

# Studies in Intelligence

Vol. 62, No. 2 (Unclassified articles from June 2018)

Journal of the American Intelligence Professional

## Intelligence and Policy as Seen from INR

The OSS and Ho Chi Minh's Rise to Power  
"A Road Not Taken": But to Where?

## Book Reviews

The Future is History *and* The Long Hangover

The Exile

Hollywood's Spies *and* Hitler in Los Angeles

In the Enemy's House

Dirty War: CW in Rhodesia

The Saboteur

The Death of Stalin

Need to Know

Intelligence  
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## Contents

### EDITORIAL POLICY

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### Intelligence Today and Tomorrow

*A Personal Perspective*  
**Intelligence and Policy**  
**The Case for Thin Walls as Seen by a Veteran of INR** 1  
Bowman H. Miller, PhD

### Historical Perspectives

*Old Man Ho*  
**The OSS Role in Ho Chi Minh's Rise to Political Power** 7  
Bob Bergin

*Reflecting on History*  
**"A Road Not Taken": But a Road to Where?** 23  
Thomas L. Ahern

*From the Studies Archive*  
**CIA Analysis of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War** 29  
David S. Robarge

### Intelligence in Public Media

**The Ghosts of Langley: Into the CIA's Heart of Darkness** 37  
Reviewed by Hayden Peake

**The Future is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia**  
and  
**The Long Hangover: Putin's New Russia**  
**and the Ghosts of the Past** 41  
Reviewed by John Ehrman

**The Exile: The Stunning Inside Story of**  
**Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda in Flight** 43  
Reviewed by Randy Burkett

**Hollywood's Spies: The Undercover Surveillance**  
**of Nazis in Los Angeles**  
and  
**Hitler in Los Angeles: How Jews Foiled**  
**Plots Against Hollywood and America** 47  
Reviewed by David A. Foy

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

<i>In the Enemy's House: The Secret Saga of the FBI Agent and the Code Breaker Who Caught the Russian Spies</i> Reviewed by David A. Foy	51
<i>Dirty War: Rhodesia and Chemical Biological Warfare, 1975–1980</i> Reviewed by Ryan Shaffer	55
<i>The Saboteur: The Aristocrat Who Became France's Most Daring Anti-Nazi Commando</i> Reviewed by Leslie C.	57
<i>The Death of Stalin</i> Reviewed by John Kavanagh	59
<i>Need to Know</i> Reviewed by John Ehrman	61
<b>Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf</b> Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake	63



# Contributors

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**Thomas Ahern** is a retired CIA operations officer who has pursued a second career as a contract historian with the CIA History Staff. He has written four book-length classified (and since declassified or partially declassified) histories of the war in Southeast Asia.

**Bob Bergin** is a retired foreign service officer with interest in Asian and aviation history.

**Randy Burkett** serves on the CIA history staff. His past assignments have included service on the faculty of the Naval Postgraduate School.

**James Burridge** is a retired NSA officer. He is a CIA contract historian and frequent reviewer of books and movies.

**John Ehrman** is a senior analyst in CIA's Directorate of Analysis focusing on counterintelligence. He is a frequent and award-winning contributor.

**David A. Foy** is the Intelligence Community historian on the History Staff of the Center for the Study of Intelligence. He is a frequent contributor of book reviews.

**John Kavanagh** is a retired CIA operations officer and frequent reviewer.

**Bowman H. Miller, PhD.** is a member of the faculty of the National Intelligence University. He has been teaching graduate courses in intelligence-related subjects since retiring in 2005 from the Department of State, where he had served in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) for 25 years.

**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.

**David Robarge** is CIA's Chief Historian.

**Leslie S.** is a career CIA Directorate of Operations officer who has an interest in intelligence history.

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







## A Personal Perspective

# Intelligence and Policy The Case for Thin Walls as Seen by a Veteran of INR

**Bowman H. Miller, PhD**

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*Something there is that doesn't love a wall . . . [but]  
"Good fences make good neighbors."*

—Robert Frost, “Mending Wall”

Each new presidential administration brings with it fresh expectations of the Intelligence Community (IC) that serves it. Given the fraught relationship evident in recent exchanges between the White House and former IC leaders over the IC’s 2016 report about Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election, there is reason to worry about today’s relationship between the intelligence and policy communities and to revisit the timeless questions, “How high and thick should the wall between the communities be?” and “Should there be a wall at all?”

As a veteran of State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), in my judgment, the model relationship—preserve a wall, but make it closer to none—exists within the State Department. A thick and impermeable wall does a great disservice to the nation, to its leaders, to sound decisionmaking, and to America’s allies and partners. Trust must be established and intelligence judgments must be received with confidence in the abilities of those who produce those judgments and in their good and honorable intentions.

In this essay, I argue that, while distinguishing between policy and intelligence is fundamentally important, the wall between the two needs to be characterized by the insights, experience, and wisdom of the likes of Sherman Kent and Sir Percy Cradock. These two titans in the annals of intelligence, American and British, rightly advocated for thin walls between intelligence and policy.

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### **Sherman Kent and Sir Percy Cradock—Veterans’ Cautionary Insights**

Often dubbed the father of US intelligence analysis, Sherman Kent published his seminal work on strategic

intelligence in 1949. In it he captured the essence of the problem:

*Intelligence must be close enough to policy, plans, and operations to have the greatest amount of guidance, and must not be so close that it loses its objectivity and integrity of judgment . . . . To be properly guided in a given task intelligence one must know almost all about it. . . Intelligence is knowledge for the practical matter of taking action . . . . [Intelligence’s] job is to see that the doers are generally well-informed; its job is to stand behind them with book opened to the right page, to call their attention to the stubborn fact they may be neglecting, and—at their request—to analyze alternative courses without indicating choice. Intelligence cannot serve if it does not know the doers’ minds; it cannot serve if it has not their confidence; it cannot serve unless it has the kind of guidance any professional man must have from his client.<sup>a</sup>*

Kent was known to worry that, given too close a proximity to policy, analysts could be swayed in their judgments toward implied or explicit policy preferences—a matter of continuing concern. His focus on knowing intelligence’s “customer” has gone underappreciated, for it is knowing what the user knows, needs, does not realize he or she needs; the questions that need asking; and responses that are critical to a successful, mutually supportive relationship. From the views cited above, Kent clearly argued that intelligence cannot succeed if it is blind to the intentions and expectations of those in policy it serves. His pointed caveat, that intelligence has no business suggesting policy choices until or unless asked, remains crucial.

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a. Sherman Kent, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy* (Princeton University Press, 2015 [Princeton Legacy Library], 2015), 180, 182.

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Intelligence's role is to inform, not to influence. In effect, when it comes to talking or writing about policy, intelligence needs to heed the admonishment heretofore given to children—to speak when spoken to. By the same token, decisionmakers cannot thrust the blame for their failed policies onto intelligence, least of all if they have not even bothered to hear or read what intelligence has to offer.

For his part, Sir Percy Cradock, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's national security advisor and chairman of the British Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), uses a graphic metaphor to describe how intelligence and policy-making should relate:

*The best arrangement is intelligence and policy in separate but adjoining rooms, with communicating doors and thin partition walls, as in cheap hotels.<sup>a</sup>*

Cradock went on to note the importance of being aware of what is going on next door, without necessarily witnessing it firsthand. This “cheap hotel” metaphor conjures up any number of images, but the point is well-taken. Like Kent, Cradock asserts the necessity that intelligence be in the know concerning policy deliberations and objectives if it is to be of relevant service to decision makers:

*Ideally, intelligence and policy should be close but distinct. Too distinct and assessments become an in-growing, self regarding activity, producing little or no work of interest to decision-makers. . . . The analyst needs to be close enough to ministers to know the questions troubling them and he must not fight shy of tackling the major issues.<sup>b</sup>*

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### **Bias in Both Camps: Shunning Cassandra and Garcia**

What Kent and Cradock share is the overarching concern that intelligence prove itself a valuable and valued service to policy. It can only do that if it stays in its own lane—of independent collection and objective analysis. However, intelligence must be enabled to clearly observe what is going on in the parallel lane of policy and its deliberation. Intelligence fails if it sings to the policy choir,

if it loses its credibility and its readership, but also if it loses sight of its purpose in informing decisionmakers, regardless of the nature of the message.

Analysis is not and cannot be captive of, beholden to, or tainted by policy. However, it must still be acquainted with policy aims, instruments, and actions to be relevant to an informed decisionmaking process. All-source analysis is not the handmaiden of policy. But policy made without reference to intelligence and its judgments is a high-risk venture fraught with avoidable blindness.

One of the challenges in this relationship between intelligence and policy is recognizing the biases and mindsets on both sides. No one lacks bias. When commentators call out bias and politicization, they most often target intelligence that has been cherry-picked for what policymakers wish it to convey—or analysts or their betters trying to stay in tune with policy's known preferences and direction.

*And almost always there will be a difference between the clear picture seen by a convinced policy-maker and the cloudy picture usually seen by intelligence.<sup>c</sup>*

The biases are quite different between the analytical world and the policy world. Analysts tend to focus on complexity, nuance, multiple explanations, a mix of variables, and often insurmountable uncertainties. Policy makers wrestle with complexity, but, given their need to come to decisions (and routinely to do so with less information than would be desirable), their urge is to ferret out facts, find simplicity, and, if possible, determine the one best answer, as Kent observed in his own commentary. “A single judgment is insufficient to characterize whatever situation we confront,” he wrote, “not only because the judgment may be wrong, but also because it may miss important variables”.<sup>d</sup>

Policymakers are also analysts, at least in their own estimation. They form assumptions, sift information, and

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a. Percy Cradock, *Know Your Enemy: How the Joint Intelligence Committee Saw the World* (John Murray, 2002), 296.

b. *Ibid.*

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c. Thomas Hughes, *The Fate of Facts in a World of Men: Foreign Policy and Intelligence Making* (1976), quoted in Ephraim Kam, *Surprise Attack: The Victim's Perspective* (Harvard University Press, 2004), 200.

d. Paul Pillar, *Intelligence and U.S. Foreign Policy: Iraq, 9/11, and Misguided Reform* (Columbia University Press, 2011), 332.

envison estimates and reach conclusions. However, their focus and orientation are different:

*The analytical process undertaken by decisionmakers is shorter and more simplified than that of the professional analyst, and images and conceptions play a larger role in it.<sup>a</sup>*

The biases of policymakers become apparent in their commitment to a given policy. That commitment involves sunk costs, stature, one's political capital and reputation, and averting accusations of vacillation. Analysis also takes time, precious time that policy decisions often cannot afford or will not tolerate. The late Richard Holbrooke, as the incoming assistant secretary of state for Europe and Eurasia in 1994, told me in no uncertain terms that he did not want to be bothered with streams of intelligence, but that, as his "chief of station," I was to get him only what he needed and when he needed it. This recipe for failure was not lost on me.

Policymakers yearn for pro and con, up or down, yes or no findings. Lacking such clarity, a danger arises when policymakers decide, on their own, to draw conclusions from raw data without the benefit of qualifying commentary and context from analysts.<sup>b</sup> The veteran senior Israeli analyst Ephraim Kam notes, relevant to the present US condition, that distrust between policy and intelligence can result in no reference at all by policymakers to intelligence and analysis:

*In extreme cases of mistrust, such as that of Stalin, decisionmakers may concentrate the entire assessment process in their own hands. This practice is not unique to totalitarian regimes.<sup>c</sup>*

This creates an impermeable wall, which is fraught with problems. At the same time, overreliance on intelligence as the basis of decisions can also be unhealthy and deleterious to sound and timely policy. If intelligence's assessment of an adversary's capabilities or intentions goes unchallenged and is the sole arrow in a decisionmaker's quiver, that can lead to tunnel vision and dangerous miscalculation.

a. Kam, *Surprise Attack*, 200

b. For his part, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot made this a key reminder to his own intelligence apparatus in the State Department in his farewell visit to INR.

c. Kam, *Surprise Attack*, 202

### ***Contending with Bias***

It is one thing to say bias is a universal human trait. It is quite another to claim that biases cannot be identified or moderated. One argument for thin walls between intelligence and policy is that they allow for a better chance that intelligence will recognize the biases that afflict policymakers and their decisionmaking in order to help them recognize blinders to a well-informed decision. Again, Paul Pillar put it succinctly:

*The craving for certainty is even stronger with policymakers. They want to accomplish the policy agenda with which they came to office; they do not want to be diverted by the unexpected.<sup>d</sup>*

They hate surprise as much as they do roadblocks. Their desire is to be told how to achieve an objective, not why it appears unachievable.

Intelligence is not heralded as the frequent bringer of "good tidings." Often, its message is unpleasant, if not irksome. But, as former Secretary of State Colin Powell often reminded his staff, "bad news does not get better with age." His was the now well-known formula for the policy-intelligence nexus closest to the optimum, as seen from an intelligence perspective: "Tell me what you know; tell me what you do not or cannot know; but, most of all, give me your judgments." He went on to stipulate that once he had been given those, the analyst's responsibilities were fulfilled. He made plain that what he did with them was his decision and solely his responsibility—a welcome stance for analysts, who otherwise tend to hedge their bets or add qualifying adverbs to their views: "allegedly," "reportedly," "probably," "likely," and more.<sup>e</sup> That freedom to remain objective and be candid proved liberating to those in analysis who supported Powell during his tenure at State.

### ***Politicization vs. Objectivity***

Many an analyst has felt the pressure, subliminally or explicitly, to hone their analysis toward the prevailing policy climate. Thus, in 2002, few if any were courageous enough to risk reputations and careers in questioning the George W. Bush administration's contention that Sadd-

d. Pillar, *Intelligence and Foreign Policy*, 333.

e. Personal recollection of the author.

am Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and that Iraq could be force-fed Western democracy.<sup>a</sup> The two IC elements (Department of Energy and Department of State/INR) that placed footnotes of disagreement into the national intelligence estimate on the subject were variously extolled and lambasted. INR was at times tarred as the community's "step child" or, on the contrary, in an op-ed in the *Washington Post* as the "Spy World Success Story."<sup>b</sup> Pilloried by some in the IC while winning plaudits in media and on Capitol Hill, members of State/INR felt whipsawed.

For all the pressures exerted on analysts to sing policy tunes, politicization of intelligence is not as frequent or endemic as many would have us believe. Moreover, most self-confident analysts, armed with facts and insights, are well-equipped to resist such pressures—presuming they enjoy higher-level backing in the process.

The temptation exists, of course, to be seen as "loyal" members of a team, but that loyalty must take the form of calling situations forthrightly, regardless of their coloration or trend. Thus, when some in the IC insisted that intelligence not focus on downside concerns over residual tensions in the postwar western Balkans "because the Secretary of Defense has already decided on a force withdrawal," more objective voices demanded that the tensions being witnessed be consistently reported and analyzed nonetheless.

Likewise, even given the known inclination of the Bush (43) administration toward an invasion of Iraq, there were major players in various segments of the IC stressing the realities and challenges of Saddam's Iraq. Decisions were made despite the many cautions expressed, and there was even a move to generate alternative analysis in a Defense Department entity set up outside the IC. That the Iraq War ensued and, at this writing, continues is not the fault of intelligence.

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### *Living with the Policy Consumer*

While thin walls should be a minimum goal in intelligence-policy connection, the absence of walls would

be an even better situation in my view. Many of us who have served in INR think we enjoyed the advantage—even a luxury—largely unavailable to the rest of the IC. As a departmental "directorate," it occupies the same space as the US foreign policy apparatus and it interacts with the geographic and functional bureaus of the State Department at all levels, every day. From the country analysts to the assistant secretary of INR, these purveyors of all-source intelligence analysis are privy to a variety of policy discussions and determinations that others in the IC lack—and, at times, envy.

At the same time, INR personnel also must be mindful of their access to sensitive information and their intelligence roles as they absorb what policymakers are considering, discussing, planning, and executing. In keeping with the admonition of Sherman Kent noted earlier, INR analysts and senior officers steer clear of recommending policy alternatives or of critiquing policy choices outright. That is not their job—not their right or duty.

By the same token, the members of policy bureaus and their chiefs are not allowed to engage in intelligence work in addition to their policy roles. In short, INR does intelligence in State but no policy; the remainder of the State Department can write policy but cannot produce intelligence-based analysis per se.

How does this actually work? It is not that complicated. State Department policy offices hold meetings and discussions at all levels of responsibility throughout the workday and outside normal hours. In most instances, INR personnel are given access to those meetings and, if asked, can offer opinions related to policy questions and offer intelligence-based perspectives—assuming those present have appropriate clearances. "They are the ones who furnish the knowledge for testing the feasibility of objectives and the knowledge from which policy and plans may be formulated."<sup>c</sup> Even if policy consumers do not specifically task INR for insights or analysis day in and day out, the mere presence of INR officers inside the wall enables INR analysts to ascertain what intelligence and analysis could prove useful, relevant, and timely to the policy process.

Unlike most IC analysts, those in INR derive immediate and direct feedback on their work and become abun-

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a. For a much deeper discussion of this chapter of US history, see Pillar.

b. David Ignatius, "Spy World Success Story," *Washington Post*, 2 May 2004.

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c. Kent, *Strategic Intelligence*, 107.

dantly aware of their stature and reputation when policy consumers habitually include them in their deliberations. Analysts sense they have “arrived” when they are asked for their opinions (often in a side conversation) or for specific information and insights during policy deliberations. Becoming part of a policymaker’s “kitchen cabinet” is the *ultima ratio* of intelligence analysis.

While not all INR analysts attain and sustain this kind of access and reputation, those who do must remember to resist the occasional pressures to join a policy chorus. INR resists and has resisted such pressures throughout its history. The analyst, with assured top cover, must be able to say— as did Martin Luther in his brave defiance of a corrupt papacy 500 years ago—*Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders*. [Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise.]<sup>a</sup>

INR may benefit more than most IC agencies from policy proximity, but they all remain committed to keep-

ing the walls between themselves and policy deliberations and decisionmakers as thin and low as possible. When Robert Gates was the deputy director of central intelligence, he made it his credo to set aside any ethos of IC separation. He obliged CIA analysts to better understand policymaker needs and to communicate directly with them, whenever and however possible. That has included placement of CIA officers in other non-IC cabinet departments, ensuring that intelligence was represented in arms control and other negotiations, and invigorating the role of intelligence in support of the White House and NSC.

NSA and NGA analysts and operators serve in multiple outside agencies as well. Such assignments serve two purposes—the conveyance of intelligence directly to policy and the creation of better, closer acquaintance of analysts with the policy processes the IC supports. Moreover, finished as well as raw, actionable intelligence makes its way to cleared policymakers via briefers throughout the federal establishment in Washington and in the *President’s Daily Brief* that is available and used at the highest levels and through the Principals and Deputies Committee meetings in which the IC and CIA are represented.

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a. For another, more detailed eyewitness portrait of this environment, see Thomas Fingar, *Reducing Uncertainty: Intelligence Analysis and National Security* (Stanford University Press, 2011).



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**The author:** Bowman H. Miller, PhD, is a member of the faculty of the National Intelligence University. He has been teaching graduate courses in intelligence-related subjects since retiring in 2005 from the Department of State, where he had served in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) for 25 years.



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## The OSS Role in Ho Chi Minh's Rise to Political Power

**Bob Bergin**

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### Introduction

*Unexpected need for intelligence acquaints a man with strange bedfellows.<sup>1</sup>*

It's a small footnote in American history, but a significant event in the history of American intelligence: the OSS relationship with Ho Chi Minh is a marker for what can happen when an aspiring and clever politician is recruited as an intelligence asset. Although Ho was a minor figure then, he was carefully handled and was given nothing considered helpful to him or his political movement. But the young men of the OSS were no match for Ho's charm and cleverness, and his manipulative skills honed over 25 years as an agent of the Comintern.<sup>a</sup> By the time the relationship ended five months after it began, the OSS intelligence operation was a success, and Ho Chi Minh was the president of the newly declared Democratic People's Republic of Vietnam.

In ordinary times, intelligence services can identify reporting needs and seek agents to service them in a methodical fashion. In a crisis, particularly in time of war, there is often a need to move quickly when options are limited. The situation is ripe for exploitation by fabricators or opportunists seeking a relationship that will help

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a. The Comintern, or "Communist International," was an organization of the communist parties of the world, founded by Lenin in 1919 to promote world revolution.

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**. . . the young men of the OSS were no match for Ho's charm and cleverness, and his manipulative skills honed over 25 years as an agent of the Comintern.**

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Ho Chi Minh, sitting on the floor, with other attendees of the 5th Comintern meeting held in 1924 in Moscow. Photo © SPUTNIK/Alamy Stock Photos

them achieve their own political ends.

In the climactic final months of World War II in Asia, OSS encountered "an awfully sweet guy" named Ho Chi Minh.<sup>b</sup> He was Vietnamese, the leader of the "The League for Vietnamese Independence" (or Viet Minh), devoted to ridding Vietnam of the French who had colonized their country. Although it was occupied by the Imperial Japanese Army, Vietnam was of little operational interest to the OSS. An agent network inside Vietnam was producing a substantial flow of intelligence on Japanese activities that satisfied both British and Americans needs. Then, one day in March 1945, the flow of intelligence suddenly stopped. The effect on the American war effort was almost immediate: Fourteenth Air Force bombers had to stop flying missions over Vietnam

for lack of weather reports and targeting information. OSS received urgent requests to establish new agent nets inside Vietnam to replace the intelligence lost.

Ho Chi Minh was visiting Kunming, China, when he came to the attention of the OSS officer tasked with resolving the Vietnam intelligence problem. The officer

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b. How, years later, US Air Ground Aid Service (AGAS) officer, Lt. Dan Phelan, described Ho to journalist Robert Shaplin. Phelan had parachuted into Ho's camp in advance of the OSS Deer Team in August 1945. Source: William J. Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh: A Life* (Hachette, 2001) 301.

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***It would take a while for the listeners waiting by their radios to comprehend the full impact of what the silence meant.***

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was impressed with Ho, as it seems was every American who met him. There was no trace of Ho in OSS files, but the French knew of him, as a long time anti-French rebel, and a communist. There were caveats on OSS use of both, but the need was urgent, and Ho appeared capable of doing the job. In a few weeks, Ho was on his way back to his jungle lair in Vietnam, with an OSS-provided transmitter, a radio operator, and an experienced American intelligence operative to work with him.



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***The Wires Went Strangely Silent—9 March 1945<sup>2</sup>***

On 10 March 1945, OSS operatives at their Kunming, China, headquarters received a single six-word message from an agent in Vietnam: “Japanese seized all posts throughout Indochina.” Nothing more was heard from Vietnam that day. A check with the French Military Mission (FMM) in Kunming revealed that Free French links with their agents inside Vietnam had also gone silent.<sup>a</sup> It would take a while for the listeners waiting by their radios to comprehend the full impact of what the silence meant.

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a. The only French Military Mission accredited to the Chinese was at Chungking. The FMM in Kunming was the unit of French Intelligence (SLFEO) responsible for clandestine operations in Indochina. Source: Archimedes Patti, *Why Vietnam?* (University of California Press, 1980) 541, 545.

When the Japanese occupied Vietnam in 1941, they assured the Vichy French government that French sovereignty over their colonies in Indochina would be respected. Under Vichy control, the French colonial administration—complete with its army of “native” troops—remained intact and allowed to run France’s Indochina colonies as before. For the Japanese, this was “the most fruitful and least tedious method of administering their new ‘acquisition.’”<sup>3</sup> It required little of the Japanese Army and kept its troops free for engagements elsewhere.<sup>b</sup>

The arrangement worked well until the war moved into its final year, when France was liberated, and the American sweep across the Pacific drew closer to the Asian mainland. The Japanese had been long concerned about the loyalty of the French colonists. Vietnam had become a vital logistical base for the Japanese Army operating in China and Burma, and the Japanese could not afford to have the French colonists as an enemy at their back. When Americans landing on the Indochina coastline started to look like a distinct possibility, the Japanese acted.

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b. Ho Chi Minh summed up the situation: “The Japanese became the real masters. The French became kind of respectable slaves. And upon the Indo-Chinese falls the double honor of being not only slaves to the Japanese, but also the slaves of the slaves—the French.” Ho Chi Minh, from his report on Indochina for OSS as quoted in Dixee Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh* (University Press of Kansas, 2006), 28.

On 9 March 1945, the Japanese implemented Operation Meigo (Operation Bright Moon), their contingency plan to take over Vietnam if it became necessary. “Japanese troops took possession of [French] administrative offices, radio stations, the central telephone and telegraph offices, banks and the main industrial enterprises. They also attacked the police forces and arrested French civilian and military authorities.”<sup>4</sup> Units of the French Army that survived the initial assaults fought their way north toward the Chinese border. Their “coup” put the Japanese in complete control of Vietnam. French Indochina was no more.

The Japanese takeover created a serious problem for the OSS: agent networks inside Indochina that the United States had come to depend on were now gone, as was the intelligence on the Japanese presence that came from them—especially weather data and targeting intelligence that was absolutely essential for US Fourteenth Air Force bombers. “Even our air attacks had to cease, because we had neither weather reports nor any check on Japanese movements.”<sup>5</sup>

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***Intelligence Collection in Indochina***

When the Japanese Army entered Indochina in 1941, the British and Chinese had a sudden need for information on what the Japanese were up to; so would the Americans as their involvement in East Asia grew. But the practical difficulties of establishing intelligence mechanisms in a new environment were compounded by the political situation. Tai Li, Chiang Kai-shek’s intelligence chief, told US Navy Capt. Milton



“Mary” Miles—then “Director of OSS/Far East”—that the Chinese “could do almost nothing so far as Indochina was concerned . . . many different [Vietnamese] groups were active in one way or another, but the trouble was they did not like each other. On only one point, apparently, were they able to agree . . . none of them liked the Chinese.” As for the French in Indochina, “being French, they seemed to have almost as many different categories as people,” and all were “heartily disliked . . . for not having permitted the people of the region enough liberty or political responsibility.”<sup>a</sup>

While the Allied services became acquainted with the truths of Tai Li’s statements, three civilian amateurs—on their own—created an exceptionally effective intelligence network inside Vietnam. It was known as the GBT, after the surnames of the three who created it and ran it: Canadian Laurence L. Gordon; American Harry Bernard; and Chinese-American Frank Tan. All were formerly employed in Vietnam by the American Cal-Texaco Corporation.

The three turned to their “wealth of contacts” in Vietnam, among the local French, Vietnamese, Chinese, and others, to collect valuable information about Japanese activities throughout Indochina. What it collected, the GBT shared with the

a. The OSS was in contact with the FMM in Kunming, but internal political rivalries made the value of intelligence received from the French questionable. Source: Vice Admiral Milton E. Miles, USN, *A Different Kind of War: The Unknown Story of the U.S. Navy’s Guerilla Forces in World War II China* (Doubleday, 1967), 181–82.

