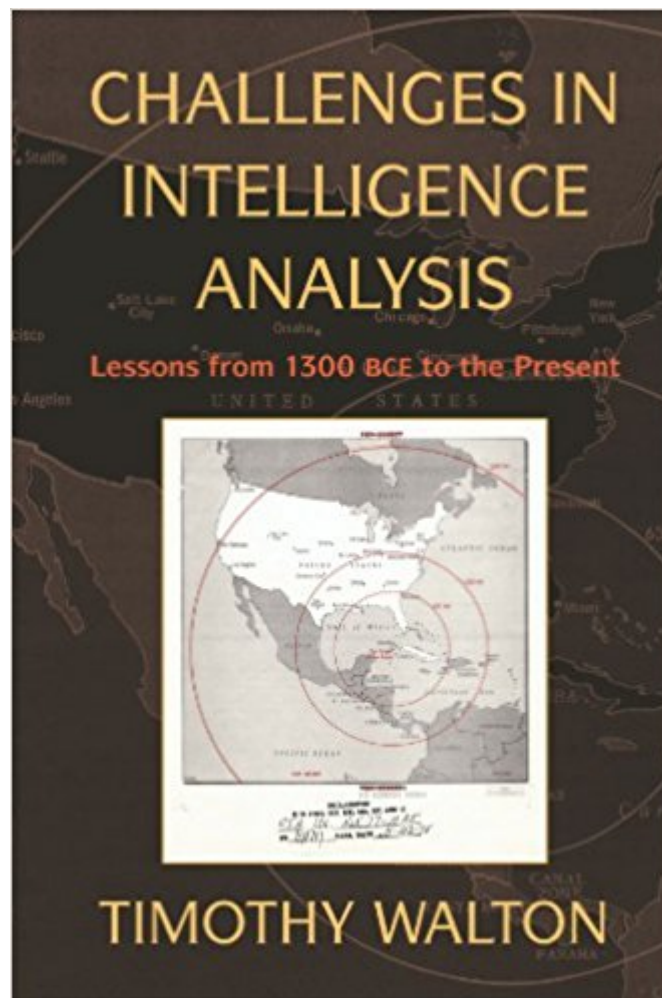




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Challenges In Intelligence Analysis: Lessons From 1300 BCE To The Present



Synopsis

In *Challenges in Intelligence Analysis*, Timothy Walton offers concrete, reality-based ways to improve intelligence analysis. After a brief introduction to the main concepts of analysis, he provides more than forty historical and contemporary examples that demonstrate what has, and what has not, been effective when grappling with difficult problems. The examples cover a wide span of time, going back 3,000 years. They are also global in scope and deal with a variety of political, military, economic, and social issues. Walton emphasizes the importance of critical and creative thinking and how such thinking can be enhanced. His book provides a detailed and balanced idea of intelligence work and will be of particular interest to students who are contemplating a career in intelligence analysis.

- *Offers a brief introduction to the concepts, vocabulary, and tools of intelligence analysis.
- *Features more than forty examples, each with questions for further discussion and recommended reading.
- *Includes an instructor's guide with model answers to the questions for further discussion, as well as suggested exercises and additional background information.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Serious students of intelligence learn far more from examining the successes and failures of actual cases than they do from abstract theorizing. They want to hear it from someone who has been there and who can speak from firsthand experience. In my opinion, it would be hard to find anyone with better credentials to write a book on intelligence analysis from a practitioner's standpoint than Tim Walton." - James M. Olson, The Bush School of Government and Public Service, Texas A&M University, and former Chief of CIA Counterintelligence

Timothy Walton has written the best

beginner's guide to the complex world of intelligence analysis with a historical perspective that also deserves to be pondered by experienced analysts." - Christopher Andrew, Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge, author of *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* and *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West*"Timothy Walton offers in these pages a readable and reliable survey of secret intelligence operations, from Biblical times through the contemporary efforts of the Western nations to thwart global terrorist activities perpetrated by Al Qaeda and its allies. The work is a rich mosaic of espionage down through the years, filled with images of shadowy figures and dazzling spy machines." - Loch K. Johnson, University of Georgia

In *Challenges in Intelligence Analysis*, Timothy Walton offers concrete, reality-based ways to improve intelligence analysis. After a brief introduction to the main concepts of analysis, he provides more than forty historical and contemporary examples that demonstrate what has, and what has not, been effective when grappling with difficult problems.

The book was in perfect condition.

The author says in the Introduction that he did no "archival research" and included no "footnotes", meaning this was intended to be a general discussion of the events, and nothing more. That is an honest description, but the book is so general there is very little useful information or "lessons". It is informative as to the events, but of no value beyond it. The "lessons" that are mentioned are the usual analytical flaws outlined in most intelligence literature. For this price, I would liked to have seen more information on the actual collection, how it was analyzed and what the specific errors were. The examples and scenarios were interesting, but the lessons were ordinary and hardly worth the current \$24 price tag.

It was a wonderful textbook.

