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## An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence Community

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OLIVER LEWIS, MAY 25 2008

*"Now the reason the enlightened prince and the wise general conquer the enemy... is foreknowledge"* [1] wrote Sun Tzu. The Hebrews reconnoitered the land of Canaan, Caesar's legions scouted barbarian foes, the Duke of Wellington employed officers to gather intelligence and break enemy ciphers. Intelligence gathering is one of the world's oldest professions and one the British have practiced intermittently since the Elizabethan secret service of Sir Francis Walsingham [2]. The achievements and idiosyncrasies of secret agents has spawned vast literature; from Walsingham and William Wickham, to Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart and James Bond, fact and fiction weave an intricate tapestry of intelligence individuals and their impact on the world.

Intelligence is the finished product [3] of collection, processing, evaluation and analysis of information in response to the stated requirements of policy-makers [4], and can also include the subsequent use made of that information [5]. However, intelligence is chiefly used to refer to information obtained by clandestine means through the penetration of secrecy maintained by a government or organisation but can also refer to publicly-available information that is put through the intelligence cycle [6]. Within government intelligence has a restricted meaning associated with international relations, defence and national security and conducted by specialised institutions [7]. The many complicated definitions confuse precisely what intelligence is, and with it, the responsibilities of an intelligence agency [8].

The British intelligence community has seen such diverse roles as counter-espionage and counter-terrorist, anti-crime, surveillance and subversion. The organisations of the community are: the domestic Security Service (MI5); the foreign espionage agency, the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS); the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) providing signals intelligence (SIGINT) and information assurance; and the military intelligence arm, the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS). The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) is a cross-department board responsible for oversight, requirement and priority tasking of the British intelligence community, providing high-level intelligence to senior members of government and passing assessments to the Prime Minister.

Leadership within the intelligence community carries with it tremendous responsibilities that can influence the decisions carried out by government. As the gate-keepers of the information provided to politicians, the intelligence community can potentially direct government policy without the public, or areas of government, from knowing the intelligence or the occurrence of its influence. In some scenarios the intelligence provided by an agency could be the only information on which a decision is made. Consequently, the impact of an individual leader – responsible for the

# **An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence**

Written by Oliver Lewis

management of an agency and providing assessments to senior politicians – can play a significant role in the formation and execution of policy. The controversy surrounding the 2003 Iraq War highlighted the power that intelligence can exercise over important policy, which led to the Butler report recommending that the JIC Chairman should be “*someone with experience of dealing with Ministers... who is demonstrably beyond influence*”[9]. Thus, in documenting criteria for one intelligence leader, Lord Butler recognised the importance of having certain characteristics in intelligence leadership. Individuals, such as John Scarlett and Robert Gates, have emerged from a career in intelligence to be public figures featured in commercial media and exert high degrees of informational social influence on public understanding of intelligence operations and threats to security. Yet, there have been no scholarly studies of the personality characteristics of intelligence leaders; no psychobiographies, distance psychological assessments, theories of best-fit personality typologies, nor a recognition of the dangers of having a psychologically ill-suited person directing the efforts of an intelligence institution.

Therefore, this paper hopes to begin a foundation upon which future research into intelligence officials can be conducted by an assessment and comparison of the personality characteristics of three British intelligence leaders.

The theoretical framework of ‘political personality’ will be outlined in Chapter One. It documents trait theories, Goldberg’s five-dimension personality model and the difficulties of trait-based assessment. It progresses to an explanation of the psychological classification of different types of people, the MBTI and criticisms of the theory.

The methodology is critically examined in Chapter Two; elucidating on the application of the five-dimensional trait model and how it will be used to place the leaders into one of the sixteen MBTI personality types, before outlining the limitations and the prospect for future research.

The successive chapters – Three, Four and Five – employ the methodology and examine Nicholas Elliott, Sir Kenneth Strong and Dame Stella Rimington. Chapter Six discusses common and divergent personality traits and analyses their collective position in the typology to make an assessment of whether further research could establish a successful personality type among British intelligence leaders.

## **CHAPTER I: Personality Psychology**

Leadership studies is as a strong cross-discipline field of international relations, drawing on theoretical frameworks, qualitative studies and quantitative fieldwork from the social and applied sciences; social, developmental and clinical psychology, anthropology, neurology and political science. Personality and its impact on leadership behaviour and performance has become a substantial field. Psychological analysis of leaders is a major area of research, contrary to Freud’s aversion to employing psychoanalytical tools on leaders; concern for an infringement of individual privacy and a likelihood to subjective partisan assessment[10]. The study of personality and politics is the oldest undertaking of political psychologists; consequently significant scholarly investigations have been undertaken into how personality impacts upon political leadership.

Personality is a central psychological factor that constantly, nonconsciously influences behaviour and remains predominantly stable over time. Personality affects all other aspects of the cognitive process and has a dynamic relationship with life experiences. An individual’s personality is unique because the major components (traits) come together in varying strengths and combinations that cannot be replicated; many individuals may exhibit common traits without the necessity of an identical personality[11]. Ewan defines personality as “*stable aspects of a person’s*

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

*behaviour that account for consistent patterns of behaviour*”[12] which DiRenzo supports, “*acquired, relatively enduring, yet dynamic, unique, system of predispositions [to] behaviour*”[13]. Psychology understands ‘personality’ in two ways; personality as “*summaries of observed individual differences in behaviours*”, and as “*individual differences in the processes [generating] these behaviours*”[14]. The latter is employed by trait theorists, as the processes that generate behaviours are said to be traits.

“*Scarcely anyone has ever thought of questioning the existence of traits as the fundamental dispositions of personality*”[15] asserts Allport, proposing trait theory as an alternative to Freud’s contention that personality was governed by the unconscious. Personality traits are descriptive observations used to characterise individuals; the “*public, observable element of personality*”[16] couched in everyday language. Summarising the major trait theorists, Cottam states that traits produce predispositions to behave “*in particular patterns toward people, events, and situations*”[17] while Krech defines a trait as “*an enduring characteristic of the individual... manifested in a consistent way of behaving in a wide variety of situations*”[18], supporting Allport’s contention that traits are central in determining people’s response to stimuli. However, these definitions are phenotypical; describing the characteristics of a trait to enable recognition when presented with one[19]. Trait theories attempt to establish a deeper understanding than the initial definition.

Trait theories developed under Allport, who outlines the metaphysical dilemma of whether traits are veridical dispositions –a constant force that influences behaviour – or “*forms of perception for an observer to use*”[20] and not discrete characteristics existing in the individual. Richards echoes Allport, citing that “*the underlying conceptual difficulties persist... How far are they an artefact of the procedures used to ‘discover’ them? How far are they permeated by culturally contingent evaluative connotations?*”[21]. A similar concern is the labelling of traits. Allport observed approximately 18,000 terms in the English language designating distinctive forms of behaviour and suggests that a large body of descriptive terms indicates that the psychologist must guard against an ‘over-simplified’[22]; characteristics must be named, but cautiously. Cattell is more helpful, recognising that the problem lies in showing that multiple ‘indicators’ of behaviour are actually a component of a larger functional unity[23], a trait. While Allport ambiguously warns against this practice, Cattell remarks how clustering behaviour as traits provides an economy of description and by refining traits to a more manageable number, “*we shall be dealing with the real structural elements in the personality*”[24]. Cattell eliminated the superfluous adjectives and reached twelve primary factors to describe traits[25]. However, Epstein suggests that purely descriptive approaches provide a poor basis for understanding complex processes; a description of surface traits is useful but does not “*elucidate cause-and-effect relations*”[26]. Traits can develop from a fusion of habits that have adaptive significance to the individual, but crucially, traits more often force the formation of new habits, “*congenial and serviceable to the trait*”[27]: The trait is formed through socialisation experiences and quickly transcends its foci of origin to become a “*deep and characteristic quality of [the] individual’s personality*”[28]. There are two principal applications of traits in directing behaviour: It is stimulation that activates traits from potentiality (present but not exhibiting) to activity (influencing behaviour)[29]. Secondly, traits initiate behaviour because the situation gives the *opportunity* for behaviour to be exhibited; the individual placed themselves into a situation where they could exercise the trait. It is personality traits, according to Slone, that are the “*major equipment in dealing with reality*” [30] enacted through the components that drive behaviour; object appraisal, social adjustment (identity reference) and externalisation.

Supported by many subsequent studies, Allport proclaims that traits will never exclusively determine behaviour because situational factors, and the unique nature of the stimuli at one precise moment, provoke an adaptive response that is unlikely to manifest itself in the same way again[31]. Slone agrees that behaviour determined by

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

environment is a widely-held conviction[32]. Greenstein raised similar questions; calling for distinction between action dispensability and actor dispensability and that it is not whether the leader matters, but under which circumstances[33]. Lewin elaborates the situation factors to include 'inner determinants' such as memory, state of the organism, emotional state, knowledge and traits[34]. Nevertheless, a trait can be scientifically observed whenever stimuli and responses are equivalent and clinically observed through a sustained study of an individual. The latter Allport criticises as subjective diagnosis without objective verification but that they have their place in studies of personality[35] and may achieve a level of accuracy in trait identification. Hamaker et al. argue that because of the longitudinal stability of traits and the prediction of future behaviour, some focus on a combination of trait and 'state', "*in which state [reflects] a person's adaptation to a particular situation*"[36]. The trait-state model is useful because it presents a unified behavioural theory integrating characteristic models with situational factors, but lacks the clarity and economy of trait-based theories.

