fact sworn out an ideological war; George Kennan in his 'Mr. "X" ' article had not only spelled it out but had elaborated a U.S. policy to *contain* it; Walter Lippmann had some months since christened the unhappy state of world affairs the Cold War.'

The Strategic Intelligence study is, rather obviously, not an abstract discussion of intelligence methodology. It is first and foremost an attempt to apply lessons drawn from the experience of the war against Germany and Japan to the new antagonist, the Soviet Union. In the specific case of his hypothetical 'Great Frusina' -- in contrast with his

general discussion of method -- Kent had little to say about intentions, because he took the question to have been answered. If however one sets his study in context, then it is far from clear that the criticism that he ignored differences between regimes has any cogency. As is well known, Kennan's X-article and the earlier Long Telegram he sent from Moscow on 22 June 1946 are generally seen as classic statements of the so-called 'totalitarian' school of interpretation, which linked the external behaviour of the Soviet regime to its internal system.

And indeed, even before the X-article was published, it was generally held that the question of Soviet intentions had been answered by Kennan. As the American scholar-diplomat and former CIA analyst Raymond Garthoff notes, 'by mid-1946, there was full consensus in the American policy and intelligence communities that Stalin and other Soviet leaders operated on the basis of historically destined conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States and other Western countries.' The assumption -- as is quite clear in the memorandum prepared for Truman by his aides Clark Clifford and George Elsey in September 1946 -- was that Stalin believed eventual war with the United States was inevitable. In fact, there are real questions as to whether this was actually an accurate representation of Kennan's view, to which I shall return later.

In relation to making sense of Kent's views, however, what matters are the implications of this understanding of Kennan's argument. These implications bear directly on the question raised by S&S, as to how far it is legitimate to assume that an antagonist will act in ways similar to those in which one would act oneself. Here, I can perhaps once again introduce a British comparison into the argument. The current British Defence Intelligence Staff was set up in 1964, in substantial measure as the result of the efforts of Eisenhower's former G-2 Kenneth Strong, and in imitation of the system earlier set up in the United States. The following year, another Second World War veteran, although of a younger generation, was appointed as head of its Soviet naval section. Former head boy of the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, MccGwire had joined the Navy as a midshipman in 1942, learned Russian after the war and cut his teeth in intelligence work among the codebreakers of GCHQ in 1952. At the end of his stint in charge of Soviet naval intelligence, in 1967, he would turn academic, working in the Eighties at the Brookings Institution, where he was a colleague of Raymond Garthoff. At the beginning of his 1987 study of 'Military Objectives in Soviet Foreign Policy', MccGwire discussed the question of how far ideological and cultural barriers made it difficult to understand the Soviets. The principal difficulty in understanding Soviet policy, he argued, was in fact not lack of information but 'the lens of logic and reasoning to which Westerners are accustomed to viewing the world'. But he went on to suggest that this is not so in the field of military thought, precisely because fundamental principles of military planning cut across ideological boundaries; and here, MccGwire noted the influence on Soviet thinking of the German General Staff approach.

In fact, central to MccGwire's work on the Soviet Union was a classic 'General Staff' problem. The initial form of the problem was clearly stated by planners from the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff when they drafted a paper on Strategic Guidance for Industrial Mobilization Planning back in May 1947. Putting the matter in Kent's terms, it was that

of whether a superiority in 'military force in being' might enable the Soviets, in the event of war, to eliminate the bridgeheads on which the vastly superior 'mobilizable military force' of the United States could be deployed. (According to figures in the key NSC 68 paper of April 1950, the United States was producing more than *ten times* the number of motor vehicles produced by the Soviet Union). If how they could make it impossible for the United States to deploy its potential power, the planners calculated, the Soviets 'could create a strategic situation in which her opponents would find themselves stalemated.' The problem was familiar from the Second World War, in which Hitler's failure to eliminate Britain from the war had meant that there was a bridgehead on which American power could be deployed. (In the view of Erich von Manstein, architect of the fall of France, this failure sealed Germany's doom).

Evidence deployed in MccGwire's study, drawing on the study of 'Soviet Strategy in a Nuclear Age' published by Garthoff as far back as 1958, established that when the Soviets began planning seriously for war with the United States, it was indeed very much on the basis of this kind of logic. Let us go back to the question of the implications of the view that the Soviet leaders regarded eventual war with the United States as inevitable. Granted the premise, it was natural to conclude that the familiar kind of 'General Staff' analysis both would be central to Soviet planning, and needed to be central to American. In this situation, although military problems were far from the only problems that Kent was concerned about, they not surprisingly took centre stage. The 'war potential' that Kent was concerned about was, rather obviously, not that of Great Britain or France, or indeed China. Indeed, he quite specifically stressed that only bad intelligence methodology, focusing on resources without considering ability to combine them to produce effective military power, could suggest that China might emerge as a threat either to the United States or the Soviet Union. So a central concern in his thinking at this point was with this kind of 'General Staff' problem.