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British, Americans, and Chinese,<sup>b</sup> becoming their indispensable source of intelligence on Indochina. US Fourteenth Air Force Commander, Claire Lee Chennault, was particularly supportive of the GBT, as it was GBT targeting and weather data that made possible US air operations over Indochina.

With its success, the GBT attracted Allied interest in taking over GBT agent networks. The GBT accepted funding and radio equipment from the British and the OSS, and some help from the Chinese, but maintained that its success was dependent on “being subservient to no one.”<sup>c</sup> The GBT was already cooperating with the Air Ground Force Resources and Technical Staff (OSS/AGFRTS), an OSS unit that was using the Fourteenth Air Force as the cover that enabled it to work unilaterally without Chinese interference. When OSS wanted to expand its association with GBT, it assigned Charles Fenn to work with group.<sup>c</sup>

b. But not the French, as GBT “do not dare cooperate with the French as they [GBT] have strong Chinese support and assistance . . . [and also] their interests are not always those of the French Empire.” Source: Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, quoting an untitled memo by OSS officer Robert B. Hall, 89.

c. “Fenn’s was the only name [Gordon] would agree to.” Charles Fenn, born in the United Kingdom, emigrated to the United States in his early twenties. He became a news photographer and journalist; joined the Associated Press in 1941; and covered the war in North Africa and Asia, including the Japanese invasion of Burma. In 1943, in New York, Buckminster Fuller,

GBT leader Laurence Gordon and Fenn had met, and the two got along well, although Gordon feared losing GBT’s independence, “especially to OSS, whose methods Gordon considered autocratic.” Later, when fast moving events “forced a decision, the GBT was transferred to Air Ground Air Service, AGAS<sup>d</sup>, along with Fenn’s services.” Fenn’s official capacity was as the OSS liaison to AGAS and to GBT.

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***With Natives if Necessary***

“Both Wedemeyer and the US Navy sent us urgent pleas to get a new intelligence net operating—with natives if necessary!”<sup>e,f,7</sup>

an advisor to OSS, recruited him. He was commissioned as a Marine lieutenant and sent to Burma to run MO operations, in which he excelled. In June 1944, he was sent to China, where his duties expanded to include intelligence collection operations under the cover of AGFRTS. Source: Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 96.

d. AGAS was a US agency responsible for assisting in the rescue of downed airmen in China and Southeast Asia, “. . . whose work was divided between the rescue of downed pilots, liaison with Prisoners of War, and collection of intelligence.” Source: Charles Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh: A Biographical Introduction*, (Scribner, 1973), 73.

e. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, Commander of US Forces in China, replaced General Joseph Stilwell on 31 October 1944.

f. In colonial usage, the term “native” had become a pejorative. “One has only to remember the names applied to the rulers (baas, master, sahib) as against the single pejorative given to the ruled (native). Originally a useful term to describe an

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**Ho was known at the US Office of War information in Kunming, and often visited there “to read Time magazine and any other news literature they happened to have.”**

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“What natives?” Fenn asked. “Nobody knew any they thought could be trusted.” Then Fenn remembered: he had recently heard about an American pilot named Shaw, “who had been brought out from Indochina by an Annamite named Ho, who would not accept any reward, but had asked only to meet General Chennault.”<sup>8</sup> The request was refused. The policy was that no ranking American officer could have contact with an Annamite, lest the French become annoyed.

Fenn learned from a correspondent named Ravenholt, who had written a story on Ho, that Ho was still in Kunming. Ho was known at the US Office of War information (OWI) in Kunming, and often visited there “to read *Time* magazine and any other news literature they happened to have.”<sup>9</sup> Ho had started visiting the Kunming OWI library during the summer of 1944. The Americans there were impressed by “Ho’s English, intelligence, and obvious interest in the Allied war effort,” and OWI wanted to hire him to broadcast war news from San Francisco to Vietnam. But later, “OSS reports stated that the OWI plan was dropped because of objections from the French consul.”<sup>10</sup> Fenn asked a contact at OWI to try to arrange a meeting with Ho. It was set for the next morning, 17 March 1945.

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indigenous person, this finally classified its recipient with a status only one step up from a dog.” Source: Charles Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh: A Biographical Introduction* (Scribner, 1973), 9.

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***Troublesome Fenn Meets Old Man Ho—17 March 1945<sup>a</sup>***

Ho arrived right on time, in the company of a younger Vietnamese, a man named Pham Van Dong.<sup>b</sup> Ho had been spoken of as “old,” but appeared younger than Fenn expected: “Ho was over 50, but his face was unlined, and his wisp of beard and thinning hair were only barely touched with gray.” Ho was given the code name “Lucius,” but Fenn and the other Americans continued to refer to him as “Old Man Ho,” simply because they were “all much younger” than Ho.<sup>c</sup>

When Ho talked about his “League for Independence” or the Viet Minh, Fenn remembered that he had been told that the “League” was a communist group. Was that label correct? “Some of our members are Communists,” Ho said, “and some aren’t. The Chinese and French call all of us Communists who don’t fit into their pattern.” Fenn asked, “Are you

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a. “Troublesome Fenn,” as he was sometimes called in OSS, was independent-minded and had little patience with bureaucracy, which often put him at odds with his OSS bosses.

b. Pham Van Dong, one of Ho’s closest associates, served as prime minister (PM) of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) from 1955 to 1976 and, following unification, as PM of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam from 1976 until 1987.

c. This and the conversation between Fenn and Ho Chi Minh that follows is adapted from Fenn’s account of his first meeting with Ho (from Fenn, *At the Dragon’s Gate*, 139–140). Fenn kept a personal diary during these years, which would account for the remembered detail.

against the French?” Ho answered, “Certainly not. But unfortunately they are against us.”

Fenn asked if Ho would be willing to work with the Americans, to take a radio and a generator into Indochina and collect intelligence—and to rescue more American pilots when that was possible. Ho noted that a radio operator from the outside would have to go in as well; the Viet Minh had no one trained to do that. When it seemed that Ho was willing to work with the Americans, Fenn asked what Ho would want in return.

“American recognition for our league,” Ho said.

Fenn hedged; Ho said, “Medicine and arms.”

“Why arms?” Fenn asked; the Vietnamese were not fighting the Japanese then.

But they should be, Ho responded. The Vietnamese would be willing to work not only with the Americans, but with the Chinese, and “even with the French, if they’d let us.” Ho agreed to meet Fenn again in two days. Fenn still needed to get OSS clearance to work with Ho, but he already knew that Ho “was our man. Baudelaire felt the wings of insanity touch his mind, but that morning I felt the wings of genius touch mine.”<sup>11</sup>

To get the clearance he needed, Fenn had to find out more about Ho’s background. Except for his contacts with OWI, the Americans knew nothing about Ho, but Fenn’s French contacts did: Ho was “a longstanding rebel, anti-French, of course, and strictly communist. The [Nationalist] Chinese did not much

like him either.”<sup>12</sup> Fenn took what he had learned about Ho to his boss, Kunming OSS chief Col. Richard Heppner. Heppner was pragmatic: if Fenn thought Ho would do the job, Fenn should use him.

### ***Where Did Old Man Ho Come From?***

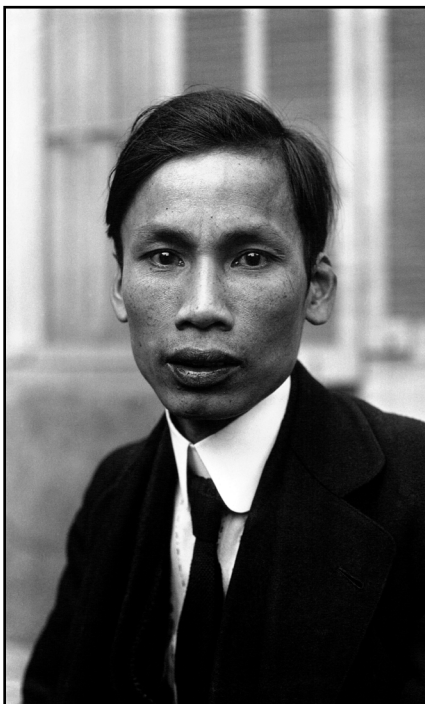
*The leader of the Annamite communist movement was trained in Canton under Borodin, in addition to his extensive schooling in Moscow and various European countries. His name, Nguyen Ai-Quoc, is known to all Annamites.<sup>a</sup>*

It’s not surprising that the Americans knew nothing about Ho; the Ho Chi Minh persona was brought into existence only in late 1940. The French and British services had extensive files on “Nguyen Ai Quoc” (Nguyen the Patriot), the name Ho had employed during his time as a Comintern agent in Europe and Asia—until he vanished from Canton in early 1933 and returned to Moscow to escape the British and French, and a probable death sentence hanging over his head in Vietnam.<sup>b</sup> When he

a. The OSS did not make the connection between the name “Nguyen Ai Quoc” and the name “Ho Chi Minh” then or when the first OSS officer, Charles Fenn, made contact with Ho in March 1945. This quote is the first reference in an OSS document to the man who would become known as Ho Chi Minh, from “An Outline of a Plan for Indo-China,” 26 October 1943, Section II, What We Have to Work with in Indo-China,” author unknown. Cited in Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 148.

b. For an account of those years, see Bob Bergin, “The Operator: Ho Chi Minh as Political Activist in Europe and Asia, *The*

***It’s not surprising that the Americans knew nothing about Ho; the Ho Chi Minh persona was brought into existence only in late 1940.***



Nguyen Ai Quoc, pictured in 1921 at a meeting of the French Communist Party in Marseilles, France. Photo © CNP Collection/Alamy Stock Photo

returned to China in 1938 on a new Comintern mission, Ho again became Nguyen Ai Quoc. He was assigned to the Chinese Communist Eighth Route Army, and beyond the reach of the British and French intelligence services. In his dealings with the Chinese Nationalists after his return, Ho used several new aliases, thus further depriving Allied intelligence of any new information about him.

When the Japanese Army started to move into Indochina in 1940, Ho’s focus shifted to new opportunities

*Intelligencer: Journal of U.S. Intelligence Studies*, 23, no 2, 37.

this might afford Vietnamese revolutionaries against the French. In late 1940, he traveled in China’s southern Yunnan Province, close to the Vietnam border. “To keep his identity secret, he became a Chinese journalist under a new name, Ho Chi Minh (He Who Enlightens.)”<sup>13</sup> Early in 1941, Ho crossed the border into Vietnam and established himself near the Vietnamese village of Pac Bo, where he lived in a cave and devoted himself to broadening his base of support. He organized the first Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) Central Committee meeting since the VCP’s founding in 1930 [as the Indochina Communist Party], and established the Viet Minh, or League for Independence.<sup>c</sup>

In August 1942, Ho started back to China, walking at night to avoid French patrols. On 27 August, Ho and his young Chinese guide were arrested by Nationalist Chinese police near Binhma, a market town where Ho could get a bus to Chungking.

Ho was carrying an ID card that identified him as Ho Chi Minh, the overseas Chinese journalist. He was also carrying papers that identified him as a representative of the “Vietnamese branch of the Anti-Aggression League” and of an international press agency, and he had a military passport issued by the KMT’s Fourth

c. The word “Indochina” in the original name of the Indochina Communist Party Ho founded in 1930 was now replaced with “the more emotive word ‘Vietnam,’ the use of which had for so long been forbidden by the French colonial regime.” Source: William J. Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh: A Life* (Hyperion, 2000), 252.

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**Fenn set two conditions for meeting Chennault: Ho must ask no favors of Chennault, and politics were not to be discussed. Ho agreed.**

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Military command. “Suspecting that anyone with so many false documents must be a Japanese agent, they [local Chinese authorities] took him and his young guide into custody.”<sup>14</sup>

Over the next five months, Ho “spent time in 18 prisons in 13 different districts in south China.”<sup>15</sup> Finally, in early February 1943, a Chinese military court declared Ho a political prisoner; his condition improved, and he was eventually released. The first contacts between the Viet Minh and the Americans began as early as December 1942, when Viet Minh representatives approached the American embassy for help in securing Ho’s release from prison but got no help from the Americans or the Free French in Kunming, “both of whom found him and his organization rather inconsequential.”<sup>16, 17</sup>

Fenn first heard the Ho Chi Minh name in a conversation with a Chinese general named “Chen” while looking for a Vietnamese agent to use against Japanese targets in Indochina. In his 22 October 1944 report of the conversation, Fenn wrote: “There is an Annamite<sup>a</sup> named Hu Tze-ming [a Chinese Mandarin rendering] who heads up the International Anti-Ag-

gression Group (Anti-fascist) who might be used.”<sup>18</sup>

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**Preparing Ho as an Agent**

After his first meeting with Ho on 17 March 1944, Fenn turned to the Vietnam experts, his GBT colleagues Bernard and Tan. As Ho’s current communications were dependent on Vietnamese couriers, a radio operator would have to be sent in with him. GBT had a candidate, Mac Sin, one of their radio operators, and Frankie Tan would go in as well, “to conduct the training and collect information.” Both were ethnic Chinese and would blend into the local population. Tan had already spent several years in Amam.

Fenn held his second meeting with Ho and Pham Van Dong on 20 March, “at the Indo-China Café on Chin Pi Street.” Ho doubted that the two GBT Chinese would blend in easily with the Vietnamese locals. The Vietnamese were suspicious of all Chinese, but he agreed with the arrangement. Ho also suggested that he, the two GBT members, and their radio equipment should be flown to Ching Shi on the China-Vietnam border, about 300 miles southeast of Kunming. It would save considerable time. From there they would walk to the Viet Minh camp, a two-week, 200-mile, nighttime trek through Japanese-held territory to the village of Kim Lung in Thai Nguyen province, northeast of Hanoi where Ho had his base.<sup>19</sup> Pham Van Dong would stay in Kunming to serve as liaison.

Fenn agreed to use aircraft as Ho had suggested. He told Ho that he had “already arranged medicines and a few things like radios, cameras, and weather equipment, which Mac Sin will train your men to use . . . we must leave out arms for the present. Perhaps later we can drop some in.”<sup>20</sup>

“And what about meeting Chennault?” Ho asked.

Why was Ho so keen to do that? Chennault was the Westerner he most admired, Ho said, and he would like to tell him so. That sounded harmless enough—although Fenn suspected Ho had some political purpose in mind. The caveat against ranking Americans’ meeting Annamites still stood, but now it appeared that Ho “might be the key to all our future Indochina operations.”<sup>21</sup> Fenn knew Chennault from his days as a correspondent. He could set up the meeting himself, with no need to go through channels, and without OSS learning about it.

Fenn set two conditions: Ho must ask no favors of Chennault, and politics were not to be discussed. Ho agreed. With that, Fenn “went to see [Chennault] personally and explained the importance of playing along with this old man, who had not only rescued one of the general’s pilots, but might rescue more if we gained his future cooperation.”<sup>2b</sup>

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a. The central part of Vietnam was called Annam by the French, the North was called Tonkin, and the South, Cochinchina. All Vietnamese eventually came to be called Annamites. As derived from the Chinese language, Annam means “pacified South,” and is considered demeaning by the Vietnamese. The word “Vietnam” was by used by Nationalists in the 1920s, and generally accepted by 1945.

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b. Martha Byrd, Chennault’s biographer, notes, “It was no secret that Ho Chi Minh and his followers were Communists. Nor was it any secret that Chennault would have worked with the devil himself to keep his flyers out of enemy prison camps.” Source: *Chennault: Giving Wings to the Tiger* (The University of Alabama Press, 1987), 345. Likewise, Fenn mentions another author, Robert Shaplen (in *The Lost Revolution*:

The meeting took place on 29 March, in Chennault's office, the general sitting behind a desk "the size of a double bed." GBT's Harry Bernard had come along to watch. Chennault thanked Ho for rescuing the pilot, and talked about how Ho could continue to help the Americans, which Ho said he was always glad to do. As the meeting was breaking up, Ho told Chennault that he had a small favor to ask.

Fenn "drew a deep breath."<sup>22</sup> "Here we go, boys, hold your hats," was written all over Bernard's face."<sup>23</sup>

"May I have your photograph?" Ho said, and Fenn "almost gasped with relief." Chennault had his secretary bring in "a sheaf of eight-by-ten glossies" and invited Ho to take his pick. Ho selected one and asked if Chennault could sign it. Chennault wrote, "Yours sincerely, Claire L. Chennault." The meeting was done. It had obviously pleased Ho.<sup>24</sup>

Fenn's subsequent meetings with Ho were held in a room above a Kunming candle shop that Ho shared with Pham Van Dong. There he briefed Ho on OSS and intelligence requirements, particularly for weather reports, "because without them our planes could not fly."<sup>25</sup> During one of their tea breaks, Ho asked if Fenn could get him six new Colt .45 automatics in their original wrappings. "No problem," Fenn said—"relieved to be asked for nothing more."<sup>26</sup> Fenn got the six .45 pistols from OSS.

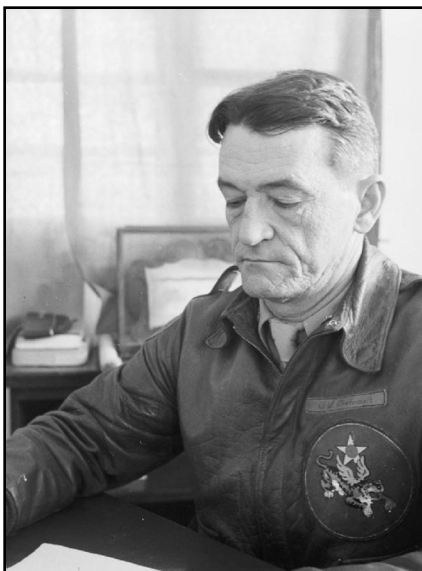
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*The US in Vietnam, 1946–1966* [Harper & Row, 1966]), who notes that Kuomintang friends had warned Chennault to "steer clear" of Ho. Source: Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh*, 78.

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***To be received by Chennault was very important in Ho's mind [as it served] as official American notice [of his leadership].***

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Claire L. Chennault, commander of the 14th Air Force, autographed a photo of himself for Ho. Photo © Military History Collection/Alamy Stock Photo

Some days later, Harry Bernard and Fenn drove Ho to the airport, "along with his small plaited case, packet of pistols, and a couple of packages done up in rice paper . . . Mac Sin would fly with Ho, and Tan would fly in a second L-5 with generator, transmitter, and various small arms he insisted on taking . . . "Their immediate destination was Ching Hsis . . . where we still had an airstrip not yet in Japanese hands."<sup>27</sup> A "wire" soon came from Tan that all had arrived safely.

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***The Making of the Top Leader***

Radio contact was established with OSS in Kunming, but Ho sent an occasional letter to Fenn via Vietnamese couriers. One of the early ones was delivered by a man who

spoke good French and brought Fenn up-to-date on Ho's situation: the courier said that after his long walk into Vietnam, Ho had arrived at his Pac Bo base quite ill:

*When he got well enough, he invited all the top leaders to a conference, not his own people, but rivals working for other groups, who had used his absence to push themselves forward. Ho told them he had now secured the help of the Americas including Chennault. At first nobody really believed him. Then he produced the photograph of Chennault signed, "Yours Sincerely." After this, he sent for the automatic pistols [the six .45s that Fenn had given him] and gave one to each of the leaders as a present. The leaders considered that Chennault had sent these presents personally. After this conference, there was never any more talk about who was the top leader."<sup>28</sup>*

Archimedes Patti—an OSS veteran of the Italian campaign—who had just taken over as Chief of OSS Indochina operations in Kunming, summed up the significance of Ho's meeting with Chennault:

*To be received by Chennault was very important in Ho's mind as official American notice. But the inscribed photograph turned out to be of vital importance to him only a few months later, when he was badly in need of tangible evidence to convince skeptical Vietnamese nationalists that he had Amer-*

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**Patti had become enmeshed in an increasingly complex situation as French military units escaping the 9 March Japanese coup started seeking ways to get back into Indochina.**

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*ican support. It was a ruse which lacked foundation, but it worked.*<sup>29</sup>

Soon after, a load of OSS supplies was dropped in, including radios, medicines and weapons. “According to Frankie Tan, this drop caused a sensation, and Ho’s stock went up another ten points.”<sup>30</sup>

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**What the Americans Got from Ho**

Ho returned good value for what he derived from his relationship with the Americans. Patti wrote, “Ho Chi Minh kept his word and furnished OSS with extremely valuable information and assistance in many of our clandestine projects.” By the end of June, Fenn wrote, “Tan and Ho between them had already set up an intelligence network of native agents that had amply replaced the French net lost by the [9 March] Japanese coup . . . [Also] the Viet Minh net eventually rescued a total of 17 downed airmen.”<sup>a</sup>

Fenn viewed the three months following the 9 March Japanese coup as

*perhaps the most significant in Ho’s career. At the beginning, Ho had been the leader of a political party that was but one amongst many, unrecognized by Americans, opposed by the French, shunned by the Chi-*

*nese . . . By the end of June, he was largely, thanks to GBT, the unquestioned leader of an overwhelmingly strong revolutionary party.*<sup>31</sup>

In mid-June, an evaluation prepared by Patti’s staff listed Viet Minh accomplishments in the period since the March coup that included six provinces in the north “under the military and administrative control of the Viet Minh; an established Army of Liberation . . . an effective propaganda organization . . . and that all-important ingredient, popular support from the Vietnamese people.”<sup>32</sup>

The impetus that propelled Viet Minh success was the 9 March Japanese coup that eliminated French authority and power in Indochina. “This coup meant that one of Ho’s two enemies was now *hors de combat*. [Vo Nguyen] Giap immediately declared Japan the sole enemy.”<sup>33</sup> The French watchdog was gone; the Viet Minh fox could run free.<sup>b</sup> The famine of 1944–45 was another big factor. Japanese seizure of rice crops—and the indifference of the French authorities—combined with severe flooding in the spring, led to deaths of as many as two million Vietnamese, and the strong feelings against the French and Japanese grew.

But not everything was going well. In a letter to Fenn in mid-July,

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b. Ho’s own description is more colorful: “The French imperialist wolf was finally devoured by the Japanese fascist hyena.” Source: William J. Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh: A Life* (Hyperion, 2000) 296.

Ho apologized for not writing much, “because I am in bad health just now (not very sick, don’t worry!).” Frankie Tan, who had just returned to Kunming, explained that “Ho had been much shaken by his long walk to Pac Bo,” and then “had a bad relapse a month or so” after his first illness. Tan and Ho’s Vietnamese colleagues “had even feared for his life.”<sup>34</sup>

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**A Parallel Operation Evolves**

Archimedes Patti, who had arrived in Kunming in mid-April, was a French speaker, and as chief of the Washington OSS Indochina desk from mid-1944 until he departed for China, was well-read into the Indochina situation. He was aware of Ho Chi Minh and enthusiastic about Fenn’s contact, which he learned of upon arriving in Kunming. Before Patti departed for China, OSS chief William Donovan told him to use anyone willing to work against the Japanese, but cautioned him not to become involved in French Indochina politics.<sup>35</sup>

In late April, Patti visited the China-Vietnam border area, where a Vietnamese contact introduced him to “an Annamite of influence and resources.”<sup>36</sup> It was Ho Chin Minh, who wanted to discuss collaboration with the Allies inside Vietnam.<sup>37</sup> Ho knew Patti was OSS, and acknowledged that he was cooperating with AGAS (Fenn’s operation) on “another matter,” to assist downed airmen, and said he was “ready to align himself with the Americans whenever they were ready.”<sup>38</sup> Patti could not make a commitment then, but later wrote, “Ho and the Viet Minh appeared to be the answer to my

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a. Fenn notes that “Some of these rescues were partly due to other help.” Source: Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh*, 82.

immediate problem of establishing [Special] operations in Indochina.”<sup>39</sup>

Patti had become enmeshed in an increasingly complex situation as French military units escaping the 9 March Japanese coup started seeking ways to get back into Indochina. President Roosevelt died in April, and the United States was now open to making concessions for the French. OSS was close to agreeing to create two French-American Special Operations teams—“Cat,” and “Deer”—in which the French military would participate. And Patti’s duties had just been expanded: in addition to intelligence collection, Patti was “to disrupt and destroy railroads in northern Vietnam to deny them to the Japanese.”

There was growing opposition from the Chinese to joint US-French military cooperation, and it was evident that French interest was not focused on defeating the Japanese but in restoring Indochina as a French colony. It was at that point that Ho Chi Minh contacted Patti again: “During the first week of June, Ho Chi Minh let me know that he was prepared to make available up to 1,000 ‘well-trained’ guerrillas for any plan I might have against the Japanese.”<sup>40</sup>

Patti replied that he would give the offer serious consideration. When the French refused to join in an OSS operation against railroads in Indochina, Patti decided he would replace them with the Vietnamese.

### ***Deer Team Drops In— Mid- to Late July 1945***

On 16 July 1945, OSS Special Operations Deer Team leader, Maj.

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### ***There was growing opposition from the Chinese to joint US-French military cooperation, and it was evident that French interest was not focused on defeating the Japanese . . . .***

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Alison Kent Thomas, two members of his team, and three “French” arrived by parachute at the Viet Minh headquarters at Kim Lung.<sup>a</sup> Thomas wanted to look the area over before committing the rest of his team. Frankie Tan was waiting on the ground, and Ho Chi Minh came to welcome them.

The “French”—a European officer and two Annamite members of the French Colonial Army—were “immediately recognized” by the Viet Minh cadre, and “it was only because of [Frankie] Tan’s amelioration that the French were ‘treated amicably.’”<sup>41</sup> Major Thomas had included them, despite Patti’s warning him against it. Ho objected to their presence; they were escorted back to China, and Thomas was left to write in his diary, “Too bad they had to be sent away, but these people dislike the French almost as much as they dislike the [Japanese].”<sup>b, 42</sup>

Thomas’s orders were to organize a guerrilla team of 50 to 100 men. “He had brought along sufficient containers of small arms and explosives to arm such a group.” Ho told Thomas that he had “three

thousand men under arms.” Thomas saw about 200 of them around the camp, “armed with French rifles and a few Brens, Stens, tommyes and carbines.”<sup>43</sup> He sent to Kunming his recommendation to use 100 “partially trained Viet Minh guerrillas,” and requested additional equipment: “air cargo transports eventually dropped more weapons—one automatic machine gun, two 60 mm mortars, four bazookas, eight Bren machine guns, twenty Thompson submachine guns, sixty M-1 carbines, four M-1 rifles, twenty Colt .45 caliber pistols, and a set of binoculars.”<sup>c, 44</sup>

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### ***Did OSS Just Save Ho Chi Minh’s Life?***

The remaining six members of Deer Team arrived by parachute on 29 July. Thomas was on a lengthy reconnaissance; the team was met by Frankie Tan and “Mr. Van”—the commander-to-be of the future Vietnam Liberation Army, Vo Nguyen Giap—in alias.<sup>d</sup> Giap apologized for Ho’s absence, saying that he was ill. Two days later, when team members were told that Ho was still sick, they decided to see if he needed help. Lieutenant Defourneaux, the team’s French-American member, found

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a. “Sensing the historical importance of the village [Kim Lung] for the fortunes of the Vietnamese Resistance, Ho ordered it renamed Tan Trao (“New Tide”). Source: Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh*, 298.

b. Back in Kunming, Patti learned from a French contact that the three “French” were on a special mission to make contact with Ho for French Intelligence. Source: Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 196.

