

H-Diplo | ISSF

Roundtable, Volume VIII, No. 2 (2015)



A production of H-Diplo with the journals *Security Studies*, *International Security*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, and the International Studies Association's Security Studies Section (ISSS).

<http://www.issforum.org>

H-Diplo/ISSF Editors: **Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse**

H-Diplo/ISSF Roundtable and Web/Production Editor: **George Fujii**

Commissioned for H-Diplo/ISSF by Thomas Maddux

Introduction by Peter Jackson

Michael S. Goodman. *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee, Vol. I: From the Approach of the Second World War to the Suez Crisis*. London, UK: Routledge, 2014. ISBN: 9780415841047 (hardback, \$140.00); 9781138925007 (paperback, \$53.95).

Published by H-Diplo/ISSF on **21 September 2015**

Shortlink: tiny.cc/ISSF-Roundtable-8-2

Permalink: <http://issforum.org/roundtables/8-2-joint-intelligence-committee>

PDF URL: <http://issforum.org/ISSF/PDF/ISSF-Roundtable-8-2.pdf>

Contents

Introduction by Peter Jackson, University of Glasgow	2
Review by Rory Cormac, The University of Nottingham.....	6
Review by Loch K. Johnson, University of Georgia	10
Review by Joshua Rovner, Southern Methodist University	16
Author's Response by Michael S. Goodman, Department of War Studies, King's College London.....	20

© **Copyright 2015 The Authors.**

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 United States License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

Introduction by Peter Jackson, University of Glasgow

The publication of the first volume of Michael Goodman's much anticipated official history of the British Joint Intelligence Committee is a major event for students of intelligence and international relations. For nearly eighty years the Joint Intelligence Committee [JIC] has been at the center of the British foreign and security policy machinery. The JIC system for coordinating the analysis and dissemination of incoming intelligence evolved gradually in response to the unprecedented requirements of preparing for and then waging a global war. This system has since served as a model for the organisation of many of the world's intelligence establishments. The first volume of the official history takes the story from the creation of the JIC in 1936 through to the Suez Crisis of 1956. As the three reviews that follow all make clear, Goodman has done justice to this hugely important topic. Volume I of his official history is an example of official history at its very best.

Rory Cormac, Joshua Rovner and Loch Johnson bring impressive expertise to bear in their reviews of Goodman. Cormac has published important work on British intelligence and counter-insurgency as well as the JIC. Rovner is the author of a range of influential books and articles on the politics of intelligence and intelligence reform in the United States. Johnson has long been one of the world's leading experts on American intelligence in the twentieth century. The judgments of these reviewers are balanced, insightful and based on vast experience.

The JIC is a remarkable institution that embodies both the strengths and weaknesses of the British system of government and decision-making. It is a product of the committee culture that is such a distinctive aspect of Whitehall and forms the fabric of British cabinet government. Within this culture, great emphasis is placed on 'gathering the voices' to hammer out a common policy position.¹ This predisposition to work towards consensus through discussion was given eloquent expression in a report by the Chairman and Secretary of the JIC in January 1945: "We believe that no department, however experienced and well staffed, has anything to lose by bringing the intelligence directly to the anvil of discussion" (2). The chief function of the JIC is to serve as the 'anvil of discussion.'

Another distinguishing feature of the JIC is its membership and structure. From the very beginnings of the JIC its senior members have always performed the dual functions of committee member and policymaker. They therefore have a dual role as final arbiters of intelligence assessment, on the one hand, and policymakers, on the other. For this reason it is misleading to understand the JIC's role purely in terms of intelligence. As Michael Herman has observed, it is better understood as an organ of 'national' or government' assessment.² The JIC stands at the interface between intelligence and policy formulation. This ensures that it remains

¹ Quote from Michael Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War* (Cambridge, C.U.P., 1996), 275.

² *Ibid.*

sensitive to the requirements of policy. As Goodman illustrates throughout this fine book, the work of the JIC has from its origins been ‘customer driven all the way down’.³

It is hard to imagine the JIC emerging in any of the other great powers in the era of the Second World War. Contrary to common belief, this is not because the British were the first to grasp the importance of ‘all-source intelligence’. Indeed the intelligence community in France was well ahead of that in Britain when it came to the systematic sharing of both open and secret source intelligence during the interwar period.⁴ What the French system lacked, however, was an inter-departmental forum for the collective interpretation of incoming information. As Goodman shows, such a forum emerged organically within the committee culture of the British system at a time when the intelligence communities of the other powers remained fragmented and often working in rivalry with one another. The novelty and significance of the JIC is therefore best understood in comparative perspective. Here the Anglocentric character of the vast majority of intelligence scholarship has imposed unwelcome limitations on our understanding of the historical evolution of intelligence as a tool of state power.

The best intelligence history is always situated firmly within wider political and policy contexts. This is certainly the case with *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee*. Goodman takes great care to integrate recent historiography on the Cold War into his analysis of the role of the JIC in British decision making. But he goes further in the introduction to offer a series of fascinating reflections on the unique challenges facing ‘official’ historians. To his great credit Goodman deals with this issue directly with an interesting discussion of the methodology he adopted. These passages are supplemented by a discussion of the nature of the archival material he consulted that will be extremely useful to future historians (particularly as more and more of this material is released for public access at The National Archives in Kew).

The reviewers below highlight other strengths in the book. All praise Goodman’s evenhandedness in analyzing the JIC’s failures as well as its successes. Rory Cormac emphasizes Goodman’s mastery of an extraordinarily extensive body of official records. Cormac also appreciates Goodman’s comprehensive treatment of the full range of the Committee’s activities: from its role as the chief organ of intelligence assessment (including the provision of strategic, operational and tactical intelligence) to the overall direction of Britain’s national intelligence effort to the management of liaison arrangements with the agencies of other states.

Loch Johnson praises Goodman’s ‘richly textured, captivating narrative about how a small, ad hoc committee grew into the legendary organization it is today’. Johnson goes further to draw a number of hugely interesting and insightful comparisons and contrasts between the structure and practices of the U.S. and British intelligence communities as they have evolved since the end of the Second World War. Johnson underlines, in particular, the marked cultural differences between the British pursuit of consensus and an American approach that is much more comfortable with dissent between agencies. Within the JIC

³ Peter Jackson, “The Assessment that Never Was: British Joint Intelligence and the threat from Iraq, 2002” in Sébastien Laurent (ed.), *Politiques du renseignement* (Bordeaux, Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2009), quote from 316.

⁴ Peter Jackson, *France and the Nazi Menace: Intelligence and Policy-making, 1933-1939* (Oxford, O.U.P., 2000), 11-44.

disagreement is often considered a failure. Across the Atlantic, conversely, it is considered “a means for providing decision makers with a more nuanced sense of the range of judgments on world affairs”.⁵ Another important distinction between the two systems is the fact that the JIC membership has always included senior mandarins who function as both producers and consumers of intelligence. This dual role is considered anathema within the American intelligence and policy community.

