When Intelligence Made a Difference

Part I

With this edition of Intelligencer, AFIO begins a new historical project of “When Intelligence Made a Difference.” Over the millennia intelligence has often played a decisive role in world events. We know this from the writings of Sun Tzu in China and Kautilya (Chanakya) in India.1

This is a crowd sourced effort – that is, AFIO wants to enlist writers who are interested in contributing to a volume of short articles that will be useful to instructors, students, historians, and other interested readers. AFIO plans to publish accepted articles initially in Intelligencer, and then post them in pdf format on the AFIO website for general consumption. The full description of the effort is in the sidebar.

In Part I we have three articles related to the American Revolution. Two are contributed by AFIO’s President Emeritus Gene Potratz, on George Washington and the French plot to take over the American Revolution. Peter Oleson condensed a section of Ken Daigler’s book, Spies, Patriots, and Traitors: American Intelligence in the Revolutionary War, which addresses Washington’s use of intelligence to plan the successful attacks on Trenton and Princeton in December 1776 and January 1777. And in the fourth article, Swedish researcher Michael Fredholm describes how SIGINT convinced Sweden’s Prime Minister to align his country with the West after the Soviet takeover of Poland and Eastern Europe.

Readers are invited to email comments on any of these articles or to propose other topics to peter.oleson@afio.com.