

Studies in Intelligence

Vol. 63, No. 3 (September 2019) UNCLASSIFIED

Journal of the American Intelligence Professional



On the Trail of a Soviet Spy at Los Alamos

**Politicization:
*Two Historical
Perspectives***

**An Interview with
Journalist Walter
Pincus**

Book Reviews

The Fighters
War and Chance
Strategic Warning Intelligence
The Great Successor
Say Nothing
Surprise, Kill, Vanish
Cover Name: Dr. Rantzau

Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf

This publication is prepared primarily for the use of US government officials. The format, coverage, and content are designed to meet their requirements. To that end, complete issues of *Studies in Intelligence* may remain classified and are not circulated to the public. These printed unclassified extracts from a classified issue are provided as a courtesy to subscribers with professional or academic interest in the field of intelligence.

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in *Studies in Intelligence* are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect official positions or views of the Central Intelligence Agency or any other US government entity, past or present. Nothing in the contents should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of an article's factual statements and interpretations.

Studies in Intelligence often contains material created by individuals other than US government employees and, accordingly, such works are appropriately attributed and protected by United States copyright law. Such items should not be reproduced or disseminated without the express permission of the copyright holder. Any potential liability associated with the unauthorized use of copyrighted material from *Studies in Intelligence* rests with the third party infringer.

Studies in Intelligence is available on the Internet at: [https:// www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/ index.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/index.html).

Requests for subscriptions should be sent to:

Center for the Study of Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

ISSN 1527-0874

Cover: The tower at Los Alamos from which the first nuclear device would be tested, 1945.
Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Mission

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.

Contributions

Studies in Intelligence welcomes articles, book reviews, and other communications. Hardcopy material or data discs (preferably in .doc or .rtf formats) may be mailed to:

Editor
Studies in Intelligence
Center for the Study of Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

Awards

The Sherman Kent Award of \$3,500 is offered annually for the most significant contribution to the literature of intelligence submitted for publication in *Studies*. The prize may be divided if two or more articles are judged to be of equal merit, or it may be withheld if no article is deemed sufficiently outstanding. An additional amount is available for other prizes.

Another monetary award is given in the name of Walter L. Pforzheimer to the graduate or undergraduate student who has written the best article on an intelligence-related subject.

Unless otherwise announced from year to year, articles on any subject within the range of *Studies*' purview, as defined in its masthead, will be considered for the awards. They will be judged primarily on substantive originality and soundness, secondarily on literary qualities. Members of the Studies Editorial Board are excluded from the competition.

The Editorial Board welcomes readers' nominations for awards.



CENTER for the STUDY of INTELLIGENCE

Washington, DC 20505

Studies in Intelligence

Vol. 63, No. 3 (Extracts, September 2019)

Contents

EDITORIAL POLICY

Articles for *Studies in Intelligence* may be written on any historical, operational, doctrinal, or theoretical aspect of intelligence.

The final responsibility for accepting or rejecting an article rests with the Editorial Board.

The criterion for publication is whether, in the opinion of the board, the article makes a contribution to the literature of intelligence.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Peter Usowski (Chairman)
John Bennett
Dawn Eilenberger
Steven Galpern
Catherine S. Higgins
Brent Geary
Stephen O. Maddalena
Jason Manosevitz
John McLaughlin
Fran Moore
LTG Theodore Nicholas (USA, Ret.)
Manolis Priniotakis
Tonya L. Tatum
Cindy Webb

Members are all active or former Intelligence Community officers. One member is not listed.

EDITORS

Andres Vaart (Managing Editor)
Rebecca L. Fisher

Historical Perspectives

*Project SOLO and the Seborers
On the Trail of a Fourth Soviet Spy at Los Alamos* 1
Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes

*Politicization and Advantage
The Use and Abuse of Intelligence in the Public Square* 15
Michael Warner

*Intelligence Lost in Politics
The Dixie Mission 1944: The First US Intelligence
Encounter with the Chinese Communists* 25
Bob Bergin

*An Interview with Journalist Walter Pincus
Reflections on a Life of Covering the World of Intelligence
and National Security* 45
Interviewed by Peter Usowski and Fran Moore

Intelligence in Public Media

The Fighters: Americans in Combat in Afghanistan and Iraq 53
Reviewed by Brent Geary

War and Chance: Assessing Uncertainty in International Politics 57
Reviewed by Charles Heard

*Strategic Warning Intelligence: History, Challenges,
and Prospects* 59
Reviewed by Ryan Shaffer

*The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of
Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un
Le monde selon Kim Jong-un: Guerre ou paix?
[The World According to Kim Jong-un: War or Peace?]* 63
Reviewed by Stephen C. Mercado

*Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory
in Northern Ireland* 65
Reviewed by Joseph Gartin

Intelligence in Public Media (cont.)

***Surprise, Kill, Vanish. The Secret History of CIA
Paramilitary Armies, Operators and Assassins*** 67
Reviewed by J. R. Seeger

Cover Name: Dr. Rantzu 69
Reviewed by Ryan Shaffer

Intelligence in Public Literature
Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf—September 2019 71
Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake



Contributors

Bob Bergin is a former foreign service officer. He has contributed frequently to this and other journals on East Asian and other historical topics.

Joseph W. Gartin is Deputy Associate Director of CIA for Learning. He has led analysis as vice chairman of the National Intelligence Council, as director of a regional office of analysis in CIA's Directorate of Intelligence, and as chief of the President's Daily Briefing Staff.

Brent Geary is a CIA Directorate of Analysis officer serving as a member of the CIA History Staff.

Charles Heard is the penname of a CIA Directorate of Analysis officer specializing in counterintelligence.

Professor Harvey Klehr is retired from Emory University, where he taught for more than 40 years. He is the author of multiple works on American communism and Soviet espionage, many in collaboration with the coauthor of this article, historian **John Earl Haynes**. Dr. Haynes served as a specialist in 20th century political history in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress and is author or coauthor of numerous other publications on US communism and anticommunism. After the fall of the Soviet Union, he worked with former Soviet archivists to acquire once sensitive documents for use by scholars around the world.

Stephen C. Mercado recently retired from a career spent in the DNI's Open Source Enterprise and its predecessors, including the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, where he worked on Asian issues via media published in several languages.

Fran Moore is a former senior CIA leader. Her assignments have included serving as the Director of Intelligence (now Analysis) at CIA. She is a member of the *Studies* Editorial Board. She is also currently director of intelligence at the Financial Systemic Analysis and Resilience Center.

Hayden Peake has served in the CIA's Directorates of Operations and Science and Technology. He has been compiling and writing reviews for the "Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf" since December 2002.

J. R. Seeger is a retired CIA operations officer and frequent contributor of reviews.

Ryan Shaffer is a writer and historian. His academic work explores Asian, African, and European history.

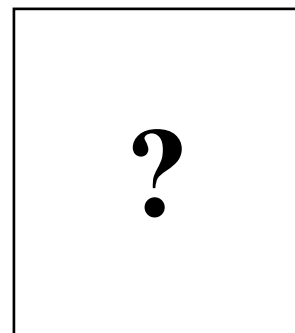
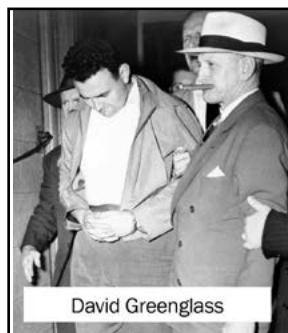
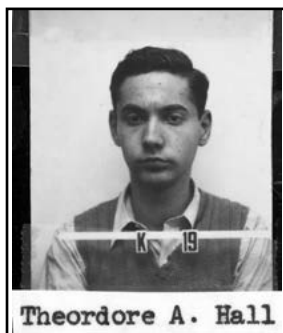
Peter Usowski is the Chairman of the Editorial Board of *Studies in Intelligence* and Director of the Center for the Study of Intelligence.

Michael Warner is a historian with the US Department of Defense. He has also served as a historian in CIA's history staff.



On the Trail of a Fourth Soviet Spy at Los Alamos

Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes^a



Images © Science History Images/Alamy Stock (left two) and Everett Collection/Alamy Stock

Until 1995 only two Soviet spies, Klaus Fuchs and David Greenglass (shown being arrested above), were publicly known to have stolen US atomic secrets from Los Alamos, the super-secret Manhattan Project facility where the atomic bomb was actually built. Coded Soviet cables sent during the years 1940–48 that were eventually deciphered by US intelligence, under the codename Venona, and released in 1995 identified a third Soviet agent, Theodore Hall, a young physics prodigy who had worked as a junior scientist in the plutonium bomb project.

Some students of Soviet atomic espionage have believed in the existence of a fourth unidentified Soviet spy at Los Alamos, codenamed “Perseus,” later changed to “Mlad.” This belief is based on memoirs of KGB officers published in the early 1990s. But with the opening of the Venona decryptations in 1995, it became clear that Perseus was a Soviet/Russian intelligence disinformation operation to protect Theodore Hall (the real Mlad), then still alive but not publicly exposed as a Soviet spy. The fake Perseus/Mlad was given characteristics that did not fit Hall. There was no Perseus.¹

But while there was no Perseus, there was a fourth Soviet spy at Los Alamos. For seven decades the identity of this spy has been buried in the FBI’s investigative files. Recently declassified, these documents reveal that along

with Fuchs, Greenglass, and Hall the fourth Soviet source at the Los Alamos laboratory in WWII was Oscar Seborer.

The FBI has known since 1955 that Oscar, his brother Stuart, Stuart’s wife Miriam, and Miriam’s mother all secretly defected to the Soviet bloc in 1952, living initially in East Germany but then moving to Moscow, where they lived under the name Smith. The brothers never returned from Moscow, but remarkably Miriam, by then divorced from Stuart, returned to the United States with her son (born in East Germany) and her mother in 1969, at the height of the Cold War. But the role of Oscar Seborer and his associates in Soviet espionage has remained hidden for 70 years.

SOLO and the Seborers

The story of Oscar Seborer’s atomic espionage is found in a few dozen easily overlooked pages scattered among tens of thousands of pages of FBI files released in 2011. The rest comes from partially released FBI files on Oscar and Stuart that document Operation SOLO, the codename for the FBI’s recruitment and direction of two communist brothers, Morris and Jack Childs, as informants inside the senior leadership of the Communist Party, USA, (CPUSA) from 1952 until 1980.¹

a. We wish to thank Mark Kramer and Steve Usdin for their assistance with research for this essay.

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. © Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes, 2019.

The Childs brothers begin their cooperation with the FBI during a difficult period in CPUSA history. Since the late 1940s the CPUSA had been under sustained legal and investigative attack from the US government and had been unable to reestablish the close communications it had enjoyed with the Soviets during earlier years. To the delight of the FBI, Eugene Dennis, then general secretary of the CPUSA, asked the Childs brothers to take on the task of reestablishing regular and secure high-level communications with Moscow, an arrangement that expanded under Dennis's successor, Gus Hall. Morris became the CPUSA's chief liaison with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), meeting regularly with its senior leadership to report on CPUSA activities and to receive political and ideological guidance. Jack carried out a variety of clandestine international activities for the CPUSA, including receiving and disbursing illegal Soviet monetary subsidies (\$28 million in total over the life of the SOLO operation). All the while, the Childs brothers reported their activities in detail to the FBI.

Early in the SOLO operation, prior to establishing a direct relationship with the CPSU, Jack Childs frequently traveled to Canada to meet with leaders of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC), who then served as go-betweens to funnel money and information from Moscow to the beleaguered CPUSA. One of Jack's longtime associates in the communist movement was Isidore "Gibby" Needleman. When Sam Carr, a prominent Canadian communist, faced arrest in 1945 as a result of the defection of GRU Soviet code clerk Igor Gouzenko, he had fled to the United States and was hidden in New

York by Needleman and Jack.

In 1949 several newly decoded Venona cables exposed Judith Coplon, a Justice Department employee, as a Soviet agent. In the wake of that discovery, Needleman lost his position as a lawyer for Amtorg, the Soviets' purchasing agent in America. FBI agent Robert Lamphere laid a trap, writing a memo falsely naming Needleman, who had been the subject of a series of FBI investigations, as a longtime government informant. Coplon took the bait, stole the memo, and was arrested meeting with a Soviet employee of the United Nations. At Coplon's trial in 1950, Lamphere testified that the Needleman story was not true. Nevertheless, the publicity led to Needleman losing his job at Amtorg. He continued, however, to be called upon frequently by the CPUSA to represent the party's interests in various legal proceedings and to carry out sensitive tasks.²

Needleman knew about Jack's assignment as liaison with the CCP—but not, of course, about his recruitment by the FBI in 1952—and in November 1954 he accompanied Jack to Toronto. They met with two senior Canadian party officials who had just returned from Moscow. One, Paul Phillips, met privately with Needleman for half an hour; afterwards, Jack heard him ask the lawyer how to spell Seborer. Jack passed this information on to his FBI handlers.³



Morris and Jack Childs, 1954. Image courtesy of Childs family.

In late December Jack returned from another trip to Toronto, and Needleman asked if Phillips had given him a message. Jack answered no and Needleman replied that was OK, "He shouldn't tell you of such things." As Jack prepared for another trip in February 1955, Needleman again asked him to see if Phillips wanted Needleman to come to Toronto to receive the message. Jack offered to collect any messages but Needleman demurred: "I have to handle this myself. It's too hot." When Jack met with the FBI in March, he reported that Phillips had apologized that he had no answer to Needleman's inquiry since no suitable comrade had been to Moscow. By now Jack had learned from Needleman that he was trying to get information about "several American friends who are in Moscow" and that they were the brothers of Max Seborer, Needleman's "leg man" or assistant for his

legal work. (Needleman and Max had become friends when both attended Cornell University as undergraduates.)⁴

Jack considered the possibility that Needleman was doing a favor for Max and simply trying to learn if the two were in good health. He rejected that notion, telling the FBI, “Needleman is too self-centered an individual to be engaged in a humanitarian pursuit requiring his making trips to Canada.” Jack, the FBI noted, “is more inclined to believe that Needleman’s interest in the Seborers is due either to past associations with the Seborers, which now constitute a threat to his security or to his intention to use them in future apparatus activities.”⁵

Several other factors led Jack to the conclusion that there was something significant going on. He was puzzled that neither Needleman nor Max Seborer ever had mentioned to him the existence of the two brothers, Oscar and Stuart, despite mentioning another brother, Noah. He “also considered it odd that Needleman should seek information regarding the Seborers through the Canadian CP instead of through the Russian embassy or through Amtorg officials with whom he apparently is friendly.”⁶

Not until August 1955 were Jack’s suspicions confirmed. Needleman told Jack that the Seborers—he never said their names but wrote them on a piece of paper and then burned it—had to “beat it” when “trouble started” in 1951 and were now in Moscow. The “situation is we have to make contact; it’s been three years since we heard from them [and] don’t know if they are alive or dead.” Jack promised on his next visit to Canada

Jack pressed and asked if this was a political situation, and Needleman angrily replied, “I can’t put a spoon in your mouth; isn’t it enough to you that I mentioned New Mexico—that is it.”

to ask Tim Buck, general secretary of the Canadian CP, to see if he could inquire about them in Moscow.⁷

One month later, responding to Needleman’s criticism for not making progress on this request, Jack replied that he was not going to jeopardize his relationship with Buck without having more details about the issue. Needleman then said,

Listen carefully. Oscar was in New Mexico—you know what I mean—I won’t draw you a diagram. Later he was at a submarine base. What happened was they were anticipating trouble. The FBI started making inquiries about them so they went over there on their own account and traveled to West Germany. In West Germany our friends helped them to get to the other side and then to the big city. Since then not a word was heard. We don’t know if they are alive or dead and “they” are worried. There must be a good reason why no word comes through. The boys here [Soviets] have heard nothing.

Jack pressed and asked if this was a political situation, and Needleman angrily replied, “I can’t put a spoon in your mouth; isn’t it enough to you that I mentioned New Mexico—that is it.” The FBI noted that he laced his comments with obscenities.⁸

Although Needleman never used the words “atomic bomb” or “Los Alamos,” his implication was clear. He also told Jack that “during the

war and for a period thereafter while their purchasing commission was still here, they [the Soviets] had dozens of apparatuses here,” which were “pretty busy.” Jack agreed to check with Buck. Jack’s recollection of the conversation was confirmed by the FBI bug planted in Needleman’s office.⁹

In mid-October 1955, Jack met first with Phillips and told him that Needleman was seriously concerned since the Seborer family was “likely to become hysterical and cause considerable embarrassment and trouble” unless they learned something about their relatives. Phillips responded that pressuring the Russians would not work. They still had not admitted that the “missing Britons”—a clear reference to Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess—were in Moscow. Jack then met with Buck and pleaded for him while in Moscow to assist the CPU-SA “in a very delicate matter” about which Phillips was aware. Buck agreed to help and said he would talk to Phillips about it.¹⁰

The delicate maneuvering got more complicated in late November as Jack prepared to return to Toronto to brief Buck before his journey to Moscow. Phillips had unexpectedly died and Jack now needed to know details that Needleman had given him about the Seborers. Needleman wrote four names on a piece of paper—Oscar and Stuart Seborer, Stuart’s wife Miriam, and her mother, Anna Zeitlin. Next to Oscar’s name, he wrote, “He handed over to them the formula for the ‘A’ bomb.” He then burned the paper. He then took Jack

Like many Jewish families from Eastern Europe, the Seborers came to the United States in stages.

into another room in his office and explained:

Look—the two brothers, one an engineer on the “A” bomb project and the other an Army captain who was heroic during the war. They were in touch with a guy here [a Russian]. I was the intermediary between “this guy” and the brothers. When the Rosenberg case became “hot,” it was the Army guy who brought information that things were getting hot. The Army guy forewarned them. Things got so hot, it was necessary for them to blow. They picked themselves up and blew. The mother went because Miriam is an only child. What more can I tell you? Maybe they won’t listen to Tim [Buck]. Maybe he should not know about this.

Needleman, reported Jack, was visibly worried, with misgivings about providing this information to Buck. Jack responded that he couldn’t let Buck go to Moscow and look like an idiot and promised to use his judgment about what to tell him. Needleman agreed and indicated that the Soviets should be told the inquiry came from him. Asked if the Soviets knew who he was, Needleman answered, “Of course.”¹¹

The Seborers

Like many Jewish families from Eastern Europe, the Seborers came to the United States in stages. Abraham, born in 1876, and Jennie, born in 1881, left Poland with their eldest son, Max, born in 1903. They trav-

eled to Great Britain, where another son, Noah, was born in 1905. Stuart, born as Solomon, came along in 1918. By the time their only daughter, Rose, was born in 1919, the family had been living in the United States for a decade. The youngest child, Oscar, followed in 1921.

Although neither parent had more than a sixth grade education, the Seborer children, with the exception of Rose, all went to college while Abraham worked as a clerk. Max and Noah both attended Cornell University on scholarships, and Oscar and Stuart went to City College of New York. Stuart also won a New York State scholarship and enrolled in the ROTC program. Abraham and Jennie lived in Palestine from 1934 to 1938 before moving back to New York. Oscar apparently went with them, but Stuart, enrolled at CCNY, stayed in the United States and may have lived with Max.

All of the children gravitated toward the CPUSA. In fact, the Seborer family was part of a network of people connected to Soviet intelligence. Max was brought into the communist movement by his Cornell friend Gibby Needleman. He was a teacher for a number of years before going to work for Needleman’s law firm. His first wife’s sister, Rose Biegel Arenal, was married to Luis Arenal, implicated in the KGB plot to kill Leon Trotsky. Rose herself serviced a mail drop for communications between the Mexican plotters and Soviet intelligence. After his wife’s death, Max married Celia Posen, introduced to him by Needleman. Celia had been a nurse in the communist-dominated Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil

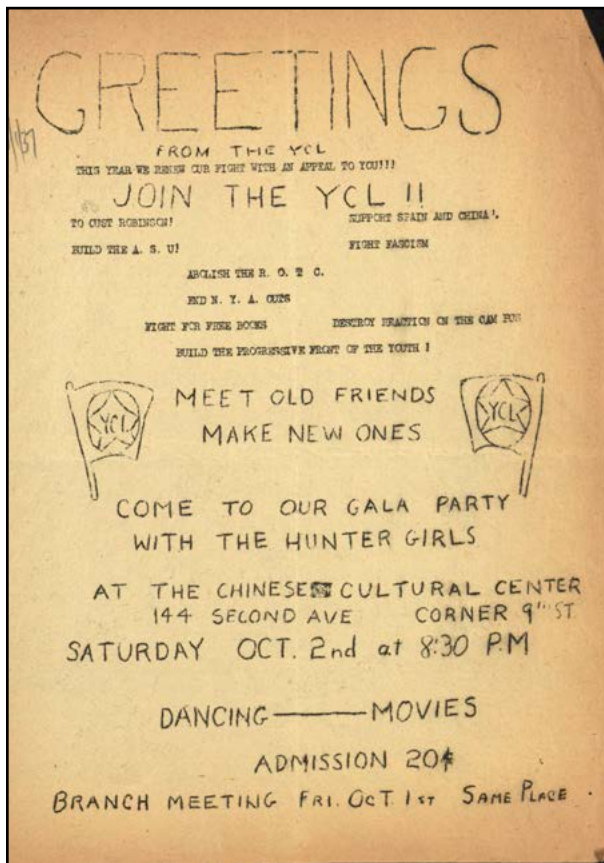
War and was friends with Soviet spies Harry Magdoff, Irving Kaplan, and Stanley Graze. Her uncle, Alexander, had married the former wife of Boris Soble, brother of Soviet spies Jack and Robert. Despite all these connections, Max had never formally joined the communist party. He later told an FBI informant that Needleman had advised him not to do so.¹²

Noah, also a teacher, was a party member. In the 1950s he moved to Mexico as many American communists at the same time did and was employed by an ice cream company started by several communist emigrés. He was close to Frederick Field and Maurice Halperin, both onetime Soviet agents, and blacklisted screenwriter Albert Maltz. Sister Rose served in a number of administrative positions in the New York Communist Party.¹³



Stuart Seborer’s 1939 photo, in ROTC uniform from CCNY’s yearbook, *Microcosm*. In it he was still going by his original given name, Solomon. No image of Oscar could be found.

For a number of years, Stuart and Oscar appeared somewhat removed from their siblings' overt communist ties. Stuart had joined a communist-dominated group at CCNY, but years later several of the most active communists at the college could not remember him. He was hired as a statistician by the Treasury Department in 1941, where he worked under three Soviet spies, William Ullman, Frank Coe, and Harry Dexter White. His wife, Miriam Zeitlin, whom he married in 1940, expressed pro-Soviet views, but neither one appeared to join the CPUSA. He joined the Army in 1942, rose to the rank of captain,



City College was a hotbed of communist activism when two of the Seborers sons attended. Source: City College of New York CUNY Academic Works Collection, CCNY Antiwar Notices archive, "Greetings from the YCL [Young Communist League]," October 1937, http://academicworks.cuny.edu/cc_arch_antiwar/188.

It was not until after the war that Stuart and Oscar began to run afoul of security agencies.

and earned a Silver Star. Several of his essays on his experiences as an armored cavalry officer in Europe are cited in military histories. Miriam underwent a Hatch Act investigation in 1942 while working at the Census Bureau and denied communist sympathies or membership. She joined the Waves (Women's Naval service) in 1942, serving until 1946, most of the time at the US Bureau of Shipping.¹⁴

Oscar had attended college in New

York before enrolling at Ohio State to study electrical engineering but joined the Army in October 1942. In view of his engineering training, the Army assigned him to the Special Engineering Detachment that provided technically trained soldiers to fill a variety of specialist posts in the Manhattan Project. He worked at Oak Ridge before being transferred to Los Alamos in 1944 and remained there until 1946. He was present at Trinity site, near Alamogordo, as part of a unit monitoring seismological effects of the first explosion of an atomic bomb, as a technician fifth grade.¹⁵

It was not until after the war that Stuart and Oscar began to

run afoul of security agencies. After his discharge from the Army in 1946, Stuart became a civilian employee of the Army's Civil Affairs Division, first as a research analyst and then as chief of the European Unit. His wife Miriam, meanwhile graduated from George Washington University Medical School in 1950.

In January 1949 an Army memo recommended that he be fired because of communist associations. There was conflicting information in the report and Gen. Leland Eberle ordered that he be interviewed. In June, Eberle dropped the proceedings, noting that Stuart's affidavit had answered the charges, sources who knew him vouched for him, and all the accusations were anonymous. At his loyalty hearing Stuart had been indignant. He denied knowing of his brothers' and sister's communist ties, insisting that he had had little contact with them for years and that he should not be tarred by their beliefs. He declared: "I resent it being said that I have ever had any connection, or implied connection with the Communist Party or any other subversive organization. I am vigorously and emphatically opposed to communists and communism." Although he was being considered for a job at the State Department in 1950, Stuart was informed in mid-August that he would not be granted a security clearance.¹⁶

Oscar applied for a civilian position at Los Alamos on 28 May 1947 but withdrew his application just one month later for unknown reasons. He then resumed the engineering studies that had been interrupted by the war. He attended the University

In fact, the first indication the FBI or any other security agency received of their involvement with Soviet espionage was Needleman's conversation with Jack Childs in 1954.

of Michigan from September 1947 to August 1948 and received his master's degree in electrical engineering. He then was hired at the US Navy's Underwater Sound Laboratory in New London, Connecticut, the center for naval research on sonar for ships and submarines.

In August 1949, the commanding officer recommended removing him as security risk. Three weeks later, on 29 August, a Loyalty Review Board overturned the decision and asked for further investigation. At the end of April 1950, the lab decided he could be retained, but Oscar transferred to the Electronic Shore Division of the Navy's Bureau of Ships in Washington. At his new job he was involved with planning the installation and supervision of electronic equipment in American and European harbors. The equipment itself was unclassified but the location of the devices was secret. Shortly after Oscar was hired, an officer who had known him in New London reported him as a security risk. The only man in the unit without a security clearance, he was "a marked man" and resigned his position on 1 June 1951.¹⁷

The Disappearance

The Seborer brothers' problems with getting security clearances coincided with a growing concern about espionage. Following the Soviets' atomic bomb test in 1949, Klaus Fuchs was arrested in Great Britain in February 1950 and confessed to spying while he was at Los Alamos. Three months later Harry Gold, his

courier, was arrested, and he led the FBI to David Greenglass in June. By July, Julius Rosenberg was in custody. By the time the Rosenbergs and Morton Sobell went on trial in 1951, many of their friends from CCNY's communist movement were under suspicion and one, William Perl, had been convicted of perjury. Several others, including Joel Barr and Alfred Sarant, had vanished. Decades later Barr and Sarant were identified as living in the USSR under assumed names.

Stuart and Oscar Seborer also decided it would be prudent to leave the United States. Together with Miriam and her mother, Anna, they booked passage on the SS *Liberte*, bound for Plymouth and LeHavre, on 15 Feb-

ruary 1951 and sailed on 3 July. The long delay between purchasing the tickets and actually leaving indicates that they were not fleeing some kind of fear of imminent danger—unlike Morris and Leona Cohen, two Soviet agents, who vanished from their New York apartment suddenly in June 1950. The Rosenbergs had been sentenced to death in April 1951, and the hunt was on for other spies, but neither Seborer brother was in the crosshairs of any espionage investigation. They had become identified as security risks because of their association with communists, but indications of possible espionage had not surfaced in their security reviews. In fact, the first indication the FBI or any other security agency received of their involvement with Soviet espionage was Needleman's conversation with Jack Childs in 1954.¹⁸

For more than a year, the traveling foursome seemed nothing more than

Line No.	FAMILY NAME-GIVEN NAME ADDRESS IN UNITED STATES	AGE (Years)	SEX (F-M)	U.S. PASSPORT No.	PLACE OF BIRTH DATE AND PLACE OF NATURALIZATION	LENGTH OF TIME PASSENGER INTENDS TO REMAIN ABROAD
1	PALEY Gussie 559 Willoughby Ave. BROOKLYN, N.Y.	42	F	443833	U.S.A.	2 Mos
2	PEPPER Rebecca PHILADELPHIA, Pa.	14	F	446490	U.S.	
21	SEBORER Stuart 535 Mellom Str. WASHINGTON, D.C.	32	M	34231	U.S.A.	6 Mos
22	SEBORER Miriah	32	F	38883	U.S.A.	" "
23	SEBORER Oscar	30	M	380876	U.S.A.	" "
24	SAPHEN Sidney 2301 Ocean Ave. BROOKLYN, N.Y.	36	M	450150	U.S.A.	2 Mos ✓

Portions of the manifest of the SS *Liberte* showing a 3 July departure for Le Havre, France, with three Seborers on board. Source: Ancestry.com.

American tourists. Miriam had told friends she was pursuing a medical internship in England. Stuart mentioned setting up an import-export company. Anna Zeitlin told friends she was traveling with her only child. The group arrived by air in Israel on 3 September, after obtaining visas in Paris, to visit Abraham and Jennie Seborer, who had again emigrated to Israel in August 1950 and were living in Gan Yavne. In the latter part of 1951, Max Seborer obtained a passport, indicating he planned a three-month trip to England, France, Italy, and Israel. There is no direct evidence if he met his siblings, but he returned to New York in January 1952. His brothers did not. The party of four renewed their passports in Vienna that month. Apart from a handful of innocuous postcards to a few friends and relatives over the next six months, nothing more was heard from the Seborers. They had vanished.

In October 1952, Anna Zeitlin's niece, Rose Mendelsohn, contacted the State Department, worried that she had no word from her aunt. She feared that the group might have strayed into Russian territory and been captured. The State Department responded that it had no knowledge of the whereabouts of any of them.¹⁹

In 1955, the FBI fretted about what Jack should do with Needleman's information. Jack was reluctant to relay Needleman's story of Oscar's involvement in atomic espionage to Tim Buck. If Buck didn't want to become involved in espionage, he might conclude that Jack was mixed up in it and sever ties with him. Almost as bad, if Buck did raise the issue with the Soviets, they might think that Needleman had breached security

Needleman had hinted that their decision to flee was linked to increasing pressure during the period when the Rosenberg ring was being rolled up.

and break ties with Buck, severing a major source of information for the FBI via Jack Childs. The FBI advised Jack to avoid mentioning atomic espionage and just say the Seborers were "apparatus [i.e., CPUSA] people" who had feared exposure.

On 6 December, Jack met yet again with Buck, described the Seborers as "apparatus people" about whom Needleman—and not the CPUSA—wanted information. He emphasized that he himself had never met them. Buck was confident there would be no problem—he had traced people before. Back in New York, Jack met with Needleman and assured him he had never mentioned espionage or the atomic bomb. Gibby was relieved: "After I told you I was sorry that I did. Forget about it now, will you."²⁰

Needleman's statements, which the FBI judged to "constitute admission of guilt on his part that he was involved in espionage with Seborers," galvanized the FBI into action. The Bureau's first impulse was concern that it had overlooked a significant case of espionage. A memo to Hoover's assistant, Clyde Tolson, explained that the loyalty investigations of the Seborer brothers had turned up communist connections but not a hint of espionage. Not until Needleman had confided in Jack Childs did that concern arise. Hence, the FBI was "not vulnerable" for any delay in investigating espionage.²¹

Several lines of investigation were laid out.

- Were the Seborers connected with the Rosenberg spy ring?
- How much did Max Seborer know about what his brothers had done?
- Why was Needleman so insistent on learning about the Seborers?
- What secrets had Stuart and, particularly, Oscar, been privy to?

Needleman had hinted that their decision to flee was linked to increasing pressure during the period when the Rosenberg ring was being rolled up. Agents learned that Stuart and Julius had been enrolled in one math class together at CCNY in September 1934 and Perl and Stuart had shared another class in February 1935. Apart from that, they could find no evidence of a connection. Neither Ruth nor David Greenglass, Harry Gold, or Elizabeth Bentley could identify a picture of the Seborers or knew anything about them. Nathan Sussman, a Rosenberg associate who led the communist cell at CCNY and partially cooperated with the FBI, did not recall either one. Several college classmates of Julius did not remember the Seborers.²²

The FBI quickly learned that Stuart had continued to receive veteran's disability checks for several years after he left for Europe. For a while, they went to Max's address. Until February 1952, they had been cashed in Europe, so he had obviously forwarded them. Thereafter, checks allegedly signed by Stuart and countersigned by Max were deposited in Max's bank account. In a letter to the Veteran's Administration, Max was

Extensive interviews with colleagues of Stuart and Miriam from their days in the armed forces, at the Underwater Sound Laboratory, and Bureau of Ships yielded little information.

listed as having power of attorney, although no such authority seemed to exist. That, and his 1951 trip to Israel, suggested that Max was in collusion with his brothers.²³

As to Needleman's insistence on learning about the Seborers, Jack had not thought much of the idea that a humanitarian concern for the family of his legman had motivated him.²⁴ The FBI speculated that Max Seborer might be part of a current clandestine apparatus and Needleman had to assuage him. If its members feared exposure and having to flee, the absence of news about Oscar and Stuart might have them worried that they would be purged if they did reach the USSR. Or Needleman himself was worried that he might have to flee and wanted a signal that the USSR was a safehaven.

Extensive interviews with colleagues of Stuart and Miriam from their days in the armed forces, at the Underwater Sound Laboratory, and Bureau of Ships yielded little information. FBI documents released under FOIA as of early 2019 do not contain any significant information about Oscar's Los Alamos career or the FBI's investigation of his work there.

The FBI was constrained, in any case, from launching an all-out investigation of the Seborers. If it started to question people about Oscar and Stuart, word about its inquiries was bound to make its way to their relatives and back to Needleman. Without any obvious pretext, that would surely lead him to suspect Jack

Childs either of being a government informant or carelessly gossiping about a very sensitive issue. In either case, Jack's usefulness would certainly be jeopardized.

To provide a reasonable excuse, the FBI seized on Rose Mendelsohn's old letter to the State Department. After assuring itself that she was not a communist, it prevailed on her to write to Max expressing her concerns and conducted several interviews using her letter as a cover. As it had suspected, word leaked back to Needleman of the inquiries, but he apparently accepted the explanation that the low-key investigation had been triggered by an anxious relative.²⁵

The Seborer Brothers Resurface

Tim Buck's overtures did produce results. On 23 November 1956, technical surveillance of Needleman's office picked up a telephone call in which Max Seborer excitedly reported that someone had delivered several letters, and he had to write an immediate reply. "They" were in East Germany, he gushed. Needleman wanted to see the letters and Max showed up at his apartment that evening at 10:45 and stayed for an hour. Max returned to his apartment and made a call to his brother Noah in Mexico City. Needleman later told Jack that Max had received a letter from someone in the Soviet embassy that included a picture of the family. Max, though, was still frustrated that direct contact was impossible.²⁶

Not until July 1958 did Max get a second letter from his brothers, reporting that they had had a hard time in East Germany, but things were better now in Russia. He showed Jack Childs the letter, with photographs of Oscar, Stuart, Anna Zeitlin, and Miriam and her child born sometime after her departure from the United States. Oscar was doing engineering research, Stuart scientific translations. Although they were living comfortably, language still remained an issue. They had made a mistake by selling their car in Germany and had to wait three years to obtain a new one. Grateful to Jack for his help, Max asked him to inquire if he or Noah's wife could visit them. Jack advised him to consult with Needleman; the FBI urged Jack not to facilitate a visit between Max and his brothers.²⁷

To date, the FBI has only released files on the Seborers through 1956, with no indication of when the files from later years might be processed. Bits and pieces of the Seborer investigation have, however, emerged from the SOLO files on Morris and Jack Childs. They indicate that Morris informed his handlers after a trip to Moscow in November 1961 that he had heard rumors among Americans living in the USSR about a "mysterious group of Americans known only as the Smiths, two couples plus the mother of one of the women. One of the men had had an affair with a Russian woman, and his wife visited the American embassy but was informed by the Soviets that she would not be allowed to leave. When she tried to visit the embassy again, she was arrested, threatened, and finally released. The two men were perhaps scientists."²⁸

The details were filled in after Jack met with Needleman in September 1963 following the attorney's return from a monthlong stay in a Soviet sanitarium. During his visit, Needleman met with the Seborers. Both had apartments in the same building, worked for the Academy of Science, and were paid 300 rubles a month. Miriam had indeed gone to the American embassy seeking to return to the United States and been "exiled" to Alma Ata in "protective custody," Needleman told Jack. The brothers no longer had any interest in her. Both Stuart and Oscar were completely "Russified and Sovietized." They told Needleman they would be executed "for what they did" if they ever returned to the United States. Oscar had been the "main man in the operation" and had given Needleman plans for the A-bomb, which had then been turned over to someone at Amtorg.²⁹

Over the years additional details drifted out. Tim Buck told Jack that he and Needleman had been invited to a party in the fall of 1963 at the Moscow apartment of Arthur and Dorothy Adams at which the Seborers were present. Adams had been a GRU (Soviet military intelligence) officer whose last assignment in the United States during WWII had focused on stealing atomic secrets.