Joshua Rovner agrees with Goodman that the creation and development of the JIC is a bureaucratic success story. Its centralizing role has limited the effects of bureaucratic rivalry in the production of threat assessments. But Rovner is more inclined to judge the JIC’s record as ‘average’. One of Goodman’s central arguments is that the JIC performed admirably in its role supporting military planning, but had an indifferent record when it came to strategic assessment. This is by no means surprising. The business of ‘forecasting’ is fraught with difficulties because it involves not only looking into the minds of other actors and divining their intentions, but also predicting what those same actors will think and do in the future. Rovner argues, implicitly, that the British system of ‘national assessment’ is no better suited to meet this formidable challenge than any other system. The larger conclusion he draws, even more implicitly, is that no amount of structural reform is liable to improve the forecasting capacities of the U.S. intelligence community. This is an argument that should not be ignored.

To conclude, the first volume of *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee* is sure to become a referent point in the growing literature on intelligence and policymaking. The scope of Goodman’s research, the quality of his analysis and importance of his topic leave us in impatient anticipation for the appearance of the second volume.

Participants:

Michael S. Goodman is a Reader in ‘Intelligence and International Affairs’ in the Department of War Studies, King’s College London. He has published widely in the field of intelligence history, including most recently *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee, Volume I: From the Approach of the Second World War to the Suez Crisis* (Routledge, 2014), which was chosen as one of *The Spectator*’s books of the year. He is series editor for “Intelligence and Security” for Hurst/Columbia University Press and is a member of the editorial boards for five journals, including the three main intelligence ones. He is currently on secondment to the Cabinet Office where he is the Official Historian of the Joint Intelligence Committee.

Peter Jackson is Professor of Global Security at the University of Glasgow. He studied at Carleton University, the University of Calgary and the University of Cambridge. He has also held research and teaching posts at Yale University, Aberystwyth University, Strathclyde University and Sciences Po in Paris. He is co-editor of *Intelligence and National Security*, and has written widely on the history of international relations in the first half of the twentieth century as well as the role of intelligence in decision-making. He is now writing a history of statecraft since the French Revolution.

Rory Cormac is an Assistant Professor of International Relations at the University of Nottingham. He holds a PhD in War Studies from King’s College London and specializes in intelligence history and secret foreign

⁵ This divergence is a central theme in the work of Philip Davies; see especially his two volume study *Intelligence and Government in Britain and the United States* (Santa Clara, Praeger, 2012).

policy. Cormac's first book *Confronting the Colonies: British Intelligence and Counterinsurgency* (London: Hurst) was published in 2013. He currently holds an AHRC research fellowship and is beginning a project on British covert action 1945-1968

Loch K. Johnson is the Regents Professor of Public and International Affairs at the University of Georgia, as well as a Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor. He is the author of over 200 articles and essays; and the author or editor of over thirty books on U.S. national security, including most recently *American Foreign Policy and the Challenges of World Leadership* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) and *The Essentials of Intelligence* (New York: Praeger, 2015).

Joshua Rovner is the John Goodwin Tower Distinguished Chair in International Politics and National Security at Southern Methodist University. He is also associate professor of political science, Director of Studies at the Tower Center for Political Studies, and Director of the Security and Strategy Program at SMU. Rovner is the author of *Fixing the Facts: National Security and the Politics of Intelligence* (Cornell University Press, 2011). His recent work on intelligence also includes "Intelligence in the Twitter Age," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 26/2 (Summer 2013); and "Is Politicization Ever a Good Thing?" *Intelligence and National Security*, 28/1 (Spring 2013). He is currently writing a book on strategy and grand strategy.

Review by Rory Cormac, The University of Nottingham

The last few years have seen a spate of official, authorised, and unofficial histories of British intelligence agencies. MI5 has been comprehensively covered by Christopher Andrew's 1,000 page authorised history.¹ Similarly, Keith Jeffery's official history of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) is a little shorter but covers only the first forty years of the agency's life.² Not to be left out, Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) has more recently been the subject of an unofficial but richly detailed history written by Richard Aldrich.³ Michael Goodman's official history of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) is therefore the latest in a glut of bureaucratic histories concerning intelligence and the twentieth century. It will appeal to a narrower audience, but complements the agency histories by demonstrating the next level up in the intelligence world.

Goodman, however, had a particularly difficult task. The authorised and official histories of MI5 and SIS respectively, offered their authors a once-in-a-lifetime chance to rummage through intelligence archives and tell bestselling stories of derring-do. Goodman's, by contrast, is the history of a government committee. The JIC is a fascinating and important committee, but a committee nonetheless. Consequently, Goodman faced the daunting task of bringing life to a world of acronyms, secretaries' minutes, and lengthy memoranda.

Goodman confronted other problems too. Perhaps slightly defensively, he practically opens the book by describing four 'complicating factors' which he faced as official historian (although he also emphasises the strengths and privileges associated with the position). These include the range of historical topics to be included; the difficulty in knowing what to include under the JIC umbrella; how to demonstrate the JIC's impact on policy; and trying to ascertain the book's audience.

An appropriate place to start, therefore, is to take these in turn. On the first, the book covers a very wide range of events. Some are covered in great detail (the Suez Crisis of 1956 being a prime example), whilst others warrant a mere couple of pages (the Hungarian revolution in 1956). All the usual events are covered, but Goodman deserves credit for acknowledging the JIC's role in colonial issues and, in doing so, adding to recent scholarship by Christopher Andrew and Calder Walton revealing the role of intelligence during decolonisation.⁴ That said, JIC's assessments of, and liaison with, India and Pakistan during the transition to independence are conspicuous by their absence – a shame given that these files are generally classified.

The structure works well though, and successfully navigates the difficulties of breaking down assessments of overlapping global events into neat chapters. This volume draws on an impressively broad array of cases to

¹ Christopher Andrew, *Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of the Security Service* (London: Allen Lane, 2010).

² Kent Jeffery, *The Secret History of MI6* (New York: Penguin, 2010).

³ Richard Aldrich, *GCHQ: The Uncensored Story of Britain's Most Secret Intelligence Agency* (London: HarperCollins, 2010).

⁴ Christopher Andrew, *Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of the Security Service* (London: Allen Lane, 2010); Calder Walton, *Empire of Secrets*, (London: HarperCollins, 2013).

argue that the JIC performed well over its first twenty years. Goodman clearly presents the principles underpinning the JIC system (i.e. consensus, all-source assessment and inter-departmentalism) and argues that the Committee successfully made military planners aware of the value of intelligence, that the committee forged close links between intelligence and defence policymakers, appreciated the increasing breadth of intelligence away from a narrow military field, and that the Committee successfully oversaw the workings of the national intelligence machinery as a whole. He offers a real sense of the growth of the Committee, alongside a holistic appreciation of its multi-faceted role. There was far more to the JIC than intelligence forecasts. Particularly interesting is the roll call of (in)famous names which crop up throughout – from Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond, to Kim Philby, the notorious Soviet double agent. This provides a real sense of the JIC's span.