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c. As questions on OSS-provided weapons were later raised, numbers and types of weapons are cited here as they appear in research.

d. Giap became the principal commander in the war against the French, and later the Americans. He is considered to be one of the greatest military strategists of the 20th century.

him “in the corner of a smoky hut . . . covered with what appeared to be rags . . . yellow skin stretched over his skeletal body.” He was “shaking like a leaf,” obviously with a high fever.<sup>45</sup> OSS medic Paul Hoagland took a quick look: “This man doesn’t have long for this world,”<sup>46</sup> he said. Giap had been very worried about Ho: “For hours he lay in a coma. Every time he came to, he would murmur his thoughts about our work. I refused to believe he was imparting his dying thoughts. But afterwards, looking back on the scene, I realized that he felt so weak that he was dictating his last instructions to me.”<sup>47</sup>

Hoagland had trained as a nurse, and worked as one for several years. He examined Ho, speculated “he was suffering from “malaria, dengue fever, dysentery, or a combination of all three.” He gave him “quinine, sulfa drugs, [and] other medicines” and checked on him periodically. Within 10 days, Ho seemed recovered. He was again up, and on his own around camp.<sup>48</sup>

Had OSS just saved Ho’s life? It certainly appeared that way. Major Thomas later said that Ho was “very sick,” but he was not sure that Ho “would have died without us.”<sup>49</sup> Giap credited a local ethnic minority wild plant expert, who fed Ho rice gruel sprinkled with the cinders of a burnt root. “The miracle occurred . . . The president emerged from his coma.”<sup>50</sup> Pulled from an early grave or not, Ho was back on his feet—ready to make the move that would determine the course of Vietnam’s future.

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### ***Training the Viet Minh— Early August 1945***

In the meantime, Deer Team got to work. The first six days in August were spent building a training camp with the Vietnamese—three barracks for the Viet Minh recruits; one for OSS; and a warehouse, infirmary, and radio center. And a shooting range. Of 110 recruits, Deer Team chose 40 of the most promising. Ho Chi Minh named them the Bo Doi Viet-My, the Vietnamese-American Force.<sup>51</sup> Their instruction in American drill and use of American weapons continued from 9 to 15 August. On 10 August, a third air drop brought more weapons and ammunition.<sup>52</sup> The recruits were enthusiastic; their commander pleased. “Giap made sure that his newly equipped units were seen by as many as possible. Wherever they went . . . local people cheered and welcomed them.”<sup>53</sup>

On August 15, “after hearing of the Japanese surrender, [Major Thomas] had turned over most of the American weapons used in training to the Vietnamese-American Force.” Three days later, Thomas received a message from Kunming advising him that all OSS equipment was to be returned to an American base in China.<sup>54</sup> It was too late: the Vietnamese-American Force was on the road to Hanoi—with Deer Team marching alongside.

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### ***The Question of Weapons***

In his biography, *Ho* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), David Halberstam wrote what others came to believe:

*The Americans later claimed that they gave Ho only a few*

*revolvers, although there is considerable evidence that five thousand weapons were air-dropped to the Vietminh in the summer of 1945 by the Allies. Also, according to French and communist accounts, the number of Vietminh troops in the country at the time of the fall of Japan, was five thousand. (75)*

In early August 1945, 5,000 weapons for the Viet Minh would have been highly significant. Halberstam, however, does not provide any of the “considerable evidence” he cites, nor does he say where he acquired that information.

There is no overall accounting of the weapons the United States provided to the Viet Minh. The number was small, perhaps fewer than 200 individual pieces, mostly passed by Deer Team. As noted above, Deer Team leader Major Thomas turned over all OSS weapons used in training to the Vietnamese-American Force on 15 August. Had the war gone on, presumably those same weapons would have been issued to the Vietnamese-American Force.

His own experience with the Americans had taught Ho not to expect weapons if he asked for them. Getting sufficient weapons had always been a problem for the Viet Minh, even when their force was small. Now an army was being formed. Vo Nguyen Giap later wrote,

*We decided to try every means to get more weapons for our army. Besides those we seized from the [Vietnamese] civil guards or from the Japanese in battle, we used the money and gold contributed by the people to buy more armaments from the*



*Japanese and Chiang troops . . . Uncle Ho called on the people in the whole country to take an active part in 'Gold Week,' to give their gold for the purchase of weapons from the Chinese. Within a short time, people from all walks of life had contributed twenty million piastres and three hundred and seventy kilograms of gold.*<sup>55, 56</sup>

Historian Bernard Fall, too, commented on the results of the so-called Gold Week:

*It was thoroughly successful and provided the nascent "Vietnam People's Army" with 3,000 rifles, 50 automatic rifles, 600 submachine guns, and 100 mortars of American manufacture—plus the substantial French and Japanese stocks (31,000 rifles, 700 automatic weapons, 36 artillery pieces, and 18 tanks) that the Chinese were supposed to have secured but did not.*<sup>58</sup>

This was the start to equipping the Vietnam People's Liberation Army.

### **Uncle Ho Makes his Move—Mid August 1945**

*Ho must have rejoiced inwardly that the 'Deer' team had arrived so opportunely and that, by spreading it thinly, everything could seem much more than it actually was.*<sup>58</sup>

In the first days of August 1945, no one could have foreseen how abruptly the war would end on 15 August. The convalescing Ho Chi Minh was following world events on Major Thomas's radio receiver. As the Americans moved closer to

### **In the first days of August 1945, no one could have foreseen how abruptly the war would end on 15 August.**

the Japanese homeland, Ho's sense of urgency grew: when the Japanese were defeated, the French would return to Vietnam. "Ho knew that to retain leadership and momentum for his movement, he had to demonstrate both legitimacy and strength."<sup>59</sup> On 6 August, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. The war's end was near. Ho called for a meeting of Viet Minh and other political leaders from all over Vietnam.

By 13 August, many delegates had arrived at Tan Trao. That evening, the National Insurrection Committee was formed. It issued Military Order Number 1, ordering a general insurrection; the next day, a Plan of Action was prepared. Vietnam's "August Revolution" was beginning.

On 16 August, the first National People's congress was convened, with delegates from the political parties that formed the Viet Minh Front, mass organizations, and ethnic and religious groups. As they gathered, "they were treated to glimpses of well-uniformed, well-armed, and well-disciplined troops coming and going in the area." Chennault's photo was prominently displayed alongside Mao's and Lenin's, and "rumors were rampant that the Viet Minh—and 'Uncle Ho' in particular—had 'secret' Allied support."<sup>60</sup>

When Ho took the floor, he spoke of the overall situation, and "reiterated the importance of a rapid seizure of power in order to greet the Allied occupation forces in a strong position."<sup>61</sup> As the congress concluded, an "appeal to the people" was issued, calling on all of Vietnam to rise up. It was signed "Nguyen Ai Quoc," the

legendary agent of revolution—and Vietnam started to understand the true identity of this mysterious "Ho Chi Minh."<sup>a</sup>

In the days that followed, uprisings broke out all over Vietnam. Some were spontaneous, others were "incited by local Viet Minh units."<sup>62</sup> On 19 August, the Viet Minh took control of Hanoi and started taking over the north. On 2 September 1945, in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh declared the independence of the new Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

### **Consternation in Hanoi—Late August 1945**

*Viet Minh Fighting with U.S. Troops in Tonkin Will Soon Be Here to Oust the French Oppressors Who Last Year Starved Two Million People.*

Those were the words of the headline of a newspaper that circulated in Hanoi in the days before Ho declared independence. The article said that the arrival in Hanoi of Major Thomas, "allegedly at the head of the main body of Ho's troops, was to

a. Charles Fenn recalls, "Most . . . had long supposed Nguyen Ai Quoc was dead, and this surprising re-emergence was a powerful toxin. As for the French, they were certain he was dead. . . . Ho needed now to establish himself as . . . one who would consolidate rather than rebel. . . . Under this name of Ho Chi Minh, he knew himself to be tolerated by the Chinese, accepted by the Americans, and at least not proscribed by the French. As for his own countrymen, they needed only to be told the name of the liberator to begin cheering." Source: Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh*, 88.

be the signal for massive anti-French demonstration.”<sup>63</sup>

OSS Indochina operations chief Archimedes Patti arrived in Hanoi on 21 August with an OSS team, and accompanied by a five-man French military team. To Patti fell the task of calming down the French and informing OSS headquarters in Kunming. He found the suggestion of demonstrations troubling. The French team, ostensibly in Hanoi to handle prisoner-of-war (POW) matters, had not been well received by the Vietnamese, or the Japanese. Patti wrote, “Knowing that demonstrations can turn into massacres . . . I radioed Kunming of the press report, emphasizing the importance of persuading our ‘Deer’ team to part from the Viet Minh force . . . and recommended in the strongest possible terms that our three Special Operations teams operating along the northern borders be returned to Kunming before being airlifted to Hanoi without their French elements . . . [to carry out the POW Mercy missions]. I hoped to disassociate all our Americans from either the Viet Minh or the French causes.”<sup>64</sup> It was already too late.

### ***The Battle of Thai Nguyen—20–25 August 1945***

When Vo Nguyen Giap’s “Vietnamese-American Force” set out from Tan Trao to march to Hanoi on 16 August, Deer Team joined them. The column was seen off by Ho and the delegates to the People’s Congress. Although orders from OSS told him to “sit tight until further orders,” Deer Team leader Major Thomas had decided that the team would accompany Vo Nguyen Giap to attack a

Japanese installation at Thai Nguyen, a town on the road to Hanoi.<sup>a</sup>

The Vietnamese and Americans reached Thai Nguyen early on 20 August. Giap sent an ultimatum calling for the Japanese to surrender. Major Thomas had received orders not to accept the surrender of Japanese troops, but he sent his own ultimatum as well. The Japanese were ensconced in an old French fort and had no intention of leaving it. Shooting broke out and continued sporadically. Except for Thomas, the Americans stayed in a safehouse, well away from the action. Thomas stayed with Giap.

Shooting went on until the Viet Minh made a final attack on 25 August. The Japanese agreed to a cease-fire that afternoon, and later agreed to “be confined to their post,” although they kept their weapons. There had been some loss of life, “six Japanese, for certain,” three Viet Minh soldiers, and five civilians, according to Thomas.<sup>65</sup> The town celebrated its liberation with a parade on 26 August, and Ho made a brief visit from Hanoi. He asked Deer Team to accompany him back. But Thomas had again been told to “stay put”—and this time he listened.<sup>66</sup> When Giap reached Hanoi, he sent Thomas “‘two bottles of champagne and a bottle of Scotch-Haigs,’ to help with the independence celebrations.”<sup>67</sup>

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a. Archimedes Patti recalls, “They [Deer Team members] were probably totally oblivious to the impression they undoubtedly gave of Ho’s ‘secret’ Allied support. But after the congress concluded, the delegates scattered back to their homes all over Vietnam, carrying their impressions with them.” Source: Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 136.

Deer Team members were unhappy with their leader. The war was over, and Major Thomas had disobeyed orders and engaged the Japanese. According to Lieutenant Defourneaux, the French-American co-commander of Deer Team, Thomas helped organize the attack on the Japanese, had given the Viet Minh “team equipment,” and “assisted” in surrender negotiations with the Japanese.<sup>68</sup> The reason for the attack on the Japanese at Thai Nguyen is not clear. Presumably, Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) leaders wanted to test the combat capabilities of the Vietnamese-American Joint Force . . . hoping to gain a clear-cut victory for psychological and political purposes.”<sup>69</sup> Historian Douglas Pike believed the Battle of Thai Nguyen was “especially significant”—that it “marked the liberation of Vietnam.”<sup>70</sup>

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### ***Good-Bye to All That***

Patti spent his days in Hanoi dealing with a myriad of problems, Japanese mischief, official French outrage with “insufferable Annamites,” and French anti-OSS propaganda warfare, as well as the growing presence of allied authorities and a visit by the Soviet representative to Vietnam, who wanted to know if Ho and the Viet Minh were indeed under American “protection,” as the French had told him.<sup>71</sup> And everyone awaited the coming of a Chinese army to take the Japanese surrender. Patti lunched with Ho and Giap, and facilitated contact for the senior French to meet Ho. On 29 September, Patti received his orders. The OSS would be terminated on 1 October; Patti was to return to Kunming by that date.<sup>72</sup> His last day in Hanoi was 30 September, his last evening was at a dinner Ho

hosted that was also attended by Giap and several other Vietnamese Patti knew.

Deer Team had arrived in Hanoi on 9 September, moved into a house the Viet Minh provided, and “were able to visit Hanoi as tourists.” On 15 September, the night before his return to Kunming, Major Thomas “was invited to a private dinner with Ho and Giap.” He later recalled, “I asked Ho point-blank if he was a Communist. He told me, ‘Yes. But we can still be friends, can’t we?’”<sup>73</sup>

### ***Consequences and Lessons***

*People also say that as a result of our support, Ho came to power. I don’t believe that for a minute. I’m sure Ho tried to use the fact that the Americans gave him some equipment. He led many Vietnamese to believe*



The OSS did not put Ho in power, but it was not without blame in his rise to leadership in Vietnam. Here he is shown after a meeting with French Foreign Minister Bidault in Paris in April 1946. Photo ©Keystone/Alamy Stock Photo.

### ***The OSS role in Vietnam became controversial in the months that followed World War II.***

*we were allies. But there were lots of reasons why Ho came to power and it wasn’t because we gave a few arms for 100 men or less.*<sup>74</sup>

The OSS role in Vietnam became controversial in the months that followed World War II. French colonialism returned, and America now supported it as a bulwark against communism. The OSS was suddenly on the wrong side of history. Under Roosevelt, America had no stomach for colonialism; but with Roosevelt’s death and coming of the Cold War, that changed. The OSS, seen as “the embodiment of an American liberal ideology”<sup>75</sup> during the war, was now charged “with being too left-wing.”<sup>76</sup> Fenn and Patti were denounced for their relationship with Ho, and “some

authors have claimed that the actions of the OSS, especially those of Deer Team and Archimedes Patti, were instrumental in bringing the Viet Minh to power.”<sup>77</sup> The controversy emerged again when the United States engaged the Vietnamese Communists in the 1960s and ’70s.

Long before Fenn serendipitously found him, Old Man Ho had been seeking out a link to American influence that would make him stand out among the Vietnamese leaders who aspired to replace the French. Ho would have preferred a long-term relationship with the United States, but his need was short-term, requiring only the appearance of being close to the Americans. Once Ho had political power in his grasp, his need for the American connection ended. With at least a tinge of regret he moved on, returning to his constant friends—the Soviets—unseen, but always there.<sup>a</sup>

The OSS did not put Ho in power, but it was not without blame. The issue was not US support, but the appearance of it: “It is no exaggeration to say that he [Ho Chi Minh] made the American officers dance to his tune with embarrassing ease,” which is how it looked to the critics. There were OSS missteps, and in Major Thomas’s case, that was significant. Fenn and Patti’s handling of Ho appears to have been competent and

a. Historian Dixee Bartholomew-Feis notes, “By the first anniversary of the August Revolution, references to America’s role in the victory over Japan had disappeared; instead, the Soviet Union was credited with ‘liberating the people subject to Japanese oppression.’” Source: Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 312.

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***The question becomes, what can an intelligence service do to protect itself in encounters with political opportunists?***

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professional. Both understood the political consequences of acceding to a Ho request for support; his requests were avoided or turned aside until he no longer asked. The two times Fenn acquiesced to Ho's requests—for the famous Chennault meeting, and then for six .45 caliber pistols in original wrapping—the requests took on significance only once it was learned how Ho used the responses to them.

An obscure point, often missed, was the change in the nature of the operational relationship, from Fenn's using Ho as a principal agent in an intelligence collection effort, to Patti's using Ho's Viet Minh as an OSS Special Operations force. An intelligence purist would not have "crossed" the two operations—on principle: theoretically, that the crossing would jeopardize the security of assets in both operations, if one went bad. But that was not a real concern in this case—which was of a more expedient nature, under the exigencies of wartime.

The unexpected consequence was that politically astute Secret Intelligence agent handlers were replaced by Special Operations officers, whose focus was not on the political aspects of the operation, but on military action and its success. And that facilitated Ho and Giap's manipulation of Deer Team, influencing "how successfully Ho succeeded among his own people in pyramiding the little 'Deer' Team mission into a fantastic psychological factor . . . convinced the rival leaders . . . that he had American backing, and that he was the man—and his, the party—to form a provisional government."<sup>78</sup>

The scenario Ho created was beyond OSS ability to control. The most astute agent handler could not have foreseen how Ho would use a half dozen pistols and a photograph to help secure the political leadership of his people. It was all for appearances, and the actions of the Deer Team leader were not predictable: the presence of Americans at Tan Trao during the Peoples' Congress, then on road to Thai Nguyen, and seeming to engage in the great battle, all occurred when the appearance of American support of the Viet Minh was most useful to Ho.

OSS had no defense against Ho's cleverness, and the skills he had acquired through training by the Comintern and by the master of the black operational arts, Mikhail Borodin. Very little is known of the training Ho received in either case. During his first years in Moscow, 1923–24, he learned "some of the basic techniques of clandestine work" at the University of the Toilers of the East, which trained communist cadre from Asia.<sup>79</sup> His postgraduate work took place in Canton, 1924–27, when he reconnected with an old Moscow acquaintance, Mikhail Borodin, the "advisor-in-chief to Sun Yat Sen and, later, the Nationalist government."<sup>a</sup> Ho proved to be both an exceptional organizer and clandestine operative, with over two decades of experi-

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a. Borodin was an associate of Lenin and Stalin, a high functionary of the Comintern, and represented the USSR Politburo. Madame Chiang called him "virtually Russia's pro-consul in Nation-alist China." Source: Madame Chiang Kai-shek, *Conversations with Mikhail Borodin* (World Anti-Communist League, 1977), 4.

ence. That the relatively inexperienced young men of the OSS were no match for him should not be a surprise.

Dealing with political opportunists is in the nature of the intelligence business. It has always been so, and there is no reason to suppose that it will not always be. The most prominent recent example was Ahmad Chalabi, "the Iraqi politician who from exile helped persuade the United States to invade Iraq in 2003." His group, the Iraqi National Congress, "attempted to influence US policy by providing false information through defectors, directed at convincing the United States that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction."<sup>80</sup>

The question becomes, what can an intelligence service do to protect itself in encounters with political opportunists?

In the case of Ho, the OSS failure was in the vetting process. Fenn did his best, but his best was not good enough. He learned that Ho was an anti-French rebel and a communist; but he did not uncover the salient fact: Ho had also been an agent of the Comintern, and probably still was.<sup>b</sup> The proper vetting of agent candidates is obviously essential, and extra caution must be exercised when strong political aspirations and involvement are found in an agent-can-

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b. In Ho's case, even if Fenn had had unrestricted access to French Intelligence files, he would not have learned Ho's secret. The Ho persona came into existence in 1940, in China, beyond the reach of the colonial security services. To the French, Ho was Nguyen Ai Quoc, and the French services did not make the connection to Ho Chi Minh until Ho publicly came out as Nguyen Ai Quoc in September 1945.

didate. Knowledge of the history of intelligence is a good preventive: knowing what has come before will

help ensure necessary wariness in any good intelligence officer. And there must be a keen awareness in

any intelligence service, not only of the pitfalls of the past, but of the politics of the present.




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**The author:** Bob Bergin is a retired foreign service officer with interest in Asian and aviation history.



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3. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 26.
4. *Ibid.*, 124.
5. Charles Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate: With the OSS in the Far East* (Naval Institute Press, 2004), 138.
6. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 69.
7. Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate*, 138.
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10. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 153 and 252.
11. Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate*, 140.
12. *Ibid.*, 141.
13. William J. Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh: A Life* (Hyperion, 2000), 248.
14. *Ibid.*, 264.
15. *Ibid.*, 270.
16. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 145.
17. *Ibid.*, 146.
18. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 149.
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20. *Ibid.*, 143.
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23. Charles Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh: A Biographical Introduction* (Scribner, 1973), 78.
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25. Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate*, 152.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*, 155.
28. Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh*, 81.
29. Archimedes Patti, *Why Vietnam?* (University of California Press, 1980) 58.
30. Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh*, 81.
31. *Ibid.*, 82.
32. Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 125.
33. Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh*, 75.
34. *Ibid.*, 82.
35. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 160.
36. Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 83.

37. Ibid., 84.
38. Ibid., 87.
39. Ibid., 86.
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41. Bartholomew-Feis (quoting Charles Fenn), *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 195.
42. Ibid., 201.
43. Cecil B. Currey, *Victory at Any Cost: The Genius of Viet Nam's Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap* (Potomac Books, 2005), 91.
44. Ibid.
45. Rene J. Defourneaux, *The Winking Fox: Twenty-Two Years in Military Intelligence* (Indiana Creative Arts, 2000), 166.
46. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 208.
47. Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh*, 82; Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh: A Life*, 302.
48. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 208.
49. Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh: A Life*, 303.
50. Ibid., 302.
51. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 209.
52. Ibid.
53. Currey, *Victory at Any Cost*, 92.
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55. Vo Nguyen Giap, *Unforgettable Days* (Gioi, 1975), 76–79.
56. Ibid., 66.
57. Bernard Fall, *The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis* (Praeger, 1967) 65, quoted in Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 260.
58. Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 135.
59. Ibid., 134.
60. Ibid., 135.
61. Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh: A Life*, 305.
62. Ibid., 307.
63. Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 172.
64. Ibid., 172–73.
65. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 224.
66. Ibid., 225.
67. Ibid., 258.
68. Defourneaux, *The Winking Fox*, 185–186. Among orders Thomas received was not to accept Japanese surrenders: “Believing that the Major was French, the Japanese refused to surrender to him . . . The Major admitted that perhaps he should not have been there.”
69. David G. Marr, *Vietnam 1945* (University of California Press, 1995), 422.
70. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 224.
71. Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 178–79.
72. Ibid., 364.
73. Harry Maurer (quoting Deer Team leader Maj. Allison Thomas), “Welcome to Our American Friends,” in *Strange Ground: Americans in Vietnam 1945–1975, An Oral History*, ed. Harry Maurer (Henry Holt and Co., 1989), 28–37.
74. Ibid., 35.
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80. Sewell Chan, “Ahmad Chalabi, Iraqi Politician Who Pushed for U.S. Invasion, Dies at 71,” *New York Times*, 3 November 2015. The last line is a *New York Times* quote from a 2006 Senate Intelligence Committee report.



## Reflecting on History

# “A Road Not Taken”: But a Road to Where?

Thomas L. Ahern

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The impulse to draw lessons from history reflects the more general human urge to use the past as a guide to predicting and influencing the future. But the exercise succeeds in helping to deal with that future only if it correctly identifies causes and effects and avoids abusing history with faulty analogies, counter-factual assumptions, and reliance on preconceived explanations.

The current renewal of the debate over the outcome of the Vietnam War is a case in point. Nearly everyone agrees that it has, or ought to have, powerful lessons to teach about the handling of 21st century challenges in the less-developed world. But people draw different, even contradictory, conclusions about what those lessons are, and the student who really wants to learn them has to try to sort out the competing interpretations.

A new biography of legendary operative Edward Lansdale offers a convenient example for the examination of both the Lansdale record and its treatment in the current wave of revisionist thinking about Vietnam. In *The Road Not Taken: Edward Lansdale and the American Tragedy in Vietnam*, Max Boot has produced a readable if over-long account of a unique career; no more chronologies of the life will be required. Boot avoids the hagiographical approach that mars other work on Lansdale's career as he describes what he sees as his subject's personal and professional shortcomings. But he does not question Lansdale's influence on two major figures in the Cold War in Southeast Asia, Ramon Magsaysay in the Philippines and Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam.<sup>a</sup>

The basic difficulty facing Boot arises from two premises implicit in his title, that 1) *The Road Not Taken* was indeed a potential path to victory in Vietnam and by extension in other Third World insurgencies, and 2) the US failed to take it. Although both can be found in current revisionist literature and have their advocates among CIA

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a. Max Boot, *The Road Not Taken: Edward Lansdale and the American Tragedy in Vietnam* (Liveright, 2018).

veterans, neither of them is supported by the historical facts.

To begin with, the road was indeed taken in Vietnam, but it led nowhere. Beginning in June 1954, Lansdale built on his experience in the Philippines as he enjoyed two-and-a-half years of the most extraordinary autonomy and policy-level support of perhaps any field case officer in the CIA's history. He was responsible, not to the chief of Saigon Station, nor to the area division chief in Washington, but directly to DCI Allen Dulles and his brother, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. He exploited this status, in the first weeks of his tour, to enlist the ambassador and other senior US Mission officers to gain access to Diem and to win control of the US Mission's rural operations. Having done this, he consolidated his position with Diem by making known to him that he had the ear of senior officials in Washington.<sup>b</sup>

Despite his perennial emphasis on the need for personal knowledge of people and their circumstances, Lansdale needed only a month in Saigon before informing DCI Dulles that his goal was nothing less than to build South Vietnam into a "political base" in Indochina which, if successful, would "give CIA control [of the] government and change [the] whole atmosphere." On 12 July, five days after his introduction to Diem, he offered the prime minister a program that included "emergency adoption" of the Philippine Constitution, electing an "interim advisory congress," absorbing the sect armies into the national forces, and launching a variety of organizational reforms that would introduce representative democracy.<sup>c</sup>

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b. CIA accounts of Lansdale's work are contained in the reviewer's *The CIA and the House of Ngo: Covert Action in South Vietnam, 1954-63* (This originally classified work and the reviewer's other histories of the period can be found under "Vietnam Histories" in the Freedom of Information Act Reading Room in [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov).) and in *Vietnam Declassified: The CIA and Counterinsurgency* (University Press of Kentucky, 2010).

c. *House of Ngo*, 27-28.

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

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None of these proposals involved prior consultation with Diem, but those calling for US material support were immediately accepted. With Lansdale demonstrating US support for Diem by acting as his emissary to the sect generals, the campaign to neutralize the armed opposition to the new regime succeeded brilliantly. By mid-1955, both the religious sects and the Binh Xuyen criminal syndicate had become null factors in the political and security context, and Lansdale was firmly, if uncomfortably, ensconced as the American official closest to a reclusive head of state.

