

# Studies in Intelligence

Vol. 63, No. 4 (December 2019) UNCLASSIFIED

Journal of the American Intelligence Professional

## US University Intel Programs— A Debate

**The Perils of Forecasting**

**The Early Days of  
North Korea's  
Nuclear Program**

**A Matter of Trust:  
Covert Action Reconsidered**

**"No Boy Scout" CIA Ops Officer  
Lucien Conein**

**Intelligence in Public Media**



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The mission of *Studies in Intelligence* is to stimulate within the Intelligence Community the constructive discussion of important issues of the day, to expand knowledge of lessons learned from past experiences, to increase understanding of the history of the profession, and to provide readers with considered reviews of public media concerning intelligence.

The journal is administered by the Center for the Study of Intelligence, which includes the CIA's History Staff, CIA's Lessons Learned Program, and the CIA Museum. CSI also provides the curator of the CIA's Historical Intelligence Collection of Literature. In addition, it houses the Emerging Trends Program, which seeks to identify the impact of future trends on the work of US intelligence.

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## Contents

### EDITORIAL POLICY

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### Intelligence Today and Tomorrow

*Major or Minor or . . . ?*

**Educators Consider Alternative Approaches to US College Intelligence Programs** 1

Professors Jorhena Thomas and Nicholas Dujmovic

*An Analyst's Reflections on Forecasting*

**The Limits of Prediction—or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying About Black Swans and Love Analysis** 7

Bobby W.

### Historical Perspectives

*An Intelligence Perspective*

**North Korea's Nuclear Program: The Early Days, 1984–2002** 17

Torrey Froscher

*Secret, Small, Deniable*

**A Matter of Trust: Covert Action Reconsidered** 33

Michael Warner

*"No Boy Scout"*

**CIA Operations Officer Lucien Conein: A Study in Contrasts and Controversy** 43

William J. Rust

### Intelligence in Public Media

**Truth to Power: A History of the U.S. National Intelligence Council** 59

Reviewed by Roger Z. George

**Leading Intelligence Analysis: Lessons from the**

**CIA's Analytic Frontlines** 63

Reviewed by Jason U. Manosevitz

**The Targeter: My Life in the CIA, Hunting Terrorists, and**

**Challenging the White House** 67

Reviewed by David T. Berg, PhD

**Intelligence in Public Media (cont.)**

<b><i>GOLIATH: Why the West Doesn't Win Wars and What We Need To Do About It</i></b>	<b>69</b>
Reviewed by J. R. Seeger	
<b><i>A Brotherhood of Spies: The U-2 and the CIA Secret War</i></b>	<b>73</b>
Reviewed by Clayton Laurie	
<b><i>A Guest of the Reich: The Story of American Heiress Gertrude Legendre's Dramatic Captivity and Escape from Nazi Germany</i></b>	<b>75</b>
Reviewed by Katherina W. Gonzales	
<b><i>A Woman of No Importance—The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II</i></b>	<b>79</b>
Reviewed by Craig Gralley	
<b><i>Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate: Covert Action and Internal Operations</i></b>	<b>81</b>
Reviewed by Gordon Bonin	
<b>Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf—December 2019</b>	<b>83</b>
Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake	
<b>Books Reviewed in 2019 in <i>Studies in Intelligence</i></b>	<b>97</b>



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## Educators Consider Alternative Approaches to US College Intelligence Programs<sup>a</sup>

*Professors Jorhena Thomas and Nicholas Dujmovic*

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***The rise in intelligence studies programs has engendered a spirited debate in academia about the best way to educate future intelligence officers.***

Undergraduate academic programs in national security or intelligence began sprouting up at US colleges and universities in the 1990s. They multiplied dramatically following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in response to the heightened need for professionals conversant with terrorism, international crime, cyberthreats, and other geopolitical issues.

The demand for people skilled in these areas has moved beyond the federal government to state and local law enforcement, public infrastructure management, and corporate security departments. In 1985, private sector institutions of higher education offered only 54 intelligence-related individual classes; that number has ballooned to nearly 1,000 today.<sup>1</sup> This surge is a response by US higher education to changing employer needs in the face of geopolitical developments, and represents an expansion resembling the shift toward science and engineering majors after the Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite in 1957, the growth of Russian studies programs during the Cold War, and the proliferation of Arabic language programs after 9/11.

Intelligence has long been a staple of popular entertainment, and the lack of serious scholarly treatment of the field before the 1970s meant that ear-

ly intelligence-related courses were limited to popular themes like “The Anti-hero in Spy Films” or “The Cold War Spy in Fiction.”<sup>2</sup> As national security issues began appearing more frequently in the news, however, more college students began considering intelligence as a career, and colleges and universities started to supply more serious content.

Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pennsylvania, pioneered the first in-depth intelligence studies program at a civilian institution in 1992 and was alone in that distinction for years.<sup>3</sup> Today, more than 100 colleges and universities provide some form of intelligence education.<sup>4</sup> A 2015 survey found that more than 24 universities have organized their offerings into dedicated intelligence studies programs aimed primarily at developing intelligence analysts.<sup>5</sup> Almost all of these universities have degree-granting programs in intelligence, most of them leading to a bachelor of arts degree.

According to a comprehensive 2009 study of intelligence education, the programs

- provide students with a uniform set of core conceptual competencies and skills that all those

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a. This discussion originally appeared in the National Intelligence University’s internal digital journal, *NIU Research Shorts*, in May 2019.

involved in national security need to possess;

- educate students about intelligence and national security matters, such as terrorism, cyberthreats, and US international security priorities; and
- help build student and public knowledge about the mandates, strategies, structures, and functioning of intelligence and security organizations in statecraft.<sup>6</sup> This last aim fills a need identified by

Sherman Kent, the prominent post-World War II intelligence figure who founded *Studies in Intelligence*. Kent observed in the first essay this journal published in 1955 that the intelligence profession’s lack of a “literature” prevented it from ensuring that knowledge about the intelligence business was captured and made accessible to others.<sup>7</sup>

The rise in intelligence studies programs has engendered a spirited debate in academia about the best

way to educate future intelligence officers.<sup>8,9</sup> Are these new undergraduate intelligence programs meeting the needs of the Intelligence Community (IC) by providing potential new hires with the skills and institutional knowledge needed to “hit the ground running?” Or would students be better served by acquiring deep knowledge in one of the many areas of subject matter expertise of value to the US national security establishment, supplemented by a few familiarization courses on the IC operating environment?



<b>Point</b>	<b>Counterpoint</b>
Undergraduate students majoring in intelligence studies master data-mining, critical thinking, and writing skills within a national security context. They can use this knowledge to quickly assimilate into the IC workforce and provide it with much-needed analytic agility. Such knowledge cannot be obtained by “dabbling” in this field of study.	Undergraduate students majoring in international relations, statistics, nuclear physics, finance, or another relevant field are more appealing to the IC because they provide needed subject matter expertise. These students can gain sufficient familiarity with the IC’s operating environment by obtaining a minor or certificate in intelligence studies.

***Point: Critical Skills for Future IC Officers***

Undergraduate intelligence studies programs allow students to develop critical thinking, writing, and communication skills within the context of the national security environment to enable them to become more effective IC officers.

*First, intelligence is a complex and unique subject that deserves its own academic treatment, particularly to benefit those students who have interest in and intend to apply for positions in the IC.* Because academic intelligence studies departments centralize knowledge about the theory and practice of intelligence as a profession, they educate students on the larger issues surrounding national security in addition to producing

future intelligence officers schooled in the roles and responsibilities of analysts, collectors, operations officers, and other IC officers.

Treating intelligence as an appendage to other disciplines would undermine students’ capabilities because the intelligence studies degree provides students with “the time to learn and think about concepts and theories that can be used to provide context for what the analyst does on the job.”<sup>10</sup> The same applies to targeters, cyber analysts, and other IC professionals. With this broader understanding, students are better able to put their subsequent acquisition of subject matter expertise into the proper context to perform as intelligence officers. They can also fill a need for generalist analysts with strong institu-

tional knowledge to allow the IC and private sector to respond more nimbly to national security threats.

*Second, the real value in majoring in intelligence is learning, before being hired, how to effectively analyze and synthesize information under the imperfect circumstances—incomplete information, demanding customers, and unyielding deadlines—that characterize the national security operating environment.* Intelligence studies programs vary in quality, but the best—like many other well-recognized academic fields—incorporate a wide spectrum of conceptual/theoretical perspectives and subject matter.<sup>11</sup> They include learning how to think critically, to identify biases and assumptions, to be resourceful in the collection of data, and to commu-

nicate findings concisely. Their value is in learning to appreciate the art and science of how the intelligence cycle works and becoming proficient with the skills needed to be a successful operator, analyst, researcher, or other professional in the field.

Intelligence majors provide students with four years of work that build and refine their ability to be analytical, self-aware, reflective, insightful, skeptical, and curious, and to think about issues from competing perspectives. For students planning to go into intelligence work, it is preferable to concentrate on developing these skills within the context of coursework in the evolution, structures, functions, activities, ethics, and oversight of the US national security apparatus and classes on critical thinking, writing, and data science.

Acquiring subject matter knowledge—economics, political science, biochemistry—and skills should be a secondary academic track for the intelligence officer, rather than the other way around. One might even argue that it is easier to learn a “hard” skill—like a language—than those skills needed to critically engage information, which a good intelligence

program would teach. In intelligence studies, critical thinking *is* the content, not just a side benefit of learning about other content.

*Third, Gen. Michael Hayden has publicly said that intelligence today is much more than a “tool of statecraft.”*<sup>12</sup> Intelligence minors, certificates in intelligence studies, and ad hoc intelligence classes usually center on the “big” IC agencies, but not all students want to work for the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, or the National Security Agency. Intelligence degree programs have the space to offer concentrations or electives on terrorism, law enforcement intelligence, and cybersecurity to meet the needs of students who want to pursue intelligence jobs at the state and local government levels—such as fusion centers—private corporations’ security operations centers, or industry information sharing and analysis centers.<sup>13</sup> Forward-leaning programs, like those at Mercyhurst and George Mason Universities, focus on intelligence education’s need to cater to the range of potential employment interests and teach the core critical thinking skills required to be successful across the board.



### ***Counterpoint: Specialized Expertise More Important to IC***

The IC would be better served if undergraduate students aiming for a career in national security gave academic priority to obtaining substantive expertise in international relations, statistics, nuclear physics, finance, or another relevant field of study that strengthens the IC’s

knowledge base and research capabilities. The needed expertise is not acquired through intelligence studies programs, although students could benefit from gaining some knowledge of the work environment by taking electives on the US national security apparatus.

*First, discussions with hiring advisers suggest that many IC*

### ***A Middle Ground? Strengthen IC Majors Rather Than Reject Them***

It may be premature to discount intelligence as a major before thoroughly examining how such a major can be best structured and taught. Maybe the question at this juncture is not whether intelligence as a major is viable, but rather what makes a strong intelligence major?

The undergraduate degree programs offered in intelligence studies vary considerably, and not all offer classes on writing and critical thinking. It could be that existing intelligence programs need to better calibrate the substance of the required and elective courses offered, internship opportunities, and faculty balance between practitioners and academics in order to find the balance that produces graduates who are competitive in any of the intelligence realms to which they apply.

For example, according to a 2013 study, nearly 70 percent of the faculty teaching classes in intelligence studies programs have had intelligence work experience.<sup>14</sup> These former intelligence officials offer valuable insight but often lack the broader understanding of the history of intelligence, the policy and legal environments within which the IC operates, and the ethical issues surrounding the pursuit of intelligence that can be provided by more academically trained professors and a cohort of intelligence studies Ph.D. scholars.

*agencies prefer hiring candidates for analytic, collection, and operations positions who have a deep knowledge of global issues, hard sciences, and language skills. This preference is largely a matter of opportunity costs. Now more than ever, the geopolitical environment demands intelligence officers who have expertise in specific subject areas, including languages. A*

student majoring in intelligence is not majoring in Chinese, nuclear physics, international finance, biochemistry, or any number of substantive fields that are needed by the intelligence agencies. The desired qualifications listed for analytic, targeting, and collection positions on the CIA's website show a strong bias toward subject matter degrees rather than intelligence studies. Most IC analysts who have made it through the rigorous hiring process have degrees in the social sciences and humanities—valued for the broad outlook and perspective on the world they provide students.<sup>15</sup> Science and engineering graduates are prized for their particular niches of knowledge that intelligence agencies need.

*Second, students can best develop the critical thinking and cogent writing skills that are essential for success in intelligence within a rigorous academic program that mandates a deep exploration of the student's academic major.* Any rigorous academic program that teaches students to select and evaluate disparate sources, to engage in critical thinking, to come to a conclusion with incomplete knowledge, and to construct a reasoned argument will help prepare that student for intelligence work. But how much better if that rigorous program is done in a substantive field? The IC needs people who have deep knowledge of foreign cultures, foreign leaders and politics, and foreign weapons systems, so that these intelligence officers can provide insights to US policymakers.

*Third, too many intelligence degree programs are designed and run by academics with little practical experience in the intelligence profession, although many adjunct staff have intelligence backgrounds.* The

programs focus on broad theories of intelligence and process-oriented knowledge but not on the deep subject matter knowledge needed to put rapidly moving events and limited data into context for policymakers as actionable intelligence. For that reason, the intelligence agencies prefer to teach the “how to” of intelligence analysis to new employees. Since 2000, CIA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence have all developed in-house “schools” to train employees in the craft of intelligence, and, like other crafts, mastery is gained through practical experience. Some of the smaller US intelligence agencies may find graduates of intelligence degree programs effective employees, at least for the short term, but even these smaller agencies would do better to emphasize subject matter expertise as well as critical thinking and writing.

*Last, intelligence degree programs shortchange both students and the IC by not giving either what they need.* The programs are popular but fail to deliver a demonstrable hiring advantage while dissuading students from majoring in something that would offer a better chance of a successful intelligence career. One veteran CIA instructor said that new hires who had majored in intelligence do not stand out from their contemporaries.<sup>16</sup> Probably for this reason, when CIA recruiters visit campuses, they seldom list “intelligence studies” as a degree of interest to the agency. Moreover, the programs put at risk the future prospects of students who do not make it through the IC's highly selective hiring process because their deep knowledge of the national security environment does not easily transfer to other careers.

That said, some CIA recruiters have observed that most young people applying for intelligence positions do not have a solid background in what intelligence is, what it does, how it developed in the United States, and what its limitations are.<sup>17</sup> Newly minted intelligence officers do not know as much about their new profession as they should, which has led a few to leave CIA service early as they chafed against the national security operating environment. Needless to say, US intelligence agencies do not want their new employees to be wholly uninformed about intelligence.

To correct this shortfall, college students intending to go into the intelligence field would benefit most from a “Goldilocks” or “just right” program that provides some education of the intelligence profession without supplanting the study of those disciplines that help intelligence officers

#### **A Happy Medium? The Intel Minor**

Is higher education moving from one extreme—treating intelligence issues as an afterthought in national security or US history programs—to another with the idea of intelligence as its own major? Is the happy medium offering a minor in intelligence studies in conjunction with an undergraduate degree in a more substantive field such as statistics, data science, international affairs, or microbiology? A typical minor or certificate in intelligence studies would be 15 to 18 credit hours and include courses on the history of intelligence, contemporary issues in US intelligence, intelligence analysis techniques, and electives encompassing a wide range of issues pertinent to intelligence, such as the psychology of terrorism, data security, counterintelligence, and criminal justice.

understand the world. One such approach would be developing a minor in intelligence studies. The minor can be strengthened through significant involvement by former intelligence officers with academic credentials, to provide students with the knowledge

they need about intelligence collection, analysis, counterintelligence, and covert actions, as well as the accountability of intelligence that our democratic system requires. Active and former senior officials from CIA, NSA, and the State Department's

Bureau of Intelligence and Research have echoed intelligence scholar Mark Lowenthal, himself a former assistant CIA director, who has said, "Intelligence can be a minor; it must never be a major."<sup>18</sup>



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## **The Limits of Prediction—or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying About Black Swans and Love Analysis**

*Bobby W.*

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***The key struggle for intelligence analysts is that what they are able to produce and what their consumers think they can produce are often two different things.***

Intelligence analysts have it rough. Their plight extends beyond the old adage of being only responsible for intelligence failures while the policymakers they inform collect praise for their supposed unilateral policy successes. This certainly irritates some, but what truly imperils intelligence analysts is something that goes much deeper. The key struggle for intelligence analysts is that what they are able to produce and what their consumers think they can produce are often two different things. In a sense, to borrow from former CIA Deputy Director for Intelligence Douglas MacEachin's oft-repeated analogy, intelligence analysts are best at providing scouting reports on opposing teams, but policymakers are expecting to hear what the score of the game is going to be.<sup>1</sup>

So what do intelligence consumers want from intelligence analysts? When asked this question directly, they often trot out myriad responses that range from "just the facts" to something akin to clairvoyant understanding.<sup>2</sup> While it is a truism that different policymakers have different requirements based on the issues they cover and their own personal backgrounds, any good analyst will admit that a good chunk of taskings from policymakers is centered on a simple theme: tell me what is going to happen. To a certain extent, the primary

desire of modern-day intelligence consumers has not advanced far beyond that of the Duke of Wellington who said, "all the business of war, and indeed all the business of life . . . is to . . . guess what was at the other side of the hill."<sup>3</sup>

Drones have mostly solved that problem for warfighters, but the wrinkle here for analysts is that humans struggle to see over the figurative hill into the future.<sup>4</sup> When humans do make the effort to stare over those mounds of dirt and rock to make predictions, they, on average, are not much better than chance or simple actuarial models.<sup>5</sup>

This does not mean that a majority of the Intelligence Community's (IC's) estimates are wrong. On the contrary, when we use sound analytic techniques and reasoning to extrapolate from the present to make linear predictions about the future, we do quite well.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, recent research shows there are things individuals and teams can do to provide better judgments about future events.<sup>7</sup> However, when forecasting a break from the norm, a wholly new development, or the course of change over a longer timeframe, even the most seasoned analyst regresses to throwing darts.

So does this mean that intelligence analysts should take their crystal balls

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The views, opinions, and findings of the author expressed in this article should not be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations or representing the official positions of any component of the United States government.

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**Analysts should keep their eyes on the main goal of any engagement with new customers: educating them about the range of ways intelligence analysis can make the customer's jobs easier.**

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and go home? On the contrary, this recognition of fallibility and limits should encourage intelligence analysts to chart proactive ways in which they approach their work. Analysts can also bridge the gap between policymaker expectations and their actual capabilities by doing a simple thing: coming clean. Intelligence analysts need to educate policymakers about the limits to what they can provide in the realm of forecasting and adopt a more modest analytic ethos.

Despite wanting to wow customers with deep expertise or a collation of highly classified reporting, analysts should keep their eyes on the main goal of any engagement with new customers: educating them about the range of ways intelligence analysis can make the customer's jobs easier. And, yes, this will at times include offering probabilistic thoughts on the future, but it will also include things short of that—things that still will help reduce surprise, inform about uncertainties, and feed into the policymaking process. Intelligence analysts would do well to educate their customers on how their analytic approach and perspective can best answer some fundamental questions that are relevant to almost any policy problem. As former CIA analyst and senior manager Dennis Wilder so rightly said, “An educated consumer is our best customer.”<sup>8</sup>

The analyst's job does not end there, because despite the difficulties of prediction, there is room for improvement. Intelligence agencies must alter the types of analysis they

most value and reform their cultures based on lessons learned for better forecasting. They also need to prepare the next generation of analysts through improved hiring and training and a commitment to harnessing technological advancements that will help analysts and policymakers grapple with the uncertain, contingent, and downright unpredictable world ahead.

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### **Why Forecasts Go Wrong**

Postmortems of intelligence failure are chock-a-block with explanations of how the IC made a faulty estimate, either through a failure to predict (9/11) or a failure to understand (Iraq WMD). These intelligence reviews list a litany of issues leading to these failures, including cognitive biases, faulty mindsets, groupthink, stovepiping of information, and outdated analytic frameworks.<sup>9</sup> However, one of the great deceptions found within the key findings of these “do better” commissions is that with just a little more information, coordination, connecting of the right dots, disconnecting of the nongermane ones, and so forth, the IC would have gotten it right.<sup>10</sup> In some cases these flaws were fatal, but all IC forecasts come with limitations that no blue-ribbon panel will be able to overcome with new standards or improved oversight.

The best research on human ability to forecast the future shows that a majority of us—even experts—are severely deficient. Renowned Wharton professors Barbara Mellers and Philip Tetlock have shown how human predictions are often overconfident, use

the wrong mental models, unknowingly rely on small amounts of data or assumptions, do not test hypotheses sufficiently, and are infrequently updated or adjusted even in the face of new information.<sup>11</sup> Daniel Kahneman said, “We are normally blind about our own blindness. We are generally overconfident in our opinions and our impressions and judgments. We exaggerate how knowable the world is.”<sup>12</sup> These core problems are not the cause of our misjudgments but are the products of the following insuperable limitations on prediction:

### **Trend Lines and Discontinuities**

*Intelligence forecasts are inescapably estimates of future action or events based on a rationalized understanding of past actions and events. For example, Farlandia is likely to respond to an airstrike with proxy terrorist attacks because that is what we have seen before and it fits within our understanding of the risk tolerance of their leadership. Analysts are very good at extrapolation or making these types of linear or evolutionary forecasts, and these probabilistic predictions often end up being correct.*<sup>13</sup>

*The frequency of getting these projections right often creates a false sense of confidence that things will muddle along as before, and this leads to estimates that miss course-altering discontinuities or changes. As one intelligence practitioner notes, “Discontinuities in history are the ultimate challenge for forecasting.”*<sup>14</sup>

*This is not a particularly new discovery even within the IC. In 1983, Director of Central Intelligence William Casey formed the Senior Review Panel to study IC judgments that preceded large shifts or surprises in history. The panel found that the*



most significant faulty estimates were due to "single outcome forecast[s]" based on the "prevailing wisdom of the times," which led to a "prejudice toward continuity."<sup>15</sup> In other words, the past is not always prologue.

### Timing and Tipping Points

**T**Our inability to forecast when abrupt changes or tipping points will precisely occur also constrain human predictions. Analysts are good at describing environments or dynamics that raise the risk of a shift from past behaviors or actions, but "no forecasting technique can predict the timing of that nonlinearity."<sup>16</sup> Nassim Taleb and Mark Blyth put it plainly when they said, "Political and economic events are unpredictable, and their probabilities are not scientifically measurable."<sup>17</sup>

Intelligence analysts can warn about the growing sophistication of al-Qa'ida attack plans and the underlying volatility in the Middle East, but they cannot predict when the planes hit the Twin Towers or when a Tunisian street vendor's self-immolation will spark regionwide unrest. The process leading up to a major shift in activity is gradual, but when a phenomenon ultimately breaks its pattern, it is often in "one dramatic moment" that serves as an unpredictable tipping point.<sup>18</sup>

### Humans and Systems

**H**Beyond the discontinuity and timing problems, the even more basic limitations on forecasting ability are the subjects of intelligence products: human beings with free will and complex systems such as foreign governments and networks whose actions are not deterministic. Much of individual human behavior and ac-

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### On the difficult questions, where more uncertainty and complexity seeps in, intelligence analysts should be content with more humble approaches.

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tivity "rests upon contingencies and chance," and often the individuals who analysts examine do not know themselves how they will act in a certain situation or what policy decision they may take.<sup>19</sup>

Humans are fickle beasts with diverse motivations that are not easily described in a two-page intelligence article. As one example, there are countless intelligence estimates claiming that a country will only take action if its leadership feels its hold on power is threatened, but can we truly understand all the ways a leader will feel himself to be on the ropes?

On the systems side, as Taleb and Blyth remark, "Governments are wasting billions of dollars on attempting to predict events that are produced by interdependent systems and are therefore not statistically understandable at the individual level."<sup>20</sup> A senior analyst once told me that even if he sat in a cabinet meeting of a target country, he would not be able to tell you what that country would necessarily do in the future.

This was not some show of personal humility or a slight dig at the target country's dysfunction; it was a recognition that so many players and interests are at play in such a complex system, and therefore the ultimate outcome is unpredictable. The problem of complex systems can be somewhat overcome in short-term assessments because all systems have a level of inertia that analysts can track and assess. However, the longer a complex system has to permutate and evolve, the more difficult it is to forecast its future character. The ac-

curacy of estimates also precipitously dropped when forecasts looked out past a few years in the future.<sup>21</sup>

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### What Analysis Can Do For You

Not all is lost for intelligence analysis. The answer to the above limitations is not to forgo estimative and probabilistic analysis and convert analysts into simple collators of raw intelligence reporting. As stated above, most estimates will be linear, and the IC excels in that area. On the difficult questions, where more uncertainty and complexity seeps in, intelligence analysts should be content with more humble approaches. Analysts must adopt a new ethos that is not centered on predicting future events.

Intelligence analysis must remain a forward-looking and policy-relevant enterprise that provides its best forecasts. However, analysts must focus more on arming customers with an appreciation of life's complexities and uncertainties while also outlining how the key factors, pillars, and linchpins of an issue can lead to distinct futures with varying levels of likelihood.<sup>a</sup> Analysts already do this work, but they should fully embrace the fact that their jobs often will not be to reduce uncertainty about po-

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a. The IC already does these things both implicitly and explicitly. Nevertheless, taking them on as the "ethos" of the analytic cadre would give more purpose and confidence to analysts who grapple with the incongruity between their capacities and the expectations of policymakers.

**As Sherman Kent said, we do not claim our assessments are infallible. Instead, we assert that we offer our “most deeply and objectively based and carefully considered estimate[s].”**

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tential future outcomes but to inform their customers of the uncertainties and contingencies.

Armed with this analytic ethos, the next task for analysts is to educate policymakers on how their unique approaches to matters of national security can aid policymakers in their day-to-day jobs. The first goal would be to disabuse policymakers of the notion that the IC's access to secret information and specialists confers an ability to remove strategic surprise. Analysts must inform policymakers that discontinuities analysts have assessed as unlikely will occur, and while this may appear to some customers as misfeasance, it is an unavoidable aspect of our business. As Sherman Kent noted, we do not claim our assessments are infallible. Instead, we assert that we offer our “most deeply and objectively based and carefully considered estimate[s].”<sup>22</sup>

Even if the reception to such Bayesian nuance is lukewarm, analysts must then sell policymakers a positive vision of what they can provide in the realm of forecasting.<sup>23</sup> Policymakers often grapple with problems in terms of concrete questions and answers,<sup>24</sup> and the IC should strive to sell itself as a question-answering service. After all, questions are the “principal intellectual instruments available to human beings.”<sup>25</sup> Analysts must show policymakers that despite their lack of clairvoyance, they are the best-equipped cadre in the US government to provide faceted and well-argued

answers on the following key questions that correspond to nearly all geopolitical, security, and economic issues:

**What is the context and reality of the problem I am facing?**

*This is the most fundamental and empirical of questions a policymaker will ask of the IC analyst. Bowman Miller called this “explanatory intelligence” and Jack Davis referred to this type of analysis as probably the most valuable for policymakers who often prefer to “see themselves as the analysts of last resort.”<sup>26</sup> When answering this question, an intelligence analyst must outline the key actors and their interests and pathologies; the drivers that determine stability or uncertainty within the problem; and how the problem fits into either domestic or regional political dynamics. This interplay and complexity is often lost on mile-wide-but-inch-deep policymakers.*

*So what does all this have to do with predictions and forecasting? Is the provision of context and explanations of observed trends just analysts acting as classified historians for policymakers? Not exactly. When explaining all the factors that go into a problem or issue, analysts should always take the opportunity to think about the most useful of questions an analyst can ask themselves: What is the “so what” for the policymaker? The analyst can start by responding to a policymaker's need to understand the brass tacks of an issue, but they should always key-in on a “so what” that addresses a policy*

*concern. This “realities” question is therefore the building block for all of the other questions below as it often explains why foreign actors act the way they do.*

**How does including information on new developments affect my problem/issue?**

*Policymakers are likely to most engage with the IC on this question because it will be the driving question behind both their taskings and the questions analysts ask themselves when they write current intelligence articles. This is the most frequent type of intelligence analysis done in the IC, and it is where analysts provide their most accurate forecasts. This is because most forecasts are linear judgments with very-near-term or immediate time horizons. A need to put new developments into the context of larger storylines of an issue that policymakers are tracking is the driving factor for nearly all current intelligence products.*

*In answering this question, intelligence analysts are responding to policymakers' desire to know the impact and implications of an event or development that is not entirely obvious. When outlining implications of a new event, analysts must think about how new developments are likely to affect the plans, intentions, and character of the actors and factors outlined in their response to the first question on the “realities” of a problem. And sometimes it is just as important when new developments will not alter those realities as when they do.*

*When responding to this question, analysts must remember the aforementioned limits on prediction and how humans often misread the importance of events. Analysts must think through*

*the circumstances under which the new development could signal a discontinuity and how its implications will play out within a complex web of humans and systems. This may mean explaining different potential outcomes and their implications (see below) or analysts could be focused more narrowly on conditional analytic responses: "This new development is likely to result in this action as long as these other factors remain."*

### **What are the ways this situation could play out?**

*At first glance, this could seem like a pedantic rephrasing of the "tell me what is going to happen" imperative that analysts hope to avoid hearing from policymakers. In reality, this question is framed this way because it directly assumes—as do most future studies scholars—that the future is plural and therefore requires an explanation of contingency scenarios.<sup>27</sup> A CIA review of NIEs in 1969 found that, "a good paper on a complicated subject should describe the trends and forces at work, identify the contingent factors or variables which might affect developments, and present a few alternative possibilities for the future, usually with some judgment as to the relative likelihood of one or another outcome."<sup>28</sup>*

*To be clear, analysts will not need to speak to all possible future scenarios every time they respond to this question, because many problems will have less uncertainty or have enough intelligence collection to be sufficiently answerable with linear and evolutionary analysis. Nevertheless, even in these instances analysts should be prepared to discuss the implications of lower probability outcomes.*

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### **In the same vein as the previous scenarios question, the most vital part of responding to these questions is outlining a strong set of signposts and indicators.**

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*There is both a good way and a bad way to do futures analysis for policymakers. Providing a laundry list of scenarios without having done the legwork to assess their relative probabilities or the key signposts and indicators for each scenario will only add to the confusion of policymakers.<sup>29</sup> Future studies scholars say that the key in describing scenarios is to avoid laying out a logical procession of events that leads to that outcome, because futures will rarely come about that cleanly.*

*Instead, analysts should think about the environments necessary to produce future events. Analysts can then work back from understanding of the complex interplay between the key actors, complex systems, and driving forces of issues to provide signposts and indicators of moves toward a particular type of environment. Oftentimes there are multiple paths to the same endpoint. With this information, policymakers will better understand how future events and their subsequent policy actions could help to precipitate wanted outcomes and avoid unhelpful ones.*

### **How do we get from here to there? and/or What should I be looking out for?**

*These two questions play off one another so intricately that analysts must always treat them together. Generally, policymakers have a Manichean-like desire to know two outcomes: the bad one for the national interest and the good one for the national interest. Analysts should do all they can to disabuse policymakers of expecting neat and tidy outcomes like these, but*

*often on issues there will be things that either fail or succeed or simply happen or not. When policymakers want to know about specific distinct futures, analysts can provide "what if" analyses that posit futures in which policymakers' dream or disappointment scenarios have occurred, and then work backwards to explain what mixture of necessary dynamics between key players and phenomena occurred to make the scenarios possible. Analysts routinely have to do analysis like this on events like outbreaks of social unrest or violence, because as the limits to our ability to predict have shown, there is rarely a silver bullet that will tell us when these things occur, but we can explain the environment that could produce them.*

*In the same vein as the previous scenarios question, the most vital part of responding to these questions is outlining a strong set of signposts and indicators that policymakers and analysts alike can monitor to determine whether a notional future is on the horizon or not. Although the answers to these questions and explaining the indicators will not end all surprise for policymakers, they will remain supremely valuable because they can "penetrate policy blinders and biases" of policymakers who often want to interpret events as inherently beneficial to their policy or policy goals.<sup>30</sup>*

*When a "what if" paper is done correctly, both analysts and policymakers should periodically revisit the signposts and indicators together, so that all sides are interpreting*

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**When assessing how an actor will respond to a US policy shift or action, analysts can explain what constants must remain true to validate their assessments.**

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events through the same lens. The goal of this frequent review would be to create a “policy of equilibrium” for policymakers whose knowledge about the key aspects and potential for change in a system allows them to guard against potential shifts.<sup>31</sup>

**H**ow would “they” react to my different policy options?

When analysts open their inboxes to this question from customers there is almost a universal reaction of uneasy squirming. This instinctual reaction is due to an ingrained sense within intelligence officers that there is a firewall between them and policy. Intelligence analysts fear proximity to policy will make them champions of policy, instead of callers-of-spades.<sup>32</sup> Analysts often take a dim view of how factors will align in response to a proposed policy, and they fear that sharing such a view will alienate their customers.

However understandable these concerns, they are misguided because analysts can sometimes have no more direct impact than explaining to policymakers—who often think their policies are straightforward and well-designed—how complex foreign actors are likely to interpret US actions. This is a difficult task because, as British professor of strategic studies Patrick Porter has observed, “Policymakers’ fearful anticipation of uncertainty when talking about the world contrasts with their confident pronouncements when talking about their own states’ role in shaping it.”<sup>33</sup>

What analysts must do in this situation is go beyond just listing the plans

and intentions of adversaries and subjects and, instead, identify and explain the reasons actors have developed those plans and what motivates their intentions. From this starting point analysts can then explain, for example, how another round of sanctions is unlikely to break an enemy’s will, because its leaders have developed workarounds and fostered a culture of resistance that sanctions only reinforce.

This is another question in which conditional responses shine and can balance against the limits of our ability to predict. When assessing how an actor will respond to a US policy shift or action, analysts can explain what constants must remain true to validate their assessments. And by identifying these key factors and constants, policymakers can then begin to craft policies that can target those things and therefore bring about the policy goal they seek.

