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## Intelligence, Reason of State and the Art of Governing

### Risk and Opportunity in Early Modern Europe

#### Abstract

Drawing upon primary and secondary historical material, this article explores the role of intelligence in early modern government. It focuses upon developments in 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century England, a site specific genealogical moment in the broader history of state power/knowledges. Addressing a tendency in Foucauldian work to neglect pre-18<sup>th</sup> century governance, the analysis reveals a set of interrelated processes which gave rise to an innovative technique for anticipating hazard and opportunity for the state. At the intersection of *raison d'Etat*, the evolving art of government, widespread routines of secrecy, and a post-Westphalia field of European competition and exchange, intelligence was imagined as a fundamental solution to the concurrent problems of ensuring peace and stability while improving state forces. In the administrative offices of the English Secretary of State, an assemblage of complex and interrelated procedures sought to produce and manipulate information in ways which exposed both possible risks to the state and potential opportunities for expansion and gain. As this suggests, the art of intelligence played an important if largely unacknowledged role in the formation and growth of the early modern state. Ensuring strategic advantage over rivals, intelligence also limited the ability of England's neighbours to dominate trade, control the seas, and master the colonies, functioning as a constitutive feature of European balance and equilibrium. As the analysis concludes, understanding intelligence as a form of governmental *technique* – a way of doing something - reveals an entirely novel way of thinking about and investigating its myriad (historical and contemporary) formations.

**Key Words:** Intelligence, Security, Government, Reason of State, Sovereignty

Through the analysis of primary and secondary historical documents, this article explores the role of intelligence in early modern government. For largely practical reasons – chief among which, the availability of source material in English – the empirical focus is on events in the English Commonwealth. While developments in intelligence (and government) played out differently across European states and territories<sup>1</sup>, the English experience represents an historically significant, site specific genealogical moment in the broader history of state power/knowledges. Conventional work on intelligence has typically focused upon either the development and activities of particular institutions (for example, Deacon, 1970; Karalekas, 1977; Andrew, 1985; Darling, 1990; Cain, 1994), the role played by espionage and other secret operations in military conflict (Farago, 1962; Fergusson, 1984; Kahn, 1985), the history of specific practices like

spying and letter opening (Seth, 1957; Deutsch, 1977; Ferris, 1989), or the place of intelligence ‘cycles’ in the policy making process (Andrew & Noakes, 1987; Hastedt, 1991; Codevilla, 1992). More recent work in international relations, security studies, criminology and (socio-) legal scholarship has often borrowed from this largely realist field of ‘intelligence studies’.<sup>2</sup> In a departure from more orthodox approaches, the analysis here makes clear that at a particular historical moment – characterised by an early form of government through *raison d’Etat* (‘reason of state’), widespread routines of secrecy, and a post-Westphalia field of European competition and (commercial) exchange between states - intelligence was imagined and set forth as a strategic art of government for identifying risk and opportunity for the early modern state. As the article will demonstrate, re-conceptualising intelligence as a form of governmental *technique* – a way of doing something – reveals an entirely novel way of thinking about and investigating its historical trajectory, its different practices and procedures, and its many (past and present) formations.

As the historical evidence makes clear, shortly after the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, under the tenure of Lord Protector Cromwell’s Secretary of State John Thurloe, intelligence was (re)imagined as a complex art of government which was fundamental to the interests of the state. That is, ‘intelligence’ came to be understood as something more than information, something more than news, and something more than its collection. Rather it was increasingly articulated as a forward looking, prognostic and strategic endeavour to furnish decision makers with the knowledge they required to govern effectively. In part, this meant discovering plots, conspiracies and dangerous designs against the state, so as to prevent insurrection or fend off invasion. More broadly however, it also meant generating, integrating and synthesising all sorts of different information in ways which exposed both good and bad possibilities for the state; a process which enabled the visualisation, calculation and manipulation of all that which might pose some hazard or opportunity for the Commonwealth. This meant developing procedures not only for collecting information, but also for organising, cataloguing and collating different material in fairly systematic ways. The body of knowledge so produced concerned not just the movements and activities of dissident factions and foreign militaries, but also the forces, resources, alliances and even the intentions of England’s European neighbours. This made possible the anticipation and avoidance of risks to peace, stability and prosperity, but also the identification and manipulation of potential opportunities for advantage and gain. As this suggests, the art of intelligence played

an important if largely unacknowledged role in the formation and growth of the early modern state, and – to the extent that it also limited the ability of rivals to dominate trade, control the seas, and master the colonies – functioned as a constitutive feature of European balance and equilibrium.

With some few exceptions however (for example, Miller, 1990), histories of state power/knowledge have largely neglected early modern developments. In Foucauldian work more broadly, a preoccupation with liberalism, governmentality, and (to a lesser extent) police, has meant a lack of close attention to events before about the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> This might be a consequence of the order in which Foucault's work was translated into English, or it could stem from his assertion that the art of government did not acquire its 'full scope and consistency' until the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (see for example, Foucault, 2007, p. 101). Whatever the reason, the journey from sovereignty and the divine right of kings to liberalism and the government of men and things is made possible only by the intervention of *raison d'Etat* – a form of governmental reason that joins the emerging art of government to late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century sovereignty. In fact, the 17<sup>th</sup> century – the century of *raison d'Etat* – could be accurately described as a prolonged moment of transition during which the art of government was slowly and steadily woven into existing arrangements; a process which gave birth to many new governmental techniques and apparatuses, and which played an important role in the eventual rise of governmentality and the 'governmentalisation of the state'. This is perhaps why Foucault (2007, p. 286, 287) compared the significance of *raison d'Etat* to the scientific revolution triggered by Galileo, Descartes and Kepler, and why he chose to spend time scrutinising its emergence and transformation. In the end, and somewhat at variance with contemporary research preferences, he concluded that the allied 'transition from the rivalry of princes to the competition of states is undoubtedly one of the most fundamental mutations in both the form of Western political life and the form of Western history' (Foucault, 2007, p. 294).

### **Governing Through *Raison d'Etat***

In his *Security, Territory, Population* lectures, Foucault made clear that while the logic and institutions of sovereignty remained predominant well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, theoretical texts from the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries sought to build an early and yet crude form of government

into extant political arrangements. While the treatises written by Palazzo, Botero, La Perriere and others excited a ‘general problem of government’, any particular form was seen as yet ‘internal to the state’ and thus supplementary to a type of government that must be ‘applied to the state as a whole’ (Foucault, 2007, p. 93). This specific and imperative mode of government would be the responsibility of a sovereign; a ‘*rationality*, calculation or type of thought’ through which a prince could govern ‘men and things’ *within* the framework of sovereignty (Foucault, 2007, p. 232). Both innovation and scandal, the political theory of *raison d’Etat* offered a diagram in which the state was endowed with its own ‘reason’; a knowledge of that which was necessary to found, preserve and extend the state (Botero, 1606, p. 1). This knowledge would be a knowledge of ‘things’ rather than laws, of the characteristics, dimensions and forces of the state (Foucault, 1991, p. 96), where the state was too be understood as a complex domain (or jurisdiction) with a set of laws, rules, customs, institutions, and people. That is, the theory of *raison d’Etat* envisaged the state as both the foundational principle and ultimate objective of proper government. As the ‘regulatory idea’ for *raison d’Etat*, the state represented a way of re-thinking and re-organising certain already established elements and institutions in ‘governmental terms’ (Foucault, 2007, p. 286). As the objective or aim of *raison d’Etat*, the state was also that which must result from governmental intervention.<sup>4</sup>

To ensure the constancy of his reign, a prince would have to preserve and extend the state, a task which would require of him more than simply applying the law with justice, wisdom, prudence, and mercy. Rather he would need to develop and govern through a detailed knowledge of the state, of its inherent characteristics and traits, and of how best to preserve and enhance its various dimensions and forces. Invested with *raison d’Etat*, ‘[i]nstead of merely controlling territories and maintaining the loyalty of subjects, modern sovereign power, increasingly concerned with governing the future, sets out to govern risks’ to the state (Valverde, 2007, p. 163). This temporal re-orientation of sovereignty would in turn require new techniques for the ‘intellectual mastery’ of the state (Miller & Rose, 1990) but also – as we will shortly see - for mastering all that which might its threaten its peace and stability or indeed contribute to its perseverance and growth. Statistics for example, would provide a mechanism through which the state’s many features could be categorised, quantified, measured, (and thus) known and manipulated. In establishing different categories of measurement and ascribing numerical values to particular dimensions of the state,

statistics also ‘constituted’ the state as a knowable and governable entity (see for example, Hacking 1982, 1990; Porter, 1986). And yet, as historians have shown, this ‘science of the state’ (or ‘political arithmetic’) did not mature until well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the sporadic ventures before then amounted to fairly basic estimations for one explicit purpose or another.<sup>5</sup> Indeed it was not until the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that more routinised and systematic measurements coupled with the rise of probability theory to drive the intensification and proliferation of statistics across Europe (see for instance, Ball, 2004; Hald, 2003; Stigler, 1986). For Foucault (2007, p. 101), this retarded development of statistics can be attributed in part to the great crises that plagued the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which ensured the voracity of sovereignty and ‘imprisoned’ the art of government.