A year-and-a-half after that, however, achievement of Lansdale's ambition to create a functioning democracy was more distant than ever. The civilian civic action entity established at his urging soon foundered, and when Lansdale left, at the end of 1956, Diem was irrevocably committed to an autocratic style of governance. By that point, the adoption of US-style political institutions—or even concern for the consent of the governed—had become a dead issue. There had also been no more talk about a US-controlled government in Saigon.<sup>a</sup>

One of the curious features of Boot's book is its acknowledgments of Diem's rejection of so much of Lansdale's advice while it continues to insist that Lansdale exercised major influence on his client. It is clear that Lansdale exerted his real clout not in Saigon but in Washington, where he was almost certainly the greatest single influence on the Dulles brothers and President Eisenhower when they reversed their approval of Ambassador Collins's urging to abandon Diem in the spring of 1955.<sup>b</sup>

It is true that much of the CIA reporting on the sect crisis was acquired by officers of the regular station. Paul Harwood, especially, as chief of its covert action branch, had developed a close and productive relationship with Diem's brother and confidant Ngo Dinh Nhu. Allen Dulles, however, treated it all as emanating from Lansdale, whom he had personally selected for the Saigon assignment, and whom he regarded as the agency's preeminent authority on Vietnam. Wittingly or otherwise, Lansdale lent that authority not only to his own reporting but to that of the regular station.<sup>c</sup>

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a. *House of Ngo*, 28–29.

b. *Vietnam Declassified*, 16–17.

c. *House of Ngo*, 82–83.

The relationship with Diem was different. Not even Lansdale himself claimed significant influence; indeed, it took him less than a year to conclude that he had signed up for a mission impossible. Just weeks after victory over the sects and Eisenhower's renewed commitment to Diem, Lansdale wrote to General Leland Hobbes, former chief of the Saigon Military Assistance Advisory Group, asking for help in arranging a transfer back to Manila. John Foster Dulles and President Eisenhower agreed, but a Lansdale visit to Manila to “test Filipino reactions” generated intense opposition from the US ambassador as well as from Filipino politicians and newspapers sensitive to the return of a reputed kingmaker. There is no evidence that Magsaysay expressed interest in Lansdale's return, or indeed that they even met. Lansdale stayed in Saigon.<sup>d</sup>

Against this background, it seems naïve of Boot to accept Lansdale's later assertion that only Washington's refusal in 1956 to pressure Diem into adopting his governmental reforms persuaded him that it was time to leave. Boot also takes at face value the statement, in what appears to be a Lansdale oral history interview, that in late 1956 Lansdale “left a very popular Vietnamese leader running things, a man who was being very responsive to the needs of the people.” But even by Boot's reckoning, Diem's “diffident and autocratic traits [had by that point] disfigured [his] rule.” The contradiction goes unacknowledged, as neither Lansdale nor his biographer seems to see the inconsistency between Lansdale's formula of inspiration and gentle persuasion and the more coercive approach he now wanted Washington to take.<sup>e</sup>



The second of Boot's premises asserts that the United States abdicated at least a chance to save Vietnam from communism when it failed to adopt Lansdale's program. “How different history might have been if Lansdale or a Lansdale-like figure had remained close enough to Diem to maintain a benign influence to offset the paranoid counsel of his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu, who would push the regime into a fatal and far from inevitable confrontation

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d. *House of Ngo*, 89; Cecil B. Currey, *Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988), 179.

e. Edward G. Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars: An American's Mission to Southeast Asia* (Harper and Row, 1972), 342–45; *The Road Not Taken*, 296–98. (Future references to *The Road Not Taken* will appear as page numbers in parentheses in the text.)



with the Kennedy administration.” Well, yes, everything is possible, but in order to be useful, such a proposition has to offer some reason to think that history *would* in fact have been different. (297)

Boot, however, offers nothing to support this surmise, resorting instead to a favored device of Diem apologists, blaming brother Nhu for Diem’s failures and suggesting that Lansdale might have offset this malign influence. Like other critics, he offers no evidence for the allegation about Nhu, but if any US official had first-hand familiarity with the two brothers’ relationship, it was probably Paul Harwood, whose experience contradicts the Boot thesis: he was chronically frustrated by Nhu’s reluctance to make decisions without first consulting Diem. (297)<sup>a</sup>

Nevertheless, it is conceivable that a continued Lansdale presence would have made a difference. But even with the advantage of hindsight, Boot makes no effort to establish any likelihood that more emphasis on tutoring Diem would actually have helped consolidate the government’s legitimacy and weaken the insurgency. Doing so in any persuasive way would have required a comparative analysis of the contending Vietnamese parties, not only in terms of military strength, but of political and social influence with the peasantry. It would have had to deal also with factors such as access to external support and the Saigon government’s competence and energy. Beyond acknowledging that North Vietnam was a very tough adversary, Boot addresses none of these aspects. (Neither, by the way, did the agency attempt any comprehensive study, during the war, of what the communist Vietnamese usefully termed the “correlation of forces.” The emphasis was always on interpreting current events and short-range trends.)

Instead of venturing a structural analysis, Boot invokes the judgment of William Colby that Diem’s overthrow was “the worst mistake of the Vietnam War.” But Colby, unfortunately, had accepted the widespread American belief of the time that a government’s anti-communism sufficed to assure its legitimacy, a simplistic stance that even Boot avoids: “The generals who succeeded Diem were just as authoritarian, unpopular, and aloof—and considerably more illegitimate, ineffective, and corrupt.” The implication is that Diem deserved continued support, not because he was succeeding, but because what fol-

lowed was even worse; we have here a textbook example of history read backward.<sup>b</sup> (xxxvii, xxxix)

Boot asserts that a collision of the Diem regime with the Kennedy administration was not inevitable, but it is hard to imagine how Lansdale’s continued presence could have helped avoid confrontation. By mid-1963, the regime had lost control of both its urban and rural constituencies, and Diem remained obdurate about placating either; there is no reason, given his rejection of Lansdale’s political program in the mid-1950s, to think he would have been more amenable to it in 1963.<sup>c</sup>

In the summer of that year, Diem moved to tighten his control of the countryside. Saying nothing to Lansdale, with whom he still corresponded, he dissolved the traditional elected village councils, replacing them with officials appointed by Saigon. In his memoir, Lansdale professes to be mystified by his exclusion, though it must have been obvious to him that Diem had made up his mind and simply didn’t want to argue the point. Then, in August, Diem published Government of Vietnam (GVN) Ordinance 47, prescribing death for “*any* deed performed in or for *any* organization designated as Communist.” This decree coincided with the decline of the civic action program on which Lansdale had placed such high hopes. From that point, Diem’s relationship with the administration deteriorated until the US-sanctioned military coup on 1 November 1963.<sup>d</sup>

A number of other features of Boot’s opus offer warnings, usually unintentional, to readers looking for insights into Ed Lansdale’s influence on the events of his day and on posterity’s understanding of insurgency and counterinsurgency. One is the author’s effort to establish Lansdale’s influence on Magsaysay and Diem with anecdotes that actually document only their patron’s ability to obtain US support for them. In the Philippine election of 1953, for example, the immensely enterprising Lansdale arranged for coordinated campaign efforts with the papal nuncio, the local Catholic hierarchy, the League of Women Voters,

b. It is strange that Boot implicitly accuses Diem’s rule of being illegitimate and corrupt. This both undermines the case for staying the course with Diem and suggests that he was personally corrupt, a proposition that to the best of the reviewer’s knowledge is unsupported by evidence.

c. *House of Ngo*, chapter 12.

d. *Vietnam Declassified*, 27 (emphasis added); *Midst of Wars*, 356.

a. *House of Ngo*, 13.

Jaycees and Rotarians. He also promoted favorable press coverage in the US, knowing that American attitudes toward Magsaysay could have genuine impact on the Philippine electorate. But Magsaysay didn't have to be educated or persuaded to accept the desirability of such activities, and Lansdale could function as something like a chief of operations for an executive whose purposes he fully shared. (159–63)

Things were very different in Saigon, where Allen Dulles's injunction to Lansdale to "find another Magsaysay" had been preempted by the appointment of Ngo Dinh Diem as prime minister of South Vietnam. There, Lansdale found almost no sympathy for his self-assigned quest to replace French colonial administration with American-style democracy as imported through the Philippines. Boot acknowledges this, but insists that the potential of Lansdale's quasi-missionary approach merited keeping him there to continue trying to convert Diem.



Unexamined premises, both explicit and implicit, make their first appearance in Boot's prologue. One of them, regarding Diem's strategic hamlet program, implies that a "tried and true pacification tactic" used by the British in South Africa and Malaya, if adequately supported by the United States, would or at least might have defeated the insurgency (as in so many other passages, Boot here avoids a categorical judgment; "tried and true" conveys his endorsement of the strategy without explicitly committing him to a position on the prospects of Diem's strategic hamlets). In fact, the two British efforts were entirely coercive—prison camps, in effect, not protected communities—and in Malaya were aimed at the isolated ethnic Chinese minority. In Vietnam, by contrast, the strategic hamlets were at least nominally designed to give the peasants the security they were assumed to desire. There is nothing here, or anywhere else in the book, about either the Viet Cong's gradual preemption of political energy in the countryside after 1941 or the decay of Saigon's authority provoked, in large part, by Diem's Anti-Communist Denunciation Campaign, launched in 1955. (xxxviii)

This gap allows the author (and other Diem apologists) to accept the "communist infiltration" mantra—the myth, really—that Viet Cong influence was always imposed from outside, as if by a foreign invader, on a victimized rural population. Boot takes at face value Lansdale's later

confident description of the Viet Minh and the communist leadership of the National Liberation Front as seeking to "impose alien ways on subjects [whom they controlled] by *force majeure*." Following Lansdale, he ignores the interlocking anti-colonial, nationalist, and xenophobic dimensions of the insurgency, and thus avoids consideration of the obstacles to the success of any US-sponsored regime.<sup>a</sup>

Boot does his readers the service of citing contemporary reservations about Lansdale's approach to counterinsurgency. He quotes the judgment of Henry Kissinger, in Saigon in late 1965 as a visiting consultant to Ambassador Lodge, that Lansdale and his team ". . . too often take the attitude that they will settle the pacification program single-handedly, that Lansdale alone has the magic recipe and that the major contribution of other members of the mission should be to get out of the way." Kissinger also pointed out the differences between the Philippine insurgency and the one in Vietnam: In the former, "There was no foreign base for the guerrillas. The indigenous government was much stronger. There was a tradition of working with the Americans. The situation in Vietnam is much more complex, much less susceptible to bravura, individual efforts." Kissinger's comparison of the two insurgencies is especially cogent, but about this implied challenge to his thesis Boot has nothing to say. (485)

Given the failure of all US efforts—certainly not just Lansdale's—to create a South Vietnamese government capable of defending itself against absorption by the communists, the plausibility of Boot's thesis rests on the shaky notion that things "might have taken a very different course" had Lansdale's "counsel . . . been followed." The context makes it clear that it was American policymakers, not Ngo Dinh Diem, Boot sees as having rejected that counsel. But it was Diem who rebuffed Lansdale's repeated urging to adopt as a model the concepts and values—as interpreted by Lansdale—of America's founders. In fact, it was simply impossible to impose on Diem a worldview he found repugnant if not incomprehensible,

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a. *In the Midst of Wars*, 164. The best description of the Viet Cong's political base in the countryside is Jeffrey Race's *War Comes to Long An* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972). Also instructive in this regard is the Rand Corporation series, published in the 1960s, based on interviews with Vietnamese refugees, ralliers, and villagers (<https://www.rand.org/R10024.html>).

and that judgment is not just retrospective, though certainly easier to make with knowledge of the outcome. (xxxix)

Like other Vietnam revisionists, Boot leaves out of consideration a key question, namely, the ability of the South Vietnamese military to prevail over an adversary whose forces included both the indigenous Viet Cong and the People's Army of Vietnam. Despite the crushing losses inflicted on the communists during and after the 1968 Tet offensive, MACV commander Gen. Creighton Abrams predicted that even after the modernization of government forces, scheduled for completion in 1972, Saigon would be able to contain indigenous VC forces only with US materiel and advisory support. And no matter how successful ARVN modernization might prove to be, it would never remove the requirement for US forces to help hold off the North Vietnamese. GVN forces were "simply . . . not capable of attaining the level of self-sufficiency and overwhelming force superiority that would be required to counter combined Viet Cong insurgency and North Vietnamese Army main force offensives." Abrams may have been wrong—we will never know—but ignoring his prediction seems tendentious at best. <sup>a</sup>



The Philippine episode preceded Lansdale's arrival in Vietnam, and despite its unquestionably greater success, Boot rightly treats it as essentially a prelude to Lansdale's deployment to Saigon. The insurgencies in both countries—the Philippines in the late 1940s and early 1950s and from 1954 to 1975 in Vietnam—represented real threats to US interests in Southeast Asia, but the much more protracted struggle in Vietnam, drawing a huge US investment in men and money, was of incalculably greater consequence. Producing a solution in the Philippines, moreover, was much less challenging in alliance with a defense secretary, later president, who knew he needed help and, like many Filipinos, was favorably disposed toward the United States. And Lansdale certainly did make the most of the opportunity offered by his introduction to Magsaysay in 1950, as he applied a fertile operational imagination to challenges in both the political and the counterinsurgency arenas and to soliciting support from public and private sources in the United States.

a. Jeffrey Clarke: *Advice and Support: The Final Years 1965–1973* (Center of Military History, 1988), 345.

Fertile the imagination may have been, but it was sometimes almost antic, as displayed most conspicuously when Lansdale headed the Kennedy administration's campaign, Operation MONGOOSE, to remove Fidel Castro in the early 1960s. In that exercise, Lansdale came up with ploys—one was a biological warfare scheme to sicken but not kill workers in the Cuban sugar fields—that seem almost a parody of the macho, damn-the-torpedoes culture encountered by a newly-minted case officer in the East Asia (then Far East) Division of the late 1950s (384–88).<sup>b</sup>

In another key respect, Lansdale exemplified the anti-intellectual aura that dominated an operational directorate in which covert action was king. Despite his apparently deserved reputation as a gifted amateur anthropologist, and granting that he saw the inequities in Philippine economic and social institutions, he never troubled to analyze the insurgency or use it to develop a counterinsurgency theory. The intuition that worked in the Philippines—that resolving peasant grievances through a pliable leader would defang the insurgency—did not, to his dismay, succeed in Vietnam. There, it encountered in the Viet Cong an adversary with a political ideology and program which could exploit the nationalistic aura conferred by a dozen years of fighting, first against the Japanese and then the French. Neither Diem nor, probably, any other anti-communist leader, could compete.

Despite its limited achievements, Lansdale's dream of exporting American political practices and institutions to client nations survives, for it seems to appeal to a hardy, interventionist strain of American exceptionalism. A more recent example dates to 2003, when US authorities charting a course for Iraq decided to turn it into "the first Arab democracy." Just as Lansdale had done, this model called for an Iraqi polity that embraced American values and guidance. Also like Lansdale, its creators saw no conceptual barrier to the application of a touch of *Realpolitik* when circumstances required. Where in 1956 a frustrated

b. Two other features of the DDP/DO culture exemplified and amplified in Lansdale's career were the twin obsessions with "rapport" in the acquisition and handling of agents—little about community of interests, exploitation of weaknesses, or other such material factors—and with an "aggressive" style as the hallmark of an effective case officer. Lansdale often seemed to see empathy (if only with foreigners) as an end in itself; as for an aggressive style, it would be hard to surpass his manipulation of the US Mission in Saigon during 1954–55.

Lansdale urged Washington to force his reform proposals on Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States chose in Iraq to invalidate the results of the 2010 parliamentary elections in which the party of longtime Western ally Ayad Alawi won a plurality. The United States, still a player in Iraqi domestic affairs, saw an advantage in retaining then-Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, a militant Shi'ite politician, and refused

to endorse the bid Alawi had won to form the new government.<sup>a</sup>

This combination of idealism and conventional power politics—the bestowal of democracy conditioned on the client's willingness to accept Washington's leadership—characterized Lansdale's approach in Southeast Asia and seems to be a feature of the interventionist mindset currently

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a. <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/02/22magazine/the-sunshine-warrior>; <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/04/obama-iraq-116708>

associated with neo-conservatism. There is always, it seems, a road to take, and if we don't find it it's our own fault: "One of the great failures of post-9/11 American foreign policy was the inability to deal adequately with Hamid Karzai [in Afghanistan] and Nuri al-Maliki." Here, Boot assumes a convergence of basic interests and a compatibility of worldviews which, it turned out, did not exist in either case, just as they were absent in that of Ngo Dinh Diem. Sometimes there really just isn't any way to get there. (xlvi)



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*Thomas Ahern* is a retired CIA operations officer who has pursued a second career as a contract historian with the CIA History Staff. He has written four book-length classified (and since declassified or partially declassified) histories of the war in Southeast Asia.

## Getting it Right: CIA Analysis of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War

David S. Robarge

This article originally appeared in *Studies* 49, No. 1 (March 2005). It is reprinted here as a reference to a review in Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf of *The Arab World and Western Intelligence: Analyzing the Middle East, 1956–1981* by Dina Rezk, which appears on page 68.

“  
... one of those rare  
instances when  
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”

With all the attention paid of late to intelligence failures, it is easy to forget that sometimes the intelligence process has worked almost perfectly. On those occasions, most of the right information was collected in a timely fashion, analyzed with appropriate methodologies, and punctually disseminated in finished form to policymakers who were willing to read and heed it. Throughout those situations, the intelligence bureaucracies were responsive and cooperative, and the Director of Central Intelligence had access and influence downtown. One such example that can be publicly acknowledged arose in 1967 in a familiar flash point area—the Middle East—and put Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Richard Helms in the position of making or breaking his, and the CIA's, reputation with one of the most difficult and demanding presidents the United States has ever had—Lyndon Johnson.

In his memoir, Helms wrote that

*Russell Jack Smith, former director for intelligence [analysis at the CIA], has described my working relationship with President Johnson as “golden”—in the sense that it was close to the maximum that any DCI might hope to achieve. However comforting, this assessment is too generous. It was not my relationship with LBJ that mattered, it was his*

*perception of the value of the data and the assessments the Agency was providing him that carried the day.<sup>1</sup>*

Certainly the key intelligence achievement that “carried the day” for Helms and the CIA under Johnson was the Agency's strikingly accurate analysis about the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967. It was one of those rare instances when unpoliticized intelligence had a specific, clear-cut, and immediate impact on US foreign policy. The CIA was right about the timing, duration, and outcome of the war; the judgments quickly reached US leaders in an immediately usable form; and the Agency did not temper its analysis when faced with policymaker resistance. The whole 1967 war intelligence scenario demonstrated that well-substantiated findings advocated by a respected DCI with access to the White House could win out over political pressures and policymakers' predilections.

### Relations with the White House

It was especially important for Helms and the CIA to impress Lyndon Johnson because he had

<sup>1</sup> Richard Helms (with William Hood), *A Look Over My Shoulder: A Life in the Central Intelligence Agency* (New York: Random House, 2003), 295.

The views, opinions, and findings of the authors 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.

little experience with or interest in intelligence when he suddenly became president in November 1963, and his attitudes had not changed appreciably during his early years in office. Johnson's selection of the hapless William Raborn to replace the strong-willed John McCone as Agency director in April 1965 clearly indicated where he placed the CIA in the power structure of his administration. He preferred getting "VIP gossip" from FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover instead of facts and analysis from the CIA.<sup>2</sup> At the time he appointed Helms as DCI in June 1966, LBJ was not yet convinced that intelligence could advance his policies, and he already was annoyed at the Agency's negativism about Vietnam. In addition, after the public scandal in early 1967 over the CIA's funding of political covert action programs—the so-called *Ramparts* revelations<sup>3</sup>—Helms was anxious to redeem the CIA with the president.

Johnson was a hard sell, however, and a harder mind to penetrate. Helms's director for analysis, R. Jack Smith, has told of his own frustration over a White House assignment to evaluate the pros and cons of a new US initiative in Vietnam that involved substantially stepping up the war effort:

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), 309–10.

“  
**President Johnson was a hard sell and a harder mind to penetrate.**

”  
*If one based one's decision on the conclusions of our study, the result was obvious: the gain was not worth the cost. Nevertheless, the President announced the next day that he intended to go ahead. Distinctly annoyed that an admirable piece of analysis, done under forced draft at White House request, was being ignored, I stomped into Helms's office. "How in the hell can the President make that decision in the face of our findings?" I asked.*

*Dick fixed me with a sulphurous look. "How do I know how he made up his mind? How does any president make decisions? Maybe Lynda Bird was in favor of it. Maybe one of his old friends urged him. Maybe it*

<sup>3</sup> In February 1967, the radical publication *Ramparts* exposed the CIA's longstanding secret relationship with the National Students Association. The mainstream press picked up the story and soon compromised the Agency's elaborate system for funding political action operations through a network of American private organizations, foundations, and cutouts. The embarrassing controversy that ensued prompted President Johnson to direct the CIA to stop providing covert funds to domestic-based voluntary groups. The *Ramparts* affair seriously disrupted the Agency's covert political operations and damaged its reputation at home and abroad. Sol Stern, "NSA and the CIA," *Ramparts* 5 (March 1967): 29–38; US Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities [Church Committee], *Final Report, Book 1, Foreign and Military Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1976), 181–87.

*was something he read. Don't ask me to explain the workings of a president's mind.*<sup>4</sup>

The period before and during the 1967 war gave Helms an opportunity to act on two of the several elements of his intelligence credo, which he often expressed in catch phrases: "You only work for one president at a time" and "Stay at the table." Helms well understood that each president has his own appreciation of intelligence and his own way of dealing with the CIA. A director who does not learn to live with those peculiarities will soon render himself irrelevant. Helms also knew that a CIA director must remember that he runs a service organization whose products must be timely and cogent to be of value to the First Consumer. Because Helms was keenly attuned to Johnson's take on the CIA and already had its analytical apparatus in "task force mode" by May 1967, the Agency could immediately respond to White House questions about the looming crisis in Arab-Israeli relations.

### The Middle East Heats Up

On the morning of 23 May—the day after Egypt closed the Gulf of Aqaba, Israel's only access to the Red Sea—President Johnson summoned Helms from a congressional briefing and tasked him with providing an assessment of the increasingly volatile

<sup>4</sup> R. Jack Smith, *The Unknown CIA* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1989), 187.

“  
**Only four hours later  
 . . . Helms had in hand  
 two papers to  
 take to LBJ.**  
 ”

Middle East situation. Here was a chance for the CIA to seize the day analytically. Only four hours later—just in time for one of LBJ’s “Tuesday lunches”—Helms had in hand two papers: “US Knowledge of Egyptian Alert” and “Overall Arab and Israeli Military Capabilities.” Those memoranda, plus a Situation Report (SITREP), were delivered to him in the ground floor lobby outside the White House office of presidential adviser Walt Rostow. The remarkably rapid turnaround was possible because the Directorate of Intelligence’s (DI) Arab-Israeli task force, in existence since early in the year, already was producing two SITREPs a day, and the Office of Current Intelligence (OCI) had for months been keeping a running log of the two sides’ relative strengths and states of readiness. The second paper Helms had brought—the “who will win” memo—was the crucial one. It stated that Israel could “defend successfully against simultaneous Arab attacks on all fronts . . . or hold on any three fronts while mounting successfully a major offensive on the fourth.”<sup>5</sup>

Two days later, Tel Aviv muddled this clear intelligence pic-

<sup>5</sup> J. L. Freshwater (pseudonym), “Policy and Intelligence: The Arab-Israeli War,” *Studies in Intelligence* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1969; declassified 2 July 1996): 3, 8; Smith, 188; CIA Office of Current Intelligence (OCI), “Overall Arab and Israeli Military Capabilities,” 23 May 1967, Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968, Volume XIX, The Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1967* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), doc. 44. [Hereafter cited as *FRUS*.]

ture by submitting to Washington a Mossad estimate that claimed the Israeli military was badly outgunned by a Soviet-backed Arab war machine. The Israelis may have been trying to exploit the special relationship

would listen to its judgments on Arab-Israeli issues over those of their own intelligence services

Helms had the Office of National Estimates (ONE) prepare an appraisal of the Mossad assessment, which was ready in only five hours. ONE flatly stated: “We do not believe that the Israeli appreciation . . . was a serious estimate of the sort that would submit to their own high



Freshly informed by CIA assessments contradicting a supposed pessimistic Israeli estimate of Arab military capabilities, Johnson, in the presence of Secretary McNamara and other senior officials, hears out Israeli Ambassador Abba Eban on 26 May 1967.

they had with James Angleton, chief of CIA counterintelligence. For years, Angleton had run the Israeli account out of his Counterintelligence Staff, without involving the Directorate of Plans’s Near East Division. That unusual arrangement may have given Tel Aviv a sense that Washington accorded its analyses such special import that US leaders

officials.” Rather, “it is probably a gambit intended to influence the US to . . . provide military supplies . . . make more public commitments to Israel . . . approve Israeli military initiatives, an

<sup>6</sup> Tom Mangold, *Cold Warrior: James Jesus Angleton: The CIA’s Master Spy Hunter* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 49, 362.

Military Capabilities of Israel  
and the Arab States

59a

Summary

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Document # 50a

Israel could almost certainly attain air supremacy over the Sinai Peninsula in less than 24 hours after taking the initiative or in two or three days if the UAR struck first. It would lose a third to half of its airforce. Armored striking forces could breach the UAR's double defense line in the Sinai in three to four days and drive the Egyptians west of the Suez Canal in seven to nine days. Israel could contain any attacks by Syria or Jordan during this period.

I. General Assessment

1. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are at a numerical disadvantage to the combined strength of its Arab neighbors in terms of aircraft, armor, artillery, naval vessels, and manpower. Nonetheless, the IDF maintain qualitative superiority over the Arab armed forces in almost all aspects of combat operations. The high quality of training and maintenance,

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First page of the draft of the "special estimate" that predicted the outcome of the war.

