INTELLIGENCE STUDIES IN FRANCE

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Since the mid 1990s, interest in intelligence studies has grown in France, resulting in a surge of publications, seminars and training sessions on the theme. As David Kahn wrote, in response to an article by Peter Jackson, it is tempting to see in this surge the birth of a « French School of Intelligence Studies ». Such a school of thought, if it even exists, is still in its infancy.

Nevertheless, there is a growing awareness of the importance of intelligence as a subject for study, signalling a major shift in the French mentality. This change comes on the heels of the geopolitical upheavals of the post-Cold War era which have made intelligence an essential instrument for an understanding of the new geopolitical landscape and consequently for scoping future threats. France, like other world powers, cannot afford to overlook such a transformation.

Those seeking to promote this seachange in the French psyche have had to overcome the inherent reticence of the French people and their political leaders to a profession that is still viewed pejoratively, a phenomenon that explains the longstanding contempt shown towards it. Above all, the academic community has come to the study of this « missing dimension » in French research in a singularly fragmented fashion.

In the present paper we will endeavour to present a concise overview of the state of academic research on the subject in France and outline the conditions for the « establishment » of a veritable French school of intelligence studies.

1 This article was originally written for the « Intelligence Studies » panel of the 5th European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), General Conference, Postdam, September 2009.
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5 Intelligence and the State: An Emerging 'French School' of Intelligence Studies", Intelligence and National Security, Vol. 21/6, December 2006, p. 1061-1065.
REASONS FOR THE LATE EMERGENCE OF INTELLIGENCE STUDIES IN FRANCE

The absence of an intelligence culture in France

There are historic and cultural reasons for the relative disinterest in intelligence studies in France. The absence of an intelligence culture in France is stunning given the role the country has played on the world stage for so long.

Intelligence work is a discipline that has never been held in high regard by politicians, the military, academics or economists.

One only has to visit a British or American library to see that France lags far behind its Anglo-American allies on the subject. When one book on intelligence is published in France, there are at least ten others published in Britain and the United States. By comparison with these two countries, there is a distinct lack of an intelligence culture in France outside a small coterie of professionals and the rare specialists on the subject. Former intelligence professionals, such as Admiral Lacoste, former director of the DGSE (General Directorate of External Security, France’s foreign intelligence service), have noted bitterly that « the intelligence culture of French leaders and of public opinion in France is famously lacking, a result of the vicissitudes of recent history and a reflection of specific characteristics of French society ».

Moreover, the Cartesian heritage has moulded the national psyche forging a tendency towards conceptualisation and abstraction, sometimes leading to a denial of reality, and a tendency to avoid the concrete resolution of problems. As General Mermet, another former director of the DGSE, has noted, « we tend to, more than other peoples, overlook the facts and prefer ideas and subjective judgements to indiscutable witness reports, whether it be in politics, where for example we were loath to believe in the changes afoot in Eastern Europe, or in military affairs, as shown by the attitude of the French Military High Command before 1939, despite the fact that the military had in its possession hard intelligence¹ ». 

French culture has always maintained a strict border between knowledge and intelligence; the former is deemed « noble » and « legitimate », the latter « contemptible » and « illegitimate ». To prove the point, in France, intelligence is absent from the writing of the greatest French military strategists. The conferences, classes and writings of French strategists Foch, Castex, Beaufre, Gallois or Poirier hardly mention the subject at all.

We are here faced with a dual problem:  
– on the one hand, the manner in which intelligence work has been performed in France is traditionally and also of necessity focused on domestic matters. The fight against the enemy within is one of the salient features of the French cultural model. 
– on the other, since the « Dreyfus Affair » (1894), French intelligence services have been mistrusted by the political class. No one has forgotten the enduring impact that the Dreyfus Affair and its aftermath had on all of French society. Since that traumatic event, government leaders have consistently shackled the intelligence services instead of asking themselves how the services could be best put to use and how the performance

¹ Général F. Mermet, "Quelques réflexions sur la fonction renseignement", ENA mensuel, n° 236, novembre 1993, p 11.
of the services might be improved. This means that in France, more than in any other Western country, the work of the intelligence services is subservient to political fluctuations and electoral demands. When we bring Ben Barka (1965) and the Rainbow Warrior (1985) into the picture, it is easy to see how the political class have come to view and manage the intelligence services1.

Thusly, intelligence work has negative connotations in the French psyche, and is unjustly connected with ideas of espionage, privacy violations and dirty tricks campaigns. On the other hand, counter-espionage, that is to say the effort made to protect French military, industrial and economic interests, is seen in a far better light. In France, all endeavours to defend the nation’s interests are more easily accepted and implemented than are offensive measures2.

The quasi-inexistence of academic research before the mid-1990s

Though perceptions of the profession were marshalled by an absence of a real intelligence culture in France, intelligence has hardly been ignored or derided. A diverse national intelligence production has long existed, and generally falls into two categories: memoirs and accounts written by former intelligence staff and writings by journalists. Before the end of the 1980s, academic research on the subject was virtually inexisten.