Basically, the art of government could only spread, be reflected, and take on and increase its dimensions in a period of expansion free from the great military, economic, and political emergencies that plagued the seventeenth century from beginning to end. (Foucault, 2007, p. 101)<sup>6</sup>

And yet while sovereignty would therefore endure as the dominant political modality in Europe, the emergence and proliferation of *raison d’Etat* gradually entwined the art of government into sovereign institutions and arrangements. That is, government ‘did not remain up in the air’ as merely theoretical idea (Foucault, 2007, p. 100), and had tangible correlations in political discourse<sup>7</sup> and concrete exercise. Chief among these was a discernible emphasis upon preserving and protecting the state, evident not only in the work of theorists like Giovanni Botero<sup>8</sup> but also in the more practical writings of political figures like Sir Francis Bacon.<sup>9</sup> Indeed while the 18<sup>th</sup> century would mark the ascendancy of programmes for state expansion (a development not independent of the rise of police), the 17<sup>th</sup> century was one in which ‘general crisis’ (Trevor-Roper, 1959) ensured the primacy of the problem of state preservation and stability. Across Europe, writers and rulers became increasingly preoccupied with the ‘constantly present’ dangers of sedition, rebellion, scarcity, financial collapse and the ruin of trade (Foucault, 2007, p. 271).<sup>10</sup> This environment of constantly threatening, major calamities weighed heavily on the policy of all Western monarchies (Foucault, 2007, p. 101, 102), infusing both political discourse and concrete exercise with decidedly protective characteristics. For the early architects of *raison d’Etat*, the problem of extending a state was therefore always supplementary to its preservation: only by first

obtaining the peace and stability of a state - which would otherwise 'not be able to maintain itself...for one hour' (Palazzo, 1611, p. 14-16) - could it be strengthened and enhanced.<sup>11</sup> In practical terms, this meant developing a detailed knowledge of all those 'disagreeable possibilities' (Botero, 1606, p. 12) which might affect the state's constancy, and which must be avoided so as to prevent 'the cycle of birth, growth, perfection and then decadence' that led to the fall of many of the great Empires (Foucault, 2007, p. 289).

In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century however, this emphasis upon preserving the state was increasingly supplemented by a more 'discrete' and 'applied' characteristic of *raison d'Etat*: the need to improve or extend the state's forces (Foucault, 2007, p. 288, 289). (The idea that states must not only persevere but expand was clearly evident in the earlier texts, though in practice it functioned in a rather subordinate way and was secondary to the problem of assuring stability). Following the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, while the question of state preservation did not disappear, there was an intensification of the problem of state expansion. The texts written by political practitioners across Europe – both those who participated in the assemblies and those responding to the treaties - began to stress the idea that in order to maintain itself, the state must also increase its 'forces'; those intrinsic aspects of the state which included its commercial resources, natural resources, human resources, and the nature and balance of trade (Foucault, 2007, p. 294). If the state was to be imagined as its own end – that is, if it is to be organized by reference to itself - then there will always be a plurality of states which will compete with one another, since no final unity is imagined (as in the all-encompassing Empire). A state will therefore always exist on a field of competition with others, where territorial borders are largely fixed and where competition and rivalry are increasingly characterised in economic and commercial terms. This new reality for European territories played out in part through increased trade and commercial exchange, and a perpetual struggle over 'monetary circulation, colonial conquest, and control of the seas' (Foucault, 2007, p. 291). Thus - even if in a way that remained largely subordinate to the problem of state preservation – post-Westphalia *raison d'Etat* increasingly sought to enhance the state's forces and improve its competitive position *vis a vis* the others.

*From Royal Households to the Administrative Offices of State*

This re-articulation of the rationale and means for governing early modern states was in turn linked to the development of an administrative apparatus and the various ‘offices of state’ across Europe. As historians have shown (see for example, Evans, 1923), if a prince was seen as the ‘owner’ of a kingdom by the very laws of nature, then nothing more than direct rule by his command (and through his household) was required of him. To govern through *raison d’Etat* however, ‘household methods and instruments’ would need to be replaced with ‘administrative’ techniques, organised through different offices of state which were staffed with new ranks of semi-autonomous officials (Gunn, 1995, p. 4). Beginning in the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century,

...an informal, fluid, and – as it were – household arrangement dependent on the whim of the king [was replaced] by a permanent, fixed, and bureaucratically organized board of government which, though still fully dependent on the king in its work, had emancipated itself from the whim of the moment as well as from close association with the [royal] household... (Elton, 1962, p. 344-345)

It is precisely through this administrative apparatus that many new knowledges and techniques were invented and refined,

According a visibility to the minutiae of the activities of the nation, devising the calculative techniques through which this visibility might be made operable, and representing the nation by means of a variety of knowledges... a crucial step in the very construction of “the state”... (Miller, 1990, p. 323)

As Peter Miller (1990) has shown for example, late 17<sup>th</sup> century French Secretary of State for Marine, Superintendent of Commerce and Buildings, and Controller of Finance Jean-Baptiste Colbert established a range of innovative procedures for managing the relationship between the French state and private enterprise. His specific inventions included a set of formal requirements for keeping ‘books of account’ (*via* the legal Ordinance of 1673), pedagogic mechanisms for instructing merchants in proper accounting procedures (using textbooks and manuals), and the representation of ‘accounting’ in a broader discourse of ‘order’; an assemblage which elevated ‘a desire to know the nation and its subjects in fine detail into an essential resource of political rule’ (Miller, 1990, p. 322; see also, Miller, 1986). Such ventures were often initiated and directed by Europe’s Secretaries of State<sup>12</sup>, pivotal state officials throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century who played an

increasingly central role in directing ‘government policy in almost every sphere, at home and abroad’ (Aubrey, 1990, p. 4).<sup>13</sup> In France and Spain, Secretarial responsibilities were divided among several different offices, while in England a single Secretary had responsibility for both domestic and foreign affairs. And while the English Secretary was directly accountable to the Queen and Privy Council (until the direction of state offices was transferred to Parliament in 1688), from its inception the office was largely autonomous from the royal household and afforded an extremely broad mandate (Elton, 1963; Highham, 1925).<sup>14</sup> Appointing the first Secretary of State near the end of her reign in 1603, Queen Elizabeth granted the office-holder wide-ranging powers and responsibilities, including managing ‘religion’ and disorderly factions within the realm, overseeing the affairs of English ‘dominions beyond the sea’, supervising the ‘Councils’ established at the ‘borders of the realm’, defending the kingdom ‘by land and sea’, monitoring revenue, taxation, commerce and trade, and organising diplomatic intercourse and ‘intelligence’.<sup>15</sup>

### **Reinventing Intelligence I: A Continuous Surveillance of People and Things**

From the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the word ‘intelligence’ referred not only to a faculty of individual understanding but also ‘true information’ or ‘news’; reliable fact which could be distinguished from rumour or hearsay (from Johnson, 1773; see also, Sabin, 1985, p. 3; Neocleous, 2003, p. 50-51). By the early decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, collecting dependable information was one of the Secretary’s most vital tasks (Fraser, 1956; Marshall, 1994, 2003). As the official outlet for up-to-date, trustworthy news, the English Secretary was responsible for learning about events on the continent and in the distant corners of the realm, and regularly conveying intelligence reports to the King and his Council (of which it was said an earl was there for ‘ornament’, a bishop by ‘reason of his office’, and the Secretary for ‘service and communication of intelligence’; Evans, 1923, p. 237). To carry out this task, early Secretaries relied upon a number of fairly informal measures, including a semi-regular correspondence with English consuls and envoys sent abroad, the solicitation of reports from military commanders in the field, and requests for official accounts from diplomatic emissaries posted to foreign Courts. In the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century however, as the Treaties of Westphalia re-ordered international relations and domestic instability climaxed with the beheading of King Charles I and the installation of the Protectorate, Lord Protector Cromwell’s Secretary of State John Thurloe set

about radically re-thinking the nature of intelligence, and its place and role in securing the interests of state.