... put more pressure on [Egyptian President] Nasser." ONE further concluded—contrary to Tel Aviv's suspicions—that "the Soviet aim is still to avoid military involvement and to give the US a black eye among the Arabs by identifying it with Israel"; Moscow "probably could not

openly help the Arabs because of lack of capability, and probably would not for fear of confrontation with the US." It was this latter ONE judgment that caused Dean Rusk to remark to Helms, "if this is a mistake, it's a beaut." The same judgment triggered an order from the president to

Helms and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Earle Wheeler to "scrub it down." Helms returned to CIA headquarters and told the Board of National Estimates to produce a coordinated assessment by the next day.<sup>7</sup>

### Making the Right Call

That paper—issued the following afternoon with the title "Military Capabilities of Israel and the Arab States"—is the illustrious "special estimate" in which the CIA (in collaboration with the Defense Intelligence Agency) purportedly called the war right, from its outcome down to the day it would end. It actually was a memorandum, not a Special National Intelligence Estimate, and although drafts had said that the Israelis would need seven to nine days to reach the Suez Canal, that precision was sacrificed in the coordination process. Instead, the paper estimated that Israeli armored forces could breach Egypt's forward lines in the Sinai within "several" days. In another memorandum issued the same day, ONE doubted that Moscow had encouraged the Egyptian president's provocations and concluded that it would not intervene with its own forces to save the Arabs from defeat. As one senior Agency analyst who helped write these papers later remarked: "Rarely

<sup>7</sup> Office of National Estimates, "Appraisal of an estimate of the Arab-Israeli Crisis by the Israeli Intelligence Service," 25 May 1967, *FRUS, 1964-1968, XIX*, doc. 61; Freshwater, 3-4; Helms, *A Look Over My Shoulder*, 299.



has the Intelligence Community spoken as clearly, as rapidly, and with such unanimity.”<sup>8</sup>

Informed by these assessments, President Johnson declined to airlift special military supplies to Israel or even to publicly support it. He later recalled bluntly telling Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, “All of our intelligence people are unanimous that if the UAR attacks, you will whip hell out of them.”<sup>9</sup>

Having answered one crucial question of the president’s—how would the war end?—Helms also was able to warn him when it was about to begin. According to several published accounts, Helms met on 1 June with a senior Israeli official who hinted that Israel could no longer avoid a decision. Its restraint thus far was due to American pressure, but, he said, the delay had cost Israel the advantage of surprise. Helms interpreted the remarks as suggesting that Israel would attack very soon. Moreover, according to Helms, the official stated clearly that although Israel expected US diplomatic backing and the delivery of weapons already agreed upon, it

<sup>8</sup> Freshwater, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Board of National Estimates, “Military Capabilities of Israel and the Arab States” and “The Middle Eastern Crisis,” both dated 26 May 1967, in *FRUS, 1964–1968, XIX*, docs. 76 and 79; Freshwater, 5–6; Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives on the Presidency, 1963–1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 293. UAR stood for the United Arab Republic, a union of Egypt and Syria from 1958 to 1961. Johnson used the outdated term as a shorthand for Israel’s Arab antagonists.

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Because of CIA support,  
Johnson could inform  
Congress that he had been  
expecting Israel’s move.

”  
would request no additional support and did not expect any. The official abruptly left the United States on 2 June along with the Israeli ambassador. That morning, according to published accounts, Helms wrote an “Eyes Only” letter to President Johnson, forewarning that Israel probably would start a war within a few days.<sup>10</sup>

#### War!

Helms was awakened at 3:00 in the morning on 5 June by a call from the CIA Operations Center. The Foreign Broadcast Information Service had picked up reports that Israel had launched its attack. (OCI soon concluded

<sup>10</sup> Freshwater, 6; Helms, *A Look Over My Shoulder*, 299–300; Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 146, citing interview with and writings of Meir Amit; Meir Amit quoted in *The Six-Day War: A Retrospective*, ed. Richard B. Parker (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 136, 139; Ian Black and Benny Morris, *Israel’s Secret Wars: A History of Israel’s Intelligence Services* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), 220–22; Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman, *Every Spy a Prince: The Complete History of Israel’s Intelligence Community* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), 161; Andrew and Leslie Cockburn, *Dangerous Liaison: The Inside Story of the U.S.–Israeli Covert Relationship* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 145; Donald Neff, *Warriors for Jerusalem: The Six Days That Changed the Middle East* (New York: Linden Press/Simon and Schuster, 1984), 190, citing interview with Helms on 2 August 1982; *FRUS, 1964–1968, XIX*, doc. 135.

that the Israelis—contrary to their claims—had fired first.) President Johnson was gratified that because of CIA analyses and Helms’s tip, he could inform congressional leaders later in the day that he had been expecting Israel’s move.<sup>11</sup>

During the brief war, Helms went to the White House every day but one, reporting to the NSC and the president’s special committee of Middle East experts, using the outpouring of SITREPS from OCI (five a day), DI special memoranda, the *President’s Daily Brief*, and other analytical products. “In the midst of one meeting,” Helms recalled,

*LBJ suddenly fixed his attention on me in my usual seat at the end of the long table. “Dick,” he snapped, “just how accurate is your intelligence on the progress of this war?” Without having a moment to consider the evidence, I shot from the hip, “It’s accurate just as long as the Israelis are winning.” It may have sounded as if I were smarting off, but it was the exact truth, and it silenced [those around] the table. Only an amused twitch of Dean Acheson’s mustache suggested his having noted my reasoning.*

<sup>11</sup> This and, unless otherwise noted, the remaining recollections of Helms cited here can be found in *A Look Over My Shoulder*, 300–303; OCI, “The Arab-Israeli War: Who Fired the First Shot,” 5 June 1967, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XIX*, doc. 169.

“

The Kremlin foresaw a ‘grave catastrophe’ and threatened action.

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### The Russians Weigh In

On 10 June, as Israeli victory appeared near, the White House received a message over the “Hot Line” from Soviet premier Alexei Kosygin. The Kremlin foresaw a “grave catastrophe” and threatened to take “necessary actions . . . including military” if the Israelis did not halt their advance across the Golan Heights.<sup>12</sup> Helms was in the Situation Room with several other presidential advisers when

elaborate projections of maps and photographs on a silver screen, or even any armed guards rigidly at attention beside the doorway. The room itself was painted a bleak beige and furnished simply with an oval conference table and an assortment of comfortable chairs.”

the recommendation of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara (endorsed by all present), Johnson dispatched the Sixth Fleet to the eastern Mediterranean—a move intended to convey American resolve without backing the Soviets into a corner. Helms told the president that Russian submarines monitoring the fleet’s movement would immediately report that it had changed course. Moscow got the message, and a cease-fire later that day restored an uneasy peace to the region.<sup>13</sup>

### Putting the Intelligence Package Together

Altogether, as Helms put it, “we had presented the boss with a tidy package.” Several circumstances made this success possible:

- *Policymakers asked one clear, basic question:* Who will win if the US stays out? Analysts did not have to advance vague medium- or long-term predictions that could go wrong because of unforeseen or high impact/low probability events.
- *Analysts had hard data*—military statistics and reliable information on weapons systems—to work with, not just “tea leaves” to read. This episode was not a Middle East version of Kremlinology.
- *The evidence was on the CIA’s side.* Israel could not prove its case that the Arab armies would trounce it.



Photo: LBJ Library

The president and his national security team in the White House Situation Room during the Arab-Israeli crisis.

the message from the Kremlin came over from the Pentagon, where the Hot Line teletype was located. Helms remembered the setting as “unlike the Hollywood versions of situation rooms . . . there were no flashing lights, no

Helms recalled the hush and chill that fell over the room after the translation of Kosygin’s message was checked. “The room went silent as abruptly as if a radio had been switched off . . . The conversation was conducted in the lowest voices I have ever heard . . . It seemed impossible to believe that five years after the missile confrontation in Cuba, the two superpowers had again squared off.” On

<sup>12</sup> “Message from Premier Kosygin to President Johnson,” 10 June 1967, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XIX*, doc. 243.

<sup>13</sup> Neff, 279–80; Harold Saunders memorandum, “Hot Line Meeting June 10, 1967,” 22 October 1968, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XIX*, doc. 244.

“

The CIA’s timely and accurate intelligence won Helms a place at the president’s table.

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- *The crisis was brief.* The time span between the reporting of warning indicators and the playing out of key analytical judgments was around three weeks. There was not enough time for the basic issues to become fogged over.

### The Payoff

The CIA’s analytical achievement brought short-term political benefits for Helms and the Agency. From then on, Johnson included Helms in all Tuesday lunches—the director had attended them occasionally since his appointment in 1966, but after the 1967 war he was assured of what he

later called “the hottest ticket in town.” It was at these inner sanctum discussions that Helms fulfilled what he regarded as perhaps his greatest responsibility as DCI: seeing that he “kept the game honest”—presenting just the facts and analyses based on them, and staying out of policy discussions. “Without objectivity,” Helms said in a 1971 speech, “there is no credibility, and an intelligence organization without credibility is of little use to those it serves.”

Johnson appreciated that tough edge to Helms’s style, and their good professional rapport helped alleviate some of the tension that the Agency’s discordant analyses on Vietnam were causing.<sup>14</sup>

A few years after leaving the CIA, Helms said of the Agency’s analysis of the 1967 war: “When you come as close as that in the intelligence business, it has to be regarded pretty much as a triumph.”<sup>15</sup> The CIA’s timely and accurate intelligence before and during the war had won Helms, literally and figuratively, a place at the president’s table—perhaps the most precious commodity that a DCI could possess. It also is one of the most perishable—a painful lesson that several directors since Helms have had to relearn, to their, and the Agency’s, detriment.



Photo: White House

DCI Helms (center rear) at one of President Johnson’s Tuesday lunches.



*The author:* David Robarge is CIA’s Chief Historian.

<sup>14</sup> Helms, *A Look Over My Shoulder*, 295; “An Interview with Richard Helms,” *Studies in Intelligence* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1981): 5; Helms, “Global Intelligence and the Democratic Society,” speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 14 April 1971, DCI Files, Job 80-01284R, box 1, folder 6, Agency Archives and Record Center.  
<sup>15</sup> “An Interview with Richard Helms,” 1.



***The Ghosts of Langley: Into the CIA's Heart of Darkness***

John Prados (The New Press, 2017), 446 pp., endnotes, bibliography, index.

**Reviewed by Hayden Peake**

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John Prados is a senior fellow at the National Security Archive in Washington, DC. His more than 20 books include an impressive study of WWII intelligence in the Pacific, *Combined Fleet Decoded*, and several others that are harsh critiques of what he calls the CIA's "secret wars" and domestic abuses. *The Ghosts of Langley* is his latest contribution on the latter topics.

The book's dust jacket contains high praise from a number of journalists and academics. For example, Tim Weiner, author of his own book on the CIA, *Legacy of Ashes*, writes that "Prados proves again that he is among America's greatest chroniclers of secret intelligence." History professor H. W. Brands at the University of Texas (Austin) goes even further, noting that Prados "knows more than anyone else about the CIA." And Prados, untainted by modesty, echoed these assessments in a presentation at the International Spy Museum on 9 November 2017, when he characterized himself as "widely knowledgeable of every aspect of the agency."

While serving and veteran CIA officers might find these testimonials somewhat exaggerated, these assertions may well entice readers interested in CIA and the idea that it is inhabited by ghosts—or as Prados puts it, "There are ghosts stalking the halls at Langley." (xvi)

What exactly are the "ghosts" of Langley? What is the CIA's "heart of darkness"? Prados never addresses these questions directly, though he does say the ghost metaphor is deliberate. As to the CIA's "heart of darkness" (the British edition chose a different subtitle: *Into The Heart of the CIA*) readers are left to infer that the author has penetrated the dark forces protected by secrecy that, while essential to CIA operations, are also used to avoid criticism and accountability.

To support of this view, he describes precedents or ghosts "of past spooks [that] are always there to encourage—and to warn—the current generation of CIA officers. For this reason, *Ghosts of Langley* follows the exploits (or misadventures) of the great, the good, and the misguided." (preface) Further clarification follows in the

semantically awkward comment, "The ghosts that inhabit Langley headquarters may not be corporeal, but these individuals and others like them are exemplars. The legends of the forebears furnish illustrations for today—and tomorrow. They are both good, like Jennifer Matthews and Eloise Page, and bad, say Dewey Clarridge or Jim Mitchell. Some—like Robert Ames, perhaps—are sad. Langley has seen them all. Its halls echo with the footsteps of past spymasters and their henchmen and henchwomen . . . the Agency, over seven decades, has resisted—and finally decoupled itself from—government accountability." This knowledgeable expert then adds, "Those who advocated a peacetime intelligence agency for America would themselves be haunted—by what their offspring has become." (xvi–xviii)

With his position clarified, Prados abandons the traditional chronological approach to events and proceeds to group "the spies by their character types and presents their stories as lenses showing the larger picture of the Agency's evolution." (xvii) Thus the book begins after some rather critical comments on President Trump, with a discussion of the enhanced interrogation program—Prados calls it torture—adding that he will "not hide horror behind euphemism. There will be no effort here to play the CIA's word game. If that is not acceptable you can put this book down right now." (xxi) Whatever your choice, be advised that the interrogation program and the CIA ghosts are the main themes of the book.

The first chapter, "The House That Allen Built," reviews Dulles's CIA career, concluding that his ghost "seemed to teach 'lessons'—most important for the CIA's future, that the mission was the thing, that anything else, including outside efforts at regulation, posed obstacles to be bypassed." (75) The author provides no evidence to support this contention.

Events and personalities are the topic of chapters with such titles as "Zealots and Schemers," "Stars and Meteors," "Crises," "The Consiglieri," "The Sheriffs," "The Headless Horseman," "A Failed Exorcist," "Jacob Marely's Ghosts," and "The Flying Dutchman."

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In general, these labels apply to agency officers and events—not in any particular order—that illustrate the perpetuation of the ghosts or precedents that Prados sees as having negatively affected the agency’s performance. The result is a choppy narrative—and one not without errors—complete with frequent flashbacks, biographical sketches, and a great deal of organizational and bureaucratic detail.

For example, “The Consiglieri” chapter is about CIA’s Office of General Counsel (OGC)—whose attorneys he gratuitously labels gunslingers (while agency officers are referred to as spooks)—and begins with a discussion of Stanley Sporkin, who served DCI William Casey. Prados comments on how Sporkin and Casey worked together to get things done, despite congressional opposition. The chapter ends with an account of Larry Houston, the agency’s first and longest serving general counsel. In an aside, Prados tells how Houston was recruited by “a tall” General Donovan (but it was Houston who was tall; Donovan was 5’9”). In between, Prados discusses how the agency treated whistleblower Victor Marchetti over his book *The CIA and The Cult of Intelligence*. The case, writes Prados, “illustrates the work of OGC gunslingers in public.” (209) Then, after placing Philip Agee in the whistleblower category without alluding to his KGB service, he relates the difficulties Agee encountered with his tell-all book, *Inside The Company: CIA Diary*, published in Britain to avoid agency review. Other examples follow, including that of Frank Snepp, a former CIA analyst who declined to submit his book, *Decent Interval*, for prepublication review to the then-recently formed Publication Review Board and lost his case in court.

The chapter entitled “The Sheriffs” is curious, since the title does not seem to reflect either of the two topics the chapter addresses: women at the CIA, and the inspectors general (IG). The chapter reviews the role of women from the Dulles days until the present; in it, Prados presents an accurate summary of the genuine difficulties women encountered in the early days, the gradually changing attitudes, and finally progress achieved—he summarizes several cases to illustrate the uphill battle.

The contributions of the IGs are also reviewed, from the days of Lyman Kirkpatrick (the first IG) to John Helgerson (who served as inspector general from 2002 until 2009). Prados discusses Kirkpatrick’s controversial Bay of Pigs investigation and report, the reasons the IG position now requires Senate confirmation, and why, as he

see it, “Langley’s director came to dread the touch of the inspector general.” (247) Along the way, he digresses with a short essay on director John Deutch’s “bad boy” prohibition that limited agency contact to those potential agents who did not have “human right transgressions.” Prados challenges those who opposed the directive, claiming that “of the top spies in CIA history, Popov, Penkovsky, Tolkachev, Gordievsky, Kuklinski—none were bad boys.” (243) (It is worth noting the Gordievsky was never a CIA agent—the British get the credit, as Ben MacIntyre’s upcoming biography of Gordievsky will document.<sup>a</sup>) This chapter then establishes precedents—or ghosts—for the IG’s role in events discussed later in the book.

“The Headless Horseman” chapter reprises the Richard Helms era at CIA. It discusses, among other things, his problems with Congress—a ghostly precedent?—but offers nothing new and leaves the reader wondering, again, as to the significance of the title.

“A Failed Exorcist” is mainly concerned with the George Tenet era, before and after 9/11. Prados goes over familiar ground here too, especially the “slam dunk” comment, although he doesn’t include Tenet’s own explanation of its use. But the main focus is on the Iraq War and the enhanced interrogation program. Among the ghosts that haunted Tenet’s tenure, writes Prados, was Bill Colby’s Phoenix Program—“a torture and murder operation.” (312) That more accurate depictions of Phoenix are available is not mentioned. In the end, Prados concludes inexplicably that George Tenet “. . . somewhere morphed from spy hero to a ghost of Langley.” (312)

The final chapters—“Jacob Marley’s Ghosts” and “The Flying Dutchman”—attempt to show how the ghosts of prior mistakes and failed operations persist, their lessons unlearned or ignored. Both are devoted to aspects of the CIA’s role in the events preceding and following 9/11. The emphasis is on rendition, enhanced interrogation, and the drone program that presumably restricted “the real business of spying.” (387) Prados comments on the contributions of key players, such as Jose Rodriguez (and his decision to destroy the interrogation tapes) and the serving directors. He is particularly hard on director Michael Hayden, dismissing out of hand the views expressed in his memoir, *Playing To The Edge* (Penguin, 2016).

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a. See Ben MacIntyre, *The Spy and The Traitor: The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War* (Crown, forthcoming—September 2018).

“The Flying Dutchman” (the identity of the Dutchman is not made clear) concerns the battle over the Senate investigation into the enhanced interrogation program. Without qualification, *The Ghosts of Langley* subscribes to the opinions expressed by the Senate “torture” report and is dismissive of contrary views. Prados does mention the corrective actions instituted by director John Brennan, adding the bewildering qualification that, “The coming failure most likely will flow from the success of John Brennan’s initiatives.” (384)

Overall, the only thing new in the book is the metaphor of ghosts, threaded through Prados’s stories of the unsuccessful operations crafted by Allen Dulles and, to varying degrees, by all of the directors and principal subordinates who succeeded him. But no straight-line cause and effect is ever established: whether you accept or reject Prados’s arguments depends upon whom you

choose to believe. There is no smoking gun evidence that proves the “ghost” hypothesis or Prados’s interpretation of its role in current Agency endeavors.

In the preface to *The Ghosts of Langley*, Prados states, “This book could not have been written by an insider,” (xx) implying that only authors who are not handicapped by their own experience as professional intelligence officers are qualified to undertake the task; however, a not unreasonable consideration is that insiders would have written a less polemical and more balanced assessment. Admittedly, the public history of any intelligence agency is something of an operational iceberg. And while *The Ghosts of Langley* is in some respects an original, challenging account, it is merely a surface view that reflects the author’s previous works on the CIA. As such, the book is a partisan apparition that has earned its place in the intelligence literature of discontent.



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**The Reviewer:** 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.





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

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### ***The Future is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia***

Masha Gessen (Riverhead, 2017), 515 pp., dramatis personae, notes, index.

### ***The Long Hangover: Putin's New Russia and the Ghosts of the Past***

Shaun Walker (Oxford, 2018) 278 pp., maps, notes, bibliography, index.

### ***Reviewed by John Ehrman***

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Explaining Russia to American audiences long has been an industry among academics and journalists. Such figures as Hedrick Smith, Richard Pipes, George Kennan, and Robert Kaiser for decades have informed and shaped popular views of a land that is culturally and politically mysterious to most US readers, but which at the same time looms large in world affairs and our national debates. Now, as Vladimir Putin begins his fourth term as Russia's president, two journalists offer analyses of how Russian political and public life has come to its present condition and where they might be headed.

The first book, *The Future is History*, is by Masha Gessen, who lives in self-imposed exile—a wise choice, given the fates of opposition journalists in Russia—in New York. She has emerged during the past decade as a prominent explainer of Russia, becoming a frequent contributor to op-ed pages, intellectual journals, and publishing a biography of President Vladimir Putin, among other works. *The Future is History* is Gessen's most ambitious work to date, chronicling Russia's descent from a brief period as an emerging, if badly flawed, post-Soviet democracy, to what she sees as an updated totalitarianism.

Gessen tells her story by weaving two narratives. In the first, she follows several Russians who came of age in the decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union and then moved into intellectual and political activism. In the other, she summarizes major Russian political events since 1991, especially after the turn of the century, to chronicle Putin's rise and consolidation of power. About two-thirds of the way through, she pauses to review the major theories of totalitarianism—essentially, Hannah Arendt's and Zbigniew Brzezinski's writings from the middle of the 20th century—and argues that they apply to Russia today. All of this is presented in the vivid, passionate prose that marks all of Gessen's writing.

Unfortunately, this book simply doesn't work. Its fundamental problem is that it is far too long. At almost

500 pages, it seems to go on almost endlessly, like Russia itself. This would be less of a problem if the people Gessen used to tell her story had been interesting, but they are not. Most of them come from the privileged strata of late Soviet and post-Soviet society—the late opposition leader Boris Nemtsov's daughter, the grandson of Aleksandr Yakovlev, one of the intellectual godfathers to Gorbachev and glasnost—or, like the gay intellectual whose coming out, loves, and academic progress Gessen chronicles in excruciating detail, come from too rarified a world to teach us much about the recent Russian experience. They also are mostly too young to have accomplished much and too self-absorbed for readers to care about them. Nor do Gessen's historical sections work very well. She goes over familiar events and says little that she has not said in earlier books; it's as if she recycled her old notes and accounts.

Nor does *The Future is History* succeed in backing its claim that Putin runs a totalitarian regime. Gessen's summary of Arendt's and Brzezinski's descriptions of totalitarianism makes it clear that she understands the term and its development in studies of Nazi Germany and the Stalinist USSR. She also sees, however, that it does not apply to Russia today—Putin's regime lacks the all-encompassing ideology, mandatory membership in state and party organizations, pervasive terror, control of information, and isolation from the outside world that marked classic totalitarian regimes.

Gessen tries to get around this problem with a little sleight of hand, modifying the definition a bit to conform to the conditions of the late Soviet period rather than the 1930s and 1940s. To do this, she falls back on arguing that lingering habits of mind shaped by Soviet-era totalitarianism left Russia's democratic experiment vulnerable to slipping into a form of authoritarianism, one that maintains power by sharing the fruits of corruption among the elites and using an occasional cautionary murder or crimi-

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nal show trial to keep everyone in line. It's a confused and confusing argument that tries, but fails, to convince the reader that this is the same as totalitarianism. Reading it, one realizes that Putin's Russia resembles nothing more than a banana republic and that to call it a totalitarian state is to drain the term of meaning and allow passion to supersede analysis.

Shaun Walker, a Moscow-based British journalist, takes a much different approach in *The Long Hangover*. As correspondent for *The Guardian*, Walker has traveled throughout Russia and Ukraine, going not only to major cities and areas where events are taking place, but also to places that few Westerners venture. Thus, he reports not only from Moscow and the rebel-held towns of eastern Ukraine, but also from the ruins of abandoned labor camps deep in Siberia and the almost-deserted villages nearby. Wherever he travels, Walker talks to ordinary people and local officials, and his accounts and observations give his book a granular sense of Russian views that Gessen, writing of elites from 5,000 miles away, simply cannot match. Walker, moreover, lets his subjects and experiences speak for themselves, and *The Long Hangover* is unencumbered with distracting theoretical discussions.

Walker describes a country and people imprisoned by a warped version of their history. Since the 1990s, numerous commentators have pointed out that Russia has not reckoned with Soviet history the way modern Germany has with the Nazi period. The result is an almost complete lack of understanding of the Soviet era and the damage it did to Russia and its peoples. Walker is firmly within this school, but his contribution is to show what this has meant down at the level of individuals. He finds few who desire the return of communism or the Soviet state, but a gauzy nostalgia for World War II—named the Great Patriotic War by the Soviets—and the memory of shared sacrifice and the victory over fascism. In terms of common purpose and success, the war was the pinnacle of Soviet success; from there it was generally downhill, especially in the catastrophic 1980s and 1990s.

Consequently, as Walker shows, Russians who seek a model of national greatness and purpose view the world through the prism of the war. In this process, history is simplified and caricatured and then blended with common prejudices, to create an incoherent mess. Russians today, Walker writes, understand the Nazis as a “generalized enemy, the specificity of their evil . . . rarely discussed . . . [Soviet accounts] glossed over the leader cult, the

militarism and the gas chambers and stripped it bare to one quality: the war against the Soviet Union.” (207) The Soviet side of the story, too, is stripped of any nuance or unwelcome inquiries into such matters as the costs of Stalin's poor decisionmaking or how the deportations of entire peoples during the war affect perceptions and events today. The type of historical examination and questioning that routinely goes on in the West now is essentially forbidden in Russia as an unpatriotic attempt to slander the memory of suffering and victory.

Out of this come the simple conclusions of Soviet innocence and that Russia today needs to be unified and strong to face the resurgent fascists who plot its destruction. In eastern Ukraine, Walker finds, it is ordinary for someone to “express furious hatred for ‘fascists’ and then in the same breath rant about the Jews or the gays as the root of all evil in the modern world.” (207) Similarly, a man who has dedicated his life to recording the history of the labor camps in Kolyma rails against Gorbachev for destroying an “incredible country.” “A person who had spent half his life memorializing the camps . . . had over time come to believe the camps had been somewhat justified . . . the country [had] pursued a difficult but necessary course, en route to its historic victory in the war.” (92)

For Putin, historical memory—or its absence—is something to use to manipulate popular opinion and build support for his policies. He's hardly the first strongman to do this, and certainly will not be the last, but much of the value in Walker's reporting is how it shows the cumulative effects of such propaganda—the spread of a truly astonishing cynicism and the willingness of Russians to support Putin's lie-based gangster regime. For that reason, anyone who has ever asked, or been asked, “Do Russians really believe this?” and cannot understand the answer will benefit from reading *The Long Hangover*.

With Putin now set for another six years in office, neither *The Future is History* nor *The Long Hangover* will be anything close to the last word on his regime. Of the two, however, *The Long Hangover* is better written and more informative, which makes it the better choice for looking at the foundations of Russian views and politics today. *The Future is History* is best read critically by those already familiar with the topic or interpretations of totalitarianism. Both, however, can be read profitably by anyone interested in understanding the Russian condition and the roots Moscow's behavior.



***The Exile: The Stunning Inside Story of Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda in Flight***

Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark (Bloomsbury, 2017), 640 pp., brief bios of major characters, notes, bibliography, index.

**Reviewed by Randy Burkett**

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The premise of the book *The Exile* is tantalizing. The authors promise to fill in the blanks and tell us exactly where Usama bin Ladin (UBL) was and what he was doing from the time he disappeared in the mountains of Tora Bora in December 2001 until his death in Abbottabad in May 2011. Was he ever living in a cave, as so many commentators assumed? Did the government of Pakistan know anything about his whereabouts? Who helped him? And, of utmost importance, how can the authors know the answers to these questions when their main character is dead?

