



Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement

### **NOTE DE REFLEXION N°13**

#### ***A FEW THOUGHTS ON INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS TRAINING***

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Following the very interesting INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS (*ICINTA'12*) held in Ankara, on the 4th and 5th of June, thanks to the Center for Intelligence Studies (ISAMER) of the National Intelligence Organization of Turkey (MIT), here are a few thoughts on intelligence analysis training.

To my mind, teaching Intelligence Studies to undergraduate students, as some US colleges do, is an unorthodox approach.

In France, when seeking good analysts, we select from candidates with MA or PhD qualifications, as we believe that they should have completed a university cycle before being called on to do transversal analysis.

They should also have solid intellectual, cultural and linguistic expertise.

Only then, in our view, is it possible to teach them analytic methods, intelligence practices and open source techniques.

As Christopher Andrew said, intelligence is « The missing dimension in History ». But light can only be shed on this missing dimension when students have a command over historical context. Then they can begin to discover the hidden side of past events.

In France, our approach to intelligence analysis is centered on knowledge, culture and intuition, rather than technique. This means in France we consider analysis to be more of an art than a science (intuition vs process).

There is no doubt that the French literary tradition (the art of dissertation and critical review) and the legacy of thinkers such as Pascal and Descartes means that the French mindset appears predisposed to the critical side of thought. We excel and are more proficient in this area than in intelligence research proper.

We insist on the importance of quality over quantity. The challenge is to detect the most promising students and then train them. However, we would probably be at a loss if we suddenly had to recruit large numbers of analysts.

We believe that the work of Richard Heuer offers nothing new, except an attempt to theorize practices that are already being applied.

We totally oppose the theories of Israeli General Ben Israel, as they are simply the reflection of a very modern failing, i.e. the mathematization of reality.

The essential question remains: how do we foster intuition, induction, transversal reading, creative thinking, acumen, perspicacity, flair, curiosity, traits that are considered in some way feminine?

This explains the usefulness of studying literary texts and works of art, alone or in groups, in writing or orally, in order to develop analytic thinking. This work leads us to questions such as : What is the author attempting to say? What is the meaning of a work? What can we deduce from our reading ?

This in turn reveals different points of view, approaches, and analyses within a group, in other words it offers a range of visions and sensibilities, conditioned by the personal experiences and specializations of each participant.

An effective course should include training on:

- diverse analytic methods and existing frameworks of analysis (financial, consulting, risk analysis, prospective analysis, etc.),
- automatic data processing methods (geographic, temporal, statistics, semantics, etc.)
- approaches to the social sciences (history, sociology, economics, geography, political science, etc.)
- knowledge of foreign cultures and civilisations (psychology, anthropology)
- and a focus on one or two specialist themes (by subject or region).

Indeed, expertise in open source intelligence acquisition (OSINT) is only useful when there is a solid grasp of a wide range of ancillary and foundational subjects.

To this should we could add:

- in-depth knowledge of the intelligence world, practices, rules and pitfalls;
- a brief operational immersion exercise, to allow students understand how information is gathered, so that they can effectively guide and question operatives in the field, using hands-on knowledge of the work performed.

The learning process must make use of numerous practical exercises, case studies (successes and failures in intelligence analysis) and personal research.

It should also extensively cover the techniques of misinformation, deception, disinformation and other stratagems employed to mislead analysts and decision makers.

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