Adams was observed meeting with a Manhattan Project scientist, Clarence Hiskey in Chicago, and a search of his New York apartment turned up espionage paraphernalia. Adams evaded FBI surveillance in 1944 and fled the country. He had worked for Amtorg in the 1930s and was associated with several scientific companies run by American communists at the time of his disappearance.

In view of the seriousness of the allegations of atomic espionage, he refused to approve closing the case and ordered periodic reviews "to insure that the subjects do not escape."

Whether or not he was the person to whom Needleman gave Oscar Seborer's information on the atomic bomb is not known, but Buck was surprised that Needleman knew Adams so well. Nor was Adams the only ex-spy with whom the Seborers socialized—Max Seborer had learned they were friendly with Guy Burgess.³⁰

While he was in Moscow in 1964, Jack Childs talked with Art Shields, the Moscow correspondent for *The Worker* (CPUSA's newspaper), who mentioned that every three or four months the Seborers dropped by his apartment to say hello. They were "mysterious" and didn't say much. Both now worked at the Institute for World Economy. Jack asked its director, an old acquaintance, about the pair and heard that they did not do "important work" and kept to themselves. Russian employees were told to "leave them alone."³¹

Yuri Nosenko, the KGB defector whose bona fides were a matter of controversy inside the CIA, told his debriefers that during 1960–61 he had seen pictures of the two brothers in KGB offices. In 1968, Morris Childs was asked by a Russian contact in Moscow if he knew the Smith brothers living there. Stuart had told the KGB he had been a member of the CPUSA since 1938, and Morris was asked to check on his claim.³²

Aside from the SOLO files, virtually nothing from FBI or CIA files dealing with the Seborers after 1956 has been released. An FBI memo from 1963 indicated that with no more logical areas of investigation,

the New York Office had placed the case in an inactive status. By 1964 it recommended closing the investigations of Oscar, Stuart, and Miriam, but continuing the technical surveillance of Needleman. William Sullivan, the assistant director demurred; in view of the seriousness of the allegations of atomic espionage, he refused to approve closing the case and ordered periodic reviews "to insure that the subjects do not escape."³³

The technical surveillance did yield some more information. In September 1961, Miriam and Stuart were divorced. Needleman met again with the Seborers on a trip to Moscow in 1965 and upon his return, told Jack that he had seen the two brothers and that Stuart had been "compelled by government to give his former wife 25 percent of his wages for the upkeep of their child."³⁴

Miriam, her son, and her mother were able to return to the United States on 29 December 1969. Nothing in the files indicates why the Soviets were willing to allow her to leave, after detaining and rustivating her for an earlier effort. Presumably, she gave guarantees of silence. She was interviewed several times by the FBI between March and July 1970. She admitted the group had lived from 1952 to 1957 in a town near Dresden in East Germany under the name of Smith. They had kept that name when they moved to the USSR in March 1957. She denied knowing anything about espionage committed by her former husband or brother-in-law before they left for the Soviet

The Seborers did leave some additional traces, however. In 1974, after more than two decades of silence Stuart wrote a book

Union and denied that she herself had engaged in espionage.³⁵

Either before her interviews with the FBI or shortly thereafter, Miriam contacted Needleman in New York. Needleman wrote to the brothers in Moscow that she was employed as a laboratory technician and “was no longer concerned with political matters.” He also assured them that she was not “vindictive” towards Stuart, a clear indication that she had not informed the FBI about their espionage activities. In response the brothers wrote that they were pleased “she bore them no hard feelings” and that they were now members of the CPSU and completely “Russified.” Both were married to Russian women. No more information is available about the brothers in FBI files that have been released.³⁶

The Seborers did leave some additional traces, however. In 1974, after more than two decades of silence Stuart wrote a book, *US Neocolonialism in Africa*, published by International Publishers, under the name Stewart Smith; it was then published in a Russian edition in 1975. Biographical material in the Russian edition explained that “S. Smith served as a senior political advisor of the US administration in Germany, but after Washington decided to re-establish West German militarism, while in US there was McCarthyism, he left US government service. . . . He settled in the working class suburb of Dresden and worked at the factory.” He had edited translations “of a number of scientific works, including classical books of the 3rd volume of Marx’s

Capital and Lenin’s *Philosophical Notebooks*.” Smith “currently continues his research work at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), USSR Academy of Sciences.”

The English edition was more frank, giving Smith’s true name as Stewart Seborer. He ended his preface by thanking his brother Oscar. Among those also thanked in the acknowledgments were Gus Hall, Henry Winston, and James Allen, all senior CPUSA officials, and I. G. Needleman. He also thanked Yevgeny Primakov, deputy director of the IMEMO, and “D. Macklin,” almost certainly a mangled transliteration from Russian of the name of British spy Donald MacLean, also employed at the same institute.³⁷

In 1987 Stuart, again using the name Smith, published a second book that only appeared in Russian: *Weaponry and Dollars: The Wellsprings of U.S. Foreign Policy*. Mikhail Voslensky, a Soviet dissident, wrote in the Russian edition (1991) of his *Nomenklatura: The Soviet Ruling Class*, that Smith—he did not know his real name—was an American who had moved to the USSR to avoid being nabbed as a Soviet spy and worked with Maclean there.³⁸

KGB Archival Evidence

There is documentary evidence that corroborates Needleman’s story that the Seborer brothers were involved in Soviet espionage and for Oscar being an atomic spy. In 2009 Alexander Vassiliev’s notebooks,

more than a thousand pages of extracts and summaries of KGB archival files, were made public. Some of the extracts deal with the rebuilding of Soviet networks during 1947–49. The KGB had deactivated many of its American networks in late 1945, when Elizabeth Bentley’s defection to the FBI forced it to recall KGB officers she exposed in 1945.

With a new cadre of officers installed in the United States, in 1947 the KGB attempted to reconnect wartime sources with whom it had lost contact. Among the extracts from Vassiliev’s notebooks is a message from Moscow KGB HQ directing its new officers in the United States to attempt to reconnect with a group of sources, labeled “Relative’s Group,” originally organized by “Intermediary,” who worked at Amtorg. Three of its members, “Relative,” “Godfather,” and “Godsend” (also translated as “Discovery”) were brothers and a fourth member was “Nata,” the Russian diminutive for Natalya, so likely female. The group had been created in 1945 but “had hardly been used for work [i.e., espionage] and had not been compromised [revealed to US counterintelligence] in any way.”

Godsend was singled out as having been at Los Alamos and provided information on “Enormous,” the KGB’s term for the atomic bomb project. By 1947, however, Soviet atomic sources were scarce: “Our opportunities for receiving information about ‘E’ [Enormous] were significantly cut down by the fact that certain athletes [KGB term for their spies] who had previously worked in that field (“Mlad” [codename for Ted Hall], “Caliber” [David Greenglass], and “Godsend”) switched to different

jobs for reasons beyond their control.”³⁹

The obvious reason these three sources “switched to different jobs” was that in late 1945, with the war over, the US atomic bomb program lost its sense of urgency. Thousands of workers were demobilized and returned to their previous jobs or pursued other goals. The young Mlad/Hall went to graduate school to complete his physics studies. Caliber/Greenglass returned to New York City and went into the machine shop business in partnership with Julius Rosenberg.

Mlad is identified in Vassiliev’s notebooks and in Venona as Theodore Hall and Caliber is identified as David Greenglass. Godsend, however, is not identified. KGB headquarters in Moscow urged its American officers to reestablish contact with him. Moscow reminded its station in Washington that Godsend was thought to be attending a university and its officers should see if he might be able to return to Los Alamos in some capacity.

US counterintelligence had no knowledge of this group. The cable was not one of those decrypted by the Venona codebreaking project. And the Vassiliev notebooks contain no more mentions of Relative’s Group. Nor do the details in Vassiliev’s notebooks provide enough information to identify its members. Godsend had worked at Los Alamos but there was no indication of his job there. He had been demobilized at the end of the war but so had thousands of others. He was thought to be in college in 1947, but so were many thousands of other veterans of the Manhattan Project. He was one of three brothers who had been recruited into espionage by

While we know a great deal about the information Fuchs, Hall, and Greenglass had access to and some of the specifics of exactly what they provided the Soviets, we only know that Seborer provided something.

a Soviet operative, likely an American, working for Amtorg.

The story Needleman told to Jack Childs fills in the sparse description of Relative’s Group from the 1947 KGB message. The KGB documents said the group was originally organized by Intermediary who worked at Amtorg, obviously Needleman. Three of its members, Relative, Godfather, and Godsend were brothers. Godsend had been at Los Alamos and handed over atomic information to a Soviet intelligence officer. Oscar, clearly, was the real name behind the code-name Godsend. The directive to see if Godsend could return to Los Alamos fits neatly with Oscar’s 1947 application to return to Los Alamos to a civilian position. Brothers Max and Stuart would be Relative and Godfather. Miriam would be a candidate for the fifth, female member of Relative’s group, Nata.

How Serious was the Seborers’ Espionage?

We now know definitively that there were at least four Soviet spies at Los Alamos: Klaus Fuchs, Theodore Hall, David Greenglass, and the newly identified Oscar Seborer. While we know a great deal about the information Fuchs, Hall, and Greenglass had access to and some of the specifics of exactly what they provided the Soviets, we only know that Seborer provided something. Needleman’s claim that Oscar “handed over to them the formula for the ‘A’ bomb” and the Seborers’ own belief that if they returned to the United States

they would face execution seem to contradict that KGB message written in 1947 that their apparatus “had hardly been used for work.”

But, there is circumstantial evidence that prior to 1945, when the KGB began to oversee it, Needleman’s ring had been providing information to the KGB’s sister agency, the GRU. Not only had Needleman been involved with Sam Carr, a Soviet spy in Canada, but Carr worked for a GRU spy ring. Needleman had worked at Amtorg with Arthur Adams, a long-time GRU officer. And the Seborers and Needleman had later socialized with Adams in Moscow. In a secret search of Adams’s New York apartment in 1944, the FBI found notes on experiments being conducted at Oak Ridge. While they could have come from George Koval, another GRU agent, Oscar Seborer also worked there from 1943 to the end of 1944.

After one unsuccessful effort to evade the FBI in early 1945, Adams succeeded in sneaking out of the United States. His difficulties beginning in 1944 may have been the impetus for the transfer of his atomic assets, including Oscar, and the latter’s controller, Needleman, to the KGB’s control. John Williamson, a onetime top CPUSA functionary preparing for deportation to England, told Jack in 1955 that Needleman was “a most reliable guy,” who had been with “them”—the Russians—“for many years.” It is, therefore, possible that, via Needleman, Oscar had furnished the GRU with a significant

Oscar Seborer died on 23 April 2015 in Moscow. Among the attendees at the funeral was a representative of the FSB, the Russian internal security service.

amount of classified information from Oak Ridge and Los Alamos.⁴⁰

While Oscar was only an Army technician, not a scientist like Fuchs and Hall, he had had university engineering training. And, as David Greenglass illustrates, even an Army technician had access to sensitive material. He machined models of the implosion lens used to trigger the plutonium bomb and provided the Soviets with a physical sample of part of the triggering mechanism.

Further, we have little understanding of what Oscar might have provided to the Soviets from his post-war positions at the Navy's Underwater Sound Laboratory and the Bureau of Ships or of what Stuart might have provided from his position as chief of the European branch of the Army's Civil Affairs Division. We do know that Soviet authorities awarded Oscar the Order of the Red Star in 1964, so his contribution must have been of some consequence.⁴¹

FBI Dilemmas

The FBI faced an excruciating dilemma in trying to untangle the Seborer case. While the full extent of its investigation awaits further FOIA releases, it was constrained by the fear that too vigorous a pursuit of this spy ring might cause Needleman to suspect Jack Childs, its chief source, and endanger Operation SOLO, its premier counterintelligence operation providing vital information about both the CPUSA and the international communist movement. The chief suspects, apart from Needleman, were beyond its reach, in the USSR by the time it learned what they had done. Even after Miriam Seborer returned from the USSR in 1969, SOLO was active and the FBI had no independent evidence with which to pressure her. So, the Seborer brothers—and particularly Oscar—got away with espionage.

Jack Childs died in 1980; in 1982, Morris went into the government's

witness protection program. By that time, Gibby Needleman had died (1975). Max Seborer died in 1978. After her return from Moscow, Miriam Seborer worked as a medical technician and then was acting medical director of the United Nations Medical Service before resigning in February 1974 in protest against not being considered to be permanent director. She later worked as medical director for an insurance company. In 1996 she was placed in a nursing home; she died in 2002.

Oscar Seborer died on 23 April 2015 in Moscow. Among the attendees at the funeral was a representative of the FSB, the Russian internal security service. His brother Stuart was present in a wheelchair. A friend explained that “both brothers are communists—they maintained their convictions and language.” And both lived to see the cause for which they had betrayed their native land disintegrate. Although a Moscow apartment and phone number for Stuart Smith still were listed in 2018, no one answered the telephone or the doorbell.⁴²



The authors: Professor *Harvey Klehr* is retired from Emory University where he taught for more than 40 years. He is the author of multiple works on American communism and Soviet espionage, many in collaboration with the coauthor of this article, historian *John Earl Haynes*. Dr. Haynes served as a specialist in 20th century political history in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress and is author or coauthor of numerous other publications on US communism and anticommunism. After the fall of the Soviet Union, he worked with former Soviet archivists to acquire once sensitive documents for use by scholars around the world.

Endnotes

1. See “The Perseus Myth” in Joseph Albright and Marcia Kunstel, *Bombshell: The Secret Story of America’s Unknown Atomic Spy Conspiracy* (Times Books, 1997), 267–77; Gary Kern, “The PERSEUS Disinformation Operation,” H-HOAC, 17 February 2006, <http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-hoac&month=0602&week=c&msg=Lb%2bREHUoud/%2bSFUeQbPTMA&user=&pw=>; John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr and Alexander Vassiliev, *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America*, (Yale University Press, 2009), 556, note 3; and John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (Yale University Press, 1999), 317–18. The SOLO operation became public in 1981 with the publication of David J. Garrow, *The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.: From “Solo” to Memphis* (W.W. Norton, 1981). Garrow updated his account in David J. Garrow, “The FBI and Martin Luther King,” *Atlantic Monthly*, July/August 2002. Although journalistic rather than scholarly, the most detailed account of the operation is John Barron’s *Operation SOLO: The FBI’s Man in the Kremlin* (Regnery Pub., 1995). Barron’s book was prepared with considerable FBI cooperation as well as the cooperation of Morris Childs and his family.
2. Robert Lamphere and Tom Shachtman, *The FBI-KGB War: A Special Agent’s Story* (Random House, 1986), 107.
3. Special Agent in Charge (SAC) New York (hereafter SAC NY) to Director FBI, 21 December 1954, pp. 53-55 in FBI file 100-56579-966. The story of Needleman’s trip to Toronto with Jack is also included in more detail in SAC NY to Director FBI, 21 December 1954, in FBI file 100-1222443, no serial number (Oscar Seborer’s file).
4. SAC NY to Director FBI, 21 December 1954 and SAC NY to Director FBI, 22 March 1955 in FBI file 1222443, no serial number.
5. SAC NY to Director FBI, 22 March 1955, FBI file 1222443, no serial number. “Apparatus” in this context referred to nonpublic CPUSA work.
6. SAC NY to Director FBI, 1 July 1955, FBI file 1222443, no serial number.
7. Airtel SAC NY to Bureau, 24 August 1955, FBI file 1222443, no serial number.
8. Belmont memo to Boardman, 4 October 1955, FBI file 1222443-10; New York FBI report, 25 November 1955, FBI file 1222443-16.
9. SAC NY to Director FBI, 7 November 1955, FBI file 1222443, no serial number. “Purchasing commission” refers to the Soviet Government Purchasing Commission that operated in the United States during WWII as a conduit for Lend-Lease aid to the USSR.
10. *Ibid.*
11. SAC NY to Bureau, Washington Field Office (WFO), and PH, 26 November 1955 FBI file 1222443, no serial number.
12. “The Seborer Family-Some Highlights,” https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000014731.pdf.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Belmont to Boardman, 30 August 1955, FBI file 1222443, no serial number.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Belmont to Boardman, 1 December 1955, FBI file 1222443, no serial number; Washington, DC FBI report, 11 July 1955, FBI file 100-1222451-6. File 1222451 is the FBI file for Stuart Seborer.
17. Airtel WFO to Director FBI, 6 December 1955 FBI file 1222443-22.
18. Airtel SAC NY to Bureau, 3 October 1955, FBI file 1222443, no serial number.
19. Philadelphia FBI report, 16 September 1955, FBI file 1222443-8.
20. SAC NY to Director FBI, 22 December 1955, FBI file 1222443, no serial number.
21. Mason to Tolson, 9 December 1955, FBI file 1222443, no serial number.
22. SAC NY to Director FBI, 1 March 1956, FBI file 1222443-86; NY FBI report, 17 February 1956, FBI file 1222451-98; Albuquerque FBI report, 7 February 1956, FBI file 1222443-69.
23. Airtel New York to Bureau, 1 February 1956, FBI file 1222451 no serial number; Legal Attache Rome to Director FBI, 8 February 1956, FBI file 1222451-81; Report of the FBI Laboratory to SAC WFO, 3 February, 1956, FBI file 1222451-87; Branigan to Belmont, 7 February 1956, FBI file 1222451 no serial number.
24. Airtel SAC NY to Bureau, 20 December 1955, FBI file 1222443, no serial number.
25. As one example, FBI agents questioned one acquaintance, who told Rose Arenal, who informed Needleman. SAC WFO to Director FBI, 17 October, 1955, FBI file 1222443-14.
26. Belmont to Boardman, 24 November 1956, FBI file 1222443, no serial number.
27. SAC NY to Director FBI, 15 August 1958, Jack Childs FBI file NYC-15, pp. 179–82. Jack Childs FOIA FBI files are online at: <https://archive.org/details/JackChilds/page/n6>.
28. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, 5 January 1962, FBI 100-428091 (hereafter the SOLO file), FBI SOLO file part 40, pp. 26-28.
29. SAC NY to Director FBI, 11 September 1963, FBI SOLO file part 48, pp. 137–41.
30. SAC NY to Director FBI, 15 January 1964, FBI SOLO file part 56, pp. 22–23.
31. SAC NY to Director FBI, 29 June 1964, FBI SOLO file part 64, pp. 221–22.
32. Federal Bureau of Investigation: “Isidore Gibby Needleman,” March 3, 1971 in Jack Childs FBI file NYC 16A-18A, pp. 102–107; SAC NY to Director FBI, 3 July 1968, FBI SOLO file part 124, pp. 265–71.
33. Branigan to Sullivan, 22 June 1964, FBI file 1222443-290.
34. SAC NY to Director FBI, 6 April 1965, FBI SOLO file part 84, pp. 143–48.
35. Federal Bureau of Investigation: Isidore Gibby Needleman, March 3, 1971 in Jack Childs FBI file NYC 16A-18A, pp. 102–107.

36. Ibid.
37. Stewart Smith, *U.S. Neocolonialism in Africa* (International Publishers, 1974); Стюарт Смит, Американский неокOLONИализм в Африке (*American Neocolonialism in Africa*) (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975).
38. Стюарт Смит, Оружие и доллары. Истоки внешней политики США (Progress Publishers, 1987); Восленский М.С., Номенклатура. Господствующий класс Советского Союза. М., 1991.
39. Vassiliev Black Notebooks, pp.127-128, 130. Vassiliev's original notebooks are held by the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress and are online at <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/86/Vassiliev-Notebooks>.
40. SAC NY to Director FBI, 1 June 1955, FBI file 100-56579-1062.
41. Alexsei Turbaevsky posting in Livejournal, April 25, 2015. Turbaevsky is a biotechnology engineer and physicist at the P.N. Lebedev Institute of Physics, who at one time worked on projects for the Foreign Intelligence Service. Livejournal is a popular Russian web forum.
42. Details of the funeral are contained in Turbaevsky's posting in *Live* journal, April 25, 2015.



The Use and Abuse of Intelligence in the Public Square

Michael Warner

Politicization is related to the integrity of intelligence personnel and services. That someone or some entity has been engaged in it is a charge that has been heard with frequency over the last generation.

The vast literature on politicization has focused on its top-down variety; i.e., on ways in which decisionmaker preferences, directly or indirectly, distort analyses. Some studies have also noticed bottom-up patterns, in which biases among intelligence officers have shaded outcomes. What has received little scholarly attention, at least in the United States, are cases in which policymakers or lawmakers have used charges of intelligence politicization in order to enhance their personal or partisan positions in policy debates. We have evidence of such behavior; indeed such charges may even in certain circumstances be predictable.

Politicization pertains to the integrity of intelligence personnel and services. That someone or some entity has been engaged in it is a charge that has been heard with frequency over the last generation. Though many academic authors have addressed the topic, the phenomenon may have eluded full exploration.

Definitions

In its broad sense, to politicize a matter means to bring it within the ambit of political (and usually governmental) consideration and processes. There is nothing necessarily pejorative about politicization in this sense, as Richard Betts explained with his customary force and clarity in *Enemies of Intelligence*. He

acknowledges that politicization is “a fighting word, usually invoked as a charge of simple bad faith,” but he then argues that its milder varieties can prove beneficial. To politicize in this sense means to elevate a question to precisely where issues of vital national interest should be argued. Hence the “presentation and packaging of assessments in ways that effectively *engage policymakers’ concerns*” is a good and useful thing.¹

This is not the sense in which critics of intelligence politicization mean the term, as Betts readily acknowledges. The common usage of politicization is indeed pejorative. It implies a flaw in the integrity of intelligence—that something that should be objective and fact-based has been twisted for ends short of the common good. All corruption of analysis, Betts insists, is bad: “policy interests, preferences, or decisions must *never* determine intelligence judgments.”²

Examining this challenge to the integrity of intelligence constituted by politicization is worthy of scholarly interest in its own right and merits attention from managers of intelligence. Even the most cogent and objective explorations, however, tend to revisit similar historical episodes and sometimes do not read even these examples rigorously. Politicization by decisionmakers is examined at length, but few scholars have studied politicization by intelligence officers.

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.

Politicization is a favorite topic among scholars of intelligence. It blends two of their consistent interests, analysis and integrity, with another, the use of intelligence in decisionmaking.

Yet a third form of politicization, moreover, is hardly studied at all.

Politicization as a Subject for Inquiry

Politicization is a favorite topic among scholars of intelligence. It blends two of their consistent interests—analysis and integrity—with another, the use of intelligence in decisionmaking. We have a comparative wealth of sources on the subject, compared with other intelligence topics, as befits an activity that takes place at least partially in public. Intelligence is politicized for a reason—to influence decisions about policies or events—and such changes are virtually always to some extent visible to domestic electorates and foreign leaders. Hence the landscape of settled facts, as it were, has become fairly extensive for investigators of politicization.

No responsible person argues that intelligence should not serve policy—that is precisely why it exists: to further the policy ends of its legitimate political overseers. Whether those policy ends are wise or foolish is a question that is largely, if not wholly, beyond the purview and competence of intelligence to judge. Paul R. Pillar usefully calls politicization a “compromise of the objectivity of intelligence.”³ Although he does not say so in so many words, the problem with such a lack of objectivity is obvious and two-fold: that public resources have been diverted to private or partisan gain, and that the common-

wealth is not getting the best advice in dealing with serious matters.

The topic of politicization thus bears a kinship to the set of issues surrounding civilian control of military establishments. Long experience has taught that expertise in the military arts does not automatically translate into political acumen. Part of what defines the modern West (and the parts of the East influenced by Marxism) is the norm that soldiers are expected to be not only competent in the profession of arms but subservient to the civilian rulers of the commonwealth. Their expertise is fostered and sustained to serve the common good, notes Samuel P. Huntington, not to facilitate private or partisan aggrandizement, and that expertise must reflect sound analysis of objective conditions and not be subtly shaded to lend support to a partisan or an ideological preference.⁴

The idea of politicization is rather new in historical terms, even in the United States. The word itself is almost a neologism. It dates from the 1930s but apparently came into wider use in the 1960s. Sherman Kent, a good bellwether of issues affecting analysis, did not use the term in his classic *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*, either in his 1949 original or its 1965 reissue. Certainly US intelligence had been no stranger to controversy in the two decades following World War II, which heard loud arguments over the best policy for the United States with regard to communism, including charges of McCarthyism and fellow

traveling. Google Ngrams, however, suggests the phrase “politicization of intelligence” only began appearing in books written in English in the 1970s, and its use expanded dramatically in the 1980s.

That seems to fit the history of US intelligence. As intelligence grew in importance and public prominence in the United States during the Vietnam War, it became possible to blend three ingredients:

- a public expectation that intelligence services should be serving the commonwealth and be publicly accountable to it;
- an explicit chain of command to that service reaching from a political leadership that is itself subject to the electoral cycle and public criticism of its foreign policies; and
- controversial issues on which intelligence is advising that leadership.

That very fact of official visibility for intelligence services made them and their consumers early, if not the first, focal points for charges of politicization. It also led Congress in 1992 to amend the National Security Act to stipulate that the Intelligence Community’s analysis should be “timely, objective, [and] independent of political considerations.”⁵

A Typology of Politicization

Experts on the topic like Richard Betts see two kinds of politicization: top-down and bottom-up; in other words, by consumers and by producers, respectively.⁶ Mark Lowenthal notes in his textbook *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy* that “the size

or persistence of the politicization problem is difficult to determine.” He hints that the two varieties converge on a single problem: “intelligence officers may intentionally alter intelligence, which is supposed to be objective, to support the options or outcomes preferred by policymakers.” The officers might do so voluntarily on their own, either to curry favor or to boost their careers; that would be the bottom-up variety. Or they might do so because they feel pressure from consumers who want support for their policies (that is the top-down kind).⁷

Top-down politicization gets the most attention in the scholarly literature. Paul Pillar examines this problem in detail, helpfully imposing some order and structure to thinking about it. He sees two forms: consumers directly or indirectly dragging intelligence into the public arena to boost support for policy judgments, and the direct or indirect effect that a decisionmaker’s policy preferences have in influencing analytic judgments.⁸ Pillar, like Richard Betts, calls it a problem inherent in government’s use of intelligence and suggests it can be mitigated but not eliminated.⁹ This form of politicization has been well and exhaustively examined.¹⁰ It can indeed be a problem, but the scholarly treatments of it seem adequate for now, and thus it will not be a focus in what follows here.

The bottom-up species of politicization is tougher to define, which may be one reason it seems to garner less attention in the literature. Several authors have nibbled around the edges of this issue. Pillar admits bottom-up politicization might be a problem but also hints it should be rare by definition because it would be risky and self-defeating for analysts

Evidence for bottom-up politicization might be rare, but it does exist.

to attempt it.¹¹ That seems intuitively satisfying and may well be correct, but it also begs a question: isn’t top-down politicization also risky and self-defeating too? Shouldn’t it also be rare? Perhaps not, for the same reasons that various self-punishing vices like drunk driving and opera are not rare.¹² Those who indulge in them might really believe that they are the miscreants who will get what they want this time and still beat the odds. Yet such a logic could obtain for bottom-up politicization as well, which is why it merits a fuller treatment here.

Evidence for bottom-up politicization might be rare, but it does exist. Vasily Mitrokhin cites a horrifying example from the Soviet side of the Cold War. The head of the KGB, Yuri Andropov, served not only as the Soviet Union’s senior intelligence officer in 1979; he also sat on the Politburo and played a key role in making policy toward Afghanistan as that nation spiraled into civil war. Andropov’s unique portfolio made him both a producer and consumer of intelligence and ensured that the intelligence his service collected and analyzed served his alarmist and interventionist inclinations, with tragic results when the Soviet army (with support from KGB commandos) invaded Afghanistan.¹³

The KGB’s experience, of course, is not representative of US intelligence or its Western corollaries. Bottom-up politicization in a democracy could be expected to be subtle and even furtive, as few intelligence professionals will want to admit to shading their products to support or conform to policy. Still fewer might

confess that they tried to shape the decisions of policymakers.

Not a few democratic leaders, however, have suspected that such shaping is exactly what their intelligence agencies were attempting. President George W. Bush disliked the wording of a 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on the Iranian nuclear program, for example, believing it had presented valid evidence in a way that exaggerated Tehran’s restraint while US diplomats sought to rally international pressure on Iran. Bush worried this optimistic finding would leak, and so he ordered its declassification in order to give his administration a head start on containing the damage to US diplomatic efforts. The president subsequently wondered “if the intelligence community was trying so hard to avoid repeating its [2002] mistake on Iraq that it had underestimated the threat from Iran. I certainly hoped intelligence analysts weren’t trying to influence policy.”¹⁴

President Richard Nixon’s administration offers ample evidence that policymakers suspected bottom-up politicization. National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger recalled that Nixon “considered the CIA a refuge of Ivy League intellectuals opposed to him.” In Nixon’s mind, these experts were “liberals who behind the façade of analytical objectivity were usually pushing their own (policy) preferences.”¹⁵ Kissinger’s memoir, of course, is second-hand and post hoc, but we have some corroborating evidence of Nixon’s views. For instance, a CIA officer present at a National Security Council (NSC) meeting in June 1969 noted

Like his boss, Kissinger also saw in the intelligence analyses a partisan bent toward institutional pessimism.

the president's complaint that intelligence projections for the previous four years had significantly underestimated Soviet weapons deployments. Nixon then issued this directive to the intelligence officers in the room:

People have been showing a tendency to use intelligence to support conclusions, rather than to arrive at conclusions. I don't mean to say that they are lying about the intelligence or distorting it, but I want you fellows to be very careful to separate facts from opinions in your briefings. After all, I'm the one who has to form the opinion—I'm the only one who has to run, I'm the one who has the sole responsibility when things go to pot.¹⁶

A year later, after a series of real and perceived analytical errors with regard to the Vietnam War and the Soviet Union, Nixon complained to his President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) about the analysts'

penchant for presenting facts or writing reports designed to fit a preconceived philosophy, e.g., to justify a bombing halt if, in the writer's personal views, such an action is warranted. The President recognized that this tendency is sometimes a subconscious one and that there are people of varying philosophies, e.g., hawks and doves, in the intelligence community as

well as the other segments of government.¹⁷

Like his boss, Kissinger also saw in the intelligence analyses a partisan bent toward institutional pessimism. The analysts at CIA, he believed, had all but given up on winning the Vietnam War: they "generally reflected the most liberal school of thought in the government," and, because they believed "they could suffer great damage by making hopeful predictions that turned out to be wrong[,] they ran few risks in making pessimistic forecasts."¹⁸

Research has subsequently found that Nixon's worry about bottom-up politicization was not wholly fanciful. According to a declassified history of CIA analyses during the Vietnam War, the agency's Office of Economic Research from 1965 to 1970 waged an exhausting debate with colleagues in other agencies—and eventually with other CIA officers as well—over the likelihood that North Vietnam would use the port of Sihanoukville (in ostensibly neutral Cambodia) as a secret entrepot for arms shipments to its forces in South Vietnam. CIA economic analysts argued that Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk would not permit such shipments. The United States initially lacked hard evidence either way, but CIA's economists insisted even as contrary indicators accumulated. The analysts did not change their conclusion until mid-1970, when the Cambodian officers who had deposed Sihanouk sought favor with Washington by showing

proof that the prince had indeed allowed North Vietnamese transshipments.¹⁹ The result of this debate was an impression among Nixon and his aides that CIA analysts had persisted in their error because they had trimmed analyses to fit their own policy preferences until forced by overwhelming facts to desist.^a Nixon also cited this episode to the PFIAB in July 1970:

... the slanting of intelligence reports is sometimes deliberate and the President feels that the (CIA's) playing down of the importance of Sihanoukville [as an entrepot for Communist arms into South Vietnam] may have been such a case. Sometimes, he said, the authors of these reports do not actually lie; instead, they slant the report in such a way that their personal points of view receive extra emphasis. He believes that those responsible for the deliberate distortion of an intelligence report should be fired.²⁰

The CIA history of the episode found a kernel of truth in Nixon's allegation. He interviewed surviving CIA participants in the analytical controversy and found some were indeed convinced that the US military wanted to expand the war into Cambodia; they were determined not to provide the Pentagon or the White House an excuse to do so. The study's author felt obliged to conclude that "[t]he intellectual biases that helped distort CIA's logistical estimates were reinforced by the intrusion of policy preferences."²¹

a. Kissinger reflected "as happens all too frequently, intelligence estimates followed, rather than inspired, agency policy views. Those who favored attacks on the sanctuaries [in Cambodia] emphasized the importance of Sihanoukville; those who were opposed depreciated it." See *White House Years*, 241.

Such evidence suggests we need more research on bottom-up politicization. For now we can only say that we don't know how prevalent or rare it is. The complaints of presidents and national security advisors about analytic politicization do not necessarily mean analysis was politicized. Those who have leveled such allegations certainly have had their own axes to grind, and individuals accused of bottom-up politicization have denied the charges. These considerations should make us wary of accepting specific allegations. Of course, such cautions can be leveled, *mutadis mutandis*, about many claims of top-down politicization as well.

Politicization of a Third Kind

Here I should like to expand the conversation beyond the integrity of the intelligence product to include what we might deem the integrity of its use. As noted above, history suggests the top-down variety of politicization is ancient—princes and potentates have always wanted to hear what they wanted to hear. Bottom-up politicization is much newer; it can only date from when analysts gained opportunities to tip the scales in favor of one policy option versus another.

The authors above discuss the phenomenon as a direct or indirect way of boosting institutional or political support for a policy option. Such assistance is obviously easier to lend if the intelligence is released to the public and thus can add to the evidence and expertise supporting a favored course of action. Various authors note that intelligence can be selectively cited (the Washington phrase for this is “cherry picking”)

Bottom-up politicization is much newer; it can only date from when analysts gained opportunities to tip the scales in favor of one policy option versus another.

for just that purpose. Anthony Glees and Philip H. J. Davies maintain that is what happened in Britain in 2002 as the government of Prime Minister Tony Blair declassified certain intelligence to bolster its case for invading Iraq. The government's use of intelligence in a public dossier supporting that policy, Glees and Davies argue, raised the question of “whether it was acceptable practice to exploit a piece of secret intelligence in public to justify military action, and whether there was not a conflict of interest between those tasked with assembling secret intelligence and those tasked with explaining government policy to the British people.”²² Similar complaints were heard about President George W. Bush's parallel and nearly simultaneous declassification of intelligence on Iraq.

If participants in a policy debate can selectively cite intelligence to support a favored policy, then they can also use intelligence to oppose a policy they consider unwise. Paul Pillar complains that intelligence services occasionally find themselves “dragged into public debates over policy not just by policymakers but by their opponents, who look to intelligence to serve as a check on the policymakers' public excesses and inaccuracies.” He argues that this typically happens post hoc, after “policies turn sour and fingers start pointing to people and agencies to blame.”²³ Kenneth Lieberthal of the Brookings Institution adds that NIEs, for instance, “lend themselves to partisan political manipulation.” Whether they are officially declassified or selectively leaked, NIEs create space

“from which political operators may be able to seek ammunition for a particular effort they favor or oppose.”²⁴ The Sihanoukville example above shows this possibility from a bottom-up perspective as well, hinting that analysts themselves can use their product to oppose as well as support a policy course.

Historical evidence suggest that selective citing of intelligence to oppose a policy need not happen *after* the policy has gone awry. As momentum for Soviet-US arms control gathered in the late 1960s, for instance, the fact that intelligence assessments of the Soviet nuclear arms control could be discussed more easily in public created powerful incentives to cite the intelligence more or less accurately in order to criticize rival policy approaches toward the Soviet Union. It was in this context that Senator J. William Fulbright in 1969 complained in a Senate hearing that what Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms had told him in closed session about new Soviet missiles “sure didn't sound like what the Secretary of Defense [Melvin Laird] has been saying.” Fulbright and allied senators a few weeks later grilled Secretary Laird and other administration witnesses on the differences between their views and a recent NIE. Laird did his best to defend administration policies, but he could not refute Fulbright's charge of a divergence between the intelligence findings and the Nixon administration's policy position without declassifying the intelligence estimate in question—and thereby exposing sensitive sources and methods.²⁵

The hypothesis that policy opponents can expose intelligence findings specifically for rhetorical advantage seems to fit certain evidence surrounding the controversy over the now-infamous October 2002 NIE on Iraq's WMD.