Memoirs and accounts by former intelligence servicemen

In the years following the end of the Second World War, a large number of books was published on the various aspects of the secret wars waged during WWII. Most of these books focused on the Resistance in France and to a lesser extent on the shadow wars waged in North Africa and the Far East.

Such publications span works by former members of the Resistance seeking to inform the public and gain recognition for their actions in the Maquis, former members of Gaullist services seeking to glorify heroic operations, representatives of the military secret services wishing to establish the truth as to their contribution to the national and Allied intelligence effort, etc. Such publications were extremely numerous and diverse and from 1950 to 1960 benefited from the interest of the general public in a period that readers had known at first hand and who sought a sharper picture of events.

Among the most important works published were the writings of Pierre Nord, Commandant Paul Paillole, Colonel Rémy, General Gauché and numerous members of the French intelligence services who had operated during the Second World War.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the theme of the Cold War was the main subject for books on intelligence, given the subversive activities of the Soviet Union and the scale of the threat that the USSR represented. Such publications were followed by more generalist works on the history and the theory of intelligence, with books appearing on secret operations conducted during the wars of Indochina and Algeria. This « second wave » had less success than the previous one, but resulted in works of great quality,

such as those written by Constantin Melnik, Jean Deve, Pierre Nord, General Henri Navarre, Robert Bourcard, Jean-Pierre Alem, among others.

**Fig. 1 - Numbers of books on intelligence published in France**

(1884-2008)

![Graph showing numbers of books on intelligence published in France](chart.png)

**Books by journalists**

The other source of books on intelligence are print media journalists, who show an unflagging interest in the subject that borders on fascination. This is a phenomenon common to all countries springing from the historic foundations of the press and its links to freedom of information. Accordingly, the media believe that they can penetrate the secrets of statecraft. Writing on intelligence from this angle often falls into the realm of the fantastical, with writers exaggerating the failures of the intelligence services and depicting the work of the services as the underhand activities of a « secret police ». The slightest error is exacerbated. And in France, since the Dreyfus Affair (1894) right up to the Clearstream Affair (2005), there has been a surfeit of scandals. Since 1975, this type of reporting on intelligence accounts for 5 % of all publications on the subject. But this approach, often sensationalist, has created an erroneous image of the services and their work. Print journalists are used to treating these affairs as they would other news items. Until recently, there were very few journalists in France specialized in the field of intelligence. Most of the journalists who wrote about intelligence issues in newspapers or weekly magazines were in fact experts in defence, terrorism, police work or investigations, such as Jacques Isnard (Le Monde) or Jean-Marie Pontaut (L’Express). Given the lack of available information, they have tended to focus on the scandals and the failures of the services, rather than their successes or indeed the very role of the services. Their texts are littered with inappropriate language, with terms such as « espionage », « secret agents », « spooks » or « secret police » banded about, and the writers display a definite lack of knowledge about intelligence work and its applications. Such low quality commentary on questions of intelligence is reinforced by the disinterest of the press in general for investigative journalism since the beginning of the 1980s on account of the high cost (time and resources) involved.

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1 Chart based on data provided in the catalogue of the French University Documentation System (SUDoc), http://www.sudoc.ub.es/
The exception to this rule are those authors who write books on the world of intelligence, both French and foreign, from a historical perspective (Roger Faligot, Pascal Kropp, etc.). Though their approach can not be described as scientific or academic, their contribution has been essential in making up for the historiographic void and inciting the interest of the general public on the subject.

Other attempts have been made through the founding of confidential newsletters or journals, but these publications have usually been short-lived. In July 1967, five years after graduating from the Centre de formation et de perfectionnement des journalistes (CF) - Paris-based School of Journalism, Michel Friedman launched the first edition of 001. Le mensuel de l'espionnage (001. The espionage monthly). Twenty years later, Olivier Schmidt and Maurice Botbol set up the Le Monde du renseignement, renamed Intelligence Online in the beginning of the 1990s. They differ from many of their colleagues in that they do not seek to complement scientific research on the subject, but rather endeavour to elucidate « in every article the political balance of power, the organisation of networks of influence and economic issues with a view to exposing the core power structures at work » ¹. This publication is the only one that has survived. It is a reference in the field. All other newsletters of its type quickly sank without a trace.

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**Fig. 2 – Publication of books on intelligence in France**

(1975-2009) ²

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**French publications on Intelligence**

If we take the long view (1884-2008), we can identify a constant trend in the choices made by French publishing houses. They have systematically held to three criteria regarding books on intelligence: such publications must either deal with history, WWII or current events, especially events that are a subject of scandal and concern. The

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¹ [http://www.indigo-net.com/about/philosophie.asp et](http://www.indigo-net.com/about/philosophie.asp et)
² [http://www.intelligenceonline.fr/info/about/p_i0.asp?rub=about](http://www.intelligenceonline.fr/info/about/p_i0.asp?rub=about)
³ Chart based on data provided in the catalogue of the French University Documentation System (SUDoc), [http://www.sudoc.ables.fr/](http://www.sudoc.ables.fr/)
Interwar period saw publications split as follows: works on the First World War (36 %),
the Interwar period itself (21 %) and historical studies (20 %, including 10 % on the
sole question of the First Empire); the following period (1945-1974) saw a majority
of books covering World War Two (45 %) and the Cold War (37 %). Since 1974, and
especially since 1997, books published on the subject in France are more diverse.