The point is obviously relevant to any assessment of the role of deception in his thinking. As Herman emphasises, it was precisely problems of mobilisation and deployment which had given rise to the conception of intelligence as research in the first place. Modern bureaucracies necessarily have to produce a vast body of information in order to function, of which substantial amounts are relevant to such problems. The notion that all this vast body of information can be manipulated to serve the purposes of deception is not really a very credible one. Unsurprisingly, one of Kent's concerns was how one could use indirect means to make information one had yield answers the questions one wanted to answer. And this was also very much the basis of MccGwire's approach. Again, covert intelligence was an important element. It was as a delayed result of the 1948 split between Stalin and Tito that in 1959 MccGwire learnt from Yugoslav sources the content of Soviet naval staff exercises immediately after the war. This information was however put together with the results of highly detailed technical analysis of the nature of the submarines the Soviets were building and the way in which these were deployed. It was on the basis of this approach that MccGwire came to believe that one could peer behind the veil of secrecy in which Soviet military planning was shrouded simply by developing adequate analytical tools -- drawing on specialist 'military science' expertise -- to analyse publicly available data.

Ironically perhaps, however, MccGwire went on the claim that an approach rooted in technical military analysis -- in particular, the analysis of military objectives -- could cast light on fundamental questions to do with Soviet foreign policy beyond the military sphere. Again, his argument is very much in tune with the kind of indirect approach advocated by Kent. Now as I am not myself a military expert, my capacity to judge these issues is limited. What I do suggest, however, is that irrespective of the validity of MccGwire's specific conclusions -- which incidentally are close to those of Raymond Garthoff -- there is every reason to suppose that the appropriate response to the intelligence challenges alike of yesterday and today is the kind of comprehensive research programme that Kent envisaged. Moreover, absolutely nothing in the conception of intelligence as research involves a naive discounting of the possibility of deception. Experienced British naval intelligence officers, like their counterparts in other services and countries, do not need to be told that enemies deceive one by pupils of Leo Strauss: they know it already.

Indeed, in their determination to establish that Kent discounted the problem of deception, S&S make a truly bizarre argument. In his response to Alexander Orlov, Kent argued that stealing documents, however successfully, would not have allowed Stalin to anticipate that the United States would defend South Korea, because the decision to do so was made after the invasion. They take this argument as evidence that Kent believed intelligence analysts could be 'unconcerned with deception', asking historically: 'How, after all, could Truman had deceived Stalin about his intentions in Korea if, prior to the invasion, he didn't know them himself?' This is a simple non sequitur. The fact a government has no intentions relating to an unanticipated event does not establish that it does not have all kinds of other intentions, about which it may or may not attempt to deceive others. In anticipating how someone will react to an unanticipated event, what one needs, obviously, is a much broader sense of their objectives. Reverting to the events of the spring of 1939, had Chamberlain had a better grasp of the objectives alike of Stalin and of Hitler, he might have anticipated that the likely effect of his -- unexpected -- announcement of a unilateral guarantee to Poland would be to increase the chances of the two dictatorships concluding an agreement. The suggestion S&S make that belief in the possibility of making some kind of prediction about 'decisions that hadn't yet been made and about which the very participants in the policy process were uncertain' reflects 'the extremely high standard that Kent was attempting to set for the "social scientific" method' is straight nonsense. Once one grasps what Kent meant by the 'social scientific' method, it should be possible to see that had the British had a bit more of it in 1939, they could have at least contemplated the possibility that Hitler and Stalin might respond in the ways in which they did -- and it is just possible that war might have been averted.

I have gone into somewhat tedious detail about the misrepresentations in S&S's paper in part because it seems to me important to grasp both that its analysis is threadbare, and that what is being recommended is the unlearning of some genuine lessons that were learnt about intelligence, both in the United States and in Britain, as a result of the catastrophes of the middle of the last century. An interesting question, perhaps, is that of how far the confusions of the S&S paper and the bad intelligence practice to which it

gives rise are purely the responsibility of its authors, and how far the natural consequence of the ideas of Strauss himself.

The truth, I want to suggest, is a bit of both. And it is worth pursuing Strauss's ideas a bit further, in part because they do point to what I take to be a genuine problem which surfaces recurrently in intelligence analysis -- that of systematically ambiguous evidence. However, I want to argue, the methodology to which Straussian ideas naturally lead is actively harmful in confronting the problem. A better methodological toolkit can perhaps be assembled from some of concepts of a figure who Michael Herman mentions, both in the study from which I have quoted and in a discussion of MccGwire's contribution to British naval intelligence -- the philosopher-historian R.G. Collingwood.

Let me start by going back to S&S. Failures in understanding the Iranian Revolution in 1979, they suggest, reflected 'the view that one could assess the views of a Khomeini from the outside, without having to try to understand him as he understood himself.' In his 1985 article on Strauss in 'The New York Review of Books', the scholar of classical philosophy M.F. Burnyeat commented on this aspect of Strauss's method. 'The injunction to understand one's author "as he understood himself" is fundamental to Straussian interpretation,' Burnyeat wrote, 'but he never explains what it means -- only that it is directed against his chief bugbear, "historicism," or the belief that old books should be understood according to their historical context.'