Senator Fulbright's complaint voiced a common assumption about how policy is supposed to be made. Stephen Marrin helpfully notes that various scholars assume that policy-makers consult formal intelligence findings before they choose a course of action.²⁶ That assumption obtains in precincts of Washington as well, as Secretary Laird discovered to his discomfort. A policy that precedes or preempts the intelligence, it could be publicly suggested, might not rest on an objective reading of the facts. And thus such a policy would be questionable, or even flawed, as Senator Fulbright hinted. If the policy matched the intelligence, moreover, the fact that the policy preceded the intelligence might be evidence that the intelligence agencies had aligned their product to a predetermined policy option. That would in turn open the way to an allegation of direct or indirect top-down politicization, and would certainly contravene the aforementioned statutory principle that intelligence should be objective and "independent of political considerations" that Congress decreed in 1992.²⁷

If such intelligence divergence from policy is not yet apparent, can opponents find ways to elicit intelligence products or statements that undermine support for a policy they dislike? I propose such a possibility, and I believe we should be open to finding yet a third kind of politicization, which is the use of intelligence as a proxy for policy gain/or even partisan advantage.

A Case Study of "Third Kind" Politicization

The hypothesis that policy opponents can expose intelligence findings specifically for rhetorical advantage seems to fit certain evidence surrounding the controversy over the now-infamous October 2002 NIE on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. The intelligence surrounding the Bush's administration's decision to invade Iraq has been examined at length in many venues, but one specific aspect of the debate over intelligence has so far been only summarily discussed in public. That is what we will examine here.

The fact that Saddam had (or could easily acquire) weapons of mass destruction seemed beyond dispute when President Bush took power in early 2001. That February, DCI George Tenet told Congress in public session "[o]ur most serious concern with Saddam Hussein must be the likelihood that he will seek a renewed WMD capability both for credibility and because every other strong regime in the region either has it or is pursuing it." Tenet added the Iraqis had "rebuilt key portions of their chemical production infrastructure" far beyond the capacity to meet civilian needs, and he shared "similar concerns about other dual-use research, development, and production in the biological weapons and ballistic missile fields."²⁸

Nothing the Intelligence Community saw by 2002 diminished its confidence in this judgment about Saddam's desire and ability to pos-

sess weapons of mass destruction. President Bush thus resolved to treat Iraq as a threat to the United States, and his administration began recruiting allies and planning to either force Saddam to comply with UN disarmament resolutions or to remove him from power.

Opponents of such an intervention largely conceded the intelligence that Saddam wanted such weapons and could well use them, but nonetheless doubted intervention's chance of success and its likely consequences for stability in the Middle East. Indeed, both the British and US governments based their public arguments for intervention on the certainty of Saddam's weapons programs, and, as evidenced by Blair's September 2002 dossier and a parallel White Paper released by the DCI's National Intelligence Council (NIC) the following month, the phrasing of the intelligence they cited in support of their joint policy became ever less nuanced as war loomed.²⁹

As Congress debated Iraq policy, senators from both parties called for the Bush administration to direct DCI George Tenet to produce a new estimate on Iraq's WMD programs. The first senator to do so wrote Tenet on 9 September 2002 requesting that the DCI also "produce an unclassified summary of this NIE" so "the American public can better understand this important issue."³⁰

Administration and intelligence officials did not believe a new NIE was necessary but nonetheless complied. DCI Tenet "reluctantly agreed" and ordered the NIC to start work on 12 September. The NSC staff, "(l)ike those of us in the Intelligence Community," said Tenet, thought the data

requested by the senators “were already available in other documents.”³¹ Nevertheless, the NIE was drafted in near-record time, coordinated by the intelligence agencies in a marathon session, and delivered to Congress on the 1 October deadline. It was then summarized, more or less, in an unclassified white paper that lost much of the nuance of the original, classified NIE. The main judgments thus conveyed about Saddam’s weapons programs were the following year discredited by evidence discovered (or more accurately, not discovered) in Iraq, and the estimate and especially the white paper are now cited as monumentally flawed intelligence analysis.³² In the words of George Tenet, “there’s a saying that ‘if you want it bad, you get it bad’.”³³

In light of criticisms of the Bush administration and the Intelligence Community since the 2002 NIE, one might be forgiven for wondering why the senators wanted the product when they did. One need not hunt for nefarious motives: Members of Congress have every right (and duty) to seek accurate and timely intelligence on vital matters coming before them. That is indeed what was happening in 2002; the timing was dictated by the looming vote in Congress on a resolution to authorize the president to use military force to compel Iraq to comply with UN resolutions (the Senate passed the resolution on 11 October 2002). In an ideal world, that would be the only motivation needed to explain the call for a new NIE, and inquiry into the matter could stop there. But such an inquiry would not fully explore two facts about that NIE: its odd production process and the already available reporting and analysis at hand on the matters it covered.

“Because of the time pressures, analysts lifted large chunks of other recently published papers and replicated them in the [2002] Estimate.”

The comparatively pressing deadline (21 days) meant that the resulting NIE could be barely more than a summary of previous reporting, a cut-and-paste job with a few new items from recent reports added to make the end-product more timely. As the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) report noted, Intelligence Community analysts told Senate staffers afterward that

*much of the text for the NIE had been pulled from previously written and coordinated IC products, meaning that analysts had previously had the opportunity to comment on the language. A CIA delivery system analyst noted that “. . . this was pulled together from pieces of stuff we’d already written, so it wasn’t as well polished as we would like. It didn’t flow very well. It was pieces pulled together. But we couldn’t argue with what was said because this is what we had written in previous publications.”*³⁴

Tenet agreed: “Because of the time pressures, analysts lifted large chunks of other recently published papers and replicated them in the Estimate. Twelve previous intelligence community publications formed the spine of the NIE”³⁵

In addition, the Bush administration tried without success to argue that the intelligence agencies had already published sufficient analyses of Iraq’s programs. The senators certainly had such products available to them, at least indirectly as back-

ground material for briefings on Iraq. As Tenet later recalled,

*(w)e had not done an NIE specifically on Iraq WMD in a number of years, but we had produced an array of analysis and other estimates that discussed Iraqi weapons programs, in the context of broader assessments on ballistic missiles and chemical and biological weapons. We all believed we understood the problem.*³⁶

Tenet almost certainly recalled that the intelligence agencies at the end of the Clinton administration had concerted their views in an Intelligence Community assessment, as Senate investigators subsequently noted:

*In December 2000, the National Intelligence Council (NIC) produced an Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA), Iraq: Steadily Pursuing WMD Capabilities. The assessment was prepared at the request of the National Security Council (NSC) for a broad update on Iraqi efforts to rebuild WMD and delivery programs in the absence of weapons inspectors, as well as a review of what remained of the WMD arsenal and outstanding disarmament issues.*³⁷

That ICA has not been fully declassified, but post mortems of the Iraq intelligence failure do not suggest that its conclusions contradicted those of the 2002 NIE. Tenet implicitly endorses this reading of the

Critics were able to cite the NIE and claim that the administration's policy was inconsistent with the intelligence.

consistency of the intelligence analyses: "The judgments we delivered in the [2002] NIE on Iraq's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs were consistent with the ones we had given the Clinton administration."³⁸ Why then was a new NIE necessary less than two years after the December 2000 ICA, especially when the new product could only be a hasty cut-and-paste job?

Available evidence could support the hypothesis that critics of the Bush administration had requested the 2002 NIE because they hoped it would give them rhetorical ammunition to criticize the president's push for intervention in Iraq. Here the actual substance of that NIE was less important than the timing and manner of its presentation. Two features of that distribution gave talking points to the administration's opponents. First, it allowed them to charge that policy had run ahead of the intelligence. This was precisely the sense of the senator who first requested the NIE, as he wrote in the Senate's subsequent review of the episode. He noted that policymakers had set out to sell an intervention to the public before ordering an NIE on the topic:

It was clear from such comments that Administration policymakers were not looking for the Intelligence Community's consensus conclusions regarding Iraq's WMD programs—the President, the Vice President,

*Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and General Myers had already reached their own conclusions, including that the U.S. needed to go to war to neutralize the perceived Iraqi threat.*³⁹

The new NIE also indirectly gave opponents of intervention a second talking point when intelligence officials briefed it to members of Congress. Critics were able to cite the NIE and claim that the administration's policy was inconsistent with the intelligence. Tenet recounts how this worked. The October 2002 NIE was classified, as was the testimony on its behalf the following day (2 October) by senior intelligence officers before the SSCI. Following their briefing, recalled Tenet, "several Democratic senators demanded that a few sentences from the testimony be cleared for public release. The senators also wanted released some language that was contained in the classified NIE but not in the unclassified white paper" (which was supposed to mirror the classified NIE but in its even-more hasty production oversimplified some of the former's conclusions). Tenet cleared a letter providing the requested information a few days later, upon which

Democratic members of the committee released the letter to the media almost immediately, provoking a flurry of stories. The articles suggested that the letter contradicted President

*Bush's assertion on the imminent threat posed by Iraq and implied that the use of force by the United States would only increase the likelihood that Saddam would either use WMD himself or share it with terrorists.*⁴⁰

DCI Tenet then had to explain to National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice (and at her behest the *New York Times* as well) that he had not, in thought or deed, meant to criticize the administration's policy.⁴¹ He satisfied the White House, but critics of the Iraq intervention had scored their point. They could now cite in public what appeared to be a misuse of intelligence by the Bush administration and suggest that congruence between the intelligence and the policy had resulted from pressure on the analysts by the White House. This use of Tenet's statement looks much like a third kind of politicization: a maneuvering of the intelligence agencies to produce an apparent discrepancy between intelligence policy in order to indict policies that critics oppose.^a

Can We Predict Politicization?

Any nation's intelligence system is a function of its government structure, legal system, and political culture. In polities where multiple parties debate vital national security questions, it may be inevitable that one or more of those parties will cite intelligence in the public arena for policy or partisan advantage. Thus

a. Joshua Rovner has helpfully brought my attention to a rather precise fit between this phenomenon and another that he notes in his book, *Fixing the Facts*. To wit, Dr. Rovner cogently argues that policymakers like to cite intelligence in public that helps them convince observers that there is official consensus around an initiative or decision. I agree, and see their opponents citing (and if need be orchestrating) discordant intelligence to refute the idea that the government agencies are united around the facts and logic of the policy in question. See Rovner, *Fixing the Facts*, 46-48.

that third kind of politicization just described seems likely to remain a possibility for the foreseeable future.

Hence a prediction: As we have seen examples of this in the past, we should also see them in the future. This survey suggests that we can expect to hear allegations of politicization in certain kinds of debates over national strategy. Those would be “wicked problems” where the evidence supporting rival policy options is incomplete or inconclusive, and when the high stakes of the various courses of action evoke strong emotions among partisans. Two such subjects readily come to mind: those involving dictators with weapons of mass destruction or terrorists who can reach into the homeland. Such topics seem ripe for allegations of politicization. One might even posit that the political parties would tailor their rhetoric and tactics for weaponizing such allegations of politicization, but that is a topic for another day.

Intelligence services have integrity to the degree that they retain their utility as sensors of and instruments for affecting international conditions

Conclusion

Intelligence services have integrity to the degree that they retain their utility as sensors of and instruments for affecting international conditions; i.e., to the degree that they avoid becoming mere instruments for the personal ends of their masters (as opposed to the ends of the larger commonwealth), or pander to those ends. In a sense, however, both pathologies have marked intelligence since time immemorial. More than a few rulers have succumbed to the temptation to equate the common good with their personal preferences, or have only admitted sycophants into their presence. Thus politicization would seem to be an issue mostly in those times and places where people inside and outside the government expect intelligence to be more than a mere tool, or a sycophant.

Politicization (or allegations of it) seem inherent and more likely when a

democratic nation faces dangers from armed and ruthless adversaries. Such perils, of course, are why democracies keep intelligence systems in the first place. We should probably refrain from defining politicization very broadly to mean any compromise of the objectivity of intelligence. After all, one man’s policy is another man’s folly. In the absence of clear and compelling evidence of policy success—a surrender on the deck of a battleship, for example—there are likely to be ongoing arguments over the efficacy of almost any policy. Leaders may indeed view intelligence through the lenses of their preferences, and a few such leaders, and even analysts, might attempt to shade intelligence findings to support those preferences. Such shading is a more useful definition of politicization. Absent such a distinction, partisans will find temptation to weaponize allegations of intelligence politicization to undermine rival policy choices.



The author: Michael Warner is a historian with the US Department of Defense. He has also served as a historian in CIA’s History Staff.

Endnotes

1. Richard K. Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence: Knowledge and Power in American National Security* (Columbia University Press, 2007), 67, 74. Emphasis in original.
2. Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence*, 75. Emphases in original.
3. Paul R. Pillar, “The Perils of Politicization,” in Loch K. Johnson, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 473.
4. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Harvard University Press, 1957), 14–15.
5. This phrase now appears at 50 USC 3024(a)2.
6. Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence*, 76–77.
7. Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy* (CQ, 2015 (6th edition)), 190–91.
8. Pillar, “The Perils of Politicization,” 474.
9. Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence*, 102.

10. See, for instance, Joshua Rovner, *Fixing the Facts: National Security and the Politics of Intelligence* (Cornell University Press, 2011), 5.
11. Pillar, “The Perils of Politicization,” 476.
12. “Going to the opera, like getting drunk, is a sin that carries its own punishment with it.”—Hannah More, 1745–1833.
13. Vasili Mitrokhin, *The KGB in Afghanistan*, introduced and edited by Christian F. Ostermann and Odd Arne Westad, Cold War International History Project, Working Paper No. 40, pp. 28, 37; accessed March 10, 2018 at <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-kgb-afghanistan>
14. George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Random House, 2010), 418–19.
15. Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Little, Brown, 1979), 11, 36.
16. Memorandum from (name not declassified) of the Central Intelligence Agency to Director of Central Intelligence Helms, 18 June 1969, reprinted as Document 191 in Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–72, Vol.2 Organization and Management of US Foreign Policy* (Government Printing Office, 2006), 388.
17. Editorial Note recounting the minutes of Nixon’s discussion with the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board on 18 July 1970, reprinted as Document 210 in FRUS, 1969–72, 446–447.
18. Kissinger, *White House Years*, 1180–1181.
19. Thomas L. Ahern, Jr., *Good Questions, Wrong Answers: CIA Estimates of Arms Traffic Through Sihanoukville, Cambodia, During the Vietnam War* (Central Intelligence Agency, Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2004), 39–48; accessed March 10, 2018 at https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/4_GOOD_QUESTIONS_WRONG_ANSWERS.pdf
20. Editorial Note recounting the minutes of Nixon’s discussion with the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board on 18 July 1970, 446–47.
21. Ahern, *Good Questions, Wrong Answers*, 44–45.
22. Anthony Glees and Philip H. J. Davies, *Spinning the Spies: Intelligence, Open Government, and the Hutton Inquiry* (Social Affairs Unit, 2004), 87.
23. Pillar, “The Perils of Politicization,” 475.
24. Kenneth Lieberthal; *The U.S. Intelligence Community and Foreign Policy: Getting Analysis Right* (Brookings Institution, 2009), 15; accessed 11 March 2018 at <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-u-s-intelligence-community-and-foreign-policy-getting-analysis-right/>
25. Senator Fulbright as quoted in Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1979) 211–12. United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Intelligence and the ABM*, 91st Congress, 1st Session, 1969. John W. Finney, “Pentagon Charged With Changing Data to Help Antimissile Plan,” *New York Times*, May 15, 1969.
26. See Stephen Marrin, “Why Strategic Intelligence Analysis has Limited Influence on American Foreign Policy,” *Intelligence and National Security*, 32:6 (2017), 725–42.
27. This phrase now appears at 50 USC 3024(a)2.
28. Statement by Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on the “Worldwide Threat 2001: National Security in a Changing World,” 7 February 2001; accessed 11 March 2018 at https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2001/UNCLASWWT_02072001.html
29. *Final Report of Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction* [the WMD Commission], March 2005, 186; accessed 11 March 2018 at <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/wmd/about.html>
30. Senator Richard Durbin quoted in United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq*, 9 July 2004. Section IX, p. 298; accessed 11 March 2018 at <https://web.archive.org/web/20071225161422/http://www.gpoaccess.gov/serialset/creports/iraq.html>
31. George J. Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: The CIA During America’s Time of Crisis* (Harper, 2007), 322.
32. See, for instance, Peter Gill and Mark Phythian, *Intelligence in an Insecure World* (Polity, 2006), 116–19
33. Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 334.
34. *Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq*, 301.
35. Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 324.
36. *Ibid.*, 322.
37. *Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq*, 215.
38. Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 330.
39. *Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq*, see the Additional Views of Senator Richard Durbin, 505
40. Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 336.
41. See David Corn, “CIA Report Refutes Bush’s Rhetoric,” *The Nation*, 9 October 2002; accessed 11 March 2018 at <https://www.thenation.com/article/cia-report-refutes-bushs-rhetoric/> See also “Statement by DCI George Tenet, 8 October 2002,” *Congressional Record*, October 9, 2002, p. S10154; accessed 11 March 2018 at <https://fas.org/irp/news/2002/10/dci100802.html>



The Dixie Mission 1944: The First US Intelligence Encounter with the Chinese Communists

Bob Bergin

Not everything the Americans heard or saw was understood, but they gathered a wealth of information, raw intelligence to be analyzed and pondered by the China experts. . . . But what may have been the most significant, intelligence on the Chinese Communists themselves, appears to have been disregarded, then, and in the years that followed.

The Dustbin of History

The Dixie Mission was one that failed in conventional terms, for it didn't lead anywhere. For the moment at least it lies in the dustbin of history.¹

The first deep encounter of American officials with the Chinese Communists came in 1944, during World War II, when a US Army observer group was sent to meet with the communist leadership at its headquarters stronghold at Yen-an in North China. It was essentially an intelligence mission:

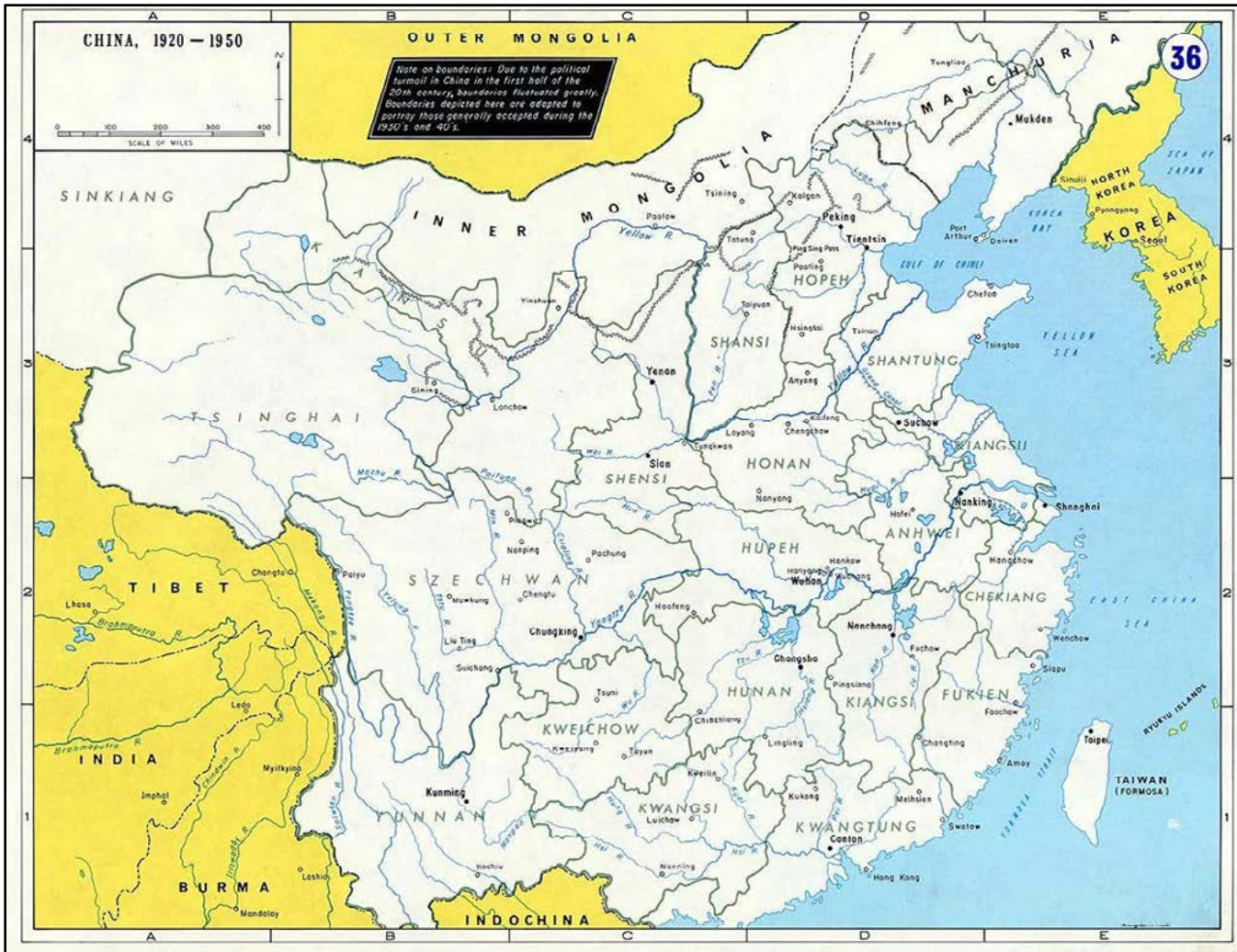
The DIXIE Mission, which consisted of nine members representing the Air Corps, Medical Corps, Signal Corps and Infantry and was followed a month later by a second contingent, was sent to observe with a purpose: to evaluate the Communist potential for military collaboration against the Japanese. They were also instructed to assess 'the most effective means of assisting the Communists to increase the value of their war effort.' This meant American aid and an American relationship, which was exactly what Chiang Kai-shek feared and the reason he had done his best to obstruct the mission."²

The communists welcomed the contact; they were frank and open and willing to tell the Americans what they wanted to know. Not everything the Americans heard or saw was understood, but they gathered a wealth of information, raw intelligence to be analyzed and pondered by the China experts. A good deal of it concerned the strength and disposition of Japanese Forces in North China and the communist Red Army's effectiveness in dealing with them. But what may have been the most significant, intelligence on the Chinese Communists themselves, appears to have been disregarded, then, and in the years that followed.

Dixie acquired facts and insights into the political and military leadership of the Chinese Communists at a time when little was known about them. The Americans got a good look at how the Chinese conducted "people's war," the model for the wars of national liberation that would soon confront America in Asia and Africa. But the war going on was the war with the Japanese, and concerns about the role of communists in the future of China would have to wait.

The war ended, and a political debate began in Washington over a supposed American betrayal of the implacable enemies of the communists, the Chinese Nationalists. It was renewed in the early 1950s over the

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. © Bob Bergin, 2019.



West Point Historical Atlases, World War II, Asia Pacific Theater at https://westpoint.edu/sites/default/files/inline-images/academics/academic_departments/history/WWII%20Asia/ww2%2520asia%2520map%252036.jpg

question, “Who lost China?” The Dixie Mission’s role was questioned. The intelligence it produced was said to be tainted and shunted aside—even within the US intelligence organizations of the time. The information was ignored when it might have been most useful, as US intelligence and military strategists were trying to come to grips with world communism and Soviet and Chinese attempts to shape the world through revolution—and in Korea, through outright war.

A Blind Spot for US Intelligence

In the spring of 1944, [General Joseph W.] Stilwell’s headquarters, under the pressure of a new Japanese offensive against central China, began to take an interest in the Communist military . . . Donovan’s officers at Chungking could no longer ignore reports that the Communists controlled a force of one million partisans and intelligence agents in an area of major Japanese troop concen-

*tration which was then a blind spot for American intelligence.*³

As US participation in the China war—and its alliance with Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalists—grew, the communists faded into the background, behind a Nationalist blockade of “twenty divisions of [Chiang’s] best troops.”⁴ OSS intelligence chief, William Donovan had become aware of the communists’ military potential “even before Pearl Harbor,” but OSS manpower was limited and focused on the Japanese.⁵ In October 1943, Roosevelt ordered Donovan “to

gather political intelligence in communist-controlled areas” of China. Given Chiang’s refusal to permit any American access to the communists, it was evident, as Donovan told the president, that OSS could not do its job unless it operated “independent of the Chinese and our other allies.”⁶ Collection on the Chinese Communists would be exceptionally difficult.

The idea for an observer mission into the communist area was first suggested by John Paton Davies, a US State Department officer serving as General Stilwell’s political advisor. In a June 1943 report to Stilwell, Davies noted the importance of the North China area and that the “last official American observer to have visited the communist region was Captain Carlson in 1938.”⁷ Davies sent a second memo to Stilwell in January 1944, which made its way to influential presidential advisor Harry Hopkins. In February, Roosevelt formally requested Chang Kai-shek “to permit military observers to go ‘immediately’ to Shansi and Shensi, tactfully omitting to specify the region as Communist. . . . Chiang gracefully agreed to ‘facilitate’ the mission which, he added, could visit only those areas under the Central Government’s control.”⁸ Roosevelt tried again with Chiang in April and again met with no success. The president then sent Vice President Henry Wallace to talk with Chiang.

In a series of meetings with Wallace during 21–24 June 1944, Chiang initially refused. The following day, Wallace stressed “the American need for intelligence from North China, particularly in connection with B-29 operations. Whether this line of

The idea for an observer mission into the communist area was first suggested by John Paton Davies, a US State Department officer serving as General Stilwell’s political advisor.

argument was persuasive, or some other consideration moved him, the Generalissimo suddenly consented to the dispatch of observers.”⁹

Stilwell had already started working on the mission in February. “To ensure observers who would not be at the mercy of their hosts, Stilwell looked for candidates who had knowledge of the language and acquaintance with China,” Tuchman wrote. To lead the mission he chose “Colonel Barrett, said to be the only American who could tell jokes convincingly in Chinese to Chinese.” He also had a close friendship with Stilwell.¹⁰

Col. David D. Barrett was an assistant military attaché in Peking, between 1924 and 1928, and from 1931 to 1936, when he was named assistant military attaché to Stilwell. In 1942 he succeeded Stilwell as chief military attaché. In early 1944, he was assigned to the Army G-2 section at Kweilin. Stilwell selected him to head the observer mission on 25 March 1944.¹¹

On 21 July, the day before the mission’s departure for Yen-an, Barrett realized he had no orders on what the mission was expected to accomplish. He contacted Colonel Dickey, G-2 at CBI (China-Burma-India) Headquarters and received a single typed sheet. It was unclassified, unsigned, and “without authentication of any kind.” “Actually they were more in the nature of general instruc-

tions for the guidance of the mission rather than the sort of orders usually issued to a unit of the United States Army.” It listed 19 subjects on which “information is particularly desired.” These included Japanese and puppet order of battle,^a target and bomb damage assessments, and weather and economic intelligence. On the communist forces: their strength, composition, dispositions, equipment, training, and combat efficiency. “No other instructions of any kind, oral or written, secret or non-secret were ever given me.”¹²

What was Known of the Chinese Communists?

*Even before Pearl Harbor, General Donovan had received information that the Chinese Communist soldiers were “the best guerrilla troops in the world, trained under veteran leaders of long experience in such tactics, and fired by a bitter hatred of the Japanese.”*¹³

Little was known of the political or military situation in China when the United States came into the war in Asia. The Chinese Communists were a particular puzzle, closed off to outsiders by their own secrecy and politics and by the remoteness of their Yen-an stronghold, where they survived behind the Nationalist Army cordon. In the 1930s, two persistent journalists found their way to the communists and wrote accounts

a. Chinese troops belonging to Japanese-established governments in areas of China occupied by the Imperial Japanese Army.

The first chronicler of the Red Army in action was American journalist Agnes Smedley. . . . In 1936, she made her way to Yen-an, befriended Red Army commander Chu Teh, and later accompanied the Red Army in Japanese-controlled areas.

of the Chinese Communist movement and its leadership. Later, a US Marine Corps officer provided his professional assessment of the Red Army and its effectiveness.

Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* appeared in England at the end of 1937 and in the United States soon afterwards. It received lavish praise as "a stunning and significant journalistic coup."¹⁴ "Among the almost two hundred influential Americans. . . Snow's volume was cited second only to Pearl Buck's blockbuster . . . *The Good earth* as a key source of their picture of the Chinese."¹⁵ Despite criticism for believing too much of what the communists told him, Snow turned his four-month sojourn with the communist leadership into a literary classic. But how useful could it be to a serious student of China? Harvard China scholar (and former OSS and Office of War Information [OWI] officer) John King Fairbank addressed that years later: "[*Red Star Over China*] not only gave the first connected history of Mao and his colleagues and where they had come from, but also gave a prospect of the future. . . . The book has stood the test of time on both these counts—as a historical record and as an indication of a trend."¹⁶

The first chronicler of the Red Army in action was American journalist Agnes Smedley. She came to Shanghai in 1928 as a journalist for *Frankfurter Zeitung*.^a In 1936, she made her way to Yen-an, befriended Red Army commander Chu Teh,^b and later accompanied the Red Army in Japanese-controlled areas. Her *China Fights Back: An American Woman with the Eighth Route Army*, published in 1938, was the earliest account of the Red Army at war. It was also well received, but not nearly as popular as Snow's book.

A professional view of the Red Army came from a US Marine Captain, Evans Carlson—the apparent source of OSS Chief Donovan's information cited above. Carlson had already completed two tours in China when he returned there in 1937 as a language student and observer with the Chinese Nationalist Army. Inspired by *Red*

Star Over China—and with Edgar Snow's help—he spent eight months with the Eighth Route Army, in his view "the only Chinese military organization that is consistently winning engagements with the Japanese." He wrote: "These troops are the most mobile I have ever seen. . . . This force will continue to resist the Japanese if every other unit in China lays down its arms. . . . And the resistance will be effective."¹⁷

All three writers were criticized as too sympathetic to the communists. As a professional soldier, Carlson in particular attracted criticism from his peers and others. President Roosevelt told Edgar Snow, "but the Marine Corps still insists he's a Red!"¹⁸ And that was in 1944, when Carlson was already a legend. After the Unit-



Agnes Smedley (left) with Western literary figures, George Barnard Shaw and Harold Isaacs. The Chinese members of the group are from left to right: Soong Ching Ling, Cai Yuan-p'ei, Lin Yu-t'ang, and Lu Hsun in undated photo from the 1930s. Source Wikimedia Commons.

a. In Shanghai, Smedley was a close associate of legendary Soviet spy Richard Sorge: "The only person in China upon whom I knew I could depend on was Agnes Smedley," said Sorge. "I solicited her aid in establishing my group in Shanghai . . . used [her]. . . as a direct member of my group." Her involvement with the Chinese Red Army does not appear related to Sorge's efforts as a Soviet agent. Source: Gordon W. Prange with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *Target Tokyo: The Story of the Sorge Spy Ring* (Early Bird Books, 1984 [ebook]), Chapter 3. Recent information from Soviet Archives and other sources seem to confirm allegations that Smedley was an agent of the Comintern and later of the Soviet Union. Source: Ruth Price, *The Lives of Agnes Smedley* (Oxford Press, 2005), 6.

b. Names of Chinese Communist officials will be rendered in the Wade-Giles romanization system most widely used during the period of this story. So too with locations, unless popular usage differs, as it does with Peiking, Nanking and Chungking.

ed States entered WWII, Carlson became the creator and leader of the US Marine Corps Raiders, which operated according to philosophy and tactics he had learned from the Red Army.^a

In 1944 there was no current “intelligence” on the Chinese Communists, but the journalistic accounts and Captain Carlson’s reports were reasonably accurate, although of questionable credibility to some readers. The pictures they painted were rosy, but they did provide good insight into the communist leaders and the strength and direction of their movement. The Red Army and the guerrilla tactics that became people’s war are well described. Together, the three accounts may be as good as what intelligence officers of the time could have produced, even better, perhaps; All three writers had extensive China experience and progressive political views that should have helped them comprehend the ways of the Chinese Communists.^b Their combined work—once their biases are recognized—was a good overview and could have served as the basis for specific intelligence requirements the Dixie Mission might have addressed to fill gaps in the picture of the Chinese communists in 1944. There is no indication that was considered.



On 5 October a delegation of US military officers and friends of Colonel Barrett arrived bearing a Legion of Merit for him. They were welcomed by Chairman Mao and Communist army commander Chu Teh. Photo in Wikimedia Commons, official military photo from Barrett’s memoir, *Dixie Mission*, (photo 21).

The United States Army Observer Group

*[T]he most exciting event ever since the war against Japan started.*¹⁹

*Because the Generalissimo had objected to the designation of the unit as a “mission,” it was named the Observer Group. . . . Also, because for some months my colleagues and I had sportingly called the Communist area Dixie—a rebel territory—the observers were also referred to, among Americans, as the Dixie Mission.*²⁰

The First contingent of nine observers of the Dixie Mission arrived at Yanan, in Shensi Province, North China on 22 July 1944; the second contingent, also of nine, arrived on 7 August. Two of the 18 represented the Department of State; four officers and one sergeant were from the OSS. One officer was from AGAS, one from the US Navy, five from the US Army Air Corps (two of whom were from AGFRTS),^c and an assortment of US Army officers, mostly infantry, but including a doctor, Major Melvin A. Casberg, from the Army Medical Corps (who would be both Dixie physician and intelligence collector.)

a. And Carlson brought the Chinese words “Gung Ho” (together) into the vocabulary of Marines. Source: Thomas, *Season of High Adventure*, 172.

b. Some have argued that they did not fully comprehend the movement: “Despite Snow’s (and Mao’s) careful emphasis on the Reds’ Marxist-Leninist credentials and goals, the book left a lasting impression that these revolutionaries were only so-called Communists.” Even among US China experts, the Chinese Communists were long looked on as agrarian reformers. Captain Carlson thought “he had witnessed among the Reds a unique example of Christian ethics and brotherhood in practice.” Source: Thomas, 178. Socialist Agnes Smedley strongly supported the communists and wrote enthusiastically, but her work adds to the sense of what people’s war could be.

c. AGAS was the “Air Ground Aid Service,” to assist the escape of American POWs; AGFRTS was the “Air and Ground Forces Resources and Technical Staff,” an OSS/14th Air Force unit hidden from Dai Li inside the Fourteenth Air Force structure.

Lectures began the morning after our arrival . . . we were scheduled for talks with senior cadres, most of whom had been teachers at Whampoa Military Academy in the 1920s . . . [who] shared with us what they considered their most effective military tactics

^a In line with Stilwell's wish for experienced people, most of the observers were old China hands, or had other extensive experience in Asia.^b

The C-47 carrying the first contingent arrived at Yen-an at about noon on 22 July 1944. The airstrip was small and had not been used for several years. As the aircraft rolled down the runway, the left landing gear suddenly collapsed into an ancient grave no one knew was there. The spinning propeller separated from the engine and sheared through the fuselage right behind the pilot. No one was injured. Standing by the door when the team exited was Chou En-lai, ready to introduce the other important communist officials waiting with the crowd. There was also an honor guard, and many curious peasants. The Americans were taken to their quarters, the famous Yen-an caves, "really not caves at all, but short tunnels. . . cut into the steep hillside and lined with beautifully fitted blocks of hewn stone."²¹ Then came an "excellent" lunch and an introduction to life in Yen-an.

Working Days at Yen-an

*Lectures began the morning after our arrival . . . we were scheduled for talks with senior cadres, most of whom had been teachers at Whampoa Military Academy in the 1920s . . . [who] shared with us what they considered their most effective military tactics . . . Of all our teachers . . . Mao was the most interesting.*²²

In turn, the Americans taught the communists new guerrilla warfare techniques. Capt. John Colling, the most senior OSS member of the mission, was a demolitions expert, and he had brought along 400 pounds of state-of-the-art demolition supplies, including Composition C, a new putty-like explosive, and Primacord, a highly effective detonating cord. Colling did four demonstrations, each drew over 1,000 interested observers.^c The communists were impressed, and eager to obtain such equipment. To Colling's regret that was not possible; arming the communists was beyond the Dixie charter.

Colling brought extraordinary experience to the team, having been

selected for Dixie after completing 15 months operating against the Japanese in Burma. He had helped organize the Kachin Scouts and led them in intelligence and guerrilla operations. Raised in Tianjin, China, where his US Army captain father had retired, he was a proficient Chinese speaker. He saw his job in Yen-an as investigating "the potential of using Chinese Communist Armies."²³ His memoir, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, which was published in 1991, would provide some of the most detailed, and colorful, accounts of Chinese Communist forces and their behavior in and around Yen-an during the life of the mission.