Between 1945 and 1974, those subjects represented 54.5 % of the books
published on intelligence. First come memoirs of former service staffers, appearing in
the immediate aftermath of the Great War, such as those written by Sir John Aston,
Baden Powell or Marthe McKenna. Ms. McKenna was a member of the so-called British
« trainwatching » cells in Belgium during the First World War. She published no less
than four books of memoirs in France between 1933 and 1940. In the same period, only
Robert Boucard and his work Dessous de l’espionnage met with similar critical acclaim.
The years that followed WWII saw the publication of the first American and British
Intelligence Studies. The Second World War was somewhat over represented (45 % of
the subjects treated) as was the Cold War (37 % of the subjects treated) in a French
output that was still low in comparison to the number of Anglo-American publications.
Moreover, the political situation in the country during the Interwar period as well as
after 1945 led to the publication of documents justifying the work of the Soviet
intelligence services, during the Moscow show trials (1932, 1937) or during the Gary

The question remains whether all these books really concern intelligence.
Frequently, book titles serve only to attract the attention of readers. Moreover, apart
from some studies by military personnel (1934, 1935), or academics (1969), sometimes
with past professional experience in the services (1987, 1994), the term « intelligence »
appeared only rarely in French studies before the end of the 1990s. Until that time, most
publications put the accent on the term « espionage » in the hope, perhaps, of attracting
more readers avid for stories about spies and spying in general. « The intersection
between case study and fiction, of documentary fiction and fictional documentation, is
major feature of the explosion of espionage in the public consciousness of the XXth
century » 1. Or perhaps such a phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the scope
of study itself was insufficiently defined.

A profession long held in neglect by French academics

The history of intelligence as a science in its own right was long the prerogative
of foreign researchers. At university level, the Americans were the first to consider
intelligence as an academic subject, before going on to establish Intelligence Studies
courses in the 1980s. The British followed their lead in the 1990s, with several
university chairs in intelligence established (most notably at Cambridge – history of
intelligence – and at Durham – law and political science). Such chairs have attracted
renowned scholars, as well as former directors of intelligence services dedicating
themselves henceforth to academic research.

The recognition of intelligence as a subject of study in its own right is a recent
phenomenon in contemporary French historiography. Until very recently, historians
and political scientists had not considered intelligence as a significative parameter of

1 Alain Dewerpe, Espion. Une anthropologie historique du secret d’Etat contemporain, Paris, Gallimard,
statecraft, nor did they consider the intelligence services as significative stakeholders in state policy. It cannot be said that the subject was totally ignored, but it is fair to say that its importance was largely underestimated and hardly appears in social and human sciences, with even military historians giving it short shrift.

It must be admitted that the secret nature of intelligence work did not facilitate the work of researchers and the issue of access to documents was for a long time a brake on historic research. When the rare academics sought to understand the contribution of intelligence to history, their lack of knowledge about the intelligence profession, and their incapability in identifying the characteristic signs of clandestine operations led them to declare that there was no source material on the subject.

The irony is that the first studies on French intelligence, using French source material, was the work of British researchers. Such a fact merits our attention because in general these English-speaking intelligence experts, already sifting through the large number of documents written in their own language, long restricted themselves to the narrow scope that such documents provided. In this way, the studies on the work of Russian and British services, access to which was as restricted to them as it was to French scholars, was primarily based on declassified documentation from the American intelligence community.

The predominance of Anglo-American publications is however relative. In the years 1945-1974, Anglo-American writing on the subject only represented 42% of total foreign production. German and Israeli writers were also publishing works in France in the same period, sometimes providing a different viewpoint on subjects being debated by journalists. A conversation on the subject of intelligence thus began, but academics did not take part. And this despite the fact that the publishing houses showed continued interest in the subject. Five years after its first print run, in 1961, the book by British journalist Jon Kimche on the action of Henri Guisan, *Un Général Suisse contre Hitler. L’espionnage au service de la Paix 1939-1945* (Spying for Peace : General Guisan and Swiss Neutrality) was reprinted. The reason for this rare privilege was the publication of *Révélations d’un agent secret sur l’espionnage en Suisse contre le fascism et Hitler, 1930-1945* (not published in English), by Otto Pünter, and the book by journalists Pierre Accoce and Pierre Quet, *La Guerre a été gagnée en Suisse, l’affaire Roessler* (published in English under the title ‘A Man Called Lucy’). Such publications hardly sparked off a wave of historiographic research and only some fifteen books, mostly foreign, were reprinted before 1995. Afterwards, the creation of a market for books on intelligence as well as the fact that some books had fallen into the public domain led to several older works being reprinted.