It is this approach which is central to the work of Collingwood and intellectual historians, anthropologists, and philosophers working in the tradition of which is part. For Collingwood, context -- recovering the intentions and purposes that people had, in the situations in which they found themselves -- is central not just to an understanding of 'old books', but to any study of human beings by human beings. It follows, of course, that if one looks for understanding of Saddam Hussein, extensive experience in the Mafia or a detailed reading of Dostoevsky's 'Devils' will not be adequate; some of that Middle East expertise which was so successfully marginalized by the Straussians in the run-up to the Iraq War is actually indispensable. It may or may not be relevant here that Collingwood had had some contact with intelligence work -- he had served in British Admiralty Intelligence, forerunner of the DIS Soviet naval section MccGwire later headed, in 1914-18. I am sometimes suspect that Collingwood's views on historical method may have reflected this experience. Certainly, MccGwire's work on Soviet military strategy is classic Collingwoodian analysis. Indeed, there are close parallels between the ways in which MccGwire treats evidence drawn from the nature of Soviet weapons systems and the way in which Collingwood treats evidence in archeology, of which he was a skilled practitioner. The question is always what is the thing being studied *for*? And from micro-analysis -- looking at matters like the absence of anti-aircraft capability on a submarine, or the presence of absence of Roman coastal forts south of Hadrian's Wall -- it may be possible to draw conclusions about very general questions.

Whether or not his intelligence experience influenced Collingwood, his views may be of some use in unraveling the problems of S&S's approach to intelligence, and perhaps in dealing with some of the wider issues raised by Colonel Lang's 'Bureaucrats and Artists

...' paper. Indeed, one of the things I tried to do in the first section of these remarks was, by putting Kent back in context, to show that he did not commit the follies of which S&S accuse him. One might perhaps suggest that S&S's interpretation of Kent is a rather good example of the kind of misreadings which Straussian modes interpretation are prone to generate. If one reads Kent as though he was producing an analysis of intelligence in a total contextual vacuum, one is indeed prone to conclude that he is not much interested in matters such as espionage, interception, and codebreaking. But the more important point is that while sharing Kent's insistence on the need for a clear definition of problems to shape the process of inquiry, Collingwood was at great pains to stress the ways in which the study of human beings necessarily had to use methods different from those of the physical sciences. And the crucial point here is precisely that human beings have purposes and intentions, as atoms and molecules do not, and that these are made evident both in what they say and in what they do. It follows that the reconstruction of these purposes and intentions is necessarily central to the task of the historian.

The issues here may sound excessively abstruse to be of relevance to practical intelligence work. The historical record, however, suggests that methodological issues involved matter. For one thing, the particular expertise of Strauss was in textual analysis. The argument about the place of context in textual analysis is not a new one. So central intellectual roots of the approach to counterintelligence practised by the legendary James Jesus Angleton lay in the so called New Criticism of the interwar years. Among the central emphases of the New Critics was on the potentiality of literary texts for carrying multiple levels of meaning, and on the need for close study of texts. In its more radical form, this emphasis on textual analysis involved denunciation of what was called 'the intentional fallacy' -- the belief that an understanding of an author's intentions was central to the interpretation of texts. Now obviously, there are texts and texts. But a classic reason why scholars in the tradition of Collingwood stress the vital importance of context derives from the belief that classic texts in fields such as political philosophy are commonly written as responses to concrete problems. This argument is ongoing. In more recent scholarship, a similar scepticism about the possibility of analysing texts in terms of fixed patterns of intention is expressed by deconstructionist and postmodernist scholars. The position of Strauss and his followers in these arguments is however materially different from that of either the followers of Collingwood, or the New Critics, or the deconstructionists. In his original 1941 essay on 'Persecution and the Art of Writing', Strauss pointed to the way in which writers who had to fear persecution -- as was the case in the great 'totalitarian' regimes of the time -- characteristically developed a style of esoteric writing, in which what they wanted to say was articulated between the lines. He then, however, went on to broaden the argument.

As Schmitt and Shulsky themselves note, it is this notion of 'esoteric writing' for which Strauss is best-known. They themselves define this as the argument that 'at least before the Enlightenment, most serious writers wrote so as to hide at least some of their thought from some of their readers.' As they rightly note, many critics of this doctrine argued 'that it gave license for fanciful and arbitrary interpretation of texts; once one asserted that an author's true views might be the opposite of those that appear on the surface, it might seem that the sky was the limit in terms of how far from the author's apparent views one

might wander.' But this, S&S assert, cannot be the real reason for the unpopularity of the doctrine. After all, they remark, Strauss was 'a piker' compared to the deconstructionists, who 'gave the reader complete carte blanche when it came to interpreting texts'.