A nonfiction book is only as good as its author—or, in this case, authors—and the veracity of the sources who provide the details. In this instance, the authors are two highly respected investigative journalists. Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark were already award-winning writers who had proven their ability to obtain insights in the dangerous and complex environment of South Asia through their previous books on A.Q. Khan and his nuclear weapons network, *Nuclear Deception: The Dangerous Relationship between the United States and Pakistan*; on terrorism, *The Meadow: Kashmir 1995—Where the Terror Began*; and on the Lashkar-e-Taiba attacks in Mumbai, India, in *The Siege: 68 Hours inside the Taj Hotel*. *The Exile* was endorsed by, among others, CIA counterterrorism expert Bruce Reidel, who called the book “a riveting account of Osama Bin Laden’s last decade.” (back cover)

Given the authors’ solid credentials, both in the region and in discussing terrorism, attention must be focused on their sources—who were they, how did they know these details, and why did they share this information with two Western journalists? The answers are amazing. The authors interviewed a wide variety of sources, including two of Bin Ladin’s wives, Amal and Khairiah, who were with him at the end in Abbottabad and UBL’s spiritual advisor from the pre-9/11 al-Qa’ida training camps, Mahfouz Ibn el Waleed (aka Abu Hafs the Mauritanian), who witnessed many of the key events in the book. Although many

others were interviewed, these three individuals provided many of the best insights.

But how did the authors find these people and persuade them to share their stories, particularly when the two women were discussing their husband and knew their words would affect his legacy? Also, how did they gain the confidence of Abu Hafs, who was living openly in Mauritania and certainly was aware that his account of what he knew—or, more accurately, what he claimed he did or did not know—might imperil his future freedom? Reidel interviewed Scott-Clark at a Brookings Institution event in June 2017 and asked the first question about the UBL wives. She answered,

*The first step, I think, was I was working in Pakistan a lot in 2011 and '12. I was there when he was killed. And my immediate thought was, what about the family and the children who remained in Pakistan for months and months afterwards? I really wanted to hear what they had to say about the years on the run with him, the years in Abbottabad, whether they agreed with what he'd done. And I was lucky in that they were held [by] the ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence], the Pakistani intelligence, for almost a year afterwards. And the brother of Amal, who was the youngest wife, came from Yemen to try and get his sister and her five children. And he didn't have a clue how to work the system in Pakistan. He only spoke Arabic. He didn't have any money. He'd spent—the family clumped together all their finances to get him the ticket to Islamabad. And so I gave him some assistance in terms of directing him, kind of this is how the court system works. And in return, when he finally got them freed, he then introduced me to his sister and her kids. And then we kind of went from there onwards, but it took a long time. I mean, five years altogether to get full confidence of certain members*

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*of her family, and there are certain members of her family I haven't talked to.*<sup>a</sup>

Having secured part of the story from UBL's wives, the authors searched for others who had been with him.

*And we gradually went through that quite short list of people. And one meeting led to another meeting, so going to Mauritania to meet Osama's former spiritual advisor kind of gave us some, I guess, brownie points with other people, who then said, well, if he meets you then we'll meet you. So then I met people in Jordan, like Abu Mohammed al-Maqdisi, who is a huge jihad theologian. And so, yes, it was a very slow, gradual process of creeping forwards and gaining confidence.*<sup>b</sup>

The ties developed with the surviving Bin Ladin family members provided the bulk of the information about UBL's travels. Abu Hafz was the source for the materials about Iran's giving shelter and virtually imprisoning al-Qa'ida members who fled there as well as some new perspectives on UBL before 9/11. Several named and unnamed Pakistan military and even ISI members, including notorious former ISI Director Hamid Gul, granted interviews and leaked stories. Several American national security personalities either provided interviews or wrote books that were cited. Finally, the plethora of documents seized at Abbottabad and later released by the US government provided the authors additional material. The result is a book that is often fascinating, occasionally insightful, sometimes enraging, and in several cases just plain wrong when it comes to details (discussed below). The entire book should be read with the understanding that many of the sources may have been trying to shape the Bin Ladin legacy through their words. The sources undoubtedly were more interested in influencing the authors than informing the reader.

The biggest flaw in *The Exile* is the authors' willingness to accept the story as each source told it—they apparently made no effort to check the accounts one source gave with those of another. For example, they did not ask Amal to confirm if UBL was absent during the numerous

trips he is reported to have taken during their time in Abbottabad. This reviewer finds the frequency and reasons for these trips to be questionable. The authors made no claim that the civilian government of Pakistan, the Pakistan Army, or the leadership of the ISI had any knowledge of UBL's location, but the book alleges UBL made many trips to contact ISI-supported terrorist groups. According to an unsourced story, UBL met with "shoe bomber" Richard Reid in Karachi in January 2002. (107–108) In 2008 he supposedly traveled to Mansehra to meet Lashkar-e-Taiba head Hafiz Saeed to consult on the planned terrorist attacks in Mumbai. (374) "In August 2009, he traveled to Kohat to meet up with Qari Saifullah Akhtar, the leaders of the banned . . . Harkat ul-Jihad al-Islami" to help plan attacks on the Pakistani Army's general headquarters in Rawalpindi. (374) Finally, in the summer of 2010, UBL allegedly traveled to Pakistan's tribal areas to meet Pakistan Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud to "discuss TTP-Al Qaeda differences face-to-face." (375) While this reviewer believes it was possible for UBL to survive by keeping himself in isolation in Abbottabad from 2005 to 2011, it stretches the imagination that he could have made all of these trips and that the multitude of people involved could keep his visits secret. This may be a case of sources close to UBL trying to build the myth that he remained an active terrorist leader rather than an impotent, trapped, and wanted man in hiding.

The book has numerous errors that undercut its reliability:

- The authors say the 9/11 attackers had two political and two military targets. Because we know the targets were the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the Capitol building, it is unclear which of these they count as a second "military" target. (48)
- They claim that CIA senior officer Robert Grenier "drew up the basic war plans two weeks" before the first aerial attack on Afghanistan after 9/11 (51). Grenier is talented but did not create the plans for aerial strikes. They further compound this error by citing "Author interview with Robert Grenier, also his book *88 Days to Kandahar*. Author interview with William Murray, former CIA director, Virginia, October 2014." (538). Grenier did not make this claim, as written, in his book, and no one named William Murray has ever been a CIA director.

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a. Catherine Scott-Clark, "The Exile: The Stunning Inside Story of Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda in Flight" (Brookings Institution presentation, Washington, DC, 5 June 2017), 4; [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/20170605\\_alqaeda\\_exile\\_transcript.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/20170605_alqaeda_exile_transcript.pdf).

b. Ibid.

- The authors claim, without citation, that “300 vials of sarin gas hidden in an outhouse” were found in Jalalabad. (54) This reviewer contacted a former member of the unit responsible for looking at al-Qa‘ida biological and chemical programs at the time and was told that these “vials” did not exist. Sarin can be stored in liquid form, but under very controlled conditions. Given the climate and conditions cited, the sarin would have evaporated fairly quickly.
- They refer several times to Guantanamo detainee and former al-Qa‘ida member Abu Zubaydah as a “planner.” Abu Zubaydah was a safe-house keeper and travel facilitator—never a planner. (68)
- Jose Rodriguez is mistakenly identified as CIA Counterterrorism Center’s (CTC) “chief of staff” instead of its director. (139)
- The authors discuss UBL’s alleged kidney problems, information that they source to “Bin Laden family members.” Although UBL was known to have suffered from kidney stones at times, rumors of his need for an operation or even dialysis are a myth. (182 and 551)
- The depiction of the capture of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed is inaccurate and unsourced. (192)
- Amal’s details of the night UBL was killed were very contradictory, which is understandable given the traumatic event she was recalling. However, the authors appear to just accept and report her story without trying to sort out its inconsistencies. On page 417, she said she was “playing dead;” on the next she was “screaming hysterically;” and on page 420 she said she was left in the bedroom with her son Hussein after everyone else had been taken out to the courtyard. This confusion makes Amal a questionable source as the primary eyewitness to UBL’s final minutes. She definitely was not left alone (or with her son) in the third floor bedroom but was taken outside with the rest of the family. The authors also strangely wrote, “Any plan [the SEAL team had] to take the Bin Laden family with them had been abandoned the moment the first Black Hawk went down.” (420) Of course, no such plan ever existed.

Despite these problems, the book is valuable for several reasons. It tells us many things about UBL and his willingness to lie to others, to put his own comfort first, and to make poor decisions. Lawrence Wright, in

*The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, had already discussed how UBL lied to Taliban leader Mullah Omar in July 2001, when he swore that al-Qa‘ida would launch no more external attacks. Omar had already tried to rein in UBL by forcing him to relocate from Jalalabad to Tarnak Farms. In July 2001, the two met again, and Mullah Omar told UBL that he and his people “must go.” UBL nagged Omar for more time and swore he would cause no more trouble while secretly knowing the 9/11 hijackers were training in Florida for the “Planes Operation.” *The Exile* not only confirms Omar and the Taliban were “blindsided” by this operation (35–36) but expands on the story that this project was closely held by UBL and Khaled Sheikh Mohammed (KSM) that the al-Qa‘ida leadership council did not know about it (45). While many people talked about “a big plan” in the summer of 2001, very few knew any of the details, “and the ones in the know were frantic,” according to Levy and Scott-Clark’s sources. (46)

UBL’s willingness to lie and put others at risk while pursuing his own safety and comfort are documented throughout the book. From his decision to hide in a cave right after the 9/11 attacks, leaving his family, friends, and followers exposed to potential retaliation from the United States, to his unreasonable demands on the two brothers who hid him in Abbottabad, UBL was a man who put himself and his own desires first. Even when his Abbottabad hosts were doing their best to protect him, UBL thought nothing of bringing more and more family members to the compound and never paused in producing more children despite the medical and safety risks to all three families living there. He kept one son, Khalid, virtually captive because he could not stand to be without a private secretary. His decision to prevent Khalid from traveling until Khairiah, his “favorite wife,” (23) could arrive from Iran to take up his administrative duties not only resulted in Khalid’s death in the SEAL team raid but created the continuing suspicion by the surviving Bin Ladin family members that Khairiah’s arrival was the reason UBL was found.

The book also sheds new light on Iran’s role during the decade between the attacks and UBL’s death. Readers are likely to be surprised by Iran’s offer to assist the United States after 9/11, including offering intelligence on key Taliban locations. (34) This cooperation ends with President George W. Bush’s “Axis of Evil” speech (116), and Iran becomes the safe haven for much of UBL’s family

and a large number of other surviving al-Qa'ida members and their families. Iran allowed the al-Qa'ida refugees in, in part to prevent the group from launching attacks there, and then allowed various members to travel out either intermittently or permanently based on whether these trips would be in Iran's interest and often influenced by the potential harm the traveler could do to the United States. According to the authors' sources, Gen. Qasem Suleimani, the head of Iran's external intelligence operations, "took personal responsibility for Bin Laden's family and Al Qaeda's military council." (520)

In summary, the book has flaws but is worth reading, even at a lengthy 640 pages. It provides new insights into UBL and al-Qa'ida and will likely make the reader question the US government's past and present relationships

with Pakistan and Iran. Although we know how UBL's story ends, one final frustration is the lack of accountability of other characters in the book. The Bin Ladin family members who are not still engaging in terrorism fly first to Jeddah on a private jet to rejoin other relatives and then move to Doha, Qatar, to live a life of luxury with UBL's estranged son, Omar. Mahfouz Ibn el Waleed (aka Abu Hafs the Mauritanian) also remains free, even though he admits he knew of the coming 9/11 attacks and was an al-Qa'ida insider. Based on the book, Iran and Pakistan are likely to continue to harbor terrorists with impunity, providing safety and support while they plan their next attacks. Filling in the blanks on where UBL was and what he was doing is satisfying, but the broader story revealed is far more troubling.



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**The Reviewer:** Randy Burkett serves on the CIA history staff. His past assignments have included service on the faculty of the Naval Postgraduate School.

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

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### ***Hollywood's Spies: The Undercover Surveillance of Nazis in Los Angeles***

Laura Rosenzweig (New York University Press, 2017), 285 pp., notes, bibliography, appendices.

### ***Hitler in Los Angeles: How Jews Foiled Plots Against Hollywood and America***

Steven J. Ross (Bloomsbury, 2017), 415 pp., maps, notes.

#### ***Reviewed by David A. Foy***

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Of the many aspects of the war against Nazism between Hitler's becoming Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and the defeat of the "Thousand-Year Reich" a dozen years later, one that is only now coming to light is the overt and covert campaign Jewish leaders, primarily in Los Angeles, conducted against various Nazi groups and "fifth columnists" in the United States. Two recent books on this subject are Laura Rosenzweig's *Hollywood's Spies* and Steven Ross's *Hitler in Los Angeles*, which cover nearly identical ground, though to a differing extent. Both focus on a pair of Los Angeles-based Jewish attorneys, primarily Leon Lewis and, to a lesser extent, MGM studios counsel Mendel Silberberg, who conduct a courageous, dangerous, and generally underfunded campaign to recruit undercover surveillants who were tasked with collecting incriminating information to ultimately convince the US government, intelligence and law enforcement entities, and the general public of the threat posed by Nazi groups and sympathizers in pre-war/wartime America.

The vehicle they used to conduct this campaign was the Los Angeles Jewish Community Council (LAJCC), a group organized by Hollywood movie moguls who dug into their deep pockets to hire private investigators to infiltrate Nazi groups and to provide leadership and strategic political support to the effort. As *Hollywood's Spies* notes, LAJCC had a public face but was simultaneously involved in a covert fact-finding mission. Rosenzweig and Ross have different motivations for writing their respective books—while the former dedicates her volume to Leon Lewis, known to American Nazis as "the most dangerous Jew in Los Angeles," Ross admittedly writes his book to acknowledge the past he has ignored for 40 years, namely his heritage as the son of two Auschwitz extermination camp survivors.

When first faced with the spectre of Nazism in the early 1930s, American Jews were uncertain how to respond. In 1930, Ross notes that Los Angeles alone had 350,000 unemployed, and one-third of all disabled veterans lived

in Southern California, making it fertile ground for Nazi recruiters. As Rosenzweig observes, America's Jews were too fractured to respond on a national level, so any response would have to be local. Faced with this situation, Lewis—whom Ross describes as "a lawyer with a social worker's heart" (9)—decided to be pro-active, working through the LAJCC.

The first indication of the latent threat Hitler's acolytes in southern California represented appeared in the spring of 1933, when Nazi propaganda appeared on the streets of Los Angeles. Initial investigation soon traced the dissemination to a group known as Friends of the New Germany (FNG), which began recruiting disgruntled WWI veterans to the cause. One of the early "converts" was John Schmidt, actually one of Lewis' spies, who reported to the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) organization his conviction that the Nazis were "smart, systematic, and dangerous" and "out to overthrow the United States." (Rosenzweig, 25) Aware that their campaign needed to have an American flavor to it, members of the FNG ensured that their literature played on the themes of nationalism, anti-Semitism, and fear of Communists. They therefore had their propaganda written in Germany, in English, then plainly wrapped and placed aboard US-bound German cruise ships to be "Americanized" by Bund members in the United States prior to dissemination.

As they talked of preparations for "Der Tag" (The Day) when Nazis and fifth-columnists would rise up and take charge of a misguided America, they went to great pains to explain that the military drills and marksmanship training their private militia, the Sportabteilung, engaged in were clearly different from the head-cracking, goose-stepping Sturmabteilung, though both Rosenzweig and Ross note that the difference was only semantical. Perceived as an even greater threat at the time was a group known as the Silver Shirts, led by William Dudley Pelley, who was intent upon establishing a "Christian Commonwealth" in the United States, in contrast to the

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atheistic Nazis. The Silver Shirts, who cooperated with various Nazi groups in the United States for a time, demonstrated their serious intent by distributing maps showing where prominent Los Angeles Jews, including MGM Studios chief Louis B. Mayer and leading film star Charlie Chaplin, lived, encouraging attacks on their property and person.

Both authors stress that Lewis was savvy enough to realize that given the ugly, persistent, and widespread anti-Semitism in America at the time, to be successful in his campaign he needed to portray Nazis as un-American and anti-patriotic rather than the LAJCC as pro-Jewish. The way to do that was to use such patriotic civic organizations as the DAV and the American Legion to funnel information to the proper authorities. In so doing, Lewis created what Rosenzweig refers to as an “informal American Jewish resistance network.” (2) As both authors stress, Lewis and his colleagues could not count on either local business leaders or law enforcement in southern California for help at the time, as many Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Office personnel were supporters of the Nazis/Ku Klux Klan/Silver Shirts and more focused on the “real” danger to America: communists, whose second-largest American contingent was in Los Angeles.

While local law enforcement hampered the efforts of the LAJCC and its allies, national efforts promised to be more helpful—at least initially. In May 1934, President Roosevelt directed the FBI to investigate Nazi groups in America, but it had too few special agents to make an impact and proved largely inept in investigating the threat. The same year, New York Congressman Samuel Dickstein, who had been shocked by what he saw during a recent trip to Berlin, announced the identification of 300 German agents in the United States tasked with overthrowing the national government. To investigate such disturbing findings, Congress established a committee headed by Texas Democratic Congressman Martin Dies to convene a series of preliminary hearings in nine cities, but the combination of limited funds, lack of information sharing with the public, and the mindset that communists were the greater threat yielded disappointing results.

However, Lewis’s spies, who had burrowed their way into the leading Nazi groups in Los Angeles, were reporting to military intelligence personnel some of the disturbing plans they had learned about. In 1938, for example, Lewis became privy to the contents of a brief-

case carried by recently-arrested local Silver Shirts leader Henry Allen, which he was stunned to discover contained the names of nearly 100 Nazi, Japanese, and Italian secret agents working in the United States and the addresses of their German contacts. Lewis’s spies also uncovered a plot to violently overthrow the US government after the 1940 presidential election and provided that information to the FBI and Naval Intelligence.

As Rosenzweig demonstrates, from 1938 until the end of the war in 1945, the LAJCC expanded its mission to answer a growing national call, though on its own terms. In the former year, Congress—fed up with consistent lies from Berlin about its relationship with the German-American Bund—passed the Alien Registration Act of 1938, bringing public scrutiny to an organization whose operations were funded by Berlin and directly involved Gestapo agents delivering propaganda materials by ship. That same year, German-American Bund national leader Fritz Kuhn was put on trial after the FBI discovered a German spy ring in New York City, putting German Foreign Office and other government officials in an awkward position.

In early 1939, Lewis recruit Joseph Roos launched the News Research Service, which disseminated the News Letter, a weekly missive in which the former newspaperman fashioned compelling stories from the cut-and-dried intelligence reports he normally collected. In this way, he helped elevate the Los Angeles-based effort to a national one and established a dialogue with federal authorities, ensuring they were aware of espionage and sabotage plots. In April of that year, Hollywood also took off the gloves after seven years of objections from domestic Nazi groups and their allies when, under heavy security, it premiered *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, based on the sensational Rumrich spy trial of 1938; the rave reviews were matched by the fury of the Nazis. Thus, by late 1939, it appeared that American Nazis were increasingly on the ropes, although the 750 Nazi/fascist groups in the United States at the time suggested that a declaration of victory was premature.

What hastened and legitimized such a declaration was, of course, the outbreak of World War II. As early as 8 December 1941, as Americans desperately sought to find Pearl Harbor on the globe, Attorney General Francis Biddle ordered the FBI to arrest German, Japanese, and Italian spies and fifth columnists—which it did, relying heavily on the lists of subversives long-maintained



by Lewis and Roos, usually without acknowledgment. Rosenzweig points out that once war had been declared, the covert collection efforts of the LAJCC were no longer needed, which prompted a change of emphasis—to “civic cooperation”—and name—in 1945, the LAJCC became the Community Relations Council (CRC) of the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles.

Both authors conclude their studies with a “whatever-happened-to” segment that, for example, informs readers that in 1947 Lewis finally returned to his law practice, toiling away until his death from a heart attack while driving on the Pacific Coast Highway in 1954; that Silberberg stayed with the CRC until his death in 1965; and that Lewis’s associate Joe Roos became the executive director of the CRC in 1950 and would remain in that position for the next 19 years. Only in Ross’s book do readers learn the fascinating information about German consul in Los Angeles Georg Gyssling, who while judiciously protecting the positive image of Germany in Hollywood films, was also working with future DCI Allen Dulles and the OSS to shorten the war in Italy, as well as to provide critical German military information to Army chief of staff Gen. George Marshall.

Fortunately for readers, both of these excellent studies appeared within weeks of one another, crying out for a comparative review. As expected, they have a good bit of overlap between them, but some degree of redundancy is welcome when the subject is one about which most readers are largely unaware. Rosenzweig, an independent scholar, based her study, a decade in the making, on 15,000 archival documents from sites around the country. Ross, a professor of history at the University of Southern California, was inspired to begin his study after reading hundreds of reports about the activities of local German spies in the archives of California State University/Northridge’s Oviatt Library. Although both histories are very readable and compelling, *Hitler in Los Angeles* is the more definitive and detailed of the two. Ross also gets the edge in the profusion of illustrations in his book, including the block-by-block contemporary maps of Los Angeles highlighting key buildings and homes integral to the dialogue. However, Rosenzweig includes several useful appendices, the most significant of which is a list of some 150 right-wing individuals and groups the LAJCC investigated between 1933 and 1945. She describes Lewis’s strategy and tactics using a chess analogy, a nice touch given the fact that Lewis was indeed a chess player.

It is also worth noting that for the disparity in the length of each book—*Hitler in Los Angeles* is almost 150 pages longer than *Hollywood’s Spies*—the number of pages of notes in each is nearly equal. The only criticism worth noting is Rosenzweig’s assertion early on (page six) that the 1930’s were “the most anti-Semitic period in US history,” for which she provides some evidence but no definitive comparisons to compel the reader to reach the same conclusion, which might not be provable anyway.

Short of all the documentation these two authors have had to paw through to understand the American Jewish response to Nazism in pre-war America, readers should add these long-awaited volumes to their bookshelves as they are likely to be the standard works on the subject for years to come. They should, however, also be aware that this topic has become an intellectual shuttlecock of late, thanks to a recent book by Australian historian at Harvard—Ben Urwand, author of the provocatively-titled *The Collaboration: Hollywood’s Pact with Hitler* (Harvard University Press, 2013).

Urwand’s thesis is that in dealing with the Nazis and their demands with regard to filmmaking, Hollywood did much more than just accede to Nazi demands; rather, they “actively and enthusiastically cooperated” with the Nazi regime. This contention has been challenged in two in-depth articles by *New Yorker* veteran staff writer and film critic David Denby, who referred to Urwand’s book as “recklessly misleading,” “poorly argued,” “strangely organized,” and “confusing.” He expressed surprise that such a flawed product would appear from such an elite publisher as Harvard University Press. Urwand has responded to the criticisms via his agent, though his responses have not been publicly aired. A spokesman for Harvard University Press stands by the rigor of its review process and its decision to publish the controversial volume. Although rock-throwing between ivory towers is a permanent feature of academia, this controversy is more significant than most, especially in light of recent debate about facts, alternate facts, and how they are used. Readers of these volumes should be aware of this ongoing squabble, evaluate the archival materials used by both authors, and draw their own conclusions as to the true nature of the relationship between Hollywood and the Third Reich.





***In the Enemy's House: The Secret Saga of the FBI Agent and the Code Breaker Who Caught the Russian Spies***

Howard Blum (HarperCollins, 2018), 317 pp., notes, sources, index.

***Reviewed by David A. Foy***

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In September 1996, an aging Soviet spymaster stood in front of a simple double grave in Pinelawn Cemetery, Long Island, New York. As is customary in such cases, he left a sample of soil from his dacha in Russia as a tribute and memorial to two of his agents, who had paid with their lives for their espionage. Struggling to maintain his composure, retired veteran KGB officer Alexander Feklisov, aka “Sasha,” spoke: “Forgive us for not having known how to save your lives.”

This story of the hunt for the Russian atomic spies—capped by the June 1953 execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg—and the unlikely working friendship that develops over several years between their hunters, FBI agent Bob Lamphere and Arlington Hall codebreaker Meredith Gardner, is the focus of *In the Enemy's House*, a new book by Howard Blum. It would be hard to imagine a more unlikely pairing than Lamphere and Gardner—the gung-ho, idealistic “G-man” who had joined the Bureau in 1941 but who was disillusioned by 1953, and the solitary, reflective, self-assured Gardner, who had learned to read at age three, who had taught himself Yiddish, Hebrew, German, and Spanish by age eight, and who was fluent in a dozen languages by age 23. Lamphere had escaped a dead-end life in the Idaho mining town where he grew up by landing a job at the Treasury Department in Washington, DC, and earning his law degree before joining the Bureau. Gardner earned a Ph.D. in German in 1938 and was teaching the language at the University of Ohio-Akron prior to securing a position in the winter of 1942 at the Army Security Agency (ASA) at Arlington Hall, where “the Army had imposed its brutal aesthetic” (34) on the once stately private girls’ school. Wanting to contribute to the cause, Gardner taught himself Japanese in three months and dove headfirst into decrypting the messages emanating from the Imperial War Command in Tokyo.

Military Intelligence Service deputy chief Col. Carter Clarke, in a moment of prescience, argued that Arlington Hall codebreakers should be reading Russian codes

as well. He created a special two-man cell for that very purpose, an endeavor referred to as the “Russia problem” or, more vaguely, the “Blue problem.” Mysteriously, the initiative ended without explanation after two months, only to be revived later. Lamphere, meanwhile, had fingered a corrupt US government official and was “rewarded” with an assignment to the Soviet espionage squad, which in Lamphere’s mind was only one step short of the dreaded assignment to the Butte, Montana, field office.

The development that changed everything was the Bureau’s August 1943 receipt of a letter in Cyrillic that detailed the operations of a Soviet espionage ring of 10 headed by Soviet undercover diplomat and actual KGB (Blum uses the name “KGB” globally, for simplicity’s sake) officer Vassily Zubilin operating in the United States. This news was bolstered by the September 1945 defection of Soviet code clerk in Ottawa, Igor Gouzenko, heightening suspicions that Soviet intelligence was operating in the United States as well. Just a month later, controversial turncoat Soviet spy Elizabeth Bentley, aka “The Red Queen,” walked into the FBI field office in New Haven, Connecticut, only too eager to share details of her duties as a courier in the Jacob Golos spy ring. Bob Lamphere was re-energized—a secret war was going on in the United States, and he wanted in.

This string of bad news for Russian Foreign Intelligence chief Gen. Pavel Fitin prompted him to shut down all KGB operations in the United States for six months to protect Operation ENORMOZ—the Soviet attempt to steal America’s atomic bomb secrets. As Igor Kurchatov began his new duties as the chief of “Laboratory No. 2” in Moscow, dedicated to developing Russia’s own atomic bomb, New York rezidentura Leonid Kvasnikov arrived in the “Big Apple” in March 1943, living his cover as an employee of AMTORG, the Russian trade organization for the receipt of Lend-Lease equipment. Two promising First Directorate officers, Alexander Feklisov—the future “Sasha”—and Anatoly Yatskov were dispatched to New York to assist Kvasnikov in conducting the stateside

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portion of “Enormoz.” Their joint mission was to learn all they could as quickly as possible about “Laboratory V”—Los Alamos National Laboratory—where US scientists were frantically working with U-235 and plutonium to develop an atomic bomb.