After more than a decade of civil war encompassing England, Ireland and Scotland, Oliver Cromwell forcibly dissolved Parliament in 1653 and acquired ‘chief magistracy’ and the ‘administration of government’ for life *via* constitutional settlement (the ‘Instrument of Government’). With no royal blood, yet acting as a king in all but name, Cromwell – a military commander from the New Model Army - relied heavily upon military backing for his political authority. Despite this support however, the Protectorate was anything but secure, and faced regular often violent opposition from royalists who wished to reinstall the monarchy, ‘republicans’ who opposed the idea of military rule (and Cromwell’s increasing autocracy), and any number of religious factions who clamoured for equal rights. Confronted by acute domestic instability, Cromwell lobbied tirelessly for the further militarisation of English government, and in 1655 successfully divided England (and Wales) into fifteen military districts, each with its own major-general who would ensure local stability and shore up support for the Protectorate regime. In London however, Parliament voiced concerns about Cromwell’s increasingly military-based system of government, and in 1656 – after rejecting yet another proposal to establish a permanent standing army – the military districts were dissolved. With rising instability on a number of different fronts, and mounting resistance to further militarisation in London, Cromwell turned to his Secretary of State John Thurloe who had an altogether different vision. For Thurloe, if domestic uprisings could not be forestalled with the proper application of military deterrence, they could instead be foreseen and prevented with the proper use of intelligence. With Cromwell’s blessing (and his purse), Thurloe set about re-thinking and re-configuring the ways in which the Secretary’s office generated, manipulated and exploited information, establishing a complex and integrated set of procedures for anticipating dangers to the Commonwealth.

Having worked under Secretary Thurloe (and later on Secretaries Morice and Benett after the Restoration<sup>16</sup>), Samuel Moreland outlined Thurloe’s approach in a ‘Brief Discourse concerning the Nature and Reason of Intelligence’, written sometime near the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> Intelligence, Moreland claimed, is more than information, more than news, and requires more of a Secretary than collecting and circulating facts. Rather it must be understood and practiced as a

complex art of government which is fundamental to ensuring the interests of state, maintaining the constancy of ‘Government’, and securing ‘his royal person’.<sup>18</sup> Amity, friendship and trust are extremely rare ‘between men’ Moreland declared, but can almost never exist between states, as these are ‘gover’d wholly by politick maxims, & move in Orbs excentrick’ to those of their ‘Neighbours & Allies’. That is, states will always pursue their own interests and objectives, and seek to improve their own welfare and position, even if to the detriment of those with whom they have reached agreement. A prince should therefore always distrust his subjects and guard constantly against the ‘lopping men’ and ‘Heroes of the populace’ who have ‘thrown their unskilful riders many times’<sup>19</sup>, but he should also doubt his neighbours, even those with whom he has some accord. Rather than putting his faith in treaties and alliances (which are ‘easily broken’), he should instead seek to discover the minds and intentions of his neighbours, always looking ahead and reasoning like a ‘cunning Gamester’. In so doing, he must develop endeavours ‘to know what cards’ are in their hands so that he may play his own ‘to the best advantage’. Intelligence properly practiced will expose the true nature of his subjects and his neighbours - their interests, their ambitions and their designs – furnishing him with the ‘clarity’ and ‘foresight’ needed to govern properly in an uncertain and anarchic environment; it is the ‘mother of prevention’, ‘essential to the arts of government’<sup>20</sup>, for want of which ‘a Prince may lose his crown or life’.

### *Recruiting ‘Centinels’*

An important dimension to this art of intelligence is what Moreland referred to as having ‘a constant View of all that passes at any moment’, a sort of perpetual surveillance of people and things. Under Secretary Thurloe’s tenure, upon which Moreland drew in his discourse, this was accomplished by three primary instruments: (i) an expansive network of spies and informants (or ‘Centinels’); (ii) centralized control and manipulation of the post; and (iii) a ‘universal’ system of correspondence. The effect of such measures was that,

Under his eyes in constant review, there passed accounts of events both great and small, which occurred in England or in the capitals and other large cities of Europe...all news had its significance for him, whether it was the reaction of the London citizens towards the accession of the Protector, a minister preaching publicly against increase of taxation,

or the number and disposition of enemy armies and fleets. (Quotation in Hobman, 1961, p. 14)

The most thoroughly documented of these initiatives has been the Secretary's use of spies and informants in learning about the activities, movements and plans of dissident factions and religious sects both in England and on the continent (especially in France, where the son of Charles I and his loyal noblemen lived in exile).<sup>21</sup> And yet Thurloe also recruited informants who would send information from quite distant lands and territories, including reports upon the deliberations of Royal Courts and detailed accounts of events in vital ports, towns, and villages.

While some would come forward of their own accord (offering him their service in exchange for payment; see for example, Aubrey, 1990, p. 94), the Secretary also set about recruiting men of quality who he considered to be well connected, well placed and likely amenable to financial incentive. Citing these typically clandestine efforts, John Wildman - a solidier and political figure who eventually held the office of Postmaster General from 1689-1691 – later advocated that Charles II follow closely Thurloe's model, and that

...all means imaginable be used to gain over some two or three of the principall members of every...reigning faction...who may separately, (that so they may be of checks to each other for the more sure discovery of the truth) and with all manner of secrecy, hold a constant correspondence with your honour, and...give you an exact account of what soever passes or is transacted at such meetings, so shall you be able to crush all their designs in the egge, and hinder them from ever coming to any maturity...<sup>22</sup>

To organise and manage his growing network of spies, Thurloe devised an accounting scheme for maintaining written records of 'intelligence disbursements' his office paid out. While his predecessors had kept only sporadic books of account, Thurloe retained transcripts which listed his different informants (typically by code name or alias) along with how much they were paid and when. By keeping such registers, his office was able to ensure not only a centralised and organised system for financial accounting, but also a means for evaluating the constancy, reliability and value of his different sources. Such an unprecedented degree of organization and systematization in the management of spies and informants has even led some to aver that his office was in effect the first 'London Headquarters' for a 'modern Intelligence Service' (Hobman, 1961, p. 23; see also Helt, 1994).

*Manning the 'Watchtower'*

Less well known than his use of spies and informants are Thurloe's relentless efforts to expand and integrate the inland and foreign post, and to establish a single, consolidated post office in London. In the middle of the 1650's he was able to merge the different postal relays throughout the Commonwealth and bring the entire apparatus under Secretarial control. This allowed for the appointment of special letter openers in London who would secretly comb through and copy correspondence before sending it on its way. This second instrument for ensuring a constant view of things – which Samuel Moreland later referred to as having a permanent 'Watchtower' – was based upon the notion that private letters and packets would provide the Secretary with a continuous and reliable stream of information that correspondents assumed private, and which would therefore include valuable information. After the Restoration, John Wildman celebrated Thurloe's manipulation of the post, stressing its value for assuring continued peace and stability;

Another great intrigue...was carefully to watch the Generall letter Office, and it very much concernes the publick peace that the same be done now; for through this Office are conveyed all the poisonous distempers of the Citty into the whole kingdome...[back then]... there were almost every post night letters of consequence intercepted...<sup>23</sup>

The practice of intercepting letters was of course nothing particularly new. Francis Walsingham for one (principal secretary to Queen Elizabeth) had seized letters and packets while trying to root out Catholicism in England. And yet rather than limiting postal circulation and intermittently seizing packets (when he had reason to suspect some plot or conspiracy), Thurloe lobbied extensively for the expansion of the postal routes, the integration of the different relays into one common system, and the centralisation of control over the entire apparatus in London. This allowed him to capitalise upon increased circulation by instituting regular, systematic procedures for opening, reading and copying correspondence, and to avoid the problem faced by his predecessors of trying to convince individual couriers to hand over their packets.

While previous Secretaries had been forced to try and pressure couriers to deliver seemingly suspicious letters, and though in 1582 this helped Francis Walsingham uncover a plot to install Mary, Queen of Scots, on the throne, Thurloe believed that without formal power over postal officials it would be impossible to acquire the full and necessary 'influence upon them'.<sup>24</sup> As a result, in 1655, after lobbying Parliament on 'reasons of state', he secured the office of

Postmaster for himself - an appointment which had previously only been held by private licensee. This granted him the powers of both Secretary of State and Postmaster, a move which enfolded the English system of post into the administrative apparatus and allowed Thurloe to institute widespread changes. In 1657, an Act for a single consolidated English, Scottish and Irish postage was set out - a law premised upon Thurloe's decisive argument that a universal, state administered post was vital for 'preventing dangerous designs against the state' (see Firth, 1897; Joyce, 1893; Turner, 1918). Subsequent legislation in the late 1650's and early 1660's reinforced and extended this control over the Postmasters office, furnishing the Secretary with legal powers for the 'survey and inspection of all letters', 'hearing and determination' of complaints against the office, and control over the appointment and removal of Postmasters and other officials (which allowed the dismissal of those who were uncooperative or 'against whom exception was taken').<sup>25</sup> Under this new arrangement, Thurloe was able to keep his fingers on 'the pulse of all political movement' (Hyde, 1894, p. 238), formalising one of the key instruments of his wider 'preventive monopoly' (Whyman, 2000, p. 3) on information.