The five-factor model (FFM) developed as a taxonomy of the basic units of personality, the 'global' traits within which lesser characteristics may be clustered. The FFM, known as the 'Big Five' personality dimensions include neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness (OCEAN) and are arranged on a continuum where an individual can exhibit high or low levels of each. Within the five dimensions can be numerous sub-dimensions (facet traits), approximately thirty facet scales adding depth to the trait dimensions. The FFM has a long history[37] in psychology and has been adopted to the extent that it is the standard measurement for personality assessment. Nevertheless, "*it would be a mistake to expect absolute uniformity among researchers*"[38] who employ trait theory. Despite its continued use in personality research to the present day, limitations have provoked fierce debate. Broadly, trait theory can pose problems of validity, reliability and associational rather than causal relationships.

Most definitions of trait theory propose that traits remain stable over the lifespan, subtle changes to which they are subjected never amount to an alteration of the basic affect the trait has on behaviour. Social cognitive theorists support the assumption that personality factors have longitudinal stability[39] but assuming personality remains static throughout adult life-experiences overlooks the peripheral personality changes that must, logically, occur. Pervin asserts that there is as much evidence of "*change as there is of personality stability*"[40], that research provides evidence of stability over shorter periods and that there are wide individual differences in trait stability. Watson argues that "*personality traits are not static, nondevelopmental constructs; they show meaningful change over time*"[41] and that it is logical to assume that increasing change will occur as the time-lapse between experiments lengthens. However, Watson noted that recent experiments indicated that "*basic personality traits... were more stable than indicators of 'personal opinion' [which] led us to predict that scales assessing the Big Five should be more stable*"[42]. Moreover, Pervin criticises trait theory for excluding evidence that suggests minor changes can induce dramatic change in the overall personality system[43]. Funder does not believe this to be problematic, arguing that even taking into account personality change, empirical evidence points to the "*inescapable finding remains that personality assessments... often can predict... behaviour years later*"[44]. A similar methodological problem is that because most FFM studies utilise self-reporting questionnaires there is a possibility that the individual will give answers which follow their self-concept, which could be considerably different from their actual personality traits[45]; the individual's conception of self can persist despite the individual having undergone considerable personality change, therefore trait stability is unlikely to exist throughout this individual's life-span. Further condemnation is attached to trait theories for their seizure of evidence of personality stability as legitimisation of an overall trait-centric understanding of the personality.

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

Allport and Odbert proposed the lexical hypothesis along theoretical similarities to Galton, that is:

*Individual differences most salient and socially relevant in people's lives will become encoded into their language; the more important such a difference, the more likely is it to become expressed as a single word.*[46]

Goldberg defines the lexical hypothesis in similar terms[47]; the FFM is an extension of this, describing how people relate to one another[48]. The lexical hypothesis stimulates questions of whether the FFM may be employed cross-culturally; whether non-Western languages have a common sequence of linguistic descriptors of features of personality. Juno echoes this, stating that the *a posteriori* basis of the FFM is “*derived from colloquial usage of language [therefore] different languages should give rise to other models*”[49]. Pervin documents a series of recent studies highlighting the lack of universality of the FFM, indicating that there is evidence that traits have different significance in different cultures and that the Western conception of individual personality-centric psychology is less important in group-orientated cultures[50]. McCrae and Allic disagree, asserting that recent cross-cultural studies indicate that “*the basic features of [FFM] generalise well*”[51] and that minor variations in different cultures are interesting rather than controversial. Rolland examined a series of cross-cultural studies which indicate the existence of trait dimensions in other cultures, remarking that by using different cultural approaches it is possible *to come up with the same five dimensions as those interpreted as being the [FFM]*”[52]. Saucier and Goldberg assert that the lexical approach does not outline, nor restrict, the methods of explanation[53]. The lexical approach could be advantageous because it is less likely to encourage the fundamental attribution error. Consequently, the individual and cultural context under which traits can be examined is not necessarily hindering of a unitary trait theory.

Individual differences are a cornerstone of personality in trait theories; traits are independent dimensions which can be measured empirically. Type theory attempts a holistic approach to personality, enabling a broader understanding of an individual's overall behaviour[54]. “*A man can be said to have a trait; but he cannot be said to have a type. Rather he fits a type*”[55], suggesting the holistic benefits of typologies, but warning that while traits “*are considered wholly within the compass of the individual... type includes more than is in the individual*”[56]. Barber's groundbreaking study on United States' presidents proposed a typology of presidential character that categorised all American presidents into four types, along an axis of ‘*Personal Satisfaction with Presidential Duties*’ and ‘*Energy put into the job*’[57]. Barber's typology remains the foundation of leadership studies and is frequently employed in political discourse. Psychologists contest that Barber's typology is limited – it does not provide the necessary depth to account for individual differences between presidents – and is highly subjective because allocation is susceptible to the researcher's bias. Type, Bayne argues, is defined as preferences for behaviour that an individual has developed more so than others, but that opposite behaviour may still result through different stimuli[58]. Moreover, type theories are not intended to fit someone perfectly but to offer broad categories within which individuals can be organised to varying degrees[59]. Types are not specific and are broad enough to include individual differences within generalised typologies. Type theory builds upon Jung's psychoanalysis that classified individual differences in behaviour as ‘*attitude types*’ of mental opposites[60].

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a typology that proposes sixteen distinctive types through a combination of characteristic cognitive predispositions (similar to Jung's mental opposites); Sensing and intuition, thinking and feeling, extraversion and introversion, and judging and perceiving. Each individual is assessed via a questionnaire to determine which characteristic in each dichotomy they exhibit most, then the results determine which types are the

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

best fit. Taking Barber's typology as a foundation, the MBTI ensures greater objective detachment and depth. However, very few attempts have been made to transpose the typology onto leadership of public organisations, especially the leaders of intelligence agencies; instead the MBTI has focused on commercial application, but is the most widely used instrument for assessing normal personality functioning[61]. The Jungian theory developed by Myers is a method for describing consistent differences in behaviour people because all categories of the dichotomy are employed by everyone, and that "*individuals have an innate disposition toward one category of each*"[62]. Consequently, the MBTI sorts individuals into one of sixteen types that best fit these predispositions. Personality classification is based upon predispositions to four modes of functioning (in perception, judgement, attitude to energy, and attitude to the outside world) and the type is a dynamic relationship between the functions, the sum of which is greater than its constituent parts.

Quenk believes that the MBTI is reliable and consistent but documents that the longitudinal nature of type is subject to identical concerns as trait-based experiments; the longer the time-span between experiments, the greater type change an individual undergoes (but usually not sufficient to warrant reclassification)[63]. Thus, one can argue that the MBTI is not an accurate portrayal of the complexity of personality, that the dynamic relationship between the modes of function is underemphasised; the modes of functioning become associated as independent traits rather than an interdependent relationship that could not function without all components. Nonetheless, Quenk argues that the validity of MBTI's application of Jungian type theory is firmly established[64].

Consequently, it is possible to observe commonalities in the FFM and the MBTI; both understand personality psychology as a dynamic relationship between their constituent units (traits, and processes of function). Further, the constituent units, are empirically measured to allow analysis of results, predict behaviour and extrapolate averages that allow an categorisation into one of a series of personalities. Moreover, constituent units are similar; with the exception of neuroticism, each of the units can easily be related. Therefore, in distance assessment one can employ the FFM to identify traits that can be applied to the MBTI modes of functioning and result in a relatively accurate portrayal of the individual's personality type.

## CHAPTER II: Methodology

The methodology in this paper uses qualitative interpretative analysis of autobiographies to: (1) identify a series of lesser characteristics that can give an estimation of the individual's strength of five global traits; (2) use trait positioning to classify individuals into preference dichotomies; (3) interpret which of the personality types each individual best fits, based on their preference dichotomies; (4) discuss the common (or disparate) traits and types found among the leaders; and (5) finally, examine the possibility of a successful personality type for the intelligence leader.

### *Trait Assessment*

Traits, the theory and the problems in their identification, measurement and positioning in personality have been addressed. This chapter is concerned with the characteristics of global traits and how the traits will be identified within the three autobiographies. The five dimensions of the FFM are (1) neuroticism, (2) extraversion, (3) agreeableness, (4) openness to experience and (5) conscientiousness.