The Anglo-American predominance can thus be explained by an obvious anteriority in the field of intelligence studies, rather than as a result of disinterest from French authors. French editors have always been open to the publication of scientific studies of the subject. Occasionally such interest wanes, as occurred at the end of the 1920s, following a surfeit of memoirs, that left the way open for the spy novel. Disinterest in the subject was only shown by academic writers. Before the 1990s, few university writers, compared to their Anglo-American counterparts, worked on the subject of intelligence.

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THE EMERGENCE OF ACADEMIC INTELLIGENCE STUDIES IN THE 1990s

The emergence of intelligence studies in the world of French academia is firstly a result of the emergence of the society of information and the growing awareness of the reality of global competition, obliging economic stakeholders to integrate intelligence into their management processes. In order to respond to their new demand for specialists, business universities and schools at the beginning of the 1990s began to provide degree courses or other specialised post-graduate courses on « business intelligence », to instruct economic players on the management of information and disinformation. In parallel, research and publications increased on the subject.

A favourable context

The work performed by the Martre Commission on « Competitiveness and Economic Security » of the XIth Plan (Martre Report, 1994) led to a growing awareness of new market entry strategies and the new realities of global competition. After the Martre Report, the Carayon Report (2002) continued to address the national competitiveness of France, but highlighted the fact that after an interval of eight years little progress had been made.

In France, a dynamic and conflictual approach to international commerce and trade has emerged only recently. Elsewhere, the major international powers all understood that to guarantee peace, scope out emerging threats and emerge victorious from global economic rivalries, effective services, drawing from a culture of intelligence disseminated throughout the administration, business and civil society, were key. Though such awareness was slow to arrive in France, at least a demand for corporate information processing specialists had begun.

The second factor that explains the new interest in intelligence is terrorism, in particular the attacks of September 11, 2001. These attacks made French politicians and the general public in France more aware of the role that intelligence plays in national security. Intelligence was rediscovered as an essential information and decision-making instrument for political leaders with regard to foreign policy, defence and domestic security, and as a means of action.

A proliferation of academic and para-university programs

The emergence of education and courses dedicated to intelligence

At the beginning of the 1990s, in response to the demand for specialists, economic science universities (4th section of the CNU - French National Council of Universities), business management (5th section of the CNU), information and communications (71st section of CNU), as well as the commerce and engineering schools, all established degree courses and specialised post-graduate courses on business intelligence, to initiate students and employees to the practices of intelligence as applied to the business world.
In 1995, upon the initiative of Admiral Pierre Lacoste, former director of the DGSE, and upon the instigation of Jacques-Émile Dubois, the CESD (Centre of Scientific Defence Studies) of the University of Marne-la-Vallée was established. The aim of the CESD is to teach, promote study and research and act as a factory for ideas, with research covering the newly-widened scope of defence and security issues in contemporary society.

In parallel, the University of Marne-la-Vallée established a DESS (Diplôme d’études supérieures spécialisées - French master degree) course in information and security that covers the work of the intelligence services and intelligence culture in general. Two DESS courses in business intelligence and security engineering were also set up to cover a comprehensive range of intelligence issues.

In 1997, the former director of the EIREL (Inter-service School for Intelligence and Linguistic Skills) in Strasbourg, General Jean Pichot-Duclos, and the former leader of NAPAP (Armed Nuclei for Popular Autonomy1), Christian Harbulot, set up the École de guerre économique (School of Economic Warfare - EGE). This unique post-graduate academy is supported by the Paris-based ESLSCA School of Business, and aims to fill in the gap in skills training for French business managers, namely the fact that the notion of information warfare is absent from the strategic planning of corporations, administrations and local authorities, and that there is an apparent misunderstanding about the strengthened position of foreign powers in the post-Cold War era, not to mention the increasingly conflictual globalisation of trade. Since its creation, eleven classes, some seven hundred students, have graduated from the school.

In addition, intelligence has been gradually introduced into the programs of ENA (French National School of Administration), allowing future senior civil servants to learn about the field. One of the missions of the IHEDN (French Institute of National Higher Defence Studies) is to provide in-depth information on the major issues connected with defence, and gives a course on the threats posed by foreign intelligence services, as well as a course on business intelligence. Finally, in 2006, the CID (French National Defence College) inaugurated a seminar on intelligence. Before this date, apart from some one-off conferences, there was no specialised seminar on the subject in the training of senior French military officers.

At the beginning of the 2006/2007 university year, the Masters program in « International Affairs » at Sciences Po Paris (Paris Institute for political studies) set up a seminar entitled « Clandestine Worlds: intelligence in the face of terrorism », led by Stephen Duso-Bauduin, Professor in Sociology of International Relations and Jean-Pierre Pochon, a former top-level officer of the French secret services having worked at the DCRG (Direction centrale des renseignements généraux – French domestic intelligence agency), the DST (Direction de la surveillance du territoire – French counter-intelligence agency)2, and the DGSE. The seminar studies the role of intelligence in the combat against terrorism in different countries, with a primary focus on the United States and the French services, while also covering other major services worldwide (Britain, Russia, Israel and China).