By his order, a special group of deputies and assistants – including John Wallis, Isaac Dorislaus and Sir Samuel Moreland himself (Bond, 1955; Whyman, 2000) - was instructed to 'reside constantly' in a private room adjoining the foreign letter office in London, where they would open, read and copy correspondence from 11pm until '3 or 4 in the morning, which was the usuale time of shutting up the male'.<sup>26</sup> Since even letters 'to as from all Ambassadors and publick Ministers were constantly opened, and copies of them sent to Mr. Thurloe'<sup>27</sup>, letter openers had to be diligent, dexterous and discreet, seamlessly re-sealing packets to avoid being discovered. The fear was that if the letter openers were discovered, people might stop using the post - something which would have a significant impact upon Thurloe's ability to gather precisely the sort of information he was after.<sup>28</sup> Following the integration of the inland and foreign relays, Thurloe also appointed a set of multi-lingual clerks for 'extracting, copying, translating, etc. all matters of correspondence'<sup>29</sup> that came into and departed the Commonwealth. This supplied him with all manner of correspondence from as far afield as the Baltic, Italy, Spain, France, Moscow and the German states, including private letters sent between relatives, friends, merchants and powerful nobles, official communiques and 'instructions' passed between ambassadors, ministers and other state officials, and a regular stream of 'gazettes' and

‘newsletters’ (state authored pamphlets printed en masse which reported official appointments, military victories, and parliamentary proceedings among other things).

Following the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, the practice of letter opening was widely condemned as yet further evidence of the perversion of Cromwell’s Protectorate. To alleviate widespread fears that private packets were being delayed in order to be read and copied, post-Restoration Postmaster General Henry Bishop invented a process of ‘letter stamping’ which imprinted on the front of each packet the date it was received by the office, reassuring correspondents that their letters were not being delayed (Bishop’s ‘postmark’ may have been the first stamp used in England). Secretaries of State Nicholas, Morice and Benett however, were quietly rather enamoured with both the efficiency and the utility of Thurloe’s system, and the practice opening letters for the most part continued (if more discreetly). In a ‘Memorial Touching on the Government of the Post Office’ written for Charles II sometime between 1660 and 1666, Thomas Ibson argued that given the ‘divers animosities’ and different ‘sects’ at work within ‘the bowels’ of the realm - ‘which without a general correspondency can never prosper’ - there is no place or office ‘more worthy of...inspection, than the Post Office’. Indeed, while the information amassed by opening private letters covered much more than the activities of rebellious factions and sects, the practice was most often advocated and defended on the grounds that it was vital for securing the state against subversive and treasonous elements. In 1677, Secretary Henry Coventry argued that for precisely this reason, ‘the opening of letters’ is ‘what no man can justify but from reason of state’ (printed in Highman, 1932, p. 212), and only ‘a Secretary of State may demand an account of any letters that come into the post house’.<sup>30</sup>

Yet as John Wildman observed after the Restoration, the more difficult problem for Thurloe (as for his successors) was the network of unofficial couriers and ‘foot posts’ who delivered packets in and around the city of London for a fee.<sup>31</sup> Despite much effort, Thurloe was never able to bring these private carriers under his control, and often the best he could manage was to

‘immediately before a rising...send 2 or 3 Messengers of his Councill to seize and bring away all the pacquetts and letters they could finde about all the carriers and foot posts throughout the Citty, which were most commonly throwne aside and never returned...

This, Wildman argued, was to leave things too late ‘when the plotts were not onely contrived, but just ready to be put in action’. It also had the unfortunate effect of often leading to the ‘utter undoing of divers poore people’ who had their letters of attorney, bills of exchange, and private correspondence lost forever. His solution to this problem was to establish a complex licensing scheme through a new ‘Commission’ which would

...take cognizance both of the names, and usuall lodging places of all the ordinary carriers and footposts in or about the Citty, as likewise that the said person bee empowered to administer an oath of fidelity to his Majestie’s service to every of them, and then give them licenses, that so he may have some kinde of influence upon them, and the better opportunity to treat and deale with them in private, to make them willing to send him [the letters] sealed up about 2 houres before his setting out...

#### *A ‘Universal Correspondence’*

Thurloe’s colonisation of the post allowed him to set up what Moreland later described as a universal system of correspondence<sup>32</sup> which encompassed a variety of contacts in nearly every territory and kingdom in Europe. The increasingly regular letters sent between the Secretary’s office in London and English ambassadors posted abroad here became only one facet of a much broader and more expansive network of communication, including many who sent Thurloe packets at great personal risk.<sup>33</sup> These included travelling merchants, ministers and nobles, ‘friends to the crown’ living abroad, unnamed contacts in European ports, towns and cities, and a number of ‘influential’ persons in distant Courts (see for example, Hobman, 1961). Other regular contacts included ‘Lieutenants and titled persons’ in the English counties, local customs officers, naval storekeepers, postmasters and other low level administrators, army commanders in the field, several prominent scholars, and a host of ‘unidentified’ persons.<sup>34</sup> Indispensable to his web of correspondence was a group of professional ‘intelligencers’; well connected, well informed ‘gentlemen of quality’ who supplied information for a prescribed fee (or occasionally on longer term contract) (see for instance, Birch, 1849). Though intelligencers - like spies – often worked discreetly and sold information for profit, they were perceived as ‘professional’ writers of news whose accounts were far more reliable (and therefore far more valuable) than those of spies and ‘turncoats’.<sup>35</sup> In fact it was not uncommon for wealthy merchants, aristocrats, and even well-heeled ministers to hire their own intelligencers, and while Thurloe certainly wasn’t the first to

engage such services, by the time of the Restoration it was said that Henry Muddiman - who assisted then Secretary Nicholas with the 'system of letters' – had inherited the most widespread network in Europe (Muddiman, 1923).

While Thurloe's different correspondents would often ask for news of England, he was typically averse to sharing anything more than a brief account of events, and most often shared not even that - his was a largely one-way system. Financial restraints and a massive failure of the intelligence apparatus during the second Anglo-Dutch war however, forced Secretaries Morice and Benett to re-consider this practice and make some changes to how their offices shared information. Following a disastrous naval encounter with the Dutch in 1666 (in which most of the English fleet was destroyed), a Parliamentary inquiry led by Prince Rupert questioned Morice and Benett on why they had underestimated the size of the Dutch fleet and mistakenly expected the French to join the battle. (The Prince had devised his strategy based upon their assessments, and so fatally divided the English fleet). Both Secretaries claimed 'want of intelligence from abroad', which they argued stemmed from increasingly limited budgets. Having been refused more money in a period of significant financial constraint, their quite inventive solution was to instead offer information of their own in exchange. Immediately they had

...a newsletter compiled that skimmed the cream of the weekly letters of some fifty correspondents scattered all over the kingdom, added news of [their] own such as official appointments and parliamentary proceedings, employed some four or five clerks to multiply the copy in manuscript, and sent out these newsletters every week as a *quid pro quo* to all...correspondents and to a substantial number of 'country friends' (Fraser 1956: 28)

Well before the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this innovative system of two-way information exchange became 'indispensable' to the intelligence apparatus, 'without which it could not proceed' (Secretary Williamson *c.* 1676). As the Secretaries newsletters became extremely desirable both in England and on the continent, their pool of correspondents was not only maintained but substantially increased.