### *Neuroticism*

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

Allport, critical of the inclusion of neuroticism as a separate trait, defined it as *failure to express imagination effectively on social reality* [65]. Individuals high in neuroticism are vulnerable to negative stimuli, which can reify predisposed problematic behaviour. Eysenck documented neuroticism as indecisiveness, causeless depression, regrets over decisions in crisis, nervousness, loneliness, fluctuation of mood, and an inability to focus on tasks [66]. Cottam defines a person high in neuroticism as anxious with maladaptive coping abilities [67]. Neuroticism is a personality disorder, according to McCrae, characterised by self-consciousness, vulnerability, hostility, and impulsiveness [68]. Moreover, neuroticism prompts an individual to seek reassurance, express self-defensive or victimisation statements and expect the worse more regularly than someone who is emotionally stable; leading them to perceive fewer personal accomplishments. Zellars et al. identify an individual who is low in neuroticism as *calm, even-tempered, relaxed or unflappable [who] remain composed during pressure situations* [69]

## Extraversion

Social relationships are measured in the extraversion dimension; an individual high in extraversion will be outgoing, energetic, assertive and actively seek social environments. Unlike neuroticism, high levels of extraversion predispose individuals to positive affects. Extraverts are optimistic and are likely to engage in activities to overcome stressful conditions [70]. Individuals low in extraversion have been described as quiet, reserved, shy and withdrawn. Introverts are said to be retiring, *fond of books rather than people, is serious, keeps feelings under control* [71]. Further, by participating in a higher frequency of social relationships extraverts are likely to perceive individuality and not depersonalise people.

## Agreeableness

An individual high in agreeableness is trusting, positive, cooperative, and aware of feelings; the agreeableness dimension is concerned with interpersonal characteristics. Agreeable characteristics include straight-forwardness, altruism, compliance and modesty [72]. Agreeable individuals are charming, and do not *exhibit much hostility or express any hostility directly* [73]. Low levels give rise to brash, insensitive and independent behaviour and could be described as hostile and self-interested.

## Openness to Experience

Broader than simply an openness to 'experience', openness refers to proactivity and tolerance. Cottam identifies a person high in openness as *curious, creative and has many interests* [74] while low individuals are conventional and unimaginative. Similarly, those high in openness seek out broader and deeper understanding of experiences which are felt more acutely (either positive or negative). Such individuals are highly aware of their surroundings and have positive attitudes to learning and new experiences. Due in part to an increased tendency toward intellectuality and originality, high openness individuals are likely *to perceive greater personal accomplishments* [75].

## Conscientiousness

Attitude to work, reliability and organisational ability fall under the conscientiousness dimension. High level individuals are *responsible, dependable, and goal-orientated* [76] and desire achievement. Characteristics associated are competence, dutifulness, self-discipline and deliberation [77]. The active coping mechanisms of high-conscientiousness increase the ability to handle crises effectively and efficiently [78]. Similarly, individuals perceive

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

the self as the locus of control, exhibiting high efficacy and are prone to greater accomplishments.

An analysis of the autobiographies will seek to identify the use of trait adjectives in descriptions of self, situation and environment. Interpretive analysis will be conducted for global trait dimensions on each of the intelligence leaders, using the material in their autobiographies to identify examples and then argue in favour of a high or low trait levels.

## *Type Assessment*

The MBTI was selected as the typology for classifying the leaders into types because of its close similarity to the FFM. Similar to how traits predispose individuals to behaviour, the MBTI assumes that personality can be observed by an individual's preferences for certain environments, tasks, and cognitive patterns. The dichotomy of the MBTI is outlined in figure 2.1.

### **Introversion**

vs.

### **Extroversion**

Introspective, reserved, seeking solitude

Expressiveness and gregariousness

### **Sensing**

vs.

### **Intuition**

Favouring literal, empirical perception

Favouring abstract, figurative perception

### **Thinking**



# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

vs.

**Feeling**

Favouring objective, detached, logical decision-making

Favouring subjective, value- or emotion-based decision-making

**Judging**

vs.

**Perceiving**

Seeking resolution and order

Curious, spontaneous, tolerant of disorder

FIGURE 2.1: MBTI personality dichotomies.

The four dichotomies give rise to sixteen personality types; into these types the intelligence leaders will be placed based on best fit of their identified traits to the type description. The sixteen personality types and a description of the 'average' individual are replicated in figure 2.2.

The placement of the leaders into the MBTI personality types will allow the identification of a common personality type, a common cluster of characteristics across similar types or a discussion on the lack of similarity among the personality types of the leaders.

Introverts (I)

Sensing Types (S)

Intuitive Types (N)

**ISTJ**

**ISFJ**

**INFJ**

# **An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence**

Written by Oliver Lewis

## **INTJ**

Serious, quiet, earn success by concentration and thoroughness. Practical, orderly, matter-of-fact, logical, realistic and dependable. Take responsibility.

Quiet, friendly, responsible and conscientious. Work devotedly to meet their obligations. Thorough, painstaking, accurate. Loyal, considerate, perceptive, concerned with how other people feel.

Succeed by perseverance, originality and desire to do whatever is needed or wanted. Put their best efforts into their work. Quietly forceful, conscientious, concerned for others.

Usually have original minds and great drive for their own ideas and purposes. In fields that appeal to them, they have a fine power to organise a job and carry it through with or without help. Sceptical, critical, independent, determined, sometimes stubborn.

## **ISTP**

## **ISFP**

## **INFP**

## **INTP**

Cool onlookers – quiet, reserved, observing and analysing life with detached curiosity and unexpected flashes of original humour. Organising factors using logical principles.

Retiring, quiet, friendly, sensitive, kind, modest about their abilities. Shun disagreements. Often relaxed about getting things done, because they enjoy the present moment and do not want to spoil it by undue haste or exertion.

Full of enthusiasm and loyalties. Care about learning, ideas, language and independent projects of their own. Little concerned with possessions or physical surroundings.

Quiet and reserved. Like solving problems with logic and analysis. Tend to have sharply defined interests. Need careers where some strong interest can be used and useful.

Extraverts (E)

Sensing Types (S)

Intuitive Types (N)

## **ESTP**

## **ESFP**

# **An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence Community**

Written by Oliver Lewis

## **ENFP**

## **ENTP**

Good at on-the-spot problem solving. Do not worry, enjoy whatever comes along. Adaptable, tolerant, generally conservative in values. Dislike long explanations.

Outgoing, easygoing, accepting, friendly. Find remembering facts easier than mastering theories. Are best in situations that need sound common sense and practical ability with people as well as things.

Warmly enthusiastic, high-spirited, ingenious, imaginative. Able to do almost anything that interests them. Often rely on their ability to improvise instead of preparing in advance.

Quick, ingenious, good at many things. Stimulating company and outspoken. Resourceful in solving new and challenging problems, but may neglect routine assignments.

## **ESTJ**

## **ESFJ**

## **ENFJ**

## **ENTJ**

Practical, realistic, matter-of-fact, with a natural head for business or mechanics. Not interested in subjects they see no use for, but can apply themselves when necessary. Like to organise and run activities.

Warm-hearted, talkative, popular, conscientious, born cooperators, active committee members. Need harmony and may be good at creating it.

Responsive and responsible. Generally feel real concern for what others think or want and try to handle things with due regard for the other person's feelings. Sociable, popular, sympathetic.

Hearty, frank, decisive, leaders in activities. Usually good in anything that requires reasoning and intelligent talk, such as public speaking. Are usually well informed and enjoy adding to their fund of knowledge.

FIGURE 2.2: The sixteen MBTI personality types and the characteristics frequently associated with each type. Replicated from Bayne, R. (1998) *The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: A critical review and practical guide*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes, p. 44

### *Delimitations*

Intelligence officials have only recently emerged into the public domain and the amount of information available differs from each individual and their position within the intelligence community. This study will focus entirely on British intelligence leaders, and while a selective study of three allows for an initial generalisation of personality, the conclusions will not have wider application until further research is conducted on a broader range of British or foreign intelligence leaders.

Furthermore, this study is limited to a trait theory which excludes many situational and cultural elements. There are

# **An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence**

Written by Oliver Lewis

many cultural facets likely to influence behaviour; class, education, location etc. For example, of the twenty-eight Director-Generals of MI5 and Directors of SIS, at-least sixteen of them were educated at a British public school, five at Cambridge and four at Oxford; an indication of their class background and (arguably) of their intellect. Moreover, a considerable number saw active service in the armed forces or in government departments which is likely to influence their mode of cognition. This study is unconcerned with *how* the personality was formed; instead it focuses on identifying which traits are present in the fully-formed personality.

Similarly, this paper is not an experiment into the reliability or validity of trait theory, type theory or the models of personality psychology which are employed in the methodology. Nor is this paper strictly within the rigorously empirical area of scientific psychology, instead it accepts the theories that will be employed to undertake humanities-orientated mode of evidential study.

