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Need to Know XII and IIHA conference 2023: Intelligence and security on border regions and spheres of influence - Graz, 17th to 19th October 2023

The conference language is English.

Borders were an important focus for intelligence activities throughout the Cold War, not only during diplomatic and military conflicts. Intelligence and security activities at borders were evident in a variety of ways, from single border incidents up to diplomatic and even military conflicts.

Besides the borders themselves, some territories became strategically important spheres of influence. As seen from the Cold War perspective, countries like Austria, West-Germany or Turkey, as states along the “Iron Curtain”, played a special role as “hubs” for Eastern/Western intelligence. Austria, in particular, gained the reputation as an important meeting place, theatre of operations, and “hub” for intelligence services from both sides.

As this year’s conference will take place in Austria, the aim of the conference is to look at intelligence and security on borderlines, border regions, regional and transregional spheres.

The Need to Know conferences aim to stimulate research and discussions on the history of intelligence, with a special focus on the Cold War and the post-Cold War Era. A core focus is to explore new information and new interpretations following the opening of archives in East and West.

Young Researcher Forum:

As part of the conference, the IIHA also invited participants to discuss practices of intelligence research with a round table of junior researchers. The aims of the discussion are not finished projects or results, but rather the ways and challenges of intelligence

research. Presenting work in progress, the issues discussed will be differences of intelligence history to other historical topics, the challenge of finding adequate research questions and sources, and the question if or how scholars are influenced by the special conditions of intelligence research.

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The conference is organised by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War/University of Graz together with the Institute of National Remembrance - Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, the International Intelligence History Association (IIHA), the Center for Cold War Studies of the University of Southern Denmark; Norwegian Aviation Museum, the King's Intelligence and Security Group, King's College London; the Estonian International Center for Defence and Security, and in partnership with the International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence. The conference is also organised with the local partnership of the Austrian Center for Intelligence, Propaganda and Security Studies (ACIPSS) in Graz.

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