

CALL FOR PAPERS

Special Issue on Intelligence

1. Who we are

SIRIUS – Zeitschrift für Strategische Analysen (SIRIUS – Journal of Strategic Analysis) addresses key strategic challenges and offers policy options in the areas of security, foreign affairs, and defence. It serves as an established forum for academics and practitioners from Germany as well as those beyond, to engage with German-speaking policy and scholarly security communities. SIRIUS is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by De Gruyter Brill.

2. Topic

In Germany, but also other European countries, intelligence has long been treated as an opaque, closed and somewhat suspicious practitioner domain, with limited public and parliamentary understanding, selective media engagement and underdeveloped scholarly attention. However, recent crises, Russia's war against Ukraine, hybrid threats and geopolitical competition have heightened awareness of the crucial importance accurate, timely, relevant and actionable intelligence can play. It can make the difference in deterring, pre-empting or mitigating attacks by terrorists or states, and help decision-makers to devise and adapt successful policies and long-term strategies. Good intelligence provides a decision-advantage in a more competitive world. For this reason alone, it needs to be at least temporarily secret, even if it does not necessarily or exclusively rely on secret sources and methods. Yet this growing awareness of the importance of intelligence has also exposed significant gaps between rising expectations and the capabilities of intelligence providers. Is there a need for some kind of *Zeitenwende* with regard to the intelligence competences, resources, cultures, institutional architectures, and oversight requirements?

Yet, we cannot answer these questions and suggest viable reforms without sufficient knowledge about how intelligence agencies' work is changing in response to new threats and evolving technologies. How and when do they collaborate with other agencies, authorities, and the private sector to deliver key benefits whilst managing vulnerabilities and risks? How do they interact with the media and the public to grow public understanding, foster cooperation and recruitment, and build trust? There are also normative, legal and practical questions about how to balance giving intelligence agencies more powers to better collect and analyse information and effectively advise decision-makers against the need to protect the rights of citizens and ensure accountability to parliament?

Against this backdrop, the Special Issue seeks to foster a problem-oriented debate on the changing role of intelligence. We aim to promote a better understanding of how existing practices, structures, and ideas have evolved, assess their limitations, and identify pathways for reform across Germany, Europe, and allied contexts.

3. We invite submissions that address, but are not limited to, the following themes

Intelligence and the *Zeitenwende*

- **Institutional Legacies vs. Contemporary Demands:** How do intelligence services—particularly in Germany—grapple with legacy structures rooted in the 1950s when confronted with digital-

age and hybrid-threats? What lessons can be drawn from reforms across Europe and allied services?

- **Oversight, Law, and Operational Agility:** How can political and legal oversight mechanisms be recalibrated to ensure both democratic accountability and operational effectiveness? Does the judiciary require greater intelligence expertise to issue rulings that safeguard fundamental rights but do not create impractical, costly, and time-consuming barriers to crucial intelligence tasks?
- **Alliances Under Strain:** How reliable are long-standing partnerships such as the Five Eyes and transatlantic intelligence collaboration in an era of geopolitical realignment, growing distrust, and strategic ambiguity?
- **Better Use of Intelligence:** The most accurate intelligence is useless if it not being noticed, understood, and utilised in decision-making. Which institutional architectures and producer-consumer relations facilitate impactful intelligence? How to avoid or reduce barriers to receptivity, wishful thinking, and harmful competition?

Measuring Intention in Intelligence Analysis

- **Understanding Adversary Intent:** What methodologies currently exist for inferring intent, and where do they fall short? To what extent are policymakers' expectations of predictive intelligence feasible, or counterproductive?
- **Institutional Dynamics and Analytical Bias:** How do internal disagreements—between agencies, departments, or epistemic cultures—influence assessments and decision-making? What lessons can be drawn from cases such as the 2021 Afghanistan withdrawal?

Intelligence Studies and the Social Sciences

- **Beyond Practitioner-Driven Research:** How can intelligence studies be more firmly integrated into the broader social sciences? What theoretical or methodological innovations (e.g., from history, sociology, anthropology, data science, or critical security studies) can enrich the field?

4. Publication format

- Full-length Articles: 5,000 to 10,000 words
- Brief Analysis & Commentary: 2,000 to 5,000 words

We welcome submissions in German and English.

5. Deadline

Submissions are due by Thursday, 30 April 2026. All accepted contributions will be published Ahead of Print (AoP). The full Special Issue is expected to appear in Autumn 2026.

6. Contact

Prospective authors are encouraged to contact the editorial team regarding topic proposals or questions:

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