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**The Road Ahead**

So where do intelligence analysts go from here? They have checked their hubris at the door by recognizing the limitations of their forecasting ability. They have embraced a new ethos and an identity as “question answerers” who respond to sets of queries that should aid their customers, covering almost any policy topic. Those two things together are powerful, but analysts must resist the temptation toward self-congratulatory back-patting. There are even more ways for intelligence analysts to improve how they inform their customers. These measures include how

analysts actually do their work on a daily basis, how managers review analysts, and how intelligence agencies build cadres of analysts best suited for the inherent challenges of providing estimates of future events.

**D**oing Analysis Better: Foundational Analysis and Speculative Thinking

A common thread in each of the responses to the key policymaker questions above is a strong understanding of the core actors and factors driving issues, which form the basis of both linear and speculative analyses. This requirement to really understand an issue’s “environment” suggests that intelligence agencies must promote foundational analytic research even over current intelligence production.

On military accounts this may mean allowing analysts more time to do order of battle or work on political accounts, allowing more historical research on the interplay between key institutions and individuals. We must provide, as Jack Davis suggested, the same resources for research as we do for the production of current intelligence products, and work to build more robust research-oriented databases.<sup>34</sup>

Speculative analysis also needs to come in from the doghouse. If we are not great at predictions and spotting big changes, then we need to be comfortable with allowing more skeptical bottom lines based on if-then constructions or explanations of different futures and their relative assessed likelihoods. This fear of speculative analysis has led some analysts to adopt a “just make a call” approach when our predictive humility should resist such extremes. Alternatively,

sometimes paralysis sets in on tough issues as analysts grow uncomfortable writing an informed speculative piece and instead choose to write nothing at all. Managers should push mainline analysts to write these types of pieces and reward them for not “waiting for more reporting” or conducting what one IC senior called “hammer judgments” on issues that clearly were not hammer-ready.<sup>35</sup>

Additionally, our efforts to institutionalize alternative analysis have failed. It is true that some agencies require alternative analysis in finished production and others created entire product lines for “red cell” thinking. Nevertheless, these measures have worked against the value of such products. Often, alternative viewpoints are provided to demonstrate to policymakers we have thought about them, but the separation of these from mainline narratives only serves to reinforce—for both analysts and customers—that these events are so out in left field that they need not be taken seriously. Even the name “alternative analysis” begs the reader to dismiss the findings they may contain.

Instead of trying to show how outside-the-box we are thinking, we should put less likely—but more disruptive—futures back in the box of regular analysis. What potentially could be even more fruitful would be reframing this alternative analysis mission into what Miller called an IC “fire watch” that would have analysts, like park rangers, report a potential fire at the first hint of smoke. Analysts should have already laid out the alternative scenarios in current production, and then make updates on the relative increasing or decreasing likelihood of these potential out-

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**Many IC agencies are already doing good work on reviewing products for accuracy, but they should make it a requirement for analysts to personally review their own work.**

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comes, based on the observation of “smoke” or triggers.

### **R**eforming the Culture: Checking Work and Building Diverse Teams

Most intelligence agencies primarily hold analysts accountable for how well they handle process and adhere to high analytic standards. Agencies promote analysts not because their forecasts were right, but because they showed mastery of the accepted analytic practices that lead to strong analysis. Intelligence agencies must mesh this process accountability with outcome accountability. Statistician Nate Silver’s work showed that forecasters perform better when they are accountable for the accuracy of their forecasts because it forces them to frequently update their work based on new information.<sup>36</sup>

Many IC agencies are already doing good work on reviewing products for accuracy, but there should be a requirement that analysts personally review their own work. How correct and calibrated for probability they were in their assessments should play into the types of training those analysts receive and their career advancement. Additionally, if an analyst consistently litters forecasts with weasel words that cannot be judged for accuracy in the future, they are skirting their duties and will require adjustments to their approaches. Some may argue that the effect of analysis on policy decisions makes it impossible to judge analytic work fairly. This will undoubtedly be true

in some circumstances, but these events will be the exception, not the rule. Fear of being overly influential on policy should not hold back intelligence agencies from doing more to check the work they produce.

Intelligence agencies also need to rethink how they approach the creation of analytic teams. Tetlock’s studies showed that the best forecasts came from diverse teams of individuals who were not all subject-matter experts but brought with them unique skill sets and various ways of thinking. These teams fostered environments of collaboration, but also the diverse perspectives and open-mindedness of their members allowed individuals to challenge each other’s work and push each other to make more nuanced and, ultimately, accurate forecasts.

So in practice what could this mean? Well, instead of managers looking to find the right balance among military, political, leadership, and economic analysts on a team, they should be looking to have a group of individuals who can break down problems in different ways. For example, a branch chief should look to find the right mix of convergent and divergent thinkers, individuals with different proclivities for different mindsets and biases, and analysts from different geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Teaching analysts about order of battle or political psychology is far easier than breaking them of natural, innate biases.

**The IC should use the most recent research on how individuals with certain traits are better forecasters and incorporate those findings into how it hires, trains, and positions analysts.**

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***Preparing the Next Generation: Superforecasters and AI***

The IC should also use the most recent research on how individuals with certain traits are better forecasters and incorporate those findings into how it hires, trains, and positions analysts. Often, hiring advisers are looking for individuals who look most like themselves in job interviews. For the IC this usually means having an advanced degree, very good grades, strong writing skills, and subject-matter expertise or previous career experience in a related field. While these are all good things that probably are strong indicators of good performance as intelligence analysts, what if we dug a little bit deeper?

Mellers and Tetlock say the best forecasters have a mix of high cognitive abilities, good previous political knowledge, an open-minded approach to problems, strong inductive reasoning and pattern detection capabilities, high levels of fluid intelligence, a nondogmatic approach to their beliefs, a balance between competitiveness and collaboration, and a commitment to self-improvement.<sup>37</sup>

Hiring in the IC should look to prioritize these characteristics over, for example, the grades of applicants during their freshman or sophomore years of college. Tetlock also observed that superforecasters are partly created and partly made, and individuals improved their forecasting abilities with training focused on improving these traits. Through the process of analysts' "checking their work," some routine biases or analytic proclivities may become apparent that can be remedied using targeted training.

Intelligence agencies must find ways to harness the power of new information-processing technologies without falling into the trap of expecting these advances to transform IC forecasts and predictions. As senior CIA officer Joseph Gartin noted in this journal in June 2019, advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), "big data," and machine learning will undoubtedly have an influence on the work of intelligence analysts in the future.<sup>38</sup> While I will not try to predict the specific ways in which these technological advances will transform the work of intelligence analysts, it is clear that the processing of raw information that feeds analytic

forecasts will become more automated and less reliant on diligent work by individual analysts.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, the desire for this technological progress to emancipate intelligence analysts from prediction purgatory is easily overstated.

An article in an issue of *Science* that focused on the future of prediction found that these technological advances were able to notice heightened tensions and potential early-warning signals of political violence, but they could not by themselves predict them because of the "inherent limitations imposed by massive historical complexity and contingency in human systems."<sup>40</sup> The authors did highlight how "big data" and machine learning could improve assessments by enabling more "limited spatial and temporal" scope; these enablers represent advances the IC would do well to begin incorporating now. These tools could help analysts do their bread-and-butter linear assessments better and generate more realistic future scenarios. The incorporation of these tools, however, must also come with an understanding that even the most advanced efforts at predictive modeling will not be able to overcome limits on prediction.



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## North Korea's Nuclear Program: The Early Days, 1984–2002

*Torrey Froscher*

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***The North Korean nuclear program has been a major intelligence and policy challenge for more than 30 years.***

The North Korean nuclear program has been a major intelligence and policy challenge for more than 30 years. Former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry described the problem as “perhaps the most unsuccessful exercise of diplomacy in our country’s history.”<sup>1</sup> Donald Gregg, who was CIA station chief in Seoul as well as US ambassador to South Korea, called North Korea the “longest running intelligence failure in the history of American espionage.”<sup>2</sup>

To be fair, Gregg was referring specifically to a lack of success in recruiting human sources—not necessarily errors in specific or overall assessments. Nonetheless, his comment underscores the difficulty of figuring out what North Korea is up to. In 2005, the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), which was convened to investigate the failed 2002 national intelligence estimate on Iraqi WMD capabilities, indicated that we know “disturbingly little about the weapons programs and even less about the intentions of many of our most dangerous adversaries,”<sup>3</sup> presumably including North Korea.

Today we know a lot more about North Korea’s nuclear program—but mostly it is what *they* want us to know. Pyongyang has conducted six nuclear tests. We know that

North Korea has nuclear weapons, a significant fissile material production capacity, and an ambitious nuclear and missile development effort. These programs are completely unconstrained. The United States has tried many approaches to deal with the problem over the years, and intelligence has played a key role in support.

Are there lessons to be learned from this experience? Obviously, it’s a very big question and I will sketch out just a few thoughts, mostly from an intelligence perspective: What we knew and when and how we thought about the problem. North Korea was one of many issues I worked on as an analyst and manager in CIA until my retirement in 2006. The views that follow are my own, of course, and the specific information is drawn from the extensive public literature on the issue, as well as declassified intelligence documents.

I’d like to proceed by dividing the history of the early North Korean nuclear program into three parts, beginning in 1984, when we first realized the potential plutonium production capacity of a reactor under construction at the Yongbyon nuclear research center, and ending with the demise of the 1994 Agreed Framework between the United States and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea in 2003—after which North Korea overtly expressed its intent to

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**Those of us following nuclear proliferation developments at the time [the 1980s] were concerned about what was sometimes called the “dirty dozen”—familiar names like India, Pakistan, Iran, and Iraq were on the list but so were South Africa, Argentina, and Brazil.**

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build nuclear weapons and then went on to do so.

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**Phase 1: 1984–89—How Concerned Should We Be?**

Concerns about North Korea’s nuclear program first arose in the early 1980s. The proliferation picture looked very different at that time. The Cold War was still on, and the US-Soviet nuclear competition was still the major foreign policy concern. Nonproliferation was not fully established as a global norm. The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) was more than 10 years old, but many key countries had not yet signed on—they included China, France, South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, and Spain. Those of us following nuclear proliferation developments at the time were concerned about what was sometimes called the “dirty dozen”—familiar countries like India, Pakistan, Iran, and Iraq were on the list, but so were South Africa, Argentina, and Brazil.<sup>4</sup>

In Asia, North Korean nuclear questions were not a focus of intelligence or policy concern. Rather, attention was focused on Taiwan and South Korea. These countries had made the decision to pursue nuclear weapons in the mid-1970s, largely in response to concerns about the credibility of US security guarantees. In both cases, the United States learned of the efforts early on and took quick and effective action to shut them down.<sup>5</sup>

In 1983, a CIA document projecting nuclear proliferation trends over

the succeeding 10 years mentioned North Korean interest in nuclear power, but it discounted the likelihood of any near-term progress. This paper also judged, “There was no basis for believing that the North Koreans have either the facilities or materials to develop and test nuclear weapons.”<sup>6</sup> By the next year, however, that picture would start to change, and North Korea would begin its ascent to the top of nonproliferation concerns.

By April 1984, CIA had determined that a reactor under construction in North Korea would, when completed, “be capable of producing significant quantities of weapons-grade plutonium.” A memorandum to policymakers warned that this

would be “significant step” toward a North Korean weapons capability.<sup>7</sup>

Still, the Intelligence Community was cautious about judging the actual intent of Pyongyang’s efforts. A National Intelligence Council (NIC) paper in 1985 noted there was no evidence that North Korea was building a reprocessing facility or working on development of a nuclear explosive device. The paper also stressed disincentives for North Korean nuclear weapons development, including the possibility that South Korea would “be provoked to do likewise” or that the Soviet Union or China would react negatively.<sup>8</sup>

The early 1984 CIA warning of weapons potential stimulated the first of many policy initiatives to deal with the problem. North Korea had been in negotiations with the Soviets for nuclear power reactors, and the United States pressed Moscow to make adherence to the NPT a condition of any sale. Pyongyang joined



In 1984, the Intelligence Community realized the reactor then under construction at the Yongbyon nuclear research center (above) had the potential to produce “significant quantities” of weapons-grade plutonium

the treaty on 12 December 1985, and two weeks later the Soviets agreed to sell four light-water power reactors to North Korea, but the deal would later fall through.<sup>9</sup>

Many hoped that adherence to the NPT would resolve concerns about North Korea's program. According to the political counselor in Seoul at the time, "It looked like a possible breakthrough in relations. . . . We thought that maybe we could lay to rest any concern about North Korea's developing nuclear weapons."<sup>10</sup>

In an analysis published in March 1986, CIA saw North Korean accession to the NPT as an indication of peaceful intent and thought IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] inspections and safeguards would provide better information about Pyongyang's nuclear program. At the same time, however, the paper stressed that the NPT and safeguards were not foolproof and could not "head off" a North Korean effort to develop nuclear weapons if Pyongyang was so inclined.<sup>11</sup>

Over the next few years, CIA produced several analytic products that continued to emphasize the likely peaceful purpose of Pyongyang's nuclear efforts, while also noting the potential for weapons applications.

- A major paper published in October 1986 judged that it was "unlikely that [North Korea] would locate a primarily military reactor at a known research center or agree, as it has with NPT adherence, to open it to international safeguards."<sup>12</sup>
- An update in May 1988 concluded that the program deserved "close scrutiny" because of delays in

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***In 1989, five years after alarms were first raised, worrisome developments began to accelerate along several dimensions.***

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concluding a safeguards agreement and the possibility that a reprocessing capability was being developed.<sup>a</sup> Still, the paper concluded that there was "no evidence that North Korea is pursuing a weapons capability, but we cannot rule out that possibility."<sup>13</sup>

- As late as March 1989, a CIA analysis began with the caveat that the Yongbyon reactor "may be part of a civilian power generation program." Pyongyang was continuing to delay formal safeguards negotiations, and the paper noted that such delays "would increase international concerns that the North's activities at Yongbyon were not strictly peaceful." The paper did allow that "North Korea may be willing to risk the international censure that a nuclear weapons program would bring in order to maintain a decided military advantage over the South"—leaning a bit more in the direction of possible weapons intent but stopping short of a specific judgment.<sup>14</sup>

During those years, the presumed "breakthrough" of obtaining North Korea's signature on the NPT led to apparent complacency on the policy side—where, understandably, attention was most focused on the

impending collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union—despite Pyongyang's foot-dragging on safeguards. North Korea was supposed to negotiate and sign a safeguards agreement within 18 months of signing the NPT, but it was granted an additional 18 months after the IAEA belatedly discovered it had sent Pyongyang the wrong documents.<sup>15</sup> The second deadline passed in December 1988 with no further movement toward completion of a safeguards agreement or North Korean acknowledgment of its nuclear activities.

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***Phase 2: 1989–94—North Korea Takes Center Stage***

In 1989, five years after alarms were first raised, worrisome developments began to accelerate along several dimensions. Pyongyang's program grew in several respects, and the first public accounts of a North Korea nuclear weapons program and its potential appeared. These led to controversies and debates in the policy and intelligence communities that would only grow over the years. Equally important, several broader regional and global developments began to affect the evolution, and interpretation, of developments in North Korea.

When the George H. W. Bush administration took office in January 1989, Secretary of State James Baker began a new effort to build international pressure on Pyongyang, mostly through the Soviet Union and China.<sup>16</sup> In May 1989, US officials provided South Korea with the first detailed briefing on North Korean

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a. A perennial challenge of nuclear reactors is the treatment of spent reactor fuel. Reprocessing is required to recover weapons-usable plutonium from nuclear fuel that has been irradiated in a reactor. It is a chemical process that involves separation of the plutonium from other fission products and unburned nuclear fuel.

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**Intelligence assessments during this time continued to highlight concerns about North Korea's program, but they still did not directly conclude that Pyongyang was developing nuclear weapons.**

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nuclear developments, including the possibility that a reprocessing facility had first been under construction since 1986.<sup>17</sup> Press accounts of North Korea's nuclear program and its potential began appearing shortly thereafter as well—leading to North Korea's first public denial that it was pursuing a nuclear weapons capability.<sup>18</sup> By October, Secretary of State Baker was further raising the temperature of public discussion by stressing the nonproliferation concern posed by North Korean nuclear developments.<sup>19</sup>

The increased public attention to the issue was part of a US effort to increase diplomatic pressure, but it also had the effect of emphasizing the weapons potential of the program to the exclusion of potential peaceful applications—somewhat in contradiction to the impressions left by intelligence assessments up to that point.

At the same time, geopolitical developments were increasing North Korea's security concerns and adding to its isolation. China was beginning the process of liberalizing its economy and sought better relations with Seoul.<sup>20</sup> The Soviet Union was in the midst of "perestroika" and accelerating toward its final demise in 1991. In the words of Don Oberdorfer, "The Soviet Union evolved from godfather and benefactor of North Korea to partner and client of South Korea."<sup>21</sup> From North Korea's perspective, the world was looking increasingly hostile.

In Washington, there was growing concern about the program but also the perception that there were

few good options for dealing with it. Little was being done beyond the program of pressure on Russia and China to influence Pyongyang's behavior. It was having little effect. According to a former official in the Reagan and Bush administration quoted in the Oberdorfer and Carlin history, *The Two Koreas*, "The real problem was the policymakers' reluctance to face the issue, an avoidance of reality that probably flowed from the realization of the scope and difficulty of the problem."<sup>a, 22</sup>

Intelligence assessments during this time continued to highlight concerns about North Korea's program, but they still did not directly conclude that Pyongyang was developing nuclear weapons.

- Talking points prepared for diplomatic talks with China noted "serious questions" about North Korean intentions and stressed the need to deal with Pyongyang's "potential development" of nuclear weapons by mid-decade.<sup>23</sup>
- An NIE published in July 1991 described the program as "of grave concern" and concluded that using the facilities under construction, "Pyongyang could have a plutonium-based nuclear device in two to five years." The estimate went on to note that since North Korea's NPT accession in 1985, Pyongyang had "failed to conclude a safeguards agreement

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a. Robert Carlin was himself an analyst in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research during the period discussed in this essay.

or to declare the facilities where we suspect a weapons program is being undertaken."<sup>b, 24</sup>

In late 1991, developments related to the collapse of the Soviet Union enabled the United States to take a radical step that had been contemplated, but not acted on, in the past—the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from South Korea. The move, undertaken as part of a unilateral withdrawal of tactical weapons worldwide, had a galvanizing effect. Direct talks between North and South Korea began in October 1991 and led by the end of the year to a nonaggression pact and a joint pledge not to develop nuclear weapons or to possess reprocessing or enrichment facilities.<sup>25</sup> For the second time, on the surface it appeared to many that the North Korean nuclear problem was on the road to resolution.

At nearly the same time, however, there was a dramatic shift in the tone and tenor of US intelligence assessments. In contrast to previous nuanced and cautious assessments of weapons intent, a December NIC memorandum judged that potential economic sanctions "would not cause North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program."<sup>26</sup> In January 1992, the CIA produced an Intelligence Community-coordinated *National Intelligence Daily* (NID) Special Analysis, which warned that the North-South agreement could not "ensure termination of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program" and that the weapons program could

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b. This reference is the first in the declassified record to directly address the question of whether a weapons program was in fact under way, but it falls short of a declarative assessment.

go underground in the face of IAEA inspections.<sup>27</sup> A NID article the next month reported that North Korea had conducted its first high-explosive (HE) test since 1988 and could be preparing to operate its reprocessing complex, “suggesting Pyongyang is moving forward with its nuclear weapons program.”<sup>28</sup>

The documents declassified thus far offer no explanation of what appeared to be the newly presumed existence of a weapons program. Undisclosed factors may offer explanations, but there is no indication or reference to new technical developments in the available material. According to several sources, concerns about the reprocessing plant had arisen by 1987.<sup>29</sup> The declassified February 1992 NID article noted that HE testing had taken place as early as 1988,<sup>30</sup> while other sources refer to such testing as early as 1983.<sup>31</sup>

In early 1992, the new-found IC pessimism over North Korea’s program clashed with policy optimism inspired by developments on the diplomatic and inspection fronts. On 25 February 1992, Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates, who had been following the issue as CIA’s deputy director for intelligence and as chairman of the NIC, told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that North Korea was “from a few months to a couple of years” from having a nuclear weapon.

At nearly the same time, however, North Korea was finally concluding its safeguards agreement with the IAEA. In May 1992, IAEA Director General Hans Blix led the first IAEA visit to the Yongbyon site. Pyongyang declared the operating 5 MWe reactor, two unfinished gas-graphite

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***During this period, US intelligence played a key role in supporting the IAEA by providing imagery of what appeared to be camouflaged nuclear waste sites near the reprocessing plant.***

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reactors, and the reprocessing plant (which it called a “radiochemical laboratory”). The North Koreans surprised the IAEA by saying that the reprocessing plant had already operated, separating less than 100 grams of plutonium. They offered a standing invitation to visit any site in North Korea, even if it had not been a part of the declaration.<sup>32</sup>

By the summer and fall of 1992, however, the IAEA was becoming concerned about inconsistencies in Pyongyang’s declaration. IAEA officials were particularly worried about the possibility that more plutonium had been separated than the roughly 100 grams declared. The IAEA, having just been able to see firsthand Iraq’s massive nuclear program after US forces had defeated Iraqi forces the year before, had been stunned and was newly sensitized to clandestine nuclear activity—something that not been its traditional focus.<sup>33</sup>

During this period, US intelligence played a key role in supporting the IAEA by providing imagery of what appeared to be camouflaged nuclear waste sites near the reprocessing plant.<sup>34</sup> Were it given access to the sites, the IAEA could have analyzed any nuclear waste they might contain and move toward a determination of how much plutonium North Korea had actually produced. Ultimately, Pyongyang’s refusal to allow access to the sites led to a formal IAEA request for “special inspections” of the camouflaged sites. In March 1993, rather than comply, North Korea surprised the United States and others by

announcing its intention to withdraw from the NPT.<sup>35</sup>

While the confrontation over special inspections was taking place, the IC produced its first NIE on the North Korea nuclear issue. The November 1993 estimate reportedly judged that there was a “better than even chance” that North Korea had already produced one or two nuclear weapons.<sup>36</sup>

The estimate was controversial in the policy community, to say the least. In their book recounting events in this period, three key policy participants wrote that the estimate “shed no light but plenty of heat.” In their view, no one could know whether Pyongyang had nuclear weapons, and the estimate amounted to “precision without accuracy,” damaging administration credibility and handing ammunition to its critics.<sup>37</sup>

Another observer claimed that the estimate “strengthened North Korea’s bargaining position and nearly led to war.”<sup>38</sup> Whatever its merits, the estimate foreshadowed future polarization (among both the IC and policy players) between those projecting the worst case and those inclined to leave more room for other possibilities. Within the IC, the starkest divisions were reportedly between State’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) (which dissented from the estimate’s judgments) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), which (according to a 3 December 1993 *Washington Post* article) was already judging that “North Korea will continue its nuclear weapons program



Washington DC, 1994: President Bill Clinton and Assistant Secretary of State Robert Galucci brief reporters following the negotiation of the Agreed Framework with North Korea. Photograph, a deal that was to have ended the North's nuclear weapons program. Photo © Marcy Nighswander/AP.

despite any agreement it signs to the contrary.”<sup>39</sup>

In June 1993, Washington persuaded Pyongyang to suspend its withdrawal from the NPT and accept a regular IAEA presence at Yongbyon. However, the North asserted a “special status” under the NPT, and dealings with the IAEA proved to be contentious. The crisis deepened in April 1994, when Pyongyang began to refuel the 5 MWe reactor, which by then contained in its spent fuel enough plutonium for four or five nuclear bombs.

In June, as the United States pursued sanctions resolutions at the United Nations and considered beefing up its forces in South Korea, former President Jimmy Carter met with North Korean Premier Kim Il-Sung in Pyongyang. After the meeting, Carter reported that North Korea was willing to “freeze” its program—i.e., forgo reprocessing of the spent fuel or further operation of the reactor—in

return for high-level talks with the United States. Ultimately, after another several months of negotiations the United States and North Korea signed the Agreed Framework on 21 October 1994. (See facing page.)<sup>40, 41</sup>

### ***Phase 3: 1994-2002—The Life and Death of the Agreed Framework***

The IC role in monitoring North Korea's program changed when IAEA inspectors gained access to Yongbyon. From the first identification of North Korea's plutonium production potential in 1984 to the first IAEA visit to Yongbyon in 1992, US intelligence was the only source of information on what was happening in North Korea's nuclear program. After 1992 the IAEA was on-site at Yongbyon, initially to implement safeguards designed to ensure that North Korea was adhering to its NPT obligations.

The IC played a supplemental role. In addition to providing information about sites of concern at Yongbyon to which the IAEA was not permitted access, the United States, along with other countries, provided technical expertise in the evaluation of environmental samples collected by IAEA inspectors.<sup>42</sup> The US help allowed the IAEA to uncover inconsistencies in North Korea's declarations about how much plutonium reprocessing it had carried out.<sup>43</sup> Pyongyang's inability to satisfactorily explain these inconsistencies, and its refusal to cooperate with the IAEA proposal for “special inspections,” led to the crisis of 1993–94.

After the Agreed Framework was signed in 1994, these “historical” issues about past reprocessing activity were put aside for the moment—to be resolved, according to the terms of the Agreed Framework, at a future date “when a significant portion of the LWR project is completed, but before delivery of key nuclear components.”<sup>a</sup> (See text on facing page.)

In the meantime, the IAEA's continuing job at Yongbyon was to monitor the spent fuel discharged in 1994 and confirm, as stipulated in the agreement, that the reactor and reprocessing plant were “frozen.”

With the IAEA monitoring activities at Yongbyon, the IC turned to looking for potential nuclear-related activity elsewhere in North Korea. This was a fundamentally different and more difficult challenge; instead of monitoring developments and

a. The Agreed Framework called for replacing the existing North Korean reactors with light water power reactors (LWRs), which were considered to be more “proliferation resistant.”

**Provisions of 21 October 1994 Framework Accord**

I. Both sides will cooperate to replace the D.P.R.K.'s graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities with light-water reactor (LWR) power plants.

1) In accordance with the October 20, 1994 letter of assurance from the U.S. President, the U.S. will undertake to make arrangements for the provision to the D.P.R.K. of a LWR project with a total generating capacity of approximately 2,000 MW(e) by a target date of 2003.

-- The U.S. will organize under its leadership an international consortium to finance and supply the LWR project to be provided to the D.P.R.K.. The U.S., representing the international consortium, will serve as the principal point of contact with the D.P.R.K. for the LWR project.

-- The U.S., representing the consortium, will make best efforts to secure the conclusion of a supply contract with the D.P.R.K. within six months of the date of this Document for the provision of the LWR project. Contract talks will begin as soon as possible after the date of this Document.

-- As necessary, the U.S. and the D.P.R.K. will conclude a bilateral agreement for cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

2) In accordance with the October 20, 1994 letter of assurance from the U.S. President, the U.S., representing the consortium, will make arrangements to offset the energy foregone due to the freeze of the D.P.R.K.'s graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities, pending completion of the first LWR unit.

-- Alternative energy will be provided in the form of heavy oil for heating and electricity production.

-- Deliveries of heavy oil will begin within three months of the date of this Document and will reach a rate of 500,000 tons annually, in accordance with an agreed schedule of deliveries.

3) Upon receipt of U.S. assurances for the provision of LWR's and for arrangements for interim energy alternatives, the D.P.R.K. will freeze its graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities and will eventually dismantle these reactors and related facilities.

-- The freeze on the D.P.R.K.'s graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities will be fully implemented within one month of the date of this Document. During this one-month period, and throughout the freeze, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be allowed to monitor this freeze, and the D.P.R.K. will provide full cooperation to the IAEA for this purpose.

-- Dismantlement of the D.P.R.K.'s graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities will be completed when the LWR project is completed.

-- The U.S. and D.P.R.K. will cooperate in finding a method to store safely the spent fuel from the 5 MW(e) experimental reactor during the construction of the LWR project, and to dispose of the fuel in a safe manner that does not involve reprocessing in the D.P.R.K..

4) As soon as possible after the date of this document. U.S. and

D.P.R.K. experts will hold two sets of experts talks.

-- At one set of talks, experts will discuss issues related to alternative energy and the replacement of the graphite-moderated reactor program with the LWR project.

-- At the other set of talks, experts will discuss specific arrangements for spent fuel storage and ultimate disposition.

II. The two sides will move toward full normalization of political and economic relations.

1) Within three months of the date of this Document, both sides will reduce barriers to trade and investment, including restrictions on telecommunications services and financial transactions.

2) Each side will open a liaison office in the other's capital following resolution of consular and other technical issues through expert level discussions.

3) As progress is made on issues of concern to each side, the U.S. and D.P.R.K. will upgrade bilateral relations to the Ambassadorial level.

III. Both sides will work together for peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula.

1) The U.S. will provide formal assurances to the D.P.R.K., against the threat or use of nuclear weapons by the U.S.

2) The D.P.R.K. will consistently take steps to implement the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

3) The D.P.R.K. will engage in North-South dialogue, as this Agreed Framework will help create an atmosphere that promotes such dialogue.

IV. Both sides will work together to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

1) The D.P.R.K. will remain a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and will allow implementation of its safeguards agreement under the Treaty.

2) Upon conclusion of the supply contract for the provision of the LWR project, ad hoc and routine inspections will resume under the D.P.R.K.'s safeguards agreement with the IAEA with respect to the facilities not subject to the freeze. Pending conclusion of the supply contract, inspections required by the IAEA for the continuity of safeguards will continue at the facilities not subject to the freeze.

3) When a significant portion of the LWR project is completed, but before delivery of key nuclear components, the D.P.R.K. will come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA (INFCIRC/403), including taking all steps that may be deemed necessary by the IAEA, following consultations with the Agency with regard to verifying the accuracy and completeness of the D.P.R.K.'s initial report on all nuclear material in the D.P.R.K..

Signatures

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***There was also a continuing concern that North Korea might be pursuing a covert uranium enrichment program as a second route to production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.***

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assessing the capabilities of facilities at a specific, known location, the IC was trying to uncover postulated clandestine activities at unknown sites.

***Kumchang-ri***

One potential pitfall of holding a firm belief that clandestine activities are underway somewhere is that you are likely to find activity, even if it doesn't really exist. In 1994, the director of DIA testified before Congress that the North would "continue its nuclear weapons program despite any agreement it signs to the contrary."<sup>44</sup> This conviction was likely a factor in DIA's 1998 identification of a large underground complex at Kumchang-ri as a site where Pyongyang was replicating the plutonium production facilities at Yongbyon, although observers would note that the view was not universally held around the IC and that, as a result, distorted pictures of the situation favoring one view or another would reach the public.<sup>45</sup>

After months of negotiations, the North Koreans allowed US inspectors on the site in return for 400,000 tons of food aid. After the visit, which took place during 18–24 May 1999, it was concluded that the facility did "not contain a plutonium production reactor or reprocessing plant" and that the site was unsuitable for such purposes.<sup>46</sup>

The incident proved to be an embarrassment for the IC and demonstrated the risks of substituting assumptions and beliefs for thorough analysis. Intelligence is rarely

comprehensive or definitive—there is usually room for alternative interpretations of available information available. When participants or observers hold strong opinions, the temptation exists, consciously or not, to emphasize the information or interpretation most congenial to predispositions. Succumbing to such temptations puts the credibility of IC assessments at risk and could be considered a form of politicization. Analysts and customers would be better served by a critical evaluation of information gaps and consideration of alternative explanations for the information available.

***Uranium Enrichment***

There was also a continuing concern that North Korea might be pursuing a covert uranium enrichment program as a second route to production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. According to a Congressional Research Service study, reports relating to North Korean procurement of enrichment-related equipment had been seen as early as the mid-1980s.<sup>47</sup>

By the late 1990s, however, concern was focusing on information that North Korea was obtaining centrifuge-related technology from Pakistan, possibly in return for North Korea ballistic missiles. According to an account by Yoichi Funabashi (editor in chief of the Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*), in 1999 the US Department of Energy was reporting that North Korea was "at the first stage of a uranium enrichment program in cooperation with Pakistan."<sup>48</sup>

By the end of the Clinton administration, the effort was apparently judged to be at the level of research and development, rather than full-scale production. According to Robert Einhorn, assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation during the Clinton administration's last two years, "What we saw, and it was very, very spotty at the beginning, we saw procurement attempts, attempts to acquire some dual use items that had application in an enrichment program. And we were aware of the North Koreans shopping around."<sup>49</sup>

In the early months of the George W. Bush administration, however, new information changed the picture. According to Jack Pritchard, senior director for Asian affairs in the Clinton administration, information available in June 2002 persuaded him that North Korea had "embarked on a program to create nuclear weapons by using highly enriched uranium [HEU]."<sup>50</sup> An untitled CIA fact sheet delivered to Congress in November 2002 indicated that the IC had learned "recently" that North Korea had begun seeking centrifuge-related materials in large quantities the previous year and that Pyongyang was constructing a plant that could produce enough weapons-grade uranium for two or more nuclear weapons per year as soon as mid-decade.<sup>51</sup>

In October 2002, Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly led a delegation to Pyongyang to renew discussions with the North—Pyongyang's first such meeting with the a representative of the new Bush administration. While originally intended to present new proposals (the "broad approach") developed in the administration's policy review, the enrichment program became



the sole agenda item. As Kelly later recounted,

*I stated that the United States now had a pre-condition to further engagement—that the DPRK’s uranium enrichment program [had to] be dismantled immediately. . . . I did not confront the Vice Foreign Minister [Kim Gye Gwan] with specific evidence of their uranium enrichment program, but I was emphatic that the U.S. knew the program was being aggressively implemented and it was a serious violation of international agreements. I asked the North Korean government to weigh its response carefully.<sup>52</sup>*

Initially, the North vigorously denied Kelly’s allegations. The following day, however, Kang Sok Ju, North Korea’s first deputy minister of foreign affairs—much to the surprise of the US delegation—ambiguously acknowledged that the North had a uranium enrichment program.<sup>53</sup>

After the October 2002 confrontation over the HEU program, two months passed before the Agreed Framework was irreparably breached. The Framework does not specifically mention uranium enrichment, and North Korea may have thought it could leverage their work in this area to gain concessions.<sup>a</sup> But the United States was not biting, and on 14 November the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)

a. The Framework does require that North Korea take “consistent steps” to implement the North-South Denuclearization Agreement of 1992, which declared that “the South and the North shall not possess nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities.”