On the codebreaking front, ASA resumed working on the “Blue problem” and was excited to discover that in its haste during the German drive on the capital in 1941, Moscow Center had committed the cryptographic “unforgiveable sin”—inadvertently making three copies of a one-time pad, thereby negating its inherently unbreakable quality. This critical error provided codebreakers like Gardner—who was assigned to the Russian unit in January 1946—a tremendous opportunity. Through painstaking analysis, Gardner reconstructed a KGB First Directorate codebook and wrote “Special Analysis Report No. 1” in late August 1947. The report, titled “Cover Names in Diplomatic Traffic,” made interesting reading for Col. Clarke, who ordered it shared with the FBI—which set up the first awkward meeting between the cryptographer and the counterintelligence agent. This organizational tap dance, fraught with freshman jitters, did, however provide Lamphere with access to a series of plain text messages from New York to Moscow dated 1944—one of which gave the extremely close-hold names of the US scientists working on the Manhattan Project. By October 1948, Lamphere and Gardner had received official sanction for working together to exploit Russian cable traffic and put a stop to secrets-stealing by the Soviets—but to share their progress and findings with only with a select few.

For the next two years, Gardner and Lamphere immersed themselves in a sea of Russian and American names, both given and cover, in their relentless effort to track the web that was Soviet intelligence in the wartime/postwar United States. They learned of “Antenna,” who had been renamed “Liberal,” but only later did they positively identify him as Julius Rosenberg, leader of the Soviet atomic bomb spy ring in the United States. They discovered that “Sasha” had met Rosenberg some 50 times over a three-year period. They became acquainted with ring members Joel Barr (“Meter”) and Alfred Sarant (“Hughes”), working in the US defense industry, and with “Ethel,” identified as simply the wife of “Liberal.”

The Soviets’ detonation of their first atomic bomb in 1949 created shock waves in more locations than the test range at Semipalatinsk. President Harry Truman initially refused to believe that “those Asiatics” (169) were

capable of constructing an atomic device, and Lamphere increasingly felt the weight of secrets he could not share with his FBI supervisors. By now, “Sasha” had returned to Moscow and was the handler for “Rest,” who had worked at Los Alamos and delivered US atomic materials to the Soviets. “Rest” was now working at Harwell, the British atomic research center, and “Sasha” had been reassigned to London, meeting with “Rest” every three to four months. Lamphere, meanwhile, had discovered an esoteric but interesting document in the archives of the US Atomic Energy Commission—a 6 June 1944 paper with the scintillating title “Fluctuations and the Efficiency of a Diffusion Plant.” The author was identified only as “K. Fuchs.” Lamphere suspected that a Soviet spy was among the 15 British scientists handpicked by US physicist Robert Oppenheimer to travel under heavy security from Britain to the United States in November 1943. A February decrypt by Gardner confirmed that assessment, and the two sleuths narrowed the list of candidates to two. Although Lamphere was convinced the spy was Rudolf Peierls, they soon had confirmation that “Rest” was actually the respected, naturalized British citizen Klaus Fuchs.

US authorities informed their British allies of Fuch’s espionage, but the latter took little action initially. One who did act, however, was the Soviet spy in the British embassy in Washington—Donald Maclean—who informed the Soviets that the Americans had tipped the British to Fuchs. The dedicated Fuchs had also supplied his mentors with information about the US hydrogen bomb development, prompting the Soviets to “repurpose” a Soviet town into the closed city of “Arzamas-16,” where Russian scientists turned their talents to creating a Soviet H-bomb. The relentless and increasing pressure of the Bureau on the resistant Fuchs, however, ultimately brought a confession on 24 January 1950 and a prison sentence of 14 years for espionage. In the process of his interrogation, Fuchs provided one tantalizing detail—the name of his contact, “Raymond,” the next step in the trail of bread crumbs Lamphere and Gardner were pursuing.

As it often does, interviewing/interrogating one suspect led to another. While Lamphere had been interrogating Fuchs in London, his special agents had focused on Philadelphia resident Harry Gold, who had forgotten to sweep up a map of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the rushed cleaning of his house that preceded the serving of a search warrant. Initially resistant, Gold ultimately folded, admitting to serving as a courier—“Raymond”—for Fuchs. Upon his return to the States from interrogating Fuchs,

Lamphere also learned from the now-arrested Gold of a second spy at Los Alamos, an Army NCO with a wife named “Ruth.” The arrest of Gold was the last straw for Moscow Center and “Sasha,” who collectively realized it was time for their spies to run. But the noose was closing rapidly. The Bureau interviewed Los Alamos Army NCO and machinist David Greenglass, who soon identified his handler as brother-in-law Julius Rosenberg, brother to his wife “Ruth,” a.k.a. “Wasp.” On 17 July 1950, Julius was arrested for espionage; four days later, wife Ethel was arrested for refusing to testify.

As Greenglass awaited his sentence, the Rosenbergs went on trial on 6 March 1951. Also in the dock was fellow spy ring member Morton Sobell, aka “Senya,” who had supplied “Sasha” with thousands of pages of secrets about US sonar, infrared rays, and missile guidance systems. Within three weeks, the trio had been convicted of espionage. Ironically, both “Sasha” and Lamphere hoped the Rosenbergs would plead guilty, but they refused. At this point, Lamphere and Gardner, despite the long and successful chase, suffered second thoughts about their part in the unfolding drama, doubts that would powerfully change the course of their subsequent lives. “I never wanted to get anyone in trouble,” Gardner lamented (284), and he and Lamphere were of one mind concerning the “wrongness” of Ethel’s death. Lamphere admitted that a death sentence for Julius “might be correct” but added quickly, “No purpose would be achieved by sentencing Ethel Rosenberg to death.” He drafted a memo for FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover expressing such opinions, a memo Hoover handed to the judge—but which did not change his mind. In his statement to the Rosenbergs, Judge Irving Kaufman intoned, “. . . by the cause of your betrayal, you undoubtedly have altered the course of history to the disadvantage of our country.” (285) The Rosenbergs were condemned to death in the electric chair; Morton Sobell received a 30-year sentence.

His heart no longer in the chase, Lamphere left the Bureau in 1955; offered a high-level job at CIA, he opted instead for the quiet backwater of the Veterans Administration and later worked for the John Hancock Life Insurance Company. Gardner fled the United States and bad memories and took up codebreaking at the British decryption center at Cheltenham. “Sasha,” meanwhile, became the resident in Washington in 1960. Lamphere died in 2002, at age 83. Gardner also died in 2002, at age 89, and two years later was inducted into NSA’s Hall of Honor.

*In the Enemy's House* is a well-written, page-turner of a book, very readable and organized into brief chapters. The quality of the writing should not be surprising given Blum’s credentials as a journalist and author. He has written several best-selling books and is a contributing editor at *Vanity Fair* and a former reporter at the *New York Times*, where he was twice nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting. This book is enough of a human interest story—focused on Lamphere and Gardner, and to a lesser extent, the spies and spymasters—to hold the interest of the average reader but is also satisfying for an Intelligence Community audience; the parallel processes of Gardner’s cryptologic research and Lamphere’s counterintelligence investigation make for especially fascinating reading.

In the category of “observations” rather than “criticisms,” readers might find the limited number of photographs—which may be at the discretion of the publisher—disappointing, especially in light of the numerous persons identified in the book. For example, there are no photos of Feklisov/“Sasha,” none of any other spy ring members besides the Rosenbergs and Harry Gold, and none of any Russian or American atomic bomb research laboratories or test sites. In light of the focus in the early portions of the book on the lives and careers of Lamphere and Gardner, the title may also cause some consternation. Does the phrase “In the Enemy’s House” refer to Russian intelligence operatives in the United States, Russian spies inside “Manhattan Program” facilities, the work of Lamphere and Gardner “inside” Russian foreign intelligence, or another possibility? Blum is to be commended, however, for not forcing an ironic similarity to today’s headlines of Russian meddling in US affairs. As he was finishing the book in 2017, he wrote, “. . . this Cold War history took on an unexpected resonance: and a chilling prescience” but he has admirably refused to overdraw the possible parallel.

In short, *In the Enemy's House* is a solid addition to Cold War literature and an especially revealing look inside the minds and often tense lives of a brilliant cryptologist and a dogged FBI counterintelligence agent as they dealt with an all-absorbing challenge of strategic significance, an important chapter in the history of Soviet and US intelligence operations.





***Dirty War: Rhodesia and Chemical Biological Warfare, 1975–1980***

Glenn Cross (Helion, 2017), 248 pp., list of terms and abbreviations, bibliography, indices, appendices, notes.

***Reviewed by Ryan Shaffer***

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Glenn Cross details the history of Rhodesia's chemical and biological warfare against insurgents from 1975 to 1980. Drawing from interviews with former Rhodesian intelligence officers and the small number of documents about the program that remain, he examines the circumstances that led a government to ignore international norms and use chemical and biological weapons (CBW). He argues that the Rhodesian case demonstrates how a small and internationally isolated nation can develop a small-scale CBW program using widely available industrial materials, without being detected by foreign intelligence agencies. The Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) and British South Africa Police (BSAP) Special Branch resorted to CBW when the conventional military failed, directing its officers and associates to "insert CBW-contaminated food, beverages, medicines, and clothing into guerrilla supplies." (xxviii) The book's appendices list and describe the chemical and biological agents linked to the Rhodesian program and include copies of Rhodesian government documents pertaining to the country's CBW efforts.

Organized topically, the book's preface offers a brief overview of Rhodesia's colonial history and demographics, discussing the ethnic and racial divisions arising from a white minority's control of the government over a disenfranchised and mostly rural black African population. Cross describes the Rhodesian War with emphasis on "the regime's inability to defeat decisively a growing guerrilla insurgency through conventional arms alone." (39) He explains the conflict's evolution in the context of post-war British decolonization and the manner in which the Unilateral Declaration of Independence was designed to maintain white minority rule, as well as the ensuing international sanctions that isolated Rhodesia. By the late 1960s, government opponents shifted strategy, believing the only way to change the country was to forcibly seize control. Meanwhile, the CIO had penetrated the opponents' ranks, gathering intelligence and setting up the Selous Scouts to work against the guerrillas. Despite decisionmaking clashes and rivalries between competing government factions, the Rhodesian Security Forces were

far better trained than their opponents, who avoided direct fighting and led Rhodesians to develop new tactics—which ultimately included the use of CBW on soft targets associated with insurgents, like rural schools and farms.

Turning to the actual CBW program, Cross describes its origins as an effort "to eliminate guerrillas" within Rhodesia, "to contaminate water supplies along guerrilla infiltration routes into Rhodesia," and to disrupt insurgent sanctuaries. (81) He notes that many program details will never be known for several reasons: the lack of contemporaneous records; reluctance to speak on the part of many who were involved; and, from those who were not reluctant, mere fragments of the story. Starting with decisions that led to creating the program, Cross points out that the CBW operation was under a Special Branch unit—itsself overseen by the CIO. Known as "Z Desk" or "Counterterrorist Operations," the small group, which consisted mostly of scientists and university student volunteers, was commanded by Michael "Mac" McGuinness (1932–2011). The actual operations remained small and rudimentary, such as "sun-drying liquid pesticides to a powder and brushing them onto clothing" that was distributed to guerrillas. (103) Experiments were also conducted on detained insurgents. Cross estimates the program killed hundreds, explaining that those involved considered the CBW program "effective" because it eliminated the enemy while also creating havoc, when the enemy placed blame on the villages where they had become infected.

The subsequent sections of the book explore South Africa's alleged assistance with CBW efforts and look at the 1978–80 Rhodesian anthrax outbreak. Regarding the role of South Africa's apartheid government, Cross acknowledges "limited and fragmentary information"—including interviews with McGuinness—to connect Rhodesia to South Africa's CBW program. South Africa's program, better known as Project Coast, involved sending "agents/pathogens" by courier, sharing scientific knowledge, and providing financial aid. (153) Cross analyzes converging evidence that links the two countries' CBW efforts

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through the material support of key figures and via information exchanges among scientists. Cross concludes that Rhodesia benefited from the help, but there is not enough information about whether South Africa used knowledge from Rhodesia in “any meaningful way” and questions about the relationship remain—including uncertainties around the timing and details of these exchanges. (163)

When Cross examines the major Rhodesian anthrax outbreak that started in 1978 and the allegations that it was part of a deliberate campaign by Rhodesian or South African officials, he analyzes available sources and finds the evidence “highly consistent with a naturally occurring epidemic, and its propagation almost certainly . . . due to wartime conditions” and to environmental factors, previous anthrax outbreaks, social conditions, and the “collapse of the veterinary and public health system in rural Rhodesia.” (205) Noting the challenges of bioattribution, Cross explores the nature of anthrax, previous outbreaks in the region, the chronology of the 1978 outbreak, possible transmission paths, and the lack of evidence linking the outbreak to deliberate dissemination.

Lastly, Cross examines the legacy of the Rhodesian CBW program, highlighting how understanding its origins and development can contribute to discovering and addressing small nations and non-state actors that develop chemical and biological weapons. Notably, he explores the incentives for using CBW, including its psychological affects and utility in asymmetric warfare, and how disincentives for deploying CBW can be influenced by a country’s position within the larger international community. For example, Cross writes, “The contextual nature of the international CBW norms weakens the norms’

effectiveness in preventing CBW use—especially in intrastate conflict such as counterinsurgencies, where regime survival is at stake.” (240)

The book is a well-researched study that sheds light on the reasons a government broke international norms to use CBW, a tactic more likely to target local non-state actors than foreign militaries. Cross explains how CBW were deployed—with “remarkable effectiveness”—against insurgents, details the specific chemical and biological agents used, offers estimates of the death toll, and describes a putative chain of command. He writes, “The most enduring and relevant legacy of the Rhodesian CBW effort is that similar small-scale CBW efforts drawing on limited scientific knowhow, primitive equipment and crude materials can be effective for State and non-State actors today.” (240)

Cross provides a sturdy framework for historicizing and analyzing the Rhodesian CBW program, but sometimes the discussion is too narrow; for instance, the reaction of the affected populations and the insurgents’ perspective on the impact of the CBW effort are admittedly missing. Moreover, the wider psychological impact that the rumors—supported or not—had on Rhodesian politics and society is not discussed. Lastly, while the broad political history and group differences are described, the cultural context—including the role of dehumanizing propaganda that targeted government opponents and helped enable the use of chemical and biological weapons—is not explored. Nonetheless, Cross provides a solid history of a relatively small and obscure CBW program, demonstrating its historical significance as well as its relevance to the contemporary world.



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



***The Saboteur: The Aristocrat Who Became France's Most Daring Anti-Nazi Commando***

Paul Kix (HarperCollins, 2017), 304 pp., notes.

**Reviewed by Leslie C.**

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Paul Kix's *The Saboteur: The Aristocrat Who Became France's Most Daring Anti-Nazi Commando*, is less than it appears on the surface. The author, a deputy editor at *ESPN: The Magazine*, has written on the career of Robert Jean Marie de la Rochefoucauld, who was just 16 years old when Germany defeated France in June 1940. La Rochefoucauld endured the German occupation of his family's estate, sharing their bomb-damaged chateau near Soissons with German officers before leaving for college in Paris. All the while, La Rochefoucauld secretly listened to Charles de Gaulle's BBC broadcasts to "eternal France," determined to join de Gaulle in London.

Denounced in a letter to the police intercepted by a sympathetic mailman, La Rochefoucauld fled Paris for neutral Spain. By then 19, he spent several months in a Spanish internment camp after which he was "recruited" for the Special Operations Executive (SOE) by British Ambassador Samuel Hoare, who had served as an intelligence officer in Petrograd during the First World War. Upon arrival in England, La Rochefoucauld underwent interrogation at the London Reception Center—a process lengthened by his lying about his identity. After he confessed, however, his examiners passed him because he came from "the right sort of family." Interestingly—though Kix does not notice it—this was the same British security service bias that later masked the Cambridge Five for so long.

La Rochefoucauld met de Gaulle in London to ask permission to join SOE, which appealed to him because of its assassination of Reinhard Heydrich and its sabotage of the Norsk Hydro plant. SOE, on Churchill's orders, was held separate from both the Defense Ministry and the established intelligence services, which resulted in petty bureaucratic jealousies. La Rochefoucauld nevertheless joined the R/F Branch, which was SOE's liaison with de Gaulle's Free French. Trained by W.E. Fairbairn and E.A. Sykes, among others, in the dark arts of clandestine warfare, La Rochefoucauld then went to a "finishing school" where he learned such skills as safecracking and resisting

interrogation. Seemingly absent from his preparation, however, was even rudimentary tradecraft.

In July 1943, La Rochefoucauld made his first jump into France, a country characterized by Michel Foucault as under "permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance." (87) His job: to train saboteurs for the Alliance Network. Unknown to La Rochefoucauld, the German Sicherheitsdienst (SD) and its collaborators in the French Milice had already broken up significant networks such as Scientist and Prosper and had recruited a double agent in the resistance cell Combat, which was part of Alliance. Hundreds of arrests followed, including that of La Rochefoucauld, who was captured in a barn. Accused of being a communist, he endured four months of interrogation and torture before being sentenced to death. He escaped from a truck en route to his execution and was ultimately exfiltrated to England by boat.

In May 1944, La Rochefoucauld parachuted back into France, charged with the sabotage of a munitions plant at Saint Medard en Jalles, near Bordeaux. He was captured almost immediately following a firefight, but he was rescued that same night by resistants from the Leon des Landes cell who attacked the kommandantur where he had been taken. La Rochefoucauld subsequently infiltrated the Saint Medard facility using another worker's altered ID and plastic explosives concealed in loaves of bread. He escaped following the explosions, but was arrested at a roadblock while bicycling away from Bordeaux.

Before his scheduled interrogation by Friedrich Wilhelm Dohse, the SD chief in Bordeaux who had broken up the Scientist ring and run an effective counter-insurgency effort against the resistance in Southwestern France, La Rochefoucauld faked a seizure, killed three guards, and walked out of prison. He escaped Bordeaux disguised as a nun with the assistance of resistance leader Roger Landes—who himself had escaped the Scientist purge—and passed the summer of 1944 in a series of occasional skirmishes and acts of sabotage. Kix offers few details about these activities, other than a description

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of the destruction of a Wehrmacht artillery casemate in the Gironde estuary. La Rochefoucauld's war ended when a mine shattered his knee. The Allies completed driving the Germans from France before he recovered from his injuries.

Why is Kix's work less than it appears? Part of it is that his sources are limited. Heavy reliance on La Rochefoucauld's memoir, an audio recording the old commando did long after the war, and contemporary interviews with family members, leavened by French military records also collated after the war (and which do not always square with his memoir) account for the anecdotal nature of the narrative and reveal its significant gaps. To his credit, Kix acknowledges this, and notes the major holes in the documentary evidence about La Rochefoucauld's service with SOE—no SOE case file for him has survived. However, the reader is not encouraged when Kix writes, "I interpreted what the facts . . . suggested", a "triangulation" of "facts" from multiple potentially problematic sources. (226)

Lost in this choppy retelling of commando audacity is a satisfactory accounting of the context—specifically, the occupied France in which these events occurred. Kix barely mentions the fractured nature of the resistance, nor its domination by communists, the right having been thoroughly discredited by the Vichy collaborationists.

La Rochefoucauld appears to have thrown his lot in with cells loyal to de Gaulle, but Kix does little to account for any of this. He offers an interesting pen portrait of Dohse, but since La Rochefoucauld never encountered Dohse, establishing him as the chief antagonist seems forced.

There is, however, no gainsaying La Rochefoucauld's courage, not to mention his determination to confound his adversaries and his sheer dumb luck in the face of appalling tradecraft in a too often fatal counterintelligence environment. Acts such as knocking on the door of known relatives in Paris while on the run after his first escape and inviting his parents to visit him there, will make any trained intelligence officer cringe. Distracting also are avoidable errors, such as Kix's reference to the 1,600-year old cathedral in Soissons—which would date it to 340 AD, an absurd notion—or his statement that the SD was the Gestapo, when in fact the SD and the Gestapo were separate departments of the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA). Partisans operating behind the lines in the American Civil War would be nonplussed by Kix's assertion that trains, railways, and bridges had been "the targets of saboteurs since T.E. Lawrence's day." (76)

*The Saboteur* is Kix's first book, and it is a game effort with an interesting—if incomplete—narrative based on imperfect sources. Readers should approach it with an understanding of these limitations.



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*The Reviewer:* Leslie S. is a career CIA Directorate of Operations officer who has an interest in intelligence history.

### ***The Death of Stalin***

Main Journey and Quad Productions, released 9 March 2018. Screenplay by Armando Iannucci, David Schneider, Ian Martin, and Peter Fellows; directed by Armando Iannucci; starring Simon Russell Beale, Steve Buscemi, Adrian McLoughlin, Jeffrey Tambor, and Michael Palin. Running time one hour, 47 minutes.

### ***Reviewed by John Kavanagh***

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On 6 March 1953, *Pravda* informed the world that Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin had died at 9:50 p.m., 5 March. “The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the USSR Council of Ministers, and the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet announce with profound sorrow. . . . The heart of Lenin’s comrade-in-arms and the inspired continuer of Lenin’s cause, the wise leader and teacher of the Communist Party and the Soviet people, Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, has stopped beating.”

The sudden departure of the Iron Man, in charge of the country’s Communist Party since the early 1920s, in unchallenged control of Russia’s affairs since the mid-1930s, and who in the post World War II era exercised complete and ruthless domination of the expansive Soviet Union, left the world puzzled and worried. Who was in charge? Director, screenwriter Armando Iannucci, known to American audiences as the creative force behind the award winning HBO political comedy *VEEP*, offers the answer in his caustic, irreverent, and frequently hilarious film, *The Death of Stalin*.

The film begins with Stalin (portrayed by Adrian McLoughlin) enjoying his last meal in the company of his fawning henchmen, Nikita Khrushchev (Steve Buscemi), Georgy Malenkov (Jeffrey Tambor), Vyacheslav Molotov (Micheal Palin), and Lavrenti Beria (Simon Russell Beale). The gathering of Stalin’s inner circle of party leaders follows the ritual pattern his guests are familiar with, if not entirely comfortable: excessive drinking, crude schoolboy humor, the reflexive overreaction to their host’s ill-timed quips, and the piling on of abuse on whichever participant Stalin chooses to humiliate—usually the hapless Malenkov. They know how the night will end, with Stalin once again forcing them to join him watching, and enjoying, a screening of a John Wayne western, part and parcel of the price each pays to maintain his tenuous balance at the apex of the Soviet hierarchy. And it is just that delicate balance which dominates the conversation as the guests momentarily pair off out of

earshot of Stalin. The main subject, as always, is the List—that is, the list of names Stalin has passed to NKVD Director Beria. The names on the list represent people out of Stalin’s favor, for whatever reason, people who will be arrested, imprisoned, exiled, executed, the people who will simply disappear. The list is a subject of constant tension and fevered speculation. On this night a rumor holds that Malenkov, second to Stalin in the party leadership, might soon be added to the list.

Stalin’s subsequent lethal brain hemorrhage, in Iannucci’s slapstick retelling, has the shocked leadership cadre in a panicked rush to memorialize the dictator with a huge, deifying public funeral, showcasing their own fealty to the fallen hero. Fearing the Russian people’s reaction to Stalin’s death will lead to chaos, their shared concern for the stability of the Soviet state pales in comparison to each man’s fixation on his own survival and status in a suddenly unsettled political reality. In their last action as a cohesive group, they strike out at assumed or suspected enemies. With the approval of the others, Beria assembles a new enemies’ list and launches a sweeping reign of terror. Then it’s every man for himself. The resulting series of desperate alliances, conspiracies, compromises, backstabblings, and double-crosses provides the comic underpinning of Iannucci’s dark unmasking of the pervasive, amoral ethos which was Stalin’s true legacy.

Mistrust, betrayal, and the facile use of violence by state organs to maintain order and control based on abject fear are the ruling principles. There are no limits to the use of the state’s power to ensure the self-preservation of those who wield that power. Iannucci spares no irony in showing that even familial bonds can dissolve in the service of such institutional ruthlessness. As the struggle for dominance evolves into a personal rivalry between Khrushchev and Beria, Beria courts Molotov’s support by arranging for Molotov’s unfairly imprisoned wife to be freed. Later, when Molotov is threatened by rumors that his allegiance to Marxist theory is suspect and he might be imperiled, he suggests to his colleagues that a useful

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solution would be to have his wife rearrested. The scene is played for laughs but fits neatly into the survival-at-any-cost arena the characters inhabit. Iannucci convinces us that such a brutal calculation is plausible within the warped moral universe Joseph Stalin bequeathed to his followers. It is not enough to say that this is satire. The film's summary moral condemnation of the Soviet system is both uncompromising and complete.

Dystopian regimes have previously been lampooned successfully in black comedies. Ernst Lubitch's *To Be Or Not To Be* (1942) savaged a Gestapo-run regime in occupied Poland. Charles Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940) sent up a Hitler-like despot as a pathetic buffoon. Iannucci's film deserves its place in this body of work, which with no small measure of humor delivers serious points regarding the markedly unfunny reality of unbridled tyranny.



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***The Reviewer:*** John Kavanagh is a retired CIA operations officer and frequent reviewer.

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

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### ***Need to Know***

Karen Cleveland (Ballantine, 2018), 290 pp.

### ***Reviewed by John Ehrman***

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Readers have certain expectations of spy novels. The hero usually is drawn into the hunt for a traitor or, occasionally, has to find a way to stop a villain planning some unimaginable catastrophe. The ensuing action takes him from one locale to another—the more exotic the better—with narrow escapes and forced, at some point, to rely on the aid of a woman he may or may not be able to trust. In the end, he returns to where the action began and unmasks the traitor or stops the plot. Everyone, including the reader, is satisfied.

Sometimes, of course, an author tries to break free of these conventions. Len Deighton did this in his Bernard Samson novels by making his hero an everyman, one with a working wife, children, and in-laws to juggle as he went about his intelligence work. But almost all spy fiction, it seems, is written by men. What, then, happens when a woman reimagines the genre, as former CIA analyst Karen Cleveland has done in her first novel, *Need to Know*?

The action starts off conventionally enough. Vivian Miller is a brilliant, hard-working CIA counterintelligence analyst who has developed a computer algorithm for identifying Russian illegals (annoyingly called sleepers). After years of effort, the hunt has finally led to the laptop of an SVR handler; breaking into it from her desk at CIA Headquarters (don't ask why an SVR illegals officer would leave his laptop connected to the internet, because Cleveland doesn't bother to say), she finds a folder of photos of illegals in the United States. Clicking on it, Vivian stares into the face of Matt, her husband of a decade and father of their four young children.