Colling was eager to get out of Yen-an and join the Red Army in the field. It would be a month before that happened, however. In the interim, he was introduced to intelligence possibilities at Yen-an: Red Army Chief of Staff, General Yeh Chian-ying, wanted an "Air Intelligence" organization for the Red Army. With AGAS assistance, a plan was drawn up in the first week. Colling himself had a special top secret project he hoped to move forward at Yen-an. Named the "Apple Project," its objective was to acquire actual Japanese perspectives on the effectiveness of US B-29 bombing of Japanese cities."²⁴ An improbable task, but at Yen-an it would become possible.

a. Casberg spent four months behind Japanese lines, "hiking with the Chinese Communists by night and hiding during the day." Source: Caroline J. Carter, *Mission to Yen-an* (The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 33.

b. After the original Dixie Mission ended in about January 1945, the United States maintained a small presence at Yen-an until 1947. From 22 July 1944 to 11 April 1946, the mission was called the US Army Observer Group; From 13 April until the last man departed Yen-an in 1947, it was called the Yen-an Liaison Group. These residual elements were also called the "Dixie mission." This article covers only the approximate first six months, when the majority of the original 18-member observer group was still engaged in Yen-an. By early 1945, communist leaders had begun to leave the region for other areas in a race to take control of territory as the Japanese left the country.

c. "The biggest bang," in Colling's demonstrations "came from a .22 caliber assassination pistol." It had a hair trigger, and Colling's assistant managed to accidentally fire off a round that "whistled past Chou En-lai's ear. There was a stunned silence - broken only when the imperturbable Chou, smiled and casually quipped, 'Close.'" Source: Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 72.

Two other US priorities were also implemented with communist assistance. The first was obtaining weather reports, essential to the 14th Air Force's bombing missions and to the US Navy's warships closing on the Asian mainland. "Large numbers of small radios . . . were sent to distant parts of the communist-controlled areas, and an astonishingly large number of useful reports, sent by means of these small radios, were received in Yen-an."²⁵

The other priority was the rescue of downed American aircrews. "One of the most strategically beneficial contributions the Dixie Mission [made] . . . was the development of a rescue system . . . for American airmen downed in Communist territories behind Japanese lines." B-29s returning from missions over Tokyo, low on fuel and sometimes with battle damage, had to cross Japanese-occupied areas of North China. Red Army intelligence and its direct help with the rescues made it possible for AGAS to save "approximately 300 American lives."²⁷ AGAS Lieutenant Whittlesey, who helped implement the system, was Dixie's only casualty, shot by the Japanese when he and his Chinese counterpart entered a village they believed had been abandoned by the Japanese.²⁷

When the day's work was done, there were friendly dinners and occasional banquets. The communists presented theatrical performances, and the Americans hosted showings of American films. Smedley wrote of Gen. Chu Teh that he "was seen at almost every showing, howling

Soon after he arrived in Yen-an, Colonel Barrett was presented an insight into Red Army acquisition and use of intelligence information at the most fundamental level.

at Abbott and Costello."²⁸ When the weather was good, everyone went to the dances in the pear garden, and "capered . . . to the noise of a battered phonograph playing scratchy records of ancient vintage." Mao always attended and accepted invitations from pigtailed girls who asked, "Chairman, please dance with me."^{29, a}

An "Intelligence Cornucopia"³⁰

*O brave new world, that has such people in 't!*³¹

Time magazine's man in China, journalist Theodore H. White, arrived with the second Dixie contingent.³² He was well-received by the communists.³³ Later, he wrote an enthusiastic overview of communist intelligence capabilities based on interviews with 11 of the 13 Politburo members at Yen-an: "Their frankness, in wartime, on their dispositions, plans, movements, was to me astounding."³⁴ White was looking for a story; he was not bound by a list of questions seeking specific answers. The lack of stricture let him see what he might not have been expecting:

The generals in the politburo admitted they knew nothing of the use of modern artillery; that they knew nothing of aviation, that their own staff work was primitive; that their communications net was rudimentary. . . . But their intelligence service was spectacular: they

*knew precisely the order of battle of Japanese divisions; enemy lines of communications; the spectrum of occupation zones.*³⁵

White's evaluation of Chinese intelligence capabilities was reasonably accurate. It became apparent that the Red Army had good accountings of the Japanese Army's strength and disposition in areas where the communists operated. Understanding how the Chinese Communist system functioned, however, required a bit of learning that would provide some surprises.

Soon after he arrived in Yen-an, Colonel Barrett was presented an insight into Red Army acquisition and use of intelligence information at the most fundamental level. On 26 August, at Barrett's request, the 718th regiment put on a tactical



Colonel Barrett, wearing his newly awarded Legion of Merit, was given a bouquet of flowers by Chu Teh's wife. Shown here is Mao admiring the bouquet. Source: Wikimedia Commons, official military photo from Barrett's memoir, *Dixie Mission*, (photo 25).

a. The dances were Smedley's legacy, a tradition she started at Yen-an in 1937. After the work day, "During such idle, friendly moments I would often line everyone up and teach them the Virginia Reel . . . General Chu . . . would swing his partner *do-si-do* and kick up the dust with a gust as great as that of the youngest guard in the line." Source: Smedley, *The Great Road*, 3.

“Classroom work consisted mostly of sitting around in small rooms and reading the [Liberation Daily].” Back at Yen-an, Barrett expressed his disappointment to the Chinese chief of staff. Once again, Barrett had missed the significance of what he had seen.

exercise, a sham battle. The Chinese scenario included the appearance of a Japanese regiment. Barrett asked how the Red Army would have learned of the Japanese presence; where had the information come from? “The people told us.” Had there been patrolling or reconnaissance “to determine the possible intentions of the enemy?” That was not necessary; “everything needed was learned from the people.”^{36, a} Barrett was not impressed, but he failed to see something very significant.

Shortly afterwards, Barrett visited the “Japanese Resistance Military-political University” at Suiteh, northeast of Yen-an, where a small village had been turned into dormitories and classrooms. At this military university, Barrett discovered, there was “no military instruction. . . . It was actually sort of a rest and recreation center where party workers, officers, and enlisted men were sent for recuperation and indoctrination. . . . Classroom work consisted mostly of sitting around in small rooms and reading the [Liberation Daily].” Back at Yen-an, Barrett expressed his disappointment to the Chinese chief of staff.³⁷ Once again, Barrett had missed the significance of what he had seen.

In his foreword to Barrett’s book, Fairbank explained what Barrett had missed—the birth of people’s war, a new era that Barrett, like most others then, could not see or grasp. “One fascination of this memoir,” Fairbank wrote, “is to see how one can be a true China hand and yet remain in some ways quite culture bound:”

Barrett is reporting on the Chinese Communist forces . . . but he sees them in the American military categories which exclude politics. He finds their military training school really doing next to nothing militarily; the trainees seem to spend their time merely reading the [Liberation Daily]. Out of this reading, of course, came the revolutionary army so ideologically indoctrinated that it could retain popular support and operate decentralized but under discipline. On manoeuvres Barrett finds the Communists rely on the populace to get accurate intelligence on the enemy and so fail to do that energetic scouting and patrolling that has been part and parcel of the American army tradition since the French and Indian War.”³⁸

People’s war was central to almost all things at Yen-an, as it

would remain at the center of the Chinese Communist movement for decades, while the “wars of national liberation” it inspired would be the preoccupation of US intelligence and military strategists over the many long years of the Cold War.

Observing People’s War

The mobilization of the common people throughout the country will create a vast sea in which to drown the enemy.”³⁹

A number of Dixie Mission observers would visit “Japanese Resistance Bases,” the areas inside Japanese-occupied territory that were under Red Army control, and report back their impressions that “the Communists were being supported by the entire civil population.” To which Chairman Mao remarked, “if they did not have the support of the people, they would never survive in areas virtually surrounded by the Japanese.”⁴⁰

On a first encounter with people’s war, professional US military officers—their careers devoted to the study and practice of conventional warfare—the concept must have been perplexing. It required the full involvement of the civilian population as an effective adjunct to the main fighting force. The Dixie observers who went into the field with the Red Army saw that the Chinese people were indeed engaged against the Japanese invader. Under the Red Army’s

a. John Stuart Service, the diplomatic observer for Stilwell and the US embassy in Chungking, echoed the observation, commenting in his collection of despatches on Major Casberg’s report: “The Eighth Route Army depends to a great extent on the People’s Militia for intelligence . . . While I was behind the Japanese lines in the Eighth sub district the military men in our party could give me daily information on the exact movements of the enemy around us. . . . When we attacked a blockhouse we knew not only the exact number and size of the firearms, the exact number of the soldiers, both Japanese and puppet, but also in many cases even the names of the soldiers.” Source: John S. Service, *Lost Chance in China: The World War II Despatches of John S. Service*, 238.

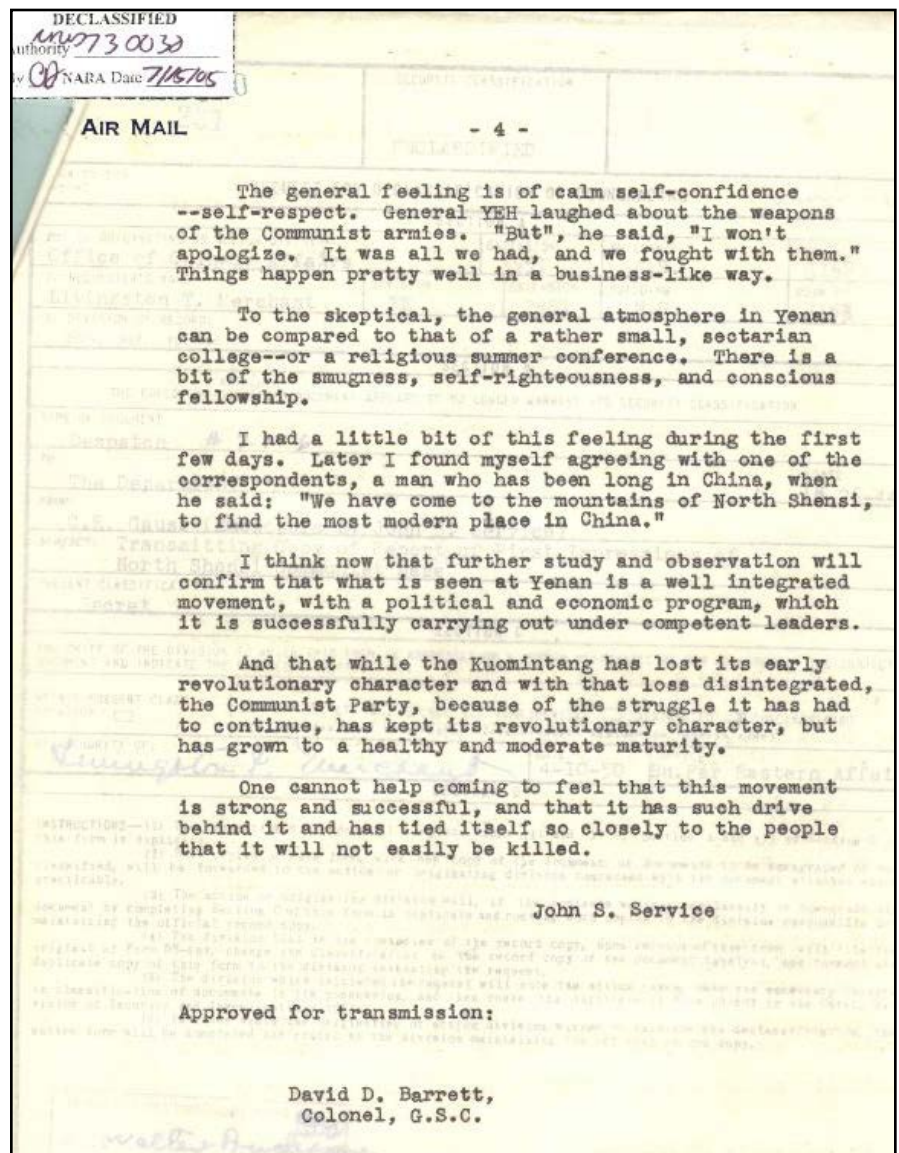
tutelage, peasants and other citizenry had become porters and guides and soldiers and spies—and appeared to be very effective at it. The Dixie team in the field experienced how good it could be:

Intelligence cover is absolute. We were at all times within ten or fifteen miles of Japanese strong points. We at times slept within one mile of Japanese blockhouses. The [Communist] officers at all times had complete knowledge of the whereabouts and exact strength of Japanese forces in the area.⁴¹

Central to people's war was the People's Militia. The Red Army was dependent on the People's Militia for more than intelligence. Early on, Colling had noted the militia presence at Yen-an: "The People's Militia, a critical extension of the . . . Red Army, was a homemade Army comprised of Chinese peasants. Their arsenal included picks, shovels, and flintlocks. . . . At times it was hard to tell where the People's Militia stopped and the Red Army began."⁴² Colling's appreciation of the militia would deepen when he joined their operations in the field.

Other Dixie members witnessed the militia at work, chief among them the Dixie doctor, Major M.A. Casberg, "who in seven weeks had trekked a thousand miles through the guerrilla areas." His report was on medical conditions in communist areas, but he included descriptions on the overall situation in the "fighting zone." On the People's Militia he writes:

In brief, this unit is an organization of peasants banded together and cooperating with



A portion of a John Stuart Service report to Washington. John Service, Report No. 1, 7/28/1944., to Commanding General Fwd. Ech., USAF; CBI, APO 879. First Formal Impressions of Northern Shensi Communist Base. State Department, NARA, RG 59.

the Eighth Route Army to fight the Japanese. In some ways it resembles the Minutemen of our Revolutionary War days, for they are really civilians, receiving no pay and wearing no uniforms. Their support comes from their farms. Each member has a rifle . . . and three or four hand grenades. . . . Villages

near the front are organized by the People's Militia for rapid evacuation. These minutemen keep constant watch over Japanese strongpoints and spread the alarm the moment the enemy starts on the march."⁴³

Casberg described the "elaborate caves which extend a distance of two

miles underground . . . as a means of escape from the raiding parties of the enemy,” and militia mine warfare so effective “that in many areas the Japanese are afraid to venture far from their blockhouses.”⁴⁴ A final section of his report contains his observations of the Eighth Route Army regulars. He begins: “There have been numerous accusations by the Kuomintang that the Eighth Route Army is not fighting the Japanese. From my observation I am convinced that nothing could be further from the truth.”⁴⁵

Intelligence Exploitation of Japanese POWs

*Particularly valuable as sources of intelligence were the Japanese prisoners of war.*⁴⁶

When Colonel Barrett was given a tour of the Japanese POW quarters at Yen-an, he found about 150 captured Japanese soldiers, “a number which seemed impressive to me in comparison with the 25 or so held by the Nationalist Government just outside Chungking.”^{47, a} All were wearing Chinese Communist uniforms. The Chinese referred to them not as prisoners, but as “members of the Japanese People’s Liberation [or Emancipation] League,”⁴⁸ Barrett considered the possibility that some were Chinese “ringers” posing as Japanese, but “prisoners later interviewed . . . were genuine Japanese.” Barrett also suggested the probability

that the prisoners had been ‘thoroughly brainwashed,’ noting that the term itself was not in ‘common use’ at the time.⁴⁹ (The only American at Yen-an who appears to have come into contact with the idea of brainwashing was Theodore White.^b) Meanwhile, back at the OWI headquarters in Washington, John Fairbanks was following these developments closely:

I can vividly recall the fascination with which we greeted . . . the reports on Chinese communist success in psychological warfare against the Japanese . . . by our own observer there, Francis McCracken Fisher . . . Japanese troops had almost never surrendered to American forces. . . . Despite the leaflets so assiduously dropped on them by the O.W.I. . . . the Japanese captured alive had usually been unconscious at the time. . . . Fischer sent back food for thought.”⁵⁰

Captain Colling was quick to recognize the “strategic importance” of the JEL. The league was directed by Susumu Okano,^c who had organized it and the associated Japanese Peasant and Workers School. The school helped the Japanese POWs assimilate into their new life with the Red Army, and turned them willing collaborators.⁵¹ “The league also operated an intelligence network that ran from behind Japanese lines in China to Tokyo, through which a stream of Japanese newspapers and

Other Contemporaneous Perspectives on POW Treatment in Communist Hands

The American Embassy’s Japanese Specialist, John Emmerson, had arrived in Yen-an in October. He reported that he had spent several frustrating months in Burma with General Merrill in an unproductive effort to interrogate Japanese prisoners. Emmerson contrasted his experiences with those in Yen-an: The Chinese Communists, employing very effective psychological warfare, had achieved remarkable success in dealing with Japanese soldiers. Communist interrogation methods, based more on persuasion than force or brutality, led to much valuable intelligence information about the enemy.⁵²

According to the information obtained in Yen-an, about 2500 Japanese soldiers were captured by Red Army troops between July 1937 and December 1944.⁵³

After three days, all prisoners were given the option of returning freely to their unit, and according to League members, sometimes a prisoner would choose to leave. However, a three-day absence from any Japanese troop unit meant summary execution, and so most decided to remain.”⁵⁴

other media flowed. It was through these newspaper and radio reports that Okano received messages in code from his sources in the Japanese media.

a. Barbara Tuchman added: “No one had ever seen the prisoners claimed by the Kuomintang except for a token group which was always the same, like the captured helmets.” Source: Tuchman, *Stillwell*, 476.

b. The head of K’ang-Ta (Fight Japan) University at Yen-an, Politburo member P’eng Chen, told White that “whether semiliterate battalion commanders or college-trained intellectuals, [his students] had to have their minds washed out, had to be remolded in ideology.” Source: White, *In Search of History*, 256.

c. Okano was Sanzo Nosaka, a founding member of the Japanese Communist Party. He spent the war years in Yen-an. After the war he returned to Japan to lead the Japanese Communist Party.

Using Okano's sources and the coded message system from Tokyo, Colling's "Apple Project" was made a reality.⁵⁵ The accepted US view was that the Japanese would fight to the last man to defend the Japanese homeland. Apple Project information revealed that B-29 bombings were demoralizing the Japanese people and eroding their will to fight, knowledge that was an important factor in US planning at that stage of the war.

Good treatment of POWs, unlike the traditional practice of torturing and killing captives, was first established in 1938, by Red Army commander Chu Teh.⁵⁶ Agnes Smedley, accompanying the Eighth Route Army then, wrote how this came about after a battle with the Japanese 20th Division in early November 1937. The first two "uninjured" Japanese had been captured, "one a radio operator, one an infantry captain." They were shown to the local people as part of a program to organize the anti-Japanese resistance. "Pandemonium broke loose and hoarse voices shouted: "Kill the devils!" To restore order, General Chu addressed the town's people:

He asked the people to realize that the Japanese soldiers were workers and peasants who had been conscripted and sent to China by the Japanese war-lords and financial magnates. The Japanese people had not made this war, he said, and large numbers of Japanese anti-fascists had already been imprisoned or killed for opposing it. The Eighth Route Army intended to capture, educate, and train Japanese soldiers to fight their own rapacious ruling

classes, and to help China win the war."⁵⁷

General Chu later issued an order to all Eighth Route Army troops forbidding "injury or insult . . . confiscation or damage to [POW] personal possessions . . . and required "special care and medical treatment . . . to all sick or wounded Japanese captives," as well as "proper work" for those who wish to remain in China.⁵⁸

At Yen-an, General Chu's orders were still being carried out. Colling and others who accompanied Chinese combat units noted that the communists, working with the JEL, "devised ingenious methods to lure disgruntled Japanese troops to fight alongside them . . . tapping into telephone lines, dispatching letters, and infiltrating comfort kits" across the lines. Once in Chinese hands, new POWs "were given food and cigarettes . . . as though they were among friends. After a few days interrogations would begin. . . . Sometimes the prisoner told everything. . . . when a prisoner was stubborn and refused to talk, they were educated slowly and methodically. During this period of continued education, a prisoner was given a fair amount of freedom and detained in a place called a "guest house."⁵⁹

With the Red Army, the People's Militia and the JEL in the Field

*"On 4 September 1944, we left Yen-an for the Chin-Cha-Chi border region where we would work with the Eighth Route Army and the People's Militia."*⁶⁰

In early September, Captain Colling and other mission members

Colling on POW and Militia Cooperation

At San Chiao we took an important blockhouse that overlooked the railway line . . . and were able to take about a dozen prisoners with the help of JEL members who accompanied us on the raid. . . . On nights before a blockhouse was to be stormed. . . JEL members would speak through megaphones, calling to the soldiers in the blockhouse, telling them . . . their cause was hopeless . . . to remain meant certain death, and that if they surrendered voluntarily, they would . . . live to see their families. . . . Coming from a Japanese whose accent cannot be mistaken, this was convincing.

As we approached our target area, San Chiao, the sound of marching feet of the peasants echoed off the hills. . . . hundreds and hundreds of them. . . . Of the 120 Eighth Route Army Members . . . only 40 of us took the blockhouse. . . . eight of us dug underneath its foundation to build a tunnel into the middle . . . where the explosives were set . . . we blew the blockhouse, setting it afire. . . . The JEL men showed Japanese character cards and told the soldiers inside, 'We won't hurt you if you come out and surrender [or] we'd have to seal them alive inside. . . . that brought them out immediately. . . . about 100 members of the Peoples's Militia . . . knocked it down brick by brick.'⁶¹

anxious to travel to forward areas got their chance to escape the "diplomatic games" at Yen-an and see the Red Army in the field, to gain the "experience to file a realistic report documenting the Communists potential."⁶² On the 4th, Colling, Navy Lt. Herbert Hitch—the only Navy man attached to the mission⁶³—and Army Air Forces Lt. Louis Jones left Yen-an for the Chin-Cha-Chi border region on horseback. Their equipment went by mule. "Piles of rubble where towns

once stood were constant reminders of the consequences of Japanese domination.”⁶⁴ “War for the villagers meant saving their land. Seventy-five percent of the villagers we met did not know much about either Chiang Kai-shek or Mao. They were eager to accept us, and the villagers showed their respect for the Red Army with the unconditional sharing of food, shelter and resources.”⁶⁵

Colling took note of the losses the Japanese were suffering and wrote that they had “adopted what could be called a ‘fort’ policy” in which they “constructed defensive outposts using forced labor by the local populace.” “From these forts they could emerge at strategic periods . . . to engulf and lay waste the surrounding territory. The Chinese answer was to destroy the blockhouses.”⁶⁶ As a demolition expert, Colling was a natural participant:

Colling spent six weeks in the field with the Red Army and the People’s Militia. On his return to Yen-an, in front of a huge gathering of peasants come for the dances in the pear orchard, Chou En-lai bestowed on Colling the award of Demolitions Hero: “The award was a large flower with paper bunting and four Chinese characters on it, in blue and pink.”⁶⁷

The Dixie Mission was making progress. The Americans were collecting a wealth of information, and the communists were happy to oblige. New initiatives were being considered. Everything was going well.

Enter the Special Emissary of the President of the United States

Hurley’s arrival in Yen-an during that first week in November 1944, to begin negotiations with Chinese communists, is a classic instance of the derailment of history by accident.”⁶⁸

On a dull November afternoon, the usual crowd of Chinese and Americans gathered at the Yen-an airstrip to await an incoming flight. The C-47 arrived, and a second aircraft appeared. Some recognized it as Stilwell’s former command airplane. From it stepped “a tall gray haired, soldierly, extremely handsome man wearing one of the most beautifully tailored uniforms I have ever seen.”⁶⁹ Colonel Barrett recognized Maj. Gen. Patrick J. Hurley, special emissary of the president. Neither the Americans nor the Chinese at Yen-an had been advised of his visit.

Barrett quickly told Chou En-lai who the visitor was. Chou “disappeared in a cloud of dust,” but reappeared quickly with Mao and a “hastily mustered” honor guard. General Hurley reviewed the troops, “drew himself to his full impressive height . . . and let out a Choctaw war whoop. . . . I shall never forget the expression on the faces of Mao and Chou,” Barrett recalled.⁷⁰ Hurley had come to Yen-an to solve the problem of the communists.

Hurley was a corporate lawyer and self-made millionaire from Oklahoma. Born in a log cabin in Indian territory, he was for a time the national attorney for the Choctaw Nation. A soldier in World War I, he became secretary of war in the Herbert Hoover administration. A Republican, he supported the Roosevelt administration, and became useful to the president as his representative on overseas assignments. When the long-standing feud between Chiang



Ambassador Patrick Hurley, met by Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, and Zhu Teh.
Source Wikimedia Commons.

Kai-shek and Stilwell reached crisis proportions, Roosevelt dispatched Hurley to resolve it. Hurley's instructions: "to promote harmonious relations between Chiang and General Stilwell and to facilitate the latter's exercise of command over the Chinese Armies placed under his direction."⁷¹ The Chiang-Stilwell relationship was likely beyond help at that point;^a Stilwell was relieved on 18 October and replaced by Gen. Albert Wedemeyer. Disgusted by the decision, US Ambassador Clarence Gauss resigned soon afterward. On 17 November 1944 General Hurley replaced him.⁷²

At Yen-an, Hurley had no idea what he was stepping into. He was not a reader of embassy reports and was "atrociously uninformed about Chinese affairs" and a firm believer in "personal diplomacy."^{73, b} He and Chiang seemed to get along famously. At Yen-an, Hurley apparently set off to work in the belief that his not inconsiderable charm would similarly win over the communist leadership—most importantly, "Moose Dung" as he called the communist leader.^c "After three days of negotiations, Hurley was able to obtain Mao's signature on a document outlining the conditions for a coalition with the Nationalists, conditions the Nationalists in turn

At the end of November 1944, OSS China headquarters was advised of an upcoming visit by OSS Chief General Donovan. General Wedemeyer planned to use the visit to present Donovan "some comprehensive ideas for assistance to the Communist guerrilla forces.

rejected."⁷⁴ Looking at the document, Nationalist Foreign Affairs Minister T.V. Soong, and Chiang's brother-in-law, immediately told Hurley, "The Communists have sold you a bill of goods."⁷⁵ Hurley nevertheless tried to continue his negotiations.

The Bird Mission

At the end of November 1944, OSS China headquarters was advised of an upcoming visit by OSS Chief General Donovan. General Wedemeyer planned to use the visit to present Donovan "some comprehensive ideas for assistance to the Communist guerrilla forces. Two separate proposals emerged." The Army recommended that 5,000 American paratroops be sent to North China to work with the communist partisans."^{76, d} The OSS proposal was more complex. On 15 December 1944 Heppner's deputy, Lt. Col. Willis Bird and Dixie Mission commander Barrett flew to Yen-an to present the proposals to the communists. The usual procedure was to discuss such matters first with the National-

ist government. In this instance, the proposals would first be raised with the communists.

In a message later sent to the chief of staff of US Forces, China Theater, Bird cites eight points in the "tentative agreement" reached in discussions with Red Army commander Chu Teh, and his Chief of Staff, General Yeh [Chian-ying]. Among the points:

OSS to place Special Operations [SO] men with their [Communist] units for purposes of destroying [Japanese targets] . . . and to generally raise hell and run; to provide complete equipment for up to twenty-five thousand guerrillas except food and clothing; [to] Set up school to instruct in use of American arms, demolitions, communications, etc; [to] Set up intelligence radio network. . . ; To supply at least one hundred thousand Woolworth one shot pistols for Peoples' Militia; To receive complete cooperation of their [Communist] army of

a. Hurley apparently thought so: "The Generalissimo's case for recall [of Stilwell] was forwarded by Hurley [to Roosevelt] on October 11 and endorsed [by Hurley] on the essential basis that Chiang and Stilwell were "fundamentally incompatible." Source: Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 501.

b. T.H. White experienced how personal it could be. On Hurley's arrival White "briefed Hurley" on his own conversations with Mao. "I did not know, when I told Hurley that his unannounced and unbriefed mission was probably futile, how much it would enrage him. Hurley sent a dispatch to the State Department the next morning, "concerning my disruptive presence. . . . White's whole conversation was definitely against the mission with which I am charged." Source: White, *In Search of History*, 265–66.

c. In fairness, Hurley addressed the Generalissimo as "Mr. Shek." But Hurley's charm did not win him many supporters among the Americans at Yen-an or elsewhere. "His favorite stunt of yelling Oklahoma Indian war whoops branded him a buffoon." The OSS code name for Hurley was "The Albatross." Source, Smith, *OSS*, 272, 172.

d. Some accounts of the Army's offer seem to conflate the 5,000 paratroops in this proposal with the 28,000-strong paratroop division that was the subject of the MG McClure issue and of Barrett's 27 December visit to Yen-an discussed below. Neither Barrett nor Bird mention this initial 5,000 paratroop proposal as a subject of discussion with communists on 15 December. It does not appear again in the narrative.

On 27 December, Barrett went back to Yen-an; it would be his final visit. Wedemeyer was out of town, and Maj. Gen. Robert B. McClure, Wedemeyer's chief of staff, gave Barrett "a most important mission"

six hundred fifty thousand and Peoples' Militia of two and a half million when strategic use required by Wedemeyer."⁷⁷

After Bird and Barrett returned to Chungking, they learned "Ambassador Hurley had not been fully briefed about the purpose of the visit which Colonel Bird and [Colonel Barrett] had made to Yen-an, or if he had been cut into the picture, he had failed to take much cognizance of it. . . . he was incensed, and took the stand we had tried to work behind his back against the interest of the National Government."⁷⁸

On 27 December, Barrett went back to Yen-an; it would be his final visit. Wedemeyer was out of town, and Maj. Gen. Robert B. McClure, Wedemeyer's chief of staff, gave Barrett "a most important mission": He was to inform the communist leaders that "after the defeat of Germany . . . a US paratroop division [28,000 strong] . . . might be sent to China to take part in the final attack on the Japanese islands." He was to ask: "if [the communists] could take care of the supply of the division . . . [until] regular U.S. Army supply procedures could begin to function." Barrett was "to impress upon the Communists that my talk with them was purely of an exploratory nature." Barrett was assured that his mission was cleared with Ambassador Hurley. Barrett met with the communist leadership, including Mao, on 27 December.

They seemed "reasonably pleased" at prospects of a large US presence on their territory and assured Barrett that they could provide such support as might be needed.⁷⁹ Soon after his return from Yen-an, Barrett received good news: General Wedemeyer had nominated him for promotion to brigadier general.

But then, "Early in January the roof fell in on me. Nationalist Government intelligence agents in Yen-an had reported back to Chungking that I had offered . . . the Communists an American paratroop division. . . ." The Nationalist were "naturally much upset" and asked Hurley for an explanation. "It developed my visit to Yen-an had not been cleared with the ambassador . . . or . . . he had forgotten the whole thing." Barrett would write that Hurley "blew higher than a kite" and had his promotion rescinded.⁸⁰

Spies at Work

Tai Li got wind of the plan, and Miles was ready to brief Hurley about this clandestine contact.^{81, a}

Lt. Gen. Tai Li was Chiang Kai-shek's spymaster, the head of the KMT intelligence and security. Tai Li was also head of SACO, the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, a joint project with US Navy Commodore Milton "Mary" Miles as his deputy. SACO's strained relation-

ship with OSS and most US military units in China, is beyond the scope of this paper, but much of that was due to Tai Li's secret police methods and SACO efforts being more focused on Chiang's political enemies than the invading Japanese. Early in January 1945, Commodore Miles invited Ambassador Hurley to "Happy Valley," SACO headquarters, "where the ambassador was greeted with pomp and circumstance."⁸² As Miles described it in his memoir:

*We greeted him with flags, ruffles and flourishes, and The Star-Spangled Banner. . . . And we even slipped in a full review. The troops passed—ten minutes of infantry ending with the drill team. . . . The dogs made their attack. The pigeons flew when released. Our few motor vehicles passed smartly. Then ten minutes of cavalry. (We had only sixty horses for our training school but we borrowed a neighboring troop of five hundred of General Tai Li's mounted men.)*⁸³

Historian Frederick Wakeman tells the rest of the story:

. . . while being entertained at dinner. . . . Miles persuaded the Oklahoma oilman that a massive conspiracy was being undertaken by U.S. State Department officers to send American troops and weapons to the Communists. Miles also offered the ambassador the use of SACO's Navy radio communications link with Washington in order to bypass the American embassy

a. The "clandestine contact" was Barrett's proposal—and the OSS proposal Bird had delivered earlier—to Yen-an. While Wakeman cites the 15 December Yen-an visit for both, by Barrett's own account, Hurley's anger was triggered by his 27 December 1941 visit.

*in Chongqing [sic], which was presumably infiltrated by fellow travelers determined to defeat Chiang Kai-shek.*⁸⁴

On 15 January 1945, Hurley sent his report to President Roosevelt. “He had learned from SACO and Dai Li that there was a plan to use US paratroopers to lead communist guerrillas. . . . this amounted to recognition of the communists and approval of their objectives to destroy the nationalist regime.” Hurley went on to denounce the American “China hands” who he blamed for this. “His cable to Roosevelt was the opening blow of his long campaign to dishonor both the Foreign Service China experts who labored under him and the military officers in Wedemeyer’s command, not only to dishonor them, but to purge them from the service.”⁸⁵

Hurley’s rage and where it would take him is encapsulated in the comment below by historian Richard Bernstein describing Hurley’s belated reaction to Stilwell’s firing—which Hurley endorsed—and to the negative American press coverage of Chiang it unleashed: *New York Times* journalist Brooks Atkinson, for example, commented: “Relieving General Stilwell and appointing a successor has the effect of making us acquiesce in an unenlightened cold-hearted autocratic political regime.”⁸⁶

Hurley said nothing public right away. But within a year or so, he was making comments that can only be described as deranged, accusing Stilwell, the State Department officers who agreed with the General about Chiang, and the American press

“Hurley’s direct access to the President was the trump card.” He used it “to press what amounted to a purge of the professional China experts in the field, the men who had been in the country for years, who spoke the language, who knew the place and its dramatis personae.”

as engaged in a conspiracy to overthrow Chiang and see him replaced by a Communist government. He summed up his position this way: ‘The record of General Stilwell in China is irrevocably coupled in history with the conspiracy to overthrow the Nationalist Government of China, and to set up in its place a Communist regime—and all of this movement was part of, and cannot be separated from, the Communist cell or apparatus that existed at that time in the Government in Washington.’”⁸⁷

In early 1945, “Hurley’s direct access to the President was the trump card.” He used it “to press what amounted to a purge of the professional China experts in the field, the men who had been in the country for years, who spoke the language, who knew the place and its dramatis personae.”⁸⁸ “The Generalissimo later congratulated Hurley on having “purged the United States headquarters of the conspirators.”⁸⁹

World War II ended with Japan’s surrender on 15 August 1945. The following month, President Truman terminated the OSS, America’s premier foreign intelligence organization. “There appeared to be no need for foreign intelligence. . . . US military planners felt comfortable, almost complacent with the technological advantage the United States

had achieved.”⁹⁰ The US Central Intelligence Agency was established in 1947.

Messengers Were Not Well Received

*I have wondered just what became of my reports.*⁹¹

Colonel Barrett wrote “many reports, all on military subjects. . . . I devoted particular attention to estimates of the strength of the Communist forces . . . and their tactics, equipment, training, discipline, and morale.”⁹² There was apparently no feedback, from Chungking or Washington, on intelligence reporting from Yen-an. In December 1944, as the Dixie Mission was winding down, several Dixie members traveled to Washington. They were taken aback by their reception.

Because of a letter he was asked to hand deliver to Chief of Naval Operations Admiral King, Lt. Hitch found himself addressing the Joint Chiefs or Staff on the China situation. He described “the Chinese Communist scene as he saw it.” From what he had observed, he concluded that no matter how much [US military support] we give to the Nationalist Government], “the people calling themselves Communists will someday take over China.” Hitch’s comments “were not well received; he was told he would not be going back

The environment the team worked in was unusual, but the mission succeeded. It gathered a wealth of fresh information and developed solutions to immediate problems like weather reporting and the rescue of downed US airmen. It even produced intelligence information from inside Japan.

to China.”^{93, a} He soon learned that he was assigned to the Philippines desk in the Office of Naval Intelligence.

The war had already ended when Major Casberg, Dixie’s doctor, returned to Washington on Christmas Eve 1945 and went directly to what was left of OSS headquarters—it had officially been disbanded three months before—to discuss his long experience with the communists. He offered his assessment: A civil war between the communists and nationalists was unavoidable, and the communists would win; after the communists took over, China would not maintain close ties with the Soviet Union; in the long term, Chou En-lai and those who “wore his mantle” would have the greatest influence in China. The people listening to him laughed, “probably thinking him merely a medical man, not qualified to predict military outcomes.”⁹⁴

John Colling also traveled to Washington in December 1944. He was instructed to report directly to General Donovan. According to Colling, “it turned out, Donovan was the only high official in Washington who wanted to know anything about the Dixie Mission.” In his 1991 memoir Colling wrote that only years later did he learn the “political ramifications” of his involvement with Dixie. “When the CIA began recruiting me in 1952 for the Korean War, I was quickly dismissed on the second day

of [interviewing] after they realized my involvement with the Dixie Mission.”⁹⁵ As to value of his reporting:

In the spring of 1945 I had returned [to OSS] my carefully kept files on Chinese field tactics. They were ignored through both the Korean and Vietnamese conflicts. These files were returned to me with my original seals intact in 1972, after ‘Ping Pong Diplomacy’ thawed US-China relations.”⁹⁶

Colling believed that “Washington learned little of what we did, partially because the purpose behind the mission was extinguished by the ending of the war.” The other part is the paradox that Colling believed Dixie had become.