Goodman does acknowledge JIC failures, especially regarding warning. Indeed, the JIC was caught short on a number of occasions, including prior to the Berlin Blockade, Korean War, and the Soviet acquisition of nuclear weapons. There is a sense throughout the book of the JIC playing catch-up and revising its assessments in a reactionary manner. Goodman, however, somewhat generously chooses not to dwell on warning failures and points out the epistemological difficulties of predicting surprise attacks. Instead, he argues that the JIC can be considered a success owing to its impressive performance *after* a crisis had broken out. It was also highly successful in providing a weekly forum for interdepartmental discussion and in providing a vast range of background information to inform policymaking. This chimes with the recollections of Michael Herman, himself a former JIC secretary, who argued that the JIC's greatest contribution lay in quietly and cumulatively building up policymaker knowledge.⁵ It is hard to argue with Goodman's assessment. Indeed, the JIC would not have recently celebrated its 75th anniversary had its opening decades been a failure.

The second 'complicating factor' was what to include under the JIC umbrella. As the volume amply demonstrates, the JIC grew into a spiralling organisation and encompassed myriad subcommittees (as usefully illustrated in Appendix V). It would have been impossible to have detailed all of these in the main narrative, but Goodman draws on the most important and relevant ones where necessary, such as the Joint Scientific Intelligence Sub-Committee and Joint Technical Intelligence Sub-Committee. Similarly Goodman discusses the JIC(FE) when considering the Far East, whilst insight is offered on JIC(W), or Washington, and JIC(G), or Germany, – impressive given the lack of sources, classified or otherwise. In doing so, the volume offers much-needed clarity on these bodies about which little was previously known.

More difficult, as Goodman acknowledges, is the fact that JIC members had lives outside of the Committee. Where should the boundaries of the official history therefore end? Goodman casts his net reasonably widely in this sense. Whilst some of the included material perhaps ranges slightly beyond his scope in places, the decision was justified. Indeed, many of the most interesting passages place the JIC in the broader Whitehall context and involve incidents in which the committee (if not its individual members) was only tangentially involved. The section on the 1953 Iranian coup, for example, is fascinating. It perhaps forms the first official British acknowledgement that the government was involved in designing the covert action which overthrew Mohammed Mossadeq, the Iranian Prime Minister. Similarly, the book offers revelations on previously classified committees such as the Political Action Group which blur the line between intelligence, subversion,

⁵ Michael Herman, *Intelligence Power in War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 152.

and policy. The best example, however, is the role of Patrick Dean, JIC Chairman, during Suez. Goodman offers a commendable attempt to ascertain what Dean did and did not know.

Third, proving JIC impact on policy was always going to be difficult. Influence was often intangible and there are very few (if any) cases of a prime ministerial document explicitly indicating that a policy had been enacted on the basis of a specific intelligence report. If anything, this task will be harder in the second volume when the Committee moved to the Cabinet Office and policy impact diversified. Goodman does, however, succeed in demonstrating policy impact where possible, such as with Operation Torch in the Second World War. Similarly, there are some interesting discussions of the interplay between the committee and Winston Churchill, Britain's wartime Prime Minister – a famously ravenous intelligence consumer. Conversely, Goodman offers a detailed and authoritative account of the most famous case of the JIC being ignored by policymakers – Suez.

Fourth, gauging the audience is a tricky one. The histories of MI5 and SIS undoubtedly appeal to spy aficionados up and down the country. A history of a committee will inherently lack quite such popular appeal. Moreover the price of the book is certainly prohibitive, whilst the text is rich with detail, names of committees, and inevitably packed full of acronyms. This is not helped by the small font size and the publisher's desire to cram as many words on each page as possible – although this of course is no fault of the author whatsoever. The book will appeal most to academics interested in intelligence history, Whitehall's security establishment, British foreign policy, and international history. Chapter 6, on the JIC's structure and bureaucratic evolution, is certainly one for the anoraks. It is dense in places but does provide an authoritative account of the committee's bureaucracy, exactly as an official history should.

Facing such constraints, Goodman deserves credit for his attempts to bring the Committee to life. The text is littered with anecdotes, personalities, and a sense of life on the Committee. For example, the description by a JIC representative of an American intelligence meeting is wonderful. The tale of Patrick Reilly, a JIC chairman, smashing his wooden chair after a particularly hard day at the office is equally delightful. Goodman's access and interviews undoubtedly helped secure such insights, which add flesh to the archival bones. Goodman does well to highlight the role of personalities amongst a swathe of minutes and memoranda. Indeed, wartime chairman Victor Cavendish-Bentinck comes across particularly favourably.

The book is impeccably researched. Goodman draws on a staggering range of official documents (including those that range widely beyond JIC papers). One criticism here though is that the references (of which there are many) make no distinction between classified and declassified archival papers. Perhaps this was designed to prevent readers from making FOI requests, but it will inevitably result in frustrating trips to the archives for other historians.

In many ways, Goodman's volume confirms existing scholarship. His argument that the JIC offered a balanced, objective, and non-alarmist assessment of the Cold War endorses similar conclusions made by the likes of Peter Hennessey when the first JIC papers were declassified.⁶ However, the book contributes strongly to existing literature and benefits from access to classified sources in a number of ways. It provides new detail on the role of the JIC in more active or event-shaping operations. The role of the JIC in designing anti-Soviet propaganda in Iran in 1946, for example, is fascinating – but cries out for more detail on the nature, themes,

⁶ Peter Hennessey, *The Secret State: Whitehall and the Cold War* (London: Penguin, 2003), 12.

and impact of the operations. Similarly, Goodman offers intriguing detail on covert British planning to topple Gamal Nasser, the Egyptian leader, from late 1955 in the Suez conflict.

Moreover, the book provides a more holistic account of the JIC and its place in the intelligence world than previous books. For example, the idea of the committee as a battleground between the military and Foreign Office in deciphering the Soviet threat at the end of the Second World War is not new.⁷ Goodman, however, offers new insights into the process underpinning the construction of assessments. His insight into MI6's relationship with the JIC is particularly interesting. Similarly, the book draws on classified files to provide an original account of how the JIC managed intelligence priorities and tasked the intelligence agencies. Descriptions of intelligence priorities in the Middle East and East Asia are therefore fascinating, as is the insight into how gloomy JIC reporting on intelligence coverage at the start of the Cold War led to approval of more daring operations.

The volume offers a reasonably detailed impression of the JIC's relationship with the Americans. The declassified files cover little on intelligence liaison but Goodman manages to provide a rich narrative of an increasingly asymmetric relationship. Indeed, the Anglo-American intelligence relationship is a fixture throughout the book, cropping up in relation to the Second World War, assessments of Soviet capabilities, fall-outs over colonialism in East Asia, and mixed messages over Suez. The book does lack a sense of liaison with other countries though. These are touched on briefly, but liaison with the Commonwealth warrants more attention as this is an area that has been equally expunged from the declassified records.

Overall, the official history is rigorously researched. It is also rich in detail. It confirms many existing understandings of the JIC during this period and emphasises the growth and successes of the Committee. Goodman also, however, moves beyond the current literature by providing a more holistic sense of the Committee's multi-faceted role alongside an authoritative account of machinery about which little was known. In doing so, it elevates itself above the only other volume on the JIC which concentrates solely on assessments.⁸ Perhaps most importantly, from the reader's perspective, Goodman balances the detail and inevitable acronyms with narrative and personality effectively.