### *Intelligence and the Problem of Secrecy*

As these three instruments suggest, Thurloe's vision for intelligence was ordered not only by the requirements of *raison d'Etat* and the available technologies of the time, but by widespread routines of secrecy which made difficult learning all that he needed to know. Nearly all of the texts on *raison d'Etat* from the 17<sup>th</sup> century averred that a detailed knowledge of one's own state and of other states was vital for maintaining strength and stability (see also, Foucault, 1988/1981, p. 151; Neocleous, 2003, p. 46). Yet such knowledge was 'only an instrument of government on condition of not being divulged' (Foucault, 2007, p. 275 footnote). In other words, for the knowledge required by *raison d'Etat* to be effective, it must be kept secret; '[a]t the time this was an explicit part of *raison d'Etat* called the *arcana imperii*, the secrets of power' (Foucault, 2007, p. 275). In particular, the states 'enemies and rivals' must not be able to learn the real resources available (Foucault, 2007, p. 275), since 'the more the forces of the state are unknown, the more they deserve respect'.<sup>36</sup> Following the Peace of Westphalia, this need for secrecy only intensified as the prospect of ultimate imperial dominion *via* endless territorial expansion gave way to a field of relatively fixed and yet aggressively competitive states. To maintain balance and equilibrium, these states would have to compete in ways that increased their forces but did not bring about the ruin of the others or the breakup of the whole (see, Foucault, 2007, p. 297-300). As a result, *raison d'Etat* was increasingly delineated in 'diplomatic terms', 'essentially defined by the constitution of a Europe' (Foucault, 2007, p. 300), and began to make use of several different mechanisms<sup>37</sup> which would allow competition while maintaining 'peace through the plurality'. Foucault referred to one of these mechanisms as an 'information apparatus (*appareil*)'<sup>38</sup>, a dimension of which was precisely secrecy, or more specifically, keeping hidden the knowledge that the state must develop. As he put it, this will mean

Knowing one's own forces (and what's more hiding them), knowing those of the others, allies and adversaries, and hiding the fact that one knows them. (Foucault, 2007, p. 306, footnote)

In practice, the imperative for secrecy gave rise to a number of restrictions on the circulation of information, particularly that which might expose the actual characteristics and forces of the state, including its wealth, military strength, alliances and trade agreements, and its plans for growth. This was achieved for example by keeping a close eye on foreign envoys and

ambassadors who ‘are for the most part but great spies’<sup>39</sup>, and implementing a ‘precise codification’ of what could and could not be published (see Foucault, 2007, p. 275). In London, both tasks were carried out by Thurloe’s many deputies, and in the interests of secrecy, he was even ‘quite prepared to deprive [...] the public of a basic account of domestic events’ (Fraser, 1956, p. 29). As elsewhere in Europe, stringent controls on printing were common throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and were typically supplemented by rigorous censorship of any pamphlets or newsletters which were to be circulated. Successive English Secretaries fought relentlessly against any sort of public or free press, and spent much of their time suppressing private printers (often through complex licensing schemes which amounted to virtual state monopolies).<sup>40</sup> While some of Thurloe’s officers spent a great deal of effort suppressing unlicensed print material<sup>41</sup>, the 1662 *Licensing Act* made this a somewhat less burdensome task, as a Secretarial monopoly on printing was formalised in law.

This state of affairs made the *London Gazette* (a printed paper, also under the supervision of the Secretary of State, and containing no home news) the only licensed source of news for the general public between 1660 and 1688. (Couvee, 1956, p. 251)<sup>42</sup>

While restrictions on printed matter weren’t anything particularly new to the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>43</sup>, the rationale for prohibiting unofficial printing underwent a discernable shift from the need to preserve the relationship between rulers and the ‘giddy multitudes’<sup>44</sup>, to the need to ensure the interests and security of the state.

Thurloe’s measures for assuring secrecy also involved closely monitoring the release of information from his offices, making certain that nothing was shared with anyone beyond what was considered essential to their particular remit. The reports from different informants, spies and correspondents were carefully protected and secured in his London headquarters, while their subject matter was divulged only in censored and synthesised form to officials, ministers and/or military commanders who were deemed to have some particular need to know. In secret dispatches sent directly from his office, by courier and under armed guard, individually tailored packets were sent to those he decided were in need of a particular bit of information, usually correlated with an area of administrative or military responsibility. In correspondence with his sources in England and abroad, he also made plain that they should never share what they learned with anyone else; ‘[t]he chief consideration was that the best intelligence could only be got...if

their news was kept exclusively to themselves' (Fraser, 1956, p. 29). That is, the more information was shared around, the less valuable it became, as the less of an advantage it provided him. After the Restoration, and notwithstanding lesser budgets for intelligence, Secretaries Morice and Bennett carried forward many of these routines, variations of which were also evident in other European states, and which endured well into the latter decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Brian, 1994).

One of the effects of such widespread secrecy however – which was not only endemic to *raison d'Etat*, but a constitutive feature of European competition and balance - was an intensification of the problem of acquiring knowledge that others sought to keep hidden. This became all the more complex in an environment of increasingly economic and trade-based rivalry, where the more knowledge a state could draw upon in negotiating the vicissitudes of commercial exchange, the more of an advantage it would have in securing its own interests. In other words, the concurrent need to develop knowledge and maintain secrecy – on a field of multiple competitive states, each with the exact same requirements - generated a unique problematic in which states needed to learn about the others while striving to keep knowledge of themselves hidden. Indeed it is precisely this problematic that helped to make the art of intelligence necessary, and give it its particular shape and form. As states improved upon their ability to learn things about the others – say by reading their mail and recruiting informants from among their trusted courtiers - secrecy became more important, and as secrecy was enhanced, intelligence became more vital. Highlighting this dynamic relationship, the English merchant and intelligencer Daniel Defoe argued near the turn of the century that,

As intelligence abroad is so considerable, it follows in proportion that the most useful thing at home is secrecy, for, as intelligence is the most useful to us, so keeping our enemies from intelligence among us is as valuable a head. (Defoe, 1704/1955, p. 264)

This complex feature of governing through *raison d'Etat* therefore shaped not only the ways in which early modern states sought to develop and protect the knowledges they required, but also their relations with one another, and thus the dynamic of the European whole.

## Reinventing Intelligence II: Identifying Good and Bad Possibilities

In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, while exposing plots, conspiracies and dangerous designs against the state remained important, it thus became increasingly vital to learn as much as possible about other states; to discover ‘what cards are in their hands’ so one could play one’s own to ‘the best advantage’. Indeed, the different measures Thurloe refined sought not only the movements and activities of dissident factions and foreign militaries, but also the strengths and weaknesses, alliances and ambitions of the Commonwealth’s allies and adversaries - developing a ‘perfect knowledge’ of ‘whatsoever they resolved to do’ (Aubrey, 1990, p. 101).<sup>45</sup> English emissaries sent abroad were instructed to preserve peaceful relations and monitor troop and naval deployments, but also to immediately convey to the Secretary any matters ‘which may be of concernment to Us and our kingdoms’, including ‘the motions and intentions’ of the Court, changes to their available force and ‘treasure’, and any negotiations or proposals for the advancement of trade.<sup>46</sup> More discreetly, Thurloe also ordered assessments of the character, strengths and ambitions of prominent foreign nobles, public ministers, and Royal counsellors, and even the ‘disposition of merchants’.<sup>47</sup> Later on, near the turn of the century, Daniel Defoe argued that as this sort of knowledge will be fundamental to the Secretary’s many dealings with his neighbours, it should be entered into a concise ‘table’ and constantly updated with

...all the ministers of state, lists of households, the privy councils, and favorites of every court in Europe, and their characters, with exact lists of their forces, names of their officers, state of their revenue, methods of government, etc., so just and authentic and regularly amended as alterations happen that by this he may duly estimate their strength, judge of their interests...and treat with them accordingly... a hundred thousand pounds *per annum* spent...in foreign intelligences might be the best money ever this nation laid out... if some money had been well applied, neither the insurrection in Hungary nor the war in Poland should have been so fatal to the confederacy as now they are. (Defoe, 1704/1955, p. 263)

Of course, monitoring royalists and republicans at home and surveying enemy forces in the field remained crucial tasks, and Thurloe’s efforts in this regard have figured prominently in historical treatments of the period (see for example, Hobman, 1961; Aubrey, 1990). Yet while this has led some to claim that intelligence therefore ‘has its roots in military...or security and defence

requirements' (Hibbert, 1990, p. 110), intelligence also figured prominently in the Secretary's efforts to manage English dominions overseas, to stabilise and improve state revenue, to develop and expand English trade, and to coordinate diplomatic intercourse. While internal volatility and the legal uncertainty of the Protectorate ensured a heightened concern over domestic stability, neither Thurloe nor Cromwell were ignorant to other forms of hazard, particularly those which might impact upon the Commonwealth's financial stability and the strength of English trade. While hunting for letters sent between known dissenters and nonconformists, deputies at the post office were instructed to copy the 'instructions', reports and other forms of correspondence sent to and from diplomatic envoys in London. Spies and informants were tasked not only with penetrating unruly factions and sects<sup>48</sup>, but with observing the comings and goings of foreign ambassadors, diplomatic envoys and prominent merchants, wherever possible discovering the nature of their meetings and secretly capturing their packets. To this end, Thurloe recruited spies not only in London and France (where lived the exiled Prince and his court), but 'abroad almost in every County, and Citty, or town of note'.<sup>49</sup> Integrating such diverse material - say a report conveying the appointment of a new Secretary of the Navy in France, tales of more frequent gatherings of the French envoys to the Spanish Court, and an account of private conferences between the Spanish ambassador in Paris and the French *Secretaires d'Etat* - revealed the possibility not of war but of looming trade agreement between France and Spain; a prospect which would have particular implications for the voracity of English commerce and continued financial stability.