The following year, the same institute established a new course called « Intelligence Policies », helmed by Philippe Hayez, Baron at the French Court of Audit and former deputy director of intelligence at the DGSE. The seminar aims to enable

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1 Ultra-left, Maoist-inspired group active in the 1970s, and responsible for several attacks.
2 In 2008, these two agencies merge into a new organization, named DCRI (Direction centrale du renseignement intérieur, French new security service)
students to better understand this « special » form of public policy, its ties with other
instruments of state (corps diplomatiques, military, police, judiciary) and administrative
decision-making.

Finally, in September 2008, a think-tank named Mètis, co-chaired by Philippe
Hayez, Sébastien Laurent and Olivier Forcade, was set up, with a view to holding regular
conference debates on issues related to intelligence at Science Po Paris.

The multiplication of publications

Two factors emerge from an analysis of French and foreign publications in
France since 1975 (Fig. 2). The first factor to be considered is the slow beginnings of
intelligence studies as of 1991, followed by a surge as of 1998, with a peak reached in
the wake of the 9/11 attacks. One should not read too much into the noticeable fall in
volume in 2009, as numbers given only refer to the first five months of the year. From a
publishing point of view, it is clear that French production on the subject has grown
considerably since 1995.

The second aspect illustrated by the statistics is a fall in the number of foreign
books published to the benefit of French-authored books. A good example of this trend
concerns the publication of a biography of James Angleton, head of counterintelligence
at the CIA between 1954 and 1974, penned by one of the present authors, CF2R
researcher Gérard Arboit1, which was preferred to a translation of Tom Mangold’s
authoritative work. Interest in the subject was inspired by the release in France of
Robert de Niro’s film, The Good Shepherd, whose main character is based on Angleton.
The film provided the publisher with a good opportunity to cash in on burgeoning
public interest. The same reasoning lies behind the reprinting in 2002 of the thesis of
Captain Fernand Routier, L’Espionnage et la trahison en temps de paix et en temps de
guerre (Espionage and Treason in Times of Peace and War), submitted at Poitiers way
back in 1913.

This reasoning influences bibliographical production, not in terms of quality, but
in terms of the subjects treated. Such books are not necessarily of a scientific precision,
as shown by L’espionne. Virginia Hall, une Américaine dans la guerre by Vincent
Nouzille2. A well-written work, L’espionne should have benefited from the continued
interest in the Second World War in France, backed up by a growing public interest in
intelligence studies. The book was, however, a commercial failure.

These two features of French publishing have been amplified by the surge in
interest from publishers on intelligence since the attacks of 9/11. Several publishers
launched collections on the subject, with L’Harmattan establishing the collection
« Culture du renseignement » (Intelligence Culture) in 1999, followed in 2001 by the
collection « Renseignement et guerre secrète » (Intelligence and Secret Warfare) by
Lavauzelle, replaced three years later by « Renseignement, histoire et géopolitique »
(Intelligence, history and geopolitics). In 2003, Ellipes also published a range of books
on the subject. Finally, in 2005, Nouveau Monde appointed two academics (Olivier
Forcade, Sébastien Laurent) to run the collection « Le Grand Jeu » (The Great Game).

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The rise of academic research

Ten years after Great Britain\(^1\), French academics began to conduct research on intelligence studies. There has been a high number of doctorates, degree papers, Masters dissertations and IEP diplomas on the subject. Analysis of that academic production reveals the areas of research explored and the progress of the ongoing « establishment » of specifically a French intelligence school. On account of its multidisciplinary nature, intelligence studies encompass history, political science, law, economic science, information and communications sciences. Its areas of application cover all sectors of national security and economic/corporate security.

Fig. 3 – Overview of French publications on intelligence\(^2\)
(1975-2009)

Three divisions (economic science, management science and information and communications sciences) account for 51% of the theses written since 1996 on the subject, respectively 5%, 12% and 34%. Two French universities in particular stand out, and both are specialised in the field of information and communications sciences. They are Aix-Marseille III (24%) and Marne-la-Vallée (7%). Henri Dou, an emeritus professor who worked at Aix-Marseille III appears to have specialised in business intelligence (13%).

Be it a passing fad, or the focus of legitimate attention, the dissertations and official accreditations granted for thesis research since 1996 illustrate a diversity of research not seen in the publishing business. Above all, it shows the primacy of subjects connected to business intelligence (49%), to the detriment of international relations and warfare (20%). It means that the university system is adapting to a dual demand, one from the state and the other arising from purely professional requirements. The

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\(^{2}\) Chart based on data provided in the catalogue of the French University Documentation System (SUDoc), http://www.sudoc.abes.fr/
former was the result of the Edouard Balladur government's concerns regarding the need to coordinate all information acquisition, processing and distribution systems for economic stakeholders. The « Competitiveness and Economic Security » Commission was set up as part of the XIth Plan, following the report helmed by Henri Martre, former C.E.O. of Aérospatiale, and published in 1994. In 2002, a second report, written by French deputy Bernard Carayon, showed that the Department of Higher Education still did not know the exact number of students in the field.