⁷ See Richard Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America, and Cold War Secret Intelligence* (London: John Murray, 2002).

⁸ P. Cradock, *Know Your Enemy: How the Joint Intelligence Committee Saw the World* (London: John Murray, 2001).

Review by Loch K. Johnson, University of Georgia

*The Joint Intelligence Committee in War and Peace: The Early Years*¹

Official histories' sound like, and often are, stuffy reads, not to mention being suspect for an establishment bias. This work by Michael S. Goodman, Reader in Intelligence and International Affairs in the Department of War Studies, King's College London, suffers from neither malady. Once I turned to this book, the first volume of a longer history still underway, I set aside a good novel I was reading at the time. My interest was caught immediately by Goodman's felicitous writing style and his fascinating chronicle of the formative years of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), the most important entity for intelligence analysis in the British government. Having read Goodman's first-rate earlier work, *Spying on the Nuclear Bear*,² as well as several of his articles and book chapters, I had high expectations for this history and they were met. I was eager to read this official history for another reason, too: one of my all-time favorite intelligence books is Sir Percy Cradock's *Know Your Enemy*,³ a classic in style and substance and an excellent companion to this official history.

Goodman covers the JIC's evolution from 1936 to the Suez Crisis ('Adventures in the Middle East') in 1956. Volume II, about half finished, will extend the history to the end of the Cold War and the first Gulf War in 1990-1991. This first volume offers a richly textured, captivating narrative about how a small, ad hoc committee grew into the legendary organization the JIC is today: for some, it provides the model of how intelligence analysis (or 'assessment' in UK intelligence terminology) should be conducted for maximum effectiveness. The JIC's trajectory over its first couple of decades toward its remarkably high status by the mid-1950s was hardly a smooth ascent and therein lies the drama.

One of the reasons this official history was of such interest to me is the story it relates about efforts to overcome organizational fragmentation in the British national-security establishment. The initial impetus behind the Committee's creation was the need for greater co-ordination among intelligence units, the military, and the diplomatic corps in the UK. This goal has been an enduring one in the U.S. as well, for many a year. In Washington, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), James R. Clapper, persistently advocates closer institutional 'integration' among the U.S. secret agencies. This goal has been an aspirational thread running through the tenure of every intelligence leader in the U.S., both before and since the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1947.

¹ This review was first published, in slightly different form, in *Intelligence and National Security* and appears on H-Diplo/ISSF with the permission of the publishers of the INS, who asked H-Diplo/ISSF to include the following statement: This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published in *Intelligence and National Security* on 26th March 2015, available online at :<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02684527.2015.1023039> . We thank the publishers and editors of *INS* for their cooperation.

² Michael S. Goodman, *Spying on the Nuclear Bear: Anglo-American Intelligence and the Soviet Bomb* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2007).

³ Percy Cradock, *Know Your Enemy: How the Joint Intelligence Committee Saw the World* (London: Murray 2002). Sir Percy Cradock was chair of the JIC between 1985 and 1992.

Though meant to be the premier coordinating agency for intelligence in the U.S., as its name implies, the CIA has never been able to overcome the various ‘stovepipes’ represented by the other 15 agencies in America’s Intelligence Community (IC). Each of these agencies has been led by a powerful ‘program manager’ or director: a ‘gorilla’, in colorful intelligence slang, prepared to ignore the CIA and now the relatively new Office of the DNI (created in 2004 to tackle again the coordination problem). Unfortunately, lawmakers and the second Bush Administration failed to give the DNI serious authority over the budgets of each of the agency or the right to hire and fire their directors, the *sine quo non* for meaningful managerial control by a DNI. These ‘gorillas in the stovepipes’ continue to stand alone, sometimes opting to work with the DNI (Clapper has displayed impressive skills of persuasion at times) and sometimes going their own way with impunity.

The lengthy *9/11 Report* from the Kean Commission, published in 2004,⁴ advanced a prominent and powerful theme: the U.S. intelligence agencies had failed to cooperate well with one another in the period preceding the 9/11 attacks. As a result of this inadequate sharing of intelligence, the government missed several opportunities to thwart the Al Qaeda terrorists. Since the intelligence and policy failures of 2001 and then 2002 (with the errant hypothesis positing unconventional weaponry in Iraq), the CIA has lost much of its Cold War cachet as America’s leading intelligence service, fading further away from its coordinating duties. In the U.S., this organizational disaggregation has remained an irrepressible bugbear, as the search for better intelligence integration in Washington staggers forward.

With these concerns in mind about the ongoing disarray of the US intelligence effort, I approached Dr. Goodman’s history of the JIC eager to learn how the British coped with this problem of unifying the defenses of the UK against threats. How did the JIC manage to strengthen inter-departmental assessments, moving toward the Holy Grail of an all-source fusion of intelligence? How were the British able to construct a managerial framework that yielded a more cohesive voice for their own intelligence stovepipes.

Goodman reminds us at the beginning of his work that the function of intelligence is “to keep readers as informed as possible, to reduce ignorance, and to provide context for decision making to take place” (7), what DNI Clapper likes to refer to as ‘seeking decision advantage’. Toward these goals, the precursor to the JIC came into being when six intelligence officers from the military services and the head of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS or MI6) gathered in a building opposite the entrance to Downing Street in July 1936 for a confabulation about the looming Nazi threat. On one point each participant could agree: improved collaboration among the Service intelligence departments would be a useful pursuit. The duplication of British intelligence activities, along with widespread confusion over the capabilities and (especially) the intentions of German dictator Adolf Hitler’s regime, underscored the need to have more frequent combined meetings of the military Service representatives and MI6. The seed that would sprout into the JIC was planted, with military planning the initial source of cohesion: what in Washington would be referred to as SMO, support to military operations (and also the primary adhesive in the U.S. Intelligence Community).

Thus the JIC began as a military support unit, concerned at first exclusively with Nazi war-fighting capabilities. (For the time being, the plumbing of German intentions would be left to others in the government who were engaged in the political analysis of foreign affairs.) The early goal was to erase, to the

⁴ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *9/11 Commission Report* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company 2004).

extent possible, the lack of coordination among UK intelligence agencies and the policy organizations they served, while reducing wasteful redundancies in intelligence collection and analysis. Just as the growing threat of the Soviet Union would push the U.S. toward intelligence reform in 1947, so did the rising Nazi challenge in 1936–39 prod the British toward the creation of a more effective and modern spy apparatus. By the time of the German invasion into Poland in the fall of 1939, the JIC had evolved into an influential council within Whitehall.

