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Handbook of Warning Intelligence: Assessing the Threat to National Security was written during the cold war and was classified for 40 years. The majority of this manual, however, is now finally available to the general public. An abridged version, Anticipating Surprise: Analysis for Strategic Warning, was published, but this original document goes into much greater detail about the fundamentals of intelligence analysis and forecasting. It discusses military analysis, as well as the difficulties in understanding political, civil, and economic analysis and assessing what it means for analysts to have "warning judgment."

Much of what Grabo writes in her book seems to appear in many of the numerous commission reports that emerged after the 9/11 attacks. However, this book was written in response to the "surprise attack" of the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. According to the author, that event was no surprise. And while analysts have to take some of the blame for their failure to strenuously present their case that the threat was real and imminent, what occurred was a failure by policymakers to listen to the warning intelligence reports that were written at the time.