The Dixie Mission was meant to be a military mission in pursuit of strategically important information. What became clear soon after was that the politics that brought us to Yanan eventually silenced our reports of what we had learned.”⁹⁷

The Dixie Experience and Its Lessons for Intelligence

The Dixie Mission is an early example of the task force approach applied to an intelligence problem. Participation in the team was wide, the Army, Navy, and Air Force were

represented, as was the OSS and other specialized elements that could evaluate Chinese Communist capabilities. The environment the team worked in was unusual, but the mission succeeded. It gathered a wealth of fresh information and developed solutions to immediate problems like weather reporting and the rescue of downed US airmen. It even produced intelligence information from inside Japan.

Much of Dixie’s success came from Stilwell’s direction to use “China hands” or others with extensive Asian experience. The Chinese Communist experience was new for everyone, but having the language, or at least past experience with an Asian culture, eased the team’s entry into its interactions with communist counterparts. The principle of using experienced area specialists in the most difficult situations has always been valid.

Extensive intelligence information was collected on the Japanese military and on the communists. That much of this information was later disregarded was due to external factors. The war would end quickly and unexpectedly and totally devalue intelligence on the Japanese.

Intelligence collected on the Chinese Communists should have had a longer life, but it became tainted by political conflict that grew out of America’s involvements in China and post-war concern about the global spread of communism and was shunted aside. The lack of anyone in Washington wise enough to glimpse the true significance of the Chinese

a. The letter Hitch delivered to the CNO was a “secret” appeal for US assistance from Mao—one of several attempts by the Communists to circumvent Ambassador Hurley and other reactionary elements among the Americans in China.”

Communists and the intelligence produced by the Dixie Mission was the killing blow. That insight might have come from OSS Chief Donovan, by war's end the only "high official interested in the Dixie Mission," but OSS was disbanded in September 1945 and Donovan was gone.

Did the loss of this intelligence have an effect on US strategic efforts in the post-war period and the Cold War? In retrospect, one can imagine the effects in US decisions made during the Korean War to support imagined Nationalist remnants fighting the new communist government—Dixie Mission members are likely to have argued that communist control was so great no Nationalist counterinsurgency could possibly cause enough damage to disrupt People's Republic of China war efforts in Korea or gain control over territory in Northeast China.

On a more global scale, if we imagine that the information had been put to use, for example, in the training of US intelligence officers, particularly those assigned to countries experiencing Wars of National Liberation. During the Cold War, most US intelligence officers were reasonably grounded in Soviet communism, but even officers sent

The major lesson from Dixie for the managers of intelligence services and for the non-intelligence outsiders appointed to oversee them is that an intelligence service must be kept well clear of politics and actively protected from any such involvement.

to countries contending with Maoist insurgencies had little grounding in Chinese communism. The presumption was that it was the Soviet hand that guided world communism, and Chinese communism was simply subordinate to that. Soviet communism received the emphasis.

Another significant lesson lost in time was how the Red Army treated Japanese POWs and the dividends that paid. John Fairbank saw the meaning of that immediately. Whether American adoption of the Red Army's "lenient" treatment of POWs might have served American interests in later wars is difficult to say. Regrettably, the Red Army way was not considered, or even the subject of serious study.

An example can be taken from Thailand. During the Vietnam era, the Thai government found itself suddenly confronted by a Maoist Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) insurgency. Within 10 years it affected half the country. "Thirty-six of Thailand's 73 provinces were under strong commu-

nist influence."⁹⁸ In looking for ways to defeat the CPT, the Thai turned to captured party members as teachers on communism and Maoist thought. In time, former senior CPT members became advisers to the police, and military effort focused on the insurgency. The key to the CPT insurgency's collapse was amnesty, and reintegration of the insurgents into Thai society. The insurgency ended in 1982; the peace established then has never been broken. The approach that led to the end of the Maoist insurgency in Thailand came from senior Maoist-raided CPT members.

The major lesson from Dixie for the managers of intelligence services and for the non-intelligence outsiders appointed to oversee them is that an intelligence service must be kept well clear of politics and actively protected from any such involvement. There is no place for partisanship in an intelligence service. To do otherwise risks undermining the objectivity of a service's reporting and devalues the service and all its work.



The author: Bob Bergin is a former foreign service officer. He has contributed frequently to this and other journals on East Asian and other historical topics.

Endnotes

1. David D. Barrett, *Dixie Mission: The United States Army Observer Group in Yen-an, 1944* (University of California Press, 1970), from the Foreword by John K. Fairbank, Harvard University, 7.
2. Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911–45* (Macmillan, 1970), 477.
3. R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (University of California Press, 1972), 260.
4. *Ibid*, 259.
5. *Ibid*.
6. Frederick Wakeman, Jr., *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service* (University of California Press, 2003), 315.
7. Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 463.
8. *Ibid*.
9. John Paton Davies, Jr., *Dragon by the Tail: American, British, Japanese, and Russian Encounters with China and One Another* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), 308.
10. Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 463.
11. William P. Head, *Yenan! Colonel Wilbur Peterkin and the American Military Mission to the Chinese Communists, 1944–1945* (Documentary Publications, 1987), 37.
12. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 27–28.
13. Smith, *OSS*, 259–60.
14. S. Bernard Thomas, *Season of High Adventure: Edgar Snow in China* (University of California Press, 1996) 172.
15. *Ibid*, 171.
16. Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (Grove Press, 1968), from “Introduction by Dr. John K. Fairbank,” 13.
17. Captain Evans F. Carlson, USMC, Letter to Captain Stapler, from “Hq. 8th Route Army, somewhere in Shansi, 20 December 1937,” prepared as an Intelligence Report by South China Patrol, Canton, China, 3 January 1938. Available at: <http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/fullbrowser/collection/p15799coll12/id/1155/rv/compoundobject/cpd/1160>
18. Thomas, *Season of High Adventure*, 268. “FDR had known Carlson since he commanded his presidential bodyguard at Quantico, where they became friends. White House backing had become essential to overcome the old-line Marine opposition to the whole Raider training system, which Carlson had set up . . . Jimmy Roosevelt had been Carlson’s executive officer, and he later become commander of the second Raider Battalion. “Jimmy,” his father once said to me, “is crazy about Carlson.” Source: Edgar Snow, “Random notes on Red China, 1936–1945,” Harvard East Asian Research Center, included as Appendix II In Colling, *Spirit of Yen-an*, 163–70.
19. Richard Bernstein, *China 1945: Mao’s Revolution and America’s Fateful Choice* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 91. Bernstein noted that Mao himself helped to set the affable tone, writing in an editorial that the mission was “The most exciting event since the war against Japan started.”
20. Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 318.
21. Barrett, p. 29.
22. John Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an: A Wartime Chapter of Sino-American Friendship* (API Press Ltd, Hong Kong, 1991), 67–70.
23. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 14.
24. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 80.
25. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 35.
26. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 76.
27. *Ibid*, 77
28. Agnes Smedley, *The Great Road: The Life and Times of Chu Teh* (Monthly Review Press, 1956), 4.
29. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 50–51.
30. Smith, *OSS*, 263.
31. Shakespeare. *The Tempest*, Act 5 Scene 1.
32. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, from the Foreword by John K. Fairbank: “[The Dixie Mission] also coincided with the admission to Yen-an of a group of American journalists who got across the Kuomintang blockade to report on that other China....” Theodore White had made his own way, accompanying the second Dixie contingent with the help of friends at the US Embassy.”
33. Theodore H. White, *In Search of History: A Personal Adventure* (Warner Books, 1981), 249: “And all—except Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung—were convinced, apparently, that I was a semi-official and friendly reportorial arm of the American government.”
34. *Ibid*, 250.
35. *Ibid*, 249.
36. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 38–41.
37. *Ibid*, 41–42.
38. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 9, from the Foreword by John K. Fairbank.
39. Mao’s statement continued:” ... [.] create the conditions that will make up for our inferiority in arms and other things, and create the prerequisites for overcoming every difficulty in the war.” Mao Tse-tung, *On Protracted War, Selected Works*, Vol. II, Foreign Language Press, 1965), 154.

40. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 44. Mao made the comment to John Service.
41. John S. Service, *Lost Chance in China: The World War II Despatches of John S. Service* (Random House, 1974), 240–41. From Service memo based on talks with journalists Harrison Forman, M. Votaw, and I. Epstein on their journey with the Red Army in Northwest Shansi.
42. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 26.
43. Service, *Lost Chance in China*, 236–37.
44. *Ibid.*, 236, 237.
45. *Ibid.*, 238.
46. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 34
47. *Ibid.*
48. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 35.
49. *Ibid.*, 34.
50. *Ibid.*, 7–8. OWI rep Francis McCracken Fisher was not a member of the Dixie team as such. The date of his appearance at Yen-an could not be determined. Said to have been “one of America’s foremost newspaper correspondents” in China, he most likely accompanied the group of journalists that had arrived almost concurrently with Dixie. In December 1941 he had been sworn in as an Auxiliary Foreign Service officer to represent Donovan’s OSS precursor office, Coordinator of Information, and later OWI. Source: Page on Fisher at “Social Networks And Archival Context” website.
51. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 80–81. Spies sent by the Japanese Army had been discovered in the school. Colling wrote that “After good treatment and indoctrination, some agents confessed and worked for the group [JEL]”
52. Head, *Yen-an*, 82.
53. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 83.
54. *Ibid.*, 86. In this author’s dealings with early members of the People’s Liberation Army Air Force—i.e., those who had trained in the early 1950’s—he learned that their flight instructors were primarily Japanese Army pilots, former POWs who had decided to remain in China after the war. Bob Bergin, “Growth of Air Defenses: Responding to Covert Overflights, 1949–1974, *Studies in Intelligence* 57, No. 2 (June 2013), 20.
55. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 88.
56. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 83.
57. Smedley, *The Great Road*, 363.
58. Smedley, *The Great Road*, 364. The date of the order is unknown, but was probably November 1937, the time of the above incident.
59. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 85–87. Captain Evans Carlson records an encounter with Japanese POWs in about mid-1938. Two officers and 11 enlisted men were being held in a small village. “The people smilingly informed us that the Japanese “guests” were doing their lessons. We found them in a sunny courtyard . . . a Chinese soldier stood before a blackboard talking to them in Japanese. The subject, I was informed, was the basic theory of co-operative societies. . . . All appeared to be in good health and well fed, and all were cheerful.” Source: Evans Fordyce Carlson, *Twin Stars of China: A Behind-the-Scenes Story of China’s Valiant Struggle for Existence, by a U.S. Marine Who Lived & Moved With the People* (Dodd, Mead & Company, 1940), 229.
60. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 95.
61. *Ibid.*, 101–106.
62. *Ibid.*, 93.
63. *Ibid.*, 158.
64. *Ibid.*, 95.
65. *Ibid.*, 96.
66. *Ibid.*, 100
67. *Ibid.*, 106.
68. White, *In Search of History*, 261.
69. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 56.
70. *Ibid.*,
71. Carole J. Carter, *Mission to Yen-an: American Liaison with the Chinese Communists, 1944–1947* (The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 107.
72. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 108.
73. Smith, *OSS*, 274.
74. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 114.
75. Bernstein, *China 1945*, 155.
76. Smith, *OSS*, 272.
77. Willis Bird Memo, “Yen-an Trip,” 24 January 1945, NARA 226, Entry 148 Box 7, Folder 103.
78. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 76, 77.
79. *Ibid.*, 79.
80. *Ibid.*, 78.

81. Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 348.
82. Ibid.
83. Milton E. Miles (Vice Admiral, USN) and Hawthorne Daniel, *A Different Kind of War: The Little-Known Story of the Combined Guerilla Forces Created in China by the U.S. Navy and the Chinese during World War II* (Doubleday, 1967), 468.
84. Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 348.
85. Bernstein, *China 1945*, 182.
86. Ibid., 48.
87. Ibid.
88. Bernstein, *China 1945*, 228.
89. Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 148–49.
90. Dino A Brugioni and Doris G. Taylor, *Eyes in the Sky: Eisenhower, the CIA and Cold War Aerial Espionage* (Naval Institute Press, 2010), 34–35.
91. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 36.
92. Ibid.
93. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 118.
94. Carter, *Mission to Yen-an*, 207, 298.
95. Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an*, 124.
96. Ibid., xxi.
97. Ibid., 125.
98. Bob Bergin, “Defeating an Insurgency: The Thai Effort against the Communist Party of Thailand, 1965-ca. 1982,” *Studies in Intelligence* 60, No.2 (June 2016), 31.



Reflections on a Life of Covering the World of Intelligence and National Security

Interviewed by Peter Usowski and Fran Moore.



Walter Pincus outside a federal courthouse on 12 February 2007 after testifying in the perjury trial of I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby, former chief of staff to US Vice President Dick Cheney in Washington. His June 2003 *Post* article on yellow cake and Iraqi WMD was said to have led to the public identification of then-undercover CIA officer Valerie Plame. Photo © UPI/Alamy Stock Photo

Walter Pincus reported for 40 years on intelligence and national security affairs for the *Washington Post*. He has won numerous awards for his work—including a Pulitzer Prize in 2002—published in several professional journals, and continues to contribute to the on-line news service CIPHER Brief. The interview took place in 2017, and Mr. Pincus reviewed it in 2018.

Editor’s Note: Italicized paragraphs or phrases in brackets reflect insertions for clarity and flow. Interviewer questions are also italicized.



Washington: A City of Relationships

In 1959 I was writing for some North Carolina papers and working for Charlie Bartlett, who was then the Washington correspondent for the *Chattanooga Times* and a friend of the Kennedys. [Among the stories Mr. Pincus covered at the time was *Fidel Castro’s overthrow on 1 January 1959 of the dictator Fulgencio Batista.*]

A Noteworthy Dinner Group

Mr. Pincus described his connections to prominent figures of the time, including membership in a monthly

dinner group. Among the members was fellow journalist Don Oberdorfer. Other friends mentioned served with Kennedy during the election and after he was elected. Future Defense Secretary Les Aspin was one. Dinner conversations were off the record, and members would bring their bosses. Mr. Pincus said he was friendly with the Kennedys through Bartlett. Mr. Pincus remembered that one night Bartlett brought Bobby Kennedy, who would himself have a lengthy engagement with CIA activities.

Such acquaintances could lead to unusual opportunities. One involved an invitation to attend a communist-sponsored youth event in Vienna, Austria, which would later, according to Mr. Pincus, become the subject of unjustified speculation that he had served in CIA. Another example came after John F. Kennedy won the 1960 election. It was during the presidential transition, just before the 20 January 1961 inauguration that he received a request from the incoming administration. As Mr. Pincus described it:

A friend of mine named Fred Holborn was working in the Kennedy transition and called me up and said, “The president-elect wants to send a letter to Prime Minister Nehru, and he doesn’t want to use the American ambassador.” The ambassador was Ellsworth Bunker, who had been

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.

The head of the Indian Youth Congress Party was Indira Ghandi. She took me to meet her father. I had a book about him, and when we met Nehru signed it.

appointed by Eisenhower. “And would you take the letter?”

I had to be in Delhi for New Year’s Eve but the [conference Nehru was attending] was in Jaipur, and so, I agreed to do it and went to Jaipur as the American representative to the Indian Youth Congress Party Conference. At the first dinner, there was a representative of the Chinese Communist Party and a representative of Russia. And before I left the United States, somebody, I’m afraid I can’t remember who, gave me a Polaroid camera and I took pictures and I made a speech. The head of the Indian Youth Congress Party was Indira Ghandi. She took me to meet her father. I had a book about him, and when we met Nehru signed it.

I can’t remember what the heck we talked about when I delivered Kennedy’s letter. While in Jaipur, I met Cherif Guellal, who was then the Algerian Independence Movement representative in India. I met him somehow, and we became friends.

Engagement with CIA and Its Leaders

My first serious connection with the agency after the widely reported and misrepresented event in Vienna began with the first investigation I did for Senator Fulbright and the Senate

Foreign Relations Committee looking at the Foreign Agent Registration Act. Without getting into any classified information, I found a situation that was obvious, a person working for an African nation’s presidential office was being paid by a US PR outfit and by the agency. And the committee agreed not to go into it. That was that.^a

Another connection was via Richard Helms. He used to have a habit of having lunch at the Occidental Restaurant with young journalists he didn’t yet know. He was a former journalist himself. I had one of those lunches with him—invited out of the blue.

Then when I was running my second investigation for Fulbright and had access to CIA personnel, I saw Helms a couple of times. And when Helms retired, I saw him socially a lot. I mean it’s always been a connection, but it’s not. . . . And Ben Bradlee knew about it.

I had the same problem [of having possibly controversial relationships] with the Kennedys. And it became worse with the Clintons. My wife, who was from Little Rock, through her family had known him since he was attorney general—and Hillary as well. . . . When George Tenet was running things, remember, I met George when he was legislative

assistant to then-Sen. John Heinz. That’s the way Washington works. Enough people here knew that I knew him. I didn’t have to talk to him. Though people thought I did. And so, they tried to help me.

Then remember I worked for Charlie Bartlett. Because everybody knew he was Kennedy’s best friend. He was being called all the time. And so he finally quit writing news stories because he knew so much and became a columnist.

But I’ve tried to stick to facts. Everybody knew I was quite conflicted, but I knew it best. That was it.

Routine Journalistic Exchanges: A Thing of the Past

We had regular interaction with CIA people—it was much more prevalent back in the 50s, 60s, 70s, probably into the 80s. What people don’t understand about the agency is that—and the Russians do the same thing—if you have a foreign trip planned to an interesting country, they [CIA analysts] would have a backgrounder for you. We met station chiefs or people in the station when you went to a country. My whole interaction with the Russians is full of that on both sides. When I first started dealing with the Russians—this is way back—I was working for Fulbright.

So, I’d done a lot of that. But such briefings are not done any more. You, as a reporter, don’t want to be considered corrupt. That’s one of the

a. “Pincus has taken two 18-month sabbaticals from journalism. Both were spent directing investigations for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee under its then-chairman, Sen. J. William Fulbright. The first was into foreign government lobbying (1962–63) and the second into US military and security commitments abroad and their effect on US foreign policy (1969–70). Both investigations led to legislation. The first in a revision of the Foreign Agents Registration Act; the second in a series of limiting amendments on defense appropriations bills that culminated in the Hatfield-McGovern legislation to end the Vietnam War.” From: <http://www.niemanwatchdog.org/index.cfm?bi-oid=81&fuseaction=about.viewContributors>

differences in the way reporters act today. I'm used to dealing with agency people. The way younger people feel today, it is a totally adversarial situation, it is totally different.

How Media Coverage of Intelligence Has Changed

It is not just the Intelligence Community. It's the way these days in journalism; everybody wants to bring down the government. And it works. And it's had an effect. We're not talking about the "whole" media. There is no single media, we're all individuals. Everybody has got their own rules. Individually you're coming in, and the institutions themselves have rules. So, it's an industry. It's a profession I think, not a trade, but a profession in which everybody makes their own rules. What's happened to it is notoriety, and electronic media now make it worse. And that is the drive. It used to be you write something that gets you on the front page. The drive now is to write something that gets clicks.

I want to say the difference is there's much more depth to the writing that gets you on the front page [*of a newspaper*] than there is in what gets you clicks. Because clicks are tracked by the hour. Every media organization now has an electronic chart that says how many people are either reading or watching what you did at that moment and who they are and how long they stay with you, and all that. It's become a pay thing. In some media organizations, reporters get paid on how many clicks they get. And that's the difference. In the past, print reporters would be looking for some media kind of impact, such as changing laws, not just trying to end officials' careers.

So, [the media is] an industry. It's a profession I think, not a trade, but a profession in which everybody makes their own rules.

On the other side of it is this idea that you can't have friends in government. And God forbid you see somebody socially. But in my case, if you keep on the same subjects like arms control or intelligence, national security issues forever, you grow up knowing people. So, I grew up with it.

The relationships today are limited to events, which is why newsmakers hold background briefings, put out press releases that would get you in the paper.

I've taught at Stanford University's Washington program for 15 years, and that's what I'm teaching my students. We're now in the PR society, and it's government by PR. We have one-dimensional relationships with sources. Each administration has gotten better at it based on control of access to their own officials.

There always will be leaks. That brings on threatening legal action against the press and all that stuff. So, it is designed to keep people in line. I'm sure the Trump administration will try to be much more successful with the investigation of leaks.

The only time I ever got leaks out of CIA was when people were unhappy with who was running it or when they thought their bosses were saying inaccurate things. Every time I got into a leak discussion with the press people at the agency I'd question why have a PR person. Deutch's PR person was very active promoting Deutch because he wanted to be defense secretary. People at CIA hated that and were willing to talk about what he was doing.

The other part is that one gets respect for the place, for me initially maybe because I went through Vienna and all that and was amazed at what was being done in the Cold War period. When [*CIA operations officer*] Cord Meyer sat there and told me the extent of what they were doing in the youth field. And then, of course, when Cord told me the extent of what the Russians were doing, it was the whole world. I couldn't imagine how it was all put together.

Growing into Knowledge of the Practice of Intelligence

I didn't want to be moved around from covering one agency and then another because I would certainly want to stay in one general area and become expert in that. And most people don't do it that way. So, I just take too much time, and I read a lot of hearings, speeches, reports, everything I can lay my hands on. That's the one thing I learned from the Army interrogator school: it was you must know as much as you can beforehand.

An interview is not questions and answers. A real interview gets you to appear to be sharing information. It's a discussion, and you bring something—whether it's convincing somebody you know everything about them so they might as well tell you, which is the way I interpreted interrogator school. You want confessions. You don't want people to help by saying, "Tell me x." You have some ideas already about x before you question persons that have information about x. They tell you because they think you already know it. And

The whole hearing system these days and congressional oversight across the board totally depend on what's in the papers the week before or how do we embarrass the president.

in this town if you read everything that you can lay your hands on before you talk to somebody, I mean, that's the way to do it, particularly if both you and your subject know it's going to be negative or confrontational.

As an investigative reporter, I was allowed to pick subjects in which generally it appeared—and then turned out—that somebody did something wrong, and it was kept secret, because in this town if something worked, somebody was going to trumpet it.

Interviewer: So, how did you go about selecting the topics about the intel business that you wrote about?

It's whatever hit me.

I teach this class on oversight of government. Each quarter I decide what issue at the beginning of the class I am going to focus on. So, this quarter [2017] I'm doing Russian propaganda. I did torture and other subjects in the past. Senator Feinstein was still mad at me for going after the Senate intelligence committee torture study and, quote, "investigation" that went with it. [I was critical] because having twice run investigations in the 1960s for Chairman Fulbright at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I believed that's not the way to do it.

Reflections on Congressional Oversight

[The quality of oversight] depends on who is the chairman. And it depends on the party in the White House. If the committee chairman

is in the same party as the president, there is no real oversight. I mean it's going to be interesting how we're handling Russia propaganda today and particularly with this president. But if I had to make a broad, sweeping judgment, it totally depends upon who's chairman. In the old days, that was it.

I hate to quote the old days, but then the party in the White House didn't matter as much, and it was really the whim of the chairman. Now there's not the kind of independent committee investigating as was done in past decades. There may be more going on than I know about. But my view of it clearly comes out of my experience with Fulbright, which means 50 or so years ago, when investigations came if you think there's some kind of trouble. You send people out to investigate before you have an interview. You don't run here based on what's in the *Washington Post* and the *Times* the day before.

The whole hearing system these days and congressional oversight across the board totally depend on what's in the papers the week before or how do we embarrass the president. *One example:* I remember the fights over big satellites—billion-dollar satellites—and small satellites. Rep. Larry Combest was the chairman over in the House intelligence committee when this was the subject and he was fighting Sen. Dennis DeConcini, who liked big ones. For others it depended on where they were being built.

The Changed Scale and Tone of Media Coverage of Intelligence

One reason [for less intelligence coverage today] is that because when Helms was running intelligence, there was better control over the Intelligence Community and respect for it. You remember NSA, the National Security Agency, wouldn't admit it existed. They got away with it for a long time. [Another example is coverage of the] Bay of Pigs. Newspapers, the *New York Times* in particular, figured out what was happening and editors were talked out of writing the story. You didn't have the government as a punching bag back then, particularly the agency. That changed; the only publicized stories became failures and screwups, and a press competition began to find out what's going on. The good news, the agency good news, successes, however can't be pushed out to the public. Deutch tried. Once you start saying this is a "great thing we did," then when something fails you're expected to outline all the bad things.

[With respect to recalling the CIA's greatest stories] I really don't know. When asked, I was trying to think what is a good story? Nothing approaches the news worthiness of failure, the Bay of Pigs, Iran government overthrow, and even Saddam's weapons of mass destruction and George Tenet's statement "It's a slam dunk"—depending on the context. But in the slam dunk context, people don't understand what Bush said to him that led to that response: "Nobody ever quits." But that [Tenet] quote [always gets] repeated by itself. It's a loser and will always be repeated.

I was trying to think of a positive story that can be written, and it's really hard to think of one.

Interviewer: What about something like the Cuban missile crisis? Do you think enough information came out on the role that CIA had in informing the president that you couldn't put that in the category as a success?

It's always the photography that's remembered and not the CIA analysis made of it. It's always been in doubt what the Russians actually had in the way of nuclear warheads. From later stories I guess they had short-range missiles. But I was never convinced about that because that comes from the Russians, and you wondered if Castro would want short-range missiles to use on his own country. That's always been in the writing about that—lots of questions. The whole idea the leader of a country would bring nuclear material into his own country—to be used in his own country. That's the problem. We knew about intermediate-range missiles they were getting but not the warheads for the shorter range missiles.

Interviewer: The one event that the CIA and the Intelligence Community was at great pains to be public about in recent memory is the raid to get Usama Bin Ladin. Rather than asking the success or failure question, what were your observations as you watched that public relations event unfold in terms of how candid the agency was.

Publicly, the credit, as I remember, went to JSOC [Joint Special Operations Command]. The Pentagon has a major PR operation.

Today, people want to have people saying “this is the worst thing about x,” even before they read the facts and thus before they understand what happened.

Interviewer: But just in terms of the agency actually getting out there with information like that?

To be brutally [frank], I don't think you should because it's then that the reverse becomes true. Then you have to be honest about when it, a CIA operation, doesn't work.

The Challenges of Helping Public Understanding of Intelligence

The way I wrote about things was so detailed and therefore complex that I made it difficult for the average person to understand; I was too deep into it. And by design, I always tried to play out the facts before I wrote about who said “this is the worst thing that ever happened in the world.” Today, people want to have people saying “this is the worst thing about x,” even before they read the facts and thus before they understand what happened.

When I wrote about Iraq and the fact that there were some people at CIA who didn't think Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction—I mean the fact that there was a fight over here over the judgment. I wrote a piece about someone calling Saddam's WMD a “Potemkin village.” He says Hussein's making it appear like he's got weapons to keep control over his country. I wrote it, and George Tenet obviously got angry and had people call me up and tell me how wrong I was. But it was a very good source. And he, the source, turned out to be right. But the *Post* wasn't going to publish it because

somebody else on the staff was told there was WMD.

So, we've had a standoff, but Bob Woodward suddenly came in on a Saturday and said he was now convinced that I was right and had to convince the editor, Len Downie, that he had to publish it. He published it on page 17. I was quite proud of that. And, the agency, at least some part of the agency had it right.

I still think the most important thing I ever did was the neutron warhead story in 1977. At least that opened up the debate about nuclear weaponry. But that was after I got involved in nuclear weapons and essentially not in intelligence.

People still don't understand that the neutron “bomb” was not a bomb. It was a low-yield nuclear artillery shell and a short-range Lance missile warhead. But this was the idea: the Army wanted a new, longer-range, nuclear artillery shell and missile warhead. Because the Germans did not want American nuclear artillery detonated on their territory, they required that everything we had in the nuclear artillery had to be stored nine miles from the border, because that was their range and they didn't want any nuclear shells around them for use on German territory. And so, the Army wanted to build a longer range shell with less blast and heat but more radiation to cut down on collateral damage to German towns.

Originally the neutron idea had been designed for use in anti-missile nuclear weapons because it yielded greater-than-normal radiation and

But I think [the neutron bomb story] created a debate that got totally out of hand, and it really taught me how you can mess up a program without foreseeing, in this case, that the Russians picked it up and used it for a long time as anti-US propaganda.

could disable incoming warheads. Designers finally convinced Army generals who hated it, because if they used it on a battlefield, people inside a tank would get killed, but the tank wouldn't be blown up. It was a continuing, huge internal debate in the Army.

The Army finally agreed to do it, and people at Los Alamos and Livermore had this problem with the way the Army was selling it to towns in Germany. The towns in Germany were described to me as "two kilotons" apart, so they had to have a low-yield weapon that was less destructive so they could drop it in the middle.

The neutron device was first described to me by then-Defense Secretary Harold Brown's top nuclear assistant, who was very proud of it. It came out of Livermore National Laboratory where someone described it as a weapon that would kill people and leave buildings standing. And everybody got crazy in the Pentagon when I wrote it that way without the Pentagon people realizing it was one of their guys who told me that.

But I think it created a debate that got totally out of hand, and it really taught me how you can mess up a program without foreseeing, in this case, that the Russians picked it up and used it for a long time as anti-US propaganda. And President Carter never liked the idea of building such a weapon, but he never thought it would come to that.

The neutron device story also caused a huge fight between me and Zbig Brzezinski. Zbig's National Security Council didn't want to understand the issue. When I called before publishing the first story, they just tossed it to the Pentagon—with or without realizing, I don't know, Harold Brown was never going to take a second look at or kill production of the neutron device because it was his weapon, built at Livermore, which he had run as director.

Balancing the Public's Right to Know with Legitimate Security Protection

I give speeches on this subject. The key element is always who the person is who decides to make something classified and then has authority to declassify it. One of the things I went through during my time working for Fulbright was that we held all our hearings, even foreign lobbying hearings, in closed session. And then the question came up, "How do you get it cleared?" It was a big issue. We eventually made our own decisions, and that was because the administration was so arbitrary. There were no common rules.

I got the *Washington Post* to accept that you don't use the name of a covert case officer if it's not necessary to the story. So, we do that, and then Snowden came out, and that to me is, from the press side, the worst leaked, exposure of classified information—that and the distortions that accompanied the torture controversy.

Interviewer: Do you see a distinction between the Snowden and Manning revelations and others?

Snowden was just worse because [he and his abettors] made the newspapers a party to it by giving the *Post* and others thousands of documents, leaving it up to them what to publish. They were going to make up their own minds. As a result, the newspapers treated Snowden so differently. The same thing with Chelsea Manning.

Manning caught the *Post* by surprise; it wasn't involved. But the Snowden thing—because several media outlets had all that previously classified material—I think it became a competitive thing. They didn't care who'd done it. They just wanted to get some hot story. And then nobody wanted to pay attention to things like newsworthiness or potential harm to national security. That all got lost in the crossfire of stories. Also, nobody wanted to pay attention to Snowden, what his view of it was and why he released so much more that was classified, given that his main point—potential of government surveillance of individuals—was made in just a limited, few documents. There were also, at that point, people with access to all that material who didn't realize what he, Snowden, was doing. So, it took off and unless you've been doing this long enough, handling classified material, you didn't know what's dangerous.

Interviewer: Have you had any personal instances where our agency pushed back on something that you were going to publish, and how did those discussions go?

Well, there are a whole bunch that are public about how things the paper

wanted to publish ended up in discussions at the White House.

These were Bob Woodward stories. I don't know where CIA was. I do know there were times agency people called to respond to a question about accuracy of what I was going to write. The only time anybody ever threatened me was in Iran-Contra, when I was asking about Ollie North for a piece I wrote after his going to Tehran to get American hostages released in exchange for US antitank missiles. . . . I was writing that, in the midst of the public controversy, North had gone back to try to make one more attempt in Lebanon to meet people who were trying to get hostages out. They thought if they'd get somebody else out, some new American hostages, the whole thing would go away.

And I was told that North had gone back and was trying again, and so I called a National Security Council official. He said, "You are going to get Ollie North killed if you write about it." Ben Bradlee and I talked about it. I went back and checked my original sources, and they said, "No, it failed, and he's on his way back." So we went ahead and printed the story.

Interviewer: We do have to wrap this up, but I was intrigued by the last question here about what story about the intelligence business would you have liked to have written about but never had a chance to?

I thought about that. I never had anything, quote, "that dramatic." I always found a way to publish pretty much everything that I wanted to. In fact, I've always thought you have to. When you learn something that's really news and is important to public

One of the most interesting things for me that involved CIA was when I wrote about Aldrich Ames, explaining how he separated his life into three parts, the covert agency side, the Soviet spy side, and his open public side. For me it gave me insight.

understanding of what's going on, publishing is what you're supposed to do.

Interviewer: Looking back then, how would you say you have helped? In what ways do you think you have helped the American people better understand the intelligence business?

I think by being reasonable about what I write about, understanding the implications. I think that one of the most interesting things for me that involved CIA was when I wrote about Aldrich Ames, explaining how he separated his life into three parts, the covert agency side, the Soviet spy side, and his open public side. For me it gave me insight. I've always been amazed that some people could live and have a covert life at the same time. Particularly the DO [Directorate of Operations] people who do what they do, and nobody knows about it, including their children. Your children don't fully know what you're doing.

I can't imagine how a life gets divided up that like. And Ames is not dumb, but he's not thinking about being caught. Talk about how he divided his life up in his head and played certain roles depending on which side he was helping or not helping and why. I've never had it confirmed. He was always convinced that he'd beat the system, such as a lie detector session during which he said he could totally focus his mind on that person and get away with it.

I'm writing for people who do understand the Intelligence Community and its issues so it gives you a license to delve into things that you know the general public sometimes can't possibly figure out. A newspaper to me is a mass media. It's kind of lost that in a sense, with the coming of web news sites.

On Catching Up to Something Gone Wrong

I think the hardest thing is to catch up with something that's wrong. You know, there really is an issue for setting a narrative about some story, and it's very hard once that happens and then you guys, the Intelligence Community people, get caught up in that. And there's really nothing you can do.

Interviewer: Did you ever experience with a source a time where you got caught up in information that turned out not to be accurate and you had to actually try to pull it back?

I've had it happen. I was trying to think of what it was. When I was a kid, a youngster, I wrote something wrong about somebody and saw the kind of damage it did to that person. Then, very early on I was writing for the *New Republic*. I became executive editor, it got a new owner and, I "got fired." My kids were eight, six, and three. And in a story in the *Post*, someone wrote a story that said I was fired. I convinced them, my children, I had disagreed with the new owner over an inaccurate story he was trying to publish because he

I learned a lesson. It's part of the reason for not naming covert intelligence people, not just because it could help the bad guys and all that, but what it does to the families. It's extraordinary.

liked what it said and did not realize the damage that it would do to the magazine. Because the *Post* news story did not have the full reason for my firing, I learned a lesson. It's part

of the reason for not naming covert intelligence people, not just because it could help the bad guys and all that, but what it does to the families. It's extraordinary.

What's happening with our political system which we in the media have played around with. This is a hell of a mess. The press has been a player. Over decades, the media have been cutting people up left and right, sometimes without having a sense that it really does have an impact on personal lives and even on our electoral system.



The interviewers: Peter Usowski is the director of the Center for the Study of Intelligence in CIA and the chairman of the Editorial Board of *Studies in Intelligence*. Fran Moore is a former senior CIA leader. Her assignments have included serving as the Director of Intelligence (now Analysis) at CIA. She is a member of the *Studies* Editorial Board. She is also currently director of intelligence at the Financial Systemic Analysis and Resilience Center.

Intelligence in Public Media

The Fighters: Americans in Combat in Afghanistan and Iraq

By C.J. Chivers (Simon and Schuster, 2018), 374 pp.

Reviewed by Brent Geary

“The battlefield did not care about reputations, appearances, or wishes. It simply snatched lives.” (210)

American young men and women born just before or after the September 11, 2001, attacks are now old enough to deploy to Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, or elsewhere to combat global terrorism. Take that in and process it for a moment. According to a recent study by the United States Institute of Peace, the war on terrorism sparked by 9/11 has taken the lives of roughly 10,000 Americans and injured another 50,000 and cost the American people an estimated \$5.9 trillion. Roughly three million Americans have served in combat zones during that time, including untold numbers of intelligence officers, diplomats, and other government employees.

Because these conflicts continue, it is probably too soon to assess their merits strategically, and historians have yet to wade into the subject in a comprehensive manner. However, like wars that came before, what some would call the “first draft” of that history—primarily from the tactical and personal levels—is emerging even before the guns have gone silent. *The Fighters*, by C. J. Chivers, is one such early effort at capturing the gritty reality of combat in the war on terrorism from the perspective of those who fought it and witnessed it firsthand.