It will be evident that this is a transparently bad argument. In scholarship, or indeed any other human activity -- and certainly those of intelligence analysis and of war -- the claim that one has got things wrong is not disposed of by pointing to others whose errors are yet more flagrant. It may well be that the errors about Iraq made by Shulsky and his neoconservative associates pale into insignificance compared with some of the great intelligence blunders in history -- that, for instance, compared with the failure of British intelligence to anticipate the Nazi-Soviet Pact, their sins are venial. But, in scholarship and intelligence analysis alike, it is precisely the fact that absolute objectivity is an unattainable ideal, and even approaching towards it so difficult, which makes the striving for it so important. Once one concedes that the attempt does not matter very much, one is liable to be on a slippery slope.

That said, arguments about ambiguous evidence and hidden meanings do raise fundamental issues relevant to intelligence work and a great deal else. Precisely because deception is common enough in international relations, it is common to find systematically ambiguous bodies of evidence. Actually, cases of wartime deception can be a useful starting point here, precisely because although the deception operations may be extremely complicated, the range of possible interpretations may be very limited. For purposes of simplicity, a classic Second World War deception operation may serve well -- the case of 'Operation Mincemeat'. This related to a body washed up in Spain, carrying documents purporting to show that Allied troops would invade not in Sicily but in Greece. There were in essence only two interpretations. If the documents were genuine, then they provided compelling evidence that the invasion would not come in Sicily. If however they were part of a deception operation, they actually provided compelling evidence that the invasion would come in Sicily.

Obviously, an analysis of the documents and the associated evidence was going to be one way of attempting to discriminate between the two hypotheses. However, necessarily, the two hypotheses involved hypotheses about purpose and intention. Accordingly, the evaluation of the hypotheses could not be limited to textual analysis. It necessarily involved a complex sequence of interpretations to do with purpose and intention, all of which involved arguments about context. And here, a fundamental point of Collingwood's analysis is material -- that action is commonly related to the solving of problems, but the methods which people use to solve problems may be more or less well adapted to solving those problems. What follows is that the reconstruction of the ways in which others solve problems -- what Collingwood characterised as the 'rethinking' or 'reenactment' of the thoughts of others -- is inherently evaluative.

In the case of 'Operation Mincemeat', the plausibility of the assumption that the documents were genuine was necessarily linked to the plausibility of the assumption that the Allies would invade in Greece rather than in Sicily. Accordingly, it involved asking fundamental questions as to what the overall objectives of Allied grand strategy were,

and of whether specific actions were appropriate means of realising the objectives. At every stage in the argument, obviously, a central question would be whether the Allies had chosen appropriate or inappropriate means. Accordingly, it involved providing an account of what Allied grand strategy was. A German analyst providing such an account would necessarily at various stages have to ask both what was the 'right' answer in relation to various components of the strategic problem, and whether the Allies were likely to adopt it. He might, of course, conclude that the 'right' answer was to invade in Sicily, but that the Allies were unlikely to choose it. (Questions to do with the competence of an adversary are necessarily central to intelligence work.) What we are dealing with, moreover, is very much what Collingwood called a question and answer complex. The question as to whether the documents were genuine was inextricably linked to the question of whether the Allies were intending to land in Sicily. But this question in turn was linked to other questions -- indeed, the fundamental matters of interpretation in relation to Allied grand strategy. Any change in one part of the intellectual structure would be likely to involve changes in others -- which might include the appearance of new questions, and the disappearance of old ones.

Conclusions about one part of a total picture may logically entail conclusions about another -- or they may suggest probabilities of greater strength or weakness. In the case of 'Operation Mincemeat', a firm conviction that the documents were genuine, without logically entailing that the Allies were not going to land in Sicily, would have suggested something close to a one hundred per cent probability that they were going to land there. Similarly, a firm conviction that the Allies were going to land in Sicily would entail something close to a one hundred per cent probability that the documents were the product of a deception operation: as was in fact the case. It follows that the analysis of evidence collected in the secret domain may very well involve tests conducted within that domain, about which full candour is not possible as a result of the need to preserve secrecy. But it also may very well involve more general tests, requiring a proper grasp of highly complicated issues outside the secret domain. It then further follows that an efficient secret operation requires to be managed by people who are both versed in the tradecraft of the secret world, and also possess the intellectual grasp to cope with the great issues of the world beyond it. This may read like a demand for supermen -- and often in practice one is going to have to opt for second best. But it is wise to be clear as to what are the qualities that one needs, precisely because it is difficult to find them.

Ironically, then, the kind of contempt for the idea of intelligence as research displayed by S&S is liable to lead to a situation where there is no adequate method for assessing information within the secret world. And precisely because information appearing within the secret world is commonly inherently ambiguous, the outcome of the situation can easily be the kind of credulity which lays one open to manipulation by a superior intelligence service. Attempting to avoid credulity can however very easily lead to irrational suspicion, and indeed suspicion bordering on paranoia: Angleton and his British counterparts, such as Peter Wright, being a case in point. A determination to believe that the Sino-Soviet split was a deception operation both did not help plan Cold War strategy -- and also reflected a monumental misjudgement of the Soviet and Chinese leaders, who had had reservations about each other from early on. The problem with an

attempt to base an intelligence methodology on Strauss's ideas however goes further. His whole intellectual approach means that the crucial intellectual problem -- finding ways of discriminating between alternative interpretations of systematically ambiguous evidence - - is never confronted. The whole thrust of Strauss's intellectual history, as indeed Schmitt and Shulsky quite candidly admit, is to establish that the esoteric meaning of great writers is different from the exoteric meaning -- that they are involved in a systematic attempt at deception.

