



CAMBRIDGE INTELLIGENCE SEMINAR: LENT TERM 2021

Convenors: Professor Christopher Andrew (cma1001@gmail.com), Dr Dan Larsen (drl37@cam.ac.uk), Dr Thomas Maguire (thomas.j.maguire@kcl.ac.uk), Dr John Ranelagh (johnranelagh@yahoo.com), Dr Daniela Richterova (daniela.richterova@brunel.ac.uk)
Tim Schmalz (ts633@cam.ac.uk), Dr Calder Walton (Calder_Walton@hks.harvard.edu), Sir Richard Dearlove and Professor Simon Heffer.

This term the Seminar will convene virtually using Zoom. In order to attend, you must be subscribed to our mailing list. The Zoom link will be distributed in advance of the session. To subscribe, please email Dr Dan Larsen (drl37@cam.ac.uk) with a very brief indication of your affiliation or interest in the Seminar. On any technical queries, please email Dr Dan Larsen.

5-30 pm Friday 22 January

Paul Kolbe, Calder Walton and Kristin Wood (Harvard Kennedy School of Government Intelligence Project):

‘President Biden, the US Intelligence Community and National Security’

Paul Kolbe, Director of the KSG Intelligence Project, is ex-Chief CIA Central/Eurasia Division; Calder Walton is Research Director of the Intelligence Project and a Convenor of the Cambridge Intelligence Seminar; Kristin Wood, Fellow of the Intelligence Project, is a former PDB briefer and ex-Deputy Director of CIA Innovation & Technology Group

Recommended reading before the January 22nd Seminar:

<https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/IntelAgenda.pdf>

5-30 pm Friday 29 January

1) Dan Larsen (Trinity College, Cambridge): **‘A Robust Republic: Coups, Concessions, and Donald Trump’s Test of the U.S. Election System’**

Building on work previously published in the [New York Times](#), this talk will explore Donald Trump’s unprecedented stress test of the U.S. election system. Far from being revealed as a weak system that is unusually vulnerable to challenge, Trump’s election contest showed an unexpected robustness to America’s odd, byzantine machinery.

2) Christopher Andrew: ‘The Nuclear Football: From JFK to Donald Trump and Joe Biden’ (illustrated)

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced on 10 January 2021: ‘This morning, I spoke to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [General] Mark Milley to discuss available precautions for preventing an unstable president from initiating military hostilities or accessing the launch codes and ordering a nuclear strike.’ The most fraught previous handover of the



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Nuclear Football from one president to another followed the shooting of John F. Kennedy in Dallas on 22 November 1963, but there have been other, little-known complications in the stewardship of the Football over the last half-century.

5-30 pm Friday 5 February

Gill Bennett (Senior Associate Fellow RUSI and former FCO Chief Historian):

‘How the CORBY spy case of 1945 caught everyone napping’:

The first major post-Second World War espionage scandal was sparked by the defection of Soviet cipher clerk Igor Gouzenko (codename: CORBY) in Ottawa in September 1945. As the wartime Big Three alliance began to fracture and settle into the pattern of East-West conflict we now call the Cold War, the ripples caused by CORBY’s revelations of a Soviet espionage network that included a British nuclear scientist disturbed the uneasy harmony of transatlantic relations. It is a story of atomic secrets, spies, betrayal and diplomacy, and how the American, British and Canadian governments struggled, in the early postwar years, to harness intelligence in the service of policy-making. The Russians had worked it out long before, but even they were unnerved by CORBY.

5-30 pm Friday 12 February

Rolf Mowatt-Larsen (Senior Fellow, Harvard Belfer Center):

‘Intelligence and Climate Change’

Mr Mowatt-Larsen served for three years as the Director of Intelligence and Counterintelligence at the U.S. Department of Energy, following 23 years in the CIA in posts which included Chief of the Europe Division (Directorate of Operations) and Chief of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Department (Counterterrorist Center)

5-30 pm Friday 19 February:

Melina Dobson (University of Buckingham) and **Sarah Mainwaring** (University of Warwick):

‘Operation Rubicon: An Unlikely SIGINT partnership?’

Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) is the least studied, yet arguably most important, aspect of modern intelligence history. Since the 2013 Snowden revelations, modern SIGINT activities of the United States and the United Kingdom have been scrutinised more intensely. Understanding SIGINT in the 20th century is crucial to researching present-day technological developments. This presentation explores one of the best kept secret SIGINT operations of the last seventy years: Operation Rubicon. An unlikely partnership between the American CIA and Germany’s BND officially formed in 1970. We argue that this liaison weakened the security of over 150 countries’ communications at the height of the Cold War. This operation, we also suggest, revises important aspects of how we have understood global intelligence alliances, the role of European intelligence, the nature of American SIGINT and the importance of the Global South.

5-30 pm 26 February:



Tim Wilson (Director, Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence [CSTPV], University of St Andrews):

‘Killing Strangers: How Political Violence Became Modern’

A bewildering feature of so much contemporary political violence is its stunning impersonality. Every major city centre becomes a potential shooting gallery and every metro system a potential bomb alley. Victims just happen, as the saying goes, to ‘be in the wrong place at the wrong time’. Tim Wilson’s recent book, *Killing Strangers* (OUP), therefore aims to highlight the very strangeness of contemporary experience when it is viewed against a long-term perspective. Atrocities regularly capture media attention—and just as quickly fade from public view. That is both tragic—and utterly predictable. Deep down we expect no different. And that is why such atrocities must be repeated if our attention is to be reengaged. Deep down we expect that, too. So *Killing Strangers* asks the very simplest of questions. How on earth did we get here?

Tim Wilson’s presentation will be preceded by a brief case study by our convenor, **John Ranelagh, on his Irish father James O’Beirne Ranelagh**, who joined the original IRA in 1916 and fought on the Republican side in the 1922-24 Civil War; half a century later he narrowly survived an assassination attempt by the Provisional IRA.

5-30 pm, Friday 5 March:

Sir Richard Dearlove, ‘Brexit and the UK’s National Security Policy’

Sir Richard Dearlove KCMG OBE is a former head of the Secret Intelligence Service (also known as MI6) and ex-Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge. He is currently Chair of Board of Trustees of the University of London. In 2019 Sir Richard Dearlove and Lord Guthrie, the ex-head of the armed forces, jointly called on MPs to block Theresa May’s EU withdrawal agreement, which they described as a ‘threat to national security’.

5-30 pm 12 March:

Erica Gaston (Homerton College, Cambridge, and Global Public Policy Institute):

‘Risky Business: Managing the Costs of America’s Irregular Partner Forces’

Erica Gaston’s research on international and national security issues and the implications of security strategies for human rights has led to extensive work in Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan, Egypt, and other countries. Her current research focuses on local, hybrid, and sub-state forces in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria—the current role and impact of these forces, and the different accountability or control mechanisms applied by supporting countries. She is a term member at the Council on Foreign Relations, and was previously a German Chancellor Fellow.