That is, for mid-century *raison d'Etat*, it is not only the preservation of the state which must be assured, but also - and increasingly - its development, expansion and growth. While England did not send a delegation to either Osnabruck or Munster, it was nonetheless obliged to conform to the increasingly economic and commercial form of rivalry which characterised the relationships between European states - a development both enabled and accelerated by the 1648 treaties. As the preservation of the state was rearticulated as a matter of ensuring peace and stability while enhancing forces, the knowledge required by *raison d'Etat* also shifted as the imperative to protect was increasingly supplemented by a need to acquire and maintain economic and commercial dominion. This compelled not only the discovery and prevention of risks to stability, but also the identification and exploitation of potential opportunities for advantage or gain. In

other words, the Protectorate's well-rehearsed preoccupation with internal stability coupled with a more obligatory and somewhat less pronounced requirement to secure and expand English trade, to increase colonial dominion and control over the seas, and to improve the Commonwealth's position *vis a vis* its neighbours. In practical terms, this meant that reports of impending war between Sweden and the northern states, or accounts of imminent treaty between France and Spain, would need to be understood and evaluated not only in terms of the problems they might engender for peace and stability, but also in terms of the opportunities they could present for expansion and growth. The dissolution of long held relationships for instance might signal new opportunities for reaching accord with previously engaged states, while forthcoming alliances made possible (even necessary) the consideration of new partnerships. After the Restoration, such 'considerations of trade' would only deepen and intensify as English financial strength became a priority for Charles II (see Firth, 1897b, p. 319).

#### *Intelligence as a Form of 'Estimation'*

As all of this suggests, Thurloe's model of intelligence comprised several different mechanisms for generating information; information which was necessary for both averting danger and identifying opportunity, but which was often difficult to come by. Some of the procedures he refined weren't in themselves all that new - using spies, exchanging letters with diplomatic envoys and even intercepting suspicious correspondence have all been traced back much further than the 17<sup>th</sup> century (see for instance, Elias, 1983; Plowden, 1991; Hayes, 1992; Breight, 1996). And yet while Thurloe certainly reinvented and extended such measures in quite innovative ways, much of the novelty in his approach lay not in the individual practices themselves but in their integration, systematisation, and (re)direction through the Secretary of State's administrative offices, and the re-articulation of the entire apparatus in the interests of state. Indeed, Thurloe's vision of intelligence was remarkably forward looking, visualising both problems for peace and stability and opportunities for advantage and gain as always only *possibilities* which could (therefore) be foreseen and manipulated to the best effect. As Foucault (2007) made clear, seeing events in this way - as remote and yet undetermined 'eventualities' - is a decidedly governmental endeavour. Unlike sovereignty, the art of government is future oriented and involves the 'right disposition of things' to lead to 'suitable ends'; ends which are always more than its own continuation (Foucault, 2007, p. 98; drawing upon La Perriere, 1598).<sup>50</sup> Since the ends of

government are always ‘distant’ in space and time, obstacles to reaching those ends will always appear as ‘possibilities’ which can be known, calculated, and governed. Borrowing Foucault’s analogy (2007, p. 97), governing a ship therefore means taking care of your sailors, your vessel and your cargo, but it also means attending to ‘possible eventualities’ like high winds, dangerous reefs, and potential storms; it means ‘taking possible events...into account’.

Put another way, Thurloe’s art of intelligence is only possible if the events, developments and processes vital to the preservation and expansion of the state are conceived as potentialities that can be foreseen and managed. This approach to intelligence is thus distinctly governmental, seeking to produce the knowledge necessary for calculations about the future. And yet given the unmistakably future-oriented concerns of mid-century *raison d’Etat* – to prevent risks to the state while seizing opportunities for growth – and ubiquitous routines of secrecy, something more is required of intelligence, something different. Indeed the art to Thurloe’s vision for intelligence lay not just in reading private letters, stealing secrets, and amassing information, but in combining, comparing, and ordering quite different forms of information in ways which revealed what was not otherwise visible. His apparatus encompassed more than just a set of information collection devices; having a ‘constant view of things’ was only one dimension to intelligence, and one which acquired its utility and significance in terms of a much broader set of procedures. To make all of this information useful, a set of processes also needed to be developed for arranging, compiling, contrasting, and synthesizing the myriad reports, narrations and letters his office received from all over Europe. Written testimonies of events in major European cities, reports on the deliberations of some distant Court, insider accounts of on-going trade negotiations, tales of recent troop movements, and so on, all had to be read and compiled, contrasted and compared, and integrated with what was already known. The ciphered and often anonymous letters passed along by spies had to be authenticated and decrypted, substantiated and corroborated, before they could be merged with other accounts. Duplicated correspondence, along with letter openers’ personal annotations, had to be scrutinised, sifted and collated in fine detail. And all of this quite different material had to be assembled and organised, evaluated and thought about in ways that made it both manageable and useful.

Much of this organisational work fell to the Secretary's many deputies, clerks and assistants (and eventually a number of Undersecretaries) who accumulated, arranged and even prioritised much of what Thurloe would eventually see. Through such procedures, a fairly continuous stream of quite variable information – in different formats and from different sources, regions, and times – could be assembled into a coherent if constantly developing body of knowledge which was constantly updated and refined, talked about and dissected, in ways that revealed things not immediately discernible from a single report or letter. Explicit evidence of some acute danger – say imminent 'troubles from within [or] invasions from abroad'<sup>51</sup> – was immediately passed on to Thurloe (and, through him, to Cromwell), yet the routinisation of systematic processes for reading, sorting, integrating and collating information enabled something more. Rather than hoping a timely and damning letter would be seized at the post office or a trusted spy would discover the seeds of uprising, the organisational dimensions of intelligence allowed more circumstantial or indirect information to be combined and juxtaposed in ways which exposed some possibility (whether disagreeable or advantageous), including its dimensions, its likelihood and its potential severity. While such processes might appear rather crude when compared to current practices, they were quite innovative for the time. Integrating quite different forms of material allowed new information to acquire its meaning and significance not only in terms of what it directly implied, but also in terms of what it revealed when it was combined with other information, and with what was already known. Reports of a surge in letters sent through the private carriers in London, increased activity in and around the residence of the French ambassador, tales from the counties of growing numbers at night time assemblies, and reports from spies in France of more frequent meetings of the 'Sealed Knot' - when taken together – indicated something particular about the prospect for general uprising, and even allowed the estimation of its likelihood, severity, and impact. Warnings from the continent of degrading relations between the northern states, reports of troop deployment along the borders, and accounts of merchants fleeing major ports, suggested not only impending war but also new opportunities for proposing trade talks with soon to be warring neighbours.

Manipulating information in such ways, the art of intelligence embodied what might be referred to as an early form of 'estimation'<sup>52</sup> - a non-probabilistic means for identifying good and bad possibilities for the state. Techniques of estimation deploy assemblages of instruments which

collectively seek to render possible (uncertain) calculations about the future. In a forthcoming article, O'Malley & Roberts characterise one such assemblage as 'cumulative dangerousness'; a form of estimation which appears in early insurantal practice, and which uses the epistemology of the list and the inspectoral gaze to accumulate more and more information to reach toward perfect knowledge. In governmental terms, such techniques supply the preconditions necessary for concrete (governmental) intervention by allowing knowledge to be developed, delineated and diagnosed in particular ways (see also, Rose & Miller, 1992; Walters, 2002). Like all forms of governmental reason, the art of governing through *raison d'Etat* 'depends upon calculations in one place about how to affect things in another' (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 238), and is therefore wholly contingent upon certain forms of calculation. Different forms of calculation in turn require specific knowledge about the future; knowledge which must be produced and assembled in 'locales' (or 'centres of calculation') where it can be worked upon, ordered and made useful for government. Thurloe's art of intelligence therefore comprised a set of 'inscription devices' – the letters, reports, and narrations his office solicited – which transformed distant events and processes into 'information' which could be transmitted to London (see, Latour, 1987; see also, Rose & Miller, 1992; Walters, 2002). But it also involved a set of procedures for integrating, comparing and juxtaposing this material in ways which made possible futures visible, thinkable and governable. In this sense, intelligence made government through *raison d'Etat* both possible and effective. Put another way, the dangers and opportunities that the state needed to manage had first to be engineered in governable form; that is, they had to be represented and depicted in a way that would allow them to be thought about, talked about and acted upon. This process of 'making up' or constituting possible risk/opportunity is inherently governmental: it does not seek to 'reproduce the visible' but rather 'renders visible' for the purposes of government (Miller, 1990, p. 317).<sup>53</sup> In a quite literal sense then, Thurloe's art of intelligence constructed possible future events as concrete, thinkable and governable 'problem-objects' (Walters, 2002, p. 91).