So it would come as no surprise to find disciples of Strauss inclined simply to take for granted that opponents are attempting to deceive them -- rather than treating the possibility of deception as a hypothesis that needs to be tested. Ironically, moreover, when one is dealing with murderous thugs and shameless rascals, precisely the difficult hypothesis to consider is often not that they are lying but that, however brazenly they may have lied in the past, in a given instance they are telling the truth. And prejudging the issue in such away can mean not simply a specific error -- but the development of a question and answer complex which is radically false. So, for example, if one started off assuming that Saddam was concealing the existence of active weapons of mass destruction programmes, one would not explore the implications of the hypothesis that he had no such programmes. One implication of such a hypothesis, obviously, would be that evidence suggesting he had such programmes would necessarily be false. Accordingly, questions as to the intentions and purposes behind the false evidence would arise. Among the directions in which such an investigation would naturally lead would be towards the possibility that some of the evidence produced by Ahmed Chalabi originated in Iran. So the question and answer complex generated from hypotheses about Saddam would necessarily entail hypotheses about the policy of the government in Tehran.

At this point, however, one also comes up against the fact that questions to do with secret intelligence are inextricably bound up with larger questions of political and social analysis. We can formulate the point in terms of the combination of Kent's analytical framework with that of Collingwood. Let us suppose that an investigation of the 'objective situation' in Iraq indicated that the Iraqi Shi'ia were essentially secular -- as Paul Wolfowitz and other neoconservatives believed. It would follow that it was unlikely in the extreme that the regime in Tehran could have 'non-military instrumentalities' by means of which it could hope to establish control over all or part of Iraq. Of course, it might still be the case that the people in Tehran thought that they had such 'instrumentalities' -- but if the 'objective situation' was such that they could not have, it would follow as a simple point of logic that they were wrong. It would be possible that the United States would need to take into account the possibility of actions based on this wrong analysis -- but the question about possible Iranian intentions in Iran would become relatively much less salient. Let us however start from the reverse assumption. It would then be extremely natural to suspect that the Iranian religious Shi'ia could have a strategy to achieve control over all or part of Iraq. The question and answer complex naturally generates a requirement for intelligence both as to the intentions of the Iranian government, and also of those organizations opposed to Saddam Hussein who have been supported by that government. If there are such intentions, then of course it is natural to

suppose that efforts would be made to conceal them. The intelligence problem would be to formulate alternative hypotheses and to work out means of testing them.

The question of the secularism or otherwise of the Iraqi Shi'a is very much a 'social science' question, in the terms in which Sherman Kent understood the notion of 'social science'. This does not mean that information about should simply be sought in research monographs -- it is a kind of information that one can look for from all kinds of sources, which may include businessmen and journalists as well as academics. The crucial point is simply that of the continuity between information available from secret sources and information available in the public realm.

All this prompts a final allusion to British experience. The Straussians sometimes write of the *reduction at hitlerum* -- the point being that it is invalid to suggest that because something was done by Hitler, it is inherently bad. I must admit that confronted by David Brooks, I am indeed tempted to remark that the degree of his faith in intuition has Hitlerian echoes, and also that, as was the case with Hitler, it is likely materially to hamper the prospects of United States both in avoiding conflicts that are avoidable and in prevailing in conflicts that are not. However, given the contempt that S&S seem to feel for Kent's arguments against the Soviet approach as advocated by Alexander Orlov, I am somewhat tempted by the *reductio at Stalinum*. However, as there are few signs that S&S have anything of the professionalism that certain Soviet intelligence officers -- despite their other less appealing characteristics -- displayed, I am going to suggest another parallel. I might call it the *reductio ad cowgillum*.

The name of Felix Cowgill will not be familiar to an American audience. I mention it because he embodies the limitations of the British MI6, as it existed that until the mid-Fifties. It is the intelligence approach of this unfortunate organisation which S&S seem to have been determined to recreate. The difference -- and I find it puzzling -- is that the failings of MI6 were widely believed to have been due to the fact that so many of its members were, as Dick White reportedly said to 'Klop' Ustinov, 'ivory from the neck up'. It is somewhat startling to see approaches to intelligence which White and others regarded as hopelessly counterproductive advocated as the last thing in intellectual sophistication by graduate students from a great American university. It is also deeply depressing to see that today's MI6 appears in some ways to have succumbed to old vices. What however persuades me that the story of MI6 is worth American attention is the extraordinary spectacle of Ahmed Chalabi being welcomed in Washington.