## *Limitations*

Despite the recognition of research boundaries there remain limitations. Intelligence studies has generated a large body of material but in comparison to politics and international relations there is a paucity of accurate information regarding individuals. In contrast to political, military and business leaders there have been very few reliable biographies of figures in British intelligence. Autobiographies and memoirs form the substantial body of literature available to any leadership study of intelligence and can be a useful source of information on intelligence operations and organisation. But memoirs penned by intelligence officials have their own weaknesses. Officials have traditionally been forbidden to publish memoirs under terms of their employment and national security; the autobiographies that are available fall into several categories. Firstly, those published with official approval. Second, memoirs published without the approval of the service but without malicious intent. The final category includes material published without the approval of the service, commonly in a foreign country, and with clear political or malicious intent. The latter could be in collusion with a foreign government or intelligence organisation and could pose severe problems for academic research. Nevertheless, the first two categories pose problems of accuracy and reliability; express or tacit approval from the service is likely to be authorised only if material has been vetted (and modified) by the organisation or that the material is so lacking in detail that it poses no risk to national security. Consequently, all autobiographies of intelligence officials cannot be considered entirely factually accurate (some may be self-aggrandisement or sensationalist).

Furthermore, autobiographies are not necessarily the most useful material to base a scholarly assessment of the author's personality. Without corroborating evidence statements cannot be entirely reliable because they lack sufficient objective evidence to support the argument. Any author, when writing about themselves, cannot remain entirely objective and is likely to depict themselves in a more favourable manner than their behaviour could suggest. Life-experiences, the assessment of others and feelings-experienced may not represent the form they initially occurred, and are likely to be influenced by opinions formed after the event. Any personality assessment based solely on the content of an autobiography is limited and potentially inaccurate or unreliable.

Personality assessment is also subjective; it is likely to be tainted by the opinions and prejudices of the author of this paper, even if on an unconscious level. Moreover, it is practically impossible to draw generalisations or conclusions from a limited study of three British intelligence leaders. This paper must adhere to a strict word length and thus the depth of analysis of each leader is limited and likely only to 'scratch the surface' of the intelligence official in leadership studies.

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

## CHAPTER III: Nicholas Elliott

In his charmingly entitled memoirs Elliott provides a wealth of interesting anecdotes – the majority devoted to his father, a well-respected climber and Head Master of Eton College, and Elliott's early life at preparatory school, Eton and Cambridge. Some difficulty arises in that at no point in the memoirs does Elliott explicitly inform the reader precisely whom he works for and the cut and thrust of intelligence work is rarely entered into. Nevertheless, Elliott was employed during the Second World War within the British Army's Intelligence Branch and subsequently with the SIS where he held various postings including Section Chief; according to one contemporary, he believed Elliott *was a diplomat yet [did] not do diplomatic work*"[79].

### *Neuroticism*

One would assume that any individual successful in a career reliant on confidential information and potentially dangerous intelligence operations would have a degree of emotional stability and therefore exhibit signs of very low levels of neuroticism. Elliott conforms to this assumption, with the body of evidence falling heavily on him having only trace levels of neuroticism and supporting an argument in favour of an emotionally stable, calm individual free from persistent negative feelings. Individuals high in neurosis are vulnerable to negative stimuli, however in documented experiences of great personal danger and discomfort, Elliott remains resolutely neutral with a sense of informed detachment, or is able to retain a positive perspective; *"The summer of 1939 passed pleasantly enough, despite the impending threat of war"*[80]. Elliott lacks any anxiousness and displays rational and fully-developed coping mechanisms that are a sign of emotional stability. Described as 'sheer hell', Elliott experienced a spartan and unpleasant period at a preparatory school managed by a married couple who *"appear to have run the school for motives [which] included a sadistic and homosexual interest in the boys"*[81] yet despite enduring misery Elliott recounts no lasting negative influence and frames many of his experiences in positive terms[82] and that he had been conditioned to expect it to be *"a nasty period which you simply had to go through as part of life"*[83]. Neurotics are likely to be emotionally reactive, which Elliott provides no evidence for. Moreover, in experiencing intense childhood privation he documents that it had no lasting influence on his behaviour[84].

Moreover, as one would expect Elliott does provide limited evidence for a natural level of neuroticism concerning self-confidence and doubts of self-esteem in specific areas[85]. However, despite these childhood doubts Elliott does not frame them within victimisation statements common to neurotics, and goes on to describe the normal process of increasing confidence with age[86]. Further, Elliott recounts insecurities, avoidance and a desire for withdrawal when confronted with environments which he determined that he lacked the faculties to engage with[87]. Similarly, *I felt too ignorant to venture opinions in the company of my parents' friends*"[88]. However one would expect to see concerns such as these dissipate in adulthood, as indeed we do. As an only child, Elliott recognises that he was occasionally 'rather lonely', but only when the situation did not allow him access to social interaction, for – when lacking social relationships with peers – he *"formed close friendships"*[89] with the domestic staff, an inclination toward openness to experience and extravert behaviour.

### *Extraversion*

Elliott experienced repetitive and pronounced engagement with the external world throughout his life cycle, a strong characteristic of high levels of extraversion which are not restricted by an individual's desire for personal privacy[90] and space of one's own[91]. But Elliott outlines situations that can be classified as introverted behaviour, *I became*

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence Community

Written by Oliver Lewis

*so introverted about the problem that I was too shy to consult either my friends or parents*”[92] concerning, however, typical adolescent questions and thus not a major indication of strong introversion. Indeed, Elliott’s personal and professional life is marked by an extremely high level of social engagement and positive emotional reactions, with many references to making and maintaining friendships over his entire lifespan; “*I made a lot of friends*”[93] and “*close friendships were formed more quickly than in peacetime*”[94]. Elliott exhibits optimistic behaviour and frequently perceives the individuality of people he encounters. For example, “*[Dick Routh] had the gift of making you feel that he regarded you as a friend*”[95]. Individuals with a high level of extraversion are likely to engage in activities as a form of ‘de-stressing’ and will often find enjoyment from participation; Elliott remarks at several points his lifelong enjoyment of skiing[96]. Moreover, extraverts are predisposed to experience recurring positive emotions, which Elliott documents extensively; “*the early years of my life [at Cambridge] were extremely happy*”[97]. Closely related to extraversion is an individual’s level of agreeableness, which also influences predisposition toward social relationships.

## Agreeableness

Anathema to absolute decision-making, an agreeable individual values social cohesion and cooperation which enables them to develop a large network of friends and contacts. Thus, in the intelligence community both high and low levels of agreeableness could be beneficial for different types of intelligence work; that which lies closer to conventional diplomacy – the sort that Elliott was engaged in – would prize high agreeableness. There is overwhelming evidence that Elliott exhibits higher levels of agreeableness. Modesty aids significantly in a positive perception of an individual, a sub-trait that Elliott documents in the opening statements of his memoirs, describing himself as no-one of ‘public eminence’[98]. Concerned with interpersonal relationships, agreeable individuals will engage in social relationships which are individualised; the merit of favourable relationships is remembered and held in higher regard because agreeable individuals are trusting, sensitive and positive toward others. Elliott provides many details about the positive characteristics of friends and acquaintances: “*I remember him [because] he had... intense human understanding*”[99], further “*I got along splendidly with Sir Edgar and... invited him to lunch at my club*”[100] also highlights Elliott’s penchant for social engagement and “*the most remarkable man who I was fortunate enough to get to know... was the Papal Legate*”[101] indicates Elliott’s value to SIS as a well-connected member of European society.

Cooperation and harmony are important elements of agreeableness which Elliott also displays[102]; to not do so would damage social harmony and show an insensitivity for other’s well-being which is a characteristic of disagreeable personalities. Similarly, in study of the Scriptures, he “*did not like to ask for enlightenment for fear that this would be thought to be in bad taste*”[103] and be perceived as a lack of compliance with the norm. Similarly, Elliott recognises merit in his and others’ altruistic behaviour, “*you remember and appreciate with startling clarity over the years individual acts of kindness*”[104] and rallies against insensitive[105]. In his treatment of others Elliott exhibits warmth, tact and consideration which are all indications of a higher level of agreeableness, however, Elliott’s openness and intellect rationalise the assessment of individual’s into favourable and non-favourable impressions which can extend to scepticism and suspicion. Nevertheless, Elliott attaches great importance to maintaining sociability, for instance he “*always disagreed with [abstinence from alcohol]. It made the young boring and unsociable to their friends*”[106].

## Conscientiousness

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

The expectation for the successful intelligence leader is that they should be conscientious, exhibiting predispositions for meticulous planning and a need for achievement. However, Elliott appears to behave in a manner convergent with low conscientiousness; unreliability in some areas, an active desire to stray outside rules and impulsive behaviour. While at Cambridge Elliott outlines how he “*got into financial difficulties*”[107] and came down with “*debts of several hundred pounds*”[108] but states no anxiety or negative concern for the situation and was able to remedy the situation through gambling (which is another indication of low conscientiousness), providing the short-lived pleasures and irresponsibility associated with unconscientious behaviour.

Moreover, conscientiousness individuals are hardworking and motivated by a need for achievement. Particularly in his early years Elliott displays few of these characteristics: He remarks that officer training was difficult to take seriously[109] and that he was “*the tattiest Army officer [a friend] had ever seen*”[110] while his attitude toward academic work was that there was “*no need to do more work than was necessary to keep out of trouble*”[111]. This complacent attitude toward work and a lack of need for achievement was echoed while reading History at Cambridge[112] and was “*extremely conscious the whole time I was there of how much I was enjoying myself*”[113] satisfying the unconscientious characteristic of desirous of excitement and pleasure[114].