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**After the October 2002 confrontation over the HEU program, two months passed before the Agreed Framework was irreparably breached.**

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announced that shipments of heavy fuel oil (HFO) to North Korea would be halted.<sup>b</sup> Pyongyang responded a week later by taking note of the paragraph in the Agreed Framework that linked the provision of HFO to the North’s obligation to freeze its reactor and related facilities.

On 12 December, two days after the last delivery of HFO, the Foreign Ministry announced it was immediately resuming operations at Yongbyon. IAEA seals were cut on the 22nd and reactor fuel loading began on the 26th.<sup>54</sup>

On 10 January, North Korea announced its final withdrawal from the NPT and by the end of June Pyongyang had completed reprocessing of spent fuel, recovering enough plutonium for four or five nuclear weapons.<sup>55</sup> In October, Pyongyang announced that it was changing the purpose of reprocessing the spent fuel rods from civilian needs to building a “nuclear deterrent.”<sup>56</sup> North Korea conducted its first nuclear test on 9 October 2006.

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**Demise of the Agreed Framework—Predetermined?**

While the confrontation over the enrichment program was the proximate cause of the breakdown of the Agreed Framework, it was far from

b. KEDO was the international consortium the United States had agreed in the first section of the Agreed Framework to establish to assist with North Korean construction of LWRs and to provide alternative fuels in the interim.

healthy even before this final blow. An analysis published in the *Nonproliferation Review* in the fall of 1999 had already concluded that a variety of factors had “all but rendered it a dead letter.”<sup>57</sup> In this analysis, the Agreed Framework’s long-term survival was in question from the start because it decoupled North Korea’s nuclear program from other political and security issues.

North Korea’s continued bad behavior undercut support for the agreement in the United States and from US allies. These factors contributed to the criticism that was directed toward the Agreed Framework almost from the beginning.<sup>58</sup> Specific problems included:

- Funding for the HFO to compensate North Korea for “lost” energy production was always in difficulty because of congressional opposition.
- The delayed requirement for the North to come into full compliance with its safeguards obligations gave the appearance of permitting a continuing violation.
- The IAEA was unhappy with inconsistent cooperation from North Korea and its continued insistence on a “special status” under the NPT.
- Japanese and South Korea funding for LWRs was unpopular in those countries and put at risk by North Korean military threats and political tensions

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***The Intelligence Community performed admirably in many respects in its work over the years on Pyongyang's nuclear program.***

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- North Korea was frustrated by continued delays in provision of the LWRs, as well as continued US and South Korean military exercises.
- North Korea felt that promised economic and diplomatic benefits were slow in coming or nonexistent.

More than anything else, Pyongyang's continued belligerence and confrontational approach—designed to get the most concrete benefits from the nuclear program, one of its few assets—were fundamentally at odds with any sense that events were moving in a positive direction. The “freeze” meant that North Korea's plutonium production was not moving forward, but in an atmosphere of hostility and suspicion that was not enough.

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***Lessons Learned or Perennial Challenges for Intelligence Analysis***

The Intelligence Community performed admirably in many respects in its work over the years on Pyongyang's nuclear program. Although North Korea was not on the radar in the early 1980s, the policy community was quickly informed when the potential of the reactor under construction in Yongbyon was identified. The IC provided key information to the IAEA and helped enable its identification of problem areas in North Korea's safeguards declaration. Collection was a particular challenge—North Korea is often described as the quintessential hard target—and there

were many unknowns throughout the process, as well as a paucity of human source information.

On the analytic front, the experience suggests possibilities for improvement, most in areas that have been perennial challenges for intelligence analysis—challenges not exclusively related to North Korea.

***Judging intent—a mystery, not a puzzle***

Former chairman of the National Intelligence Council and intelligence scholar Greg Treverton has described the distinction between puzzles, which can be “solved” in principle if the right information is available, and mysteries, which involve political or societal issues and include judgment of intentions or likely future actions.<sup>59</sup>

Puzzles are often the domain of scientific and technical analysis—the assessment and estimation of foreign system capabilities or R&D programs. Most of the analysis of the early North Korean nuclear program, as described above, fits into the category of a puzzle. Reporting described the nature of the reactor and other facilities under construction and what they were capable of in terms of plutonium production.

A question of equal or greater importance for policymakers, however, was a mystery—Why is North Korea building these facilities? Does Pyongyang intend to produce nuclear weapons? These questions cannot be answered by assessing the technical features of the facilities under construction. As Treverton puts it, “Issues of this type can only be framed,

not solved, and thus the logic or argument and analysis is as important as the evidence, often more so.”<sup>60</sup>

There may well be technical aspects of a nuclear program that bear on the question of intent, but they are complex and subject to misperception. Take, for example, the question of the reprocessing facility at Yongbyon. During the late 1980s, the possibility of reprocessing at Yongbyon was often taken to be an indicator of intent to produce weapons—i.e., if Pyongyang was planning to reprocess the spent fuel from the reactor to recover plutonium, it must be that it intended to use that material to build nuclear weapons.

However, it was also known that the fuel used in the North Korea reactor—magnesium-aluminum-alloy-clad natural uranium, known as Magnox—cannot be stored indefinitely in standard cooling ponds because it corrodes over time. Therefore, the spent fuel from the North Korean reactor had to be reprocessed—it was not an option not to do so.<sup>61</sup> In fact—although the United States would certainly not have been comfortable with this outcome, Pyongyang might argue that under the terms of the NPT, it could legally reprocess the reactor's spent fuel as long as the separated plutonium was safeguarded and reserved for “peaceful purposes.”

The inherent dual potential of the North Korean approach is further underscored by the history of British nuclear technology on which Pyongyang's was based. According to a 1986 declassified CIA document and other sources, the North Korean reactor is based on 1950s technology with a marked similarity to the British Calder Hall reactor.<sup>62</sup> The Calder

Hall reactor, first operated in 1956, was conceived and built to produce plutonium for military applications as well as electricity for civilian use.<sup>63</sup> It is impossible to separate the two purposes, and whether or not the North Korean plant was ever seen connected to an electrical grid it could still be used to support a weapons program, as the British reactor was.

When North Korea's nuclear program was in the formative stages, judging whether the intent was to develop nuclear weapons was a mystery, not a puzzle. Most of the analysis in the early years of the program, as described above, was agnostic about its purpose or noted both civil and military possibilities. This apparently changed by the end of 1991, when the program began to be characterized in definitive terms as a nuclear weapons program. The reason for the change is not made clear in the available record. What did not change, at least in the material that has been declassified, is that the intelligence product generally described programmatic details rather than factors affecting motivations or intentions—in other words, it treated the problem like a puzzle rather than a mystery.

#### ***The impact of context on judgment***

One possible explanation for the evolution of the IC judgment about the purpose of Pyongyang's nuclear program is changes in the broader context of assumptions and beliefs about North Korea, nuclear proliferation, and international relations in general—the spirit of the times (*Zeitgeist*), if you will. At any given time, attitudes and judgments about particular developments are affected by this broader context in ways that may not be immediately apparent

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because they are generally unspoken, universally shared, and thus largely invisible.

In the 1980s, international relations were still seen through the prism of the Cold War contest between the United States and the USSR. To the extent that nuclear proliferation was an issue in Asia, the focus was on South Korea and Taiwan—both of which had flirted with nuclear weapons because of their doubts about US security guarantees.

North Korea was seen as a country with no technological capacity or motivation to pursue nuclear weapons. Nuclear power was seen as a more likely aspiration, albeit one the North Koreans were unlikely to achieve on their own. This set of beliefs and assumptions likely was a factor in the IC's willingness in the 1980s to allow for the possibility that Pyongyang's nuclear effort might not be aimed at weapons development.

By December 1991, the IC judgment about North Korea had hardened to the point that it was assumed not only that a nuclear weapons program existed but that Pyongyang would not agree to give it up. The change coincided with the end of the Cold War and a growing sense of isolation for North Korea. China and the Soviet Union, the North's traditional patrons, both established relationships with South Korea—leaving Pyongyang feeling beleaguered.

These geopolitical developments may have been a factor in Pyongyang's positive response to the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from South Korea in late 1991 and the conclusion of the North-South accords in December of that year. North Korea also might have decided that its growing isolation was a reason to pursue nuclear weapons, if it had not already decided to go down that path. It is not clear from the declassified record, whether any of these developments was a factor in the shifting IC judgment on North Korea's intentions.

Any specific explanation for the shift in IC views must be speculative. Nonetheless, there are two other developments earlier in 1991 that might have contributed. After press accounts of North Korea's nuclear efforts first appeared in 1989,<sup>64</sup> the public discussion of the issue focused almost entirely on concern about nuclear weapons development.

The pace of press coverage increased after the first Persian Gulf war in early 1991, with an emphasis on how North Korea, not Iraq, was the real nuclear weapons threat.<sup>65</sup> It would be a mistake to think that intelligence analysts are not influenced by the tenor of public discussion and press coverage, even if the effect may be subliminal.

Post-1991 revelations about the extent to which the IC had underestimated Saddam Husayn's nuclear

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**Nonetheless, analysts—as often as not—are strongly tempted to make their judgments as definite and certain as possible— “make the call,” as the expression goes.**

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weapons program may have been a more direct influence.<sup>66</sup> This failure had a large impact on the thinking of analysts, who did not want to again underestimate a foreign nuclear program. It would be a natural response to take a more critical approach to North Korea’s nuclear efforts.

***Polarization as a form of politicization***

Greg Treverton has laid out a spectrum of politicization ranging from direct pressure from senior policy officials to a shared “mind-set” whereby intelligence and policy share strong predispositions.<sup>67</sup> He points out that the first almost never happens, while the last is a “limiting case” in that it may be self-imposed. He defines several intermediate stages, including the “house line” on a particular subject that tends to exclude alternative views.

Politicization is a notoriously malleable concept, often used more as cudgel to discredit the opinions of others. But Treverton’s conception of the “limiting case” illuminates the extent to which politicization may appear in an unexpected guise. A dictionary definition of “political” is “relating to the ideas or strategies of a particular party or group in politics.” One could easily say that allowing one’s view to be affected by any particular set of beliefs is a form of politicization, even if it is self-imposed. And yet, this is unavoidable at least to some extent since everyone has opinions.

Polarization may occur in the IC when organizations develop strongly opposing “house lines” that unduly color their interpretation of events.

Individuals may also let strong personal views affect their analytic judgment. In the case of North Korea, strongly polarized views appeared about the time of the 1991–92 shift to the judgment that Pyongyang was pursuing nuclear weapons. Don Oberdorfer quotes President Clinton’s national security advisor, Anthony Lake, as telling him that the president often received diametrically opposed estimates on North Korea from CIA and INR on the same day.<sup>68</sup> One wag characterized the State view as follows: “Two guys will be standing in an enormous bomb crater, and the guy from State will be saying: ‘The North Koreans are trying to send us a subtle and nuanced message.’”<sup>69</sup> As previously noted, DIA was on the other end of the spectrum—taking a hard line and asserting that Pyongyang would violate any agreement no matter what.

When there is little or no concrete evidence to go on, there may be a temptation to offer a firm opinion anyway. It is sometimes difficult to say, “I don’t know” or suggest a range of possibilities when the policymaker wants an answer. When opinions or firm views are offered that are more a product of a predisposition or assumption, that can be a form of self-politicization and should be avoided.

***Analysis should provide answers, not the answer***

Intelligence, almost by definition, addresses questions to which answers are uncertain or unknown. As Donald Rumsfeld has put it, “If it were a fact, it wouldn’t be called intelligence.”<sup>70</sup> Scholars of intelligence have argued

that the most important function of estimative intelligence is the management of uncertainty—helping policymakers deal with complex situation where the correct answer is not or cannot be known.<sup>71</sup>

Nonetheless, analysts—as often as not—are strongly tempted to make their judgments as definite and certain as possible— “make the call,” as the expression goes. This is what customers want, after all. Recipients of intelligence assessments sometimes are frustrated by excessive caveats and a litany of alternative possibilities that may be seen as “CYA.” In addition, as Paul Pillar has put it, Americans have a “strong belief” that the Intelligence Community “ought to hold accurate images of the outside world.”<sup>72</sup> So there is an expectation that intelligence analysts can and should provide the right answers, with little uncertainty.

On the North Korea question, the IC approach to conveying degrees of certainty has varied over the years. Up until about 1991, the IC did not express much, if any, confidence about the purpose of the North Korean program. There were consistent warnings about the potential for nuclear weapons development, but the possibility of peaceful use was also taken seriously. In retrospect, this even-handed approach seems overly cautious. We now know—from post–Cold War studies of Soviet and Eastern European archives—that Pyongyang was hinting to the Chinese about their interest in nuclear weapons as early as the mid-1970s.<sup>73</sup> According to Oberdorfer, North Korea had even directly asked China to “share the nuclear secret” shortly after the latter country’s first nuclear test in 1964.<sup>74</sup>

One important downside of the even-handed, cautious assessment of the North Korean nuclear problem in the 1980s is that it made it easier for policymakers to ignore the problem. As long as the possibility is offered that the program was for peaceful purposes, the urgency of measures to control it is reduced. During the early years when North Korea dragged its feet on declaring its program and accepting safeguards, there was little sense of urgency in the policy community. Arguably, the IC could have and should have done more to sound alarms.

At about the same time the IC switched to a firm conclusion that North Korea had a nuclear weapons program, Pyongyang finally signed a safeguards agreement and began dealing with the IAEA. The policy community generally felt this shift in analysis was ill-timed, given North Korea's steps toward NPT

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***Is there a way to find a happy medium between “making the call”—a firm judgment that goes beyond what can be known—and offering a banal, “on the one hand, on the other hand” formulation that sheds little light?***

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compliance and engagement with the IAEA. The late 1993 NIE judging that “There was a better than even chance that North Korea had already produced one or two nuclear weapons” was even more unwelcome in policy circles. As previously mentioned, key policymakers saw the NIE as an unwelcome injection of an arbitrary assertion into the policy process, since “no one knew” whether North Korea possessed nuclear weapons. In their view, such a judgment “handed ammunition to critics of administration policy” and undermined the administration’s credibility for no good reason.<sup>75</sup>

Is there a way to find a happy medium between “making the call”—a firm judgment that goes beyond what

can be known—and offering a banal, “on the one hand, on the other hand” formulation that sheds little light? Perhaps one fruitful approach would begin by spending less time reporting current developments and devoting more effort to thinking through possible future developments, how they might materialize, and what factors would affect their likelihood. Ideally, policymakers and academics would join with intelligence analysts to consider the historical context, uncertainties, and unknowns and lay out alternative future pathways that events might follow. Such a program could provide a stimulus to new thinking as well as break down the polarization that harms working relationships, inhibits creative thought, and does not serve the interests of consumers.



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## A Matter of Trust: Covert Action Reconsidered

Michael Warner

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**Covert action is the secret supplement to war and diplomacy, employed at the margins of conflict to shift patterns of trust and allegiance.**

Increasing our knowledge of what covert action is requires deeper insight into how it works, especially in the cyber domain. Covert action is the secret supplement to war and diplomacy, employed at the margins of conflict to shift patterns of trust and allegiance. With most if not all types of covert actions, however, the problem has always been one of scale. Covert action to be effective has had to remain plausibly deniable for a crucial time period, and to do so it has had to remain small. Cyberspace with its promises of (relative) anonymity and its near-instantaneous reach to large numbers of computer users has made it possible to run activities that are indistinguishable from covert actions on a much larger scale. That development does not make all cyberspace operations covert actions; rather, it suggests that cyber covert actions will be practiced by many more nations unless and until victim states find ways of thwarting them.

Covert action's dark arts have been with us at least as long as we have written records, but they have always been marginal to the larger movements of politics, diplomacy, and war. This limitation inheres in the secrecy that by definition attends *covert* action. After all, something is covert if its effects can be seen but something about its origin,

sponsorship, or purpose remains deliberately hidden from those who would certainly want to know the full truth about it.

Such secrecy is naturally difficult to maintain, and embarrassing or even fatal to lose. Hence covert action's influence on the margins of state practice in war, diplomacy, and internal security. As soon as it scales up to a point where its secret aspects can no longer be kept secret, then it either fails or finds itself subsumed within larger, overt activities or operations. That rule may now be changing as a result of the ease with which states and non-state actors can mount covert (i.e., unattributed) campaigns in and through cyberspace.

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### ***Ancient Roots, Modern Scholarship***

Ancient authors had plenty to say about spies, and though they regaled readers with examples of political and military skulduggery, they typically glossed over the distinctions between practices that we moderns would carefully distinguish, such as espionage (the clandestine collection of secrets) and covert action (the various arts of subversion and sabotage). A spy was a spy; for purposes of taxonomy it mattered little whether he collected secrets in the enemies'

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**Classical authors who were quite distant from one another in time, place, and culture nonetheless sound remarkably similar when addressing indirect and subtle means to cause effects.**

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camp or poisoned their general.<sup>a</sup> What counted most for authors like Sun Tzu, Kautilya, and Plutarch was not the morality of treason and trickery, or the taxonomy of the spy's actions, but the fact that the spy had gained trusted access to the enemy's plans and person. Such entrée was highly useful to, and thus prized by, the spy's secret master, who could exploit it for a variety of ends.

Classical authors who were quite distant from one another in time, place, and culture nonetheless sound remarkably similar when addressing indirect and subtle means to cause effects. Such means were not exactly what we now call covert action, but were well known and, if not approved, then were at least an expected supplement to war and diplomacy, used when normal practices did not avail. The late Adda Bozeman reminded scholars that the primary actor in covert actions is not the state per se but the regime running that state; not a few regimes, she noted, have practiced covert action against their domestic rivals rather than (or in addition to) their foreign opponents.<sup>1</sup>

Though ancient, covert action as such has been defined and studied only for a few decades now. The need to safeguard international legitimacy was a factor in the frequency of "secret wars" during the ensuing Cold War. Austin Carson has usefully examined several cases of covert

interventions (specifically in Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan), in which external powers provided lethal aid to combatants, or even fought each other, while ostensibly hiding their roles in wars that were already ongoing. Carson notes that both sides, however, knew full well of this covert assistance and even combat, and yet decided not to publicize it.

The resulting "collusion" between rival states to maintain the obscurity of certain aspects of larger conflicts served an important, rational purpose for both sides: it preserved bargaining space by mitigating "hawkish" internal pressures in one side or both that could have escalated the conflicts.<sup>2</sup> This notion of limiting escalation and preserving bargaining space is an important argument that Carson makes, and one could easily add to it another incentive for secrecy: the desire to preserve the diplomatic legitimacy essential for international coalition building. In short, given modern strictures on aggressive war, a state gains more allies for its preferred policies and allies if its behavior is viewed as following international law and norms—and if the behavior of its opponents is seen as violating them.

Legislative and scholarly considerations of covert action ultimately led in the United States to passage of a law to define and govern it. This was arguably the first statute in history to openly define the practice;

before this point covert action had just been something that states did even if they did not talk about it. The (then) annual Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991 defined covert action as "an activity or activities conducted by, or on behalf and under the control of, an element of the US government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad so that the role of the United States is not intended to be apparent or acknowledged publicly."<sup>3</sup> That is, covert action means methods designed to influence foreign events in ways that will not convincingly be attributed to the US government. That "plausible deniability" of visible effects subsequently seems to have become a universal definition.

The definition fixed by the US Congress is a good one not only because of what it includes but for what it leaves out. First, it implicitly distinguishes *covert* activities (which are visible by definition, while their sponsorship remains hidden) from *clandestine* ones (both the cause and the effect of which are intended to remain invisible). Second, the definition does not encompass normal diplomatic practices or military tactics, even military deception measures. The former are typically conducted between declared diplomats in agreed and publicly known settings, such as ministries and embassies. The latter are similarly conducted by one's own forces and often in full view of the adversary, and thus they are hardly unattributable, even if their import is not what it seems. Congress deemed such "traditional diplomatic or military activities" to remain outside

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a. "Generally, in the case of armies you wish to strike, cities you wish to attack, and people you wish to assassinate, you must first know the names of the garrison commander, the staff officers, the ushers, gate keepers, and the bodyguards. You must instruct your agents in inquire into these matters in minute detail." Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Samuel B. Griffith trans. (London: Oxford, 1963), chapter 13.

the ambit of covert action and thus beyond the reach of statutes governing it.<sup>4</sup>

A word about the scholarship on covert action seems appropriate before we move on. Covert action as defined above implied certain affinities between covert action and diplomacy. To wit, covert action does not always impact “targets”; sometimes it seeks partners (who can in turn work together against the same targets). Len Scott noticed this in 2004, when he usefully described “clandestine diplomacy.” Scott’s term denoted “secret and deniable discussions with adversaries,” specifically “an activity undertaken by secret intelligence services where deniable communications between adversaries may be helpful.”<sup>5</sup>

One might well ask what countries (and terrorist groups) locked in a de facto or even a de jure state of armed conflict would have to say. It turns out that they sometimes have plenty to talk about, as Scott hints and history verifies. Wartime parleys under a flag of truce have a long pedigree, of course, but that is not quite what Scott meant. Rather, the historical record shows any number of instances where wars and undeclared conflicts end as a result of secret negotiations that statesmen sprang upon their respective nations just before the shooting stopped. The list of crises defused by such secret talks before the shooting even started must be even longer.

Such clandestine diplomacy must proceed in secrecy, as Scott explains, because a leak could ruin the slim chance of some sort of progress toward bringing their dispute to a conclusion. Traditional diplomacy

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***Clandestine diplomacy, on the other hand, occurs between officials on both sides who are officially not supposed to talk to one another, and who keep the secret of their contacts from many (if never all) of their colleagues, countrymen, and allies.***

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takes place between people who are publicly authorized and indeed expected to talk with one another—i.e., diplomats and high state officials. They might keep their proceedings confidential, of course, but no one disputes the seemliness of their meetings. Clandestine diplomacy, on the other hand, occurs between officials on both sides who are officially *not* supposed to talk to one another, and who keep the secret of their contacts from many (if never all) of their colleagues, countrymen, and allies. They represent states, movements, alliances that are officially in conflict, and their colleagues and coalition members might well be opposed (perhaps violently so) to the very idea of talking to the enemy.

Hence the secrecy of not only the proceedings but the meetings themselves, and hence the frequent involvement of intelligence officers or means in such cases. Both covert action and clandestine diplomacy can occur in conjunction, with each complementing the other. The symmetry between covert action and clandestine diplomacy allows us, for the sake of discussion in the analysis that follows, to fold in clandestine diplomacy as another type of covert action and use the latter term to denote both (unless they are explicitly distinguished). Now for some summary conclusions before considering recent trends.

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### ***Covert Action’s Principles: Trust and Scale***

These findings permit us to venture into theory in order to link covert action to larger understandings of political coercion, international relations, and expected utility. As noted at the outset, covert action generically is the *secret* supplement to war and diplomacy. It is not an independent factor in international relations, as Kristian Gustafson explains, for “covert action is encompassed by the same political philosophical factors which condition any non-consensual activity.”<sup>6</sup>

Aaron Brantly helpfully explains that covert action abides in the “shadows of international relations” because it is rational in the sense that war can be rational; it is predicated on expected net utility to increase the bargaining space for two international actors who would otherwise have to fight (or keep fighting) to resolve their differences.<sup>7</sup> Such shadowy means are attempted when the traditional means of war and diplomacy lack efficacy, as in a situation that is not quite peace or war but perhaps has reached a tipping point between these opposites. Thus covert action is *marginal*, in the economic sense of the term, offering rulers an extra bit of diplomatic or military utility in exchange for incrementally small (but potentially consequential) “inputs” of a state’s resources added to solve a problem via indirect means.

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***To be effective, covert action should remain plausibly deniable for a crucial time period, making it akin to wartime operational secrecy for military planners and commanders.***

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***The Workings of CA***

Having noted what covert action is, we can explore how covert action works. That marginality of covert action in turn suggests three generalizations.

*First, to be effective, covert action should remain plausibly deniable for a crucial time period, making it akin to wartime operational secrecy for military planners and commanders.*

Like them, the architects of a covert action are typically seeking specific effects and mission outcomes, and thus certain secrets about their activities need remain secret only until a mission is accomplished. Covert action therefore has a high requirement for secrecy up to the point of mission accomplishment, after which the requirement lessens (and sometimes vanishes altogether). That is why the US government, for instance, felt able to acknowledge the “fact of” (but not the details of) some of its covert actions from World War II and the Cold War.<sup>a</sup>

*The second generalization follows from the first: covert action is about trust.* It is employed at the margins of conflict, as noted above, to split foes from each other, or to shift neutrals into one’s own camp. To put this another way, covert action seeks, through secret ways, to make foes distrust one another, or make neutrals distrust foes. But sophisticated covert action (especially its clandestine

diplomacy annex) does something more constructive as well: it seeks to offer less-hostile foes and/or neutrals a path away from one’s harsher and more dedicated enemies. It splits the opponent’s camp, and adds to one’s own. Sun Tzu glimpsed this when he ranked the various policies to employ in defeating the enemy:

*Thus, what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy’s strategy. Next best is to disrupt his alliances. The next best is to attack his army. The worst policy is to attack cities. Attack cities only when there is no alternative.<sup>8</sup>*

Covert action corresponds to Sun Tzu’s second best policy: the disruption of the enemy’s alliances. The successful ruler or commander induces his opponent’s external allies to sit out the conflict, and his foe’s internal sources of support to desert his cause. Kristian Gustafson noticed this in a recent paper: “Since no political entity above the individual is monolithic, covert action seeks to exploit whatever degree of agreement can be found within aspects of the opposing party—exploiting fine political fissures to break down an enemy’s alliance.”<sup>9</sup> If conventional military operations and tactics can be compared to the movement of pieces on a chessboard, covert action then equates to a quiet struggle to determine the shape of

that board and the number of pieces each player controls.

Covert action on its own is only the catalyst for that rupture in the enemy’s alliance or internal cohesion. The actual split must be facilitated; it requires a path that is provided by diplomacy, whether quiet or overt, and possibly also supplemented by military assistance or support. Here is where clandestine diplomacy fits in. It is the flip side to covert action, in that it seeks in secret to build trust with certain foes (those who want to leave the fight, or switch sides), while covert action seeks to erode or even break that trust.

*Third and finally, with all of the ways and means discussed above, the problem has always been one of scale.* Covert action to remain covert has to be small. It only becomes large (and known) at the point of decision. Two examples from the Second World War illustrate the point. The United States and Britain in 1943 jointly proclaimed a policy of unconditional surrender to the Axis, meaning Washington and London would not negotiate any armistice; peace would only come with utter capitulation by the Germans, Italians, and Japanese.

Yet, negotiate American and British officials certainly did in at least two instances: when the king of Italy and his government pulled Italy out of the Axis in September 1943, and when the German forces in northern Italy laid down their arms a week before VE Day. Both negotiations

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a. OSS publicized clandestine diplomacy in North Africa and Thailand, for instance, within months of the end of the war. Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates publicly acknowledged several covert actions weeks after the collapse of the Soviet Union; see his “CIA and Openness” speech to the Oklahoma Press Association, February 21, 1992; accessed January 19, 2019 at <https://fas.org/irp/eprint/gates1992.html>

took place between individuals and small teams of military officers deputized by their commanders for the purpose.<sup>10</sup> But while both deals could be cut in secret, the execution had to become public and had to involve hundreds, if not thousands, of Allied commanders, officials, diplomats and ultimately troops.

When covert action is not small, it isn't secret, which typically means it is blown, soon or already embarrassing its sponsors and its participants. Covert action operations are usually too small to make a difference if they become publicly exposed. When they are blown their authors get the worst of both worlds: failure and notoriety. This fits with the perhaps coincidental confluence between the observations of Len Scott and Austin Carson, who both noticed that rival states in a conflict might seek through secret means to signal each other that a turning point in the struggle could be approaching (one that can either lead to escalation or de-escalation). Obviously such states have ample means of signaling one another through overt channels; diplomacy, military moves, and propaganda represent the usual mechanisms. But how can a state subtly signal that its declared policies *might* be about to change? The subtlety here is key, for it almost by definition requires quiet, plausibly deniable, and potentially reversible measures. In short, it is tailor-made for covert action.

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### ***Covert Action and Cyberspace***

These factors function in new and still indeterminate ways in cyberspace, the newest "domain" of conflict. Herein lies a tale, for the relation of covert action to state activities

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### ***Cyberspace has its own ways and means by which opponents use force against one another. . . .***

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in cyberspace has recently garnered scholarly attention. Cyberspace has its own ways and means by which opponents use force against one another, which means military force works differently, and diplomacy can operate in novel ways as well. Much of the difference in cyberspace stems from the ease of anonymity; the ability of actors to move undetected, unnoticed, or unattributed in cyberspace has become so familiar as to be verging on proverbial.

Several scholars have argued that covert action functions in cyberspace. Aaron Brantly explained in 2016 that offensive cyberspace actions are akin to covert actions because both proceed in some degree of secrecy; both sorts of operations "need to occur in the shadows between overt diplomacy and war."<sup>11</sup> William Carruthers in his thoughtful Ph.D. dissertation goes even further, arguing that offensive cyberspace operations are not a *form* of covert action but instead should be treated as covert action *per se*.<sup>12</sup>

Some evidence seems to bear this out. Brantly reflected that conceiving of offensive cyberspace operations as a simply overt tool would "overlook most state uses of cyber" since 2000.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Benjamin Jensen and Brandon Valeriano argue that most of the cyberspace operations that they could count in effect constituted covert actions:

*Despite increasingly sophisticated operations, between 2000 and 2016 cyberspace was a domain defined by political warfare and covert signaling to control escalation more than it was an arena of decisive action.*<sup>14</sup>

Jon Lindsay and Erik Gartzke offer a rationale to explain that pattern: "By and large, cyber options fill out the lower end of the conflict spectrum, when deterrence is not as credible or reliable." The exceptions to this rule that Lindsay and Gartzke observe are "mainly powerful states conducting covert action, subversive propaganda, or battlefield support operations against militarily weaker opponents."<sup>15</sup>

If the cyber domain thus seems tailor-made for covert action, there remains uncertainty over what that means. Few should be surprised that the US Congress does not closely follow debates in international relations theory, but Congress recently passed legislation moving this topic in a different direction. To wit, in August 2018 the new National Defense Authorization Act (for Fiscal Year 2019) amended Title 10 of the US Code to affirm that clandestine US military operations against adversary activities in cyberspace do not have to be regulated and overseen like covert actions: such an activity or operation by American forces could instead be treated as "traditional military activity" under the exceptions provided for in the covert action statute discussed earlier.

Why this divide between theory and practice? Here is where recent events want explication in light of the above. Over the last decade we have seen states and non-state actors (particularly terrorist groups) employ ways to attack digital information systems and the data on them. Armed forces have created cyber units to defend national networks and in recent years have used them on the offense.

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***The Russian effort to affect the 2016 US election campaign showed the possibilities for covert action at-scale.***

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But cyber conflict has spread well beyond war zones; indeed, various actors have found ways to impose their wills by non-violent means on state and non-state victims. In short, states are now employing cyber campaigns in pursuit of strategic advantage in competition short of armed conflict with one another and with non-state entities as well.

Cyberspace allows states to conduct operations that look much like covert action just as cheaply but far more broadly. Here it bears noting that the rest of the world has not imitated our legal segregation of traditional military activities (Title 10) from covert action operations (Title 50). In short, adversary states undertake secret activities without worrying whether American lawyers would classify an analogous American operation as proceeding under Title 10 or Title 50 authorities. Cyberspace further blurs the distinction. Its offers (relative) anonymity, and its near instantaneous delivery of finely tailored appeals to thousands or even millions of computer users provides the venue and means to do what covert actions once could attempt at a fraction of the extent. Indeed, cyberspace seems to have fixed covert action's problem of scale. Yes, states have been "caught" aiding and abetting such operations, as the examples below will show, but attribution is not proof, and sometimes attribution may actually appeal to certain actors.

The Russian effort to affect the 2016 US election campaign showed the possibilities for covert action at-scale. Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation probed the interference undertaken by the

private Russian organization called the Internet Research Agency (IRA) that had close ties to Putin's regime. The Mueller Report subsequently concluded:

*By the end of the 2016 U.S. election, the IRA had the ability to reach millions of U.S. persons through their social media accounts. Multiple IRA-controlled Facebook groups and Instagram accounts had hundreds of thousands of U.S. participants. IRA-controlled Twitter accounts separately had tens of thousands of followers, including multiple U.S. political figures who retweeted IRA-created content.*<sup>16</sup>

The scope of cyber-enabled efforts like the IRA's quite simply dwarfs anything possible before the Internet. Even radio broadcasts to entire countries during the Cold War did not make active, unwitting participants of their audiences; passive listening and even discussing last night's news lacks the authenticity and immediacy of a re-Tweet that perfectly replicates and spreads covert action messages produced by a foreign power.

