Foreword

RHODRI JEFFREYS-JONES

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Two surprise attacks, Germany's on Russia in June 1941 and Japan's at Pearl Harbor just over five months later, transformed an essentially European war into a worldwide conflict. It turned out that the aggressors had overstretched themselves, and the attacks eventually contributed to the defeat of the Axis powers. In 1941, however, they appeared to be disasters for the defending nations. Critics then and since have asked how the Soviet Union and the United States could have been caught off guard, given the known aggressive proclivities of their attackers. According to one interpretation, Stalin and Roosevelt were ill-prepared because they were ill-informed. For this reason, the intelligence dimensions of the two attacks have prompted discussion, controversy, and, all too often, speculation of a sensational character.

Over the last two decades, a dedicated group of historians has introduced more scholarly standards to the study of intelligence. One of the initiators of this volume, David Dilks, encouraged this development in 1984, when he co-edited, with Christopher Andrew, *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century*, a book that gave the new discourse a widely-used catch-phrase. Other historians, notably Donald Cameron Watt, pushed forward the frontiers of intelligence history, while stressing the axiom that 'the missing dimension' should be studied in a wide context. With the publication of *Barbarossa*, its editors signal their implicit agreement with the proposition that such episodes demand a broad contextual approach. In the following pages, while Harry Hinsley and Dmitri Volkogonev do focus on its intelligence dimension, the assault on Russia is placed in a wide military and strategic framework.

The guiding hand of the great historian of the Red Army, co-editor John Erickson, is evident in this book's emphasis on multi-lingual primary

evidence. This is important, for the opening of the Soviet archives is potentially perilous, with many pitfalls awaiting the credulous and/or linguistically handicapped historian. In *Barbarossa*, we are protected from such pitfalls not only by the erudition of John Erickson and Ljubica Erickson, but also by two further factors – the distinction and seniority of most of the contributors, and their diversity of perspective and opinion.

Yet, while the viewpoint in this book is not monolithic, it is still in some respects loosely unified by an approach that was also evident in two earlier volumes in ‘Perspectives in Intelligence History’, the series in which *Barbarossa* appears. Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones and Andrew Lownie, eds, *North American Spies* (1992) and Sallie Pisani, *The CIA and the Marshall Plan* (1992) both challenged prevailing interpretations of *American* history. The reader will find in *Barbarossa* a refreshingly revisionist approach to contemporary *European* history.