Seven years later, there are now more than forty Masters courses specialised in this new discipline. Paradoxically, practitioners of business intelligence research are loath to recognize its relationship with intelligence work. Business intelligence is considered more as a new form of business management, the result of a cross between open source management and the rigorous and scientific approach employed in marketing and consultancy, despite the fact that, internationally, the relationship between business intelligence and intelligence work in general is taken for granted. Consequently, many academics believe themselves to have « invented » a new discipline. Accordingly, the information and communications sciences, whose scope is the widest due perhaps to its lack of definite contours, have quickly gained prominence in the field. Since 1996, information and communications sciences account for one third of thesis papers submitted on the subject of « intelligence » and two thirds of theses presented on « business intelligence ». These academics consider that business intelligence is a result of the digital revolution, and thus their discipline is essentially tied to the Internet. In effect they are presenting this new field of knowledge as an advanced form of cyberdocumentation, aimed at improving the competitiveness of companies. This trend is so prevalent that three thesis papers were temporarily classified (for periods ranging from one to ten years) and a fourth was classified sine die, because the research covered issues of national competitiveness. This trend creates a misunderstanding about the reality of economic intelligence and has resulted in the fact that 49 % of thesis papers presented were dedicated to « open source monitoring », i.e. electronic information management processes.

This reductionist approach has since extended beyond the field of information and communications sciences and has been imported to all academic disciplines that treat of economic intelligence. In this way, in business management, 49 % of business intelligence thesis papers presented were on the theme of open source monitoring; 13 % of economics thesis papers also. The interest in business intelligence has also extended beyond the sciences and has spread to the humanities, including law (22 % of thesis papers), political science (15 % of theses) and even history (4 %). In management studies, there was a thesis entitled La déstabilisation de l'entreprise au nom de l'éthique : approche par l'auto-alimentation (Corporate destabilisation in the name of ethics : a self-supply approach). This reveals a salient feature of this approach to business intelligence, viz. all these novel subjects could have been studied through the prism of a variety of disciplines. This is the case of two other business management thesis papers on the organisation of the intelligence services, a subject which should more logically have fallen within the purview of political science research. Such tendencies prove that intelligence studies, as Admiral Lacoste pointed out in his 1998 report, are by their very nature multidisciplinary.
For the last thirteen years sixteen different disciplines have participated in intelligence studies in French universities. Contrary to what occurred in Great Britain, the history of intelligence (16% of thesis papers) is not the guiding force. Just as with information and communications sciences, the study of the history of intelligence can be said to deform the reality of its object of study. Military intelligence is overrepresented (60% of historical thesis papers), benefitting from the progress made in military history research over the last twenty years. And though international relations are well represented (28%), it should be noted that 80% of the subjects treat modern history only. Unlike military history, disinterest among students for the history of foreign relations has grown, especially in relation to contemporary history. There are no professors working on the history of intelligence who are also foreign relations experts, despite the fact that foreign relations constitute the traditional theatre of operations for the intelligence services.

Fig. 4 – Subjects of research in intelligence studies (1975-2009) based on university research papers presented in France

Bizarrely, political science thesis papers on intelligence (8%) are not comparable in quality to the efforts of foreign students working in the same field. With 47% of theses on spy literature and only 38% on the intelligence agencies and their structures, we can hardly talk about any knock-on effect. The same goes for thesis papers in law (15%), despite that law constitutes the third reservoir of intelligence studies in France; 56% of papers submitted since 1996 are concerned with espionage, as was the case at the end of the 19th century.

2 Chart based on data provided in the catalogue of the French University Documentation System (SUDoc), http://www.sudoc.abes.fr
Other angles of research

The structure of official academic research on the subject of intelligence is still in the development stage, but it is in the area of business intelligence that the most important initiatives are taking place, with, in particular, the establishment in 2003 of the Laboratoire de recherche en guerre économique (LAREGE – The Economic Warfare Research Laboratory), by the School of Economic Warfare. Under the direction of Philippe Baumard, a university professeur agrégé in management sciences at the University of Aix-Marseille III, his aim is to make up for the time lost in France concerning the field of business intelligence. From the outset, he has set an ambitious objective and accorded himself the resources necessary to achieve his goals. He seeks to contribute to the research in the field of informational strategies; to create a truly independent space for inventive thinking and expertise on such issues and strategies; to sensitize the main institutional and economic stakeholders as well as the general public to the strategic reality of information in the new globalized world.

Preferring longitudinal research methods (modelling instruments, case studies, and prospective studies), the research carried out at LAREGE examines development modalities, the implementation of indirect strategies and the dynamics of strategic and organisational change arising from such manoeuvres. Among the themes prioritized is the study of tactical and strategic management.

