

Intelligence field workers Kerop Gourdikian and Charles McCorvey look at the evolution of Electronic Intelligence Collection

Intelligence is a rather simple word, but a word nonetheless that conjures up vivid images of danger and intrigue: covert meetings in the various spy capitals of the world or in creepy little restaurants... for years "intelligence" has evoked clandestine images of espionage. People also have a tendency to visualise spy satellites streaking through the upper atmosphere as they scan the world below for valid information and excellent images of enemy positions and weapons of mass destruction, their strengths and weaknesses. And then there are thoughts of unusual aircraft that can easily penetrate both the enemy's and potential enemy's airspace at great altitudes and fantastic speeds, both of which perform a shield of protection as the reconnaissance systems on board gather vital information.

Long considered the province of spies and glamorous gadgets, intelligence collection is as old as humankind. Technology has been increasingly used to gain foreknowledge of an adversary's capabilities and intentions. Intelligence seeks to answer the question:

Is anything going on out there that should cause concern?

The oldest form of intelligence gathering is known as HUMINT, human intelligence. Sadly, we have seen the technological forms of intelligence collection place HUMINT resources on the back burner... far back. Without question though, technological forms of intel gathering produce far more information than the human operative, so much so that a problem exists in seeking to perform reasonably prompt analysis of the collected data.

Flying on the edge of space - the U-2 made its first flight in 1955



Intelligence collection has evolved tremendously from the early days by the introduction of electronics into our lives and the lives of the world's population, friends, allies, and adversaries. Let's take a quick journey through evolution of electronic intelligence gathering.

TALKING WIRES

The first form of an electronic communication system to go into large scale use was the Telegraph, invented by Samuel F.B. Morse to send messages over wires in 1837. As the use of the Telegraph evolved and continents were connected by undersea cables, the skills