We cannot know how many or even if any votes were swayed in 2016, but rigging the election was apparently not the operation's purpose. Its goal becomes clear in the affidavits released in early 2018 by Mueller's investigation. According to the indictment of 13 Russians handed up by his team that February, for instance, Moscow soon after its seizure of Crimea had mounted a covert campaign to get Americans arguing with one another. The IRA "as early as 2014 . . . began

operations to interfere with the U.S. political system, including the 2016 U.S. presidential election," noted the indictment.<sup>17</sup> The Russians employed social media to attack the presidential candidates that they (along with most American experts) considered strongest, while ignoring their apparently weaker challengers. Russian agents allegedly

*engaged in operations primarily intended to communicate derogatory information about Hillary Clinton, to denigrate other candidates such as Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, and to support Bernie Sanders and then-candidate Donald Trump. . . . On or about February 10, 2016, Defendants and their co-conspirators internally circulated an outline of themes for future content to be posted to [Internet Research Agency]-controlled social media accounts. Specialists were instructed to post content that focused on "politics in the USA" and to "use any opportunity to criticize Hillary and the rest (except Sanders and Trump—we support them)."*<sup>18</sup>

The efforts of these operators received supporting fires, as it were, from leaks of embarrassing e-mails exfiltrated by Russian intelligence from the headquarters of the Democratic Party and released to the news media in increments to distract Clinton's campaign.<sup>19</sup> A month before the election, the secretary of homeland security with the director of national intelligence jointly explained to the world that the "Russian Government directed the recent compromises of e-mails from US persons and institutions, including from US political

organizations.” The disclosures resembled “the methods and motivations of Russian-directed efforts”; indeed, “the Russians have used similar tactics and techniques across Europe and Eurasia, for example, to influence public opinion there.” Secretary Jeh Johnson and Director James Clapper assessed that with “the scope and sensitivity of these efforts, that only Russia’s senior-most officials could have authorized these activities.”<sup>20</sup> After the election, a team of experts convened by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington concluded that Russia had “invested in a systematic, multi-year campaign to not merely affect the results of an individual election, but sow chaos and undermine trust in the liberal democratic order itself.”<sup>21</sup>

As the world saw in the 2016 election, such targeting of individuals and societies via the “information space” could have strategic effects by eroding the cooperation necessary to sustain a democratic society. This thought has impressed leaders in Europe as well. It made the French wary. Russian actors followed the same playbook to sabotage the candidacy of Emmanuel Macron in France’s spring 2017 presidential race, and though they dumped thousands of Macron’s campaign emails on the public two days before the election, Macron’s cyber savvy campaign limited their intrusions and the resulting damage.<sup>22</sup>

British leaders that same year nevertheless cited in public a growing threat of Russian cyber and electoral disruption potentially backed by powerful military forces. Prime Minister Theresa May warned in November 2017 that Moscow had “mounted a sustained campaign of

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***As the world saw in the US 2016 election, such targeting of individuals and societies via the “information space” could have strategic effects.***

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cyber-espionage and disruption.”<sup>23</sup> Its tactics, she claimed, “included meddling in elections.” A few days later, Ciaran Martin, chief of Britain’s new National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), accused Russia of “seeking to undermine the international system.”<sup>24</sup> Attribution is not proof, as noted above, but if a victim state ties itself up in arguments over the standards of proof that a response should require, then that state is hardly acting decisively. Which is perhaps the point.

Interestingly, the US Congress looked at this situation and decided that responding to such provocations could not be done exclusively through covert action. What was required would have to include military action in cyberspace, as noted above. That change gains relevance when read with a later section in the same FY19 National Defense Authorization Act. Section 1642 covers “Active defense against the Russian Federation, People’s Republic of China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and Islamic Republic of Iran attacks in cyberspace,” and offers the president the authority to order US Cyber Command “to disrupt, defeat, and deter cyber attacks” by nations that conduct “an active, systematic, and ongoing campaign of attacks against the Government or people of the United States in cyberspace, including attempting to influence American elections and democratic political processes.”<sup>25</sup>

A related question: Can cyber operations covertly unite as well as divide? Yes, they can and do. That

is precisely its danger to regimes. It allows outside influences to reach directly inside a country to talk to that country’s citizens and turn them against the regime. Hence the fear of many autocracies and their herculean efforts to establish and guard their “virtual borders.” This is not clandestine diplomacy, but it is the same principle. When the Islamic State in Syria and the Levant (ISIL) took to the internet, Western leaders and security services feared what their citizens might see there.<sup>26</sup> ISIL’s “caliphate” by early 2015, for example, offered websites and slick online magazines, in addition to posting the names, photos, and addresses of dozens of US military personnel, and calling on supporters to attack them in America.

This was personal targeting in the extreme, designed to turn at least a few neutral but persuadable Muslims in the West against their adoptive homelands.<sup>27</sup> ISIL did not manage to reach any of the service members named in the online postings, but its various exhortations still prompted attacks in Garland, Texas, and San Bernardino, California. In the latter, a husband-and-wife team shot up an office holiday party before dying in a suburban fire with police in which the two sides exchanged more than 500 shots.<sup>28</sup>

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***Conclusion***

The argument here is not that all offensive cyberspace operations should (or should not) be labeled and overseen as covert action. Rather, the technology of cyberspace seems to

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be producing something unexpected: operations and effects that resemble covert actions but are much larger in their scale and reach. If covert action represents one way to bridge the gap between diplomacy and war, then cyberspace operations might offer another span, as it were, for exerting influence. Social media trolls do not have to rig an election to succeed; they just have to get Americans (or Britons, for Frenchmen . . . ) arguing with each other. ISIL does not have to inspire more than a handful of “lone

wolves” in the West to spread fear of Muslims and fuel bitter debates over immigration. Success in covert action tends to prompt imitation, at least until the would-be victims learn to prevent such tactics (or find ways of setting norms to tame them). The signs, as seen above, do not look promising, for the arguments over attribution, response, and collusion do not seem to be receding.

At the same time, however, the affinities between “covert cyber action”

and the quiet signaling described by Len Scott and Austin Carson above suggest new avenues for inquiry into what is happening in the cyber domain. This is an open field for scholarship into how states explicitly and tacitly bargain with one another in and through cyberspace. There is a great deal of ambiguity remaining about covert action, particularly over its place in cyberspace and its differences from traditional military and diplomatic activities. Such work should be informed not only by international relations theory but also by the history of intelligence, which amply shows that covert action works in the shadows to split an adversary’s “seams.”



***The author: Michael Warner*** is a historian with the US Department of Defense. He wishes to thank Josh Rovner and Kristian Gustafson, whose insights helped refine the analysis here.



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## **CIA Operations Officer Lucien Conein: A Study in Contrasts and Controversy**

*William J. Rust*



*Lucien E. Conein in OSS personnel file photo most likely taken in 1945 on his promotion to captain. For most OSS officers and their CIA successors, notoriety was to be avoided. The French-born Conein would prove to be an exception, becoming to many of those who knew him and would learn of him a legend—in many ways the epitome of clandestine operational success. The qualities that earned him that place were skill and courage, historic circumstance, and the force of personality. Often guilty of foolhardiness, poor judgment, exaggeration, and indiscretions, Conein, others felt, was unworthy of emulation.*

I first met Lucien E. “Lou” Conein, CIA’s principal contact with the South Vietnamese generals who overthrew President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963, at Dominique’s, a once elegant but now defunct French restaurant in Washington, DC, not far from the White House. It was 1981, and I was interviewing him for a book I was writing about the Kennedy administration and the Vietnam War. Then 61, Conein was just under six feet tall, with thick white hair, a deep, booming voice, and an impish smile accented by bushy, animated eyebrows. His most distinguishing physical characteristic was the absence of fingertips down to the first joints on his index and middle fingers of his right hand.

A profane, irreverent raconteur, Conein punctuated his answers to my questions with colorful language and idiosyncratic slang: CIA was “the cookie factory,” and conducting covert operations was “playing cowboys and Indians.” He characterized the plotting South Vietnamese generals as “corporals with stars on their shoulders” and incapable of organizing “a two-car funeral.” Not once did he project the “hint of barely restrained violence” that a former CIA colleague detected at their first meeting in the 1950s.<sup>1</sup>

My initial meeting with Conein was followed by several more interviews that became source material for *Kennedy in Vietnam*. There was nothing particularly exclusive about my conversations with Conein, who spoke to journalists in Vietnam and to historians after the war. His willingness to talk was welcomed by writers, but his information was not always accurate. A sympathetic evaluation of Conein early in his intelligence career acknowledged his “flair for exaggeration.”<sup>2</sup> His service in the French Army, 1940–41, was sometimes portrayed as a more romantic-sounding assignment in the French Foreign Legion. And he often implied that the loss of his fingertips occurred during a hazardous intelligence operation, when in fact the injury happened while repairing an automobile engine.

The views, opinions, and findings of the author expressed in this article should not be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations or representing the official positions of any component of the United States government. © William J. Rust, 2019

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**Richard M. Helms, a former director of Central Intelligence (DCI) whose career often intersected with Conein's, wrote in his memoir that he doubted there was “any government activity encompassing the mix of personnel as that in OSS or CIA.”**

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“One of the problems with Conein is that he told you these marvelous stories, but they didn’t always pan out,” said Stanley Karnow, a foreign correspondent and historian who abandoned a Conein biography because of the dubious accuracy of his subject’s recollections. “I had a hell of a time trying to figure out what was true and what was false.”<sup>3</sup>

Sorting fact from fancy in Conein’s life story has become somewhat less difficult with the release of a growing number of declassified government records documenting his career in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and its successor intelligence agencies, most notably CIA. Reports by and about Conein, background investigations, and other official documents tell the story of a rough-hewn paramilitary officer who was a polarizing figure within the US government. To many CIA officers he worked for, Conein was an experienced professional—dedicated, courageous, and loyal. Among Agency security officers, however, there were persistent concerns about his heavy drinking, multiple wives, and emotional volatility. Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., the American ambassador in South Vietnam during the Diem coup, found Conein’s covert machinations indispensable to US policy objectives. Yet Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara was appalled that an “unstable Frenchman” was the CIA liaison with the rebellious generals.<sup>4</sup>

The story that follows is not only one of a controversial intelligence

officer, but also an account of OSS and its successor agencies balancing Conein’s operational effectiveness with the security risk posed by his impulsive, erratic personal behavior. Richard Helms, a former director of central intelligence (DCI) whose career often intersected with Conein’s, wrote in his memoir that he doubted there was “any government activity encompassing the mix of personnel as that in OSS or CIA.” Another observation Helms made about intelligence agencies is perhaps even more relevant to Conein: “We’re not in the Boy Scouts.”<sup>5</sup>

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**“Judgment not always good”**

Born in France on 29 November 1919, Conein was the illegitimate son of Lucien Xavier Conein. The infant’s birth was registered under his mother’s surname, Elin, in the 14th District of Paris. The father subsequently acknowledged the paternity of the child, who took his name. In a personal history statement for OSS, Conein listed his father’s occupation as a soldier who had served in the Zouaves, the dashing light infantry noted for colorful open waistcoats and baggy trousers. The older Conein died when Lucien was five years old.

His mother, Estelle Elin, sent the boy to live with her sister in Kansas City, Kansas. A World War I war bride, Conein’s aunt had married a disabled US Army veteran. Brought up in a strict household, Conein had below-average grades in high school

and “associated with the son of a Kansas City policeman who had a wild reputation,” according to one of his many background checks.<sup>6</sup> Dropping out of high school during his junior year, Conein was hired by a printer in 1936 and later moved out of his aunt’s home to live with the family of his employer.

While working as a pressman and typesetter, Conein joined the Kansas National Guard, Company G, 137th Infantry Regiment. To help defend his native country against invading Nazis, Conein joined the French Army in 1940 as a private in an antitank battery. After the fall of France, Conein made a daring escape through North Africa, receiving a hero’s welcome in Kansas City in 1941. In September of that year, he married Marian Marshall of Kansas City. The marriage was an impetuous act of spite—aimed both at a former girlfriend who refused to marry him and at the parents of his bride, who reportedly “objected to his character.”<sup>7</sup> The marriage lasted six months.

Conein enlisted in the US Army the same month he wed. Army life agreed with him. He received a promotion to private first class in January 1942 and to corporal the following July. In August, he became a naturalized US citizen. Conein was assigned to the 3rd Student Training Regiment at the Infantry Officer Candidate School, Fort Benning, Georgia, in the spring of 1943. He was asked to volunteer for OSS, a request based on his fluent French and his familiarity with that country’s culture. Like many OSS recruits, he received his initial training at Area F, the code name for the Congressional Country Club in suburban Washington leased to the government during World War II.

Conein received further training at Area B, a mountainous wooded area in secluded northern Maryland, an area ideal for large-scale paramilitary exercises. In the fall of 1943, he shipped out for Great Britain, where he received tactical and parachute training from the Special Operations Executive, the UK’s clandestine sabotage and commando organization. First Lieutenant Conein was selected as a member of Jedburgh team MARK, a multinational unit of volunteers who parachuted into southwestern France in August 1944 to assist the Maquis in guerrilla warfare against the Germans. Maj. Henry B. Coxe, a senior US leader of the Jedburgh program, reported that Conein had completed his mission in France in a “superior manner.”<sup>8</sup>

Conein returned to the United States on 21 December 1944. An OSS evaluator described him as “voluble,” “energetic,” and “resourceful.” He was “a man of action—chiefly of independent action. Impetuous and sometimes rash, but dynamic and capable of inspiring men to follow his orders.” Conein had a “high war motivation—he enjoys fighting,” according to the assessment. His “lack of conservatism,” a consequence of a poorly disciplined, “often reckless” adolescence, made him “somewhat unreliable. Judgment not always good.”<sup>9</sup>

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### ***An officer of “proven worth”***

In preparation for a new assignment to the Far East, Conein attended the OSS West Coast Training Center on Santa Catalina Island for advanced instruction in such subjects as demolition, communications, and reporting. A combat veteran who had

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***As would often be the case in his career, Conein’s operational value outweighed his personal behavior. Unlike the West Coast evaluators . . . Major Coxe had given Conein’s combat performance the highest rating in virtually every category . . . .***

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been promoted to captain, Conein appeared to have little interest in mere training. “Showed poor discipline and might be a trouble-maker in the field,” according to one assessment. “Not too friendly and even tended to be antagonistic at times.” Conein was abruptly dropped from the program, with the comment that he was “no good” and the recommendation that he be transferred back to the regular army.<sup>10</sup>

As would often be the case in his career, Conein’s operational value outweighed his personal behavior. Unlike the West Coast evaluators, who gave him mostly “average” marks for his training, Major Coxe had given Conein’s combat performance the highest rating in virtually every category, including leadership, motivation, and practical intelligence. In Washington, a representative of the OSS Personnel Procurement Branch (PPB) looked into the West Coast training decision to release Conein, observing that the case appeared to have been handled in an “almost ludicrously incompetent and stupid” fashion: There was “not much sense in PPB breaking its neck to recruit” officers if another OSS branch could easily “dispose of men of proven worth.”<sup>11</sup>

In the spring of 1945, Conein was transferred to OSS Detachment 202 in China, where he trained irregular forces along the border with French Indochina—today’s Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Conein led a successful guerrilla attack against

a Japanese divisional headquarters in northern Vietnam on 9 July. His team of French, Chinese, and American commandos then embarked on a 23-hour forced march through enemy-occupied territory to attack a Japanese garrison, before withdrawing to safety in China.

During the final two weeks of the Pacific war, he led his guerrillas in missions against Japanese patrols and outposts in northern Indochina. A threatened attack by Japanese forces prompted local allied commanders to recommend that Conein abandon the area: “He chose to remain and defend his position against advancing columns of Japanese.”<sup>12</sup>

Conein was awarded the US Bronze Star for meritorious service in Indochina in August 1945. He also received three European decorations for bravery during World War II: the French Croix de Guerre with Bronze Star, the French Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur, and the British Mention in Despatches award. Many years later, a CIA assessment of Conein’s wartime record concluded that it had been “very satisfactory.”<sup>13</sup>

Among the earliest Americans to enter Hanoi after the war, Conein met the Vietnamese revolutionaries Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap.<sup>a</sup> In

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a. For an account of OSS engagement with the Viet Minh and its leadership see, Bob Bergin, “Old Man Ho: The OSS Role in Ho Chi Minh’s Rise to Political Power” in *Studies in Intelligence* 62, no. 2 (June 2018), <https://internet.cia/library/center-for->

later years, Conein publicly expressed contradictory positive and negative views of the two communist leaders. What is clear is that in 1945, when many OSS officers throughout Southeast Asia sympathized with nationalists seeking independence from their prewar European masters, Conein favored the French. According to a confidential informant, French intelligence officers in northern Vietnam unsuccessfully tried to recruit him as an agent. A fact about Conein’s service in Vietnam, subsequently revealed to CIA personnel security staff during a polygraph test, was that he had smoked opium on two occasions in 1945.<sup>14</sup>

The most significant aspect of Conein’s first tour of duty in Vietnam was making the acquaintance of many noncommunist Vietnamese soldiers, some of whom became senior officers in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and led the coup d’état against President Diem eighteen years later. Without diminishing the importance of his initial assignment in Vietnam, it is worth noting that Conein was there for less than six months. For the next six years, he served in Germany, an improbable posting brought about by his messy personal life but sustained by his professional performance.

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### **“A spotty reputation”**

In December 1945, more than two months after OSS had been officially dissolved and its operational branches transferred to the War Department’s Strategic Services Unit (SSU),

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[the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol-62-no-2/old-man-ho.html](http://the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol-62-no-2/old-man-ho.html).



Captain Conein (fifth from the left) with others receiving the French Legion of Honor on 3 December 1947 at European Command Headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany. US Army photo, NARA.

William G. Suhling Jr., chief of the SSU mission in Germany, wrote to headquarters about “a critical situation.” With American citizen-spies demobilizing there and around the world, Suhling was “disturbed” to learn that replacements for departing espionage and counterintelligence personnel would not be arriving in the near future. Among the personnel he “urgently” requested was a company-grade officer to serve as the mission’s mess officer, an undemanding position that would allow much time for intelligence work.<sup>15</sup>

The SSU replies to Suhling included the announcement that Conein would be his new mess officer. The choice appeared to be an odd one. Conein spoke no German, and his specialty was paramilitary operations, not espionage or counterintelligence. Senior officials in the War Department, however, had insisted that

SSU assign Conein to an “innocuous position” in Europe for the purpose of marrying Monique Denise Pierre Veber.<sup>16</sup> A member of a politically influential French family, she had been romantically involved with Conein after the liberation of Paris. Conein, having few good options, accepted the assignment and married Veber in April 1946. (This was the third marriage for Conein, who had wed and promptly divorced Gwendolyn Axsom in 1943.) Conein and Veber’s relationship produced two children, but their marriage ended in divorce after 20 months.

Despite the unusual reason for his assignment in Germany, Conein began to prove his value in an intelligence duty that Lt. Col. Louis E. Kubler, the SSU mission’s executive officer, characterized as “peculiar”: resettling agents who had outlived their usefulness.<sup>17</sup> This work included

altering and forging birth certificates, identity cards, and other documents—deceptive arts that likely benefited from Conein’s prewar printing experience. The “disposal” of spent agents often included financial rewards to help ensure their continuing allegiance to the United States. “Loyal and effective collaborators deserve to be left with a smile,” Helms, then chief of SSU’s Central Europe Branch, wrote in his memoir.<sup>18</sup> (He did not, however, comment on the appropriate treatment of less satisfactory former agents.) One can easily imagine Conein as both a convivial traveling companion for relocating agents and a menacing threat to those tempted to reveal their relationship with US intelligence.

Conein’s fitness for intelligence work was a controversial topic among officials in SSU and its successor agencies, the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) and CIA. In Washington, personnel officers declared that his “evident inability to stay within certain social regularities might lead him to placing the organization in an embarrassing position.” Helms, however, concluded that Conein was loyal, dependable, and imaginative. Resettling “burned out agents” and defectors posed little security risk, he argued. Moreover, Conein was unaware of the mission’s clandestine espionage and counterintelligence operations.<sup>19</sup>

Conein’s status within CIA was finally settled by Brig. Gen. Edwin K. Wright, deputy director of central intelligence: “The services rendered by the subject [Conein] in a highly technical and delicate field have more than indicated his loyalty and devotion. These very activities have sobered and steadied the subject to

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**Conein’s fitness for intelligence work was a controversial topic among officials in SSU and its successor agencies, the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) and CIA.**

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a point where in my opinion little consideration need be given to any earlier derelictions.”<sup>20</sup>

While serving in Germany, Conein furthered his formal education by taking courses at the University of Maryland’s College of Special and Continuation Studies, an off-campus program initially established on US military bases in Germany in 1949. During his tour there, Conein earned more than two years of college credit. Although he did not receive a degree, his superiors were nonetheless impressed with his progress as an intelligence officer. In June 1951, the chief of station in Karlsruhe described Conein as

*the most remarkable case of self-improvement by study and self-discipline I have witnessed in this organization. Starting with a spotty reputation, Conein has seriously applied himself to self-education, both by outside study and by a conscientious and levelheaded approach to the job given him.*<sup>21</sup>

From November 1951 to May 1952, Conein was chief of CIA’s Nuremburg Operations Base. When Conein left Germany in 1953, Lt. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott Jr., the senior CIA representative in Germany, praised him for his “valuable contribution” to the Agency’s work there.<sup>22</sup> During his assignment in Germany, Conein married his fourth wife, Carmen Adkisson, a clerk in the CIA mission who subsequently resigned from the Agency. They divorced in 1957.

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**“Rough as a cob or . . . gallant and gracious”**

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After a brief desk job at CIA Headquarters—his “forte is not administration,” according to one efficiency report<sup>23</sup>—Conein returned to Vietnam on 1 July 1954. This was three weeks before the conclusion of the Geneva Conference, which ended the First Indochina War and divided Vietnam into provisional regrouping zones, with the communist-led Viet Minh in the north and French forces in the south. Now a major, Conein was a member of the Saigon Military Mission (SMM), which conducted paramilitary operations against the Viet Minh and worked to stabilize the new anticommunist government led by Ngo Dinh Diem.

The leader of SMM was Col. Edward G. Lansdale. An Air Force intelligence officer “detailed” to CIA, he had helped suppress the Huk rebellion in the Philippines and had been an influential adviser to defense minister and later president Ramón Mag-saysay. SMM operated independently from the “regular” CIA station in Saigon, led by Emmett J. McCarthy. According to Thomas L. Ahern Jr., a retired CIA operations officer and contract historian, Lansdale reported to neither McCarthy nor the Agency’s Far East Division but directly to DCI Allen W. Dulles: “Allen Dulles seems simply to have regarded Lansdale as his personal agent in matters of Third World instability.”<sup>24</sup>

According to Rufus Phillips, a member of SMM who had joined CIA in 1952, “Conein could be rough as a cob or as gallant and gracious as

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**After SF approval of the technique that would become high-altitude, low-opening parachuting, Conein was named “the first officer in charge of Military Free Fall training within the Special Warfare Center” at Fort Bragg.**

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the occasion demanded.” Conein’s contacts in Vietnam, Phillips wrote in his memoir, “extended throughout the local French community and were particularly good with the Corsicans, some of whom he had met in Marseilles after the surrender of the French army in 1940. They ran many of the bars and night clubs in Saigon. He had also developed contacts in the French and Vietnamese armies and with émigré North Vietnamese, noncommunist political groups.”<sup>25</sup>

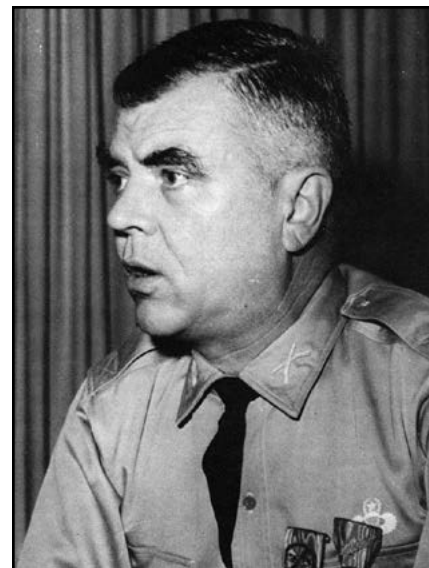
Conein was initially assigned to Hanoi, where he organized stay-behind resistance groups and conducted sabotage missions. One operation was contaminating the oil supply of a bus company to gradually destroy the vehicles’ engines. Before leaving Hanoi in October 1954, the deadline for withdrawal of all foreign forces from the north, Conein thought it would be a good idea to boobytrap the refrigerator in his home with C-3 plastic explosive and an electric detonator. Plugging in the appliance would destroy the house, a mansion that would likely be occupied by a high-ranking Communist Party official. This plan and proposed sabotage operations against infrastructure in northern Vietnam were vetoed by US diplomats.<sup>26</sup>

Returning to Saigon, Conein trained and infiltrated anticommunist Vietnamese agents into the north. He later recalled that the results of these missions were “zilch.”<sup>27</sup> Moreover, some of his agents were doubled by Viet Minh security services. Conein’s assignment with SMM

ended on 28 April 1955, when he began working for the “regular” CIA station in Saigon. In a formal assessment of his performance with SMM, Lansdale wrote that Conein was “a good, strong right-hand man in a tight spot and proved it in a number of tense situations during this assignment.” Privately, however, Lansdale was blunter, referring to him as “the Thug.”<sup>28</sup>

In October 1956, Conein temporarily severed his connection with CIA and returned to the regular army. Since World War II, he had been a US Army officer assigned to OSS, SSU, CIG, and CIA. The army informed him that any further promotion would require additional military training and service with troops. In late 1956, Conein completed the six-week course for Special Forces (SF) officers at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. After SF approval of the technique that would become high-altitude, low-opening parachuting, Conein was named “the first officer in charge of Military Free Fall training within the Special Warfare Center” at Fort Bragg. Promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1958, Conein successively commanded two battalion-equivalent detachments of the 77th Special Forces Group.<sup>29</sup>

Conein married Elyette Brochot in Dillon, South Carolina, on 30 March 1958. Born in central Vietnam, she had met Conein during his assignment with SMM. A French citizen, Elyette Conein became a naturalized American in 1959. This marriage,



Conein in an undated photo from the 1960s. Courtesy of author.

Conein’s fifth and final one, lasted until his death 40 years later.

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### **“Four shots per day”**

Conein was assigned to the US Army’s assistant chief of staff for intelligence in 1959. For nearly two years, he served as an adviser to the intelligence directorate of the Iranian Imperial Army. Near the end of his tour, Edward Lansdale—then a brigadier general working in the Pentagon’s Office of Special Operations—responded to a request from CIA to “quietly” check on Conein’s future plans. According to a memorandum for Desmond FitzGerald, chief of CIA’s Far East Division, “Lansdale feels that Conein is very anxious to come back and work for the Agency.”<sup>30</sup>

Conein retired from the army and rejoined CIA as a civilian in the fall of 1961, when President John F. Kennedy was stepping up the US military advisory effort in South Vietnam. Conein would be going back to



Saigon to advise the chief of station, fellow Jedburgh veteran William E. Colby, on paramilitary matters. He would not, however, be a staff member of the Agency. Instead, he would be a CIA contract employee. Such arrangements were sometimes made for “particularly well-qualified individuals who cannot meet all requirements for staff employment.”<sup>31</sup> Throughout the hiring process, questions were raised about Conein’s drinking. CIA’s personnel security staff was apparently not reassured by his admission of drinking excessively in the mid-1950s but currently limiting “himself to four shots per day.” An additional complicating factor for staff employment might have been his most recent certified personal history statement, which listed only two of his four divorces.<sup>32</sup>

Operating under military cover, Conein worked with the South Vietnamese government’s Ministry of Interior on the Strategic Hamlet pacification program. Not long after his arrival in Saigon, two South Vietnamese pilots bombed and strafed Diem’s presidential palace on 27 February 1962. The damage to the palace was substantial, but Diem was uninjured. Colby, who had been chief of station in November 1960, when South Vietnamese paratroopers launched an unsuccessful coup d’état, asked Conein and another CIA paramilitary specialist, Russell F. Miller, to canvass South Vietnamese military leaders to gauge the depth of their dissatisfaction with Diem. Conein and Miller reported to Colby that “there was some dissent, but it was not organized dissent.”<sup>33</sup>

Conein received an effusive fitness report for his service in South Vietnam in 1962, perhaps the high-water

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***Conein received an effusive fitness report for his service in South Vietnam in 1962 . . . . He was praised for his paramilitary contributions, his role as “honorary” executive officer of the SF command, and his liaison work with senior members of the South Vietnamese military.***

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mark of American optimism about the fight against the communist-led insurgency. He was praised for his paramilitary contributions, his role as “honorary” executive officer of the SF command, and his liaison work with senior members of the South Vietnamese military, many of whom were “general officers, long term friends and former subordinates.” The only performance quibble was his report writing, which could “stand improvement.” John H. Richardson, Colby’s successor as chief of station, commended Conein’s knowledge of Vietnamese affairs: “I have personally leaned heavily on his judgment and advice. Our high appraisal of [the] Subject is shared by the Ambassador [Frederick E. Nolting Jr.] and by the Deputy Chief of Mission [William C. Trueheart].”<sup>34</sup>

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### ***Talk of a coup begins***

During the Buddhist crisis of 1963—a political-religious confrontation between the South Vietnamese government and its noncommunist opposition—rumors of plots to topple the Diem regime multiplied. On 8 July, Maj. Gen. Tran Van Don, acting chief of the Joint General Staff (JGS), told Conein that the military had “plans to overthrow the government.” With the exception of one or two generals, Don said, all agreed that “the entire Ngo family”—President Diem, his younger brother and adviser Ngo Dinh Nhu, his caustic sister-in-law Madame Nhu, and his youngest brother Ngo Dinh Can,

the despotic satrap in central Vietnam—“must go.” Don “specified no timing for action.”<sup>35</sup>

Momentum for a coup slowed after Nhu, the regime’s powerful éminence grise, indicated to the generals that he was aware of military conspiracies.