However, there are divergent examples of high conscientiousness: In volunteering for diplomatic service abroad, enlisting as an officer in the Second World War and his later work for the intelligence services, Elliott displayed high levels of efficacy and rose to high levels of achievement. At Eton, he was keen to enrol in the Officer Training Corps because “*it enlarged our horizons and provided scope for considerable entertainment*”[115] intermixing some low conscientiousness characteristics (entertainment) with some high conscientious motivation (opportunity for achievement). One explanation for the high achievement and mixed levels of conscientiousness exhibited by Elliott would be a high intellect which allowed him to employ organised behaviour in an efficient manner, accomplish tasks quicker and less frequently have to employ hard work. This is supported by early life-experiences of scholarly engagement and later professional environments. At preparatory school, he “*hoped to go to Eton*”[116] and was desirous of achievement, which he accomplished; speaking two foreign languages[117]. Thus, Elliott was hardworking and dependable, but only when he perceived there to be purpose to his efforts. This is echoed in his approach to intelligence work; “*There are few experiences more infuriating than the laborious decipherment of a telegram... only to find that there is no conceivable action that could possibly be taken from it*”[118]. Moreover, Elliott’s need for achievement was lessened by the degree of importance he attached to work: Given a high-level diplomatic post, he believed it “*detracted from the time I could give to... more important work*”[119] and “*It was always my aim to avoid working on any committee and thus save myself largely unproductive periods of stupendous boredom*”[120]. Comparably, Elliott appeared to exercise a significant ability to effectively handle crisis, which is a high conscientious indicator; “*the Swedish blonde’s hair caught fire which I quickly extinguished by sousing her hair with half a litre of white wine*”[121]. Elliott remarked that he “*made mistakes and... learnt from them*”[122] confirming his self-determination and dependability, but also his ability for introspection and self-awareness.

## *Openness to Experience*

Intellectual curiosity is a constituent of an individual’s openness to experience which Elliott displays in abundance. Not only the raw academic recognitions of his intellectual ability – Eton, Cambridge, a successful career in intelligence and later business – but the meticulous research into his family coupled with an extensive knowledge of history, the classics and several languages displays his wide-ranging erudition. The originality, style and wit of

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

anecdotes and details point to an active imagination and a high level of creativity that is synonymous with openness. Sensitivity to beauty – which is a mark of openness – can be found throughout the memoirs[123]; he believed that Cambridge is “*beyond doubt more beautiful than Oxford*”[124]. Elliott behaves in a curious manner, seeking to broaden his knowledge through a wide variety of interests regardless of their obvious practical use; *“I was naturally interested so he took me off to his laboratory where he showed me the revolting object [a two-headed baby] in a glass jar”*[125]. Moreover, an interest in the arts is a common characteristic of high openness also present, for he asserts that he was “*most grateful to Claude for his introduction to the great English poets*”[126].

Individuals open to experience commonly seek out a deeper understanding of emotional experiences that contain some importance to the individual, as Elliott did when during the Battle of Britain:

*Basil Fisher was killed in action. I felt this very deeply... because he had been virtually a brother to me [and] because (so lucky had my life been hitherto) this was the first time I had been hit by tragedy.*[127]

With deeper understanding the individual often experiences an emotional reaction more acutely, as is witnessed in Elliott’s admission of the depth of feeling. A desire for deeper understanding is not limited to personal events but will flow into the professional career, as it did with Elliott who *“In 1942 I had arrived in Cairo with absolutely no first-hand knowledge of the Middle East... but over the years I have had opportunities to form deeper impressions”*[128].

Unconventional, individualistic beliefs are a further mark of high openness that is evidenced in Elliott’s memoirs when he attacks Whitehall bureaucracy, declaring that *“to be in administration was in my view the last resort”*[129]. Additionally, he also displays a form of low agreeableness and high openness in asserting that administration *“required a mental outlook, foreign to my own, in which personal initiative was only to be deplored”* and low conscientiousness, low neuroticism and high conscientiousness in stating that *“every confidential report written on me when I was in government service emphasised my distaste for administration of any sort and doubtless my incompetence at it as well”*[130].

## Personality Type

As has been indicated, Elliott exhibits high extraversion throughout his lifespan which places him in the ‘Extravert’ axis of the MBTI; expressive, outgoing, enthusiastic, friendly and imaginative. The lower level of conscientiousness and high openness to experience also place him in the intuitive rather than sensing category because of his documented creativity and dislike of bureaucracy. Consequently he is limited to four types within the Extravert-Intuitive (EN) section of the MBTI typology.

Along the thinking / feeling spectrum it is more difficult to place Elliott accurately within a single camp because of the level of crossover between thinking and feeling that Elliott’s characteristics exhibit. His sociability, the high extraversion, his compassion and awareness of feelings argue for placing him within the feeling categories. The high intellect, level of reasoning, ability in social environments and logical detachment from negative emotion place him within the thinking band. However, placement in one category does not preclude an individual from behaviour found in an opposing band because individual personality is a complex mixture of many different characteristics; it is the most dominant traits that indicate where on the spectrum an individual should reside. Consequently, while Elliott is



# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

socially aware and capable of recognising other's feelings, his other characteristics would not permit conscious subjective decision-making and therefore he must be placed within the thinking band.

Of the two personality types possible, the Extraverted Intuitive Thinking Judging (ENTJ) and Extraverted Intuitive Thinking Perceiving (ENTP) Elliott's tolerance of disorder (evidenced by his pleasure-seeking and dislike of obedience and administration), his intellect, curiosity and occasionally spontaneous decision-making place him in the ENTP personality type.

## CHAPTER IV: Maj. Gen. Sir Kenneth Strong

Major General Sir Kenneth Strong attended Sandhurst in 1919 and served with the British Army until retirement in 1947; when he was Director of the Joint Intelligence Bureau and then Director-General of Intelligence, Ministry of Defence until 1966. During the Second World War he served as Eisenhower's Chief of Intelligence, Allied Force Headquarters. Consequently it is not exaggeration when Strong remarks that he was *"was at the centre of things and knew what the policy makers had been thinking and saying"*[131] throughout the Second World War and was a key-player in shaping the organisation and conduct of military intelligence in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

### *Neuroticism*

The difficulty in assessing Strong's level of emotional stability resides in the paucity of detail he offers of any emotional reaction. The accounts of his war experiences are detached and informative rather than subjective and offer no emotional introspection. However, there is evidence to suggest that Strong's exhibited a lesser degree of emotional stability to Elliott but did not suffer from neuroticism; Strong documents feelings of anxiety, restlessness and negativity when his need for achievement is threatened by circumstances outside his control, or exhibits negativity to situations of an existential threat (such as a world war). For example, during a period following an exciting assignment, Strong remarks that *"I was restless. Time was passing, I was not getting younger and I was desperately anxious to learn as much as I could about my profession"*[132] indicating a level of neurotic behaviour that without conscientiousness and efficacy, could be psychologically harmful. Aside from habitual concern for advancement and the future, Strong's anxiety exhibits itself as responsive to external stimuli of serious military or political threat – 'professional neuroticism'; *"When I left Germany I was pessimistic about the future"*[133], and *"It was the first time I had seen a dictator in action and it made me distinctly apprehensive for the future"*[134] give voice to Strong's future-orientation and anxiety for his societal infrastructure. This concern is personalised when *life seemed at its most frustrating*[135] and that even when he distinguished himself he was distracted that *'promotion, which could have brought with it new and interesting responsibility, seemed a long way off'*[136] thus exposing Strong's awareness of his level of vulnerability to future events; while present in all of us, his concern is decidedly acute.

However, discounting his need for achievement Strong exhibits none of the other characteristic negative behaviour found in neuroticism. He asserts that he had a *"happy and united family"*[137] and positively remarks about childhood illness[138]. Moreover, when he perceived that the environment had been altered through his and peer's decision-making, he could be *"decidedly optimistic about the future course of events"*[139] and thus was not abnormally predisposed to negative emotional reactions.

### *Extraversion*

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

Lower levels of extraversion are evident in the character of Strong throughout his lifecycle; rarely does Strong refer to 'friendship', using the term 'acquaintances' which implies a superficial relationship, and typically he refers to fewer lasting social relationships than Elliott. Strong documents moments of difficulty in conversing with those that do not share his own interests[140] – which betrays his lifelong tendency toward engaging exclusively with military officers, albeit of many nationalities. Indeed, when introverted Strong shows hope for extraverted interaction where he may engage intimately with individuals similar to himself; *"I looked forward to joining my regiment and broadening my contacts"*[141].