It is hard to imagine that a better ground-level account will ever replace it. Chivers, with this book and his newspaper articles from which it is derived, has carried on the work started by the legendary Ernie Pyle in World War II and continued by reporters like Michael Herr in Vietnam, and his starkly visceral and intimate reporting is worthy of comparison to both. His chronicling of the human toll of war reads like a direct descendant of Pyle’s description of the vast scale of suffering and death at Omaha Beach and Herr’s telling of a teenage Marine at Khe Sanh whose permanent smile “verged on the high giggles” but whose eyes seemed to say: “I’ll tell you why I’m smiling, but it will make you crazy.”

Chivers tells the stories of six combatants from the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, including infantrymen, two pilots, a member of the Special Forces, and a Navy corpsman (medic), along with those with whom they served. Some of the combatants Chivers covers served multiple combat tours, and he follows them through their deployments and their return home. Five of the six survived their wars, and only two were seriously wounded, but all suffered and will carry scars for the rest of their lives. “Together,” Chivers wrote, “their journeys hold part of the sum of American foreign policy in our time.” (xviii) With his carefully chosen cross-section of combatants, he shows in clear and brutal terms that their stories share much in common and that there are untold thousands just like them.

Chivers is among the most accomplished war correspondents of this century. He served as a Marine infantry officer in the 1991 Persian Gulf War and has covered conflicts across the globe since 1999. In 2017 he won a Pulitzer Prize for his long-form article about an Afghanistan war veteran who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The article—a *New York Times Magazine* piece titled “The Fighter”—should be read along with *The Fighters*. In it, Chivers chronicled a Marine “designated marksman” named Sam Siatta who was revered for his prowess with a precision rifle but who struggled terribly with guilt derived from his actions in combat. After a particularly intense firefight, Siatta wrote in his journal, “I go to sleep every night knowing I have the blood of so many on my hands and no amount of soap could ever wash these stains away.” One of Siatta’s commanders confessed to Chivers his own sense of guilt for the role he played in Siatta’s life. “Watching Sam evolve from that sweet, innocent kid to that killer he became, the killer we needed him to be,” he said, “it breaks my heart.”

These are stories of modern war experienced by modern warfighters in the most advanced and capable military on the planet, and Chivers masterfully conveys their experiences on their own merits, largely avoiding wider discussion of the relative wisdom of the wars or

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

those who led them. Some critics have argued that he should have included the views and experiences of senior commanders, but that was never Chivers' intent. He wrote that he wanted to tell the stories of those who fought and leave it at that. That clarity of purpose gives the book greater focus and avoids distracting the reader from the warfighters' experiences. By sticking almost exclusively to their stories, Chivers also makes his book accessible to readers regardless of their views on the wars, a task that would have proven more difficult the higher up the chain of command he went. In his preface, he is unsparing in his critique of the wars, but his criticism is balanced and fair. "It is beyond honest dispute," he wrote, "that the wars . . . failed to achieve what their organizers promised, no matter the party in power or the officers in command." It is a credit to Chivers that he focuses thereafter on what he does best—reporting on moment-by-moment combat and combatants—and *The Fighters* is better for it.

Chivers spares no feelings, and his book is a relentless cycle of firefights and resulting combat trauma with only brief intermissions devoted to assessments of the wars' aftermath by and for those who fought it. He quotes combatants liberally and lets them tell their own stories when possible. He has chosen fighters who all appear to have tried to do their jobs to the best of their abilities while maintaining a hold on their own morality.

Navy fighter pilot Layne McDowell, for example, served on for decades with a constant worry that he might have accidentally killed civilians in the air campaign over Kosovo in 1999. His commanders never questioned the bombing, but McDowell could never quite let it go. Chivers describes in haunting detail a nightmare McDowell had years later about the incident, where he envisioned his own young son dead in the rubble. He stated later that he was glad when he returned from missions over Afghanistan having not had to release any ordnance, and he eventually chose to leave the Navy's "fast track" to accept assignments that gave him more time with family.

Leo Kryszewski, the son of a Chicago janitor, was a seasoned Special Forces sergeant on 9/11 with 15 years of experience. He was among the first US soldiers into Afghanistan and later Iraq. It was there, in March 2003, that he and his team found themselves stuck between two parts of the larger US advance across southern Iraq and had to run a gauntlet of surprised Iraqi troops to cross a bridge in unarmored light trucks. Once across, his team learned of an impending counterattack by Iraqi armor

units to their front and did the unthinkable: they drove back the way they came, through a hail of bullets and rocket-propelled grenades, miraculously without any casualties. In 2004, on his second tour in Iraq, Kryszewski narrowly survived a rocket attack at an American base near Baghdad that killed the Green Beret standing next to him along with two other soldiers and wounded another 25 and two civilians. Kryszewski and a fellow soldier—convalescing in Germany two days after the attack—learned that their fallen comrade would be memorialized at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in the coming days. With help from a third soldier, they snuck away from their military hospital, boarded a commercial flight for the States—where merciful flight attendants allowed them to sleep on the galley floor—and made it back in time for the ceremony. Kryszewski recovered from his wounds and returned to war zones several times, both as a soldier and later as a contractor, but he struggles with PTSD.

Mike Sledobnik piloted Kiowa light attack helicopters for the Army in both Iraq and Afghanistan and had served for 18 years before seeing combat. Chivers recounted in riveting detail missions Sledobnik flew in both theaters, including a 2005 ambush of US helicopters by Iraqi insurgents that heavily damaged Sledobnik's Kiowa and left fellow pilot Lori Hill with a bullet wound through the sole of her foot and her ankle. Part of Chivers' great accomplishment with this book is his eye for details that humanize the actors and give their lives and experiences greater resonance. In this case, he quoted Hill as she was being taken, bloodied, from her damaged aircraft to be treated for her wounds. "At least I painted my toenails," she joked. Like McDowell, Sledobnik sometimes suffered from nightmares. In his case, he dreamt that he died in combat. Seven years to the day after the 9/11 attacks, a bullet through his leg killed him in Afghanistan. Chivers recounts in almost minute-by-minute detail, over ten pages, the struggle by Sledobnik's copilot to return the stricken aircraft to base, the efforts made at first aid, and the rapid airlift by Sledobnik's fellow pilots to a military hospital, too late to save their friend. As is the case throughout *The Fighters*, it is clear that Chivers interviewed everyone involved and made every effort to get the details right, making Sledobnik's story hit home that much harder.

Robert Soto was only 18 when he deployed with the Army to the Korengal Valley of Afghanistan in 2008.^a He

a. The following year, part of his larger unit—Second Platoon, Battle Company of the 173rd Airborne Brigade—was the subject of

grew up in New York City and was 10 years old on 9/11. He visited the pile of rubble where the towers had been and made up his mind that he wanted to serve when he was old enough. His first squad leader was Staff Sergeant Nathan Cox, an older grunt whom Soto came to admire. Cox loved to read, and upon learning that he had never read *A Catcher in the Rye*, Soto ordered a copy and had it sent to Afghanistan to give to him. He also became close with Specialist Marques Knight, like Cox an Iraq veteran. Soto and Knight had the same taste in rap music, and Knight told him he planned to visit Brazil someday, to see a foreign country not at war. Within days of each other, first Knight then Cox died in combat, the latter before Soto could give him his book. Soto usually rode with Cox in his Humvee but had been ordered to another assignment on the day Cox was killed—along with another soldier—by a powerful roadside bomb. Soto later took part in a textbook ambush of Taliban fighters in April 2009, personally shooting several enemy fighters. Days later, his own unit was ambushed while on patrol, and a newly arrived replacement was killed by an IED. Soto left the military after four years and graduated from Columbia University in 2017. He told Chivers he was “crushed” when he learned the Army had abandoned the Korengal Valley but that he understood the decision. (336)

Jarrod Neff was a Marine lieutenant who led a rifle platoon in a large-scale, heliborne assault on the Afghan city of Marja in 2010. Neff and his men occupied several homes on the western approach to the city on the first night of the operation, along with Marines from other platoons. One home had been predesignated as a command post for the coming sweep of the city, and the Marines evacuated the family who lived there to another home, one further away from the coming fight. On the second day, after intense fighting, the Marines called in an artillery strike on Taliban locations. By tragic mistake, American rockets fell instead on the home housing the family Neff and his men had evacuated, killing nearly everyone inside, mostly women and children. Twelve dead, all told. Neff led a small team to assess the damage, collect the bodies, and load them aboard a US aircraft for burial away from the battle. According to Chivers, the

Restrepo, an award-winning documentary about life and combat at Firebase Restrepo, named for a soldier killed nearby in 2007. Like *The Fighters*, *Restrepo* and a follow-on film in 2014, *Korengal*, represent some of the finest early accounts of the war on terrorism from the ground-level, and this reviewer strongly recommends them.

Marine Corps at first publicly denied the targeting error—claiming the rounds hit their intended targets—but then later owned up to the mistake. After days of fighting, Neff and his company accomplished their part of the mission—capturing a strategic crossroads—and Marja fell to the Marines, for the time being. Neff left the Marines in 2011 and took a job as a police officer, his lifelong ambition. By 2017, Chivers wrote, the Taliban had retaken control of Marja. (339)

Chivers’ depiction of the experiences of Dustin Kirby is arguably the most profound account of the book. Kirby followed his cousin, Joe Dan Worley, off to join the ranks of Navy combat corpsmen, those who treat the wounded in a Marine Corps that has never fielded medics of its own. When Worley lost a leg to an IED in Iraq, Kirby’s immediate family in Georgia hoped that meant he would come home unharmed, assessing that such things did not hit the same family twice. Chivers had watched Kirby perform his duties treating the wounded in Iraq, including saving the life of a Marine shot in the head by a sniper. He describes a young man who had believed in what he was doing but been terribly shaken by his cousin and hero’s maiming. “Doc” Kirby pressed on, though, and after breaking a unit rule by urinating in an empty bottle one night rather than going to the latrine, he received a stint of guard duty as punishment. While standing that duty atop a base tower in 2006, an insurgent sniper shot him through the face, destroying his lower jaw and many teeth in the process. Chivers details the years of pain and only partially successful surgeries Kirby endured as a result of his wounds and his spiral into depression, divorce, alcoholism, and attempted suicide. Early in his recovery, Kirby was unable to talk and had to communicate by writing messages to his family. His fear was palpable when he wrote to his mother after one of his surgeries, “If I stop breathing, will you help me?” (313) Kirby later remarried and in 2016 received spectacular treatment from surgical specialists in New York City who reconstructed his face and teeth, pro bono. His mother, Gail, wondered to Chivers why Dustin had to get pro bono help for something the government should have fixed. (348)

Possibly the most riveting scene in *The Fighters* happens not in a combat zone but in a private meeting between Kirby, his family, and former President George W. Bush in November 2013 at Bush’s office in Texas. After exchanging small talk, Gail Kirby began to speak. “He tried killing himself by driving his truck into a tree at

speeds in excess of 120 miles an hour,” she said. “I am not the same mom who sent her son to Iraq. I’m different now.” “Gail had prepared a monologue and practiced its lines overnight,” Chivers wrote. The result was devastating. Kirby’s mother told Bush that sending her son off to war was like having her baby sitting in a car seat in the middle of a highway, with cars zipping past at high speeds, and having to watch it—in anguish—every day on television while hundreds of other babies, dressed just like hers, sat on the same road. She described her shame at feeling relief when she learned that some other mother’s baby had died, but not hers. The Kirbys were respectful of Bush, and they saw in him someone who cared enough to meet with them and hear their stories. He told them he was sorry for what happened to them and accepted responsibility for the war. After hearing Gail’s analogy and expressing his sorrow for what they had been through, Bush thanked them for coming, smiled to Kirby, and gave him a fist bump. “Make better decisions,” Bush told him. Chivers ended the chapter with those words, al-

lowing the reader to pause and render their own judgment on what they had just read.

After two decades of covering America’s wars at the ground level, Chivers last year said that he planned to spend the foreseeable future running his small commercial fishing operation in Rhode Island, and “living largely without the f*cking internet or the phone . . . and not having to think about this sh*t.” Elected officials and senior diplomats, intelligence officers, and military commanders do not have that option; they do not get to tune out the realities of war. They hold no higher responsibility than the protection of the American people, including and especially our citizen soldiers. For that reason, *The Fighters* belongs on their reading lists and permanent bookshelves to serve as a stark reminder of what lies beyond diplomacy, espionage, and covert action for those we ask to go into harm’s way. To paraphrase retired Admiral James Stavridis, war as a policy tool is akin to surgery as a health care option. “It’s painful. It’s high-risk. Things go wrong,” he said. Wiser words were never spoken.



The reviewer: Brent Geary is a CIA Directorate of Analysis officer presently serving as a CIA historian.

War and Chance: Assessing Uncertainty in International Politics

Jeffrey A. Friedman (Oxford, 2019), 195pp., appendix of source material, index.

Reviewed by Charles Heard (penname)

In 1964, Sherman Kent complained in print about analysts he peevishly called “poets.”^a Poets believed that communicating uncertain intelligence judgments to US policymakers required the full resources of the English language. Where Kent, who self-identified as a “mathematician,” saw a need for a well-developed lexicon of common terms for uncertainty, tied to numeric probabilities, his poet-opponents saw the need for rhetoric, for suggesting and hinting at possibilities. Kent’s article was itself something of an admission of defeat; by then he had campaigned for 14 years to get CIA to adopt a common lexicon, without success. For the remainder of the 20th century, excepting the odd experiment here or there, the dispute—if it could be called a dispute—over how to think and talk about uncertainty in the intelligence business was resolved in favor of the poets.

In the past 14 years, however, and especially this decade, the poets have had a tougher run of it. Following the establishment of the DNI in 2005, and the promulgation of IC-wide analytic standards beginning in 2007, lexicons have proliferated. Kent in 1964 talked wistfully about colleagues who wanted but could not put a lexicon at the back of every National Intelligence Estimate; now it is rote.^b In 2011, the DNI’s Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA) began sponsoring a geopolitical forecasting contest, which it closed after two years because it was clear that people with a common set of characteristics, including training in some basic numeric probability, were winning going away.^c And in 2016, a researcher revealed that Canada’s Intelligence Assessment Secretariat (IAS) had been experimenting with the use of numbers to assess uncertainty, to great effect.^d

Among the leading academic researchers pursuing this question of how best to assess uncertainty in national security affairs is Dartmouth’s Professor Jeffrey Friedman. In *War and Chance: Assessing Uncertainty in International Politics*, Friedman shows he, too, has little patience for the poets of the world. In seven chapters and less than 200 pages, he raises every argument for avoiding numbers to think or talk about uncertainty in international politics—most of which will ring familiar to any analyst—and knocks them down one by one. Friedman’s book is not good-humored and avuncular, in the way Kent’s essay reads half a century later, but every poet in the intelligence business (and there are many) should make time to read and reflect on at least some of what Friedman has to say.

Think subjective probabilities are meaningless? Friedman would like to meet you in Chapter 2, where he, John Maynard Keynes, and General Stanley McChrystal argue (explicitly or by implication) that no policy analyst actually behaves as if this is true. Convinced that policymakers just want analysts to “make the call,” or that numerical probabilities will give customers a false sense of precision in your assessment? Friedman tested these hypotheses at the Naval War College with officers who will go on to be the customers of the future, and his results in Chapter 4 cast new doubt on these old chestnuts. Worried (though you might never say it aloud) that precise numeric estimates make it easier for policy makers to blame advisers for mistakes? Friedman in Chapter 5 argues that the historical record of intelligence failures indicates that a *lack* of serious engagement with uncertainty is as often the source of blame as its specificity.

If I have left practitioner “mathematicians” aside so far, it is not because they escape Friedman’s scrutiny. In the first chapter, he shows that the profusion of probability lexicons in US intelligence elements – a fact that by itself might reasonably be thought of as a victory for

a. Kent, “Words of Estimative Probability,” *Studies in Intelligence*, Fall 1964.

b. For a history of such efforts, see James Marchio, “By The Numbers: “If the Weatherman Can...”: The Intelligence Community’s Struggle to Express Analytic Uncertainty in the 1970s” in *Studies in Intelligence* 58, no. 4 (December 2014).

c. The resulting research was popularized in Philip Tetlock’s book *Superforecasting* (Crown, 2015).

d. Barnes, “Making Intelligence Analysis More Intelligent: Using

Numeric Probabilities,” *Intelligence and National Security* 31:3 (2016), 327–44.

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

the pro-numbers crowd – include nonsense charts and encourage analysts to keep their judgments vague. He calls for point precision (meaning, “75 percent probability” not just “70 to 85 percent”) in subjective uncertainty estimates, a position more radical than all but the most enthusiastic proponents of using numbers in this way, and shows by experiment that such point estimates can reflect real differences in assessment.

In support of his claim about the value of such estimates, and to frame his broader consideration of the use of numbers, Friedman at the book’s outset and again in the middle briefly discusses the well-reported exchange with President Obama and a range of advisors wherein the latter provided different numerical estimates about the likelihood that a curious compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, harbored Usama bin Ladin. Friedman chides the president—respectfully, to be sure, but also, it must be said, from the comfort of the pages of a university press—for concluding, based on the range of inputs he received, that the decision about whether to take action against the compound was “fifty-fifty” instead of the two-thirds or so chance those estimates should have represented. And fair enough: policymakers who go to the trouble of eliciting numeric probabilities should be prepared, or have with them people prepared, to make the best use of the results.

But it is at these moments in the book, when Friedman’s reasoning runs up against actual decisionmaking, that practitioners reading him will struggle with *War and Chance*. The volume covers important ground in a longstanding and fundamental argument about how best to execute intelligence analysis. But it does so in a way curiously devoid of foreign policy making’s necessarily competitive and *political* nature. That nature is a stew of world events, competing perceptions of national interest,

existing policies and commitments, bureaucratic infighting, domestic political guardrails, and personal idiosyncrasy. Many if not all of the behaviors Friedman calls “pathologies” of reasoning about uncertainty are explainable as extensions of this idea, that policymaking is aided, but not determined, by rigorous evaluation of uncertainty about world events.

That soft-pedaling of the messy reality of policy making also means the book does not address some other objections that will spring immediately to the practitioner’s mind. Friedman bemoans a pathology he calls “relative probability,” where advisers do not assess the likelihood of a policy’s success overall, but only relative to other options; but policy processes rarely reopen an entire policy framework in this way. More mundanely, policymakers, like all human beings (even intelligence analysts!), remember their own history with advantage, undermining Friedman’s use of some presidential critiques to demonstrate the need for numeric probability.

In short, *War and Chance* is an articulate, closely reasoned, empirically tested challenge to fundamental assumptions, which continue to shape analytic practice in the intelligence community, about how (and how not) to think rigorously and transparently about uncertainty. Its optimism, bordering on naivete, about decisionmaking is easy to pick apart and I suspect will be distracting for many. But the rigor and reasoning behind its challenge remains, and the debate is one that every analyst and analytic manager should regularly reflect on as professionals operating in this space. If such reflection should lead, at a minimum, to analysts at least not instinctively recoiling from numeric estimates, and instead considering how they might focus and sharpen thinking, in this reviewer’s view the volume will have done a valuable service.



The reviewer: Charles Heard is the penname of a CIA Directorate of Analysis officer specializing in counterintelligence.

Strategic Warning Intelligence: History, Challenges, and Prospects

John A. Gentry and Joseph S. Gordon (Georgetown University Press, 2019), 274 pp., bibliography, index

Reviewed by Ryan Shaffer

In *Strategic Warning Intelligence*, the authors seek to fill a gap in the literature of intelligence by offering a contemporary study of the evolution of strategic warning, providing warning methodologies and techniques, and suggesting ways to overcome dysfunctions they perceive. Drawing partly from their respective careers at the Central Intelligence Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency, John A. Gentry and Joseph S. Gordon surveyed academic literature on warning, including in related fields like deception and denial. They also reviewed declassified intelligence records and conducted interviews with intelligence officers. The authors note that Cynthia M. Grabo's landmark work *Anticipating Surprise: Analysis for Strategic Warning* was completely declassified 44 years after it was written and one year after she died. That book drew on Grabo's expertise in possible scenarios for a Warsaw Pact invasion in Europe, a perspective now dated, given geopolitical developments and the emergence of multiple transnational, non-state threats. Gentry and Gordon's work offers a more academic approach, employing fields like psychology, while seeking to help analysts warn their customers about 21st century threats.

The book consists of a preface, an introduction—which includes a useful review of the “expanding” literature on intelligence warning, much of it on display in a 20-page bibliography—and 12 chapters. These, the authors point out in the introduction, are organized in four sections; the first chapter defines warning and its concepts; chapters two through four provide history—including notable failures—lessons from that history, a taxonomy of warning institutions and an overview of the evolution of US, British, Dutch, and NATO warning institutions; chapters five through 11 address challenges, methods and bureaucratic issues; and chapter 12 delves into prospects.

Gentry and Gordon define strategic warning intelligence as the “communication to senior national decision-makers of the potential for, or actually impending, events of major significance to national interests and recommendations that leaders consider making policy

decisions and/or taking actions to address the situations.” (12) Noting that warning is “underappreciated,” they explain the key to identifying trends involves intelligence collection, accurate assessment and persuasively conveying that analysis to decisionmakers.

The authors' historical review addresses four warning cases: the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, the Allied invasion of Normandy in 1944, the Yom Kippur War in 1973, and the US Intelligence Community's (IC's) warning of the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1990. From these case studies, they draw seven lessons, which, interestingly, focus on the human dimensions of strategic warning. These include psychological factors of individual analysts, the perspectives of leaders and the impact of their environments on their thinking, the expertise of analysts, and the quality of intelligence personnel, among others. (49) They return to these themes throughout the book.

As for historical government warning systems, the subject of the third chapter, Gentry and Gordon categorize five types. These include national leaders who serve as their own warning analysts and a system of analysts who are all responsible for warning, through their command chains, about issues in their areas of expertise. They also discuss the widened view of strategic intelligence that encompasses elements of what was previously tactical warning. In addressing the development of warning institutions, Gentry and Gordon explain that the US warning system is currently the only example with a “strong version” of the “every-analyst-a-warning-analyst” model. (102)

In the next section, the authors examine operational challenges to strategic warning and responses. Gentry and Gordon explore methodological issues of warning, explaining analysts must know their customers' wants and needs, and high-ranking national security officials are focused on “short time horizons” for the crises that they have to address. Turning to the indicators and warning method as well as its variants, they argue it is “useful to

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

both warning specialists and intelligence analysts generally” and it “is relatively easy to use in monitoring operations and to explain to intelligence consumers.” (138) Gentry and Gordon also describe other analytic warning techniques, such as horizon scanning and the roles of individual analysts’ psychology and political leaders’ personal experiences in shaping warning analysis and reception.

Focusing on specific character traits for good warning analysts, they cite authors like Grabo and Barton Whaley, who argue that certain personality types are best suited for warning; they are “unusually bright, creative people”; “moderately unorthodox in intellectual outlook”; can “get along with most people” as they question their views; and have “modest” career goals and desire for praise. (182) Broadening the scope to warning outside of formal IC channels, Gentry and Gordon examine economic, natural disaster, and health warnings from businesses, non-government organizations, and international organizations that produce valuable warning. They then explore the cultural differences between politicians and analysts as well as briefly describe approaches to intelligence of each US president since Franklin D. Roosevelt, arguing that warning officers can teach their customers about aspects of warning to help them avoid warning mistakes.

In the last chapter of the challenges section, Gentry and Gordon examine institutional problems affecting strategic warning in the IC. Issues they see, for example, are the focus on current intelligence, with a short-term outlook that “precludes” warning; “weak” warning training at the major intelligence agencies; the denigration of expertise caused by emphasis on current intelligence; a lack of long-term research; and the expansive scope of warning issues beyond non-military threats.

Looking forward, Gentry and Gordon conclude that the “emphasis on strategic warning intelligence in the United States” is “now deep in one of its periodic troughs,” and they recommend significant structural changes to reconstitute strategic warning. (235) Citing others’ recommendations as well as their own, the authors call for reforms ranging from more emphasis on warning in basic training courses to “a small number of elite, senior intelligence officers within line analytic units of IC agencies who have warning responsibilities and are given unfettered access to senior decision-makers.” (239)

Strategic Warning Intelligence is probably most suited for junior analysts, students of intelligence, and others looking for a basic treatment of strategic warning issues. It provides a solid synthesis of earlier works, bringing together aspects of the history of strategic warning—including the personalities who have played roles in its development since WWII—and the methodologies used for warning. It also does a good job of analyzing current problems and challenges.

More experienced intelligence professionals and scholars will be familiar with much of the material, especially the case studies, which seem to this reviewer to be relatively superficial summaries drawn from secondary literature. In addition, it is not clear how some of the cases or discussion of warning in countries with different military and political cultures over differing time periods contribute materially to the authors’ closing discussion of problems, methods, institutions and reforms unique to the United States.

Still, this is a useful textbook for introductory intelligence courses and a good reference for interested analysts, scholars, and policymakers.



The reviewer: Ryan Shaffer is a writer and historian. His academic work explores Asian, African, and European history.

Intelligence in Public Media

The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un

Anna Fifield (PublicAffairs, 2019), 336 pp., notes, index.

Le monde selon Kim Jong-un: Guerre ou paix? [The World According to Kim Jong-un: War or Peace?]

Juliette Morillot and Dorian Malovic (Robert Laffont, 2018), 270 pp.

Reviewed by Stephen C. Mercado

Leadership analysis is the assessment of leaders and their environments, of an individual's character and the surrounding political, economic, and military factors driving, constraining, or enabling a leader's actions. Superior intelligence analysts, journalists, or researchers must gather key information, analyze the findings, and report their conclusions clearly to their audiences, whether in classified briefings to senior policymakers or by published works to the public. The journalist Anna Fifield in her recent book on Pyongyang's young leader does well in gathering information and ends her work with some solid analysis, but she exasperates this reader with mocking, contemptuous language better suited to propaganda than analysis.

Bureau chief in Beijing for the *Washington Post* since last year, Fifield is a veteran journalist, who has written for many years on Korean affairs, including in her time as foreign correspondent in Seoul for the *Financial Times* (2004–2008) and as bureau chief in Tokyo for the *Washington Post* (2014–18). She is a fine example of the reporter who wears out a great deal of shoe leather in pursuit of a story. She has visited Pyongyang multiple times; interviewed in the Japanese Alps the extraordinary Fujimoto Kenji,¹ for several years father Kim Jong Il's personal sushi chef and a font of information on the Kim clan²; visited Switzerland for the story of the young leader's European schooling; interviewed in the United States his aunt, Ko Yong Suk; and met in a number of countries with many refugees from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The book benefits a great deal from Japanese and Korean acquaintances and assistant reporters who helped Fifield by conducting research and translating material found in such sources as the memoir of a Kim clan member who defected to the West; a book by one of Japanese journalism's leading Pyongyang hands; and the memoir of Russian President Putin's representative in the

Russian Far East, who rode the rails with Kim Jong Il for a bilateral summit in Moscow.³ Fifield's network gave her "invaluable research and translation help," as she wrote in her book's acknowledgments section. Indeed, the Japanese, Korean, and Russian texts she mined, along with information from more accessible works in English, arguably yielded more treasure than all her trips to Pyongyang and refugee interviews.⁴

Having gathered such impressive information, Fifield wrote a book divided into 16 chapters grouped under three headings—"The Apprenticeship," "The Consolidation," and "The Confidence"—tracing Kim Jong Un's early life, his coming to power at the age of 27 following his father's death in 2011, and his unexpectedly rapid moves since then to consolidate his position and act upon the world stage. Pyongyang watchers and general readers alike will find interest in the details of his basketball-obsessed childhood years in Switzerland; his elimination of his uncle Jang Song Thaek and half-brother Kim Jong Nam, both threats to regime stability because of their connections to Beijing and, allegedly, in Kim's case, Washington.⁵ Fifield also offers such spectacles as the young leader enjoying in Pyongyang the company of a colorful former star of the NBA's Chicago Bulls, and such serious issues as the regime's growing capabilities in nuclear and cyber warfare.

In the end, Fifield marshals some solid conclusions on Kim Jong Un and his regime. She quotes a senior CIA official who credits Kim with a "clarity of purpose" for developing weapons of mass destruction. She herself concludes that Kim is intent on preserving the country against a much stronger United States through the time-tested strategy of mutual assured destruction. Ringing true is her argument that Kim agreed to summit talks with President Trump not simply due to Washington's "maximum pressure" campaign but because the young leader had first laid the necessary diplomatic (rapprochement with

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

Beijing) and military (the nuclear and missile programs) groundwork necessary for fruitful negotiations.

The author errs in a couple instances. One is in suggesting that terror alone has kept the Kim clan in place and the DPRK's people in submission. The other is that the regime is inherently incapable of undertaking bold economic reform without bringing down the political house. As to the first idea, the security services and prison camps certainly play a role in regime stability. However, with the decades-old Korean civil war between North and South still unsettled, the threat from the stronger Republic of Korea (ROK) south of the DMZ appears to be the greatest prop to the dictatorship in Pyongyang. The authorities even today cannot have forgotten the arrests and executions that followed the advance of ROK forces north into the DPRK several months into the Korean War. Nor can anyone in Pyongyang expect a happy future for themselves if the South should succeed in taking over the North. Rather than scenes of Koreans dashing joyously south across the DMZ, as Germans crossed into West Berlin when the Wall came down, we are likely to witness Seoul sealing the borders.⁶ As for bold economic reform, even Beijing and Hanoi, peers to which Fifield unfavorably compares Pyongyang, only opted for fundamental opening and change after winning their own civil wars.

Perhaps worse than any error, however, is how the author mars her hard work and solid conclusions by resorting to a sneering tone more suited to propaganda than analysis. She writes of Kim as a "puzzling potentate," of his "coronation" as a "young emperor" following "anointment" by his father. She mocks the outpouring of grief among the Koreans lining the route of the funeral procession in Pyongyang as "Korean soap opera crossed with Latin American telenovela with a heavy dollop of bizarre." Many of the snide remarks are not only gratuitous, but contradictory. She judges the nuclear program to be a rational deterrent but then describes it as Kim's

"security blanket." Elsewhere, she derides the "absurdity" of Kim's protective service members running alongside his armored limousine while also noting that the Koreans adopted the practice from the US Secret Service. Did the author or her publisher think that ridicule would sell more copies than analysis? The book's very cover is a cartoon portrait of Kim.⁷

Another point of view

Across the Atlantic, French journalists Juliette Morillot and Dorian Malovic present a more sober and accurate portrait of Kim Jong Un's Korea. Like Fifield, the two have expended much shoe leather in three decades of research and writing, with many trips to the two Koreas as well as to China, Japan, Russia, and Southeast Asia, to speak with DPRK officials and refugees.⁸ In their book, the two cover much the same ground as Fifield, from economic changes to the development of nuclear weapons. Whereas Fifield writes of Pyongyang's growth but denigrates the nation's capital as a "Potemkin village," Morillot and Malovic inform us that development there is real and is also visible in the provincial capitals. Fifield repeats the notion, common in the West, of an official blackout of foreign information. The French journalists inform us that the DPRK has five television stations, with frequent broadcasts of films from China and Russia, as well as from France, Germany, and elsewhere, along with televised international sports matches and other foreign news. By coincidence, both books mention Pak Chol In, manager of the March 26 Electric Cable Factory. Fifield neglects to name him or offer details of the site but writes of his having gained weight as the factory has prospered in recent years. Morillot and Malovic name Pak and report a number of details concerning the factory. Let us hope an American publisher discovers this book and publishes it in English.



The reviewer: Stephen C. Mercado recently retired from a career spent in the DNI's Open Source Enterprise and its predecessors, including the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, where he worked on Asian issues via media published in several languages. He has written often on contemporary and historical issues in Asian intelligence, including several previous articles and book reviews on North Korea for this journal.

Notes

1. All Japanese and Korean names appear in traditional order, with family name preceding given name.
2. It was Fujimoto who said in an interview published 15 years ago that Kim Jong Il would choose Jong Un over elder brother Jong Chol. Many Pyongyang watchers then and much later assumed that the youngest son of Kim Jong Il had little chance of coming to power in a nation so steeped in Confucian culture's preference for the elder over the younger. See *Kitachosen: Kin Seinichi okake sushi shokunin no shinshogen* [North Korea: New Testimony of Kim Jong Il's Sushi Chef], *Aera*, 26 July 2004, 70–71. Fujimoto has written several extraordinary insider books on the Kim clan. Three draw on his years as the family's sushi chef, relating various episodes, adding ground photos of leadership villas, and providing the West with the first photograph of Kim Jong Un: *Kin Seinichi no Ryorinin* [Kim Jong Il's Chef] (2003); *Kin Seinichi no Shiseikatsu* [Kim Jong Il's Private Life] (2004); and *Kaku to Onna wo aishita Shogun-sama* [The General Who Loved Nukes and Women] (2006). Fujimoto later wrote of Kim Jong Un's new regime in a book describing his return to Pyongyang in 2012 to beg forgiveness for leaving without permission years earlier: *Hikisakareta Yakusoku* [Torn-Up Promise] (2012).
3. I refer to Song Hye Rang's *Dungnamujip* [Wisteria House] (2000), Gomi Yoji's *Onna ga ugokasu Kitachosen* [Women Who Move North Korea] (2016), Konstantin Pulikovskiy's *Vostochnyy ekspress*, and Po Rosii s *Kim Chen Irom* [Oriental Express: Journey through Russia with Kim Jong Il] (2002). One of Fifield's helpers almost certainly mined information from the 2003 Korean translation of Pulikovskiy's book.
4. Document exploitation often trumps direct observation. An earlier example comes from Beijing. Claude Martin, French ambassador to China (1990–93) wrote in his memoir that, on arriving in Beijing in 1964 as a cultural attaché, he discovered to his surprise that his embassy, the first from the West to operate behind the Bamboo Curtain, gained most of its information not from its presence on the ground but from the weekly arrival from Hong Kong of translated Chinese radio broadcasts monitored by the “special services” of the United States, Britain, and the Republic of China (Taiwan). See *La diplomatie n'est pas un dîner de gala* (2018), 59.
5. Fifield asserts, without offering evidence, that Kim Jong Nam was an “informant” of the Central Intelligence Agency, which, if true and reported to Pyongyang, could have been the reason for his killing.
6. German politicians who visited Seoul in 2011 to offer lessons from their own country's unification learned of the South's intent to seal the North's population in place after a takeover. Said one German: “The South Koreans were talking about border controls. I'll be damned! They seriously intend to close the border after the wall has fallen!” “Germans Give Pep Talks on Korean Unification,” *Spiegel Online*, 6 January 2012 (<https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/seoul-searching-germans-give-pep-taks-on-korean-unification-a-807123.html>, accessed 25 July 2019).
7. Interestingly, Fifield's British publisher opted not for the cartoon but a cover photograph showing Kim and several military officers in the field. The British also chose a more sober subtitle: *The Secret Rise and Rule of Kim Jong Un*.
8. Morillot speaks Korean, and Malovic Chinese, which has allowed them to meet DPRK refugees without relying, as other journalists have done, on ROK intermediaries and interpreters to make introductions for them and interpret the refugee testimonies.



Intelligence in Public Media

Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland

Patrick Radden Keefe (New York: Doubleday, 2019) 559 pages, source notes, photographs, index

Reviewed by Joseph Gartin

New Yorker writer Jon Lee Anderson once observed “war has a way of making all kinds of killing possible.”^a Northern Ireland’s long political-sectarian conflict known as the Troubles was no exception. Spanning the late 1960s until the Good Friday Agreement in April 1998, the Troubles left some 3,600 dead, wounded perhaps 500,000 more, and displaced untold others. What began as a civil rights movement in Protestant-controlled Northern Ireland (part of the United Kingdom) descended into a grinding deadly struggle. All kinds of killing were possible: shootings, homemade napalm, car bombs, and what Irish poet Ciaran Carson dubbed “Belfast confetti,” the detritus heaved from rooftops and across barricades.

As the conflict escalated, so did its lethality. The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA, but also commonly known as the IRA or the Provos), upgraded its obsolescent arsenal with modern arms through a clandestine supply chain that stretched from the United States to Libya. Its bombmakers built larger, more deadly devices in a widening gyre of terrorism that would account for about two-thirds of all Troubles deaths. Protestant loyalist paramilitaries killed another 1,000, including through bombings in Dublin, the capital of the Republic of Ireland. British intelligence, police, and military added to the death toll, assassinating IRA members, funneling guns and intelligence to loyalist groups, and colluding with death squads that killed Catholics with no republican ties.