### **Discussion: Intelligence as Governmental Technique**

As all of this makes clear, the realities of a European field of competition and exchange between states and the requirements of mid-century *raison d'Etat* – including the need to develop knowledge in an environment saturated by routines of secrecy – supplied the conditions necessary for the invention of a novel governmental technique which would enable calculations

about the future. Producing and manipulating (often secret) information in ways which would reveal possible hazards and opportunities for the state, intelligence comprised a set of practices not for ‘mastering the state’ (Miller & Rose, 1990) but rather all that which might affect its stability and growth. This certainly included any imminent threats from within or from without. Yet these were to be visualized and represented as merely one form of (advantageous or disagreeable) possibility. In seeking the continued strength, stability and expansion of the Commonwealth, Thurloe’s art of intelligence therefore contributed to both the formation and growth of the early modern state. His efforts to establish a universal system of correspondence - as a mechanism for controlling information flows - and the development of a state administered post furnished the Commonwealth with specific institutions, apparatuses and relays which endured for some time as key dimensions of the early English state. In providing him with strategic advantage in his dealings and negotiations with his European neighbours, and in limiting the ability of his rivals to dominate trade, control the seas, and master the colonies, intelligence also functioned as a constitutive feature of European balance and equilibrium. This provides a useful corrective to the not uncommon perception that intelligence was (and is) inherently about discovering and preventing threats. If the art of intelligence is indeed linked to mid-century *raison d’Etat*, as has been shown here, then the notion that its roots can be found in military and defense requirements can also be questioned. In fact the need to develop economic and commercially relevant knowledge is not only evident in Thurloe’s design, it also significantly intensifies after the Restoration in 1660, when English priorities shifted even further toward trade, colonial expansion and financial strength.

Perhaps most crucially, this analysis reveals an entirely novel way of thinking about and studying intelligence. As a form of governmental *technique* that appears quite early on in the genealogy of state power/knowledge, intelligence ought to assume a more prominent position in Foucauldian analyses that have traditionally eschewed its form, trajectory and mutations. One of Foucault’s most important contributions of course was the idea that techniques have their own histories which can be considered independently of any particular logic or rationality. Thus,

Documenting and analysing *techniques* independently...is important because while certain logics...have certain affinities with particular techniques...the choice of logic does not absolutely determine which techniques will be used. Techniques are often borrowed

creatively in an *ad hoc* manner, and so they need to be studied separately rather than being relegated to the extra-theoretical realm of ‘implementation’. (Valverde, 2011, p. 9; emphasis in original)

In other words, there is nothing which inherently ties intelligence to *raison d’Etat*, and a useful way forward would be to continue diagnosing its many historical and contemporary variations. There has already been work carried out on ‘national intelligence’ and (increasingly) on ‘intelligence-led policing’, yet much more needs to be done. In fact our present seems almost saturated with different models of intelligence, both within and beyond the state, which seems to be playing an increasingly central role in governing fields as diverse as fire, health and disease prevention, business, borders and crime. Adding studies of intelligence to the growing body of work on contemporary anticipatory logics and techniques would therefore be of great value. A well-seasoned and today rather commonplace technique, intelligence deserves a place alongside probabilistic risk, preparedness, resilience, and precaution.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There is evidence, for example, that by the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the French had outpaced the English in both secrecy and intelligence; 'tis plain the French outdo us at these two things, secrecy and intelligence, and that we may match them in these points is the design of [my] proposal' (Defoe, 1704/1955, p. 265).

<sup>2</sup> With some notable exceptions (for example, Der Derian, 1992; Rathmell, 2002; Neocleous, 2003; Dillon, 2003), studies of intelligence have often taken a rather realist approach. The field of 'intelligence studies' is comprised of mostly policy oriented researchers and a substantial number of practitioners, journalists and 'insiders'. One of the core debates in the leading academic journals is how to properly define 'intelligence', which is considered a necessary first step in developing a universal theory of intelligence (see for example, Scott & Jackson, 2004). The three most common characterizations of intelligence build upon Sherman Kent's (1949) landmark *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*. For Kent, intelligence can be understood as either: (i) a type of 'strategic knowledge' (or what has more recently been referred to as 'evaluated information'; see also Gill, 2000, 2006; Aclin, 2010); (ii) the organizations that produce this knowledge; or, (iii) the activities and methods that these organizations employ in doing so (see also, Rathmell, 2002). Historical treatments often begin with one definition or another, and proceed by charting the evolutionary course of a particular institution or practice.

<sup>3</sup> The emphasis on governmentality, liberalism and police is evident from – and perhaps in part driven by – the publication of what are perhaps the two most influential English collections dealing with Foucault's work: *The Foucault Effect* (see Burchell et al., 1991) and *Foucault and Political Reason* (see Barry et al., 1996).

<sup>4</sup> As Foucault (2007, p. 287) put it,

What the intervention of *raison d'Etat* must arrive at is the state's integrity, its completion, consolidation, and its re-establishment if it has been compromised, or if a revolution has overturned it or momentarily suspended its strength and specific effects.

<sup>5</sup> Early surveys of Ireland by William Petty for example, were carried out in order to help Cromwell dole out land to his most loyal soldiers, while John Graunt's 'mortality rolls' were driven by fears over the plague.

<sup>6</sup> Among which were the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), widespread peasant uprisings and urban revolts in the middle of the century, and prolific scarcity and financial crises near its end.

<sup>7</sup> It was noted in the English House of Commons in 1621 for example that 'to reason of state and the preservation of state is most fit in this place' (from Neocleous, 2003, p. 43). Similarly, Chemnitz wrote during the Peace of Westphalia (1647-48) that 'Every day we hear an infinite number of people speaking of *raison d'etat*. Everyone joins in, those buried in the dust of the schools as well as those with the responsibilities of public office' (Thuau, 1966, p. 9-10, n. 2).

<sup>8</sup> For Botero, the preservation and expansion of a state depends upon the 'peace and tranquility of subjects', which must be ensured by averting 'war waged by a foreign power', forestalling 'civil war, in which the subjects fight each other', and preventing 'rebellion or revolt, in which [subjects] fight their ruler' (Botero, 1606, p. 12).

<sup>9</sup> For Bacon – as Foucault makes clear in dissecting his 1625 essay 'Of Seditions and Troubles' – the forces which can destabilize a state must be constantly attended and avoided. The most destructive of these are sedition, rebellion, and revolt – those 'internal' causes of ruin which come from within.

<sup>10</sup> While the threat of invasion by an aggressive neighbour certainly never disappeared, many argued that the most insidious causes of ruin were those that came from within.

[W]hich are the most pernicious causes [of ruin]? Without doubt, internal causes; for it rarely happens that external causes bring about the downfall of a state which has not already been corrupted by internal ones. (Botero, 1606, p. 5)

<sup>11</sup> For Botero, '[c]learly it is a greater task to preserve a state, because human affairs wax and wane as if by a law of nature' (1606, p. 5). Here,

...*raison d'Etat* is essentially...protective...what is involved is essentially identifying what is necessary and sufficient for the state to exist and maintain itself in its integrity. (Foucault, 2007, p. 258)

<sup>12</sup> In France '*les Secretaire d'Etat*', in Spain the *Secretarios de Estado y del Despacho*.

