



Strategic Intelligence for the 21st Century

Book by **Alfred Rolington**

Book Review by **Andrea Cafiero**¹

As Chief Executive Officer of Cyber Security Intelligence Ltd., Alfred Rolington is credentialed to write this book. Cyber Security Intelligence Ltd. is a news website that deals with topical issues related to cybersecurity and intelligence, and it is aimed at executives and specialists in institutional sectors, such as financial services, information technology, security, government, and, police. The company has created an IT database that includes all the different areas of cyber, from threats and security to IT services and opportunities.

Rolington also formerly was Jane's Information Group, as well as CEO for Oxford Analytica. He has produced publications and lectured on strategic planning at prestigious universities such as Cambridge, Oxford and Harvard, and, at organizations of global importance such as the CIA, NATO and GCHQ. He also currently is conducting research on computer and digital data and information technology, and, how they influence strategy, opportunities, and security, particularly for the media, the publishing industry, and governments.

His book, “Strategic Intelligence for the 21st Century,” was published in 2013 by Oxford University Press, and includes a preface by former CIA Director James Woosley.

One may wonder what strategic intelligence is. It concerns the ability to collect, elaborate, analyze and disseminate the intelligence necessary in order to plan and implement political and military plans on various geographic scales. The well known American psychoanalyst and anthropologist Michael Maccoby, says that strategic intelligence concerns a certain skill system that requires a decision maker to possess the following abilities: [1] to understand the trends that present threats or opportunities for an organization; [2] to conceptualize a future state ideal and create a process to engage others and implement it; [3] to perceive, synthesize and integrate elements that work together to achieve a common purpose; [4] to motivate different people to work together to implement a vision – necessary in any organization – and; [5] to develop strategic alliances with individuals, groups and organizations.

Using the Mosaic method, Rolington provides assessments by industry experts on current intelligence methods, and offers a new strategic model, aimed at the police operators, the armed forces and intelligence agencies. The birth of the Internet, the advent of information agencies operating continuously all hours of the day, and, the rise of social media, all have generated the need for governments and intelligence professionals to obtain the maximum available information. At the same time, recent terrorist events have highlighted the need for global intelligence cooperation.

Establishing deeper and continuously interconnected relationships, that differ from traditional models, Rolington’s solution to addressing these interconnections is to promote more fluid and networked operating methods.

The book is organized into three parts. After an introduction, the first part deals with the changes of definitions and histories of information and intelligence. It addresses the changes in intelligence for asymmetric threats, and, the analysis of past information revolutions and their effects on intelligence methods, to arrive at the history of military intelligence.

The four chapters in the second part concern post-modern information, knowledge, “truth,” and intelligence. Rolington dedicates Part Two to the so-called “Global 3.0,” defined as a new geo-political intelligence landscape, to the current cultural perspective, and, to prejudices and problems related to collection and analysis, including the deep and dark Webs, counter-espionage, secret action, conspiracy and propaganda, ending with the discussion related to the issues of supervision and relationship between analyst and policy-maker.

The third and final part is an intelligence review, and, analyzes traditional intelligence, business intelligence, topics that finds Rolington extremely prepared. Space in the chapter, edited by the collaborators, is entitled “A ‘Paradigm Shift’ in Police Intelligence.”

The final part is dedicated to the post modern global intelligence proposal for the 21st century put forward by the author. With the contribution of key figures in the sector, including the aforementioned James Woolsey, the book traces the history and developments of intelligence, connects these to current challenges, and, analyzes their social influences exerted by technological innovations. Analyzing the post - 9/11 era and the consequent impact on civil liberties and on police operations, the advent of the deep web, and, the radical change in the forms of communication, “Strategic Intelligence for the 21st Century” offers a revolutionary new approach to intelligence analysis and global collaborations.

Governments, agencies and other organizations involved in, or affected by, intelligence have an increasingly pressing need to be able to predict the events that a given context could generate. Nowadays, contrary to what happened in the past, it is technology that guides practice with an information revolution that is continuous and incessant. This perspective is supported by a complex initial historical analysis that started with the dawn of man. The

sustained approach to intelligence is presented as a interactive, connected and continuous process in support of a new post-modern strategic planning model supported by Rolington on the basis of his experience and intelligence.

Aimed especially for the sector operators, the interesting chapter edited by David Phillips put the focus on the role of intelligence in supporting the identification, investigation, and necessary precautions related to repeat offenders, as well as on the strategic organizational planning cycle. He proposes that and the data relating to this type of criminal are updated at the minute and are available through portable devices supplied to operators. In order to achieve better results, this type of approach would require major changes and modifications also in today's police practices.

The suggested Mosaic method is a multifaceted approach that provides for a more in-depth analysis and understanding of the myriad of factors that determine the events of interest, as well as their triggering cause. In the various chapters of the book, Rolington explains and analyzes different models already in use, and which are included in his but which are, to date, used in a disjointed and fragmented way.

The definition of mosaic means that the author has ordered these different intelligence methods in one, providing a more coherent and systematic picture. The book is an interesting and stimulating reading that examines strategic and operational intelligence from different points of view. It discusses the challenges to be faced in the 21st century, and highlights shortcomings of traditional intelligence models, using real situations as examples. It proposes a more connected model that combines different types of information sources and is capable of adapting to today's rapidly changing threats. The contributions of eminent personalities in the sector, in support of rather revolutionary theses, give greater strength to the positions expressed by the author.

Released for a few years, but still extremely topical, the book offers a new approach to intelligence analysis, an approach developed to meet the needs of an increasingly globalized, interconnected and interdependent world. The author focuses on what are considered the major IT challenges of the present, those related to big data for police activities, and other challenges regarding the aim of ensuring an ever wider security domain.

The Mosaic method aims to exploit the full potential of open source data in a fully integrated and collaborative approach. All this contributes to making this volume necessary for all those who have authority tasks, and who want to fully exploit the analytical skills of contemporary strategic intelligence. Rolington's 30 years of experience in analytical publishing and media companies, in the production of information and intelligence dedicated to trade, law enforcement, defense and government, make this volume unique for the systematic approach.

He recommends to intelligence agencies is to promote overcoming modern information challenges. This can only be done by breaking with traditional models to overcome the limits deriving from an increasingly interconnected world.

The publication is discredited only in that it is slightly superficial in some explanations that are not exactly intuitive, but this note is understandable and unimportant, noting the abundance of the volume and the large number of pages. Scholars of intelligence systems, sector operators, and inquisitive enthusiasts certainly will find this volume interesting, and the main positive peculiarity of the book lies in Rolington's ability to merge practice and theory, through the experience he has gained both in the journalistic and commercial fields. In this book, academic perspectives and practical approaches take shape in a single overview.



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