Plotting intensified, however, after government attacks on Buddhist pagodas in Saigon, Huế, and other South Vietnamese cities on 21 August. The reversal of the regime’s stated policy of conciliation with the Buddhists prompted State Department officials to draft the infamous cable of 24 August. Declaring that the United States could no longer “tolerate” Nhu’s commanding position in government, the telegram called for his, and possibly Diem’s “removal” from power.<sup>36</sup> The message and subsequent cables between Washington and Saigon kicked off a weeklong effort by the US government to stimulate a military coup d’état. Conein was the principal intermediary with the conspiring South Vietnamese generals, who finally said they were not ready to move. In a 31 August cable to CIA Headquarters, Richardson wrote: “There is little doubt GVN [South Vietnamese Government] aware [of the] US role and may have considerable detail.”<sup>37</sup>

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**Although senior Washington officials wanted as much information as possible about coup planning, some were anxious about continuing to use Conein as the Agency’s key contact with the plotting generals.**

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***Executing orders “explicitly”***

On 2 October 1963, General Don told Conein that the South Vietnamese military “now had a plan” for a coup. Moreover, Maj. Gen. Duong Van “Big” Minh, a respected officer who held the meaningless position of military adviser to the president, wanted “a private conversation” with the American. Three days later, Conein had an embassy-approved meeting with Minh, who outlined three possible plans, one of which involved assassinating Nhu and Can and keeping Diem as president.<sup>38</sup> David R. Smith, a former member of Lansdale’s SMM and the acting chief of station after Richardson’s recall to Washington, recommended to Ambassador Lodge, that the United States “not set ourselves irrevocably against the assassination plot,” as Minh’s other



One of Conein’s senior contacts, Maj. Gen. Tran Van Don, had been a friend of Conein’s for 18 years. Photo © Keystone Press/Alamy Stock photo.

plans would likely cause “a bloodbath in Saigon” or a lengthy civil war.<sup>39</sup>

In his report to CIA Headquarters, Smith wrote that he and a visiting Agency official—whose name has been redacted—thought the plan to assassinate Nhu and Can while retaining Diem was “naive.” The South Vietnamese president, Smith wrote, “probably would not cooperate with the perpetrators of those acts.” Confirming that he would not act on any of Minh’s proposals without instructions “from the highest level,” Smith declared that he had “considerable confidence” in Conein’s ability to “carry out whatever role in this affair that HQS may direct.”<sup>40</sup>

The initial CIA response to Smith about Minh’s assassination proposal was that “we certainly cannot be in the position of stimulating, approving, or supporting assassination, but on the other hand, we are in no way responsible for stopping every such threat of which we might receive even partial knowledge. We certainly would not favor the assassination of Diem.”<sup>41</sup> This reply to Smith was apparently too equivocal for DCI John A. McCone. On 6 October 1963, CIA headquarters directed Smith to withdraw his recommendation to Lodge that the United States not oppose the assassination of Nhu and Can: “We cannot be in [the] position [of] actively condoning such [a] course of action and thereby engaging our responsibility therefor.”<sup>42</sup>

Without commenting on assassination plans, Washington’s policy

instructions to Lodge reflected the deep divisions within the Kennedy administration about the strengths and weaknesses of Diem and his opposition: The United States would neither “stimulate” nor “thwart” a coup attempt. What tilted American policy toward encouraging a coup, however, was the assurance to the generals that the US government would not “deny economic and military assistance to a new regime if it appeared capable of increasing [the] effectiveness of [the] military effort, ensuring popular support to win [the] war and improving working relations with [the] U.S.”<sup>43</sup>

Although senior Washington officials wanted as much information as possible about coup planning, some were anxious about continuing to use Conein as the Agency’s key contact with the plotting generals. *The Times of Vietnam*, a mouthpiece for the Diem regime, had accused CIA of attempting a coup and using Conein to foment it. When President Kennedy sought more information about the CIA officer, Defense Secretary McNamara declared:

*He’s a colorful figure, a Lawrence of Arabia type. He is well known to all the reporters in Vietnam. He is well known to the Vietnamese government, and here he is contacting an individual [General Minh] that is known to be a dissident and a probable coup leader. It’s as open as though we were announcing it on the radio. To continue this type of activity just strikes me as absurd.*<sup>44</sup>

Although the comparison of Conein with the Oxford-educated archaeologist, writer, and intelligence

officer T. E. Lawrence was risible, McNamara's concerns about the security risks posed by continued reliance on a highly visible CIA operative were well founded. DCI McCone was initially optimistic that the Agency could establish "another channel" for communication with the generals.<sup>45</sup> One proposed replacement was Maj. Gen. Richard G. Stilwell, who had arrived in Saigon the previous April. A combat veteran of World War II and Korea who had served as chief of CIA's Far East Division during 1949-52, Stilwell was the chief of operations for the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), a position that provided natural cover for meeting with senior ARVN officers. The plotting generals, however, distrusted MACV, especially its perennially optimistic commander, Gen. Paul D. Harkins, who thought it would be "incongruous" for the US government to "get rid" of Diem after nine years of support.<sup>46</sup>

Ambassador Lodge, who disapproved of the Diem regime, resisted Washington's attempt to replace Conein as the US contact with Don. The CIA station in Saigon, Lodge wrote to Washington, had "been punctilious in carrying out my instructions," and Conein had executed the ambassador's orders "explicitly." Lodge pointed out that the CIA officer was "a friend of some eighteen years' standing with General Don, and General Don has expressed extreme reluctance to deal with anyone else. I do not believe the involvement of another American in close contact with the Generals would be productive."<sup>47</sup>

McCone, however, worried that Don might be a Nhu-managed agent who was trying to control

INCOMING TELEGRAM		Department of State	
44-41	<del>SECRET</del>	Control: 113	
Action		Rec'd: NOVEMBER 1, 1963	
FE		4:29 AM	034
Info	FROM: CAS SAIGON		
SS	TO: Secretary of State		
G	INR NO: 3, DTG 010921Z NOVEMBER (CIA MESSAGE)		
RMR	FLASH		
	ACTION FLASH DIRNSA; INFORMATION FLASH USIB AGENCIES, DEPARTMENT OF STATE		
	CRITIC		
	CONEIN REPORTS FROM JGS THAT GEN VIG MINH ONCE MORE CALLED PRESIDENT DIEM AND DIEM HUNG UP AS OF 1715 HOURS. MINH HAS GIVEN THE ORDER TO BOMB THE PALACE. THIS APPARENTLY REFUTES RADIO ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT PRESIDENT HAS RESIGNED WHICH BROADCASTED APPROX 1710 HR.		
	GP-1		
	JVC/28		
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One of Conein's numerous situation reports as delivered to State Department and White House officials. The reports made clear he was at the center of coup activity observing each step. Image courtesy of JFK Library.

or entrap Conein. And McNamara continued to fret about the lack of professionalism in covert US contacts with the generals. "We're just like a bunch of amateurs," he said at a White House meeting on 25 October. "I hate to be associated with this effort—dealing with Conein." In a followup comment, McNamara observed: "We're dealing through a press-minded ambassador and

an unstable Frenchman—five [sic] times divorced. That's the damndest arrangement I've ever seen. This is what we have to stop."<sup>48</sup>

Conein's contact with Don did not stop, but their security practices improved. Lodge informed Washington of "a new security system" for the two conspirators that included cutouts for communications, safety signals,

and countersurveillance for their meetings.<sup>49</sup>

**“Controversial” accounting**

At 1:15 p.m., Friday, 1 November, the South Vietnamese generals launched their coup d'état. Summoned by the generals to their command post at JGS headquarters near Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Conein was asked to bring as much money as he could readily gather. According to a report on the Diem coup by the CIA inspector general (IG), “The station had stored 5 million piasters (about \$68,000 at the official rate) in a safe in Conein’s house against such a contingency. Conein took 3 million with him. General Don used the money to reward opposition military units that joined the coup group.”<sup>50</sup>

On 2 November, when General Don requested more money to pay “the families of persons killed during the coup,” Conein delivered another 1.75 million piasters to him. (An “overlooked” bundle of 250,000 piasters was later found in Conein’s safe.) As noted in the IG report, the passing of US funds to the generals was “obviously a very sensitive matter.” At the very least, providing a financial “reward”—in other words, a bribe—to ARVN commanders joining the coup made the US government an accessory to Diem’s overthrow. The transfer of funds also apparently involved some dubious accounting. Walter Elder, McCone’s executive assistant, later cited this episode to DCI William Colby as an example of “controversial” uses of Agency funds:

*As you well know when Lou Conein received his summons to report to the Joint General Staff Headquarters on 1 November*



Maj. Gen. Duong Van “Big” Minh (left) with members of the military junta that replaced President Ngo Dinh Diem on 2 November 1963. Undated photo © Everett Collection/Alamy

**President’s Intelligence Checklist, 2 November 1963<sup>51</sup>**

1. South Vietnam
  - a. The deaths of Diem and Nhu just about wrap up the generals’ coup.
  - b. Not all versions of the story are the same, but it would appear that the brothers either committed suicide, or were done in after they surrendered. We suspect the latter.
  - c. The population of Saigon, in a jubilant mood today, has pulled down several symbols of Madame Nhu’s authority and sacked the offices of the Times of Vietnam and another pro-Diem paper.
  - d. Ambassador Lodge was cheered as he drove through the streets. There have been no indications of anti-American sentiment.
  - e. We believe there may be some temporary dislocations in the counterinsurgency effort, particularly the strategic hamlet and paramilitary programs which Nhu had been running. Much will depend on the continuity of officialdom at the province level.
  - f. Initial reactions from Hanoi and Peiping have been characteristic. The US has put in “one puppet for another.” We know that Viet Cong has long had standby plans to try to take advantage of a coup, but we have noted no implementation as yet.

*1963 a large amount of cash went with him. My impression is that the accounting for this and its use has never been very frank or complete.<sup>52</sup>*

The same could be said for Conein’s subsequent testimony about the Agency funds before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, better known as the Church Committee. When pressed to discuss the money’s purpose, Conein testified that it was used for food, medical supplies, and “death benefits.” He made no mention of a “reward” for troops joining the coup. He was also unable to remember the amount of money he took to JGS headquarters: “Truthfully, I don’t recall if I had 3½ million or 5 million piasters.” He was, however, able to remember that he had obtained signed receipts for the funds: “Now, I do not know where those receipts are.”<sup>53</sup>

While the coup was nearing its successful conclusion on the morning of 2 November, Generals Don and Minh asked Conein to secure an airplane that would take the surrendering Ngo brothers to the first country offering them asylum. Conein passed this request to Acting Chief of Station Smith, who replied that it would take 24 hours to secure an aircraft with sufficient range for a nonstop flight to a country that might provide asylum. Such a plane—for example, a KC-135 tanker from Guam—would prevent Diem from disembarking at an interim stop and declaring a government-in-exile. Conein later testified that he did not know whether this instruction originated with Lodge, the State Department or the White House.<sup>54</sup>

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***The Diem coup was the pinnacle of Conein’s career as an intelligence officer. He secretly received CIA’s Intelligence Star for his role as liaison with the generals during the planning and execution of the putsch.***

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Any discussion about securing a plane for Diem and Nhu was overtaken by their murder, most likely by Minh’s aide-de-camp, Capt. Nguyen Van Nhung. Yet the 24-hour delay required to arrange safe passage for the Ngo brothers raised a question that “has not been convincingly” answered, according to Thomas H. Hughes, director of the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research in the 1960s. In an oral history interview, he asked: “Why, during the preceding weeks, were contingency arrangements not made for giving Diem refuge or for flying him out of Vietnam? The impression remains that American officialdom was content to leave Diem and his brother to the postcoup mercies of the plotters.”<sup>55</sup>

In 1975, the Church Committee investigation into the alleged role of US officials in plots to assassinate foreign leaders concluded that the US government “offered encouragement for the coup, but neither desired nor was involved in the assassinations” of Diem and Nhu.<sup>56</sup> Yet the explanation for the delay in arranging safe passage for the Ngo brothers was “unsatisfactory,” according to Rhett B. Dawson, the committee’s minority counsel, who worked with Republican senators: “The whole incident casts a pall over American involvement in the assassinations of Diem and Nhu.”<sup>57</sup>

The Diem coup was the pinnacle of Conein’s career as an intelligence officer. He secretly received CIA’s Intelligence Star for his role as liaison

with the generals during the planning and execution of the putsch. His personal behavior in the summer and fall of 1963 may have been rowdy, but it was undoubtedly professionally useful. John M. Dunn, then a US Army lieutenant colonel and special assistant to Ambassador Lodge, characterized Conein as “a brawler, really. He’s a guy that likes to get out and have a good time in the most basic soldierly way. And he used to do rather a lot of that with a number of the Vietnamese officers.”<sup>58</sup>

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***“Bum” or “imaginative and dedicated officer”?***

Saigon Station’s “History of the Vietnamese Generals’ Coup of 1/2 November 1963,” written in the immediate aftermath of Diem’s assassination, concluded by wondering whether General Minh, head of the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC), appreciated the complexity of the political and military problems he faced. If not, station officers asked, “what new coup group is forming now?”<sup>59</sup>

That question was answered on 30 January 1964, when Maj. Gen. Nguyen Khanh staged a bloodless coup, toppling Minh’s government. Commander of I Corps, the tactical zone comprising South Vietnam’s five northernmost provinces, Khanh had played a limited role in Diem’s overthrow and felt slighted by the MRC since the coup. Conein, who had been in Washington during much of January, returned to Vietnam just as Khanh’s coup was ending. The

***After an unusually eventful career as an intelligence officer, Conein unsuccessfully pursued private business opportunities in South Vietnam. He might have remained a relatively obscure CIA retiree were it not for a fellow member of the second Lansdale mission to Vietnam: Daniel Ellsberg.***

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general wanted Conein to be “continuously available on five minutes notice” as his civilian interlocutor with Ambassador Lodge. (MACV’s Col. Jasper Wilson was Khanh’s choice for indirect communication with General Harkins.) According to Ahern, Conein’s “meetings with Khanh were devoted mostly to political gossip and such trivialities as office logistics and a Khanh request that Conein develop for him a contingency plan for escape from Saigon.”<sup>60</sup>

Lodge’s successor, Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, disliked both Khanh and Conein. A former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and an esteemed military intellectual, Taylor had shared McNamara’s distaste for

the CIA officer during the plotting against Diem. On 2 September 1964, less than two months after his arrival in Saigon, the new ambassador demanded Conein’s recall to Washington. Although Taylor would later refer to Conein as a “bum,” Chief of Station Peer de Silva described his subordinate as “an imaginative and dedicated officer who can be counted on to discharge his duties with high effectiveness and total personal commitment. It has been a pleasure to have him at the Station.”<sup>61</sup>

After the abrupt end of his Vietnam tour, Conein prepared for a planned assignment to Caracas, Venezuela. In the summer of 1965, however, Taylor’s none-too-successful term as ambassador ended, and Henry Cabot Lodge returned to Saigon as the US chief of mission. With him came by-then retired General Lansdale as an adviser on rural pacification, the longstanding political-economic-security effort to generate support for the South Vietnamese government and to undermine the authority of the southern communists. Lansdale, no longer affiliated with CIA, assembled a small team of experienced Vietnam hands. Among them was Conein, who arrived in Saigon on 29 September.

A CIA employee on special assignment with Lansdale’s team, Conein served in Bien Hoa, just north of Saigon. His responsibilities included advising, financing, and supplying South Vietnamese Census-Grievance

Teams, which provided intelligence on communist political and administrative cadres, and Provisional Reconnaissance Units, which used such information for “operations designed to capture or, when capture is impossible, ambush Viet Cong cadre.” Conein’s work in Bien Hoa reflected CIA’s conviction that “the extirpation of the VC cadre system is the sine qua non for pacification.”<sup>62</sup>

Conein left Vietnam in August 1967, under circumstances that are not entirely clear. He told me that an alcohol-fueled incident in which he tossed flower pots from the roof of a Saigon hotel onto the street below prompted his exasperated chief of station, Gordon L. Jorgensen, to ask for his recall. Rufus Phillips, however, wrote in his Vietnam memoir that the flower-pot episode merely resulted in Conein’s banishment “to the most remote province in South Vietnam, Phu Bon.”<sup>63</sup> What is clear from Conein’s declassified personnel records is that CIA pulled his special clearance for communications intelligence in July and ordered him to take a physical in August.

Agency officials were apparently fed up with Conein’s drinking. After his return to Washington, CIA began the process of terminating its relationship with him. Yet a review of his records also suggests that his Agency colleagues wanted to reward Conein for many years of faithful service. A new personal services contract, effective 10 January 1968, authorized his participation in federal programs for retirement income, life insurance, and health benefits. Within weeks of that date, Conein filed for “retirement for medical disability,” which was approved in May. The official date for Conein’s resignation as a CIA



Maj. Gen. Nguyen Khanh, the military leader who would unseat the government of General Minh just three months after he had overthrown Diem. Photo © Keystone/Alamy.

employee was 15 July 1968, a date that allowed him to exhaust all of his accrued sick leave and excess annual leave.<sup>64</sup> He was 48 years old.

### “Very pro-Agency”

After an unusually eventful career as an intelligence officer, Conein unsuccessfully pursued private business opportunities in South Vietnam. He might have remained a relatively obscure CIA retiree were it not for a fellow member of the second Lansdale mission to Vietnam—Daniel Ellsberg. Lansdale, who had wanted to influence McNamara’s views on the war, selected Ellsberg for the team because of his prior work for the defense secretary and other top Pentagon civilians. As was often the case, things did not turn out as Lansdale had hoped. Disillusioned by the war, Ellsberg later provided the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* with copies of the 7,000-page, top-secret Defense Department history of the Vietnam War, commonly known as the Pentagon Papers. On 1 July 1971, the *Times* devoted several full pages to US involvement in the Diem coup and reprinted half a dozen top-secret documents that specifically mentioned Conein.

Within a week, Conein was invited to the White House by a recently hired, part-time security consultant—E. Howard Hunt, one of the “plumbers” whose work included stopping government leaks. A former OSS and CIA officer known to Conein, the two retired spies spent a boozy afternoon discussing the Diem coup and Ellsberg. Sometime after their chat, Hunt recommended hiring Conein as a consultant. According to his later Church

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### ***The Nixon White House was reportedly pleased by Conein’s appearance in the documentary. CIA officials, however, were disturbed by the egregious violation of his lifetime secrecy oath.***

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Committee testimony, Conein said that he “worked as a consultant for the White House for approximately four months.”<sup>65</sup>

At a time when President Richard M. Nixon publicly declared that “the way we got into Vietnam was through overthrowing Diem and the complicity in the murder of Diem,”<sup>66</sup> White House officials requested and received sensitive national security documents about US involvement in the coup and other covert missions. Such requests, according to a commission led by Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller, were aimed at finding “embarrassing” information that “would be used for the political advantage of the Nixon administration.”<sup>67</sup> When Hunt’s review of the relevant cables between Washington and Saigon did not prove Kennedy administration complicity in the death of Diem, White House aide Charles W. Colson and Hunt agreed that the latter “might be able to improve upon the record” by fabricating more incriminating telegrams.<sup>68</sup>

Hunt produced two fake cables, one of which instructed Ambassador Lodge to deny any asylum request from Diem. Colson told Hunt to “show the entire set of cables, including the forgery, to Col. Lucien Conein.” The idea was to convince him that “the Kennedy administration had been responsible, implicitly responsible, for the assassination of Diem.”<sup>69</sup> Hunt encouraged Conein to be interviewed for an NBC documentary about the Diem coup, “providing he was properly briefed.” Hunt said

that he “would take care of coordinating” Conein’s TV appearance with the Agency and gave him some two dozen cables, including the bogus telegrams, “to refresh his memory.” According to Hunt, Conein accepted the cables as “genuine.”<sup>70</sup>

On 22 December 1971, NBC News broadcast “The Death of Diem.” Conein was one of some 20 US and South Vietnamese officials interviewed on camera. Although he spoke at length about his role as liaison with the plotting generals, Conein said nothing about US responsibility for the assassination of the Ngo brothers. Moreover, he confirmed NBC News reporting that placed the blame for Diem’s death squarely on the generals.<sup>71</sup>

The Nixon White House was reportedly pleased by Conein’s appearance in the documentary. CIA officials, however, were disturbed by the egregious violation of his lifetime secrecy oath. The day of the broadcast, an Agency division contemplating rehiring Conein was advised that he “should not be used in any capacity” and that further contact with him should be “avoided.”<sup>72</sup> On 31 January 1972, Howard J. Osborn, CIA’s director of security, reported to DCI Helms on a lunch that he had with Conein. When Osborn asked why he had agreed to be interviewed by NBC, Conein replied that Hunt had “encouraged and sponsored” him. Osborn, who found “Conein to be personable, cooperative, and very pro-Agency,” reported to Helms that the retiree “has either conquered or is

working on his drinking problem (he had only one beer).”<sup>73</sup>

### ***Buried on Bastille Day***

While Hunt and Colson went on to infamy and jail for their roles in the June 1972 Watergate break-in and the subsequent cover-up, Conein went to work as an intelligence officer for the Justice Department’s Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs and its successor organization, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). His

notoriety as a celebrity spy, however, kept him in the spotlight. In January 1975, there was an unproven public allegation that Conein sought to equip DEA with anonymous assassination devices—for example, exploding telephones, triggered by motion, sound, or timer. Later that year, the Church Committee released its report on alleged assassination plots, which discussed the Diem coup and Conein’s role in it.

Conein retired from DEA in 1984 and died on 3 June 1998. He

was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors for service during some of the most significant epochs of the 20th century—World War II in Europe and Asia, the post-war recovery of Germany, and, of course, the first and second Indochina wars. For a naturalized American citizen born in Paris, the date of Conein’s burial was chosen with care: 14 July, the day he traditionally served as honorary judge of Dominique’s Bastille Day waiters’ race.



**The author: William J. Rust** is the author of five books about US relations with Southeast Asian nations during the mid-20th century. Learn more about them at [www.beforethequagmire.com](http://www.beforethequagmire.com).



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## Intelligence in Public Media

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### **Truth to Power: A History of the U.S. National Intelligence Council**

Robert Hutchings and Gregory F. Treverton, eds. (Oxford University Press, 2019), 242 pp.

#### **Reviewed by Roger Z. George**

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The edited volume, *Truth to Power*, is a small but significant step toward documenting the remarkable role of the Intelligence Community's most often examined and criticized analytic organization, the National Intelligence Council (NIC). As a former national intelligence officer interested in this institution, I eagerly applauded the co-editors' plans for the publication. Given my own association with the NIC, readers might write me off as an apologist for the organization, but that would miss the point of this review, namely to objectively assess this volume's contribution, just as the NIC seeks to reveal "truths" to those in power.

To be honest, the volume should not have been subtitled "A History of the National Intelligence Council." The eight contributors, all former NIC chairmen, span the years 1993 to 2017. A better subtitle might have been "The NIC After the Cold War." Its role in the 1970s and 1980s is briefly, though deftly, summarized in the introductory chapter by co-editor Robert Hutchings. He examines the legacy of the Board of National Estimates and the challenge of providing strategic analysis found in NIEs until the board was replaced by national intelligence officers (1974) and the subsequent creation of the council to be led by a chairman (1979). As Hutchings notes, the NIC struggled to distinguish itself and its estimates from CIA and its publications. This remains a challenge despite many efforts to bring in outside experts as NIOs and to present IC-wide assessments that do not solely reflect CIA's intelligence judgments. (13) Not surprisingly, the NIC's strategic intelligence role has never been easy. Even in the best of times, for example, when the IC had former CIA Director George H.W. Bush as president, "rarely was strategic analysis sought out or heeded." (14)

Having edited several volumes containing contributions from practitioners and academics, I recognize the difficulty of weaving together, as Hutchings and Treverton have done, the perspectives of eight very different NIC chairmen, each of whom served under a variety of presidents, bureaucratic pressures, and politics. Two chairmen were professional intelligence officers from the CIA (John

Gannon and John Helgerson), while five others had come from academia or the think-tank world and had previously served in policymaking or intelligence positions (Joseph Nye, Richard Cooper, Robert Hutchings, Thomas Fingar, and Gregory Treverton). Some were in charge of producing strategic intelligence that addressed the post-Cold War challenges of globalization and new transnational threats. The others' tenures were deeply affected by the aftermath of 9/11 and the Iraq War.

Joseph Nye, Richard Cooper, and John Gannon cover the years after the end of Cold War period—five officers chaired the NIC from 1991 to June 2001, when Gannon's tenure ended. The three highlight their efforts to refine estimative methods to include multiple futures, to leverage outside expertise, and to adjust strategic analysis to the beginnings of the IT-revolution. Many veterans of the NIC would applaud Nye's assertion that "no one can predict the future because there is no one future." (16) To paraphrase Nye, it is better to *think* about the future than to try to predict it. Building on this notion, Cooper's chapter places great emphasis on his initiative to bring about the now well-known *Global Trends* series, in order to exploit the open source world and build outreach to non-US government experts. As part of this project, Cooper highlights the NIC's service to the IC in legitimizing new intelligence topics (humanitarian crises, environment, migration, etc.) and creating new NIO positions for economics and global issues. Gannon's chapter, in addition, reflects his efforts to combat bureaucratic inertia and security concerns about introducing the NIC to the internet.<sup>a</sup>

Gannon goes on to foreshadow the attention given in later chapters to NIOs as the true measure of the NIC's reputation. These dozen or so senior analysts, more than the NIE products, are what produced impact and relevance for the NIC. They must be recognized specialists but also well versed in intelligence practices and

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a. The *Global Trends* series can readily be found on the internet on ODNI.gov. <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/digital-extras/previous-reports>

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personally connected to those sitting in the White House, State Department, and Pentagon. Indeed, NIOs often found it necessary to “orally estimate” to an NSC senior director or assistant secretary. They were also a major conduit for probing questions and follow-up taskings for the broader IC.

In the post 9/11 era, three chairmen grappled with the fallout of global terrorism and the prominence of the Iraq and Afghan wars. John Helgerson narrates how he and DCI George Tenet exited CIA Headquarters after the 9/11 attacks to begin planning for the post-attack requests for intelligence. Helgerson admits that the NIC’s role was less clear as “Everything was tactical; no one had the leisure to focus on larger, strategic considerations.” (89) In that environment, he strove to shorten NIEs and continued work on perennial topics like the Balkans, Russia, and China. Despite the fact that the infamous 2002 Iraq WMD estimate was prepared during his tenure, Helgerson asserts that no one in the NIC or IC generally “thought there was an intelligence-based case to go to war with Iraq.” (96)

It was left to Helgerson’s successor Robert Hutchings, however, to deal with the repercussions that estimate had on the NIC. Hutchings reflects that he had assumed his chairmanship knowing he did not agree with much of the Bush administration’s policies toward the Middle East. His mission was to insure that the NIC continued to speak truth to power in its estimates. He also recreated the NIO for Transnational Threats (aka Terrorism) in order to insure that the IC took a strategic view of the issue and put it into a context that would not further contribute to what he feared was an “overmilitarized response” to the global war on terror. (108) Recognizing that the NIC was very much under attack for its flawed NIE, Hutchings nonetheless chides some of the post-mortems for their “hindsight” bias and criticizes the subsequent 2004 intelligence reforms because they “further divide” intelligence responsibilities without increasing the DNI’s authorities and staffing. (120)

NIC Chairmen Thomas Fingar and Chris Kojm reflect on the NIC’s adjustment to becoming part of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the bureaucratic and procedural changes this reform introduced. Fingar, as the INR director who signed off on the 2002 Iraq WMD estimate, defined his mission to restore the IC’s credibility and morale. Under DNI Negroponte he had almost carte blanc to improve analysis, although he resisted the

temptation to restructure the IC that so many reformers often attempt. Instead, he describes how he used his position and the NIC as an opportunity to introduce more rigorous analytic tradecraft, to knit together the IC-wide analytic community through more and better tools for collaboration, and to redesign the NIE process to ensure collection agencies took more responsibility for validating the information used in estimates.

Chris Kojm took over the NIC when DNI James Clapper decided to introduce major structural changes aimed at integrating analysis and collection. Hence, Kojm describes how he struggled to accept the imposition of the National Intelligence Managers (NIMs), who would sit over the NIC and the NIOs. While Kojm says he philosophically understood the need for senior managers who would integrate analysis and collection better, he laments the bureaucratic turf battles around whether a NIM would replace the customary NIO as the back bencher at senior policy meetings. Symbolically, if not substantively, this bureaucratic loss undercut the NIC’s status and the NIO’s ability to speak for their communities of analysts. For those of us who have served in government, the DNI’s decision to have NIMs rate their counterpart NIOs’ performance further salted the NIC’s professional wounds and made it harder to recruit accomplished experts.<sup>a</sup>

In the penultimate chapter, Greg Treverton, who had served as the NIC’s vice chairman in the 1990s, opens his narrative with the observation that it was a very different place as a result of the preceding terrorism crises, structural reforms, and current intelligence needs. What he found was a NIC saddled with preparation of detailed briefing books for deputies and principals committee meetings that were held non-stop and drew NIOs away from more strategic work. NIE production dropped precipitously from previous levels, to be replaced by shorter, time sensitive memos to specific senior officials. Treverton lauds the professionalism of the NIOs, who in lieu of the NIE, were now the essence of what made the NIC relevant. He laments, “The NIC was, and probably still is, too small to carry out its mission, dramatically expanded from strategic intelligence to include intense current intelligence support to the government’s main policymaking committees.” (195)

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a. Kojm offered his take on leading the NIC to *Studies in Intelligence* in 2015: <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol-59-no-2/pdfs/Kojm-NIC-in-Changing-Times-June-2015.pdf>

Looking at the eight chairmen and chapters described above one can ask, “Is the sum greater than the whole of its parts?” In some ways, yes. Each chapter contributes to a picture described best by John Gannon as the “hard scrabble world of intelligence.” (69) The NIC, he asserts, is not simply a government version of an academic think-tank but more a player in the policy game, where the NIC’s judgments were under political pressures, if not outright politicization. Each of the chapters contain vignettes of controversial NIEs, ones that either were “inconvenient truths” to uninterested or hostile policymakers. All the chapters note the struggle to improve the products to suit an ever-changing and accelerating policy process.

To one degree or another each chairman also provides evidence and examples of a National Intelligence Council that is the most transparent (and, perhaps because of this, vulnerable) element of the Intelligence Community’s activities and performance. Without the NIC, the American public would know a lot less about intelligence. Some chairmen sought to speak more publicly about their duties and contributions in order to educate; a few more than others also reached out to non-government experts to encourage exchanges of views. The *Global Trends* series exemplifies the NIC’s goal to collaborate with the outside world and indirectly encourage those of us inside to be more open to unclassified sources of information and insight. The NIC, in short, was a window on the world. However, often the IC’s the security restrictions made it appear to be made of one-way glass.

Finally, these reflections also provide the reader with an opportunity to consider the relevance and significance of “strategic” analysis. Although hard to define, most observers would agree that strategic analysis must look ahead and identify significant challenges and opportunities for US policymakers. Indeed, many of the chapters single out instances when the NIC’s foresight was on display. For example, the NIC’s 1995 foreign ballistic missile threat projections regarding North Korea and Iran were roundly criticized by the Rumsfeld Commission but in hindsight now look to be about right. Few credited at the time the prescience of the 1990 estimate forecasting the breakup of Yugoslavia, which the Bush administration ignored,<sup>a</sup> or the NIC’s early work on the geo-politics of global climate change, or the *GT 2015* (published in 2000) identifying China as a potential challenge. What comes through is a sense that when policymakers perceive long-range forecasts to be negative or not part of their immediate agenda, they likely will ignore them rather than act. So, does strategic analysis truly raise the level of debate, as Sherman Kent tried to convince us? As a former NIO, I continue to believe (and hope) that there are a few policymakers who will look beyond their inboxes and think about the future.

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a. See the CSI-sponsored RAND study by Greg Treverton and Renanah Miles, *CIA Support to Policymakers: Unheeded Warning of War: Why Policymakers Ignored the 1990 Yugoslavia Estimate* at <https://internet.cia/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/csi-intelligence-and-policy-monographs/pdfs/unheeded-warning-yugoslavia-NIE.pdf>



**The reviewer: Dr. Roger Z. George** is a former CIA analyst and national intelligence officer who has published several co-edited volumes on intelligence and national security and is author of a forthcoming textbook, *Intelligence for the National Security Enterprise: An Introduction* to be published by Georgetown University Press.



## ***Intelligence in Public Media***

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### ***Leading Intelligence Analysis: Lessons from the CIA's Analytic Frontlines***

Bruce Pease (QC Press, 2019), 235 pp., bibliographical references and index

#### ***Reviewed by Jason U. Manosevitz***

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A subtle hint runs through former senior CIA manager Bruce Pease's *Leading Intelligence Analysis: Lessons from the CIA's Analytic Frontlines*: training to develop effective managers of analysts needs improvement. This idea underpins his reason for writing and is apparent at the outset. His book starts with the premise that CIA's Directorate of Analysis (DA) produces analysts and analysis and takes a classic "What got you here, won't get you there" approach. (4) But the DA produces managers, too.

This leads Pease to his first lesson. He argues that new analytic managers must simultaneously broaden their fluency across several substantive issues while learning to articulate work standards. To do so, new managers need to back away from deep substantive expertise on a few specific issues and apply their analytic skills to assess team needs. (5–11) While *Leading Intelligence Analysis* is a good start for studying the manager's role in leading analysis, it lacks some essential elements. Pease does not address issues such as assessing analysts' performance, program evaluation, analytic conflict resolution, or working with budgets and human resources.

Pease certainly knows his subject from his vast experience leading analytic teams. In the 1990s, he led the then-Office of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Analysis in CIA's then-Directorate of Intelligence. Following the 9/11 attacks, he was among the first managers to set up the Office of Terrorism Analysis within the Counterterrorism Center (CTC). He then led the CTC as its deputy director. In the wake of the Iraq WMD analytic failure in 2002, Pease was tapped to serve as the director of CIA's largest functional office, then the Weapons Intelligence, Nonproliferation, and Arms Control Center (WINPAC). As WINPAC's director, he was charged with restoring the unit's credibility, as it received the most blame for the WMD failure, according to Pease. (165)

Pease avoids debates about the qualities of general leadership and management, examining instead how to manage intelligence analysis and how to develop managers. As such, *Leading Intelligence Analysis* may appeal to only a small audience. Pease's prose also

makes clear that his insights are intended mostly for IC managers.

Understanding analysts and who they are is critical to successfully managing analysis from Pease's perspective. He thankfully spends little time on the cliché about all analysts being introverts and focuses on explaining the traps of merely seeing analysts as "thinking machines." Echoing many general works on management, he argues the importance of cultivating allies among one's analysts to effect cultural change and to influence behavior in the analytic process. Similarly, Pease highlights the importance of nurturing trust, finding the right stress level for one's team, showing one's human side, and sharing values. More specific to leading analytic teams, he argues analytic managers need to strike the right balance among imaginative and pragmatic analysis, breadth and depth of expertise, generating insights at the expense of making mistakes, and being proactive versus reactive. (37–48)

One of the most useful parts of Pease's book is his list of 10 things analysts hate. The list includes "being out of the loop," "being told how to think," "having to answer the same question over and over," and "a draft stuck" in a manager's inbox. (20–29) The list is a good reminder to managers to think about things from their analysts' perspective and underscores his point about leaders needing to know who they are leading. The list can be a useful tool for candid discussions among analysts and managers about how teams can succeed and what each person's role is in fostering success. The list also helps clarify the day-to-day rules of the road. Had Pease also offered a list of 10 things analysts love, it would have peeled back the cover of mystery surrounding "the analyst" even further. A list of things managers love and hate would have been still another nice addition, for surely there are some that come into play in managing analysis.

Analytic tradecraft is the second major focus of *Leading Intelligence Analysis*. Pease touches on familiar tradecraft issues, including identifying key intelligence questions, deploying structured analytic techniques, and addressing big-data projects by adopting new

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technologies, such as artificial intelligence. He offers trenchant points on how managers can cultivate (or kill) new ideas by the questions they ask their analysts and the approach they take to innovation. Pease stresses that analytic managers need to “get deep into a give-and-take over the analyst’s evidence and reasoning.” (98) Here he offers “framing” questions and “component” questions, which get at context and facts, for an effective dialogue. (101)

Bad questions simply convey distrust, waste analysts’ time, and end as “gotcha” moves, Pease warns. These questions are akin to a lawyer’s cross examination and in some cases put analysts in the impossible position of having to prove a negative. (98) Pease correctly argues that predictive questions are often the most difficult, but also the most useful questions analysts can address. He stresses the importance of carefully selecting intelligence questions and products to pursue because ultimately these are investments of time and come at the expense of working on other analytic lines.

Pease highlights the significance of self-awareness in analysis, wrapping the issue in an examination of ethics. He argues that analytic managers need to be more than comfortable expressing their values while they help analysts contend with arrogance, self-righteousness, and cynicism that stem from being steeped in the details of reporting (and being encouraged to be experts). It would have also been helpful had Pease addressed some of the ethical and self-awareness pitfalls analytic managers themselves must avoid.

Pease does hit on the biggest ethical issue in producing analysis—the consequences of policy action that analysts aim to inform. The decisions national security policymakers make drawing upon analysis can range from killing terrorists, to going to war, to leveling crippling sanctions, to putting US soldiers at risk. Analysts and their managers have to be comfortable with the actions policymakers may take based on the analytic work they produce. Pease addresses this knotty problem by reminding readers that analysts provide insight to inform decisions but do not themselves make policy. That solution will satisfy some. For others it may conjure recollections of the scene in *Good Will Hunting* in which the movie’s main character rejects working for the National Security Agency after tallying up a fantastical chain of events that starts with breaking enemy codes and ends with harm to those he cares about.

Perhaps the most unsatisfying part of Pease’s book is the chapter “Analysis as a Business.” He uses the chapter to stress the need for analytic managers to sustain strong personal reputations with their supervisors and policy-makers. All can agree on the merits of that point, nor are many likely to debate Pease’s observation that change is constant and that managers have to adjust as analytic missions change.