Throughout his memoirs Strong does not write of social engagements with any great energy or excitement, seeing them more as diversionary activities when professional life is dull – *"relieved only by the many delightful dances"*[142]. Social engagement is perceived as an extension of professional responsibilities and the friendships that arise are incidental to the principal object of expanding Strong's intelligence contacts; this is evidenced in the praise offered by the Prime Minister, who *"inform[ed] Major Strong that his conversations with his German officer friends had played a large part in persuading the Cabinet to introduce conscription"* [143] and in Strong's assertion that he *"made as many acquaintances [who could give] a deep understanding of Nationalist attitudes"* [144]. Moreover, Strong exhibited a deftness in cultivating friendships among foreign military attachés and officers which retained high levels of trust[145] even when he passed on intelligence from them back to the British establishment[146].

## Agreeableness

Despite many friendships in military circles Strong's attitude to human nature is negative or neutral, displaying low agreeableness, scepticism and suspicion of those which he did not perceive as 'acquaintances'. For example, he documents how he *"had to be careful and selective in my recruiting if I were to get any worthwhile information"* [147] and that his *"agents were not of very high calibre [and contact] exceedingly dangerous"* [148], especially for him, as he *"was alleged to be on the Sinn Feiner's list for early assassination"* [149]; exhibiting a low level of consideration for the well-being of others (his agents) which is a disagreeable characteristic. Moreover, in enrolling in the Army Strong was displaying uncooperative and independent behaviour toward his father's desire for Strong's university education; the Army *"was finally my own choice"* [150]. In his assessment of others Strong behaves with very low altruism and awareness of feelings and may voice opinions that, while accurate, are nevertheless insensitive. For instance, while at Sandhurst he criticised the standard of the instructors *"because they were mostly officers who had been badly wounded in the war, and clearly had little hope of further advancement in the service"* [151].

However, in conduct toward friends Strong is agreeable, levying praise on the achievements and character of others; *"A fine description of the functioning of the German Intelligence... written by Major General Liss"* [152]. Similarly, *"She was a delightful person with a wonderful sense of humour"* [153] and *"he was excellent value as a companion"* [154] are common descriptions of personal friends. Furthermore, members of the armed forces are held in esteem by Strong: In Rommel he found *"a vivacious and intelligent officer and a good conversationalist"* [155], while Lord Mountbatten had *"an attractive mixture of talents, and I have never lost my admiration for him"* [156] and of diplomatic corps staff he *"could not have asked for more helpful colleagues"* [157]. Akin to his positive perception of his peers is the abiding positive assessment of those serving under him, who *were without exception men of ability... with their lively brains they mastered their subjects"* [158]. The memoirs themselves, Strong asserts, were *"written to keep a promise"* [159] which reflects the high sense of conduct displayed in relationships with friends and of the importance he attached to reciprocal trust; this trust made the memoirs possible, for *thanks to the kindness of*

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

*friends, I have been able to make use of many private papers and records* "[160]. The straight-forward nature of his narrative and lack of literary flair is testament to a characteristic of agreeableness which is paradoxically found in largely disagreeable individuals, particularly professional soldiers. Additionally, Strong's admission that the reader "*will find no explosive secrets or dramatic revelations in its pages, for a great deal of Intelligence work is not concerned with the secret and the esoteric*"[161] may be modest but is more an indication of his high level of conscientiousness and professional pride.

## *Conscientiousness*

Exceedingly high conscientiousness, with a subsequent important and enduring need for achievement and recognition is evident in Strong. There are only two indications of low conscientiousness; that he "*did not keep a diary*"[162] and that as a young subaltern he was not keen on work[163]. Strong's need for recognition of his accomplishments is identified from his introduction, in which he outlines all the senior military and government positions he held, and of the contributions he made to the development of military intelligence; that he *help[ed] in relaying the foundations of... the Intelligence Corps of the British Army*"[164] and moreover "*was unique in that few Intelligence chiefs had survived one, let alone two major campaigns and kept his job* "[165]. Also, Strong provides evidence for valuing his professional opinion in that "*immediately after the war [my] recollections were in demand by historians*"[166] which is supported by his belief in the validity of his recollections – "*They are not the result of hindsight*"[167] – and the responsibility he expressively states adds credence to his perception of accuracy[168].

The early foundations for Strong's high conscientiousness were laid by his father, the headmaster of a Scottish private school and later a university professor (similar to Elliott's father), who "*was an intellectual, and throughout [Strong's] childhood a certain rigour was attached to learning*"[169]. The durable influence of this is evident in Strong's remark that "*even when I was quite old I did not like to be seen idle or without a book in my hand* "[170]. At Sandhurst, Strong exhibited the purposeful planning and persistence characteristic of conscientious individuals by winning the "*prize in my term for military administration*"[171] and throughout his military education he worked diligently to realise academic success; "*I had received a 'distinguished' grading in my promotion examination (as indeed I did in the other instructional military courses I attended)*"[172]. To support Strong's driven need for achievement he employed his faculties in activities that could open professional opportunities and propel him forward, especially in the mastering of foreign languages:

*If one had any ambition at all, was to keep one's brain reasonably active... my solution was to continue to learn languages.*[173]

The persistence of learning difficult new languages exhibits the determination and self-discipline that Strong valued highly; "*hard work and a retentive memory are the main requisites*"[174] for mastering a foreign tongue. In military activity Strong prized efficiency and diligence which he advocated was fostered in the proper military education and training system, for example, "*There seems to be a thoroughness in German military training which is seldom seen elsewhere*"[175]. Appreciation for high military standards is echoed in Strong's pride that his "*detachment was... inspected by the Colonel and sometimes even a general*"[176] and that before the inspection, "*we were drawn up in immaculate parade order... fervently hoping that we would impress him with our efficiency*"[177]. Strong's sense of duty is accentuated by continual hard work and personal efficacy which gave rise to professional decisions that he believed were necessary even if potentially damaging to his advancement:

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

*Many considered that I had far exceeded my terms of reference in embarking on criticism of operational matters.*[178]

This ability to break with military procedure exhibits Strong's low agreeableness and the imaginative, unconventional characteristics of an individual high in openness to experience. An extraordinary need for achievement, an appreciation of efficiency and a talent for military administration greatly contributed to Strong's consistent and diligent work ethic, which much of his life appears to be entirely devoted. In a rare and interesting insight, he outlines an occasion where he might have married but in a characteristic lack of impulsivity, that *"Together we decided that the complications would be too great"*[179].

## *Openness to Experience*

It is surprising that an individual high in conscientiousness – an organised, systematic character – and disliking social engagements would exhibit signs of high openness to experience; creativity, an appreciation of beauty and the ability to recognise when change from convention is desirable. Sir Kenneth's openness is driven by an intellectual rigour that contributes to conscientious and open behaviour. In his wide and varied travels, Strong documents how he attempted to learn as much about the area and the people as possible; *"another friend who taught me much about the island and its history... I despaired of convincing her that Malta had few problems outside the confines of its lovely shorelines"*[180] also indicates Strong's appreciation of beauty; which is also recognised in his assessment of the bombing of Dresden, *"one of the most beautiful of German cities, was tragic, especially as the operation could have no effect on the outcome of the war"*[181]. Equally, while visiting Tunisia *"the knowledge I gathered of the country and the people were to help me in World War II"*[182]. The education process comes under scrutiny from Strong's openness in declaring that the 'school solutions' at the British Army's Staff College *were generally distinguished only by their lack of imagination... Little initiative was allowed a commander*"[183], which displeased Sir Kenneth. Not lacking humour, his intellectual curiosity, disagreeableness and individual belief in military standards led him to write *"for a now defunct military magazine an article entitled 'Generals and Cookhouses', which attempted to explain what really interested generals and did little to further my own military career"*.

## *Personality Type*

Restrictive desire for social engagement, while not entirely introverted, would nevertheless place Strong closer to introversion; serious, reserved, analytical and favouring organisation. Thus he is initially limited to the eight 'Introvert' personality types. Strong's high conscientiousness pushes him toward sensing and not intuition, however the intellectual vigour and creativity of his openness, combined with originality and desire for success in the future places him clearly in the intuitive category; whereby his ability to think strategically analyse information to identify a variety of possible outcomes supports this categorisation. Consequently, Strong is restricted to the four Introvert-Intuitive (IN) personality types.

There is little doubt that the evidence analysed places Strong within the thinking area of the thinking / feeling method of decision-making. A clear, logical and analytical approach to planning and the establishment of procedures and organisations to improve military intelligence and strategy is a mark of the rational impartiality characteristic of thinking individuals. Therefore Strong falls into one of the two remaining personality types along the INT (Introvert-Intuitive Thinking) axis.

# **An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence**

Written by Oliver Lewis

A successful career as an intelligence officer and military planner, where information has to be carefully assessed and a decision formed in a very short period of time indicates that Strong should exhibit judging tendencies above perceiving. Similarly, strategic planning and the importance of organisation and executing a plan in accordance with received intelligence support the classification of Sir Kenneth Strong as an INTJ personality type; originality and effective organisation and planning coupled with critical and independent action.