Along the way, perhaps the most unique feature of the JIC model came into existence: the idea of having not just military leaders and intelligence officers in the room when the Committee met, but (starting in 1938) diplomats from the Foreign Office (FO) as well. Indeed, the senior FO representative was soon asked to chair the proceedings, setting a precedent that would endure – however much heartburn that innovation had caused initially among representatives of the Air Ministry and the Admiralty. The extraordinary leadership skills of the early FO chairmen softened a potentially spiky relationship, as did the smaller size of the British national security establishment and its more cordial personal relationships (compared to its sprawling U.S. counterpart). A representative from MI6 began to meet regularly with the Committee as well. With this clever jointness between civilian and military security officials adopted as a *modus operandi*, the JIC became widely acknowledged and respected in the British government as a legitimate “central intelligence authority” (24) – precisely what had been missing before. Coming along a decade later, the CIA was meant to play a similar role in the U.S., but was exclusively an intelligence organization. The State Department would stand away, and so would the Pentagon’s top brass (though represented by several military intelligence agencies within the framework of the Intelligence Committee). Of significance, too, during the JIC’s formative stage was the Committee’s concerted effort to build a talented, deep-knowledge staff.

At first, the JIC’s concentration was on long-range intelligence forecasting (research intelligence); soon, though, it was apparent to all involved that current intelligence assessments were badly needed, at the time regarding Nazi operations and after the war events in the wider world. In these early days, the intelligence products coming from the JIC were chiefly military-related. As the nation moved toward a war footing, the frequency of these reports increased, as did their quality. Further, the JIC began to establish ties with intelligence organizations overseas, mainly within the Commonwealth but also with (for example) the French and the Turks, all of which generated additional tributaries of information from abroad. “Thus, by 1939,” Goodman writes, “it was clear that intelligence would underpin decision making over the inevitable conflict with Nazi Germany, and to this end the JIC would be crucial” (31). The inter-departmental reports prepared by JIC were now being read at the highest levels of the British government.

Keeping track of events in the Spanish Civil War was an early challenge for JIC analysts, as they attempted (based largely on MI6 reporting) to gauge the war-fighting capabilities of the German and Italian military units involved in that conflict. The most important outcome of this assignment was for JIC to demonstrate how the three British military Services could count on the Committee for a flow of useful all-source insights into foreign situations, further cementing its reputation as a valuable manager of the UK’s intelligence agencies. The JIC had become the only widely recognized inter-service coordinator and, throughout these early years, it was expected – above all else – to integrate intelligence findings, first, about German military matters and, a distant second, about political developments overseas.

If the Spanish Civil War was a tune-up, the Second World War would be the big test for the JIC. The war, Goodman notes, had a galvanizing effect in uniting the intelligence effort and all of the UK against a common enemy. The Committee began to churn out ambitious assessments on the Nazis, such as studies on

the German construction of V-weapons. The JIC had only modest success in piercing the fog of German's war plans. Perhaps being too generous, Goodman states that: "the JIC may be held responsible for its inability to predict Hitler's true intentions [with respect to Poland, which he would soon invade], but this would be unfair for it was never created to fulfill such a role; its task was to ensure that intelligence arrangements were in place in case of war" (54). The Committee also failed to anticipate the fall of Norway. Nevertheless, the Committee did impressively carry out its primary assignment: the integration of British intelligence during the war. The hardest part of that job was less the collection aspect (especially after ULTRA moved into place) than the preparation of solid assessments and their timely dissemination to policy officials.

During the war, JIC membership expanded further with the additions of MI5 and the Ministry of Economic Warfare; more and more, the Committee had become a unified civilian-military intelligence and policy forum. Other developments took place: signals intelligence (SIGINT) became increasingly prominent in JIC reporting; greater attention was paid (at the insistence of military brass) to Nazi intentions, not just capabilities; reporting became more succinct, as demanded by Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill. Mistakes and experience were leading to an ever more reliable JIC, although it still had a ways to go even with its basic mission of institutional co-ordination.

As JIC members felt their way forward, a far-reaching tenet was agreed upon: assessments would be based upon consensus, with a single unanimous view – no 'footnote wars' among the secret agencies, as one often finds in U.S. intelligence reports. It was sometimes a challenge to resolve differences of opinion among the Directors of Intelligence in the UK, but the JIC remained wedded to the concept of consensus reporting. Here was the way to overcome the cacophony and confusion about the meaning of intelligence findings – a frequent earlier complaint among policy officials about the products issued by spy agencies. In contrast, the CIA and its companion agencies adopted (although inconsistently) a quite different approach of trying to capture intelligence dissent within reports, as a means for providing decision makers with a more nuanced sense of the range of expert judgments on world affairs

As the years passed, the JIC experienced more mistakes, including a failure to predict the German invasion of the Soviet Union (or at any rate the timing of the invasion, which the JIC assumed would occur only after a Nazi invasion of the UK). Another blind spot, shared by the Americans, was the Japanese attack against Pearl Harbor. Moreover, the Committee had little to offer by way of tactical intelligence during the war. The JIC also enjoyed successes, though, including the building of intelligence liaison bridges to the U.S. and establishing a direct presence in the Far East. It also displayed a solid ability to assist the planning and implementation of military operations. The bottom line: the JIC had become an indisputable full partner in the conduct of war. The Committee seemed to have no qualms about involvement in policy decisions, an ethos the U.S. Intelligence Community eschewed under the CIA's leadership, deciding (again inconsistently) – on the grounds of maintaining intelligence objectivity and avoiding politicization – to erect a wall between the spy agencies and decision-makers.

As the JIC made noteworthy strides forward in the quantity and quality of its reports, the record continued to suffer from imperfections – a fate shared by all intelligence organizations, everywhere. High among them was an underestimation of the tenacity Nazi forces would display as Allied troops advanced toward German soil. The Nazi attack against Allied forces in the Ardennes alone cost the West 80,000 lives in December 1944. The power structure in Japan and that nation's intentions remained opaque, too, both for JIC and CIA analysts.

The JIC survived the war – a rarity among war-time national security agencies in the UK and the U.S. While it continued to serve, above all, as a military council, its remit was expanding, as was the dissemination of its products far beyond the initial core circle of military consumers. Intelligence coordinator, forum for thoughtful inter-agency discussions, and, most of all, the producer of assessments and global forecasts for military planners (and, increasingly, others), by the end of the war the JIC had come of age. British intelligence stovepipes had been dismantled left and right; the UK had a reliable central source of national security intelligence.

In the aftermath of the war with Germany, a new threat arose: a well-armed Soviet Union, viewed by the British and Americans alike as an untrustworthy and potentially dangerous adversary. This union of views drew London and Washington, along with the governments in Canada, Australia (especially), and New Zealand, into a closer intelligence alliance that would become known as the ‘Five Eyes.’ Dr. Goodman reports that by 1950, 90 per cent of the JIC’s reports were being passed to the Americans (209), although the U.S. side of the partnership proved less cooperative (especially when it came to sharing nuclear-weapons intelligence). In these early years of the Cold War, the JIC exhibited considerable foresight in its determination to fashion for itself a global presence, built on strong liaison ties and the creation of JIC subcommittees around the world.

For both the UK and the U.S., the Soviet target remained elusive in the opening stages of the Cold War. None of the ‘ints’ made much of an inroad, as the Iron Curtain proved impenetrable (although SIGINT held out some promise for providing insights). The most pressing intelligence questions became: What was the intent of Kremlin leaders, over the short- and the long-run? And what were the Soviet Union’s military capabilities, particularly on the nuclear front? All the stops were pulled out in search of answers: defector debriefings, aerial reconnaissance, telemetric data analysis, and sorting through bomb-test debris. Unlike many U.S. intelligence reports (especially those prepared by Air Force Intelligence), the JIC assessments were notable for their avoidance of hyperbole about the Soviet threat.