Several issues are missing in *Leading Intelligence Analysis*, and without understanding these analytic managers have slim chance of success, either for themselves or for their analytic missions. The first is evaluating analysts’ performance. Performance evaluation is an annual—in some cases quarterly—task. These reviews can serve as tools for motivating analysts because they affect promotions. Performance evaluations are fraught with difficulty, however. Evaluating analysts’ performance requires understanding how to assess the subjective value of an analyst’s work, individual strengths, and development areas. Performance evaluations also require analytic managers to think through how to coach analysts and how to assess analysts against either specific criteria or relative to their peer group. Evaluating the volume of work versus its impact is just one of the perennial questions that arise in performance reviews. Given Pease’s vast experience, including multiple changes in the performance review process, his thoughts on performance reviews or a set of guidelines about how to address analysts’ performance would have been most welcome.

The second unaddressed area is program evaluation. Much of what Pease covers is focused on managing analysts and how to execute analytic programs, but he is largely silent on how to evaluate programs. Understanding the inputs, the outputs, and the degree to which a program is aligned with client needs is critical to assessing how well an analytic program is doing, what it needs to offer its clients, and as the case may be, what it needs to cease offering. Given Pease’s point about mission change being a constant, it’s surprising he did not offer insights about how to evaluate analytic programs. Arguably program evaluation and the rebalancing of analytic resources will become increasingly important as budgets for intelligence change and the analytic mission gyrates from a focus on counterterrorism to renewed attention to state-based threats.

The manager’s role in resolving analytic disagreements, internal team differences, as well as those the team has with other analytic units or IC elements is also



missing from *Leading Intelligence Analysis*. Analytic differences are by no means rare and those that analysts cannot resolve themselves inevitably land on managers' desks. Managers must then walk minefields in supporting their own analysts, recognizing competing but valid arguments, and deciding when, or if, to escalate such differences to their own supervisors.

Lastly, *Leading Intelligence Analysis* would have further benefited readers with some discussion of engaging human resources as well as budget creation and execution. To help analysts cope with their work and non-work life, from time to time managers need to tap the expertise of human resource officers. Developing and executing spending plans for analytic teams is also an important function for managers. Appropriation legislation,

continuing resolutions, government shutdowns, and furloughs complicate analytic programs, particularly since most are run on single-year budget plans. Understanding these issues, albeit far less appealing than knowing analysts, substantive issues, and tradecraft, help analytic managers recognize that not everything is on their shoulders and that many things lie beyond their control.

Some will see Pease's book as an incredible work that not only pulls back the curtain on leading analysis but also points the way toward becoming an effective manager of analysts. Others will see a curated set of lecture notes or lessons learned that only address part of what is needed to lead analysis. However one sees the book, its value lies in framing candid conversations among analysts and their managers.



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## Intelligence in Public Media

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### ***The Targeter: My Life in the CIA, Hunting Terrorists, and Challenging the White House***

Nada Bakos with David Coburn (Little, Brown, & Company, 2019) 354, endnotes, no index

#### **Reviewed by David T. Berg, PhD**

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The targeting officer career track has been in existence for less than 20 years at CIA. Growing in prominence due to popular media and some well-publicized successes, the precociousness of this field tends to be less visible in the popular imagination than other CIA positions. It is with this context that Bakos documents her contributions as an analyst and targeting officer inside the CIA Counterterrorism Center's Iraq Unit. Sketching a memoir of her time at CIA from 2000 to 2007, she weaves her personal story with that of her primary antagonist, the now-deceased Al-Qa'ida-in-Iraq (AQI) leader Ahmad Fadil al-Nazal al-Khalayleh, also known as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Bakos' narrative of her CIA career roughly parallels Zarqawi's evolution from common street thug to the most wanted terrorist leader in Iraq. While the story chronicling the rise of Zarqawi is well documented in recent literature such as Joby Warrick's *Black Flags: The Rise of ISIS*, Graeme Wood's *Way of the Strangers: Encounters with the Islamic State*, and Jean-Charles Brisard and Damien Martinez's *Zarqawi: The New Face of al-Qaeda*, Bakos' work provides unique insights to the origin story for targeting officers at CIA.<sup>a</sup>

A casual reader unfamiliar with CIA targeting officer history may be confused by the title of Bakos' memoir. In fact, the first 200 pages of this book focus on her time as an analyst before her transition to becoming a special skills officer-targeting (SSO-T), the first official targeting position in CIA's Directorate of Operations. The transition from analyst to targeting officer is an important detail for this book because a strong analytical foundation is essential for any good CIA targeting officer. It is the targeting officer's responsibility to sift through large amounts of data, identify patterns that will fix a person in time and space, and make informed judgments about the best way to leverage that information to achieve an outcome favorable to US national security interests.

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a. Joby Warrick, *Black Flags: The Rise of ISIS* (Anchor, 2015); Graeme Wood, *The Way of the Strangers: Encounters with the Islamic State* (Random House, 2017); Jean-Charles Brisard and Damien Martinez, *Zarqawi: The New Face of Al-Qaeda* (Polity Press, 2005).

Bakos notes that analysts formed the first cadre of targeting officers at CIA because they already possessed functional expertise on topics to help the agency expand its role in combating terrorism. (22) Frustrated by what she describes as "backward looking policymaker questions" during her time as an analyst, Bakos leveraged her analytic tradecraft and expertise on Zarqawi to work as a pioneer in a discipline that continues to demonstrate both tactical success and strategic impact. (23)

Bakos provides important historical context on the role targeting officers have played conducting detainee debriefings, particularly during the early months of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) at the Camp Cropper Theater Internment Facility in Baghdad, Iraq. While detailing her frustrations debriefing senior advisers and intelligence officers from Saddam Husayn's regime as she fruitlessly searched for a relationship with central Al-Qa'ida leadership, Bakos shows the reader a side of the detainee debriefing process that is not often associated with CIA counterterrorism efforts in the media. In her debriefing vignettes, Bakos tells the reader of the importance compassion, empathy, and cultural understanding—through expert knowledge—have on this process. Bakos notes that the "direct approach," in which one simply asks questions without any force or coercion, is usually the most effective way to obtain information from a detainee. (145)

While some may question the premise of this assertion, it is important to note that the German *Luftwaffe* master interrogator Hanns Joachim Scharff reached the same conclusions more than 60 years before Bakos, when, during WWII, he successfully mapped out the entire 8th and 9th US Army Air Force's strategic plans and order of battle using these exact same techniques.<sup>b</sup> Detainee debriefings add important context and details that are essential for understanding an enemy's plans, intentions, capabilities, and network in successful targeting

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b. Raymond F. Tolliver, *The Interrogator: The Story of Hanns Joachim Scharff Master Interrogator of the Luftwaffe* (Schiffer Publishing, LTD., 1997).

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operations. Having empathy and compassion for a seasoned opponent is a soft skill and a valuable commodity among targeting officers.

Bakos also details some the early counterterrorism partnerships between US military Special Operations Forces (SOF) and CIA officers performing targeting duties. Bakos accurately describes the thrill of leveraging targeting tradecraft proactively to drive missions with US SOF that would resonate with current targeting officers. She writes:

*It was the first time I'd had a hand in the front end of the targeting process, identifying people I had specifically wanted to debrief as opposed to spending my days in the plywood shack interviewing whomever someone else happened to pick up. From the comfort of my desk back at the terminal, the process was revelatory, the independence and immediacy of it almost addictive. I'd never imagine intelligence could turn into action so fast. (135)*

Despite the thrill of being in the center of the action during this phase of the war, Bakos makes clear her ambivalence about US counterterrorism strategy and her role driving operations with the SOF community. She documents a tension between CIA and SOF that mirrors her time and experiences in Iraq but does not necessarily reflect the state of these close relationships today. This tension will naturally be present between these organization due to separate mission focus, authorities, bureaucratic culture, individual personalities, and policymaker interest. Since working-level targeting officers on counterterrorism accounts often serve as important bridges between SOF and the Intelligence Community, it became important for these officers to forge and maintain relationships with their military counterparts, while recognizing that changes in degrees of cooperation are normal as conditions evolve. Targeting officers must do their part to build effective teams in these complex and dynamic environments.

Unlike fictionalized portrayals of targeting officers in movies and television programs such as *Zero Dark Thirty*, *Homeland*, or *Jack Ryan*, Bakos to her credit

acknowledges that a single individual is rarely the sole driver of success during targeting operations. Indeed, the author points out that targeting is inherently a team sport, especially for a counterterrorism manhunt like the one conducted against Zarqawi. Targeting officers almost never operate on their own, regardless of their rank, subject matter expertise, or experience level. The hunt for Zarqawi involved the hard work, dedication, and a drive to stem a rising tide of violence in 2006 that was shared across CIA, US military, other colleagues from the Intelligence Community, and our foreign liaison partners. Bakos writes:

*Many tenacious women and men led targeting operations for significant Al-Qa'ida figures, including [now-deceased Al-Qa'ida amir Usama] Bin Ladin. My team's efforts directly preceded the climatic action in that movie [Zero Dark Thirty], just as our work built upon the groundbreaking analysis of men and women who came before me. (5)*

Targeting officers are wise to remember that, while they may play a central role in finding critical leads and driving mission, success or failure often relies on how well they can work with others. Bakos' narrative strikes a careful balance between providing a unique voice to her personal experiences working Iraq counterterrorism issues and sharing credit for the successes of her team.

Readers hoping to glean the essence of the "magic" targeting officers can produce in hunting down leads will come away from this book disappointed. Bakos reveals few, if any, tradecraft details on how targeting officers perform their mission, almost certainly because these techniques continue to be used today. What Bakos does provide is her deeply personal journey of the frenetic, unrelenting, and traumatic nature of counterterrorism work during the early war period in Iraq and the personal qualities that helped her endure. Readers will take from this memoir that the period of Bakos' CIA service was a major inflection point not only in her life, but also in CIA and US foreign policy. This book stands as a testament to the courage and strength of the officers who founded the targeting officer discipline.



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## Intelligence in Public Media

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### **GOLIATH: Why the West Doesn't Win Wars and What We Need To Do About It**

Sean McFate (Penguin Press, 2019), 18 pp., bibliography, index

#### **Reviewed by J. R. Seeger**

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The first two decades of the 21st century must seem a period of unusually high level of violent worldwide conflict to the citizens of the United States or the United Kingdom. Compared to the relative calm immediately following the end of the Cold War, the military and intelligence communities of the United States, the United Kingdom and our closest NATO allies have been in what is termed in polite conversation “low intensity conflict” for 18 years in Afghanistan and for 16 years in Iraq and now northern Syria. Counterterrorism operations have focused on al-Qa’ida, Daesh (aka the Islamic State or ISIS), and a myriad of other violent Islamic extremists. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are involved in proxy wars throughout the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf. For a dozen years, Russian operations in Crimea and eastern Ukraine show a more engaged Russian military in what Russian strategists have termed “the near abroad,” and in East Asia the Chinese have created islands in the South China Sea that serve as military platforms designed to control the Pacific almost to the national waters of the Philippines. A new multi-polar competition between the West and the East creates additional opportunities for proxy wars between states, as well as direct superpower confrontation in the shadow world of intelligence collection and special operations.

Since 2010, this strategic context has been the subject of multiple books. Some, like former CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell’s book, *The Great War of Our Time*, focus on the complexities of counterterrorism operations in the 21st century. Other books, such as General Stanley McChrystal’s *Team of Teams* and Michael Mazarr’s *Mastering the Gray Zone* focus on sophisticated operational methodologies used in the dynamic military environment of the 21st century. Others, such as Anne-Marie Slaughter’s *The Chessboard and the Web* focus on grand strategy of international relations.<sup>a</sup> Regardless

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a. Michael Morell with Bill Harlow, *The Great War of Our Time* (Hatchette Book Group, 2015); General Stanley McChrystal, *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World* (Penguin Press, 2015); Michael J. Mazarr, *Mastering the Gray Zone: Un-*

of the focus, these books offer specific methodologies or, what the military would call “tactics, techniques and procedures” (TTPs), as they describe a threat continuum in which the United States and its allies face political and economic challenges from terrorism and covert operations through full-scale confrontation between superpowers and regional adversaries.

At the same time, military writers have been captured by the concept of “hybrid warfare,” in which a complex web of political, economic, and military resources are used by an adversary to bring about a favorable result, all the while avoiding direct confrontation. The term “hybrid warfare” is used to describe conflict between state and non-state actors, for example, the 2006–2007 conflict between Israel and Hizballah and the conflict in 2014 between Russia and Ukraine over Crimea and the Donbas region. Unfortunately, the use of the term has accelerated far beyond any formal definition. It is closer to a heuristic device, helping to frame a discussion than any doctrinal definition of operational art. In the introduction to *Goliath*, Sean McFate offers a simple description of the nature of modern conflict, one that cuts through the vague definitions of hybrid warfare:

*Wars will be fought mostly in the shadows by covert means, and plausible deniability will prove more effective than firepower in an information age. . . . The most effective weapons will not fire bullets, and non-kinetic elements like information, refugees, ideology, and time will be weaponized. (8–9)*

It is important to underscore that McFate’s book *Goliath* is a polemic. McFate spends most of his time offering strong opinions based on his own understanding of the world and his concerns over the difference between his worldview and current US strategies and policies. The book’s structure resembles popular business and leadership books in which authors frame their views in

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*derstanding the Changing Era of Conflict* (US Army War College Press, 2015); Anne-Marie Slaughter, *The Chessboard and the Web: Strategies of Connection in an Networked World* (Yale University Press, 2017).

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simple, short chapters. McFate's ability to distill the ideas of many different writers into clear, bullet points is the reason this book will be read by military and intelligence professionals as well as US political leaders. That said, most of McFate's views are not new. *Goliath* will be successful because of the way McFate presents his ideas.

Some of McFate's arguments have their origins in the early 20th century, for instance in the UK military's "small wars" in remote parts of their colonial empire. US Marines faced similar challenges in Central America, and the US Army did as well in the Philippines.<sup>a</sup> In other parts of *Goliath*, McFate's discussion of the threat of unconventional warfare and information operations/warfare is a distillation of diverse discussions on these topics.<sup>b</sup> McFate's argument of the exceptional nature of the 21st century threats and the failure of US defense policymakers to understand those threats suffers from a quick review of the history of political, economic and military conflicts between World War I and World War II. The challenges we face today are no more complex than those faced by the Western powers in the 1920s and the 1930s with the rise of totalitarian states, colonial insurgencies, the disruptive force of the worldwide depression, and advances in military weaponry. The key differences today are in the areas of information technology and the proliferation of small and exceptionally lethal weapons.

McFate frames each chapter with a "rule" of 21st century conflict. These rules allow him to expand on the central premise that this century will be a world of "durable disorder" with persistent armed conflict. The persistent armed conflicts will be, as often as not, wars without states. McFate's forecast is of a Hobbesian world where the United States will not be able to accomplish any strategic objectives through alliances and diplomacy. McFate's dark view is probably as exaggerated as Slaughter's positive argument of a networked world, in which states work together to accomplish strategic goals.

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a. See Caldwell, Colonel C.E. 1996 *Small Wars. Their principles and Practice*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press and The Small Wars Manual. United States Marine Corps 1940. Reprint of Original by Manhattan, KS: Sunflower Press.

b. For other discussions on unconventional warfare and information operations see: Christopher Rawley, *Unconventional Warfare 2.0*. (Periplus Media, 2014); Andrew Fuller, *Hacking the Bomb: Cyber Threats and Nuclear Weapons* (Georgetown University Press, 2018); David Sanger, *The Perfect Weapon: War, Sabotage and Fear in the Cyber Age* (Crown Books, 2018); and Kevin McCauley, *Russian Influence Campaigns Against the West* (CreateSpace Publishing, 2016).

In both cases, the authors intend to offer policy guidance and alternatives that are not currently in use. However, while Slaughter frames her discussion in a manner consistent with polite grand strategists of the 20th century, McFate does not mince words. McFate is an excellent writer, but he is often blunt. On page 2 of the book, he displays the reason he wanted to address the future of military operations: "*The last time the United States won a conflict decisively, the world's electronics ran on vacuum tubes.*" Given this premise, McFate argues that US defense and policy bureaucracies are not properly aligned and, more importantly, US military and political leaders are not prepared to cope with this new world order.

McFate's discussion of the IC, and especially the CIA, is equally critical, though less detailed. It does not appear to be informed by anything other than newspaper and journal interviews of former directors of central intelligence and a vague understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the IC. He brings up the old (and perhaps tired?) criticism of the CIA's supposed failure to predict the fall of the USSR as an example of why the IC is incapable of understanding the dynamic world of the 21st century. He also argues the CIA is incapable of influence operations. Specifically, he argues,

*The West needs to update its information-warfare game. Until it does, it will continue to get outplayed by its enemies that wage war in the information space, and that's most everyone. In America's case, this will require structural change. Currently no one in Washington really knows who's in charge of strategic influence. Is it the State Department, the military, the CIA, the National Security Council, or something else? Yes, they say. No wonder the superpower is losing. The correct answer is the CIA, because only it is authorized to conduct covert, or "Title 50" programs, which are essential for this kind of warfare. But the CIA should just manage it, because bureaucrats are not artists. Instead, it should outsource the heavy lifting to Hollywood and invest real money. The Pentagon spends \$120 million on a single F-35 that never flies in combat—surely some money can be spent on something that might be useful in war.*

McFate's 10 "rules" offer strong arguments against the current structure of Pentagon warfighting doctrine. He punctuates these arguments with specific comparisons between modern military technology in Pentagon projects such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter or the Special

Operations Tactical Assault Light Operator Suit (TALOS) and the low cost offensive tactics of terrorists, insurgents, and even our near peer adversaries. He says

*Contemporary and future threats are not conquering states but failing ones, and what emanates from them are terrorists, rogue regimes, criminal empires, or just plain anarchy. None these are “detractable,” a fact repeatedly proved since the end of the Cold War. (107)*

McFate’s stated mission is to shake up thinking inside the policymaking community and force a discussion on whether we are preparing for the challenges of the 21st century or simply resting on the laurels of the Cold War victory. At the end of the book, he says,

*Half of winning is knowing what it looks like, and this requires a grand strategy. In an age of durable disorder, our grand strategy should be to prevent problems from becoming crises and crises from becoming conflicts. (247)*

McFate shares this mission with another writer who is a veteran of this century’s wars, Frank Ledwidge. Ledwidge was a British military officer in Afghanistan and Iraq, and his views “from the foxhole” are very similar to those presented in *Goliath*. Ledwidge offers an argument for a grand strategy for military operations in this century and states categorically that

*The old ways of “cracking on” and then muddling through using a combination of wishful thinking, old myths, and “initiative” are (or should be) long gone.<sup>a</sup>*

a. Frank Ledwidge, *Losing Small Wars: British Military Failures in Iraq and Afghanistan* (Yale University Press, 2011), 258.

For the intelligence professional, the book is an important read for many reasons. First, the book’s structure and the author’s credentials will make the book popular inside the Beltway. The positions McFate argues in the book are controversial, but they not so out of the box that they can be dismissed. McFate’s current position as a senior professor both at the National Defense University and at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service also means that he has a regular opportunity to argue his positions to the next generation of military and political leaders. Fair or unfair, his criticisms will resonate in the current political environment.

Second, although McFate is very critical of the CIA and what he sees as the bureaucracy that affects both analysis and operations, he raises analytic questions and operational opportunities that should be central to CIA operations in the future. McFate never states in detail how he expects policymakers to understand the complex networks of rogue states, terrorist organizations, or transnational criminal enterprises. For those of us who have served in the IC, it is abundantly clear that espionage operations, whether HUMINT or human enabled SIGINT, are the only real way to acquire the type of information that he deems essential. Finally, when he raises the questions of information operations, influence operations, and paramilitary operations, he is speaking directly to the Title 50 role which is acknowledged throughout the US government to be one of CIA’s strengths. If *Goliath* becomes a popular read inside the Beltway, it will be essential for senior intelligence professionals to understand his arguments and criticisms and be prepared to answer direct questions from policymakers and Congress that are based on them.



**The reviewer: J. R. Seeger** is a retired CIA paramilitary officer and frequent reviewer of books in the field.





## ***Intelligence in Public Media***

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### ***A Brotherhood of Spies: The U-2 and the CIA Secret War***

Monte Reel (Doubleday, 2018), 342 pp., illustrations, endnotes, bibliography, and index

#### ***Reviewed by Clayton Laurie***

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History provides us the ability to keep the present in perspective. It is useful today to recall a time decades ago, during the height of the Cold War, when Americans faced a true existential threat from a nuclear-armed Soviet Union. On 29 August 1949, the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb (roughly the same 25 kt. size as that dropped on Hiroshima) and four years later, on 12 August 1953, exploded a 400 kt. hydrogen bomb. While disconcerting to the American public and those in President Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration, the Russians still lacked the means to deliver a surprise nuclear attack upon the United States. That changed the following year, however, when US officials in Moscow noted during the 1954 May Day parade the appearance of a new, long-range Soviet jet bomber, the Mya-4 Bison, an aircraft ostensibly capable of reaching the United States. The fear that a "bomber gap" now existed with the Soviets—possessing an unknown number of Mya-4s, and with the new US B-52 bomber still coming off assembly lines—threw the nation into near panic. Even worse, the CIA could not apprise President Eisenhower of the true nature and extent of the threat due to its inability to penetrate the communist world with spies. The president needed accurate knowledge to carry out the primary functions of his office—to protect the nation and reduce uncertainty. He also needed an assessment of the nation's ability to answer these vital intelligence questions.

How the CIA and private sectors responded is the subject of Monte Reel's fast-paced and very enjoyable book, *A Brotherhood of Spies: The U-2 and the CIA Secret War*. Reel, author of two other books on historical topics, has written for the *New Yorker*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Harper's*, and the *Washington Post*, where he served as a foreign correspondent. He currently writes for *Bloomberg Businessweek*. The author covers the already well-known story of the U-2 program, but from a different and novel approach through interlocking biographical accounts of four participants: inventor, entrepreneur, and intelligence consultant Dr. Edwin H. Land; Lockheed aviation engineer Clarence L. "Kelly" Johnson; CIA U-2 program director Dr. Richard M. Bissell, Jr.; and U-2 pilot

Francis Gary Powers. Referring to the four as a brotherhood of spies, however, is a writer's contrivance that implies a much closer relationship than existed among them. They were integral to the program, true, but they were also not alone and were not in constant four-way contact. Each played much different roles in different places, and each made contributions of varying but not equivalent importance. More than 300 people knew of the covert CIA U-2 program when Powers was shot down on 1 May 1960, and hundreds more—unwitting of its true purpose or origins—built, serviced, and maintained the aircraft and examined the imagery collected. Although touted as such, this is not a story that suits the "great man in history" concept, and the book provides little new information.

The author has consulted the vast literature on the U-2 that has accrued over the past 50-plus years, including declassified CIA publications and archival sources at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and the National Archives. The selected bibliography is thorough, listing the standard histories and memoirs, and the endnotes are adequate, citing many additional contemporary journal and newspaper accounts, government hearings, and interviews. Historians always hope that when journalists, novelists, or non-fiction writers choose historical topics, they analyze such sources carefully and stay true to events. Many, however, tend not to let chronologies or the written factual record interfere with the telling of an exciting, larger-than-life story that will appeal to a popular audience. While Reel covers the overall program well, the book has too many inaccuracies and overgeneralizations to recommend it as a stand-alone introduction to U-2 history. Careful attention to, and placement of, people, places, dates, events and causes and effects is not pedantry but an essential ingredient for accurate history.

Although the book's shortcomings are too many to cite here, a few examples will suffice to illustrate the problem:

- The Technical Capabilities Panel (TCP), whose intelligence subcommittee Land chaired, accurately assessed the weaknesses of CIA HUMINT collection in the Soviet

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Union and recommended space-based reconnaissance systems as the solution. CIA contracted with Lockheed to build the U-2 the same month the TCP began its work in November 1954. Land did not deliver his report to Eisenhower until early 1955, by which time the U-2 was a done deal, and the TCP report contained no mention of it.

- Air Force General Curtis Lemay dismissed Kelly Johnson and his CL-282 (later, the U-2) design according to myth and legend because it lacked armament or because he and Johnson disliked each other. But perhaps most important, the Air Force already had a top-secret contract with Bell Aircraft to build 20 X-16 reconnaissance aircraft, a design very similar to Johnson's U-2. Few beyond Lemay knew of the classified program, and Johnson had no need to know. Yet, soon after the CIA signed the U-2 contract with Lockheed, the Air Force cancelled the X-16, knowing the CIA would share U-2 collection if not eventually the aircraft itself.
- The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) came into being through a CIA and DoD agreement on 6 September 1961, not September 1960, after the first successful Corona photoreconnaissance satellite mission the previous month.
- The CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology, with responsibility for oversight and development of CIA aerial and space-based collection platforms appeared in August 1963—long after Land, Bissell, and Powers had left the scene. Its predecessor, the feckless Deputy Directorate of Research, created by new DCI John McCone in February 1962, met fierce opposition from Bissell, who vehemently declined any involvement and who, in any event, left to become the first co-director of the NRO. He left government service altogether in April 1962.

- President Kennedy fired DCI Allen Dulles—and made clear that Bissell's days were numbered as well—in November 1961 after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion; Dulles did not simply retire.
- Joe Murphy, who met and identified Gary Powers on the Glienicke Bridge in Berlin during his exchange for KGB spy Rudolf Abel, was a CIA security officer and not a U-2 pilot.
- Johnson and Lockheed did produce the SR-71 Blackbird, after building the CIA's A-12 Oxcart, a different and superior-performing supersonic reconnaissance aircraft that many today erroneously conflate.

Beyond such errors, Reel often includes superfluous episodes with little connection to the main history. Kelly Johnson's professional relationship with aviator Amelia Earhart before her final flight, while interesting, has nothing to do with the U-2, Land, Bissell, Powers, or CIA. The extensive coverage of the Bay of Pigs episode, Barbara Powers's conjugal visits with her husband in Soviet detention, Joseph Alsop's Moscow honey trap problems, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Georgetown Set parties, and assassination plots against Castro, including Mafia involvement, clutter and distract from the narrative.

Reel's book is nonetheless an enjoyable read. Taken with other more scholarly accounts, with CIA's declassified publications on the U-2 program highly recommended as a start, *A Brotherhood of Spies* makes for a breezy, interesting, and enjoyable supplemental look at one of the nation's most revolutionary intelligence collection platforms and those colorful individuals involved in its development and use.



*The reviewer: Clayton Laurie* is a former military and CIA historian.

***A Guest of the Reich: The Story of American Heiress Gertrude Legendre's Dramatic Captivity and Escape from Nazi Germany***

Peter Finn (Pantheon Books, 2019), 240 pp., endnotes, bibliography, photos, map, index

**Reviewed by Katherina W. Gonzales**

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“Someone stop me; O someone please, just try and stop me.” This quote, uttered by the character Linda Seton in the 1930 movie *Holiday*, is both an apt motto and warning regarding the life Seton’s character was based on: Gertrude “Gertie” Legendre. The Broadway play *Holiday* and subsequent film starring Katharine Hepburn were based on Legendre the socialite and big game hunter of the 1920s and oddly not the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) clerk who would be captured and imprisoned by the Nazis in France during World War II. The first American female, uniformed officer to be captured by the Nazis, Legendre lived a life that could provide content for many films, but her story falls a bit short in Peter Finn’s valiant attempt in *A Guest of the Reich: The Story of American Heiress Gertrude Legendre's Dramatic Captivity and Escape from Nazi Germany*. Although a compelling tale that helps fill the literary chasm that begs to be filled by the various and layered stories of women in the security services during World War II, Finn’s treatment of Legendre should be read more as an annotated, incomplete memoir than all-encompassing biography.

Finn, the noted national security editor at the *Washington Post*, is also the co-author of *The Zhivago Affair: The Kremlin, the CIA, and the Battle over a Forbidden Book*, which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction. For his treatment of Legendre, Finn, a thorough researcher, organizes this book in only partial chronological order, preferring to create chapters based on geographic locations, including separate chapters for each city in Germany in which the Nazis held Gertie from 1944 to 1945. This is an interesting approach but leaves the reader a bit unclear as to who Gertie is versus where she was at any given time. Gertie, a prolific journal-keeper also wrote two memoirs that Finn relied on extensively: *The Sands Ceased to Run* (1947) about her wartime experiences and *The Time of My Life* (1987), loosely chronicling her childhood until after the war.<sup>a</sup>

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a. Legendre’s personal papers and photos are available on-line on the Lowcountry Digital Archive (<https://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/>).

Also delving into the National Archives’s OSS holdings and German military records, Finn attempts to round out Gertie’s explorer and wartime narratives, but there is the sense that his subject, for all her words, was more adventuresome than heroine. Read in this context, *Guest of the Reich* is a good adventure story of a woman who chased danger for the love of risk. For those seeking out the daring heroine and spy, a better choice is Sonia Purnell’s 2019 biography of OSS officer Virginia Hall, *A Woman of No Importance*, which is reviewed in this issue.

Finn’s begins the actual biographical details of “Gertie”—as Gertrude Ellen Sanford would be known her entire life—after the first chapter discussing the events leading to her capture by the German army. She was born to wealth in Aiken, South Carolina, on 29 March 1902, her father being the New York politician and rug magnate John Sanford. Gertie enjoyed the best schools and excelled as the youngest of three children. Although easily able to enjoy her status as a southern socialite, Gertie from a very early age wanted adventure more than the trappings of a family. Her thirst for adventure beyond the parlors of Charleston society began when she was only a teenager, when she embarked on her first hunting expedition in the Grand Tetons of Wyoming. From this time forward, Gertie joined multiple expeditions all over the world, some of which were funded by her family, to contribute specimens to multiple museums in the United States. Although it can be more difficult for 21st century readers to appreciate big game hunting, the zeal and fearlessness of this young woman should not be underestimated for those who can place her life into the context of the time. Finn’s copious quotes from Gertie’s correspondence and journals highlight a woman of tenacity and bravado that would serve her well as an adult. Finn’s use of Gertie’s own descriptions of big game stalking gives, by far, the best insight into Gertie’s character and sets the tone for the rest of his work. These vivid and often violent moments of foreshadowing are also reminiscent of the love of hunting shared by Virginia Hall.

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Falling in love during an expedition to Ethiopia with fellow southerner Sidney Legendre, the couple purchased Medway, a plantation outside of Charleston, South Carolina, which the couple would visit between expeditions. This is also the home where Gertie and Sidney would have their children, Landine, born 1933; and Bokara, born 1940. Both daughters would have difficult relationships with their mother over the decades. Gertie was rarely home or emotionally available while going on adventures with her husband and during the war. An interesting take on Gertie's relationship with Bokara and the history of Medway Plantation (which Bokara inherited upon her mother's death) is available in a 2011 *New York Times* article by Andrew Rice, "Gertie's Ghost" detailing some of the more metaphysical aspects of inheriting a property once operated by slaves, as well as Bokara's quest to heal her relationship with her absent parents.<sup>a</sup> Within Finn's work, the difficult relationship between Gertie and her daughters is mentioned in passing but set aside for the more dramatic portions of Gertie's life as an explorer and thrill seeker.

The bulk of Finn's book both opens and eventually excavates his subject's OSS brief work, capture, captivity, and daring escape toward the end of the war. Through the influence of friends within her social sphere, Gertie obtains an officer's commission before volunteering to the OSS in 1942. Her most important patron, David Bruce, was a key lieutenant to OSS founder William "Wild Bill" Donovan, whom Gertie cultivated in order to serve in the exciting new secret agency. Although not further explored in this book, Finn quotes a letter from Gertie to Bruce, stating that she was "already providing his agency with information on Iran and southwestern Africa" as proof of her skills in addition to her services as a fluent French speaker. Further exploration of these previous activities might have served the book well.

Gertie's position as an OSS clerk in Washington, DC, meant that she was responsible for routing classified cables throughout the OSS posts around the world. Although she enjoyed the work, according to Finn, she began to bristle at her lack of responsibility. Only a fraction of women in the OSS served overseas, while most were clerks like Gertie, stationed in Washington. Gertie became frustrated with the gender divide, stating, "What burns me up the most is the unbelievable lack of confi-

dence in a woman's ability.... Men cannot bear to have their world encroached on by more efficient women." Although Gertie would receive glowing praise from supervisors, she remained focused on trying to serve overseas and eventually worked as a clerk in London during the Blitz, where she would also host parties during air raids and then finally to France after D-Day, where the majority of Finn's narrative takes place.

As Finn begins to chronicle Gertie's time in France, the narrative speeds up with immense detail. During September 1944, Gertie was enjoying the liberation of Paris with OSS colleagues, as well as celebrities such as Ernest Hemingway. However, Gertie, ever the adventuress, yearned to see the front lines of the war and was afraid she would miss the opportunity before she would be demobilized. Serving nominally in uniform as a US Army officer but actually an OSS employee, she struck out with colleagues from Luxembourg City on 23 September to see if they could bear witness to what everyone believed to be the end of the war in Europe. In a jeep with four men and a driver, their car came under fire by the German Army near Wallendorf, just over the German border with Luxembourg. Pinned down by machine guns and small arms fire, the group decided on a cover story and burned their OSS identification cards next to their vehicle. As the inevitable happened and they were all taken prisoner, Gertie explained to her German military captors that she was an interpreter for the group from the embassy in Paris, a cover easily workable for an erudite woman now in the hands of the enemy. Although two of her companions would eventually perish as a direct or indirect result of this attempt to see the war up close, Gertie's fate was quite different.

As Gertie sticks to her cover story, Finn describes her regaling her interrogators with stories about her life as a socialite with important friends. Gertie's capture is eventually reported in the German press after the OSS had suppressed similar stories in US news outlets, causing pressure and some embarrassment for OSS officials who were concerned about the amount of classified information Gertie might reveal. However, these intelligence professionals were also mildly comforted that any press story by the Germans likely indicated that they did not believe Gertie to be a spy. Within the German army, opinions varied on this topic, and Finn provides ample evidence through wartime records that the German High Command was not quite sure what to make of this woman in their custody. However, her relatively high profile status as a

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a. Andrew Rice, "Gertie's Ghost," the *New York Times*, 14 October 2011 (available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/16/magazine/key-gerties-ghost.html>)

wealthy American woman meant that she was treated well and truly as a “guest” of the German government more than a captive. Eventually making her way through the Allied-bombed countryside of Germany, Gertie was held in Dietz Castle but soon found herself in Berlin and in the hands of the Gestapo.