- <sup>13</sup> In the seventeenth century...the administrative duties performed through [the secretary's] office steadily increased. As the privy council declined in importance as an administrative body owing to its large numbers and the increased complexities of government...the secretaries of state...emerged in the forefront of political life as heads of the chief executive offices of the state. (Higham, 1925, p. 366)
- <sup>14</sup> It has been said that from the appointment of the first Secretary of State, England was governed 'not through peers of ancient lineage' but by a new 'gentlemanly class' of Cromwells, Sadlers, Petres, and Cecils (Dicey, 1760, p. 42; see also, Brown, 1968; Kleimola, 1987).
- <sup>15</sup> These powers were drawn from Sir Robert Beale's 'Treatise on the office of a Counsellor and Principal Secretarie to her Majestie'. Beale was Chief clerk to Queen Elizabeth's principal secretary Francis Walsingham.
- <sup>16</sup> Throughout the Restoration period, which began in 1660 after Charles II was (re)installed as King of England, there were two Secretaries of State; one for dealing with northern Europe (the Northern Department) and one for dealing with southern Europe. Both Secretaries shared responsibility for domestic and colonial affairs.
- <sup>17</sup> British Library Manuscript #47133. Egmont Papers (1576-1733), Vol. CCXIV (ff. ii+276).
- <sup>18</sup> Moreland is writing after the Restoration of the English monarchy.
- <sup>19</sup> Moreland is here referring to the beheading of Charles I in 1649.
- <sup>20</sup> This from a letter written by Isaac Basire to Sir Phillip Musgrave, 17 May, 1665. Durham University Library, Cosin Letter Books, 1(b): 132.
- <sup>21</sup> Thus did one Mr. Cockin, a preacher to a gathered Congregation, constantly for divers years together discover to Mr. Thurloe (though with all secrecy imaginable) all the proceedings and consultations of his Independent brethren, and had a salary of 500lb. per annum for his pains; and thus did Sir Richard Willis betray all the Councils and undertakings of the Royalists. (from John Wildman's 'brief discourse concerning the business of intelligence', printed in Firth, 1898).
- <sup>22</sup> This is taken from 'A brief discourse concerning the business of intelligence and how it may be managed to the best advantage', authored sometime during the Restoration, likely by John Wildman (printed in, Firth, 1898).
- <sup>23</sup> From John Wildman's 'brief discourse concerning the business of intelligence' (printed in Firth, 1898).
- <sup>24</sup> From Thomas Scot's account of his actions as an intelligencer during the Commonwealth (printed in Firth, 1897).
- <sup>25</sup> From the 1663 lease of the office to Daniel O'Neil.
- <sup>26</sup> From John Wildman's 'brief discourse concerning the business of intelligence' (printed in Firth, 1898). See also the 'confession' of Thomas Scot (printed in Firth, 1897) and Hobman (1961, p. 19).
- <sup>27</sup> From John Wildman's 'brief discourse concerning the business of intelligence' (printed in Firth, 1898). See also the 'confession' of Thomas Scot (printed in Firth, 1897).
- <sup>28</sup> After learning of the practice, a French official advised his Court in Paris to consider carefully future correspondence, as the English had developed,  
 ...tricks to open letters more skillfully than anywhere in the world. Some even go the length of fancying that it is the thing to do, and that it is not possible to be a great statesmen without tampering with packets. (from documents printed in Jusserand, 1892, p. 50)
- <sup>29</sup> From a document found in the Secretaries office, now in the British Library (see also Fraser, 1956, p. 59).
- <sup>30</sup> Taken from a letter from Secretary Coventry to Lord Arlington, September 18, 1677.
- <sup>31</sup> From John Wildman's 'brief discourse concerning the business of intelligence' (printed in Firth, 1898).
- <sup>32</sup> From Moreland's Discourse; British Library Manuscript #47133. Egmont Papers (1576-1733), Vol. CCXIV (ff. ii+276).
- <sup>33</sup> To protect their identities,  
 The manner how he corresponded with spyes either beyond sea, or from the countries here in England was thus: the said Moreland gave them some false adresse whereby to direct all their letters...and at the same time sent the same adresse to Mr Dorislaus at the post office to put it down upon his list, that so when he opened the maile, and found such an adresse, he might know whether to send them.
- <sup>34</sup> From Thomas Scot's account of his actions as an intelligencer during the Commonwealth (from Wildman's Discourse, printed in Firth, 1897).
- <sup>35</sup> Largely by virtue of their higher social standing. A collection of the sorts of letters written by intelligencers has been compiled by Thomas Birch, who found them to be a more interesting account of history than official state papers (see Birch, 1849).
- <sup>36</sup> Translated from the anonymous 1736 *Discours historique a Monseigneur le Dauphin sur le Gouvernement interieur du Royaume*; see Brian (1994, p. 155).

<sup>37</sup> These instruments included a new ‘diplomatic’ form of warfare, a system of diplomacy which sought to preserve the ‘greatest possible stability’, the creation of permanent standing armies, and an information apparatus (see Foucault, 2007, p. 301-306).

<sup>38</sup> This fourth dimension of the military-diplomatic apparatus is mentioned only in the original manuscript for 22 March, and is for some reason not taken up in the lecture (see Foucault, 2007, p. 306 and footnote).

<sup>39</sup> As John Wildman noted in his discourse on intelligence:

Another intrigue in the businesse of Intelligence is this: All Ambassadors and publique Ministers, are for the most part but great spies, and one of the most acceptable services they can doe their masters, is to gaine for mony some of the Ministers, Councillors, Secretaries, or other Officers of that Kingdome or state where they reside. And therefore there ought to bee a strickt watch upon them, and their letters constantly opened, and it were not difficult to place in their houses by some other hand at a distance some trusty person, who might be entertained as their domestique servants, and by that means discover who come into them at back doores in the night and the like.

<sup>40</sup> The struggle between private printers and the English Secretaries of State has been dealt with at length by Levy (1985) and Stephens (2007).

<sup>41</sup> As Thomas Scot confessed after the Restoration:

I had much to doe and much of my time was spent ... in suppressing the swarming number of pamphleteers, which sooner or later I always got into my power (printed in Firth, 1897, p. 121)

<sup>42</sup> After the English Revolution of 1688, state control over printing was more difficult to justify and to sustain, as 1689-1690 saw a number of private pamphleteers and publicly available gazettes spring up in and around London. The onslaught of print after the Revolution was facilitated by both the Penny Post (originally established in London in 1680, and long considered a threat to Secretarial control over printed matter) and the opening of ‘coffee-houses’ in which patrons gathered to talk, and in which professional intelligencers plied their trade (Fraser, 1956). With the accession of William and Mary in 1688, the monopoly on print that the Secretaries had enjoyed disintegrated as private licenses were handed out and the ‘private press’ began to emerge (Williams, 1908).

<sup>43</sup> Prohibitions date back at least the early 1500’s, and some even proscribed ‘spoken news’. In 1538 King Henry VIII decreed that all printed matter had to be approved by the Privy Council, and in 1557, Queen Mary granted a Royal Charter to the Company of Stationers which restricted the right of owning a press. As Clarke (2004, p. 13) notes,

To publish news was seen as an interference with the affairs of state which would expose the workings of government to the giddy multitude and undermine the relationship between governors and governed. Even ‘spoken news’ [...] was prohibited by Edward VI’s proclamations of 1547 and 1549.

The only form of printed information available for much of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the ‘relation’, a narrative of a single event typically authored by the sovereign, boasting of military victory or describing an item of ‘wonderful and strange newes’ (Clarke, 2004, p. 13).

<sup>44</sup> See note 43.

<sup>45</sup> Especially France, Spain and the Dutch; see Firth (1897b).

<sup>46</sup> Drawn from the instructions to Sir William Trumbull upon leaving for France; see, Clark (1938, p. 104)

<sup>47</sup> From Tomas Scot’s confession; printed in Firth (1897, p. 122)

<sup>48</sup> Both those at home and abroad, like the ‘Sealed Knot’, a group of exiled nobles in France who sought to coordinate royalist uprisings in England (Aubrey, 1990, p. 95-96).

<sup>49</sup> From Wildman’s ‘brief discourse concerning the business of intelligence’ (see, Firth, 1898, p. 532).

<sup>50</sup> Sovereignty also has an ‘end’, but one which is characterised in terms of the ‘common good’ - a condition in which subjects obey the law and respect the established order. Thus ‘the end of sovereignty is circular; it refers back to the exercise of sovereignty’ (Foucault, 2007, p. 98).

<sup>51</sup> From Thomas Scot’s account of his actions as an intelligencer during the Commonwealth (printed in Firth, 1897, p. 125).

<sup>52</sup> I am grateful to Pat O’Malley for pointing this out.

<sup>53</sup> Statistics, for example, is knowledge of the state, but it is also a means of *constituting* the state as a visible, measurable and manipulable entity (see for example, Hacking, 1990). That is, by measuring and ascribing values and categories to specific aspects of the state, ‘the state’ is literally constructed in concrete form. Similarly, accounting is more than just a technical mechanism for recording economic transactions; as Peter Miller (1990) has shown, by attributing financial values to specific social practices, accounting procedures inscribe certain processes with a concrete visibility, calculability, and ‘operational utility’.

<sup>54</sup> See for example, O’Malley (2004), Lakoff (2006), Lentzos & Rose (2009), O’Malley (2010).