## **CHAPTER V: Dame Stella Rimington**

Dame Stella Rimington was an unconventional career officer in the Secret Service (MI5) who rose from temporary work as an MI5 clerk to work as a desk officer and section head in counter espionage, counter subversion and counter terrorism and eventually the first female and publicly named Director General (DG) of MI5. Furthermore, as DG Rimington pioneered a more open approach to the existence of MI5 and released information about its activities.

### *Neuroticism*

Growing up during the Second World War, Rimington's childhood and early adult life appears to be dominated by low levels of neuroticism and repressed emotional instability. Amid accounts of moving home on a regular basis, Rimington details how she and her parents were greatly concerned with notions of safety which are a recurring theme in her early life; speaking of the outbreak of World War II, *'My safe life had become dangerous and insecure and I had become a frightened little girl'*[184] and that *"all my earliest memories are dominated by the war and its anxieties and uncertainties"*[185]. Much of the concern and anxiety exhibited by Rimington is influenced by the behaviour of her parents[186] from which she *"felt anxious for the first time in my life. It was an anxiety that was to last for a long time"*[187]. Moreover, the influence of her father contributed to her early childhood environment, for he *"greeted the arrival of the Second World War with immense sadness and depression"* [188] but did provide an intermittent source of stability and safety[189].

Early experiences of the Second World War dominated Rimington's childhood and significantly shaped her adult behaviour, she recalls moments of great danger when she experienced negative emotions[190] that left her with *"some tangible symptoms of anxiety"*[191] that were to persist in the form of claustrophobia and a *'quite pessimistic and anxious personality'*[192] well into her adult life. In contrast to the largely optimistic school experiences of Elliott and Strong, Rimington recalls how on her first day of school she announced *that I hated my new school and I would never settle down there*"[193], exhibiting emotionally reactive behaviour and hostility. Similarly, at the interview for entry to Cambridge, Rimington asserts that she *"felt very much like a fish out of water... from the wrong background and quite unable to deal with the... patronising female dons"*[194], highlighting feelings of self-consciousness[195], vulnerability and an anxious[196] coping ability that were to persist until she had an established career in MI5[197] and consequently began *"to feel pretty comfortable and self-confident"*[198]. Rimington exhibits a level of control over her neurotic behaviour by limiting the frequency and impact of emotional reaction; *'I have felt that showing emotion is somehow a bit of a weakness... and people like me are supposed to be strong'* which is a coping mechanism when combined with conscientiousness and openness could negate any harmful influence on her decision-making.

### *Extraversion*

Throughout her memoirs, Rimington provides little evidence for appreciation of social engagement, exhibiting

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

preferences for quiet and retiring behaviour which supports her desire to keep emotional reactions under control; *I was not socially at ease... I had no small talk and I found meeting new people difficult and embarrassing* "[199] and frequently took time for independent pursuits[200]. A lack of social involvement is indicated by Rimington's admission that she was *"rather anxious... diffident and quietly spoken"*[201] which betrays the high levels of agreeableness evident in her early life. However, while Rimington displays less dependency on the social world she is able to form attachments and friendships in a normal manner: At school, *"I kept a large group of friends"*[202] while also experiencing positive emotions, *"I grew to enjoy my time at [school]"*[203]. Introversion, therefore, does not impair an individual's ability to experience positive emotions, which continued at university where she found life *enjoyable and on the whole unstressed*[204]. Similarly, when friendships were formed they were lasting and positive[205]. In her capacity as the wife of a diplomat, with societal expectations, Rimington upheld these responsibilities regardless of personal preference – indicating a higher level of agreeableness[206] that continued in her approach to social responsibilities in senior positions within MI5.

## Agreeableness

Dame Stella documents compliance and modesty and sought cooperation and stability within her professional career. For example, in the assessment of superiors she is accommodating of behaviour if the overall impact is professionally positive; *"He bullied us all, but it was meant well... In his eccentric way he was in fact an excellent trainer of staff"*[207] and later, in MI5, *"The Head of the Registry [was] a bully with a heart of gold"*[208]. Consequently, in the workplace Rimington valued efficiency and competence but recognised the importance of social harmony and awareness of the well-being of staff, for the *"atmosphere in the office was friendly and cooperative"*[209]. Where this is not present, Rimington comments suitably, *"I found it surprisingly hostile and uncomfortable... their presentation of Indian history did not defer at all to our feelings"* [210] further highlighting her belief in the importance of maintaining trust and agreement of others. Similarly, cooperation with the established norm – while occasionally overridden by other traits – is displayed by Rimington; she controls her high openness and curiosity in stating that *"I soon realised that people regarded you with suspicion if you asked too many questions, so I learned to keep quiet"*[211] and thus she knew how to distinguish when *"No-one thought it appropriate to comment"*[212]. Professionally, Rimington highlights how charm and persuasion – agreeable characteristics – were of value in her work in MI5; *"It was these same powers of persuasion, which came in very useful years later, when in MI5 I had to try to persuade people to do much more unlikely and sometimes dangerous things on behalf of their country"*[213]. However, as her competence and confidence increased Rimington became self-aware and willing to question certain norms through rational and logical observation and consequently willing to behave disagreeably when it was perceived to be of importance to the institution:

*I knew enough about the service and the people in it to know that I was just as capable as many of the men, if not more, and I resented being given less responsible work to do and above-all being paid less than they were.*[214]

## Conscientiousness

Fluctuating levels of conscientious behaviour are indicated throughout Rimington's memoirs; relatively low conscientiousness at school and university – *"I was not an intellectual and was more concerned with enjoying myself than acquiring knowledge"*[215] – to a concerted effort to reform procedures of MI5 and improve the condition

# An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence

Written by Oliver Lewis

of its female employees. Rimington documents how when she perceived work to be of little relevance or interest the effort put into the enterprise would diminish over time unless some variety was injected into the environment. For example, *"I easily got bored and when things started to become more difficult I was not prepared to make the effort"*[216]. The lower levels of conscientiousness exhibited during the early life-cycle could be contributed to Rimington's inability to think progressively and thus a failure to perceive an accomplished future (neuroticism).

Only when Rimington began to follow a profession that engaged her in a variety of interesting roles did conscientiousness, hard work, dutifulness, reliability and efficiency manifest themselves. Admitting that when she was *"learning the first principles of intelligence work... I must say at that stage I found it pretty dull"*[217] she eventually rose to be the *"leader of one of the country's intelligence agencies"*[218]. Her ambition and need for achievement provided her with the necessary emotional supports to challenge the conventional norms of her profession and thus *"Having begun work in the days when women's careers were not taken at all seriously... I ended up advising ministers and Prime Ministers"*[219]. Driven into intelligence work because she *"thought it would be interesting"*[220] the realisation that it was *"not a glamorous business... It is hard work"*[221] did not diminish the organisational aptitude and deliberation she brought to the effective management of crisis situations, partly through believing that *"hard work and devotion to duty were the most important things"* [222] and because of the increasing need for achievement that arose from self-confidence and an awareness of the self as the locus of control; influenced through experiences provoked by a tendency toward curiosity.

## Openness to Experience

An appreciation of beauty is indicated in many passages of Rimington's autobiography, both of manmade structure[223] and natural beauty; *"There were breathtaking things to see – flying fish and shooting stars, the planet Jupiter over Africa"*[224]. Moreover, before Rimington had decided upon a profession she knew that she *wanted to do or be something out of the ordinary and exciting* [225] which continued throughout her study[226] and was realised later in her adult life with MI5. Prior to enlisting in the Security Service, Rimington sought other interesting and intellectual opportunities that would allow her to indulge in a variety of different interests, for example, *My job was interesting, I met some eccentric and amusing people* [227]. Similarly, the breadth of her expertise within MI5, having served in sections devoted to each of its major activities is indicative of her many interests and desire for deeper understanding. Her originality and creativity is evident in the many imaginative asides, thus *"The sound of all those feet drumming on the wooden floor in those ancient lecture rooms, just as they must have done for hundreds of years, made me feel I was part of some on-going historical process and this I enjoyed"*[228].

## Personality Type

The body of evidence in assessing Dame Stella Rimington's neuroticism and extraversion trait-dimensions indicate that she falls (but not without variation) within the introversion section the typology; no reliance on social engagement, preferring conscientiousness and independence, and reserved in behaviour. The open behaviour indicated in Rimington's autobiography, supported by her awareness of others, fluctuating conformity and ability to perceive inequality and present change in a way consummate with it succeeding, place Rimington into the intuitive mode of thinking and decision-making. Thus she falls into one of the four Introvert-Intuitive (IN) personality types.

Despite Rimington's desire to remain emotionally detached whenever possible, her introspective awareness of emotional reactions, supported by the reasons she gives for some major life decisions indicate that she would

# **An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence Community**

Written by Oliver Lewis

primarily reside in the feeling rather than more logical and cold thinking mode. This does not claim that in professional decision-making she would be driven solely by subjective motivations; in the workplace it is highly likely that Rimington was able to detach her emotional reactions from decisions in crisis (possible through high conscientiousness and deliberation in work) but that instead in the general course of her life-cycle she favoured a feeling approach.