Other centres of research are also studying and working on intelligence questions: the Centre d’études d’histoire de la Défense (CEHD – Centre for Historical Study on Defence), established in 1995, set up a History of Intelligence Commission in 2000 chaired by jurist Bertrand Warusfel. The objective of the Commission is to promote research and debate, and to allow the military to contribute to university research in this potentially rich field of historiographic study. However, after eight years work, and one publication presenting the conferences held over its first five years of existence, the Commission was disbanded. The Centre de recherche des écoles de Coëtquidan (Coëtquidan Military Schools Research Centre), where Olivier Forcade ran a seminar on intelligence from 1997 to 2002, met a similar fate; the program was ended when its founder left having co-supervised fifty-eight dissertations by junior grade lieutenants on the subject of intelligence.

In parallel, the Agence nationale de la recherche (ANR – National Research Agency) supports a four-year program (2006-2009) for « young researchers », entitled « Information ouverte, Information fermée (IOIF – Open and closed source information) », set up by Sébastien Laurent, Associate Professor at Bordeaux III and Science Po Paris. The program gathers twenty-two researchers and and its objective is to be the first multidisciplinary intelligence approach in France (history, political science, law), composed mostly of young academics who work closely with their international counterparts. This interesting initiative is however more of a gathering of researchers interested in intelligence rather than a centre for intelligence experts. Their grasp of intelligence is somewhat limited even though the work produced is of a high

2 St Cyr/Coëtquidan Military School is the French equivalent to West Point Academy.
quality and the meetings organised do enable many young historians to familiarise themselves with the subject.

We deplore the fact that the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS – National Centre of Scientific Research), the paragon of French university research, still does not conduct research on intelligence, leaving such work to non-university and privately-run research labs.

_The creation of a specialised research centre_

Though French universities did not allow for the establishment of a specific research centre on intelligence studies, one striking project has been developed at the margins of university life, around the Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement (CF2R – French Centre for Intelligence Studies), founded in 1999. University researchers and former intelligence officers, overcoming ingrained reticence from the academic world, decided to create an independent think tank to foster the development of intelligence studies. With a dual entrepreneurial and academic approach, professionals with backgrounds in the services and a team of researchers, both young and more experienced, have for the last ten years produced more than twelve thousand pages of books, documents, and multidisciplinary articles. They have worked on numerous private university and military academy degree programs, and have addressed conferences in France and abroad. CF2R has established exchanges with international research institutes and with foreign researchers and has set up a university prize that awards the work of students on the subject. In addition, researchers at CF2R have taught a variety of audiences (general public, children and adolescents) and have given orientation sessions and consultancy work to MPs, the media, filmmakers, etc.

Though there existed no specific diploma dedicated exclusively to intelligence studies, CF2R and the Centre d’analyse politique comparée, de géostratégie et de relations internationales (CAPC GRI – Centre for Comparative Political Analysis, Geostrategy and International Relations) of University Montesquieu-Bordeaux IV, under the direction of Professor Michel Bergès, established a third level « Intelligence Studies » university diploma (DU) in September 2006.

With this diploma program, CF2R and CAPC GRI sought to deepen and disseminate a veritable intelligence culture in France. With this end in mind, the course aimed to teach students the principles governing the actions undertaken by intelligence operatives, enabling students to recognize the traces of such actions in their research. Clandestine operations are conducted according to a set of codified practices, with specific rules, which must be known in order to be able to recognize them. The teaching approach also highlighted the vital contribution made by intelligence services to political leaders seeking to shape History and allowed students to understand the way which other nations put their intelligence services to work. This project has not yet succeeded. It is in the process of being relaunched within the framework of the Groupe de recherche Sécurité et gouvernance (GRSG – Study Group on Security and Governance), directed by Professor Michel-Louis Martin, at the University of Social Sciences Toulouse 1.

In addition, despite the fact that the government’s Livre Blanc sur la Défense et la Sécurité (French government White Paper on Defence and Security, 2008) pilloried the need for an intelligence academy in France, CF2R launched at the beginning of 2009 a
diploma for professionals unique in the French-speaking world, entitled «Management
des agences de renseignement et de sécurité» (Intelligence and Security Agencies
Management). The course is aimed at high-ranking civil servants and military officers,
as well as deputies who work in or with intelligence and security services and who wish
to become proficient in this environment. The objective is to allow participants direct,
manage or supervise intelligence services, to integrate such services with success, or to
work effectively with them. To this end, the course will cover all the principles that
govern the activities of this unique part of statecraft. Teachers will impart the
fundamentals of intelligence work required for an understanding of the
discipline; provide a thorough overview of the activities, professions, services and
missions of an intelligence service; introduce students to the main security services
worldwide; identify best practices and compare and contrast the ideas of professional
intelligence officers; provide an understanding and analysis of the future tests facing the
services to enable the services adapt to the new international, technological and
parliamentary challenges that will impact the operations of intelligence services.

Limits of and challenges facing academic intelligence studies in France

The main reason for the late emergence of scientific study of intelligence arises
from two difficulties.