By this time, according to the author, Gertie had contrived a life around her cover story of being a US embassy file clerk and interpreter, stating, “I now began to think that what I was saying was really true.” This being mixed in with stories about prominent US political and military figures, her interrogators, who according to Finn, were experts in espionage against the United States and Britain, eventually filed reports stating that Gertie held little of intelligence value. According to these reports, which went straight to Nazi leadership, she was more likely than not a rich American who used her influence to get a job that allowed her to travel.

As Gertie was transferred from city to city in Germany, interestingly, many conversations with her captors centered on convincing their prisoner that the real threat to America was the Soviet Union. These attempts at creating a wedge between the Allies were apparently amusing to Gertie, who stated that the United States would handle the Soviets once the war was over, but her captors persisted in the effort. Gertie’s reminiscences of these events, including stays at castles and villas with “tea parties” hosted by the Gestapo are strongly bolstered throughout these chapters by Finn’s use of German military records and biographies of the German General Staff. The relative ease and comfort of Gertie’s life during this time is a particularly unusual portrayal of a captured OSS employee during World War II, when so many female spies were tortured or killed. In one particularly remarkable anecdote, while being held in Kronberg at the home of Heins Grieme, a German industrialist, Gertie was allowed to shoot birds with a .22 rifle for her hosts by day and drink champagne by night, while awaiting news of her expected release on the heels of the US Army advance into Germany.

Finn’s narrative surrounding Gertie’s eventual escape from custody is detailed but somewhat lacking in explanation, which is likely owing to his having only Gertie’s version of events. In March 1945, with help from two German soldiers and in a moment that Gertie rightfully described as the scariest of her life, she leapt off a stopped train and across the border to Switzerland while another German soldier yelled for her to stop. Finn’s commentary on Gertie’s miraculously lucky escape is brief—Gertie’s version of events and Finn’s otherwise meticulous research shed no further light on the topic or why the unnamed German soldiers assisted her.

According to Finn’s archival research, the Swiss and subsequent OSS reports indicated that officials believed Gertie might have become a double agent, but Allen Dulles (who conducted her debriefings in Bern) as well as her other superiors eventually believed in Gertie’s contrition about the incident leading to her capture. They further accepted her singular narrative of events. Coming back to the United States under orders to remain silent, Gertie did not reunite with Sidney until the end of the war in the Pacific. Her separation from her husband and having nothing to do generated a great deal of frustration for Gertie. She was anxious to tell her story but found that the press had no interest in her accidental adventure. Additionally, the OSS refused to return Gertie’s notes and diaries from her period of incarceration for quite some time after the war, citing security concerns. After Sidney’s return and her eventual decision to write *The Sands Ceased to Run*, there was simply not an audience for Gertie’s story in a world that wanted to move past the war. The couple would soon start going on expeditions again, but Sidney died of a heart attack in 1948, and soon Gertie was traipsing around the world alone again, exploring and cataloging for museums. Although Gertie would attempt to tell her story many times until her death in 2000, it is only with Finn’s book that we begin to get a glimpse into the story of a woman whose layers remain mostly unknown, even as her most famous exploit is revealed.



**The reviewer: Katherina W. Gonzales** is a CIA officer who has served in two other components of the Intelligence Community.



## Intelligence in Public Media

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### ***A Woman of No Importance—The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II***

Sonia Purnell (Viking, 2019), 368 pp., list of characters, map, photographs, source notes, selected bibliography, and index

#### **Reviewed by Craig Gralley**

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Sonia Purnell's biography of Office of Special Operations (OSS) and CIA clandestine officer Virginia Hall, *A Woman of No Importance*, is by far the clearest, most comprehensive review of Virginia Hall's life to date.<sup>a</sup> It is a fine exposition that deserves to be on the top shelf of intelligence literature.

Purnell, a former investigative journalist, undertook the formidable task of piecing together an account of Hall's wartime espionage from the fragmentary government record which formed the backbone of her story. While many lesser agents publicized their wartime exploits, Hall remained the model undercover agent. She shunned the spotlight and stayed true to her secrecy agreement long after her career in espionage ended. She wrote no memoir, granted no interviews, and spoke very little about her clandestine life, even with her closest friends and relatives. Overcoming this absence was a daunting challenge: important documents on Hall in the US archives were missing—possibly thrown out—and the British and French archives suffered fires that destroyed much of the history of agent operations in WWII France. Consequently, key pieces of Hall's complex story—the tissue connecting intelligence officers, intelligence circuits and codenames—are gone.

By necessity, large gaps in Hall's life and career had to be filled with interviews, the memoirs of other agents, and duplicate documents that somehow escaped the calamities of time. Purnell took great pains to marshal what remained and broke new ground by persuading the French government to open sealed files on one of Hall's key agents—brothel owner, Germaine Guerin. Still, this only took Purnell so far. In a complex story like Hall's, where large sections of her private and clandestine life are missing, the author was faced with the biographer's

dilemma: stay silent where no information exists, or take an informed leap. It's here where biography moves beyond description to become a creative process.

Purnell proves to be master at filling the gaps that swirl around Hall in WWII France, but she is strangely silent when it comes to the interior Hall, leaving the reader to infer Hall's personality and, by extension, her thoughts and motivations. This is where a greater grasp of espionage could enrich readers' understanding of Hall's actions and offer insight into the personality of a wartime clandestine agent. Purnell's understanding of espionage reveals itself when she makes the exuberant claim that her research pushed through, "nine levels of security clearance and into the heart of today's world of American espionage." This is an odd comment on several levels. Perhaps Purnell means nine levels of classification (of which there are only four). Even then, her comment doesn't acknowledge that OSS records have been declassified—as have the CIA records she reviewed—so there's only one level of classification she broke through: Unclassified.

A case-in-point is Hall's reason for returning to France a second time in the spring of 1944. This is important because Hall's single-minded passion to do so without regard to the dangers—the wanted posters still in circulation, the bounty on her head, while Gestapo Chief Klaus Barbie still was hunting her—epitomizes the depth of Virginia Hall's courage. The book is not clear on why Hall returned but in subsequent interviews, Purnell takes a leap: "[Virginia Hall] wanted to prove what she could do. . . . It was her accident that drove her every day."<sup>b</sup>

Purnell's exuberant proclamation is appealing because it's easy to understand. But it's a conjecture made without evidence or considering the mindset of a clandestine agent. There's no public record of how Hall felt about

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a. Large portions of this "untold story" have, of course, been told before but not in such detail or clarity. Two other biographies about Virginia Hall have been published: *Wolves at the Door* (Judith Pearson, Lyons Press, 2005) and *Le Espionne, Virginia Hall* (Vincent Nouzielle, Fayold, 2013).

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b. "Morning Joe," MSNBC, 23 May 2019. Hall lost part of her left leg in a hunting accident and received a wooden prosthesis she nicknamed "Cuthbert" in 1933.

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the loss of her leg, much less to tell us that her disability was, as Purnell suggests, the controlling force in her life. Moreover, the evidence suggests the contrary, that Hall, a confident, strong-willed, risk-taker, had moved beyond negative feelings of self-worth that required continual affirmation.<sup>a</sup>

While Hall's motives for returning undoubtedly are complex, she clearly was a driven person prior to and following her hunting accident. Still, the strongest case can be made that Hall returned to France not only because she believed she could make a decisive contribution to the liberation of the country, but she went back out of concern for the safety of the agents she left behind. While Purnell makes a fleeting reference to Hall's likely feelings of guilt, it is the nature of the case officer-agent relationship that offers the strongest argument for Hall's return.

The personal bond between clandestine officer and agent, forged under the most demanding life and death situations, is inordinately strong. Hall broke that bond when she fled Lyon and left her agents in the middle of the night in November 1942 to escape the Gestapo. Her circuit, Heckler, had been blown and she knew her agents would be rounded up and tortured simply for knowing

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a. In a 20 October 2015 interview, Lorna Catling said "nothing daunted" her aunt Virginia. As for as the need for affirmation, Hall shunned ceremonies honoring her achievements.

and supporting her. It is the kind of knowledge that can cause unbearable stress and remorse—feelings that could motivate a second return to France.

Was it a coincidence that when Hall returned, it was back to the Haute Loire where she left her agents? Perhaps, but what's undeniable is that immediately after she completed her wartime mission, Hall undertook what some might consider the unusual step of conducting an extensive 1,000-mile search to find those she left behind. And she did find her agents—nearly all of whom had been sent to prison camps and tortured for assisting her. What's more, when she saw the pitiful physical and financial condition they were in, Hall, likely feeling responsible, successfully petitioned the US government for financial compensation and recognition for her agents' valuable service.

One important aspect of biography is the background authors bring to their subject. Sonia Purnell is an exceptionally talented journalist and writer. A few overly exuberant statements and omissions do not dim the remarkable research that went into writing *A Woman of No Importance*. The book is an important addition to intelligence literature on Virginia Hall and WWII France. It should be close at hand for the intelligence professional, historian or layperson interested in learning more about the life and clandestine career of this heroic disabled American hero.



**The reviewer: Craig Gralley** is a retired CIA officer. He is the author of a historical novel about Virginia Hall, *Hall of Mirrors: Virginia Hall: America's Greatest Spy of WW II*.



## ***Intelligence in Public Media***

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### ***Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate: Covert Action and Internal Operations***

Owen L. Sirrs (Routledge, 2017), 317, chapter endnotes, bibliography, index

#### ***Reviewed by Gordon Bonin***

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##### ***Contradictions.***

For the observer, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) can be a contradiction. For a reader, Owen Sirrs' book on ISI is a set of contradictions.

A former senior intelligence officer with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Sirrs does a great service in his book by providing a framework for clearly looking at ISI, its duties, and its roles in the Pakistani military, Pakistani domestic security, and Pakistani foreign relations.

But then there are contradictions that make this a flawed book. Instead of Sirrs applying his intelligence experience and tradecraft to cautiously work out answers based on the publicly available information he can use, too often he runs with rumors and presumptions.

A strength of Sirrs' book is that he lays out the breadth of ISI duties, he gives more space to but does not exclusively focus on its support of militant groups, especially its role in the anti-Soviet insurgency in Afghanistan or its backing of the Afghan Taliban. And this is a current ISI contradiction in US eyes: ISI supports the Afghan Taliban, while Pakistan asserts it is a US ally and provides access to Afghanistan so that US forces can fight the Taliban insurgency.

##### ***Questions, Questions, Questions***

Sirrs' framework is essentially a series of questions in the book's introduction. The first is the most basic: "What exactly is ISI?" His answer is dead on the mark in helping the reader look at ISI: "It is a military agency." This is important because it helps answer a frequent question about ISI, which Sirrs also asks: "Is ISI a rogue agency or a state within a state?"

Sirrs effectively drives home the fact that as a military agency, ISI does what military leadership tells it to do. "ISI [is] owned by the Army Chief not the prime minister," Sirrs points out. "ISI implements policy set by army dominated planners." He quotes former President and Army Chief Pervez Musharraf, "The government

formulates policy and tells ISI what to do. They do not do [anything] on their own."

Sirrs uses this approach of asking questions throughout the book, starting sections with a barrage of questions, and then ending a section with a flurry of them. The initial batches come across like sets of intelligence requirements intended for collectors. The batches that end sections are like the questions used in brainstorming ahead of drafting finished intelligence. Within this structure, Sirrs lays out ISI's history chronologically.

A strength of the book is the amount of space Sirrs gives to its internal security duties. ISI has a "formidable domestic security role," Sirrs notes. Military leaders have used it to influence domestic politicians and news coverage, to suppress sectarian and ethno-nationalist groups, to protect army interests and its reputation. ISI became known as nasty and all-knowing among Pakistanis. Circa 1975, ISI's internal role became formalized with the establishment of an "internal wing." Sirrs notes the paradox that civilian politicians almost universally decried military and ISI meddling in domestic politics, but the internal wing was created by executive order of a civilian prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was removed from power two years later in a coup.

Throughout the book, Sirrs weaves in sketches of individual ISI officers as they lived through parts of Pakistan's history. Sirrs uses these sketches to put faces on a usually faceless organization and to show the factors that motivate ISI officers and inform their worldview. The most striking is a sketch of a Pakistan Army major who had served in both military intelligence and ISI. In 1971 the major defected to ethnic-Bengali guerrillas in East Pakistan fighting the Islamabad government. The major, an East Pakistani, was alienated by the Pakistan Army's violent suppression of Bengali political agitation. However, the military's repression would end with East Pakistan's independence.

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***Militants: The Good, the Bad, and the Different***

Sirrs describes how from Pakistan's inception the military saw utility in conducting, what Sirrs calls "unconventional war." Unconventional warfare is essentially the use of militant and insurgent groups in India and Afghanistan. ISI became the military's militant overseer, starting with anti-India groups in the 1950s, and adding Afghan groups in the 1970s. Sirrs in the introduction states that the genesis of the book was a two-month stay at the Counterinsurgency Training Center in Kabul.

He points out that ISI and the Pakistani military have differentiated over the years between "good jihadis," like the Afghan Taliban and anti-India and Kashmir-focused insurgents, and "bad jihadis" who wage war domestically against Islamabad. Pakistani support to the Taliban, including allowing the movement to have unmolested sanctuary inside Pakistan, has infuriated US officials. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks, "the US focused on the immediate objective of defeating AQ, while Pakistan looked to its long-term goals, which included a pro-Pakistan regime in Afghanistan and use of that country as strategic depth against India," Sirrs assesses. Though "the keystone of cooperation was tracking down and arresting al-Qaida fighters [there was a] growing misunderstanding about the Taliban."

Sirrs notes that ISI's execution of unconventional warfare and militant support has not been entirely successful. The most renowned success was supporting the Afghan resistance that drove out the Soviet Union in the 1980s; a more equivocal achievement was helping the Taliban to take power in Afghanistan in 1996. Otherwise, militant support has been effective, Sirrs notes ironically, in helping Pakistan alienate almost every country it counts as an ally.

To his credit, Sirrs refutes the assumption that ISI and militants are best buddies. He points out that in backing and manipulating the Afghan resistance groups in the 1980s, "control was ISI's top priority" and adds, "Over the long term, this policy built up a bitter hatred for Pakistan's ISI among many Afghans."

Despite the strengths of these insights, he lets me down in how he addresses "Directorate S" and what it is or may be. Directorate S has a mystique. Sirrs describes the ISI unit as "a secret cell planted within an intelligence agency that has tight compartmentalization, rigid communication security procedures, and a network of former intelligence officers to aid militant groups and conduct plausibly deniable operations." Much of this description could be applied to units within the US Intelligence Community. Instead of making an intelligence or analytical argument about whether Directorate S is super-secret squirrel special, or whether it is, maybe, simply the external counterpart to the internal wing, Sirrs, waxes poetic, and calls it "elusive."

For many observers Directorate S is the hobgoblin that causes the ISI to act in ways we don't expect. But Sirrs doesn't connect the directorate to his sound analysis that ISI follows orders from Army leadership.

***Usama bin Ladin***

Late in the book Sirrs tries to answer the question of whether ISI either knew about or actively helped hide Usama Bin Ladin in Abbottabad. How did Usama bin Ladin "reside, almost in plain view?" For me, this section is another example of Sirrs' dropping his intelligence tradecraft and ignoring the arguments he's already made.

Sirrs doesn't weigh whether Bin Ladin would trust ISI to know where he was hiding, even though he had pointed out "there was no trust in this [AQ-ISI] relationship, only a few shared objectives." He doesn't ask whether AQ fits the profile of the insurgents ISI usually backs. He never really answers the crucial question he asks, "Would Pakistan run the risk?"

For me, Sirrs' book is a lost opportunity. He asks the right questions about ISI and its relationships with the Army, militants, civilian politics, and foreign governments. He frames ISI well, but too often he turns to myths to explain ISI actions or simply leaves them as enigmas.



***The reviewer: Gordon Bonin*** is a CIA officer serving as a deputy national intelligence officer for military issues related to South Asia.

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## **Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf—December 2019**

*Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake*

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### **HISTORICAL**

***Agents of Influence: A British Campaign, A Canadian Spy, and the Secret Plot to Bring America into World War II***, by Henry Hemming

***The Birth of the FBI: Teddy Roosevelt, the Secret Service, and the Fight Over America's Premier Law Enforcement Agency***, by Willard M. Oliver

***Lincoln's Spies: Their Secret War to Save A Nation***, by Douglas Waller

***Madame Fourcade's Secret War: The Daring Women Who Led France's Largest Spy Network Against Hitler***, by Lynne Olson

***The Myths of Tet: The Most Misunderstood Event of the Vietnam War***, by Edwin E. Moïse

***Our Germans: Project Paperclip and the National Security State***, by Brian E. Crim

***The Rising Clamor: The American Press, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Cold War***, by David P. Hadley

***SPIES: The U.S. and Russian Espionage Game from the Cold War to the 21st Century***, by Sean N. Kalic

***Trinity: The Treachery and Pursuit of the Most Dangerous Spy in History***, by Frank Close

### **INTELLIGENCE ABROAD**

***SECRET: The Making of Australia's Security State***, by Brian Toohey

***Special Duty: A History of the Japanese Intelligence Community***, by Richard J. Samuels



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## HISTORICAL

*Agents of Influence: A British Campaign, a Canadian Spy, and the Secret Plot to Bring America into World War II* by Henry Hemming. (Public Affairs, 2019), 371 pp., endnotes, index.

Author Henry Hemming begins this book by telling how its central character, Sir William Stephenson, once saved the life of Hemming's father. Having expressed his gratitude, Hemming continues *Agents of Influence* with a biography of Sir William that emphasizes his wartime service in British intelligence, while correcting some of the myths that have accumulated around Sir William's reputation.

The most well-known inaccuracy is that Sir William was the man codenamed Intrepid. Hemming admits that this was the invention of his Canadian biographer, William Stevenson, albeit with Sir William's concurrence. Stevenson's book, *A Man Called Intrepid*, sold millions—it is still in print—and “was so inaccurate that the US publisher later had it reissued as a work of fiction.” (319–20)

But *Agents of Influence* deals with British intelligence influence operations in the United States prior to Pearl Harbor. Their objective: bring the United States into the war before it was too late for Britain. Hemming quotes a *Washington Post* assessment that judged their operations to be “arguably the most effective in history . . . a virtual textbook in the art of manipulation, one that changed America forever.” (2) Using contemporaneous poll data, Hemming asserts that when Stephenson began his operations just after the Battle of Dunkirk in 1940, “one poll suggested that 8 percent of the American population wanted to go to war.” In the weeks just before Pearl Harbor, “polls showed that more than two-thirds of Americans had decided it was time to go to war.” (2–3)

Hemming explains these results by describing two competing forces. One is the America First Movement championed by Charles Lindbergh and the rallies he held throughout the country arguing that the United States should stay out of the war in Europe. The other is Stephenson's operations supplemented by William Donovan, Ian Fleming, Robert Sherwood—the president's speech writer—and in varying degrees, the FBI.

Although Stephenson reported to MI6, he had elements of MI5 and SOE under his command, and this enabled him to take a multipronged approach. While working to increase Donovan's influence and the creation of OSS, his station—referred to as British Security Coordination (BSC)—planted stories about the gallant British fighting the Nazis, promoted propaganda films like *Britain Can Take It* and *Mrs. Minever*, supported President Roosevelt's controversial lend-lease proposals with subsidized articles in the press, and implemented “any warrantable action likely to bring the US into the war.” (153)

Not all of Stephenson's operations were preapproved by London. The most prominent example occurred on Navy Day, 27 October 1942, when, in a radio talk to the nation, President Roosevelt announced that “I have in my possession a secret map made in Germany by Hitler's government by the planners of the new world order. It is a map of South America and part of Central America as Hitler proposes to reorganize it.” This was sensational news for two reasons. First, it was coming from the president—very unusual in those days. And second, Hitler had long claimed not to be interested in the new world. And then Roosevelt added more; he also had a copy of Hitler's “plan to abolish all religions.” (250–52) At a news conference the following day, the president declined to exhibit the map or the plan. Some in the press were skeptical and a senator was told Donovan was probably involved. Hemming asks, “Did the president know these were British forgeries?” (257) He provides some persuasive, though not conclusive, evidence that suggests he did.

*Agents of Influence* endeavors to make the case that the clandestine BSC influence operations it describes were a principal factor in preparing the American public to join World War II. But his poll data is not strong, and nothing else presented suggests that BSC made much of a difference when compared to the impact of Pearl Harbor. Finally, the British never credited Sir William with bringing the United States into the war. Hemming's position is weak.

***The Birth of the FBI: Teddy Roosevelt, the Secret Service, and the Fight Over America's Premier Law Enforcement Agency***, by Willard M. Oliver (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 328 pp., endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

In 1935, during the Franklin Roosevelt administration, the Department of Justice created the Federal Bureau of Investigation, headed by J. Edgar Hoover. It was not a new organization, just a new name, a successor to the Bureau of Investigation (BoI), which had been founded in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt. The first BoI director was Stanley Finch. Today, for practical purposes, the FBI refers to its creation using the 1908 date. *The Birth of the FBI* is concerned with the very early days of its existence under the earlier Roosevelt administration and the reasons for its creation.

An official history of the FBI says that from its birth it “exercised a wide range of criminal and intelligence responsibilities,” later expanding to espionage, bank robbery, kidnapping and migratory bird investigations.<sup>a</sup> But author Willard Oliver, a professor in the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State, argues that while it would do all of those things and more, “the FBI emerged from a political . . . row with Congress over the Secret Service,” and that its “true origins . . . are shrouded in the mystery of politics.” (x)

The first few chapters of the book look at the historical evolution of the federal and private agencies created to support the legal system. Beginning with the US Marshalls Service and including the Pinkerton Detective Agency and the Secret Service, they dealt with support to the court system, counterfeiting, and assassinations. But these were not the problem that led the president to create the FBI; his motivation was environmental conservation.

Teddy Roosevelt learned early in his presidency “that thousands perhaps millions of acres of government owned lands in the West were being stolen” from legitimate

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a. *Celebrating 80 Years of Counterintelligence*, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, (Washington, DC: 2019), 11–13.

owners, who had acquired the land under the Homestead Acts. (131) Attempts to investigate these land thefts were assigned to Secret Service agents borrowed from the Treasury Department since the Justice Department had no agents with the needed authority. When one investigation “ensnared two congressmen” (138) and some senators (147), and after a lead Secret Service agent was killed, Congress passed a bill prohibiting use of Secret Service agents to investigate “private matters of members of Congress.” (149) Roosevelt and his attorney general, Charles Bonaparte—the grandnephew of Napoleon—countered that move by issuing an executive order creating the Bureau of Investigation, the same method used to create the Secret Service in 1865. (167)

*The Birth of the FBI* concludes with a lengthy analysis of public and congressional reaction to Roosevelt’s decision. Even though it was near the end of the president’s term, some congressmen responded aggressively with the president giving as good as he got, calling one senator, “one of the foulest and rottenest demagogues [sic] in the whole country.” (239) By the end of Roosevelt’s administration, the FBI was a legitimate organization of government.

In a short epilogue, Professor Oliver digresses to make the following point: “the greatest myth of US politics outside the belief that the Supreme Court is an apolitical branch of government is that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is a professional, apolitical governmental bureaucracy. Nothing could be further from the truth.” (261). He goes on to argue that all elements of the executive branch are political to some degree and that the FBI was born out of politics and thus will “be a political agency well into the future.” (263) His book is interesting, well documented, and informative; his political philosophy is debatable.

***Lincoln's Spies: Their Secret War to Save A Nation***, by Douglas Waller (Simon & Schuster, 2019), 594 pp., endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

Allen Pinkerton, Lafayette Baker, Elizabeth Van Lew, and George Sharpe were each part of the intelligence history of the American Civil War. Pinkerton provided

security for President Lincoln for the final part of his trip to Washington in 1861 and was later hired by General McClellan as his intelligence officer. Baker was an

ambitious “poorly educated and aimless drifter,” who managed to convince Gen. Winfield Scott “that he could be a superb espionage agent.” (45). Elizabeth Van Lew was a native of Richmond, Virginia, and the daughter of a wealthy slave owner, an institution she opposed. During the Civil War she privately subverted supporters of slavery and gradually became an important Union secret agent. Union Army Capt. George Henry Sharpe of Kingston, New York, was considered “a natural military leader” (25) by his superiors, and would go on to form the Bureau of Military Information, the Army’s first military intelligence unit. *Lincoln’s Spies* tells how each one contributed to the president’s conduct of the war and the events immediately following his assassination.

After presenting short biographical accounts of his four principals, author Douglas Waller discusses their contributions in greater detail. He recognizes that the stories of Pinkerton and Baker have been told before in their memoirs and other accounts, and he is careful to emphasize those exploits that are shaped more by callous narcissism than historical fact. If the measure of performance in these cases is the impact they had on the outcome of the war, the sometimes colorful but somber verdict must be no.

When that performance measure is applied to Elizabeth Van Lew and George Sharpe, the answer is an unqualified yes, they had impact, albeit for quite different reasons. Waller describes how Van Lew came to the attention of the Union Army as a potential source of intelligence and how, applying common sense tradecraft, on her own she developed “more than a dozen agents and couriers” who provided order-of-battle and related details on the Confederates. (327) She communicated using “invisible ink” and various concealment devices, helped POWs escape, and successfully fended off Confederate detectives suspicious of her activities. (330–31) Van Lew didn’t write a memoir, but Waller draws on official documents and personal letters to tell her story.

George Sharpe didn’t publish a memoir either, but his story is thoroughly documented by his wartime record and correspondence. Although much less has been written about Sharpe than the others, Waller has done a fine job of focusing historical attention on the most important of his subjects. A graduate of Rutgers University and Yale Law School, fluent in French, and a member of the New York State Militia’s 3rd Division, Sharpe had a flourishing law practice when the war started. His initial commitment was for three months, certainly enough to defeat a Confederacy with half the population of the Northern States.

Waller tells how it was Sharpe’s fluency in French that brought him to the attention of Gen. Joseph Hooker. It seems Hooker had a book on the French secret service that he needed translated, and he asked Sharpe to do it. Impressed with the work, Hooker “asked” him to remain on his staff; he did that, too. This was the beginning of the Bureau of Military Information that would also serve Generals Meade and Grant for the rest of the war. Waller also discusses how Sharpe quickly learned how to recruit and handle secret agents, interrogate POWs and deserters, intercept signals and telegrams—enciphered and clear text—intercept mail, and verify information before informing his superiors. He performed with a regularity that had escaped Pinkerton and which Baker never contemplated.

Each of the protagonists in *Lincoln’s Spies* supervises other agents who carry out espionage and counterespionage and security operations, and Waller includes many of their stories. The result is a rough chronology of intelligence, security, and military operations in the Civil War in the east and its immediate aftermath describing how the peace affected the principals, none of whom actually worked directly for Lincoln. A well-told review of the contributions of Pinkerton, Baker, and Van Lew that gives Sharpe long overdue credit.

***Madame Fourcade’s Secret War: The Daring Young Woman Who Led France’s Largest Spy Network Against Hitler***, by Lynne Olson (Random House, 2019), 428 pp., endnotes, bibliography, photos, maps, index.

In his history of the French resistance in World War II,<sup>a</sup> Olivier Wieviorka, professor of history at the Ecole

Normale Supérieure Cachan, begins by pointing out that the resistance was not a single organization, and he discusses several French units. This point is reinforced by Robert Gildea, professor of modern history at Oxford, in his book on the same subject, though he takes a broader,

a. Olivier Wieviorka, *The French Resistance* (The Belknap Press, 2016).

all-European view.<sup>a</sup> Neither mentions *Alliance*, the largest—and the only—resistance network commanded by a woman.

The reasons for the omission are organizational and political. Those units working with the British Special Operations Executive have received extensive attention, as have those supported by Gen. Charles de Gaulle. But resistance elements linked to MI6 and the French Vichy government—even for cover purposes—are much less frequently mentioned in the literature because de Gaulle opposed giving credit to any network having contact with the Vichy and because the MI6 relationship was kept secret. *Madame Fourcade's Secret War*, author Lynne Olson's eighth book, meets both of those conditions and seeks to amend the historical record, although she is not the first to make that attempt. Marie-Madeleine Fourcade's 1974 autobiography, *Noah's Ark*, told the basic story<sup>b</sup>—without any sourcing—but she was constrained from mentioning her relationship with the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6). Olson adds these and other operational details, while including source notes and comments on her life after the war.

Fourcade spent her early life in the East Asia, where her father was a steamship executive. She was educated in Shanghai and later in Paris. By the time World War II started, she had married, had a child, and separated from her husband, a military officer. She had also learned to fly and drive fast cars, while she worked for Frances's first commercial radio station. There, she helped launch the careers of Edith Piaf and Maurice Chevalier. It was a Paris dinner party attended by Lt. Col. Charles de Gaulle and Maj. Georges Loustau-Lacau that led to her role in the resistance, although she could not see it coming at the time.

Olson explains Fourcade's initial role working for the leader of what became the *Alliance* network, how she came to lead it, and why the Germans called it *Noah's Ark*, (196) and how it grew under her leadership to some 3,000 members spread all over France. Fourcade didn't tell MI6 she was female after taking over from her male predecessor, but by the time of her first face-to-face meeting with MI6 she had gained the organization's

confidence. Similarly, all her subordinates recognized her inherent ability to assess and command people. When she suspected a radio operator sent by MI6 was a Nazi agent, she managed, after some debate, to convince MI6 and his execution was ordered. Another suspect, however, turned out to be a valuable MI6 agent.

The book doesn't describe how *Alliance* carried out operations, but it does say that the network reported on airfield locations, ships at naval bases—especially submarines—troop movements, and related order-of-battle intelligence. With few exceptions, it doesn't say what MI6 did with the intelligence. The exceptions include a detailed 55-foot hand drawn map of the Normandy invasion beaches that reached MI6 before the invasion, (303) and reports on the V-1 program, for which the agent, Jeannie Rousseau, later also received a CIA award in 1993. (380)

Of course, the French collaborators in the Vichy government and the Gestapo were aware of *Alliance* and constantly laid traps to capture its agents. Fourcade was arrested twice by Vichy security but escaped both times since *Alliance* had penetrated it thoroughly. By mid-1943 tensions were high and Fourcade had recently given birth to a boy when she was recalled to London to meet her MI6 colleagues. She remained there, impatiently maintaining tangential contact with *Alliance* until after the invasion, when she returned by plane.

Only days after her arrival, she was arrested by the Gestapo. (317–19) Her ingenious escape and permanent return to freedom make exciting reading.

Marie-Madeleine Fourcade and all but three of her *Alliance* colleagues were denied post-war public credit for their anti-Nazi exploits, for political reasons and de Gaulle's refusal to acknowledge those who did not report to him during the war and maintained contact with the British. (377–78) Much of her post-war life was devoted to finding lost members of the network and recognizing the others who had served.

*Madame Fourcade's Secret War* is a well-documented, long overdue tribute to a brave woman.

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a. Robert Gildea, *Fighters In The Shadows: A New History of the French Resistance* (The Belknap Press, 2015).

b. Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, *Noah's Ark* (E. P. Putnam and Company, 1974).



***Our Germans: Project Paperclip and the National Security State***, by Brian E. Crim (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018) 245 pp., endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

By the end of World War II, the Allies had established camps for German and Austrian scientists, engineers, and technicians who were to be screened for possible culpability in war crimes. The files of those who possessed professional skills that might contribute to research in the United States were flagged with a paperclip indicating additional interrogation was required to assess specific capabilities. Thus began what came to be called Operation Paperclip. (3)

Lt. Walter Jessel of the Army's Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC)—who would later head the CIA's Congress of Cultural Freedom—was assigned to interrogate members of the German rocket (i.e., the V-2, *Vergeltungswaffe* or retribution, ballistic missile) development team headed by Werner von Braun, whose files reached Jessel with a paperclip. Jessel's orders were to sort out the "Nazis and the hangers-on from the technical staff" so the latter could be sent to the United States. (36) The task was more difficult than it sounds, and Brian Crim, an associate professor of history at Lynchburg University, quotes from Jessel's diary that "the team consists of rocket enthusiasts, engineering college graduates, professors, all unrepentant Nazis aware of their bargaining power with the Americans. . . . They are mercenaries who want to sell their weapon," the V-2. Jessel went on to note he was "troubled by their mercenary mentality and their disingenuous attempts to stoke fears of the Soviet Union." This issue has been addressed by others, and Professor Crim acknowledges Jessel's predecessors who took a much broader view of the problem by screening for other skills like atomic or medical research. (37)

*Our Germans* focuses on why the US government allowed the German rocket scientists into the United States in 1947. It asks whether that decision was justified by their involvement in the US satellite program launched in 1958, and their subsequent contributions to what Crim calls the "National Security State"—"military necessity or a dishonorable episode." (5).

There is no easy answer. Crim discusses the principal opposition that surfaced in the State Department, where the objections were focused, inter alia, on the granting of citizenship to the ex-Nazis when many displaced persons in Europe were denied the privilege. As Crim recognizes,

at least one rocket scientist, Arthur Rudolf, voluntarily gave up his US citizenship and returned to Europe when his behavior at the Dora-Mittlebau camp became known in 1984. Dora-Mittlebau was the location of an underground V-2 production and storage facility built by forced laborers kept underground for as long as they could work.