I have always believed in interdisciplinary studies. Specifically, I like to read about approaches taken in superficially-dissimilar fields where the underlying problems or useful solutions have stronger connections when examined more closely. For example, nearly 10 years ago I read *Level 4: Virus Hunters of the CDC* and found a number of useful lessons for combating malware outbreaks and dealing with large-scale incidents. More recently, my interest has turned to applying lessons from intelligence analysis. This isn't much of a reach, truthfully, because those of us working in infosec

("cyberintelligence") frequently do the same work as those in military intelligence and related agencies. As part of this effort, I recently finished reading *Challenges in Intelligence Analysis* by Timothy Walton. Out of all the books I've read recently on intelligence, this offered perhaps the most direct application in any number of fields (including mine). I read the Kindle edition, so I can't say much about the quality of the printing, readability of the text, or appearance of the figures. The structure makes it particularly straightforward to read. After the initial chapters dealing with challenges and solutions in somewhat general and abstract terms, Walton runs through nearly 40 case studies ranging from the Israelite spies in Canaan (as recounted in the Book of Numbers, chapter 13) to George Washington to the pre-WWII Luftwaffe to Aldrich Ames to Aum Shinrikyo. Apart from the history lessons, each case study examines the intelligence analysis techniques used and discusses what could have possibly improved upon the approach. "Questions for Further Thought" provide utility for classroom settings or those simply interested in taking the time to structure their thoughts in response. Each case also has a recommended reading list, which I find particularly useful because a number of historical cases have striking parallels in current situations (beyond their own intellectual appeal). For example, Chapter 10 "Estimating the Strength of the Luftwaffe in the 1930s" immediately resonated with me in thinking about challenges regarding 'cyberwar' with China and understanding their strengths. The same challenge would apply in looking at the US, I'd think. And Chapter 17 "Counterinsurgency in Malaya" has a number of connections to the US' recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, something not lost on General David Petraeus and Lieutenant General James Amos when they wrote the new Counterinsurgency Field Manual. Several techniques appear frequently in the text. It does not limit discussion to easily-understood tools like timelines, flow charts, and matrices. Walton also reviews link and network analysis (particularly applicable in cyberintelligence), analysis of competing hypotheses, indicators (sound familiar?), and red teaming. This latter goes beyond a simple penetration test to emulate the tactics, techniques, and procedures of specific adversaries. Decision trees and especially scenario analysis also recur throughout the case studies. Cognitive biases also play a significant role in the discussions, especially confirmation bias, groupthink, and even hindsight bias given the context of the book. A few of the case studies seem a little rushed. Even when we have less data on the situation for historical review, Walton doesn't always take the opportunity to explore analysis techniques in greater detail. Related to this, a few case studies seem a little forced ("Sun Tzu" has a lot to say about intelligence analysis, but he isn't a case study per se). And I would have liked a little more description on why he recommends certain books for further reading, especially in the general (non-case-specific) list at the end of the book. In general, I highly recommend this book

to anyone with an interest in intelligence analysis, world history, or critical and analytical thinking.

Useful books about the oft-misunderstood world of intelligence analysis are few and far between. Descriptions of the analytic profession are often out of print (Jack Smith's *The Unknown CIA* or Ray Cline's *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*) or are buried in bigger tomes (Robert Gates, *From the Shadows*). Others, dealing with the analytic process in clinical detail, are frankly boring. Walton's unique approach is historical--he tells succinct, readable stories about analytic challenges, thereby showing that the bases for today's intelligence analysis can be found thousands of years ago--Caesar's contemplation of Gaul, for example. He prefaces his historical case studies with two chapters--the best short treatment I've seen--on what makes intelligence analysis difficult, how analysts get things wrong, and specific techniques that can help lead to analytic success. Marching straight up to present times, subsequent chapters describe not only challenges, but successes and failures as well. Walton's chapters on the analytic failures surrounding the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, 9/11, and Iraqi WMD are excellent and objective synopses of complex issues. This would be an ideal textbook for any undergraduate introductory course on intelligence dealing with analysis and estimates. Highly recommended.

"Challenges" is a collection of case studies of intelligence analysis. It was recommended to me as a potential text book for undergraduate classes. This book, with a book like *Structured Analytic Techniques for Intelligence Analysis* could be the basis of an excellent course in the theory and practice of intelligence analysis. "Challenges: present almost forty different cases from antiquity to first decade of the twenty first century, and military to business. Each study includes questions suitable for classroom discussion and recommendations for further study. Each chapter is well researched and presents a brief sketch of the issue. The follow on questions tie the issue to the theoretical challenges discussed in first two chapters. What it lacks is robust discussion of methods and the processes for intelligence analysis, and the practical aspects of developing assessments and forecasts based on information available. This is why I recommend Heuer's book as a companion. I teach history at the undergraduate level and lead discussions and grade papers for graduate level classes. While it would take two full semester of undergraduate class to get full use of this book, there is a lot of excellent material that I'm incorporating into my classes. "Challenges" is an academic survey of the subject, but a broad and superior survey with an excellent collection of case studies. While I can't really make it work as a text book, I will certainly put it to work and recommend it to my students. E.M. Van Court

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