The first difficulty is simply the secret nature of intelligence work. There is
nothing more difficult than an analysis of a field of activity whose main characteristic is
the elimination of all trace of its existence or activity. Nevertheless, this difficulty also
applies to many other fields of human endeavour and cannot be accepted as a reason
for failure. Over time archives have been declassified and former intelligence officials
will accept to talk openly about their work. Secondly, the work and professional
practices of the intelligence services are wholly misunderstood; it is only with the
acquisition of such knowledge that is becomes possible to identify the many traces of
intelligence work throughout history and behind current events. Very few university
teachers are able to comprehend the range of professional practices employed by
intelligence operatives. Such practices are extremely rigorous and codified and have
been perfected over centuries. Few researchers are aware of this gap in their knowledge
when dealing with the work of the services. This is why academic courses must be
developed on the subject.

A subject of research that is ill-defined

When we talk about intelligence, what is referred to exactly? There is much
confusion about what constitutes a piece of intelligence, intelligence work in general
and indeed the function of the intelligence services. Such confusion usually stems from
problems of vocabulary. Indeed the term «intelligence» refers to the intelligence
services, their operations and the results of their work:
– special services provide state information to various Departments, (Ministries of the
Interior, Defence, Foreign Affairs, Economy);
– professional practices enable the penetration of the secrets of adversaries using
different means. The means employed to penetrate enemy secrets do not consist solely
in illegal actions. Such practices are conducted to lend meaning to a mass of different data, both secret and non-secret, and to make such data understandable and actionable for a decision-maker;
– *finished product*, drafted to respond to a given demand. The finished intelligence product arrives directly on the desk of the authorities providing them with information; such information does not originate only from the special services.

When intelligence is studied, a researcher may be led to focus on several areas of expertise:
– the *administrative bodies* in charge of intelligence missions; the position and importance of such bodies within the state defence and security apparatus;
– the *professional clandestine skill-sets* developed to conduct intelligence missions. Such skill-sets are the only parameter by which one can judge the professionalism of an organisation; however, this is an area where archival material is very rare and academics are insufficiently trained;
– *intelligence product*, i.e. the intelligence gathered, the quality of that intelligence and the manner by which such product it taken into account or not by government authorities;
– the manner by which a power (State) informs itself about the world around it with a view to safeguarding control over its destiny and for the realisation of political and/or military projects;
– *intelligence culture*, i.e. the relationship between the national community and intelligence work in general.

It is very important to give a detailed explanation of what is commonly referred to as a « culture of intelligence ». The term not only covers intelligence work proper. In fact it covers all aspects of « secret warfare », be that intelligence, action or influence: intelligence and counterintelligence, clandestine operations and special operations, interceptions and decoding, psychological warfare and deception. These activities cannot be separated one from another. Only a holistic, global approach allows for an understanding of the impact of such actions and their combined interaction.

**An object of research that requires a well-defined discipline**

Intelligence study is by its very nature multidisciplinary and englobes political science, law, history, geopolitics, management sciences, the organisation of information and communications. Intelligence applies to all areas of national security, and economic security via business intelligence.

In an appendix to the compendium of papers presented at the seminar « French Intelligence Culture » at Marne-la-Vallée, Admiral Lacoste provided eleven themes of research essential to intelligence study. He drew from his experience as director of the DGSE as well as from the advances made in Anglo-American research, as published in British journal *Intelligence and National Security*:
- documentation;
- elaboration and decision-making;
- methodological approach to intelligence;
- internal workings of secret services;
- business intelligence;
- information processing and information warfare;
- criminality and public order;
- ethics and deontology;
- civil liberties;
- investigative journalism;
- culture.

This indicative list constitutes an initial largely multidisciplinary ‘road map’. The former director of the DGSE suggested «a multiplication of complementary approaches from a range of disciplines»¹. A non-exhaustive list of specialist subjects indicated could be gleaned by looking at the speakers invited by Admiral Lacoste to the seminar: they included historians, economists, political scientists, sociologists and jurists.

**Fig. 5 – Multidisciplinary research on intelligence**
(1996-2009) based on university papers submitted in France²

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² Chart based on data provided in the catalogue of the French University Documentation System (SUDoc), http://www.sudoc.abes.fr/
LESSONS LEARNT AND PERSPECTIVES

In less than two decades, French intelligence studies have undergone a major transformation, benefiting from the favourable environment born of the information revolution and the attacks of September 11th, 2001. The different government reports on business intelligence have also largely influenced the integration of the subject into university curricula. This has led to the establishment of diploma and degree courses, the first thesis papers and research programs as well as the creation of a specialised research centre (CF2R).

In addition, closer correspondence between the academic world and the publishing business has led to a popularisation of a specifically « French intelligence culture », that differs from the traditional journalistic approach and has resulted in the publication of numerous books that can be qualified as « scientific » in their treatment of the subject.

Accordingly, and despite the traditional disinterest of political leaders in the subject, intelligence has achieved a level of recognition that hitherto it lacked. The existence of university courses on this subject seemed quite unrealistic only a decade ago. Such progress still requires comprehensive harmonization by the universities in France.

We believe that it is still too early to talk of the emergence of a « French School » of intelligence, as Peter Jackson wrote in 2006. As a subject of research, it is still too early to say whether the renewed interest in intelligence is but a passing fad. Research projects, save for CF2R and LAREGE, remain too fragile to constitute a real trend.

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