Conscientious behaviour, particularly high in relation to work, and agreeableness which amounts to loyalty tapered by a creativity and willingness to engage in a deeper understanding of emotion, events and situations indicate that Rimington's final dichotomy resolves itself in favour of a judging attitude toward decision-making. Consequently she should be placed within the Introverted Intuitive Feeling Judging (INFJ) personality type; achieving success through whatever work or original thinking is necessary, quietly determined and consciously aware of what decisions most favour the common good.

## **CHAPTER VI: Trait & Type Comparison**

Of the three intelligence leaders examined none fall into an identical personality type. Elliott differs the most from among the three, residing in the Extravert Intuitive Thinking Perceiving (ENTP) type. Strong and Rimington share the most similarities when applying the typology to their individual trait-dimensions, being Introverted Intuitive, then differing in whether they are motivated by 'thinking' or 'feeling' decision-making, before converging on a tendency for resolution and order in the judging category: Strong being Introverted Intuitive Thinking Judging (INTJ) and Rimington residing as an Introverted Intuitive Feeling Judging (INFJ) type.

The two leaders who rose to the highest echelons of their respective intelligence communities were Strong and Rimington, who displayed low characteristics associated with dynamic leadership instead indicating higher capabilities for organisation, administration, effective planning and management than were present in Elliott; who with a lower need for achievement displayed dynamic leadership but was an ineffective bureaucrat. Consequently, the characteristics necessary to reach the highest level of leadership in the British intelligence community are abilities of generic administration and organisation and not exclusively what is traditionally thought of as beneficial traits for conventional leaders.

However, all three share the intuitive characteristic, where intuition plays a significant role in decision-making. Such individuals are able to perceive the 'whole picture', then focus down into the minute detail; in the world of intelligence one must be able to perceive the importance of details and then apply them to a context wider than might initially be apparent, which relies to a large degree on intuitive thinking. Moreover, intuitive individuals consider the impact of actions and events on the future; intelligence analysis provides just this sort of advice to senior members of government and the Prime Minister. As Rimington and Strong document, on many occasions they were asked not for detailed intelligence but for their professional opinion. Sensing characteristics focus on an ability to recognise intricate changes, to highlight details and follow plans and orders; this mode of thinking would be valuable in the lower-levels of intelligence gathering but with increased responsibility and leadership, individuals must be able to associate these details with the wider world. All three of the examined leaders displayed these characteristics to a very high level.

One can argue that the thinking characteristic would be most desirable for the intelligence leader. Strong and Elliott fall into the thinking mode of decision-making, with only Rimington differing. However, while Rimington differs, the evidence indicated that only in decisions in her personal life; while making professional decisions it is highly unlikely that she could, or would (given her high introspective awareness), allow her decisions to be impaired. Nevertheless,



# **An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence**

Written by Oliver Lewis

Strong and Elliott provide examples of how their decisions were dominated by rational choice and logical thought rather than emotion. Strong provides very little indication of any emotional reactions, while Elliott provides this information but refers to how he made arrived logically at decisions that ran contrary to the emotion. Both were able to retain high levels of detachment and impartiality even under potentially high levels of stress and discomfort and thus one may infer that this ability is highly desirable in the intelligence leader. Intelligence assessments cannot be subjective in nature; they must present the facts and provide an analysis that is as objective and therefore as close to reality as the information available would indicate. Without objectivity intelligence loses much of its value, and thus crucial warnings can be overlooked or the intelligence itself can be abused in the pursuit of policy.

Decisions influenced by judgement – order, organisation and systematic modes of functioning – support the assertion that administrative personality characteristics are favourable to senior intelligence leaders as this is where only Elliott differs. Elliott engages with the external world on a regular and interdependent basis, while Strong and Rimington follow clear rules and procedures, often scheduling and planning how operations should be carried out and adapting these procedures when new information is available. Elliott acts spontaneously and makes smaller – tactical – decision making and is more likely to perform well in mid-level intelligence; in the collection, assessment and execution of intelligence activities rather than their strategic planning. This is supported by Elliott as the only one of the three leaders to fall into the ‘extravert’ personality category; he actively seeks out society and performs well when sociable behaviour is required. Thus he is perceived as charming, popular and more interesting than Strong and Rimington, an argument that is evident in the literary style and entertaining flair of Elliott’s memoirs, while those of Strong and to an even greater extent, Rimington, are more straight-forward, fairly dry and lacking in creative presentation. Sociability is vital in the agent hoping to infiltrate social circles – commonly diplomatic – to gain the trust and friendship of a wide variety of people who are privy to sensitive information. High levels of extraversion are not required for the organisation and management of established institutions that will continue to function regardless of social engagement from the chief; no doubt some normal modes of social interaction are required, which both Strong and Rimington prove themselves able, but the level of the engagement need not be pronounced. Indeed, extraverted behaviour from a most senior intelligence official could do considerable harm on their career because they could draw undue attention to themselves, be a target for foreign intelligence agencies, or accidentally betray state secrets.

Thus, from the evidence gathered, one can propose that the most favourable personality characteristics for the senior intelligence leader in the British intelligence community would be a guarded engagement with the social world (controlled introversion), a high ability to think creatively and perceive the context of intelligence (intuition), a rational and impartial decision-making process that is detached from personal emotion or external partisanship (thinking) and an effective and efficient ability to organise and administrate (judging).

## **CONCLUSION**

The British intelligence community is a curious entity, it prides itself on secrecy and integrity yet both have been drawn into question. A great deal of its activities do remain secret, its archives are not subject to any Parliamentary agreements for public disclosure, yet a great deal of literature has been published that does shed light on its clandestine environment. Some of this has highlighted its shortcomings, that as any government body it is open to abuse through the eccentricities of its staff, or the infiltration of its infrastructure by traitors and enemy agents. The very nature of intelligence makes it a difficult area for academic study, particularly for scholars of leadership studies and personality psychology; intelligence agents and leaders are cultivated within a system that indoctrinates them into the importance of conformity and loyalty to the service and to the country, the careers of many will remain hidden

# **An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence**

Written by Oliver Lewis

and unnoticed even to their closest family; unlike the Civil Service and Diplomatic Corps, there is no expectation of the publication of memoirs upon retirement, indeed, it is actively discouraged: Those that publish, even with limited official sanction, are often shunned by their former colleagues as an anomaly within an otherwise privileged and private area of 'secret government'. The norm is to go quietly into provincial retirement, or into employment which the service approves or provides, or simply into the abyss.

However, without the public disclosure of memoirs and autobiographies, however hazy and unreliable they may be, it will be impossible for the public to have full confidence of those placed in command of their domestic safety and security, or of the foreign interests of their country. Closer scrutiny of intelligence leaders is essential in an open democracy; they must be capable and competent and they must be seen to be so, simply to be informed by the government that this is the case shatters the democratic ideal, it mystifies the true activities of the intelligence community to such an extent that Fleming or le Carré are understood as accurate reflections of the community's secret world. The leaders of Britain's intelligence community deserve to be recognised for their achievements, their lives and opinions can add much needed clarity to intelligence scholarship and should not be left to fall, quietly, into oblivion.

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Written by Oliver Lewis

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# **An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence**

Written by Oliver Lewis

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Written by Oliver Lewis

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Written by Oliver Lewis

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[188] *ibid.*

[189] *ibid.*

# **An Examination of the Personality Types of Three Intelligence Leaders Within the British Intelligence**

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[190] *ibid.*, p. 7

[191] *ibid.*, p. 8

[192] *ibid.*

[193] *ibid.*, p. 17

[194] *ibid.*, p. 21

[195] *ibid.*, p. 35

[196] *ibid.*, p. 51

[197] *ibid.*, p. 35

[198] *ibid.*, p. 70

[199] *ibid.*, p. 35

[200] *ibid.*, p. 39

[201] *ibid.*, p. 35

[202] *ibid.*, p. 18

[203] *ibid.*, p. 21

[204] *ibid.*, p. 29

[205] *ibid.*, p. 34

[206] *ibid.*, p. 59

[207] *ibid.*, p. 37

[208] *ibid.*, p. 96

[209] *ibid.*, p. 37

[210] *ibid.*, p. 58

[211] *ibid.*, p. 98

[212] *ibid.*, p. 101

[213] *ibid.*, p. 39

[214] *ibid.*, p. 102

[215] *ibid.*, p. 29

[216] *ibid.*, p. 21

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[217] *ibid.*, p. 95

[218] *ibid.*, p. xxiii

[219] *ibid.*

[220] *ibid.*, p. 91

[221] *ibid.*, p. 92

[222] *ibid.*, p. 9

[223] *ibid.*, p. 13

[224] *ibid.*, p. 54

[225] *ibid.*, p. 20

[226] *ibid.*, p. 33

[227] *ibid.*, p. 42

[228] *ibid.*, p. 27

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*Written by: Oliver Lewis:  
Written at: Aberystwyth University  
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## **About the author:**

Oliver Lewis is an academic advisor to the Ministry of Defence and completing a PhD in International Studies at the University of Cambridge, where he researches on the culture(s) and education of elite transnational groups.