Simulating Intelligence

In his Foreword to *The Art of Intelligence*, Jan Goldman explains that he established the Security and Professional Intelligence Education Series (SPIES), in 2006, because so few books were then available to the general public on the education or training of intelligence analysts and operators. Despite the recent proliferation of those books, Goldman is concerned that most still reflect a bias toward "speaking" about, rather than "doing," intelligence. This latest SPIES text felicitously bucks that trend.

Differentiating the *art* from the *science* of intelligence, in this anthology, befalls to Julian Richards, founder of University of Buckingham's (UK) Center for Security and Intelligence Studies. He asks, rhetorically: how can intelligence not be an art, since it is a profoundly human enterprise, dependent on best-guess judgments, necessarily influenced by cultural and other biases. Yet science is required as well, especially the study of human behavior and epistemology, information technology ranging from collection to databasing and presentation, and all manner of analytical techniques that owe their ubiquity mostly to Richards Heuer and Sherman Kent.

Since the articles actually deal with both art and science, a more accurate title might have been *The Art and Science of Intelligence Analysis,* were it not already taken – by Dr. Julian Richards himself, no less. It is the anthology's subtitle, however, that reveals what is most distinctive about the book's approach: *Simulations, Exercises, and Games*. It also distinguishes it from Henry Crumpton's better known *Art of Intelligence.* As it happens, both books share a belief that mere descriptive-academic "knowing" cannot replace tacit-intuitive knowledge gained through "doing;" the two titles could easily be included in the same syllabus.

The idea of play-acting, war-gaming, or simulating, is hardly novel; less common are detailed materials assisting instructors to conduct them. The volume's editors, professors William J. Lahneman and Ruben Arcos, believe that a good program in intelligence studies "should not only *educate* students by enabling them to learn how to think about and perform analyses, but it should also *train* them by teaching them the ethics, terminology, structures, processes, and pitfalls associated with the intelligence profession." Setting aside the curious suggestion that so theoretical a topic as terminology, or ethics for that matter, constitutes mere "training," emulating real-life situations is extremely useful for intelligence practitioners who must deal with the world as it is: messy, and in constant flux.

Serving as the topic for the anthology's first simulation is the ill-fated saga of Saddam's elusive WMDs. The exercise requires the participants-students to produce a National Intelligence Estimate: half will then have to work from the actual classified NIE originally produced just prior to the 2003 invasion, while the other half must rely on the declassified White Paper. Since the White Paper's word choice inadvertently conveys a distinctly different message, the exercise thus underscores the importance of rhetoric while simultaneously developing an appreciation for organizational dynamics, awareness of cognitive biases, and briefing skills.

Several other simulations are written by intelligence analysts, surprisingly enough, hailing from my native Romania. Reflecting a very different structural and geopolitical context, their selected scenarios highlight issues of particular urgency to Southern Europe, although certainly relevant

beyond that region. For example, one challenging exercise designed to illustrate the complexity of "need-to-share" constraints on crisis management in fighting narcoterrorism, as well as another that focuses on analyses of migration patterns in Southern Europe, have applications to any intelligence service. The same is true of a third simulation, set in a particular defined scenario of revolutionary context that may have special resonance to those who witnessed the bloody end of the Ceausescus, but applies no less to the Arab so-called "Spring" and beyond.

That said, the choice of topics does have some obvious limitations, aside from the rather too scant background information provided for a non-Romanian readership. As two of the authors commendably recognize, not only are these simulations accomplished in "lab conditions" rather than real world, but "the process itself depends strictly on the data that the instructor chooses," to say nothing of the inevitable "subjective factors such as culture, identity, and religion" which differ greatly from one continent and ethnic group to another. That, however, is also what makes the exercises interesting and useful.

Among the best contributions is "Spies and Lies," by Mercyhurst professors Kristan J. Wheaton and James Breckenridge. Tested in both graduate and undergraduate courses for over eight years, the exercise "takes place in a time-constrained and information-constrained environment where quantity is rewarded over quality of information and where collectors do not understand the underlying purpose behind the collection activity." Though a fuller appreciation of sophisticated deceptions as the celebrated Operation Mincemeat require traditional research, simulations offer a welcome supplemental teaching tool. If only the scenario selected were not, again, the pesky Balkans, instead of, say, Africa?

Less information-dependent is "Facing Intelligence Analysis with Ethical Scenarios," by Ruben Arcos and his Spanish colleague Fernando Velasco – a topic whose importance cannot be underestimated, especially when the likes of Edward Snowden is being hailed by many as a hero instead of being castigated as a traitor. But distinguishing between an "Ethics of Conviction" and an "Ethics of Responsibility" is not especially helpful. Personal convictions are themselves open to ethical scrutiny, and should not conflict with responsibilities voluntarily incurred. All these and other similar terms must be clearly defined, lest they end up condoning a moral relativism that is incompatible with morality itself. Any exercise involving moral dilemmas requires some basic understanding of ethical reasoning. Fortunately, the article's bibliography does list a number of good sources, such as James Olson's "Fair Play: The Moral Dilemmas of Spying" (2006) along with series editor Jan Goldman's own writings on this topic, but a primer in ethics should be added as well

In conclusion, this anthology deserves to be widely used in intelligence education. But its success depends in part on the individual instructor's own experience and ability to supplement the simulation exercises with appropriate materials, including classics of analysis and history, not to mention a well-honed, though ultimately intuitive, feel for what matters - the essential, intangible ingredient of first-rate intelligence. Which, of course, is what makes it an art.

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