One crucial respect in which Le Carré's Smiley differs from White is that Philby's nemesis made his career in MI5, the counterintelligence service, rather than MI6. In the light of the study of the Cambridge spies produced last year by the former American Foreign Service officer S. J. Hamrick, entitled 'Deceiving the Deceivers', it seems likely that White was convinced of Philby's guilt very much earlier than has been generally recognised. However, at the time when White was moved over in 1956 from MI5 to MI6, to clean up the latter organisation, leading members of MI6 were still not convinced of Philby's guilt. We must hope that it does not take the neocons so long to grasp the possibility that they had been the victims of a sophisticated deception operation -- but

once people have made a mistake they can be remarkably reluctant to admit it. In his study, Hamrick discusses Trevor-Roper's essay on Philby at some length, noting that it was never published in United States. In fact, with the assistance of Hamrick's account and other information which has come to light since 1968 it is possible to see yet more clearly why Trevor-Roper made an argument about the importance of the concept of intelligence as research very similar to that in Kent's study -- although Trevor-Roper did not give hostages to fortune by using the term 'social science'.

Secret intelligence, he argued, was 'the continuation of open intelligence by other means' -- precisely the point Kent was making. It was the intellectual inadequacy of MI6 which both rendered it futile, and open to manipulation by others. Its leaders concentrated on the threat from Soviet Communism, but they saw it as 'mere "subversion", the doctrine of subject classes and peoples.' From this derived both the failure to grasp the threat from Germany, and also the subsequent inability to comprehend that someone of Philby's background could be a communist. Obviously, this whole argument is in the shadow of the debates over appeasement, which were bound up with rivalry between the two intelligence agencies. While MI6 developed an ineffective network of agents which was rolled up at the start of the war by a German deception operation, White at MI5 was introduced to the private network of agents developed by the anti-appeasement former Foreign Office head, Sir Robert Vansittart -- which was how White came to handle 'Klop' Ustinov, Ribbentrop's former attaché. So unlike MI6, MI5 was in a position to warn about the mortal danger to Britain posed by the possibility of a German-Soviet alliance, and possible collaboration between the two 'totalitarian' states to dismember the British Empire. (This might be seen as a good thing -- but not if the likely replacements were Stalin and Hitler!)

The role of Trevor-Roper in this is at some interest. He had been brought into MI6 when that organisation, pitifully short of intelligence achievements of its own, achieved control of the priceless intelligence resource he and Major Gill had opened up -- the Abwehr traffic. Something like total transparency was achieved with the cracking of Abwehr Enigma codes in December 1941. By late 1942, as Trevor-Roper writes in the Philby essay, he and his colleagues had a clear picture of 'the struggle between the Nazi Party and the German General Staff, as it was being fought out in the field of secret intelligence'. The Abwehr was suspected not merely of inefficiency, but of disloyalty -- correctly, as its head, Admiral Canaris, had indicated a willingness to treat with the British. Cleverly playing on the obsession of their common superior Cowgill with source protection, Philby managed for some time to prevent the report going even so far as the head of MI6. It may well not have mattered, given that Churchill, who did eventually see the paper after the insubordinate Trevor-Roper went behind the backs both of Cowgill and of the head of MI6, had adopted the policy of 'absolute silence' towards the German resistance in January 1941: that is, before complications introduced by relationships with Russian and American allies were at issue. As with Roosevelt's later 'unconditional surrender' declaration, arguments continue as to whether this was wise. Ultimately, there is no way of knowing. What one can say is that -- as we can set aside Churchillian fantasies of the 'soft underbelly' -- the most promising possibility for cutting short the

carnage and also preventing Soviet power coming into the heart of Europe would have lain in exploring the possibilities of fomenting dissension within Germany.

The account that Hamrick gives of the Philby affair rests partly on the argument that the kind of intercepted and decoded material pointing to the Cambridge spies which was made public in the transcripts of the Venona archive is likely to have been independently decoded by the British. It also rests on his reading of Trevor-Roper's account of the affair of Konstantin Volkov, the Soviet intelligence officer whose attempt to defect in 1945, bringing with him a complete list of Russian agents working in Britain, might, if successful, have been a monumental counterintelligence triumph, which would probably have yielded invaluable intelligence results, for the reasons Kent gave in discussing the uncovering of the Soviet spy ring in Canada. It was frustrated by Philby, but in clearly suspicious circumstances. Again here Collingwood is useful. It is often difficult to be clear whether someone is attempting to achieve one objective by inappropriate methods, or another concealed one by highly appropriate ones. The intelligence problem was – had Philby tried to bring Volkov to Britain, and bungled it, or had he tried to stop him coming to Britain, and done precisely what he set out to do? I suspect that very early on White and Trevor-Roper concluded that the latter was the almost certain explanation. If you add in Trevor-Roper's experience with the report on the Abwehr, his own admission that he had known Philby was a communist, and also the fact that White had debriefed Krivitsky about Soviet agents in Britain in 1940, the most likely interpretation is that White and Trevor-Roper looked back at the evidence in 1945 or very soon thereafter, and saw that on any natural interpretation it both pointed to Philby and suggested that both of them had to accept some degree of responsibility for the fact that he had ended up in charge of anti-communist counterespionage. One of agents whom the Soviets had recruited, Krivitsky had said, had been a British journalist serving with Franco in the Spanish Civil War. In 1940, would have hardly seemed the most urgent of security problems. However, once alerted to the possibility that Philby might be working for the Soviets, the coincidence would have been striking as would also have been a whole series of weaknesses in Philby's cover story.