Amid such a tableau of violence, a handful of cases would come to epitomize the conflict. The subject of Patrick Radden Keefe’s *Say Nothing* is one: the kidnapping and murder of Jean McConville by the Provos in December 1972. Widow and mother of 10 children, McConville was snatched from her Belfast home, interrogated, tortured, shot, and buried along the shore, just over the border in the Republic of Ireland. Her remains were discovered by a passerby in 2003.

a. Jon Lee Anderson, “Massacre in Kandahar,” *New Yorker*, 11 March 2012 at <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/massacre-in-kandahar>

Why the IRA targeted McConville is disputed, and conflicting accounts offer little prospect of resolution. Keefe explores claims she had helped a wounded British soldier (53) or was an informant for British intelligence. (306) The truth is probably irreducible. In the charged atmosphere of 1970s Northern Ireland, on both sides suspicion alone could be enough for a death warrant.

Tragic as McConville’s death might be, it is an unlikely topic for an entire book, which makes the success of Keefe’s account all the more impressive. Keefe is an accomplished writer whose work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Slate*, and *The New York Times*, and while a student at Yale University Law School he authored a well-received book on global electronic surveillance.^b He is also a dogged researcher who pursued McConville’s story for several years from Belfast to Boston.

Caveating *Say Nothing* as narrative nonfiction rather than history, Keefe sweeps the reader along for nearly five decades of conflict and uneasy peace. He deftly places McConville’s murder within the context of Britain’s military response to the civil rights movement, the IRA’s resurgence from nostalgic irrelevance to Europe’s most lethal terrorist group, her fateful intersection with some of the IRA’s most notorious figures, and the post-Troubles search for accountability.

Despite the quality of the prose, intelligence readers might occasionally chafe at Keefe’s narrative approach. He provides an extensive index detailing his sources, including his rationale where records or memories contradict. At times, though, the storytelling flourishes—the rickety chairs in a pub (90) or the soft grass in a field (108)—take center stage. More crucially, are the thoughts and emotions ascribed to key figures products of the inevitable repackaging of memories, justification of misdeeds some nearly 50 years on, or just score-settling?

These are central questions because Keefe relies in part on the Belfast Project, a fraught oral history program

b. Chatter: Dispatches From the Secret World of Global Eavesdropping (2005)

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

at Boston College that was intended to capture the experiences of key figures from the Troubles but would eventually become embroiled in trans-Atlantic police investigations. (225) In the closing pages of *Say Nothing* Keefe uses the archives and other documentary sources to conclude that McConville's killer was Marian Price, (343) an infamous IRA volunteer, on the orders of Gerry Adams. Both deny involvement, and Adams—president of the IRA's political wing Sinn Fein until 2018, pivotal figure in the peace process, and regular visitor to Washington, DC—has long denied IRA membership during the Troubles despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

The twists and turns of the McConville case are fascinating whodunit, but *Say Nothing* also succeeds as an important addition to contextualizing intelligence operations during the Troubles. Human intelligence would play a major role. The IRA's clandestine toolkit was largely an extension of republican operations during Ireland's war for independence decades before: informers, overseas fundraising, access agents, surreptitious entry, jail breaks, bank robbery, double and triple agents, and assassinations.^a British military, police, and civilian intelligence organizations recruited IRA members as informers, blocking the flow of arms and money and disrupting plots. All the while, all sides used a complex and shifting web of secret back channels to communicate throughout the Troubles.

Keefe invokes infamous CIA spy-hunter James Angleton to convey the IRA's obsession with the risk from informers (also known as touts or grasses) throughout the conflict. As with Angleton, the obsession was not without cause; Keefe asserts by the end of the Troubles the IRA was "hopelessly penetrated by double agents." (270) It is hard to know whether that is overstatement, but one thing is clear: the counter-spy battle in Northern Ireland was deadly.

Say Nothing looks in some detail at notorious IRA molehunter Freddie Scappaticci, who likely had a hand in some 50 murders of IRA touts but was himself allegedly

a. See for example Michael Foy, *Michael Collin's Intelligence War: The Struggle Between the British and the IRA, 1919–1921* (Stroud: Sutton, 2006)

controlled by British intelligence under the codename Stakeknife. Keefe notes that for years the IRA had worried about an informer within the highest levels of the organization, a so-called supergrass. The fears were well-founded; given his access to information on the most sensitive IRA operations, Scappaticci's apparent recruitment was akin to the KGB having turned Angleton. Keefe cites one British military intelligence officer's conclusion that Scappaticci's best protection against suspicion was simply "to keep killing," because IRA leaders assumed London would not permit one of its own to exhibit such "conspicuous savagery." (273)

As the Troubles dragged on, the British would increasingly turn to technical collection to supplement its HUMINT operations. The IRA and other republican groups—and to a lesser extent loyalist paramilitaries—faced airborne reconnaissance, street cameras, wiretaps, vehicle trackers, and other technical collection that all but blanketed Northern Ireland's cities. These were augmented by the UK's expansive counterterrorism authorities, including internment without charge, and extensive use of undercover police and military. Northern Ireland in effect became the distillation of Britain's colonial counter-insurgency tactics—applied inside the United Kingdom. (70)

A comprehensive intelligence history of the Troubles has yet to be written, but *Say Nothing* succeeds both as an accounting of one infamous murder and a starting point for future inquiry. Given the financial support for the IRA that flowed from Irish-American donors, the central role of the United States in the GFA negotiations, British collusion with loyalist paramilitaries, and deep ties between the US and British services now a century old,^b there are ample avenues to explore. Doing so, however, will mean navigating the culture of silence that looms over any reckoning. It is fitting that Keefe takes his title from a line by another Irish poet, Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney: "Whatever you say, say nothing."

b. Dr. Mary Samantha Barton's otherwise comprehensive article in *Studies* (Vol. 63, No. 2, Extracts, June 2019) on the origins of the special relationship in the "Red Scare" of 1919 makes no mention of Irish war of independence during this same period or the Irish civil war that followed in the early 1920s. In both periods, intelligence collection and clandestine operations would play major roles.



The reviewer: Joseph Gartin is Deputy Associate Director of CIA for Learning. He has served as an intelligence analyst and led analysis in multiple senior positions in CIA's Directorate of Intelligence and the National Intelligence Council.

Intelligence in Public Media

Surprise, Kill, Vanish. The Secret History of CIA Paramilitary Armies, Operators and Assassins

Annie Jacobsen (Little, Brown and Company, 2019), 545 pps, 16 pages of photographs.

Reviewed by J. R. Seeger

As the US military and Intelligence Communities enter the 19th year of armed conflict in the 21st century, dozens of books have been published addressing everything from the geostrategic aspects of the post 9/11 world to tactical descriptions of specific conflict zones and sometimes specific battles in those zones. These books include memoirs and well researched official and unofficial histories of the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other “small wars” raging across the entire globe. While it is no longer considered an acceptable descriptor for the US missions since 9/11 to talk about a “global war on terror,” for the men and women in uniform and for members of the IC that these 19 years have been a “global war.” If not entirely focused on terrorist organizations, the conflicts across the globe certainly focused primarily on non-state actors and often their state sponsors hostile to the US and to our NATO allies.

At the beginning of her book, *Surprise, Kill, Vanish*, Ms. Jacobsen offers a clear description of the options the president of the United States has in these complex times. He can use diplomacy as a first option to influence world actors. If that fails, he can use the US military to force enemies and malign actors to comply. Somewhere between the public sphere of diplomacy and the equally public but far more destructive sphere of military operations, the president also has a third option. He can use covert (meaning deniable) means to influence adversaries. Often that third option is designed to prevent war and provide the United States with some breathing space so that the diplomacy can work. Sometimes, the third, covert option is used in advance of military activity to prepare the battlefield for US forces. The third option is almost always associated with violence.

In the first pages, Jacobsen asks, “I wondered if dispatching paramilitary operators around the world to conduct lethal covert-action operations was all too often a recipe for disaster or, instead, mostly a weaponized strength.” And adds, “Is killing a person decreed by the president to be a threat to the U.S. national security right or wrong? Moral or immoral? Honorable or dishonor-

able? I found answers in writing this book. I hope readers find theirs.” (6–7)

These questions posed along with the subtitle of the book would argue that the author intended the book to be didactic: to teach readers through discussion of the strategic aspects of presidential authorities with regard to covert action or, instead, to teach readers about the sophisticated covert capability available to every president since the end of World War II. Another alternative would have been to provide a modern explanation for the famous line from John LeCarre’s novel *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, “We do disagreeable things so that ordinary people here and elsewhere can sleep safely in their beds at night.”

While both topics are discussed in the book, they are discussed only by means of vignettes without any help in identifying teaching points. Further, neither of the topics are discussed in anything resembling the detail required to understand the nuance of covert action or the “third option.” Instead, the book bounces among at least four different topics. First, the book provides vignettes of special operations from World War II to the present. Some of these operations are linked by the concept of unconventional warfare. UW is often described simply as working “by, with, and through” indigenous forces to accomplish a military mission.

Some of the operations are linked to the concept of clandestine special operations conducted by the OSS, US Army Special Forces, and other US Special Operations Forces. These clandestine operations are not in any way designed to be “deniable” and are therefore not considered “covert” operations. Instead, they are secret operations conducted by small teams of highly trained operators who have a specific mission which is described in the title of the book: to surprise, kill, and vanish. Some of the operations she describes were true covert operations in which the approving authority is always the president of the United States and the US government must not be as responsible.

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

Woven into the fabric of the book are biographies of two men famous in their respective communities: Billy Waugh and Lewis Merletti. Both started their federal careers in the military. Jacobsen makes it very clear that the origins of their successes in two very different careers were in Vietnam, when they were members of the US Special Forces conducting direct action and strategic reconnaissance missions against the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army. Billy Waugh began his career as a paratrooper in the Korean War and ended his military career as a highly decorated noncommissioned officer. Merletti served with distinction in Vietnam as a non-commissioned officer and at the end of his tour of duty returned to the United States and separated from service. In the late 1970s, Waugh became a CIA contractor working for Special Activities Division. After college, Merletti joined the US Secret Service. He served on the Presidential Protective Detail and eventually served as the Special Agent in charge of the detail under President George H.W. Bush. He was director of the Secret Service under President Clinton.

Jacobsen has a well-deserved reputation as a good writer and an excellent researcher. The bibliography and notes at the end of the book reinforce her credentials as a journalist who wants to be sure that she has more than one source to corroborate a story. Unfortunately, the book has two problems that make it hard to recommend. First, Jacobsen tries to capture too many topics between the covers. The paired biographies of Waugh and Merletti alone would have easily filled a book and their heroic actions in war and peace would have guaranteed an avid readership. The same could be said if the book had focused on the interplay between White House policymakers and the “foot soldiers” responsible for delivering the required operational successes. Another focus might have been detailing why some covert operations succeeded and why others failed. Instead, readers are left with bits and pieces of each of these topics. Though well researched, the material doesn’t seem to hang together for the entirety of the book.

The second problem is probably of less interest to the general public than to members of either the special operations or IC, and these are a number of small errors that should have been corrected by an editor familiar with

the topic. For example, in the first chapter, Jacobsen puts the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) inside the British Secret Intelligence Service (aka MI6). In fact, SOE and MI6 operations were entirely separate during WW II and often were openly hostile to one another. In the same chapter, Jacobsen identifies William Casey as the chief of OSS Special Operations in Europe. He was the head of OSS Secret Intelligence operations running spy networks in occupied Europe and in mid-late 1944 focused on OSS operations inside Nazi Germany. Jacobsen conflates OSS/Special Operations UW missions working with resistance forces in occupied Europe with OSS/SO Operational Groups which were US-only direct action and strategic reconnaissance teams.

Later in the book, Jacobsen compresses the story of the CIA-Special Forces partnership in Vietnam with the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) in a way that readers might assume the partnership began with Operation SWITCHBACK and was almost certain to be a failure. A more detailed reading of CIA and Special Forces histories the partnership would indicate that CIDG operations were showing some success until policymakers in Washington, including the director central intelligence, transferred command and control of the CIDG program to the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). During what is probably the most dramatic vignette involving Billy Waugh’s multiple Vietnam tours, the text confuses an RPG (rocket propelled grenade) with a Soviet bloc machinegun (either an RPD or RPK). Finally, in the post 9/11 part of the book, Jacobsen glosses over the death of Mike Spann, the first CIA SAD officer to die in Afghanistan. There she reiterates a completely inaccurate account of the events, which implies that Mike Spann’s death was linked to CIA errors in headquarters and in the field. In reality, he was killed in a larger Al Qa’ida and Taliban ambush designed in one stroke to kill the regional Afghan leaders and US Special Forces and CIA officers.

In sum, *Surprise, Kill, Vanish* is a disappointment mostly because it tries to cover too many topics. Jacobsen conducted research to write multiple books on multiple topics, but compressing them into one book results in a work that sometimes enlightens, sometimes entertains, but often misses the mark.



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

Intelligence in Public Media

Cover Name: Dr. Rantzau

Nikolaus Ritter, trans. and edited by Katharine R. Wallace (University Press of Kentucky, 2019), 264 pp., foreword, preface, bibliography, notes, index.

Reviewed by Ryan Shaffer

This is the memoir of Nikolaus Ritter (1899–1974), chief of air intelligence for Nazi Germany’s military intelligence service, Abwehr. Originally published in German in 1972, this is the book’s first appearance in English. It was translated and edited by Katharine Wallace, Ritter’s American-born daughter. The foreword is a synopsis of Ritter’s life and an overview of intelligence during the period of Ritter’s service written by historian Mary Kathryn Barbier. We learn, surprisingly, that the original manuscript was written in English with American author Beth Day, but the original apparently found no English-language publisher, so it was translated and published in Germany. Wallace was unable to locate the English manuscript, so she translated the German edition and added comments throughout, providing real names of agents and historical background. The real value of the book is its rich detailing of Ritter’s work in recruiting agents, through bribery or ideological loyalty, to collect scientific or tactical material in aid of Nazi Germany. Ritter also discusses the tradecraft intelligence officers used while posing as international businessmen and making contact with agents through third parties.

The book’s 25 chapters are chronologically ordered and culminate with Ritter’s arrest, interrogation and imprisonment by the Allies. Ritter begins his introduction by describing a visit to the United States in 1937, soon after he was hired by the Abwehr to collect intelligence on the United States and the United Kingdom. He was selected for the job because of his knowledge of the United States and mastery of English; he had lived in the country from 1924 to 1935, marrying in 1926 and having two children before moving back to Germany, disillusioned with the state of the US economy in depression. Ritter explains that he was reluctant to write a book, but after finding out that all the names of his agents and records were publicly available in the US National Archives, “there were no reasons to keep secrets” anymore. (3) He writes that the people who worked for him “were not Hollywood heroes, but rather human beings of flesh and blood, with much courage, selfless commitment, and great idealism. But there were also issues of greed, foolishness, and treason.” (4)

Ritter details how he recruited agents, starting with Arthur Owens, codenamed Johnny, who was an electrical engineer in England.^a Ritter contacted Owens through the mail under the guise of importing batteries, which created a cover for Owens to travel to Hamburg. Ritter used numerous cover names other than Dr. Rantzau when making contact with such agents. Other agents who worked at US diplomatic missions were recruited through contacts in other countries, where they had access to non-public information or could provide passports and shipping documents. By the time war broke out, Ritter explained, “My section was the only one in all of Intelligence I Air that had a secret transmitter in Britain,” and it was used to provide intelligence about British radar stations. (108) As the war progressed, the two met in Spain and Ritter suspected that Johnny was by then working for British intelligence or he would not have been able to leave the country, which Ritter claimed Johnny confirmed.

Ritter often posed as a textile merchant, a job he had held in New York City, and had four phones in his German office: three for business contacts, each associated with a specific company name. The networks he launched used a variety of people from those in private business who had access to blueprints for military equipment to cleaning personnel with access to an American ambassador’s office where he “had the habit of throwing his notes and other papers in the wastebasket by simply crumpling them up instead of destroying them.” (19) He also describes the internal structure and issues of the Abwehr and provides insight into Admiral Canaris, head of the service, who “radiated a striking air of calm.” (13)

In 1937, Ritter was given the task of acquiring intelligence related to the US Army Air Corp armament industry. He built a network of assets using false names in different locations, but his most notable collection achievement was acquisition of designs for the Norden Company’s bombsight; these he sent back to Germany in

a. For more on Owens, see: Nigel West and Madoc Roberts, *Snow: The Double Life of a World War II Spy* (Biteback Publishing, 2011).

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

newspapers. Analysts in Berlin declared the blueprints to be “completely worthless,” but Ritter refused to believe this since his source had not accept payment and provided them to help Germany. (78) Ritter took the unusual step of showing them to an expert, who declared they were legitimate, and the bombsight “was quickly built for assembly line production,” while “Americans were still in the experimental stage.” (82) In addition, a German at an American company that made gyrocompasses provided technical designs for the Sperry Gyroscope.

Ritter also helped train two men to parachute as agents into England. Each was given proper British identification and ration cards. One was immediately caught in a tree during landing. Ritter wrote that he reluctantly had Johnny help, but found out after the war that Johnny met the person “accompanied by two men from the British Security Service” and that the man was imprisoned for the rest of the war. (154) The other man landed safely and subsequently provided reports about weather, airfields, and aircraft, among other things.

Ritter also describes his mission in Africa, which included helping two informants get behind the Egyptian-British front. He was on board an aircraft, which crashed and the men survived on a rubber raft with just “a small pouch of ship zwieback plus a half-liter bottle of cognac.” (188) Eventually, they were rescued by a local man, and both agents arrived at their intended location and “were able to establish contact with the Egyptian Revolutionary Committee. Their contact man was Anwar el-Sadat.” (191) Meanwhile, Ritter was discharged from a military hospital in July 1941, and by the fall news broke that dozens of German spies were arrested in the United States. He learned that one of his assets had been turned by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and exposed the entire spy ring. Therefore, Ritter “could no longer work in the United States” and subsequently served in military operations in Italy and Germany until his capture. (195)

At the end of the war, he fled through US and British lines to Hamburg where a British officer arrested and interrogated him about his informants and travel. He was released from prison in August 1946. Remarried after his American wife divorced him, his German wife worked as a notary, and Ritter became “self-employed” and connect-

ed with “various import and export firms.” (209) In the years that followed, he met some of his former contacts and learned the fate of others. Of Johnny in particular, he writes “there is no further doubt that Johnny was a master spy.” (213) Ritter concludes the book by discussing the vital importance of intelligence and the people involved. He explains, “True informants are those who place themselves at the state’s disposal out of idealism or out of a patriotic sense of duty. Among all volunteers, they have drawn the heaviest lot because they are almost always lone wolves—often in a losing battle.” (218)

This book is a valuable primary source, offering insight into a German intelligence officer’s activities before and during the WWII. Historians have for decades, cited the German-language version of this autobiography. Now this translation makes it accessible to new readers interested in German intelligence history. However, there are notable omissions and questions about Ritter’s accuracy in describing the involvement of his assets in counterintelligence and deception operations. For example, former CIA historian Benjamin Fischer described Ritter “as hapless in the field” and “behind his desk in Hamburg,” but he also noted it was unclear what, if anything, Ritter knew about Britain’s double-cross system under the Twenty, or XX, Committee that turned Nazi agents, because it was not mentioned in the book.^a In addition, in her preface Wallace writes that Ritter “damaged” her family. In the foreword Barbier explains that Ritter’s first wife, Aurora, and their two children were essentially abandoned during Ritter’s frequent disappearances, leading to the divorce and an attempt to leave the country with the children. However, “the Gestapo abducted the children and wanted their mother to leave for America without them.” (xii) These interesting details are missing from the memoir itself, but they have been published in another book by Wallace written under her maiden name, K.F. Ritter.^b Nonetheless, historians will find rich detail about Nazi Germany’s intelligence work and tradecraft in this book.

a. Benjamin Fischer, “A.k.a. ‘Dr. Rantzau’: The Enigma of Major Nikolaus Ritter,” *Center for the Study of Intelligence Bulletin* no. 11, Summer 2000. Online at <https://web.archive.org/web/20070214054501/http://www.cia.gov/csi/bulletin/csi11.html>

b. K.F. Ritter, *Aurora: An Alabama school teacher in Germany struggles to keep her children during WWII after she discovers her husband is a German spy* (Xlibris, 2006).



The reviewer: Ryan Shaffer is a writer and historian. His academic work explores Asian, African and European history.

Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf—September 2019

Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake

(Note to on-line readers: The titles are hyperlinked to the reviews in PDF versions of this bookshelf.)

CURRENT TOPICS

Bytes, Bombs, and Spies: The Strategic Dimensions of Offensive Cyber Operations, edited by Herbert Lin and Amy B. Zegart

To Catch A Spy: The Art of Counterintelligence, by James M. Olson

GENERAL

LEADERS: Myth and Reality, by Gen. Stanley McChrystal, US Army (Ret.), Jeff Eggers, and Jason Mangone

HISTORICAL

An Impeccable Spy: Richard Sorge, Stalin's Master Agent, by Owen Matthews

The Lady Is a Spy: Virginia Hall, World War II, Hero of the French Resistance, by Don Mitchell

The Last Cambridge Spy: John Cairncross, Bletchley Codebreaker and Soviet Double Agent, by Chris Smith

The Spy In Moscow Station: A Counterspy's Hunt For A Deadly Cold War Threat, by Eric Haseltine

They Fought Alone: The True Story of the Starr Brothers, British Secret Agents in Nazi Occupied France, by Charles Glass

To Blind the Eyes of Our Enemies: Washington's Grand Deception, by G. L. Lamborn and W. L. Simpson

HISTORICAL— INTELLIGENCE AND D-Day

Bletchley Park and D-Day: The Untold Story of How the Battle for Normandy Was Won, by David Kenyon

Codeword OVERLORD: Axis Espionage and the D-Day Landings, by Nigel West

D-Day Girls: The Spies Who Armed The Resistance, Sabotaged the Nazis, and Helped Win World War II, by Sarah Rose

Soldier, Sailor, Frogman, Spy, Airman, Gangster, Kill or Die – How the Allies Won on D-Day, by Giles Milton

VANGUARD: The True Stories of the Reconnaissance and Intelligence Missions Behind D-Day, by David Abrutat

INTELLIGENCE ABROAD

Guy Liddell's Cold War MI5 Diaries, Three Volumes, May 1945–May 1953, edited by Nigel West

Australia's First Spies: The Remarkable Story of Australia's Intelligence Operations, 1901–1945, by John Fahey

Spies of No Country: Secret Lives at the Birth of Israel, by Matti Friedman

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

CURRENT TOPICS

Bytes, Bombs, and Spies: The Strategic Dimensions of Offensive Cyber Operations, edited by Herbert Lin and Amy B. Zegart. (Brookings Institution Press, 2018) 424, end of chapter notes, index.

In the introduction to *Bytes, Bombs, and Spies*, the editors assert academics and analysts have paid much more attention to cyber defense than to cyber offense despite “the increasing prominence of offensive cyber operations as instruments of national policy.” Thus, they conclude, this circumstance warrants “serious research conducted by independent scholars at universities and think tanks.” (4) As precedent for their position they cite the important contributions to nuclear strategy made by Bernard Brodie—the fundamentals of deterrence and the importance of a second-strike capability—and Herman Kahn, who introduced the concept of strategic nuclear escalation, and Thomas Schelling, who contributed to the theory of arms control.

It is too soon to assess the long-range strategic significance of the 16 articles by 23 authors that comprise *Bytes, Bombs, and Spies*. But it is safe to say the authors identify the unique characteristics of cyber weapons and their functions in cyberspace. In addition, they comment on the strategy and doctrine for their offensive use, how they are influenced by deterrence and escalation potential, and the participatory role of the private sector.

For example, in his article “Illuminating a New Domain,” former Deputy Director of NSA Chris Inglis lays out the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) infrastructure needed to support effective cyber operations, the fifth domain of operations “alongside

land, sea, air, and space.” Other articles assess when and how to respond to cyber attacks—with bombs or from a keyboard—and what the rules of engagement should be in either case. The chapter titled “The Cartwright Conjecture” deals with the proposition that the United States should possess “fearsome cyber capabilities and that our adversaries should know about them,” (173) a concept analogous to our nuclear deterrence theory. The need for intelligence is mentioned frequently, especially in the chapter on the proposing a cyber SIOP (Single Integrated Operational Plan) such as existed to coordinate US and Allied nuclear warfighting strategy against the Soviet Union. (117)

Not all the contributions are written with the clarity found in the excellent introduction written by the editors. For example, the chapter on “Effects, Saliences, and Norms” is semantically dense and cries out for some simple declarative sentences. An equally problematic example is titled “Disintermediation, Counterinsurgency, and Cyber Defense,” where the term disintermediation is never defined and just how it has “altered espionage and warfare” (346) is left to the reader to discover.

With the designation of the US Cyber Command comes the certainty that understanding of the issues raised in *Bytes, Bombs, and Spies* will be required for national security planning in the future. It should be given serious attention and this is a good place to start.

To Catch A Spy: The Art of Counterintelligence, by James M. Olson. (Georgetown University Press, 2019) 232, endnotes, appendix, index.

In 2009, Georgetown University Press republished the late William Johnson’s 1987 book, *Thwarting Enemies At Home and Abroad: How To Be a Counterintelligence Officer*. An endorsement on the rear cover reads “He gets it right. Only a respected pro like [Johnson] could have described so clearly our arcane business of dangles, doubles, defectors, and deception.” It was signed, James M. Olson.

Now teaching intelligence courses at the Bush School of Public Service at Texas A&M University, Olson has written his own book on the subject, and former CIA colleague Henry Crumpton, author of *The Art of Intelligence*,^a has endorsed him as “America’s counterintelligence guru.” Is there a conflict of opinion here? No. In *To Catch A Spy*, Olson has written because “[w]e are losing the espionage wars, and it is time to tighten our

a. Henry A. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA’s Clandestine Service* (Penguin Press, 2012).

counterintelligence.” (xii) To achieve that goal, Olson builds on Johnson’s fundamentals and applies them to current cases and threats.

To establish the magnitude of the problem, Olson devotes a chapter to each of “the three most aggressive and damaging culprits currently undermining our national security . . . China, Russia, and Cuba.” (xii) He follows this analysis with an updated version of an article he wrote in 2001, “The Ten Commandments of Counterintelligence,” which provides guidelines for dealing with foreign counterintelligence cases.^a Counterintelligence in the workplace gets a chapter of its own.

Like Johnson’s book, this book gives serious attention to the topic of double-agent operations. As Olson puts it, “there is nothing more delectable than a good, juicy double agent operation.” And after clarifying the definition, he reviews what such operations can accomplish and how they should be managed.

The final portion of the book contains 12 case studies that Olson writes “illustrate succinctly some of the most important dos and don’ts of good CI.” (113). After a summary of each case, he highlights one or more of the principles addressed earlier that were not followed or were improperly applied. A few examples will make the point.

The Edward Lee Howard case, besides being the only instance of a former CIA employee defecting to the Soviets, is a mix of CIA mistakes made when he was processed for employment and then assigned to Russia;

had the errors been avoided, none of what followed would have occurred.

The reverse is true in the Earl Edwin Pitts case. Olson concludes his becoming a Soviet agent was probably unavoidable, but when a Russian diplomat he had originally contacted defected and named him as a spy, Pitt’s days were numbered. Eventually he became the ‘victim’ of an FBI false-flag operation.

The case of Chinese spy Chi Mak “violated one of the cardinal sins of espionage: predictability.” Yet, Olson continues, the Chinese use the same techniques over and over because they work. Chi Mak was one of many Chinese who immigrated to the United States, got an education, became a citizen, went to work for a high-tech company in California, and spied for his homeland. Olson urges every US CI specialist to study this case “because it provides a template of how the Chinese intelligence services like to operate against a high technology target.” (132)

To Catch A Spy has an appendix titled the “Counterintelligence Officer’s Bookshelf” that provides and annotated list of 25 very good books on one or more CI cases that if read and studied, will provide a solid historical foundation on counterintelligence. But he has omitted one book that deserves equal consideration: *Fair Play: The Moral Dilemmas of Spying*, by James Olson.^b While not directly about CI, many of the moral principles discussed apply.

Professor Olson has delivered an important contribution to the intelligence literature.

GENERAL

LEADERS: Myth and Reality, by Gen. Stanley McChrystal, US Army (Ret.), Jeff Eggers, and Jason Mangone. (Portfolio Penguin, 2018) 458, endnotes, photos, index.

Gen. Stanley McChrystal is a West Point graduate with 38 years of service in leadership positions. He is now teaching at Yale University. Jeff Eggers is a Naval Academy graduate and a former SEAL officer with combat service in Afghanistan and Iraq. He has a graduate degree from Oxford University, served as President Obama’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, and is

currently executive director of McChrystal Group Leadership Institute. Jason Mangone served as a Marine Corps infantry officer before attending graduate school at Yale and then joining the Aspen Institute. In *LEADERS: Myth and Reality* they “attempt to take that first step toward a general theory of leadership”—not a simple challenge. (xiv)

a. “A Never-Ending Necessity: The Ten Commandments of Counterintelligence,” *Studies in Intelligence* 45, No. 3 (September 2001).

b. James M. Olson, *Fair Play: The Moral Dilemmas of Spying* (Potomac Books, 2006).

To emphasize that there is no one definition of leadership that fits all and how leadership can be swayed by myth rather than reality, the authors follow Plutarch's precedent and compare 12 famous leaders—not all of them exemplary—in six categories and one stand-alone. The latter is Gen. Robert E. Lee, and General McChrystal's essay about how he came to change his views on Lee's reputation is a powerful illustration of how myth can influence judgment.

The six categories and the personalities compared are: *Founders*, Walt Disney and Coco Chanel; *Geniuses*, Albert Einstein and Leonard Bernstein; *Zealots*, Robespierre and Abu Al-Zarqawi; *Heroes*, Zheng He and Harriet Tubman; *Powerbrokers*, Margaret Thatcher and "Boss" Tweed; and *Reformers*, Martin Luther and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Readers who recall WWII from books, movies, or personal experience, may now be asking "where is Churchill?" Not to worry, the authors have not forgotten him. They work in and assess his leadership abilities to show how they differ according to circumstances and serve to exemplify the persistent great-man theory of leadership as proffered by Boris Johnson among others.

Having created a data base of leadership characteristics, the authors discuss the three myths of leadership that, if applied singularly, only complicate any formulation of a general theory. The first follows from the tendency to identify common factors in the comparisons, a task they find impossible. (370) They call this the "formulaic myth." The second myth is the inclination to credit a

single person—the great-man theory myth—with important achievements that neglect the contributions of others. The third myth, called the "Results Myth," holds that "the falsehood that the objective results of the leader's activity are more important than her words or style or appearance." (378). If these so-called intuitively attractive myths can't be used to formulate a leadership theory, what can?

The authors found the answer by realizing the limitations of their original research question: "How did he or she lead?" (381) They concluded that that formulation pointed toward the leader not the context of operations. Thus a better construction would be: "Why did they emerge as a leader?" or "What was it about the situation that made this style of leadership effective?" (382).

In the end they do not come up with a general theory of leadership, but they do suggest a new definition: "*leadership is a complex system of relationships between leader and followers, in a particular context that provides meaning to its members.*" (397) Whether, as the authors claim, this definition accounts for the three myths is not immediately obvious, though they do provide extensive commentary on this point. Still one could be excused for responding, "Yes, but what are the elements of leadership? or is one born a leader?; does it come with position or rank, or is it learned?"

LEADERS is not easy reading but it recognizes that "leadership is far more difficult than we realize . . . painful and perplexing even at its best." Therefore this book is worth the effort to think through its sometimes complex observations. (399)

HISTORICAL

An Impeccable Spy: Richard Sorge, Stalin's Master Agent, by Owen Matthews. (Bloomsbury, 2019) 448, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

In 1952, Maj. Gen. Charles A. Willoughby, Gen. Douglas MacArthur's chief of intelligence in Tokyo, sent Allen Dulles, then deputy director of CIA, a privately printed copy of a report titled, *A Partial Documentation of the Sorge Espionage Case*, dated 1 May 1950. It had an attachment titled, *An Authentic Translation of Sorge's Own*

Story, dated February 1942.^a Both reports included the original Japanese versions. Copies of these documents, plus those produced by the official German inquiry, interviews with former members of the Sorge network, Sorge's messages intercepted by the Japanese, and the Japanese

a. *A Partial Documentation of the Sorge Espionage Case*, dated 1 May 1950. Matthew correctly states that the findings in this document were extensively cited by the House of Representatives Un-American Activities Committee (he ignores its real name; HCUA) but incorrectly states it was chaired by Senator Joseph McCarthy. (349)

interrogation records, were the basis for four excellent accounts of the Sorge case.

The first by F. W. Deakin and G. R. Storry^a in 1966, covers Sorge's early life as well as his espionage in China and Japan. The second, by Gordon W. Prange^b in 1984, and the third by Robert Whyman,^c concentrated on his network in Japan. *An Impeccable Spy*, by Owen Matthews, is the fourth. It is a detailed and thoroughly documented biography of Sorge's entire life from a new Russian perspective. Matthews was the Moscow representative for *Newsweek*, is fluent in Russian, has a Russian-born wife, and had access to Russian publications and archival material—including correspondence between Sorge and his wife—not previously available.

All the authors agree that Sorge was born in 1895 near Baku, the son of a German oil engineer and his Russian wife. The family returned to Germany when Sorge was four. There he attended school. When WWI started, he enlisted and by 1916 had been wounded twice, leaving him with a permanent limp. It was while in hospital that a nurse brought him copies of Marx and other "building blocks of socialism." (16) These started him on a path to communism. It is at this point in the narrative that Matthews makes his claim of originality: Sorge's "turbulent career as an agent for the Communist International . . . [his] recruitment by Soviet military intelligence and the subsequent cycles of distrust and paranoia that led to Sorge's gold-standard intelligence being dismissed as enemy disinformation, is told here for the first time." (5)

Bluntly summarized, Matthew's claim is only partially accurate. These topics are raised by each of the authors mentioned above, though with less detail. Subjects where

Matthews adds entirely new material include Sorge's Comintern service, his academic aspirations expressed in letters to his wife, and some details of his relationship with American communist Agnes Smedley and German Ursula Hamburger (nee: Kuczynski; aka: Ruth Werner, Sonia) during his service in China.

Finally it is worth considering just how impeccable was the *Impeccable Spy*? Dictionary synonyms for this adjective include: faultless, flawless, unimpeachable, perfect, immaculate, spotless, and above reproach. Matthews and others make it very clear that Sorge was none of these in his personal relationships, unless one overlooks his womanizing and drinking to excess. But he gets much higher marks when it comes to his espionage. He maintained his cover, recruited excellent sources, wrote timely accurate reports, and on occasion defied orders to return home for consultations. Ironically, Stalin ignored some his most important submissions, and his radioman declined to transmit some—without telling Sorge—as it became clear the Nazis were on the losing side. That Sorge trusted him too much, was a serious mistake. But Stalin did accept his report that the Japanese would go South rather than attack the Soviet Union, and this, plus his overall record, earned him belated rehabilitation and his picture on a postage stamp.

Matthews argues, as the other authors did before him, that Sorge expected Stalin to bargain for his freedom after his arrest by the Japanese and is perplexed that no attempt to do so appears to have been made.

An Impeccable Spy is the most complete account of the Sorge case to date. A story well documented and well told.

The Lady Is a Spy: Virginia Hall, World War II, Hero of the French Resistance, by Don Mitchell. (Scholastic Inc. Publishers, 2019) 267, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

Before turning his talents to biography, Don Mitchell was a staffer on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the National Security Council. In *The Lady Is a Spy* he has given us a new biography of Virginia Hall, the

only woman to serve in the Special Operations Executive and OSS during WWII and in the CIA during the Cold War as a field intelligence officer. While one recent book about Hall was a mix of fact and fiction,^d and two others

a. F. W. Deakin and G. R. Storry, *The Case of Richard Sorge* (Chatto & Windus, 1966)

b. Gordon W. Prange with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *Target Tokyo: The Story of the Sorge Spy Ring* (McGraw Hill Book Company, 1984).

c. Robert Whyman, *Stalin's Spy: Richard Sorge and the Tokyo Espionage Ring* (I. B. Tauris, 1996).

d. Craig Gralley, *Hall of Mirrors: Virginia Hall: America's Greatest Spy of World War II* (Chrysalis Books, 2019).

were non-fiction biographies amplified with historical background material, one with source notes, one without,^a Mitchell's more compact account follows a middle, "Goldilocks" course: he includes the essential facts, each well sourced and many nicely illustrated.

Mitchell's account of Hall's early life and education in Baltimore includes incidents that hint at her contrary and often independent nature. For example, he tells of her attending high school wearing a live garter snake on her wrist as a bracelet. (6) By 1926, after a year at Radcliff College and another at Barnard (both then for women only), with the encouragement of her father, she went to Paris and then Vienna, where she studied economics, international relations and languages. In 1929 she returned to the United States to further her studies at American and George Washington universities. Her goal was to become a foreign service officer (FSO) in the State Department. Then she hit the glass ceiling for the first time and had to settle for a civil service position as a State Department clerk. (11)

It was while serving in Turkey that Hall shot herself in the foot and ultimately lost her left leg below the knee. After recovery in the States and the fitting of a prosthesis she called "Cuthbert," Hall returned to Europe, only to lose another attempt to become an FSO despite the support of President Roosevelt. While the reader may feel her frustration, she continued with her work until the outbreak of war, when she resigned and became an ambulance driver in France before escaping via Spain to London after Paris fell.