Errors in forecasting continued to haunt the British (and the Americans), as underscored by the JIC’s surprise – “an intelligence fault of the highest order,” Goodman writes (317) – over the North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950 and, subsequently, the entry of China into that war. “The JIC never managed to achieve a clear understanding of the Chinese psyche,” he concludes, “or an ability to read Chinese intentions” (321). The CIA did not fare any better. Further, the JIC probably made as many mistakes regarding Vietnam as the Americans did. Neither understood that the French were about to be defeated and driven from their former colony in 1954.

The U.S.-UK intelligence relationship grew closer in 1953, as MI6 and the CIA joined forces in a covert action to depose Mohammad Mossadeq as Prime Minister of Iran. The objectives were to protect American and British oil interests in that key Middle East nation, while also establishing a more reliable pro-Western government as a bulwark against Soviet encroachment into the region. Officials in London and in Washington seemed unable, though, to distinguish between nationalist movements around the world that might actually be in harmony with Western interests, on the one hand, and the angst that new regimes would soon fall prey to international communism, on the other hand. “Fear of communism began to pervade all judgments,” writes Goodman about JIC assessments, and he might as well have been writing about CIA estimates.

Despite examples of partnership, the Special Relationship began to show signs of fraying in the mid-1950s. Her Majesty's Government proved unable, in the light of waning military and financial capabilities, to join fully with Washington officials to shore up anti-Communist defenses around the globe. This led to carping in Washington. Then, in 1956, the two nations found themselves on opposite sides of an important foreign policy crisis in Egypt. The British leaned toward the overthrowing of the Egyptian ruler, Gamal Abdel Nasser, who had threatened to close down the Suez Canal, an important waterway for British commerce; the Americans, though, were less convinced that this was the right approach and, unsure, were inclined to send mixed signals to London. The British, too, had their dissenters opposed to the *coup* plans, which greatly complicated the JIC tenet that all of its members had to agree on conclusions. Goodman reports, further, that: "the JICs assessments [regarding the crisis] were almost certainly being ignored by the politicians" (399). The Committee may have produced fine forecasts, but its reports on Egypt were simply ignored by British politicians; foremost, Prime Minister Anthony Eden, who was hell bent on toppling Nasser and securing control of the Canal. The combination of U.S. dithering, dogmatism at the high reaches of the British Cabinet, and a JIC left in the dark by its political masters was, in a word, "catastrophic" (409).

Despite this sobering case study that concludes Volume I, Goodman reviews the bidding for these early years and properly observes that the JIC had become an important contributor to British national security deliberations, virtually inventing the concept of all-source intelligence. The Committee's prowess lies in the ability of its members to reach consensus, to blend inter-branch differences, to limit duplications, to provide centralization in a previously fragmented system, to serve as a secure forum for the discussion of national security threats and opportunities, and to develop liaison ties with the U.S. and other nations. The JIC's mixing of policy and intelligence perspectives on the same panel represented a novel approach to decision-making: a kind of CIA and U.S. National Security Council (NSC) mashed together. Coordination, integration – two key words in any discussion of a nation's intelligence efforts – became the hallmark of success for the JIC. Goodman briefly underscores the risks of this approach, however attractive it may seem in some instances: "Achieving a consensus was the main imperative, which meant that the JIC readership knew nothing of any alternative interpretations that had been discussed and discounted" (426).

I would like to have learned more about how well participants thought this consensus approach served the British government, and whether there was much of a reform movement to introduce a better sense of analytic dissent into JIC reporting. As an American, I would also like to have heard more about the mysterious U.S. intelligence officers who flitted in and out of JIC meetings during these years. What was their contribution, if any? These are minor points, though, and detract not in the slightest from the marvelous job Goodman has done with this first volume. One wishes him Godspeed for the next one.

Review by Joshua Rovner, Southern Methodist University

There is a vast literature on intelligence failure. Historians and political scientists have spent decades trying to explain covert action blunders, surprise attacks, and erroneous estimates. Scholars rarely look at success stories, however, or ask why intelligence sometimes works. Michael Goodman provides a refreshing exception to the rule in the first volume of the official history of the British Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). As he puts it in the introduction, the book “sets out how successful the JIC system has been in providing a coherent voice on intelligence for policymakers and in becoming an indispensable element of central government” (3). From modest beginnings the JIC became a key conduit between intelligence services, policymakers, and the military. It encouraged coordination by acting as an efficient clearinghouse for information from across the British intelligence community. It also acted as an intellectual bulwark against bureaucratic biases in different parts of the government, because it operated on the principle of consensus. As the JIC’s prestige grew it adopted a variety of other tasks, and its organizational design served as a model for intelligence agencies around the world.

Readers might suspect that official historians are more inclined to deliver favorable accounts, given their preferred access to official records. Goodman confronts this suspicion forthrightly in the introduction, and throughout the book he offers judicious evaluations of the JIC’s performance, warts and all. His research is extensive and painstaking. The book weaves together primary and secondary sources, utilizing a huge amount of JIC archival material while engaging in sustained conversation with other historians of British intelligence. While I do not agree with all of his conclusions, this is certainly not because he did not make a serious effort to ensure his objectivity. Goodman is too good a historian to have done otherwise.

While the JIC served many purposes from 1936-1956, the book suggests two basic questions that may serve as criteria for evaluation. First, did it succeed bureaucratically? Goodman’s answer is an unequivocal yes. The JIC began life as an adjunct to the military Chiefs of Staff (COS), but it expanded at breakneck speed and soon occupied a central role in British government. Its success was partly the result of timing. The demands of pre-war planning required close collaboration between intelligence and the military, and in this environment the services agreed with JIC demands that it had a direct channel to the Chiefs of Staff (21). The JIC also thrived because its early leaders stressed the need to integrate traditional military intelligence with political assessments, and brought Foreign Office representatives into the committee (22-25). The fact that senior Foreign Office (FO) officials would subsequently chair the JIC was especially notable because the Foreign Office traditionally considered intelligence to be somewhat ignoble (30). Finally, it benefited from the fact key policymakers were enthusiastic consumers of intelligence in the early years of the JIC, and from the fact that early JIC chairmen were uncommonly skilled bureaucrats (148-149).

The second question is whether it delivered useful assessments to policymakers and military leaders. Here the record is mixed. The JIC was at its best in assisting military planning and helping to manage alliance relations, but like most intelligence organizations it struggled mightily at providing warning. So, for instance, while it played an important role in planning the Allied invasion of France in 1944, it subsequently failed to predict the German counteroffensive that winter (140-141). Early in the war it failed to predict Germany’s invasion of Norway or of the start of the Battle of Britain, though signals intelligence did provide warning in the later case (79). It also vacillated about whether Germany would invade the Soviet Union, despite increasing intelligence reporting on German preparations (95-98). In the Pacific it never seriously considered a Japanese attack on Singapore, even after the attack on Pearl Harbor (105-106).