It was, however, not until Philby's defection that there was full acceptance in MI6 that Philby had not bungled the Volkov affair, but in fact had been working for the Soviets all along. Meanwhile, that organisation proved as ineffectual in dealing with the post-war Soviets as it had been in dealing with the pre-war Nazis. In 1954, it was discovered that the operation begun as early as 1944 to infiltrate Balt agents into their homelands, far from having created as was boasted a network of agents stretching from the Baltic to the Urals, had simply created a double cross operation by the Soviets rather similar to that the British had practised against the Germans. Again, it was realised in 1955 that the agents which the British had been sending Ukraine since 1950 had been either eliminated or turned. Of course, we British were not alone in being gulled. The commentator who writes on the Defense and the National Interest website under the pen-name 'Werther' has recently reflected on the role of Reinhard Gehlen in causing American intelligence to accept greatly inflated estimates of Soviet military power in the early post-war period, and in creating a major vulnerability in Western intelligence, because his organisation was so thoroughly penetrated. Aptly, I think, he compares Gehlen to Chalabi.

I come back, however, to the parallels between Trevor-Roper's argument and that of Kent. One reason for the former's insistence that secret intelligence was 'the continuation of open intelligence by other means' was that he was convinced that it was a lack of general intellectual grasp that had made MI6 such an unsatisfactory institution. Its members had not bothered to read *Mein Kampf*, and, failing to grasp its quasi-religious appeal, had been unable to imagine that anyone of Philby's background could be attracted to it. I suggest that with the neocons, it may also be the case that a more general intellectual failure is driving specific failures in intelligence analysis. Had it been the case that the Iraqi Shi'ia were as secular as they thought, then toppling Saddam Hussein might perhaps have been expected to produce a challenge to the Iranian regime -- as well as, although the logic is harder to see here -- a new political alliance to replace the traditional alliance with authoritarian Sunni regimes. In the event, of course, the outcome was to massively increase the influence of the Iranians, at least for the time being.

Why was this? I suggest that the hostility of S&S to 'social science' may hold one key. Although they have so much education, the effect of the kind of education they have is to produce an intellectual incapacity rather similar to that of Felix Cowgill. The reason is that they genuinely believe that they have been given access to a superior truth, which means that it is not necessary to reckon with the objections of the uninitiated. One consequence of this is that, if someone like Chalabi has appropriate credentials, it is extraordinarily easy for him to dupe the neocons.

The implications of this seem to be profoundly frightening, not least because of the example of what happened when the Americans and British, having arranged not to look at some of the potential dangers involved in their alliance of the Soviet Union, woke up in 1945 to the full unpleasantness of their wartime collaborator. Perhaps ironically, however, this brings me back to a final area of S&S's paper that I find dubious.

It relates to their charge that 'American intelligence analysts were generally reluctant throughout the Cold War to believe that they could be deceived about any critical question by the Soviet Union or other Communist states.' Again, one sees a characteristic intellectual sloppiness. It is not clear whether what is being suggested is that American intelligence analysts thought that the Soviet Union was attempting to deceive them, but believed they could see through the deception, or whether it is suggested that American intelligence analysts simply accepted what the Soviets asserted at face value. Now in fact there was in the late Fifties a clear move, driven by the analysts of the CIA, towards a much more sanguine view of the role of military force in Soviet policy. So according to NIE11-4-59 of April 1960: 'military power in the Soviet view should not be used recklessly to the hazards of the main power center of Communism The Soviet armed forces unintended in the first instance to deter attacks on the USSR and other Communist states, and to insure survival of communist power should such an attack occur They are probably *not* intended for any consistent and far-reaching policy of outright military conquest.'

Precisely what was being suggested here was that the public Soviet account of their military strategy was not an exercise in deception. In no sense did this imply that one could afford to be insouciant about Soviet military power. The relationship of capabilities and intentions is a complex one, but requirements for military power are rather obviously not determined simply by the current intentions of an adversary. A point I would like to stress is that this kind of 'revisionism', which in the United States came from the CIA, came in Britain from within naval intelligence, with Michael MccGwire a central figure. The history of MccGwire's attempt to change official British assessments of Soviet naval power is recounted by Michael Herman, who is clearly inclined to think that the view taken by figures like MccGwire is right. One point worth stressing, perhaps, is that MccGwire is rather dismissive of textual analysis, precisely on the grounds of circularity. 'The problem of identifying the correct context, the importance of asking the material the right questions, the difficulty of uncovering the subject of debate,' he writes in discussing the pitfalls of textual analysis in interpreting Soviet policy, 'all underlined the inherent ambiguity of textual material, particularly at the higher levels of analysis.'

