

Call for Papers

Twenty years After the Butler Review: Have we learned anything?



Oxford Intelligence Group Conference June 5-6, 2025

The Oxford Intelligence Group was founded at Nuffield College in 2004 to facilitate a forum for a briefing and discussion of the *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction*, HC898 14 July 2004 by Lord Robin Butler (aka, the Butler Review). The review concluded that key intelligence used to justify the war with Iraq was unreliable, yet it was still used in the decision-making process. Twenty years later, we celebrate the continuing work of the OIG by revisiting the Butler Review and tracking the successes and failures of the intelligence community since that time. But are the lessons identified by Lord Butler still relevant today? Or were they ever learned? Are the ambiguities and uncertainties of intelligence forecasting adequately understood? As a nation's national security depends on closer collaboration between the intelligence community and commercial corporations, what is the role of academic intelligence studies? What is the connection between strong citizen forces and the defence of liberal democracies? Can there be a 'theory of everything' that synthesizes the past's disparate approaches?

The Oxford Intelligence Conference at Nuffield College will address these questions by bringing together, in the tradition of the OIG, intelligence practitioners and scholars, military thinkers, and policymakers over two days to hear papers and discuss the issues facing National Security. Aware of the history but also to inform fresh thinking about the current threat landscape. The conference will result in a special issue for the *Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*.

Themes may include but are not limited to the following suggestions:

- Retrospective analysis of the Butler Report
- Legislative developments, oversight, and organisation of national security
- Responses to successes – and failures in intelligence forecasting
- Did the release of classified material by Edward Snowden make a difference?
- The role of public opinion and trust in national security policy
- Changing attitudes to OSINT or the role of technology in intelligence analysis
- The future of the Five Eyes Intelligence Alliance versus bilateral intelligence sharing
- Rule-based international order – whose rules are they and are they still relevant to security

The conference will be held June 5-6, 2025, at Nuffield College, Oxford University.

Proposals should include title and abstract (approximately 150-200 words) and a short bio of the presenter(s). The deadline is April 1, 2025.

Expressions of interest, questions, and submission of proposals:

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