Interestingly, Goodman suggests that what was necessary for bureaucratic success as an inter-agency body cut against the quality of JIC analysis. The JIC provided current intelligence on German war preparations, for instance, but did not estimate the likelihood that German dictator Adolf Hitler would act. It could have produced more useful estimates for policymakers if it had been willing to take more analytical risks, but Goodman speculates that it did not because it was never asked to do so. As the JIC was building its institutional foundation it was careful not to step outside its role (50-55). Similarly, while its reporting on the Spanish Civil War was useful, the committee chose not to ponder the implications of its findings. Instead it left this task to the individual services at a time of intense inter-service rivalry. Such a risk-averse approach may have protected the JIC but at the cost of real influence (40).

Goodman reasonably argues that many of the JIC's failures were not really the JIC's fault, mostly because it was forced to make conclusions on the basis of very limited information. This was especially a problem in the early Cold War, when British intelligence struggled to penetrate the Soviet Union in order to assess its current and future plans. Such estimates are inherently problematic because they require guesswork about the future behavior of foreign leaders. These questions are always uncertain, and even good answers about intentions may prove misleading if foreign leaders later change their minds. The fact that British intelligence was trying to collect information from an authoritarian regime – always a hard target for espionage – compounded the problem. Thus the JIC was forced to grapple with unanswerable questions without the benefit of very much information. In these circumstances it was careful not to oversell the certainty of its findings, and its conservative conclusions tempered the more confident but opposite views of the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff. It also provided better estimates of the Soviet Union's bomber and missile capabilities than did some intelligence agencies in the United States (287-292). Senior policymakers clearly appreciated the "steadying tone of JIC forecasts" (261).

Nonetheless, it is unclear whether JIC's record was more prescient than any other intelligence service during this period. This is important, because the JIC was (and is) a model of inter-agency coordination for intelligence reformers. It was designed to increase sharing and coordination among intelligence officials who might otherwise have kept to themselves, and it enjoyed powerful leaders with access to the highest-level policymakers. The fact that its performance seems average suggests the limits of organizational reform as the key to improving the quality of intelligence.

The discussion of the Suez Crisis, however, seems to cut against the grain. Goodman's basic argument is that before 1956 the JIC was an organizational triumph with a mixed record in terms of assessments. Despite its analytical shortcomings it continually won praise from British leaders and served an important role in military and policy planning. In the Suez case the outcome was reversed. The JIC provided prescient assessments before the debacle, Goodman argues, but decision makers ignored them. The JIC offered useful and balanced assessments of Egyptian and regional politics leading up to the crisis, but it was left out of key policy deliberations in the crucial weeks leading to the ill-fated war.

If this is correct, then it begs the question as to why the previous pattern flipped so dramatically. But Goodman overstates the case, largely because it is not clear that the JIC actually disagreed with Prime Minister Anthony Eden's increasingly hawkish view of Egypt. On the surface it sometimes appeared to be more sanguine, but the content of analysis about regional developments was quite ominous. In January 1956, for instance, the JIC reassured policymakers by stating that Communist penetration of Egypt was not imminent and that Moscow's influence was limited. But the same assessment concluded that the spread of Communist ideology in the Middle East had merged with nationalism and anti-imperialism, thus increasing

the risk to Great Britain's position in the region (377). In April it concluded that while President Gamal Abdel Nasser would not admit to being "an instrument of Soviet policy," Egypt's increasing dependence on Moscow meant that it was moving inexorably into the Soviet orbit (381). Though there was more subtlety to the JIC's evolving view, it supported Eden's basic beliefs about the need for quick and decisive action. In August the JIC's Middle Eastern outpost produced a report that was ominous about the situation but confident that Britain could do something about it. "Its conclusions," Goodman writes, "were probably well received by the pro-war elements of the Cabinet and Whitehall" (390). And in October, shortly before the climax of the crisis, the JIC warned that "any concessions made by the United Kingdom under pressure are likely to have repercussions throughout," while a successful resolution would send a powerful message to others who would put pressure on British authority (399). It seems a stretch to believe that Eden would have changed his views even if he had assiduously followed such assessments leading up to the crisis. He might even have become more enthusiastic about regime change.

In addition, Goodman exaggerates the degree to which the JIC was excluded from policy discussions. JIC chairman Patrick Dean was deeply involved throughout most of 1956. He participated in a variety of intelligence, military, and policy committees. He also operated with considerable discretion, which perhaps explains why the Prime Minister used him as a personal envoy to France. For most of his tenure as JIC chairman he enjoyed an extraordinary degree of access. Now, it is certainly possible that Dean had information about policy plans that other members of the committee lacked, especially regarding early discussions of covert operations. But the book does not clarify exactly what information the JIC lacked, so it is hard to make a definitive judgment that it was excluded from the policy process for most of 1956.

Why, then, does Goodman argue that the JIC was left out? The key piece of evidence is that Dean was not informed about the Suez plot when British and French leaders first discussed it on October 14. In fact the Prime Minister did not inform him until October 24, five days before the operation began. Goodman implies that this ten-day gap had serious consequences. If the Committee had had an inkling of what was coming it might have had the chance to have commented on the likelihood of success, the possibilities of a post-Nasser government favorable to British interests, and the wider reaction in the Middle East. Perhaps it would have issued pessimistic answers to all three questions, even if it sympathized with the Prime Minister's desire for regime change. And perhaps Eden would have thought twice before blundering into Suez.

Perhaps. It is true that Dean was skeptical about what kind of government would follow Nasser's in the event of a coup, especially given the broad appeal of his anti-colonial and nationalist rhetoric (389). This idea resonated with the Chiefs of Staff, who asked for a further JIC analysis. But Dean demurred, arguing that such a "political" estimate was beyond the JIC's remit.¹

Dean's decision is puzzling. By choosing to ignore Egyptian public opinion, he prevented the JIC from making an important contribution to the intensifying debate over British policy. It is also puzzling because the JIC had been producing political estimates for decades. Why, then, did he do this? One possibility is that Dean sensed the direction of Eden's policy and his resolve to topple Nasser. If so, then he may have opted to

¹ Interestingly, this foreshadows the Bay of Pigs disaster five years later, in which the CIA's Directorate of Operations did not consult with Agency analysts about whether the Cuban people were likely to support a counterrevolution against the revolutionary Castro regime. Had they been asked, they might have thrown cold water on the Kennedy administration's belief that a small army of expatriates could land on the island and stir an uprising.

withhold criticism out of fear that he would be wasting precious political capital in a lost cause. Many other intelligence officials have made the same calculation. Of course, there might be a more prosaic explanation. Anticipating that a coup was in the works, Dean may have become more circumspect about JIC assessments out of concern for operational security.

For whatever reason, Dean recused the JIC from a critical question in the run-up to the Suez Crisis. Two months later Eden excluded the JIC from knowledge about the conspiracy with France and Israel. Both were deliberate decisions to keep intelligence out of the policy process in the prelude to a gigantic policy blunder. It is no surprise that Goodman spends so much time on this case, given that the history of the JIC before the crisis was characterized by increasing responsibilities and respect in Whitehall. Goodman writes that the Suez crisis indicates the limits of the JIC model. For the Chairman, it also illustrated the “difficulty of combining the roles of policy advice and intelligence assessment” (408). Navigating this dual role has been the subject of a great deal of discussion among intelligence scholars, and in the memoirs of intelligence chiefs, so it is not surprising that it resurfaces here.