The Last Cambridge Spy: John Cairncross, Bletchley Codebreaker and Soviet Double Agent, by Chris Smith. (The History Press, 2019) 256, endnotes, bibliography, index. Forewords by, Sir Dermot Turing and Professor Richard Aldrich.

Chris Smith's light and able pen has produced a biography of John Cairncross that gets off to a dubious start. While the assertion that his subject was the "last Cambridge spy" is supported by Sir Dermot Turing in his foreword, it is questioned by the author himself, who acknowledges that former KGB officer Oleg Tsarev cited

As unlikely as it may sound, since the United States was not in the war, Hall wanted to return to France to help the resistance. Mitchell tells how she achieved that goal. After building her own journalistic cover and joining the SOE, she returned to France, where she worked with Peter Churchill and Dennis Rake and a few resistance traitors to the Vichy government. Rake would become Douglas Fairbanks Jr.'s butler after the war.

Although Hall had not had much experience handling agents, Hall's instincts were spot-on. As an example, Mitchell includes the case of Abbé Alesch, who aroused her suspicions and who turned out to be a double agent.

After the invasion of North Africa, the Nazis occupied the balance of France, and Hall was forced to escape to Spain again, this time over the Pyrénées with Cuthbert. After some time in a Spanish jail, Hall returned to London and requested once again to be sent back to France. SOE declined, but OSS accepted, and Mitchell goes on to tell of her second return to France and her support of the resistance.

Mitchell goes on to track Hall's often rewarding and yet frustrating post-war career in intelligence. While it was one she chose, she hit a glass ceiling again—advancing to the grade of GS-14—forced to endure working for men who had little or no experience in the field. By the time she reached the mandatory retirement age of 60, she was married to a former member of the resistance and living in Maryland.

The Lady Is A Spy is a fine contribution to the story of a much underrated intelligence officer.

NKVD records in giving that honor to the American at Trinity college, Michael Straight. (14) Then there is the comment in the secondary title that Cairncross was a "Bletchley Park codebreaker." Once again, Smith himself in an earlier book on Bletchley, quoted Cairncross as say-

a. Sonia Purnell, *A Women of No Importance: The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II* (Viking, 2019); Judith L. Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy* (The Lyons Press, 2004).

ing he was a translator at Bletchley,^a which in fact he was. Finally, Cairncross was not, by definition, a double agent.

What does this inauspicious start imply for the story of Cairncross the Soviet agent? Nothing of substance, since that is not what concerns Smith, who admits at the outset that there is nothing new from the official archives on Cairncross' spying. And though he cannot avoid the topic in his chronology, when it comes up he readily points out Cairncross' own doubtful claims, inconsistencies, contradictions, and rationalizations. (152–53) Typical of the latter was Cairncross' argument that he only spied to help an ally that deserved more than the British were providing. And though he insisted there never was a Ring-of-Five at Cambridge, at least one that involved him, he did not grasp the point that it was the Soviets who saw the Cambridge spies as the Ring, not MI5. Likewise, Cairncross denied he was the “fifth man,” since he operated alone. But he could not see that for the KGB it was a logical designation; Cambridge knew the others, had worked for Philby, and was the fifth Cambridge man recruited. But

this has all been thrashed out in earlier books, for example, *Crown Jewels*^b and *The Mitrokhin Archive*.^c

Thus it is understandable that in Smith's biography, Cairncross' espionage is secondary to his “central objective . . . to provide an exploration of John Cairncross' character, to tell the wider story of his life, and to place him within a broader context of 20th century British society and in history.” (16) But it is already well known that Cairncross was an eccentric, brilliant linguist, scholar, and author, as well as a socially awkward comrade who was not a member of the upper class. In this work, Smith adds little more than details from family letters and unstinting support from Graham Greene.

If the personal life of John Cairncross, as assessed by a lecturer in history from Coventry University is of interest, this is the book to read. But should you be concerned with Cairncross the Soviet agent and one of the Cambridge Five, start with *Crown Jewels*.

The Spy In Moscow Station: A Counterspy's Hunt For A Deadly Cold War Threat, by Eric Haseltine. (Thomas Dunne Books, 2019) 264, endnotes, index.

If you are expecting a tale about a KGB agent stealing the secrets of Moscow Station, disappointment follows. Inexplicably, author Eric Haseltine, a former Disney executive brought to NSA by Gen. Michael Hayden to revitalize its research department, tells a different though curiously fascinating story. Its central figure is Charles Gandy, a onetime NSA scientist asked by the CIA to investigate whether recently compromised operations could be explained by Soviet interception of Moscow Embassy communications.

During his first visit to Moscow in 1978, Gandy discovered a moveable antenna in a fake chimney attached to the embassy, a strong indication of nefarious Soviet activity. But this was not enough for station chief Gus Hathaway, who wanted “smoking gun” proof of what the antenna was producing. Haseltine then quotes Gandy as wondering whether the “CIA didn't really *want* NSA to find the source of the devastating leaks? NSA would look like heroes if they found a leak, while CIA . . . would look like

incompetent bumlbers.” Failure to find a technical cause of the leaks would support the view held by some CIA officers that they weren't bugged—human sources were more likely—and save face at the same time. And, said Gandy, “Most folks at the CIA hated, hated, hated relying on outsiders for anything.” (111)

But this explanation was too cynical even for Gandy. He decided Hathaway would not play that sort of bureaucratic game, and he was right. *The Spy In Moscow Station* tells the story of how and where bugs were found and their surprising level of technical sophistication, while at the same time revealing a sub-theme of bureaucratic battling among NSA, CIA and State Department.

Between 1978 and his final visit to Moscow in 1981, Gandy explored various complex technical possibilities that could explain how the antenna was part of the electronic penetration of embassy communications. For example, the Soviets had been bombarding the embassy

a. Chris Smith, *The Hidden History of Bletchley Park: A Social and Organizational History, 1939–1945* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 81.

b. Nigel West and Oleg Tsarev, *The Crown Jewels: The British Secrets at the Heart of the KGB Archives* (Yale University Press 1999).

c. Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West* (Penguin, 2000).

with radiation dubbed by specialists as Technically Unidentified Moscow Signals (TUMS), whose purpose was not understood. Gandy was convinced the Soviets were using the radiation to trigger listening devices implanted in the embassy that could somehow “read text using microwaves,” but he “never produced any proof” (132) and the CIA remained skeptical. Support from State was never strong “because he was going around saying the Moscow Embassy was compromised.” (133) Moreover, his manner irritated other players who were considering the issue but held to a conventional wisdom that the Soviets couldn’t run a country so they couldn’t accomplish such a sophisticated technical penetration operation.

What turned things around was a report from the French in 1983 that the Soviets had bugged French embassy teleprinters with highly sophisticated transmitting equipment. If the Soviets had successfully bugged the French, NSA Deputy Director Walt Deeley reasoned, what Gandy was saying about their penetration of the US embassy was at least as likely. Thus, with the help of President Reagan, Operation GUNMAN was born.

Haseltine describes the crafty sequence of events in Operation GUNMAN in enlightening detail. But the bottom line is that Gandy arranged to inventory all the electronic typewriters and related equipment in the embassy without the staff’s knowledge. Next he had selected equipment returned to NSA and replaced with new equivalents. Then NSA examined the returned items and discovered the state-of-the-art bugging mechanisms—one in the IBM

Selectric typewriter used in the ambassador’s office for years—and the method of battery recharging.

It will not surprise some readers that the ambassador, according to Haseltine, was not upset by these findings. He adopted the view that he wanted the Soviets to hear most of what he told his visitors and correspondents. Haseltine puts it more generally; “the State Department regarded it largely as a nonevent.” (213)

Haseltine might have used the same descriptor for a story Gandy told him about his midnight encounter with a beautiful Russian woman who knocked on the door of his embassy quarters and offered her services. (98–99) Haseltine correctly labels it a would-be honeytrap but does not comment on the implausibility of the story or the likelihood that it was a genuine nonevent.

The Spy In Moscow Station concludes with two unsettling observations made during a 2018 meeting the author had with Gandy. First, Gandy speculates that they probably didn’t get all of the bugged equipment in the embassy. Second, Haseltine, who by then had served in the ODNI, opines that the bureaucratic battles within the Intelligence Community that led to operation GUNMAN had not been overcome and were only aggravated by the ODNI that “everyone hates . . . as meddling, micromanaging, incompetent bean counters.” (233) But perhaps the most obvious, yet unstated, conclusion is that there was no spy in Moscow Station.

They Fought Alone: The True Story of the Starr Brothers, British Secret Agents in Nazi Occupied France, by Charles Glass. (Penguin Press, 2018) 322, endnotes, photos, index.

The British entered WWII with functioning foreign and domestic intelligence services. But it was a different matter when the need for special forces operations behind enemy lines arose in early 1940. There was no organization with that mission, so they established one: the Special Operations Executive (SOE). *They Fought Alone* tells the story of two half-American brothers in SOE, George and John Starr, that illustrates how each dealt with the stresses encountered. Of equal value, the book explains how the organization’s complex and persistent operational growing pains at headquarters complicated operations in the field.

The Starr brothers spent much of their youth on the European continent working for the Barnum and Bailey

Circus and Wild Bill Hickock troupe. Later, George went to the Royal School of Mines, paid his dues underground digging coal, and then installed mining equipment for a Scottish company with clients throughout Europe. John, four years his junior, studied art in London and Paris and drew posters for a living. As war drew near, both brothers volunteered for the Royal Air Force but were rejected because their father was an American citizen. So they joined the Army instead, George in Brussels, John in Paris.

Returned to England after Dunkirk, John was the first to be contacted by SOE. He recommended his brother George, who was then serving with a carrier pigeon unit with David Niven. After training and promotion to 2nd

lieutenant, John was sent to France first, dropping blind, with instructions to assess the state of SOE's field operations. George, by now also a 2nd lieutenant, was sent to France by boat in October 1942 to make contact with resistance groups in southwestern France.

From this point on their careers epitomize the positive and negative characteristics of SOE operations in France. George is one of the few contacts with the Resistance who was not captured by the Germans. For more than two years he dealt with morale, security, communication, and supply problems. When the invasion finally came, he executed his mission to delay enemy forces as they tried to reinforce the Wehrmacht in Normandy. And after France was liberated, he was less than courteous to General De Gaulle who refused to acknowledge his contribution and declared him *persona non grata*.

John Starr's resistance war followed a different path. He was betrayed by a French colleague and arrested in July 1943. While in captivity in Paris, his behavior led some of his British fellow prisoners to conclude he was collaborating with the Gestapo. His characterization of the matter was that his interrogations convinced him that SOE communications with London were under Gestapo

control—a so-called *Funkspiel* operation—and he was correct because SOE had not taken seriously the alert signals built into the messages indicating the sender was under enemy control. This explained why many of the supply drops were picked up by the Gestapo and not the resistance. Thus he was just acquiring evidence to present to SOE headquarters when he escaped. Unfortunately, his escape attempt failed and shortly after D-Day, he was sent to Sachsenhausen and then Mauthausen concentration camps in Germany because “he knew everything about the *Funkspiel*.”(223)

John survived the camps but he never overcame official SOE doubts about his behavior. He received no official recognition for his service despite an official French investigation that did not establish disloyalty. SOE officer Vera Atkins summed up the official view: “We felt he let the side down. He was the only one who did.” (253)

George received the Military Cross and the Legion of Honor among other decorations before returning to France where he died in 1980. John died in Switzerland some years later. *They Fought Alone* reflects their personal legacy and the contribution of SOE to the war effort in France.

To Blind the Eyes of Our Enemies: Washington's Grand Deception, by G. L. Lamborn and W. L. Simpson. (White Hart Publications, 2018) 203, footnotes, no index.

In his biography of George Washington, Ron Chernow writes that “the record shows he [Washington] had repeatedly favored a strike against New York” and only reluctantly agreed to Yorktown, the location recommended by his French allies and place in which he won the battle that won the war. Washington's 1788 explanation that the overt indications of an attack on New York were a “mere feint to mislead the British,” was in Chernow's view, a self-justifying attempt “to rewrite history.”^a

These are harsh words and former CIA operations officer G. L. Lamborn and retired Navy Lt. Cmdr. W. L. Simpson Jr. don't accept Chernow's judgment or similar views expressed by other contemporary historians. *To Blind The Eyes of Our Enemies* states their case.

The authors' overall characterization of Washington credits him with exceptional tactical skills as exempli-

fied by the battles of Trenton and Princeton; few historians challenge this claim. Their view that “as a strategist he had no peer on either side” is less widely accepted. Nevertheless, they conclude that the “foundation for his strategic vision and genius for war” was his “mastery of intelligence collection and deception operations,” with Yorktown being the prime example. (11)

To support these views, Lamborn and Simpson turn first to Washington's knowledge of history. They argue that his approach to Britain's overwhelming force drew on the example of Roman general Fabius and his strategy of wearing down Hannibal by avoiding major battles until “logistical realities and lack of manpower forced him to leave Italy.” (18) Washington's variation on this strategy was to avoid direct battles until the help of the French was secured and the right location for battle was determined.

a. Ron Chernow, *Washington: A Life* (Penguin, 2010), 403–404.

It is true that Washington's initial thinking focused on capturing New York and cutting off the head of British forces in the colonies especially those of Lord Charles Cornwallis operating in the south. The authors note the many objections to this approach voiced by the French and his own advisors, among them Alexander Hamilton. Then, in a letter dated 22 July 1780, Washington acknowledged they were right but held out hope that things might change in the future. The authors suggest that it was at this juncture that Washington decided "a more suitable target should be sought." (75)

Thus at a conference in Hartford, Connecticut, in September 1780, Washington and the French generals agreed that aiming to take a target in the south was the best course. At that point, all that remained was to select a location, secure French naval support, and move Washington's troops south without alerting Sir Henry Clinton to the changed in plans. The authors treat these issues in detail. Critical to their version of events is a letter written

by Washington to Noah Webster dated 31 July 1788, that describes the "trouble . . . taken and finesse used to misguide and bewilder Sir Henry Clinton in regard to the real object, by fictitious communications as well as by making deceptive provisions of Ovens, Forage and Boats. Nor were less pains taken to deceive our own army." (88)

The authors concede that while historians agree on what Washington did, some challenge him on when he agreed to do it—suggesting that it was in 1781 not a year earlier—thus casting doubt on his strategic wisdom and foresight. Lamborn and Simpson counter these critics by pointing out that these skeptics had no need to know of the deceptive measures and thus were not in a position to draw post facto judgments. (91)

To Blind The Eyes of Our Enemies goes on to tell how Washington's deception led to the "white flag over Yorktown." They make a strong case in support of Washington's explanation of events.

XY&Z: The Real Story of How Enigma Was Broken, by Dermot Turing. (The History Press, 2018) 320, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index. Foreword by Professor Dr. Arkady Rzegocki, Polish ambassador to the UK.

In his 2015 biography of Alan Turing, his nephew Dermot Turing tells of a "major breakthrough" in July 1939, when Polish cryptographers shared their extensive progress on breaking the Enigma codes with the British and the French.^a In *XY&Z*, Dermot Turing, a graduate of both Oxford and Cambridge and a trustee of Bletchley Park, fills in the details.

For reasons of security prior to WWII, the participants referred to themselves as X for the French, Y for the British, and Z for the Poles. Ironically, the French who knew the least about Enigma, were critical to the success of the effort because they had recruited the German agent, Hans Thilo Schmidt, who had access to Enigma engineering details, which he passed on for money.

Neither the French nor the British knew what to do with the first batches of material, but the Poles did, as French intelligence officer, Gustave Bertrand discovered. Dermot Turing tells how an arrangement was worked out that made it possible for Alan Turing to develop an improved version of the Polish "bombe" used to extract the keys to the Enigma.

The erratic contacts among X, Y, and Z, continued throughout the war, with some Poles operating in France, North Africa, and England, though not at Bletchley. As the war's centers of gravity shifted, some Polish codebreakers operating outside of England were caught and sent to Sachsenhausen; others were imprisoned in Spain and escaped to make their way to England. At war's end, the British worked to protect their contribution while seeking to assist the Poles, by now refugees, who wanted to remain in Europe or return to communist Poland. All kept their Enigma secrets. If those in Poland became known as codebreakers for the Allies, their post-war lives would have been spent in the Soviet Union.

Gradually the Polish contribution became part of recorded history, and it was officially recognized at Bletchley Park with a permanent exhibit called *The Bombe Breakthrough*. *XY&Z* helps to assure their names won't be forgotten.

a. Dermot Turing, *PROF: Alan Turing Decoded—A Biography* (The History Press, 2015), 119.

HISTORICAL: INTELLIGENCE AND D-DAY

Bletchley Park and D-Day: The Untold Story of How the Battle for Normandy Was Won, by David Kenyon. (Yale University Press, 2019) 295, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

Codeword OVERLORD: Axis Espionage and the D-Day Landings, by Nigel West. (The History Press, 2019) 352, endnotes, bibliography, appendices, photos, maps, index.

D-Day Girls: The Spies Who Armed The Resistance, Sabotaged the Nazis, and Helped Win World War II, by Sarah Rose. (Crown, 2019) 384, endnotes, bibliography, index.

Soldier, Sailor, Frogman, Spy, Airman, Gangster, Kill or Die – How the Allies Won on D-Day, by Giles Milton. (Henry Holt and Company, 2019) 486, endnotes, bibliography, photos, maps, index.

VANGUARD: The True Stories of the Reconnaissance and Intelligence Missions Behind D-Day, by David Abrutat. (Naval Institute Press, 2019) 400, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

It is no coincidence that books about prominent historical events are often published close to the anniversary of the event concerned. This can leave the prospective buyer wondering whether they contain anything new, if there is subject overlap, are they well documented, and the like. The five books listed above do well in each of these factors, allowing for some overlap in the common subject.

In *Bletchley Park and D-Day*, David Kenyon, the research historian at Bletchley Park, answers two basic questions about Bletchley's role in Overlord. First, what role did codebreaking play in its planning, execution, and in the Normandy campaign? Second, how important was the SIGINT produced to the result?

In answering the first question, after some valuable background discussion, Kenyon concentrates on 1944, the year when Bletchley was functioning at its best. He characterizes it as a period of industrial efficiency rather than the more frequent description of Bletchley as the home of intellectual eccentricity and individual genius.

By 1944 the difficult problems had been solved, thanks to the Bombe improved by Turing that provided key settings for Enigma and the Colossus machines that did the same for online teleprinter intercepts. Kenyon reviews how this was done and credits those who did the work and implemented the results.

Thus, Hut 6, responsible for German air force, SS and Army Enigma decryptions, was breaking 44 percent of the traffic, a relatively small amount, but still "a very significant haul of intelligence." (51). Hut 8 (naval Enigma) sta-

tistics were better at 72 percent. The non-Enigma online teleprinter intercepts, the so-called FISH material used for the traffic of Hitler and high-ranking officers, was more complex than Enigma and only about 4.1 percent of those intercepts were decrypted, but they were often important to D-Day. Traffic analysis greatly aided in selecting the messages most likely to be of value if decrypted, as it also did for Enigma traffic. Once a message was decrypted, it was sent to Hut 3, where it was translated, integrated with collateral allied material, prioritized and disseminated.

As to Bletchley's role in the planning and aftermath of Overlord, Kenyon concludes it was mainly in the very detailed and accurate order-of-battle data provided, and he cites sources for that result. The allies knew what German forces were on the battlefield, where they were, and when they were ordered to move or remain in place. Kenyon's answer to the question of Bletchley's long range contribution concurs with Sir Harry Hinsley: it probably shortened the war in Europe by two years.



Bletchley Park and D-Day tells a fascinating story and is a genuine contribution to the literature.

In *Codeword OVERLORD*, military historian Nigel West considers what German intelligence organizations did to learn the details of the anticipated D-Day and what the Allies did to counter their efforts. He tells how the Nazis got off to a relatively good start when in early 1944 one of their agents, codenamed CICERO, stole secret documents from his ambassador boss in Ankara, Turkey, that

included codeword OVERLORD indicating an upcoming invasion of Europe.

When CICERO failed to produce further details, German intelligence units were tasked with finding the particulars. In addition to traditional aerial reconnaissance operations, West devotes sizable effort to describing the extensive SIGINT and HUMINT capabilities in France and the Iberian Peninsula that failed. He offers three reasons why they were unsuccessful.

The first was the lack of overall command and control of intelligence units; left to decide on their own how to implement orders, results were redundant, unshared and thus uncoordinated. Second, MI5 implemented effective domestic security that dealt with potential security breaches. In one case, the well known military historian Basil Liddell Hart published an article and later gave a talk hinting he had knowledge of Overlord, due to high level leaks, and MI5 double agents. An investigation couldn't establish whether he was speculating or not, so his mail was monitored. (72–74) If the Germans heard of his comments, they apparently paid no heed.

The third reason was, of course, the work of MI5's Double Cross committee. The German's didn't have to rely on their vast SIGINT assets because they believed they had agents in England working the problem. In fact, the agents were controlled by the British and passing intelligence according to a deception plan called FORTITUDE (South) that was designed in part to convince the Germans that OVERLORD was aimed at the Pas-de-Calais. The Double Cross agents were also tasked to provide order-of-battle data and West furnishes examples of how this was done to good effect.

West tells of three other intelligence operations that contributed to the success of OVERLORD. The first was implemented by the BBC through coded messages that alerted the French resistance that D-Day had come. The second concerned the *résistance* elements whose mission it was to sabotage railroads and bridges to prevent movement of armored divisions to Normandy. West gives some startling statistics concerning how well the Germans penetrated the resistance circuits, and yet the resistance elements still accomplished their missions.

The third was a post invasion operation that neutralized the German stay-behind networks. OSS X-2 (counterintelligence) and British intelligence were the operating units. West describes how a special sub-element

of the Double Cross Committee was set up in Paris to handle these controlled enemy agents as they came to be called.

In a postscript, West relates several attempts to lift the veil of secrecy surrounding FORTITUDE. The first was a convoluted and ultimately unsuccessful effort to expose GARBO, the most important of the Double Cross agents, that peripherally involved double agents run by the FBI. Another concerned a less direct challenge from Churchill and Eisenhower, when they wished to mention in their memoirs more about wartime deception operations than MI5 thought appropriate. The accommodation reached lasted until 1972 and the publication of *The ULTRA Secret*.



Codeword OVERLORD gives further evidence, based in large part on German records, of how and why deception was such a successful part of D-Day. An important contribution.

D-Day Girls tells the story of five women and four men of the SOE who served in France behind enemy lines performing sabotage missions. Their stories have been told before, and author Sarah Rose adds nothing new in her description of their exploits except exaggeration. For example, her assessment that Lise de Baissac “had been crucial to the liberation of France” (280) is not supported by her narrative.

It is true that the “Girls” described received decorations for their contributions, two posthumously. But their citations indicate bravery more for enduring torture during interrogation by the Gestapo than for successful operations that had a direct impact on D-Day.

Ms. Rose goes to some length to point out, justifiably, the inequities inherent in the British and French cultures at the time that resulted in women receiving lesser awards than men for equivalent or greater endeavors. But her rationale for calling her subjects D-Day girls remains obscure.



Soldier, Sailor, Frogman, Spy... on D-Day is a good baseline account for readers not already steeped in the military details of the invasion and dependent only on the Hollywood versions. It provides a chronological perspective of

the fighting and combat support contributions, male and female—both sides—from the viewpoint of the generals, soldiers in the ranks, and resistance fighters.

The objective of the invasion was to establish a contiguous 50 mile wide beachhead that extended 15 miles inland at the end of the first day. The battlefield reality was much different. Of the five Normandy assault beaches—SWORD (UK), JUNO (Canadian), GOLD (UK), OMAHA and UTAH (USA), only the Canadians had advanced 6 miles inland. The OMAHA effort extended only 2,000 yards inland, with UTAH somewhat better while the British managed several miles. And there were major gaps in the front; the biggest was the 11 miles between OMAHA and UTAH. But it was enough.

Milton's narrative tells how they did it in numerous vignettes. Operation Tarbrush X was a one-man behind-enemy-lines effort to learn about new German mines before the invasion even began. Then there are the tales of the glider commando experience, the bravery of the Rangers on the cliffs of Pointe de Hoc, and the exploits of the bagpiping commander of the British Special Service Brigade, Lord Lovat. (278) Not to be overlooked, Milton includes the naval guns of the USS McGook that destroyed German concrete shore batteries while nearly running aground. (306)

The Canadian intelligence officer's description of the German prisoners as "unprepossessing examples of the so-called master race" (379) and the help provided by a young French farm girl to a lost GI add human perspective. Finally, Milton relates a real example of the BBC sending coded phrases to alert the resistance that the invasion was at hand that led to sabotage of the rails lines between Caen and Laval to prevent resupply of the Germans at the front.

Soldier, Sailor, Frogman, Spy... on D-Day offers no tactical or strategic surprises but it does give the reader a good appreciation of how and by whom success was achieved.



Author David Abrutat is a lecturer at the University of Buckingham and a former Royal Marine Commando reconnaissance specialist. In *VANGUARD* he discusses 20 contributions to the D-Day intelligence story. Topics range from the organizational structure employed, to the role of midget submarines—called X-craft—in underwater beach reconnaissance, to specific missions of familiar units such as SOE, OSS, and the French resistance. Also included are the familiar functions of signal interceptor companies, POW interrogation techniques, radar variations, and commando deception operations, among others.

For example, the chapter titled "Black Lists" relates the story of the 30 Commando Assault Unit (30AU) allegedly the creation of Ian Fleming. Abrutat first tells of its disastrous contribution to the failure of the Dieppe Raid in 1942 and goes on to explain their later role in missions to obtain codes and administrative papers of value, for example, the Nazi "black lists" of enemies to be arrested.

The little known story of the Martian Reports prepared by the Theater Intelligence Section (TIS) from all-source intelligence excluding ULTRA, was "a vital cog in the Allied intelligence machine." (330). With a staff that grew to some 500, the TIF concentrated on resistance unit contacts and relatively low-level, but important, order of battle data and unit dispositions not reflected in ULTRA because land lines were available to the enemy units.

Abrutat recognizes the role SIGINT played with chapters on Bletchley Park that discuss the hardware developed to deal with the high volume of Enigma and Jellyfish traffic; the latter originating from the German online geheimschreiber machine. Of lesser volume but equal value was the MAGIC traffic that revealed what the Japanese ambassador to Berlin thought about German Western Wall defenses. A third version of SIGINT contribution was the BBC with its coded message traffic to the French resistance elements.

VANGUARD gives the reader a good extensively illustrated overview of the intelligence operations and the men who carried them out in support of D-Day.

INTELLIGENCE ABROAD

Guy Liddell's Cold War MI5 Diaries, Volume 1: May 1945–December 1947, edited by Nigel West. (Independently published amazon.com, 2019) 615, no index.

Guy Liddell's Cold War MI5 Diaries, Volume 2: January 1948–December 1950, edited by Nigel West. (Independently published amazon.com, 2019) 379, no index.

Guy Liddell's Col War MI5 Diaries, Volume 3: January 1951–May 1953, edited by Nigel West. (Independently published amazon.com, 2019) 495, no index.

WALLFLOWERS was its codename. But it did not refer to an intelligence operation or an agent; it was the code-word for the operational diaries kept by Guy Liddell, the director of counter-espionage and later deputy director-general of the British Security Service (MI5) from August 1939 to May 1953. Two volumes, covering 1939 to 1945, were published in 2005.^a Now the remainder of Liddell's diaries have appeared in paperback and digital format. The content and candor expressed in them make it clear Liddell wrote for the benefit of future MI5 officers; he did not expect public viewing.

Editor Nigel West notes in the introduction that the entries in these final three volumes were misfiled for many years and not available to Christopher Andrew or his research associates when they wrote the authorized history of MI5.^b Thus there is much new material in the nearly 2,000 pages in these volumes.

Each volume contains an introduction, a list of personalities included, a list of intelligence establishments mentioned, and a glossary. The topics included vary from parochial turf battles when the organization shifted to civilian status to new operational problems. In volume one, examples of the latter include Liddell's reaction to the Canadian announcement that Igor Gouzenko had defected and incriminated Alan Nunn May in what became the atomic spy scandal. Liddle also commented on post-war contacts with the Double Cross double agents, some seldom mentioned elsewhere. Turning to the Middle East, this was the period in the final days of the British mandate in Palestine with growing security problems.

Liddell also records his views on the first rumblings of those officers who wished to publish accounts of their wartime services. J.C. Masterman, author of *The Double Cross System* eventually succeeded, but Maurice Hankey did not.

Volume II covers the period in which "MI5 found it hard to persuade Whitehall mandarins to take Communist infiltration of the civil service seriously," (14) even while recognizing it had bungled the security investigation of Klaus Fuchs. Simultaneously, other crises included the strained relationship with the FBI after MI5 refused to allow access to Fuchs until after his trial and the discovery from VENONA of an "active spy-ring in Australia that had compromised British documents." (15) In Palestine an MI5 affiliated unit was blown up by the Irgun in the King David Hotel, in Jerusalem. Domestically, staff vacancies were difficult to fill for an organization that didn't officially exist.

The final volume covers some of the most damaging events to British security in M5's history. Included are the what Liddell calls the "Washington leakage" investigation (Vol. 2, p. 200), his term for the molehunt that eventually identified Donald Maclean. His reaction to the disappearance of Burgess and Maclean begins in the 29 May 1951 entry. As Liddell tries to sort it out, he turns to old colleagues like Anthony Blunt whose pseudocooperation is masked with friendly deceit. And here, finally, is proof that MI5 officer Dick White, the man who tried to go to France and track them down and arrived at the port of entry with an expired passport. Comments on the case continue with diminishing frequency into 1953. A short three-line entry on 14 May 1953, is Liddell's only com-

a. Nigel West, *The Guy Liddell Diaries: Volume I 1939-1942; Volume II 1942-1945*, (Routledge, 2005)

b. Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* (Allen Lane, 2009).

ment when learning that he had been passed over for the D-G position in favor of subordinate Dick White. Then 61, past the age of mandatory retirement, Liddell resigned, and his chronicle of events comes to an end.

The Liddell diaries have two shortcomings worth noting. First, they do not have an index, and readers will have

to use the digital versions to overcome this omission. Second, they are poorly copy-edited and typos abound. Nevertheless, they remain a one-of-a-kind-account of high-level MI5 views on some of the most important cases of the early Cold War era. A most valuable contribution to the literature of intelligence.

Australia's First Spies: The Remarkable Story of Australia's Intelligence Operations, 1901–1945, by John Fahey. (Allen & Irwin, 2018) 434, endnotes, bibliography, photos, glossary, index.

The three volume *Official History of ASIO* (Australian Security Intelligence Organization),^a published between 2014 and 2016, tells the story of how Australia's domestic security service was established after WWII and grew to become a member of the *Five Eyes* group of intelligence services. A similar study of ASIO's sister service, ASIS (Australian Secret Intelligence Service), has yet to reach the public. But now, thanks to Dr. John Fahey, whose 30-year career in military intelligence included service with the British and Australian armies, the story of Australia's formative years in the national intelligence operations has been told in *Australia's First Spies*.

Within a few months of the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, a successful though ad hoc clandestine operation was initiated by Australia against French and British colonies—and thus their European governments—in the New Hebrides whose behavior had long conflicted with Australian interests. Fahey stresses this point to show that Australia would from then on, with a few exceptions, act in its own rather than depend on the British.

Fahey tells how, between 1901 and the end of WWI, civilian and military intelligence capability gradually came into its own with coast watchers and naval and signals intelligence. In the interwar period Britain recognized Australia's potential as a center of South Asian intelligence operations—with emphasis on SIGINT collection against Japan—and assisted in improving these functions. Training in cryptanalysis, counterintelligence and the Japanese language was begun.

HUMINT did not receive the same level of attention and produced spotty results. In the early 1920s, the Wanetta organization worked well in performing general surveillance and intelligence collection. Headed by civilian Reginald Hockings, who volunteered as a foreign intelligence officer, the organization first served the Navy and later the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board, but it was dissolved shortly after WWI. (55) At the other end of the spectrum lies the badly bungled case of Japanese-speaking Harry Freame and his assignment to the Australian Legation in Tokyo. (128-30)

Fahey describes one other attempt to establish a foreign intelligence program focusing on Japan that began during the war and ended in the early twenties. While initially successful, it ran afoul of politicians who resented its potential power and thus “deprived Australia of an effective foreign intelligence organization until May 1952.” (74)

During WWII, the Australian Special Reconnaissance Department (SRD) was part of the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB) established by MacArthur. The SRD mission was to collect HUMINT and conduct sabotage. Fahey explains why things did not always go well.

The situation was better with SIGINT as Australia gained greater operational independence, though troubles surfaced when security involving ULTRA was compromised by the Japanese in 1944. Fahey devotes considerable attention to how these difficulties were sorted out.

The story of *Australia's First Spies* echoes the start-up experiences of other Western intelligence organizations. But as Fahey emphasizes, “Australians best protect Aus-

a. David Horner, *The Spy Catchers—The Official History of ASIO 1949–1963*, Volume 1 (Allen & Unwin, 2014); John Blaxland, *The Protest Years—The Official History of ASIO 1963–1975*, Volume II (Allen & Unwin, 2015); John Blaxland and Rhys Crawley, *The Secret Cold War—The Official History of ASIO 1975–1989* (Allen & Unwin, 2016).

tralian self-interest,” and that theme that “permeates the story of Australia’s secret world of intelligence.” (339)

Spies of No Country: Secret Lives at the Birth of Israel, by Matti Friedman. (Algonquin Books, 2019) 248, end-notes, photos, no index.

The United Nations voted on 29 December 1947 to partition Palestine, then a British mandate, and create Jewish and Arab sovereign entities. Arab rejection of the resolution precipitated a two-phase war for Israeli independence that began the following day and ended in March 1949. Phase one was largely ad hoc guerilla warfare as each side worked to organize forces. Phase two began in May 1948, when the British abandoned the mandate and the state of Israel was proclaimed. *Spies of No Country* is concerned primarily with phase one, when Israel struggled to learn what was going on in the Arab-controlled territory before there was a Mossad or a Shin Bet.

But the Israelis did have the Arab Section of the Palmach, the elite fighting element of the Haganah, the pre-Israel Jewish paramilitary organization. Canadian journalist Matti Friedman tells how he met 93-year-old Isaac Shoshan, a survivor of the Arab Section, and learned his story of the section’s operations, which he later confirmed using material in Israeli archives.

The operational problem facing the Arab Section was how to penetrate the Arabs in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. Speaking Arabic wasn’t sufficient. Local accents and customs were so distinctive as to make pretense near impossible. The preferred option was to recruit Jews who grew up in Arab cities, spoke the language with genuine local accents, and could mimic native behavior. Shoshan

was such a Jew. Born in Aleppo, Syria, he had run away to Palestine during WWII to live among Jews.

Shoshan told Friedman about his Arab Section experiences in many long interviews. He was one of four section agents who served mainly in Haifa and Beirut. Their tasking varied from reporting on the local military situation, to surveilling and even assassination of political leaders, and to destroying Hitler’s yacht. (135) Communication with section headquarters was initially by mail, though a radio was eventually introduced. Training was strictly on-the-job, and when caught in the periodic raids by both Arabs and Israelis, the agents endured the same “humane courtesies” as the genuine Arabs.

Cover was also left up to the agents themselves. In Haifa, Shoshan worked and lived among the Arabs as a laborer. When tasked to drive a getaway car after a sabotage mission, he admitted he could not drive and learned in one day. The Oldsmobile commandeered for the job was converted into a taxi, which they used for both business and private matters. In Beirut, Shoshan and two of his colleagues established “Israel’s first intelligence station in the Arab world” in the form of the Three Moons Kiosk, which sold pencils, erasers, candy, and sandwiches to locals. They made some money while maintaining cover.

After defeating the Arabs in 1949, the Palmach was dissolved, but the Arab Section with its unique capabilities was retained as part of the Israeli Defense Forces: “The days when the spies improvised their own cover and lacked money for bus fare were over.” (159) Isaac stayed on in “Israeli intelligence,” (217) though not all of his colleagues survived to pursue civilian life.

Spies of No Country is an absorbing story of dedicated colorful crafty agents who served a “no country” when needed most.



Hayden Peake has served in the CIA’s Directorates of Operations and Science and Technology. He has been compiling and writing reviews for the “Intelligence Officer’s Bookshelf” since December 2002.