This is the classic problem of ambiguity, about which I have suggested Strauss has nothing useful to say. One way out of it is a most refined textual analysis, concentrating on context, in the spirit of Collingwood – and indeed, if one reads Garthoff's methodological discussions, the approach is clearly Collingwoodian. In MccGwire's case, both his initial change of mind about the objectives of Soviet strategy and the later development of his views came from putting together textual evidence with the exploitation of the expertise of an experienced naval officer about weapons systems and deployment patterns. His initial reading of the evidence was precisely that the prime goal of the Soviet submarine fleet was, like that of the German U-boats, to prevent the effective deployment of American military power in Europe. The difficulty was that accumulating evidence suggested that, if this was the primary problem the Soviets were trying to solve, they were going about it by highly inappropriate means. A large proportion of the submarines were in the wrong places -- the Baltic and Black Sea, with narrow exits likely to be controlled by Western navies in the event of war. They also had the wrong armament, in particular lacking anti-aircraft capability, which you would expect to find in submarines designed for operation in the Atlantic. The interpretation that the Soviets were largely concerned with providing a perfectly appropriate answer to a different problem: that of ensuring in the event of war the proven Allied capacity for large-scale operations could not be exercised in the Baltic and the Black Sea. It was at the ability of the United States rapidly to remobilise in the event of war that they were looking, rather than to the possibility of preventing such deployment outright by doing successfully what the U-boats had in the end failed to do.

These are issues too complex to go into in depth here. However, it does not seem to me that jibes about CIA complacency take the argument about the crucial -- and neglected -- military dimensions of Cold War history much further. Moreover, one does not have to probe very far to discover that both the principal State Department Soviet experts of the Truman years, Kennan and his friend and colleague Charles Bohlen, were repudiating the notion that the dynamics of Soviet Communist and German National Socialist forms of

'totalitarianism' were similar back in the Truman years. As regards Bohlen, to my mind a figure frequently greatly underestimated, it is clear that the fundamentals of his analysis were very similar to those of Garthoff and MccGwire. Many more puzzles surround Kennan's role. For one thing, it is far from clear that the view that Sherman Kent and others took from the famous X-article was an accurate representation of the complexities on what he actually thought. For another, whatever the manifold evils of the Stalinist regime, the belief that Stalin believed eventual war with the United States to be inevitable, the basis of the Clifford-Elsey memorandum, is actually wrong: both as an account of what Stalin said, and of Kennan's account of what he said.

I stress this, because a characteristic of the neocon approach is that wherever we are, we are back in 1938. Every threat ends up being, in one form or other, Hitler reincarnated. It is difficult to be clear here how far one is dealing with genuine misperception, and how far with manipulative rhetoric. One might say that the S&S paper itself involves a major problem of ambiguity of evidence, in that it is deeply unclear how far one is dealing with conscious distortion or incomprehension: is this an ill-calculated attempt at dealing with intellectual issues relating to intelligence, or a well-calculated piece of propaganda designed to use the technique of the Big Lie in a war against the CIA? What is clear, and in some ways frightening, is the shamelessness. In her 1988 study of 'The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss', Shadia Drury portrayed Strauss as an interesting if deeply flawed thinker, but suggested that what was fundamentally unfortunate about him was that 'he corrupts'; more specifically, he 'seduces young men into thinking that they belong to special and privileged class of individuals that transcend ordinary humanity and the rules applicable to other people.'

But here perhaps one can usefully recall that Dostoevsky reading whom David Brooks thought was a sufficient condition for intelligence expertise. The whole of Arthur Koestler's novel *Darkness at Noon*, whose old Bolshevik protagonist is partly modelled on Bukharin, is structured in terms of an argument about ends in means derived from Dostoevsky's writings. On the one hand, the protagonist never quite manages to answer the Machiavellian case made by his initial interrogator, also an old comrade. But at the end, with his interrogator having been shot before him, the protagonist reflects that it may be that Machiavellian doctrine which has made the revolution into the utter catastrophe it became.

What does it mean to suggest, as S&S do, that 'deception is the norm in political life, and the hope, to say nothing of the expectation, of establishing a politics that can dispense with it is the exception'? Of course deception is a permanent part of the human condition, and in many ways a necessary one. Who suggested anything different? Certainly, Kent did not. But deception, and general shamelessness, are more present in some systems than others. The twentieth century regimes by which it was most systematically practised, those of Hitler and Stalin, do not represent encouraging models. Certainly, in fighting them it was necessary to practice deception. I look back with pride to the fact that some of those British liberals who held views for which S&S have such contempt – were rather good at it. And whatever his faults, I would rather face the challenges of the twenty-first century in the spirit of Sherman Kent than of Leo Strauss – whose ideas, for

a conservative British liberal, have much too much of a scent of the patterns of thinking which brought Europe to destruction.