While Operation Paperclip was ongoing, the Soviets were doing the same thing and managed to send some "2,522 specialists" with their families to the Soviet Union. The results were mixed, however, and most returned by the late 1950s for reasons that are never made clear. The US Intelligence Community, according to Crim, believed that 60 percent of them were sympathetic to the "communist ideology." (148)

In conclusion, Crim returns to the topic of war crimes, noting that only one of the "Paperclippers" was prosecuted—and acquitted, "despite a significant paper trail connecting them to war crimes." (188) Even Von Braun eventually gave a deposition about three SS officers and the horrid working conditions at his facility. But Crim writes that he "explicitly lied about the presence of slave labor at Peenemünde. (189) His Nazi connections were overlooked.

*Our Germans* leaves unasked the question: Would it have been better not to have brought the German scientists to the United States and made them citizens in return for their work on US space science? And equally important, what would the United States do if it faced a similar situation in the future?

***The Rising Clamor: The American Press, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Cold War***, by David P. Hadley (The University Press of Kentucky, 2019), 261 pp., endnotes, bibliography, index.

Sir Martin Gilbert's multi-volume biography of Winston Churchill has been called definitive by some reviewers, but that did not stop Andrew Roberts from writing a 1,000-page treatment of his own.<sup>a</sup> Similarly, new books about Lincoln continue to be published. In the same way, although to a much lesser extent, books about the CIA and its relationship to the media have appeared with some frequency.<sup>b</sup> Usually in these cases the authors have discovered new material justifying a new publication. That is not the case with *The Rising Clamor*.

Author David Hadley, a visiting assistant professor of history at Ashland University, holds that "the press was able to influence the CIA from its foundation in often unacknowledged ways." (1) At the same time, he suggests that "the potential for manipulation and abuse of the press by the CIA led to serious questions about the legitimacy of the free press." (3) Hadley attempts to document these

assertions by analyzing the "press-CIA relationships that existed in the agency's early years," by which he means from 1945 to 1976. (5)

*The Rising Clamor* then embarks on a chronological review of CIA relations with the press under successive directors of central intelligence during controversial operations. For example, he touches on covert action under Dulles. Then he looks at the National Student Association scandal, the battle over the publication of Victor Marchetti's *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, the so-called year of intelligence in 1975, and the consequent congressional investigations. Hadley concludes that to some extent, by 1976, these events had "fundamentally transformed" the CIA and its "reputation for effectiveness, trustworthiness, and respectability was for many Americans severely undermined." (172) And then Hadley suggests that in an effort to overcome this image, that "the CIA's approach to its public image has grown considerably more sophisticated in recent years. The CIA now seeks to ensure it is well represented in fiction and popular culture." (176)

But how does Hadley know these things? He doesn't provide new evidence and doesn't analyze past events in new ways. In fact, his sourcing is all secondary, and he relies on the the opinions of others. Absent first-hand knowledge or new research, Hadley offers no new insights. *Caveat lectre*.

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a. Andrew Roberts, *Churchill: Walking With Destiny* (Viking, 2018). See Thomas Coffey's review of the book in *Studies in Intelligence* 63, no. 2 (June 2019).

b. See for example: Francis Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New Press, 1999); Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Harvard University Press, 2008); Oliver Boyd-Barnett et. al, *Hollywood and the CIA* (Routledge, 2011); *The CIA and Hollywood: How the Agency Shapes Film and Television* (University of Texas Press, 2012).

***SPIES: The U.S. and Russian Espionage Game from the Cold War to the 21st Century***, by Sean N. Kalic (Praeger, 2019), 231 pp., endnotes, bibliography, photos, appendices, maps, index.

Sean Kalic is a professor of military history at the US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. In *SPIES* his objective was to show how the United States and the Soviet Union sought to achieve strategic advantage in a modern version of "the great game," with the CIA pitted against the KGB. For two reasons—one general, the other specific—he is only partially successful. The general reason follows from his statement that "neither the CIA nor the KGB were ever to move completely away from heavy reliance on intelligence officers and agents." (3) He provides no evidence that either service ever set out to achieve more

than a working balance in this area, because that is what the profession demands.

The specific reason has to do with his failure to include the detailed contributions of allied intelligence services during the Cold War and the minimum attention he has given to the National Security Agency and the FBI.

This is not to say the seven chapters in *SPIES* are without merit. The material Kalic presents is not new, though with some exceptions, it provides useful reviews. The chronological narrative begins with the Soviet penetration of the Manhattan Project, the VENONA

program, and other events that led to the National Security Act of 1947, which created CIA. A principal exception is the author's treatment of the VENONA program and his comments on the one-time pads that he calls "onetime-use codebooks," the pages of which were, in some cases, used twice. (32) His explanation that "Soviet diplomatic officers saved pages and even entire books . . . to conserve limited resources" is incorrect. The one-time pads were used by cipher clerks, not officers, and the duplication occurred when the pads were printed.

Concerning the identification of the agents in VENONA, they were identified by the FBI, not by Army personnel at Arlington Hall, as Kalic asserts. Lastly, the Soviets were not "steadily informed" about the program by Lauchlin Currie or Elizabeth Bentley; these two passed on sketchy rumors. (33) William Weisband and Kim Philby get the credit for that betrayal.

The balance of *SPIES* discusses the international situation, covert action programs, and how the intelligence services of both countries adapted to changing circumstances. Some famous cases are summarized to illustrate the level of effort. For example, in the late 1940s, the Soviets sent KGB Col. Rudolf Abel [true name: Willie Fisher] to build a network of agents in the United States. He was marginally successful, but his efforts show how the situation had changed since before

World War II. Kalic then discusses the CIA's Berlin Tunnel operation as an example of ingenuity and the need for more innovative means of collection such as the U-2 and surveillance satellites, all possessing inherent budget, bureaucratic and operational complexities.

Kalic also comments on how different directors of central intelligence (DCIs) influenced the CIA. One example, his assertion that DCI Turner (1977–81) "had boldly seized the reins of the CIA to demonstrate that he was in control and would not allow the agency to continue to be a disgrace" (129) will roll the eyes of those who served at that time.

In his concluding chapter, Kalic recognizes the changes that both the CIA and KGB underwent when the Soviet Union collapsed. For reasons not clear, he calls the service that succeeded the KGB the FSB—it is the domestic security service—and ignores the creation of the foreign intelligence service, the SVR. But he notes that many of the collection challenges remain unchanged since the end of World War II. He observes, however, that the technical means have changed and intelligence officers require new skills.

*SPIES* will be useful for fact-checking, but otherwise it rates mixed marks.

***Trinity: The Treachery and Pursuit of the Most Dangerous Spy in History***, by Frank Close (Allen Lane, 2019), 500 pp., endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

The VENONA Project involved the decryption of KGB cables by the US Army Signal Intelligence Service beginning in 1946. Among other revelations, the decryptions exposed the penetration of the Manhattan Project by British physicist Emil Julius Klaus Fuchs, a communist whose ultimate loyalty was to the Soviet Union. The FOOCASE, as the FBI called it, became public knowledge in 1950, the year Fuchs was sentenced to 14 years in a British prison for giving atomic secrets to the Soviets. Several good books have been published about the case since then, each adding something new as archival material became available.<sup>a</sup> The most recent, *Trinity*, follows this pattern.

Author Frank Close, emeritus professor of physics at Oxford University, presents the Fuchs chronicle beginning with his life in Germany, where besides studying physics Fuchs became an outspoken socialist and anti-Fascist. Soon after Hitler came to power he emigrated to England and resumed his studies, eventually gaining his PhD. By the time World War II started, he had established himself as a promising physicist. He soon made contact with Jurgen Kuczynski, leader of the Communist Party of Britain; endured a brief deportation to Canada; joined Rudolf Peierls (pronounced Pi-Urlls), who was working on the British atomic bomb project; and sometime in 1941 began to spy for the GRU. After a bumpy start, by

a. See for example: Robert Chadwell Williams, *Klaus Fuchs, Atom Spy* (Harvard University Press, 1987); Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes, "On The Trail of a Fourth Soviet Spy at Los Alamos,

*Studies In Intelligence* 63, no. 3 at <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol-63-no-3/pdfs/Fourth-Soviet-Spy-LosAlamos.pdf>.

1942 he was being handled by Jurgen's sister Ursula (aka: Sonja), from whom he learned basic tradecraft. In the fall of that year, he became a naturalized British subject, and in December 1943 he traveled with a group of British scientists to New York, where they joined the Manhattan Project.

Before leaving England, Sonja had given Fuchs contact details for his American courier, Harry Gold, and while working in New York—about a year—he made the connection. By August 1944 he was in Los Alamos, New Mexico, where the atom bomb would be designed, assembled, and tested. Professor Close describes his contributions to the bomb project and his growing knowledge of work on the “Super” or hydrogen bomb, all of which he sent on to the Soviet Union through Gold.

Fuchs returned to Britain in the summer of 1946 and began work at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell; the Brits were also going to build an atomic bomb. He was there in 1949, when MI5 identified him as a Soviet agent.

Some obvious questions follow from this case summary, and professor Close deals with each one in depth; it is here that he adds new material. For example, how did Fuchs pass his security check before joining the British atomic project and again before being accepted for the Manhattan Project? Did any evidence emerge that linked Fuchs to other communist agents that was not followed up or interpreted properly by MI5? Were his communist beliefs known to any of his friends and if so, what did they do with that knowledge? Since for security reasons, the VENONA decrypts couldn't be used to pressure a confession or as evidence at trial, what caused him to confess?

The well documented answers to these questions do not reflect positively on British security practices of the day and, with some exceptions, those carrying them out. The exceptions include Millicent Bagot, the MI5 officer responsible for monitoring the Comintern, who learned

Fuchs had been a communist in Germany—she would become the model for John le Carré's Connie Sachs. Her attempts to follow up on this information do not reflect well on MI5. (77–8)

Perhaps the most surprising new material in *Trinity* deals with Fuchs's confession. Professor Close shows that the common perception that during “a skillful but deceptive interrogation by Jim Skardon [MI5] . . . Fuchs was persuaded to make some highly incriminating statements,”<sup>a</sup> was somewhat misleading. Fuchs, in fact, had previously confessed to colleagues and during his interrogation by Skardon, he mistakenly assumed if he confessed to him too, he would be allowed to remain and work at Harwell.

*Trinity* provides no evidence that Fuchs was “the most dangerous spy in history.” And Close is wrong on a few historical points. For example, “communist witch-hunts” did not begin with the start of the Cold War. (56) The Cold War began when communist agents were discovered in the US government thanks to Elizabeth Bentley, VENONA, and because of the behavior of the Soviet Union. The FBI did not have access to the VENONA material until after the war. (150) And as Benson has documented, the Finnish codebook played no role in the early decryption of the VENONA cables (150–51), and they were intelligence not “diplomatic cables.” (213) The statement that Gen. Curtis LeMay was Air Force chief of staff in 1946 is incorrect; the US Air Force wasn't created until 1947, and LeMay didn't become chief of staff until 1961. And finally, Kim Philby was not a “double agent.” (216)

Notwithstanding these inaccuracies, *Trinity* is the most comprehensive thoroughly documented account of the Fuchs case to date.

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a. Nigel West, *Historical Dictionary of British Intelligence*, second edition (Scarecrow Press: 2014), 228.

***The Myths of Tet: The Most Misunderstood Event of the Vietnam War***, by Edwin E. Moise (University Press of Kansas, 2017), 276 pp., endnotes, bibliography, maps, index.

Historical analogies are often useful for explaining the strategic significance of events to those whose perspective is informed only by firsthand tactical experience or by

reading reports of the events concerned. Thus, initially, it made intuitive sense to some of those serving in Vietnam during the Tet offensive of 1968 when Ambassador

Ellsworth Bunker and Gen. William Westmoreland, among other high-ranking notables, compared Tet to the Battle of the Bulge—a failed attempt to change the momentum of the war. But it soon became evident that, as some reported, the Tet offensive was not a military disaster for the communists that would set them on the road to defeat. That is just one of the eight myths publicized by various authors and analyzed in *The Myths of Tet* by Clemson University history professor Edwin Moïse.

The nature of the other myths ranges from claims of well coordinated attacks to differences in reported MACV (Military Advisory Command Vietnam) troop strength and casualty figures to the impact on South Vietnam’s infrastructure and the US reaction. Perhaps the most recognizable myth, at least to those who recall the events, was the charge that the “American media not only failed to notice an American victory but portrayed it as the opposite—an American military defeat.” (2) As an example of this position Moïse cites authors who argued Walter Cronkite took that position and then quotes Cronkite to show that he did not. (183) On the other hand, Moïse and others emphasize that the “impact of Tet on the American public opinion did represent a political victory for the communists and a hugely important one.” (181)

As background to help readers understand the way Tet “was experienced by Americans at the time,” Moïse discusses several related topics. The first is the knowingly distorted order-of-battle figures produced at MACV—reminiscent of Pinkerton and McClellan in the Civil War—and disputes that resulted at CIA and DIA and in misleading national estimates that followed. He names

those that produced the unjustifiably optimistic figures in late 1967 that led to the official belief that “enemy forces were fading away.” (4) Moïse later concludes that people in power “should be cautious about letting their subordinates know what they want to hear.” (210) He does point out the deleterious effects of such bad staff work, though in surprisingly gentle terms. (211)

Other topics include the North Vietnamese preparation for Tet and its execution from their point of view, the varying levels of activity in the different military regions of South Vietnam, and the subsequent North Vietnamese “Mini Tet” that was partially diffused by an NVA defector. (203)

He then goes on to show that the shock of the Tet offensive was not confined to MACV. New Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford noted, “Tet, to me, was the roof falling in.” Others commented that “We did not believe they would be able to carry out the degree of coordination demonstrated.” The latter serving as an early example of the coordination myth. (152)

In a retrospective comment, Moïse suggests that “widespread beliefs among civilian and military personnel that the US media had done a grotesquely bad job of covering Tet contributed to suspicion of the media’s ability to cover later conflicts.” (209) *The Myths of Tet* documents those mistaken beliefs but is less convincing as to the long-term impact.

Those wondering what to believe about Tet and its aftermath will find answers here. *The Myths of Tet* sets the record straight, with solid documentation.

## INTELLIGENCE ABROAD

**SECRET: The Making of Australia’s Security State**, by Brian Toohey (Melbourne University Press, 2019), 384 pp., endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

In an earlier book on the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS), Australian gadfly journalist Brian Toohey criticized ASIS’s putative cooperation with the CIA and the CIA’s covert action operations in general.<sup>a</sup>

In his memoir, former ASIS officer and director-general of ASIO, Harvey Barnett, cited Toohey for publishing articles claiming “ASIO officers had met in Washington in secret visits ‘over many years’ with US officials and handed over sensitive information of a personal nature on prominent Australians.” Barnett found no evidence that such “bizarre and distasteful meetings . . . ever took

a. Brian Toohey and William Pinwell, *OYSTER: The Story of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service*, (Heinemann Australia, 1989).

place.”<sup>a</sup> Toohey’s latest book, *SECRET*, continues to reflect his propensity to manufacture errors.

*SECRET* begins with the assertion that the birth of ASIO “in 1949 is widely attributed to the discovery of two Australian diplomats,” who spied for the Soviet Union, a view neither documented by Toohey nor supported by the *Official History of ASIO*. He then goes on to suggest three “more important, but rarely noticed, secrets behind the birth of ASIO.” The first is that nothing in the material the spies “handed over mattered.” The second “secret” was that “the USA used highly classified nonsense to harm the [Ben] Chieflly Labor government.” The third “and most important is that the Americans harboured a much bigger traitor, William Weisband, but kept his genuinely damaging activities from ASIO on a need-to-know basis.” Toohey goes on to describe Weisband as an “American counterintelligence official who told the USSR in October 1948 how to stop the US deciphering its top secret cables.”<sup>b</sup> Seldom have so many errors appeared on a single page. (3)

As to the first assertion, the value of material provided does not absolve a spy of guilt. Secondly, the “highly

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a. Harvey Barnett, *The Tale of the Scorpion* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988), 19.

b. David Horner, *The Spy Catchers: The Official History of ASIO* (Allen & Unwin, 2014).

***Special Duty: A History of the Japanese Intelligence Community***, by Richard J. Samuels (Cornell University Press, 2019), 355 pp., endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

For many readers, exposure to Japanese intelligence has been episodic. Some will recall stories of WWII operations like project FATHEAD, one of Peter Fleming’s (Ian’s brother) multiple ruses that conveyed the impression of a “timid and bungling” military intelligence capability.<sup>c</sup> Others will remember how Japan’s domestic security service captured Soviet spy Richard Sorge. And some might even recall the FBI’s arrests of commander Itaru Tachibana and Toraichi Kono (Charlie Chaplin’s former valet) for espionage. But those searching for a comprehensive history of Japan’s intelligence services have been frustrated until now, with the publication of *Special Duty*.

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c. Thaddeus Holt, *The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in the Second World War* (New York: Scribner, 2004), 408–10.

classified nonsense” is not specified. And third, Weisband did not tell the Soviets to stop deciphering cables nor was he a counterintelligence officer. And, not surprisingly, none of Toohey’s assertions are sourced.

Much of the book is a critique of Australia’s intelligence services and their internal impact on successive governments, from their origins to the present as seen from a presumably leftist perspective. Toohey discusses the contributions of MI5 and the CIA, with the latter subject to repeated charges of interference in Australia’s domestic affairs. None of the accusations are new—one example is the assertion that CIA influenced the demise of the Whitlam government (175)—and all are discussed in greater depth in the official ASIO histories.

While *SECRET* also includes Toohey’s assessment of alleged US State Department interference in Australia’s affairs, (210) the latter part of the book is concerned mainly with Australia’s domestic security, excessive government secrecy, and foreign policies such as the US-Russia relationship and the risks of nuclear calamity. He concludes with some comments on the risks of going to war with China.

From the point of view of intelligence history, *SECRET* offers little new, and much that is doubtful, and it is all influenced by a political viewpoint.

In his prefatory remarks, author Richard J. Samuels, Ford International Professor of Political Science and director of the Center for International Studies at MIT, notes that “few Japanese spies have been popularly associated with either wisdom or heroism in Western accounts.” In part this is so, he suggests, because “there is some confusion abroad regarding whether or not the Japanese are adept at espionage.” (xiii) *Special Duty* explains the reasons for the confusion and the various reforms implemented to correct misconceptions.

To establish perspective, *Special Duty* discusses the evolution of Japanese intelligence from the early 17th century to the present. For most of that time, its disparate components functioned independently. Thus, military, naval, and the government elements each created “special

duty” units—hence the title of the book. Even as a gradual measure of an integrated intelligence community was achieved, the term was applied to units undertaking operations.

To explain the somewhat spasmodic development of reforms undertaken, Samuels introduces what he terms “three generic drivers that affect the shape, pace, and direction of intelligence reform . . . strategic change, technological development, and failure.” (xv–xviii) He then examines these drivers in five chronological periods and observes how they are affected—in each period—by the basic elements of intelligence: collection, analysis, communication, protection, covert action, and oversight—as Japan gradually realizes the benefits of a coordinated intelligence community.

It is not surprising, Samuels writes, that, in its formative years, Japanese intelligence “was plagued by many of the enduring pathologies common to intelligence communities everywhere”: severe turf battles, subordination of political to military intelligence, weak analysis, and refusal of decisionmakers to listen. (33) But after World War II, Japan also suffered from a limitation not encountered by Germany: forced accommodation to US views that lasted well into the 21st century.

The historical narrative of *Special Duty* discusses how modern Japanese intelligence began to take shape in the late 19th century as government leaders demanded timely and accurate information about its principal adversaries, Russia, China, and Korea. It was not a smooth or linear evolution, and initially operations were uncoordinated mixes of efforts by diplomats, military officers, naval attachés, and special societies. Professor Samuels provides examples of these activities, successes and failures, and the principal players involved. Of particular interest are the complex covert action and espionage operations conducted by military officers Akashi Motojirō (38) and Doihara Kenji, (41–2) neither of whom had prior intelligence experience. Not to be outdone, the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) were both active during these formative years. The IJN was the first to form a service-wide intelligence unit, and MOFA succeeded in decrypting Chinese telegrams, though not the Russian traffic. A common feature of all operations was the independence—Samuels calls it stove-piping—with which they were executed and the problems that inevitably resulted.

The foremost failure to coordinate intelligence that Japan experienced prior to Pearl Harbor occurred on the Chinese-Russian border near Nomonhan, where the Soviets defeated the IJA. Among the contributing factors were the counterintelligence reporting of Richard Sorge and the firsthand order-of-battle intelligence given by an NKVD general officer defector, intelligence that was ignored by the Imperial General Staff. In the typical after-action investigation, the intelligence units were, unjustly, given “the brunt of the blame,” (57) although improved training resulted, including the famous Nakano School that produced impressive intelligence officers. Still, as in the United States until the late 20th century, intelligence officers lacked the same status as other combat support elements.

In his summary of intelligence operations that contributed to Japan’s defeat in World War II, Professor Samuels includes Japan’s tactical success and strategic defeat at Pearl Harbor. He gives examples of other failures that involved each of the six elements from collection to oversight while adding one new factor—“delusions that spiritual power would prevail”—a “god is on my side” belief—common in Japan’s ruling class. (77)

With the help of the United States and to some extent its wartime allies, Japan’s economic and political recovery after World War II was relatively rapid and democratic. Not so for the evolution of its intelligence community. Samuels gives two principal reasons for this. The first was the aversion of the Japanese population to returning to the oppressive domestic security environment created by the Kempetai (military police with a wide remit) and the Tokkō (Special Higher Police for Public Surveillance) during the imperial period. The second, and perhaps more important, was the bitterly resented subordination of policy and operations to US priorities that lasted in varying degrees from 1945 to 2001. *Special Duty* analyzes the manipulative Japanese behavior that undercut the MacArthur regime, the controls imposed by the United States during the Cold War, which restricted independence, and the gradual political and organizational changes that led to successful reengineering of the intelligence community in 2013.

With three exceptions, *Special Duty* is thoroughly documented with both English and Japanese sources. Curiously, the exceptions deal with US history. The first refers to Herbert Yardley’s “Black Chamber,” which broke Japanese naval codes after World War I. Samuels writes that “it was disbanded by President Herbert Hoover

in 1921 at the conclusion of the Washington Naval Conference.” (4) Of course, Hoover was not president in 1921, and the Black Chamber wasn’t disbanded until 1929, Hoover’s first year in office. On the same page, there is mention of the “U.S. Civil War in 1860.” Finally, in a discussion of America’s first imagery satellite, the statement that the film was released in cannisters “that parachuted back to earth” is incorrect. The parachutes were intercepted in the air.<sup>a</sup> (5)

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a. For more, see David W. Waltrop, “Recovery of the Last GAMBIT and HEXAGON Film Buckets from Space, August–October 1984,” *Studies in Intelligence* 58, no. 2 (June 2014), <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol-58-no-2/pdfs/Waltrop-Catching%20the%20End%20of%20an%20Era-June2014.pdf>.

For those unfamiliar with Japanese intelligence history, the structure of *Special Duty* is particularly helpful. Each chapter refers to the elements of the model established in chapter 1 and adds a summary section at the end to reinforce the principal points made. The final chapter reviews the entire book and could be read first if a detailed overview of the book is desired. By any measure *Special Duty* is a seminal contribution to the intelligence literature.



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## Books Reviewed in 2019

### *Studies in Intelligence*

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#### CURRENT TOPICS

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***Bytes, Bombs, and Spies: The Strategic Dimensions of Offensive Cyber Operations***, edited by Herbert Lin and Amy B. Zegart. (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

***The CIA and the Politics of US Intelligence Reform***, by Brent Durbin (63, 1 [March 2019]) Michael Yerushalmi

***Dawn of the Code War: America's Battle Against Russia, China, and the Rising Global Cyber Threat***, by John P Carlin with Garrett M. Graff (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***GOLIATH: Why the West Doesn't Win Wars and What We Need To Do About It*** by Sean McFate (63, 4 [December 2019]) J. R. Seeger

***The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un*** by Anna Fifield and ***Le monde selon Kim Jong-un: Guerre ou paix? [The World According to Kim Jong-un: War or Peace?]*** by Juliette Morillot and Dorian Malovic (63, 3 [September 2019]) Stephen C. Mercado

***To Catch A Spy: The Art of Counterintelligence***, by James M. Olson. (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

#### GENERAL

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***The Fighters: Americans in Combat in Afghanistan and Iraq*** by C.J. Chivers (63, 3 [September 2019]) Brent Geary

***The Literary Reagan: Authentic Quotations From His Life***, by Nicholas Dujmovic (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***LEADERS: Myth and Reality***, by General Stanley McChrystal (U.S. Army (Ret.)), Jeff Eggers and Jason Mangone (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

***Leading Intelligence Analysis: Lessons from the CIA's Analytic Frontlines*** by Bruce Pease. (63, 4 [December 2019]) Jason U. Manosevitz

***Strategic Warning Intelligence: History, Challenges, and Prospects*** by John A. Gentry and Joseph S. Gordon (63, 3 [September 2019]) Ryan Shaffer

***Truth to Power: A History of the U.S. National Intelligence Council*** by Robert Hutchings and Gregory F. Treverton, eds., (63, 4 [December 2019]) Roger George

***War and Chance: Assessing Uncertainty in International Politics*** by Jeffrey A. Friedman (63, 3 [September 2019]) Charles Heard

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Following book titles and author names are the *Studies in Intelligence* issue in which the review appeared and the name of the reviewer. All bookshelf reviews are by Hayden Peake.

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**HISTORICAL**

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***Agents of Influence: A British Campaign, A Canadian Spy, and the Secret Plot to Bring America into World War II***, by Henry Hemming (63, 4 [December 2019] Bookshelf)

***The Battle of Arnhem: The Deadliest Airborne Operation of World War II***, by Antony Beevor (63, 1 [March 2019]) Leslie C.

***Beirut Rules: The Murder of a CIA Station Chief and Hezbollah's War Against America***, by Fred Burton and Samuel M. Katz (63, 1 [March 2019]) Brent G.

***The Birth of the FBI: Teddy Roosevelt, the Secret Service, and the Fight Over America's Premier Law Enforcement Agency***, by William M Oliver (63, 4 [December 2019] Bookshelf)

***Bletchley Park and D-Day: The Untold Story of How the Battle for Normandy Was Won***, by David Kenyon (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

***A Brotherhood of Spies: The U-2 and the CIA Secret War*** by Monte Reel (63, 4 [December 2019]) Clayton Laurie

***Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War: The Journals of the Congress of Cultural Freedom***, edited by Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte A. Lerg (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***Churchill and Tito: SOE, Bletchley Park and Supporting the Yugoslav Communists in World War II***, by Christopher Catherwood (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***Churchill: Walking with Destiny***, by Andrew Roberts (63, 2 [June 2019]) Thomas Coffey

***Code Name Lise: The True Story of the Woman Who Became WWII's Most Decorated Spy***, by Larry Loftis (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***Codeword OVERLORD: Axis Espionage and the D-Day Landings***, by Nigel West (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

***Cover Name: Dr. Rantzau*** by Nikolaus Ritter, trans. and edited by Katharine R. Wallace (63, 3 [September 2019]) Ryan Shaffer

***A Covert Action: Reagan, The CIA, and the Cold War Struggle in Poland***, by Seth G. Jones (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***D-Day Girls: The Spies Who Armed The Resistance, Sabotaged the Nazis, and Helped Win World War II***, by Sarah Rose (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

***The First Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill George Washington***, by Brad Meltzer and Josh Mensch (63, 2 [June 2019] Bookshelf)

***Freedom's Laboratory: The Cold War Struggle for the Soul of Science*** by Audra J. Wolfe (63, 2 [June 2019]) J. R. Seeger

***Gray Day: My Undercover Mission to Expose America's First Cyberspy***, by Eric O'Neill (63, 2 [June 2019] Bookshelf, reviewed by J. E. Leonardson)

***Grand Improvisation: America Confronts the British Superpower, 1945–1957*** by Derek Leebaert (63, 2 [June 2019]) Leslie C.

- Guest of the Reich: The Story of American Heiress Gertrude Legendre's Dramatic Captivity and Escape from Nazi Germany*** by Peter Finn (63, 4 [December 2019]) Katherina W. Gonzales
- An Impeccable Spy: Richard Sorge, Stalin's Master Agent***, by Owen Matthews. (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)
- The Lady Is A Spy: Virginia Hall, World War II, Hero of the French Resistance***, by Don Mitchell. (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)
- A Lie Too Big To Fail: The Real History of the Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy*** by Lisa Pease (63, 4 [December 2019]) David Welker
- Lincoln's Spies: Their Secret War to Save A Nation***, by Douglas Waller (63, 4 [December 2019] Bookshelf)
- Madame Fourcade's Secret War: The Daring Women Who Led France's Largest Spy Network Against Hitler***, by Lynne Olson (63, 4 [December 2019] Bookshelf)
- The Millionaire Was a Soviet Mole: The Twisted Life of David Karr***, by Harvey Klehr (63, 2 [June 2019] Bookshelf)
- The Myths of Tet: The Most Misunderstood Event of the Vietnam War***, by Edwin E. Moïse (63, 4 [December 2019] Bookshelf)
- Nuking the Moon and Other Intelligence Schemes and Military Plots Left on the Drawing Board***, by Vince Houghton (63, 2 [June 2019] Bookshelf, reviewed by Robert W. Wallace)
- Our Germans: Project Paperclip and the National Security State***, by Brian E. Crim (63, 4 [December 2019] Bookshelf)
- The Rising Clamor: The American Press, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Cold War***, by David P. Hadley (63, 4 [December 2019] Bookshelf)
- Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*** by Patrick Radden Keefe (63, 3 [September 2019]) Joseph Gartin
- The Secret History of KGB Spy Cameras 1945-1995***, by H. Keith Melton & Lt. Col. Vladimir Alekseenko with Michael M. Hasco & Detlev Vreisleben (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)
- Secret Operations of World War II***, by Alexander Stillwell (63, 1 [March 2019]) David A. Foy
- Shadow Strike: Inside Israel's Secret Mission to Eliminate Syrian Nuclear Power***, by Yaakov Katz (63, 2 [June 2019] Bookshelf)
- Soldier, Sailor, Frogman, Spy, Airman, Gangster, Kill or Die – How the Allies Won on D-Day***, by Giles Milton (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)
- SPIES: The U.S. and Russian Espionage Game from the Cold War to the 21st Century***, by Sean N. Kalic (63, 4 [December 2019] Bookshelf)
- The Spy and the Traitor: The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War***, by Ben MacIntyre (63, 1 [March 2019]) David A. Foy
- The Spy In Moscow Station: A Counterspy's Hunt For A Deadly Cold War Threat***, by Eric Haseltine. (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

## Books Reviewed in 2019

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***Spy Pilot: Francis Gary Powers, The U-2 Incident, and A Controversial Cold War Legacy***, by Francis Gary Powers Jr. and Keith Dunnavant (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf and in 63, 2 [June 2019]) David A. Foy

***The Spy Who Was Left Behind: Russia, the United States, and the True Story of Betrayal and Assassination of a CIA Agent***, by Michael Pullara (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***Surprise, Kill, Vanish. The Secret History of CIA Paramilitary Armies, Operators and Assassins*** by Annie Jacobsen (63, 3 [September 2019]) J. R. Seeger

***The Third Reich Is Listening: Inside German Codebreaking in 1939-45***, by Christian Jennings (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***They Fought Alone: The True Story of the Starr Brothers, British Secret Agents in Nazi Occupied France***, by Charles Glass. (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

***To Blind the Eyes of Our Enemies: Washington's Grand Deception***, by G. L. Lamborn and W. L. Simpson. (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

***Trinity: The Treachery and Pursuit of the Most Dangerous Spy in History, by Frank Close*** (63, 4 [December 2019] Bookshelf)

***VANGUARD: The True Stories of the Reconnaissance and Intelligence Missions D-Day***, by David Abrutat (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

***Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945–1975***, by Max Hastings (63, 1 [March 2019]) Leslie C.

***The Watchdogs Didn't Bark: The CIA, NSA, and the Crimes of the War on Terror***, by John Duffy & Ray Nowosielski (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***A Woman of No Importance—The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II*** by Sonia Purnell (63, 4 [December 2019]) Craig Gralley

***XY&Z: The Real Story of How Enigma Was Broken***, by Dermot Turing (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

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## MEMOIR

***Nine Lives: My Time as the West's Top Spy Inside al Qaeda***, by Aimen Dean with Tim Lester and Paul Cruickshank (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***The Targeter: My Life in the CIA, Hunting Terrorists, and Challenging the White House*** by Nada Bakos with David Coburn (63, 4 [December 2019]) David T. Berg, PhD

***Terrorism, Betrayal & Resilience: My Story of the 1998 U.S. Embassy Bombings***, by Prudence Bushnell (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

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## FICTION

***Hall of Mirrors: Virginia Hall America's Greatest Spy of WWII***, by Craig Gralley (63, 2 [June 2019] Bookshelf)

**INTELLIGENCE ABROAD**

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***Australia's First Spies: The Remarkable Story of Australia's Intelligence Operations, 1901–1945***, by John Fahey (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

***Guy Liddell's Cold War MI5 Diaries*** (Three Volumes covering May 1945–May 1953), edited by Nigel West. (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)

***Disrupt and Deny: Spies, Special Forces, and the Secret Pursuit of British Foreign Policy***, by Rory Cormac (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***Inside The Wilderness of Mirrors: Australia and the Threat From The Soviet Union in the Cold War and Russia Today***, by Paul Dibb (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***Pakistan Adrift: Navigating Troubled Waters***, by Asad Durrani (63, 1 [March 2019] Bookshelf)

***Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate: Covert Action and Internal Operations*** by Owen L. Sirrs (63, 4 [December 2019]) Gordon Bonin

***SECRET: The Making of Australia's Security State, by Brian Toohey*** (63, 4 [December 2019] Bookshelf)

***Special Duty: A History of the Japanese Intelligence Community, by Richard J. Samuels*** (63, 4 [December 2019] Bookshelf)

***Spies of No Country: Secret Lives at the Birth of Israel***, by Matti Friedman (63, 3 [September 2019] Bookshelf)





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