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TRUTH TO POWER

A History of the U.S. National Intelligence Council

BY ROBERT HUTCHINGS AND GREGORY F. TREVERTON

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*A History of the
U.S. National Intelligence Council*



Robert Hutchings
& Gregory F. Treverton

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Truth to Power, the first-ever history of the U.S. National Intelligence Council (NIC), is told through the reflections of its eight Chairs in the period from the end of the Cold War until 2017. Co-editors Robert Hutchings and Gregory Treverton add a substantial introduction placing the NIC in its historical context going all the way back to the Board of National Estimates in the 1940s, as well as a concluding chapter that highlights key themes and judgments.

This historic mission of this remarkable but little-known organization, now forty years old, is strategic intelligence assessment in service of senior American foreign policymakers. Its signature inside products, National Intelligence Estimates, are now accompanied by the NIC's every-four-years Global Trends. Unclassified, Global Trends has become a noted NIC brand, its release awaited by officials, academics and private sector managers around the world.

Truth to Power tracks the NIC's role in providing strategic analysis on every major foreign policy issue confronting the United States during this consequential period. Chapters provide insider insights on the Balkan wars of the 1990s, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, the nuclear weapons programs in Iran and North Korea, upheaval in the Middle East including the rise and fall of the Islamic State, the rise of China, and the Russia's turn toward aggression under Vladimir Putin. The book also assesses the NIC's newly expanded role in direct support to meetings of the National Security Council as well as its longstanding role in producing longer-range strategic intelligence.

- Presents the first history of the National Intelligence Council.
- Describes the travails and successes of strategy in the post-Cold War era.
- Reflects on the complex relationship between intelligence and policy – and the occasional clashes with policy makers as the NIC told “truth to power.”
- Draws lessons from the long history of the U.S. experience with strategic intelligence analysis
- Argues that the need for strategic analysis is more important than ever in this era of great flux and uncertainty

Robert Hutchings is Professor of Public Affairs at and former Dean of the LBJ School at the University of Texas-Austin. He served as Chairman of the National Intelligence Council from 2003 to 2005.

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