But I suspect the case says more about the inherent problems with covert action than with the structure of the JIC, the role of its chairman, or the quality of its analysis. Covert operations require extreme secrecy in order to remain covert. As a result, only a small number of individuals are typically informed about the details in advance. While this makes sense in terms of operational secrecy, it comes at a cost, because it inhibits the kind of analysis and reassessment that might prevent leaders from making foolish decisions. Restricting knowledge about plans also encourages groupthink, which seems to have happened here. The JIC’s role in the Suez Crisis illustrates the tradeoff between operational secrecy and operational sobriety, but it does not offer obvious lessons about intelligence organization or best practices.

These criticisms notwithstanding, Goodman’s close study is an extremely important addition to intelligence studies. It provides much new detail on a committee system that has been an object of emulation for intelligence reformers, raising important questions about the value and limits of centralization. It also provokes new thinking by focusing not just on intelligence failure but also on success, which may lead to more balanced theories about the role of intelligence in strategy and foreign policy. While scholars may debate the utility of the JIC system, there is no doubting the value of this book.

Author's Response by Michael S. Goodman, Department of War Studies, King's College London

I am extremely grateful to Peter Jackson for introducing my book, and to Rory Cormac, Loch Johnson and Joshua Rovner for their reviews. All three reviews are interesting in the points they identify, and I'm flattered that each reviewer has spent such a considerable time reading and reflecting on the contents of the book. I have grouped my responses into a number of different themes, rather than reflecting on the comments of each reviewer individually.

Coverage

It is pleasing to read such thrilling and positive reviews, particularly when they comment on the scope of the book. Despite the small font and narrow margins (not my choice), my *Official History* is a big book, both in terms of length and coverage. Attempting to produce a history of a committee was no easy task, and I spent considerable time at the outset, and reflecting throughout, on trying to make the book readable and interesting. It would have been easier to have produced a book that simply reproduced the contents of different assessments in a chronological fashion. As the reviewers highlight, the importance of personalities was vital and often missing from previous accounts. Johnson correctly comments on how important they were to the Joint Intelligence Committee's (JIC) success; I would argue they were paramount.

A related point is that the scope of the JIC's work, and its subordinate and associated committees, is vast. Cormac notes that it is a shame that there was not more on India and Pakistan during the transition to independence. As I highlight in the book, most topics covered were obvious, but there was a small number, of which Cormac is correct to identify India and Pakistan, that I largely ignored. Partly this was due to space limitations, but partly it was also due to the amount of coverage afforded by the JIC at the time. Cormac also comments on the lack of detail on liaison with Commonwealth countries in the book; much of this takes place after 1957 so he will find ample detail in Volume II.

Secrecy

Cormac comments on the fact that is not clear in the endnotes whether files I refer to have been released or not. I accept that this is far from ideal, but on the other hand a decision was taken to do it this way as files would continue to be released and so a comment on their availability could quickly go out of date. Indeed, many files have already been declassified since I first viewed them as closed files. In the case of the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department's (PUSD) material in the Foreign Office, this is especially true, and batches of files are being routinely reviewed and released; the same is true of JIC files.

JIC's performance

The book focusses on the JIC's assessments and the related question of the impact they had on policy. This latter point is one of the most difficult aspects to answer. I tried, as far as the documents would allow, to trace the evolution of the intelligence assessment, from commissioning to dissemination, and attempted to see if it had any impact on policy (military or otherwise). In the case of the Second World War, this was relatively straightforward; it was far trickier in the post-war period. Nonetheless, I remain convinced that the JIC's primary role lay in *explanation* rather than *prediction*. This was largely because so little intelligence was readily

available, but also because the JIC was principally a strategic intelligence producer, so forecasting was done at a broad level. I disagree, then, with Cormac when he writes that this chimes with Michael Herman's views.

I entirely agree with Johnson's view on the growth of the JIC itself and his comments on how its evolution offers an important lesson to other countries, though I would highlight the fact that the JIC model, exported overseas to a number of countries, really only worked and endured where a Cabinet system of government (broadly akin to that of the UK) was utilised. Indeed, Rovner comments that it would have been interesting to compare JIC forecasts to those produced by other countries. I agree but did not really attempt to do so given the book's scope. The only real comparison I include is with the U.S., particularly the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which was frequently in tune with JIC thinking (which is probably not a surprise given their close relationship).

The importance of bringing together disparate parts of government was key, as was reaching a common stance - something that was anathema to the U.S. assessment process as Johnson highlights: the value of avoiding 'footnote wars.' Indeed, Johnson comments that he would have liked to have seen more on JIC member's views of consensus and the lack of analytic dissent. So would I! Apart from the one or two examples that are detailed in the book, there are no examples of dissent. This does not mean, of course, that they did not take place. I commented at the start of the book on the danger of relying on records of minutes as they do not record what actually took place at the meetings. Put simply: there are no records whatsoever of any heated JIC debates or disagreements but surely there would have been some; rather, the lack of detail in the book on these reflects the absence of any documentary record.

Related to this are Rovner's comments about the Suez chapter. More has been written on this episode than any other, and the chapter is twice as long as other case studies in the book. Suez is interesting on a number of different levels, and Rovner asks why the performance of the JIC was so different (its assessments were good but were ignored). I disagree with a number of points he raises in relation to Suez. For instance, there is a careful line to be had between intelligence forecast (using a range of possible outcomes) and policy prescription. The JIC was certainly careful to try to avoid conflating these, and the events of Suez made this particularly difficult. I do not disagree with him that the JIC's assessments would not have changed Eden's mind, but I would highlight the fact that the JIC was not producing papers specifically for Eden: this was a sub-committee of the Chiefs of Staff reporting directly to them. Similarly, I disagree slightly with Rovner's comments on the role of Patrick Dean, the JIC Chairman. The reason so much space is devoted to Dean's various roles vis-à-vis Suez is that a good deal of what he did was outside his strict JIC position, and he was forced to compartmentalise what information was available and shared with what forum. It is difficult to comment on what the JIC lacked because it is not entirely clear what individual committee members knew; certainly the JIC was not privy to the collusion plans. Rovner is correct to comment on the puzzling nature of Dean's decision making; unfortunately Dean left scant evidence as to what he really thought, but this underplays the point that he was a civil servant responding to requests from his political masters. I daresay that most other people in his position would have done the same thing, regardless of their own personal views. I agree with Rovner's point on covert action though, and especially like his comment on "operational secrecy and operational sobriety."

Relationship to other scholarship

I am extremely pleased with the positive endorsements of the book's style, language, and readability. A book about a committee is not necessarily the most exciting of reads, so such reviews are very gratifying. I particularly like Rovner's comments on the value in looking at both intelligence success and failure, and his point about the impartiality of the book in documenting the JIC's failures and failings.