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Uncovering Ways of War: U.S. Intelligence and Foreign
Military Innovation, 1918-1941 (review)

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The Journal of Military History, Volume 67, Number 1, January 2003,
pp. 262-263 (Review)

Published by Society for Military History
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/jmh.2003.0001>



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These problems aside, Holland's primary argument—that Eisenhower's experiences in the interwar years were crucial to his development and later success—is well proven. Among the many valid points that the author makes is that Dwight Eisenhower was an ambitious and energetic officer determined to become—if fate allowed him the opportunity—a great soldier. He drove himself to impress his superior officers, to study his profession (in a time when the vast majority of officers did not energetically do so), and to understand the evolution of weapons such as tanks. Indeed, Holland accurately asserts that Eisenhower became one of the Army's visionaries, postulating a combined arms approach to war that would eventually necessitate a supreme commander for each theater.

Matthew Holland's book makes an important contribution to our understanding of Dwight Eisenhower. Future Eisenhower scholars will want to consult this book and consider its arguments carefully.

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Uncovering Ways of War: U.S. Intelligence and Foreign Military Innovation, 1918–1941. By Thomas C. Mahnken. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8014-3986-8. Tables. Notes. Index. Pp. x, 190. \$35.00.

One of the enduring myths of intelligence history concerns the performance of American intelligence in the period between the world wars. According to the folklore, American intelligence in that period was feeble and ineffective due to neglect by military and political masters blind to the uses of intelligence and miserly in the provision of resources. Marginalized even within their own services (so the story goes), army and navy intelligence officers proved completely inadequate for the diplomatic and military crises that exploded with increasing frequency in the 1930s and culminated, at least for the United States, in the disaster at Pearl Harbor.

Recently, this myth has come under critical scrutiny by intelligence historians who have suggested that things were never so bad as we have been led to believe and that the military intelligence services performed credibly between the wars. With *Uncovering Ways of War*, Thomas Mahnken, a professor at the U.S. Naval War College, has become a leading spokesman for this revisionist view. Reviewing the reports of the officers who served as military and naval attachés in Berlin, London, and Tokyo between 1918 and 1941, he concludes that the majority were capable and conscientious intelligence officers who, often in the face of imposing obstacles, worked diligently and often successfully to collect information about military innovation in their host countries.

Mahnken examines nine cases of British, German, and Japanese military innovation in the interwar period. American military attachés correctly identified and reported the “new ways of war” in four of these cases: Japan-

ese amphibious warfare, British tank experiments, and British and German armored warfare organization and doctrine. In two cases, Japanese surface naval warfare operations and German tactical aviation, the attachés were partially successful in uncovering innovations. In only three areas, Japanese carrier aviation, German rocketry, and Britain's development of radar and integrated air defenses, did the attachés fail to identify new developments. In the course of demolishing the legend of interwar intelligence ineptitude, Mahnken puts to final rest several mini-myths that still find a place in books and Internet discussion groups. For example, the prewar United States Navy was aware of the deadly effectiveness of the Japanese Navy's Type 93 ("Long Lance") torpedo, since naval attaché reports from Tokyo identified the weapon's characteristics. Unfortunately, the technical experts in the Bureau of Ordnance simply dismissed the possibility of such a remarkable and innovative weapon. In an insightful analysis with implications for contemporary intelligence programs, the author considers the conditions that contributed to the attachés' successes or failures, noting, for example, that in the interwar period American intelligence organizations were more likely to monitor established weapons systems (tanks) than identify new systems (rockets), and more likely to pursue developments in areas of interest to the American services (amphibious warfare).

Readers should be forewarned that the title is misleading. Despite references to open source collection, communications intelligence, and liaison with foreign military and intelligence services, the focus is predominantly on the work of the attachés. In a period when America's clandestine espionage capabilities were negligible, communications intelligence operations modest, and liaison connections tenuous, the attachés certainly were important sources of information. Still, it would have been interesting to learn to what extent open sources and decryptions were integrated into the information developed by the officers. In the 1930s naval cryptanalysts had significant access to Japanese naval communications while their army counterparts, who focused on diplomatic rather than military traffic, were not even intercepting let alone decrypting British, German, or Japanese army communications. Did army attaché reports carry more weight because they had no competition from the Signal Corps' miniscule Signal Intelligence Service? Procedures for processing, evaluating, and distributing reports might have been investigated further. Who was on the distribution lists? How were reports selected for distribution? Did some officers or bureaus exhibit more interest in the reports than others?

Professor Mahnken has illuminated a significant but neglected topic. His important book will interest students of interwar military history and will be required reading for intelligence historians.

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