With the spy revealed on page 14, what's left to keep you reading? Plenty, as it turns out. Does Matt truly love Vivian and the kids, or is it all a sham? Is he coming clean with Vivian and working with her to save their family from the clutches of the SVR, or is he manipulating her for Moscow's benefit, using her as a pawn in his espionage? If Matt has become a good guy, will the SVR blackmail Vivian into treason? Will the Russians—the

fiends!—go so far as to slowly and gruesomely kill the children to make Vivian cooperate? Will the FBI arrive in time to save the day?

Cleveland is careful, too, to make *Need to Know* a spy story for our times. The Russians are back, as evil as ever, and it's not just Matt—Vivian learns that his entire extended family are all illegals, some of the hundreds (gasp!) at large in the United States. Even better, Cleveland knows how to tell a story. As with all good contemporary spy novels, the plot moves along at breakneck speed, without a wasted word, and Vivian narrates the story in the present tense to give it an even greater sense of urgency. Every section of each chapter ends with a cliffhanger, as do the chapters themselves. Cleveland keeps the pages turning so fast, and the book is so hard to put down, that it takes a while to realize the plot makes almost no sense. (At one point, an omniscient narrator has to intervene and supply a few critical details that keep the story from breaking down completely.)

Most interesting, though, is what Cleveland says about women working in intelligence. Vivian's brains and determination make her a promising character at first, but Cleveland then loads on her fragile shoulders all the burdens and anxieties of the modern, American upper middle class, career mom. Money is tight because Matt insisted on buying a house they couldn't quite afford because it was in a neighborhood with the best schools. Preparing to go back to work after her first child was born, Vivian recalls, she and Matt sent him "to the best day care center in the area, the one with the longest list of accreditations, a flawless reputation." Still, despite securing such ideal care, she laments, "Nothing could have prepared me for the feeling of handing Luke off to a woman I didn't know . . . I broke down the moment the door to the infant room closed." (133) Through the rest of the story, Vivian worries not only about how to save her family from the Russians, but about missing dinner with the kids and whether she ever will be a good mother.

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Working desperately to save her children from cruel deaths just doesn't seem to make the grade.

As conflicted as Vivian is between motherhood and career, she's equally torn about Matt. Learning his true identity, she realizes that they met not by accident, but because he was targeting her. Vivian realizes that she can no longer trust Matt, no matter how much he reassures her of his love and that they will get through this together. Or does she? One minute she clearly sees his manipulations, and the next she is denying or excusing them. The result is that she rides an emotional roller coaster, with the resulting agony clouding her judgment at every turn and leading her to accept Matt's explanations and instructions. "I trust you, I hope you can see that now," she tells Matt near the end, still desperate to believe him after seemingly endless rounds of deceit. (264) Thus does Cleveland's attempt to recast the spy novel veer toward a supermarket paperback romance.

Ultimately, this is the problem with *Need to Know*. For someone who has 10 years of counterespionage experi-

ence and is smart enough to figure out how to track down illegals and break into SVR computers, Vivian has a surprising amount of trouble understanding what is going on in front of her. That, and her collapse in judgment and confidence the first time she's challenged to do the work that she's been trained for—catch spies—makes for a damning portrait of mothers as counterintelligence officers. If anyone takes this seriously, Cleveland will have set back the cause of working moms in intelligence by at least three decades.

Fortunately, though, *Need to Know* is too unbelievable to be taken so seriously. It is entertainment and nothing more. But Cleveland clearly has talent as a storyteller and enough knowledge of the intelligence world that she could, if she wants to get rid of the silliness, put together a serious spy novel or superior thriller. Perhaps in a decade we will look at *Need to Know* as Cleveland's learning experience, the first step in a successful post-CIA writing career.



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**John Ehrman** is a senior analyst in CIA's Directorate of Analysis focusing on counterintelligence. He is a frequent and award-winning contributor.

## **Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf**

*Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake*

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### **CURRENT TOPICS**

(Note: Titles are hyperlinked to the pages of the reviews.)

***American Spies: Modern Surveillance, Why You Should Care, and What To Do About It***

by Jennifer Stisa Granick

***Beyond Snowden: Privacy, Mass Surveillance, and the Struggle to Reform NSA,***

by Timothy H. Edgar

### **GENERAL**

***The Art of War***, Peter Harris, ed.; foreword by Gen. David H. Petraeus, US Army, Ret.)

***The CIA and the Politics of US Intelligence Reform***, by Brent Durbin

***The National Security Enterprise: Navigating the Labyrinth***

by Roger Z. George and Harvey Rishikof (eds.)

### **HISTORICAL**

***The Arab World and Western Intelligence: Analyzing the Middle East, 1956–1981***

by Dina Rezk

***The CASSIA Spy Ring in World War II Austria: A History of the OSS's Maier-Messner Group***

by C. Turner

***Churchill's Spy Files: MI5's Top-Secret Wartime Reports***

by Nigel West

***Enemies Within: Communists, The Cambridge Spies and the Making of Modern Britain***, by Richard Davenport-Hines and ***A Spy Named ORPHAN: The Enigma of Donald Maclean*** by Roland Philipps

***A Most Enigmatic War: R. V. Jones and the Genesis of British Scientific Intelligence 1939–1945***

by James Goodchild

***Neither Peace Nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America***

by Patrick Iber

***Taking of K-129: How the CIA Used Howard Hughes to Steal a Russian Sub in the Most Daring Covert Operation in History***, by Josh Dean



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## CURRENT TOPICS

***American Spies: Modern Surveillance, Why You Should Care, and What To Do About It***, by Jennifer Stisa Granick. (Cambridge University Press, 2017) 339, footnotes, bibliography, index.

Jennifer Granick is director of Civil Liberties at Stanford Law School. She is also an outspoken, impassioned opponent of what she terms modern surveillance: “America can survive terrorism,” she insists, “but American democracy cannot survive modern surveillance.” (5) In *American Spies*, she pleads her case.

While her antipathy to mass surveillance didn’t begin with the Snowden disclosures, they clearly influenced her views on the topic and she invokes them frequently while adding her own perspectives. For example, to heighten the intuitive understanding of the risks involved, Granick extends the definition of the terms “surveillance” and “spying” as used by NSA to mean “government collection of private and personal information: address books, buddy lists, photos, phone numbers, web history, geolocation data, and more,” without specifying the “more,” adding, “I also call this spying.” (28) She critiques the existing laws and their application as too permissive, anticipating that if something is not done, individual liberty and privacy will suffer.

In support of this position, Granick foresees, *inter alia*, the perils of “big data” collection, the risks to Americans associated with intercepting foreign communications, the necessity to protect the privacy of foreigners, and the “nothing to hide” argument. In support of the latter, she devotes a chapter to the history of surveillance abuses and the potential continuance if mass surveillance is not abolished—or at least constrained. Since “something closer to 100 percent of Americans have committed crimes other than mere driving infractions” without being caught, (128) mass surveillance as she conceives its application

would place citizens at risk of exposure by those controlling the data. For those who have not committed a crime and who assume the US government would “never engage in espionage or blackmail” against them, (147) Granick gives examples that suggest otherwise, some dating back to 1964, but she does not report that remedial actions were taken to prevent these tactics from being employed again. As to the present, she argues the *potential* dangers to political dissidents, whistleblowers, and journalists.

*American Spies* is much more than a recitation of anecdotal examples of the dangers of mass surveillance. Granick examines the associated legal issues at length, especially those arising after 9/11, analyzing their perceived weaknesses and suggesting corrective actions. While her approach may appear alarmist to some while attempting to demonstrate that government cannot be trusted and that things will get worse if action is not taken, her suggestions for the future, whether or not one accepts her anticipatory views, are not unreasonable. Toward this end, she advocates for improved oversight, accountability, and changes in the current laws. It should be noted that, since *American Spies* was published, new laws have been passed that may put some of her concerns to rest.

For those in the Intelligence Community, the lack of trust expressed in *American Spies* may be hard to understand and accept. But the book is important because it is an articulate expression of how many see modern intelligence and thus should be kept in mind by the practitioners, policymakers, and congressional leaders as they work to ensure the common goal of national security.

***Beyond Snowden: Privacy, Mass Surveillance, and the Struggle to Reform NSA***, by Timothy H. Edgar. (Brookings Institution Press, 2017) 276, endnotes, index.

As an ACLU lawyer, Timothy Edgar argued against increased surveillance during the war on terror. In 2006, he joined the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, where for seven years he reviewed classified programs “to ensure they had a firm basis in law and included safeguards to protect privacy and civil liberties.” When

he found the Bush administration surveillance policies questionable, he worked to put them on a stronger legal footing. Despite the agreement among his colleagues he achieved at the working level, his “efforts to start a meaningful public dialogue about privacy” were stymied by top officials who wanted to keep the programs involved

secret. (2) In 2009, he was detailed to the National Security Staff as its “first ever director of privacy and civil liberties,” where he also dealt with privacy and security issues. (55–56) Once again his efforts were frustrated, and in 2013 he resigned and accepted a position at Brown University. (71) A few days later the Snowden leaks became public.

*Beyond Snowden* expresses Edgar’s inconsistent views on what Snowden did. He is supportive of NSA’s global mission and of those who carry it out, while at the same time acknowledging the disclosures were damaging to US national security. Yet, he is also delighted with the transparency the disclosures provided and the reforms they provoked. And although he declines to characterize Snowden’s behavior as treason or whistleblowing, he signed an ACLU-sponsored letter to the president requesting Snowden be pardoned in which he claimed he was both. As to what to do with Snowden, he recommends “an unreviewable act of presidential clemency.” (214)

Edgar is also critical of government’s attempts to deal with the Snowden disclosures concerning mass surveillance, which he admits was “not illegal.” (215) But they do confirm, in his view, excessive secrecy and raise serious privacy and civil liberties issues, which he discusses at length. In the end, though he is encouraged by the increased transparency and ensuing reforms, he argues these are insufficient.

The final portion of the book is devoted to Edgar’s views on what remains to be done—hence the title. Moving beyond Snowden’s polarizing actions, he offers a 14-point agenda for surveillance reform that summarizes his opinions on what Congress, the courts, and the Intelligence Community should do to set things right.

Overall, *Beyond Snowden* is a measured treatment of the issues raised. It sets out the positions of all sides fairly and is worth serious attention.

## GENERAL

*The Art of War, by Sun Tzu.* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2018) 307, bibliography, appendices, chronology, index. Translated, edited and introduction written by Peter Harris; foreword written by Gen. David H. Petraeus (US Army, Ret.).

Editor and translator Peter Harris is a senior fellow in the New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre at Victoria University of Wellington. His new translation of *The Art of War* is based on three Chinese texts. The first is the standard modern Chinese version published in 1962. (33) The second, published in 1990, draws on the first but contains new material written on bamboo strips excavated from a tomb in China. The third is taken from *A Concordance to the Militarists* edited by D. C. Lau (Hong Kong, 1992).

In the foreword, General Petraeus emphasizes the continued contemporary relevance of the 13 chapters in *The Art of War* with examples from his experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In his introduction, Harris discusses what little is known about Sun Tzu. He explains the reasons some scholars doubt Sun Tzu ever existed, the variants of his name found in the literature, the speculation that if he existed he may not have written the book himself, and the

difficulties in determining when the book was actually written.

This edition actually contains two reproductions of *The Art of War*. The first version is Harris’s 50-page translation that is presented without editorial comment. The second version includes the same basic text plus extracts from Chinese specialists that Harris refers to as “traditional commentators.” For example, chapter 13, “Using Spies,” is three pages long in the first version and nearly nine in the second.

As to the differences in meaning—which are subjective—consider the first version sentence that reads, “When a spying matter is not yet underway and people hear about it, both the spy concerned and those he has told are to be put to death.” The comment about that item reads, “When a matter regarding spying has been planned but not yet put into effect and suddenly people who have heard about it come and report it, they and the spy concerned are to be killed, partly to stop any leaking out and partly to shut them up for good.” (290) These extracts

provide alternate interpretations of various portions of the text. Consequently the second version is nearly 200 pages longer. Details on each of the commentators are included in the appendix.

***The CIA and the Politics of US Intelligence Reform***, by Brent Durbin. (Cambridge University Press, 2017) 330, endnotes, index.

Brent Durbin is an associate professor of government at Smith College. He has worked on Capitol Hill, studied at Harvard, Cambridge, Stanford, and the University of California (Berkeley), where he earned his Ph.D. Thus, his analyses of intelligence reform are unencumbered by direct experience and reflect an academic's view on this prickly topic.

That reform may be necessary even now is indicated by the assertion that “many Americans and their leaders remain skeptical that the intelligence community is doing its job well.” (2) But before considering the implications of that statement, Durbin describes his conceptual approach to intelligence reform and then reviews the successes and failures that occurred during the Cold War and in the post-9/11 period.

Durbin's approach employs what he terms “the pathology of intelligence reform,” using pathology in the sense that “the fundamental political dynamics governing intelligence reform undermine the overall health and effectiveness of the system.” (3) Without indicating why this should always be the case, he argues that within “the difficult environment for adapting US intelligence to global realities, we find the two dynamics that combine in the pathology of intelligence reform: the unique challenges of intelligence oversight and the overcharged politics of crisis reform.” (17) He discusses how these factors complicate reform, citing as one example the failed attempts “to adapt the CIA and other intelligence agencies to the post-Cold War world.” Although he finds this claim “largely uncontested,” those who lived through the period may offer other interpretations. (22) Likewise, his observation that in order to achieve a positive result, “we must first change the political environment in which reforms take place,” (25) is largely unsupported and some readers may recall circumstances where this condition did not apply. Most will agree, however, that mistakes were made prior to 9/11 and Durbin considers whether reforms

The additional commentary plus the historical remarks on Sun Tzu and the book's origins are unique to this new edition. It makes *The Art of War* worth reading again.

could have been anticipated and implemented, and if so who should have taken the action and if not, why?

Using CIA as a point of reference, Durbin next takes an in-depth look at the history of intelligence reform, stressing the roles of the bureaucracies, the Executive Branch and the Congress during the administrations preceding the end of the Cold War and the actions they took after it ended. Many of the changes were event-driven while others followed from routine congressional oversight, as the result of legislation, as a consequence of congressional investigations or some combination of the forces. Thus, while the creation of the National Security Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency are noted in passing, the focus of the book is on more operational matters. These include the organizational, personnel, and regulatory changes due to the Dulles-Correa report in the late 1940s; the perceived failures associated with the Korean War; various covert action operations, Watergate, and the congressional investigations of the mid 1970s; the end of the Cold War and the congressional reaction to Iran-Contra; and 9/11 and post-9/11 terror related activities.

The final chapter of *The CIA and the Politics of US Intelligence Reform* includes three common-sense findings that sum up the political power relationships associated with reform in the Intelligence Community. These are followed by the eye-rolling claim that “the study has shown how the politics of US intelligence policy are systematically biased against . . . the protection of civil liberties—except when intelligence abuses have been uncovered through leaks. A system in which illegal activities can only be uncovered and corrected by breaking the law and exposing state secrets is dangerous for its citizens.” (271–2) The alternative view, that intelligence policy is biased in favor of protecting civil liberties, is not considered.

Dr. Durbin has produced a provocative study of intelligence reform worth serious, though cautious, contemplation.

***The National Security Enterprise: Navigating the Labyrinth***, by Roger Z. George and Harvey Rishikof (eds.). (Georgetown University Press, 2017), second edition, 420, end of chapter notes, index.

Roger George is a 30-year veteran of CIA where, among other assignments, he was the National Intelligence Officer for Europe. He also served tours in the Defense and State Departments. After retirement, he taught at the National War College and at Georgetown University. He is currently professor of national security practice at Occidental College. Harvey Rishikof is a lawyer who served in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the FBI, and the federal judiciary. He is also the former dean of faculty and professor of law and national security at the National War College. They are both co-editors and contributors to this, the second and expanded (53 new pages) edition of *The National Security Enterprise*.

The principal differences include a new chapter on the Department of Treasury, a bit player before 9/11, but now its little known Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is a major participant. There are also a number of new authors and content updated since the first edition in 2011. The chapters discuss the roles of intelligence among the major agencies and departments that contribute to national foreign and security policy, with the surprising exception that, although both NSA and DIA are mentioned, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research is not.

Organizational and operational culture is a central theme and strength of the book. The authors compare the various organizational cultures and how they impact indi-

viduals, at all operational levels and across organizational boundaries, to influence policy. To give a more complete cultural picture of the already complicated Intelligence Community functions, there is a chapter on Congress, its responsibilities, and how it interacts with the intelligence enterprise. For related but less direct reasons, there is also a chapter on the Supreme Court and its role. Chapters on lobbyists, think tanks, and the media round out the coverage.

The chapter on CIA contains a comment worth further attention. Author George notes that after its creation by the National Security Act of 1947, the agency's role changed quickly to accommodate missions not specified in the Act, as for example, "collection of intelligence" or espionage. (207) But there was no need to specify that function since the Act did state that CIA would absorb the personnel and missions of Central Intelligence Group (CIG), which had already been assigned the espionage mission performed by OSS's successor, the Strategic Services Unit (SSU) and which was operating stations in Europe and elsewhere.

With the exceptions noted, *The National Security Enterprise* sketches a big picture of the Intelligence Community or enterprise. The same knowledge can be acquired on the job, but reading about it here could lead to more inspired job performance and prove career enhancing. A worthwhile contribution.

## HISTORICAL

***The Arab World and Western Intelligence: Analyzing the Middle East, 1956–1981***, by Dina Rezk. (Edinburgh University Press, 2017) 361, end of chapter notes, bibliography, photos, index.

Dina Rezk earned her doctorate at Cambridge University under the supervision of reknowned British intelligence historian Christopher Andrew. *The Arab World and Western Intelligence* is a study of major political, military, and diplomatic events in the region—from the 1956 Suez crisis to Yom Kippur War. Rezk reviewed the academic literature pertaining to the events and actions taken by various nations during this period, and she concludes that

in many cases the conclusions are incorrect. Thus, she asks, "Have Western experts in some fundamental way failed to understand the dynamics, leaders, and culture of the Middle East?" (1) Her qualified, affirmative answer is explained, she suggests, because "much of the literature ignores a vital component . . . the 'missing dimension' of intelligence analysis on the Middle East." (4) Yes, that's

right, analysis—not espionage or covert action, though these factors are not ignored.

Rezk supports her position by comparing recently released British and American intelligence analyses and assessments produced during the period with the views historians have expressed on the same events. She clarifies the data acquired from these sources by interviewing participants, showing that intelligence analysts more often than not got it right—when historians and, in some cases, Arabist scholars, did not. For example, with regard to Egyptian president Gamal Nasser’s behavior following his nationalization of the Suez Canal, she writes, “Intelligence analysis performed better than scholars have conventionally thought. In fact, at times, it is striking how far-sighted contemporary analysis proved to be with the benefit of retrospect.” (326) She is careful, however, not to comment on the results of analyses or the decisions made by policymakers; that realm is beyond the scope of her study.

Rezk presents the foundations for her conclusions in eight case studies of major events that occurred during the period. Each case is evaluated by some combination of the following factors that affect Middle East analysts: mindset, the role of culture and politics, Arab motivation, religion, honor, the influence of stereotypes, and “other-

ness,” which historians define as the state of being “other” or different.

The 1967 Six Day War illustrates her approach. She examines the factors that made the conflict an intelligence success in the short term—CIA told the president when the war would start—noting, “intelligence assessments of the major players were both important and accurate.” (192) But, she adds, analysts’ advice to consider the aftermath went unheeded, and Israel abruptly annexed territory—to the surprise of the West.

The Yom Kippur War case study is an example in which British and American analysts agreed that, for political reasons, Sadat would start a war he knew he could win. Then they underestimated his capabilities to do so, and were surprised in the event. Rezk assesses analysts’ evaluation of the motivating factors.

*The Arab World and Western Intelligence* demonstrates forcefully the contributions of intelligence analysts to Middle East policies during the decades considered and argues persuasively that historians should not neglect this dimension in the future, as documents become available. (An article reprinted in this issue from the *Studies* archive supports Rezk’s point. See David Robarge, “Getting it Right: CIA Analysis of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War,” *Studies in Intelligence* 49, No. 1 (March 2005) (page 29.)

***The CASSIA Spy Ring in World War II Austria: A History of the OSS’s Maier-Messner Group***, by C. Turner. (McFarland & Co., 2017) 232, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

One of the few references to the CASSIA ring by name is found on page 178 of Barry Rubin’s 1989 book, *Istanbul Intrigues: A True-Life Casablanca* (McGraw Hill) about OSS operations in Turkey. Rubin mentions one of its leaders, Franz Josef Messner, a Viennese businessman, and one of his compatriots, a Viennese priest whom he does not identify. In his book, *Piercing the Reich* (Viking, 1979), Joseph Persico also mentions Messner; identifies the priest as Heinrich Maier; adds another principal member, Barbara Issakides, a Viennese concert pianist; and discusses the intelligence they provided to Allen Dulles in Bern. In *The CASSIA Spy Ring*, author C. Turner, a retired government foreign affairs specialist, tells the story of the ring’s origins, operations, its key players, and its demise.

It was Maier who started the ring, writes Turner. First, he recruited his onetime parishioner, the businessman Messner, who had contacts throughout Europe and could collect information from them. Gradually others were added to meet operational needs. Helene Sokal, a communist and Nazi hater, and Issakides, the pianist, served as couriers. It was Issakides who conveyed oral messages to contacts in Switzerland that led to Allen Dulles. Gradually, this group of amateurs became a productive source for OSS.

Turner describes the CASSIA reporting on Peenemünde—the V-weapons facility—as well as its contributions on the state of German manufacturing and bomb damage assessment, among other tasks.

The Gestapo was not unaware of CASSIA and eventually penetrated the ring's operations in Turkey. By then, according to Turner, CASSIA had become "OSS's most effective spy ring in Austria." (15) Turner explains how it happened, noting the many clues that all was not well were either overlooked or ignored.

When Dulles learned the ring had been infiltrated and betrayed, he tasked Fritz Molder—who would later become his son-in-law—with finding those who survived and giving them protection. Molder enlisted the help of a former classmate Harald Frederiksen, an American medical student who, despite imprisonment by the Nazis

and later the Soviets, survived the war and returned to America.

Father Maier and Franz Messner were not so fortunate. Maier was hanged; Messner died in Mauthausen. Both the CASSIA couriers, however, survived. Issakides returned to Vienna and married. Sokal settled in East Germany and worked for the Stasi. Turner adds post-war details on many of the other CASSIA members.

*The CASSIA Spy Ring* fills a gap in OSS history. It is well documented and should be of interest to all those concerned with the OSS in WWII.

***Churchill's Spy Files: MI5's Top-Secret Wartime Reports***, by Nigel West. (The History Press, 2018) 464, endnotes, appendices, index.

For the first half of World War II, MI5 kept its counter-intelligence and counterespionage operations secret. Not even the prime minister was informed. His well-known interest in such matters was offset by an equally well-known tendency for being indiscrete. MI6, on the other hand, didn't share this view and presented Bletchley Park decrypts to the prime minister daily. In *Churchill's Spy Files*, intelligence historian Nigel West tells how and why MI5 changed its policy and in 1943 began sending the prime minister monthly summary reports on its double-agent operations, prepared for his eyes only—not even his closest advisors were informed. Ironically, Soviet intelligence did have access since they were edited by Anthony Blunt, one of the now infamous Cambridge spies. (15) The reports have now been released by the British National Archives, and West presents all of them in *Churchill's Spy Files*.

Typically, MI5's director-general or the minister responsible for MI5, presented the report to the prime minister in person and remained while it was read to deal with any questions. Setting a precedent with the first report, the prime minister asked for further information on an agent named Wurmman, a German defector. West treats this case in Chapter 27. (404ff) The ninth report, dated 7 March 1944, disclosed a leak concerning the upcoming invasion,

and Churchill in this case "demanded more information" which was supplied promptly. (228)

In general, the reports did not identify active agents by name; codenames were used and some—GARBO, MUTT & JEFF, TRICYCLE, and ZIGZAG—will be familiar to those acquainted with the Double-Cross operation. Little has been reported on others, for example, FREEK, PUPET, BRONX and HARLEQUIN, FIDO, and METEOR.

In all cases, West adds explanatory background material to aid reader understanding. For example, he notes that MI5's ability to run and monitor the double agents was highly dependent on decrypts of German hand ciphers labeled "ISOS." To emphasize this point, he cites MI5 officer Guy Liddell, who reported that MI5 could claim to have captured only three agents "single-handedly." (431)

West's commentary also describes the often contentious relationship between MI5 and MI6, as well as the support arrangements with the interrogation centers at Camp 020 and in post-war Germany. He demonstrates that, by war's end, a successful model for counterintelligence operations had been established—albeit one highly dependent on the ISOS data. *Churchill's Spy Files* is a unique and valuable contribution to WWII espionage history and the literature of intelligence.

*Enemies Within: Communists, The Cambridge Spies and the Making of Modern Britain*, by Richard Davenport-Hines. (William Collins, 2018) 642, endnotes, photos, index.

*A Spy Named ORPHAN: The Enigma of Donald Maclean*, by Roland Philipps. (W. W. Norton, 2018) 440, endnotes, photos, index.

Like faithful garden perennials, the Cambridge spies find their way into the intelligence literature with dogged regularity. Typically, authors justify treating these familiar subjects by citing recently released archival material or a new interpretation of previously flawed works. *A Spy Named ORPHAN* follows the former approach, while *Enemies Within* is a prime example of the latter.

After retiring from a career in publishing with Hodder & Stoughton and Macmillan, author Roland Philipps learned of new material about Donald Maclean released by the British National Archives. His interest was spurred by several unique relationships. First, his grandfathers were linked to Maclean, one directly, the other indirectly. Roger Makens, his maternal grandfather, who had served with Maclean at the British embassy in Washington and later at the Foreign Office, was the last government officer to speak with him before he defected. Second, Wogan Philipps, was a lifelong communist whose commitment to the cause helped his grandson understand Maclean's motivation. Third, additional insights into the Maclean story were obtained from his friend Alan Maclean (Donald's brother) and for whom Philipps's mother had once worked in publishing. Finally, the archives at Cambridge and Oxford revealed diaries and letters between Maclean and many of his closest friends.

The result is a biography of Donald Maclean that repeats the details of his recruitment and handling by the Soviet intelligence service, while illuminating other areas of his story—particularly the detrimental effect that the mental stress of his espionage had on his personal life and career. In the late 1940s while serving in Cairo, Maclean himself recognized he was in difficulty. Before he had some sort of alcohol-induced mental breakdown, he wrote his Soviet masters asking to be allowed to go “work in Russia,” adding that his American wife, Melinda, was “perfectly prepared to go.” For reasons the author—and Maclean's subsequent London handler, Yuri Modin—can only guess at, the appeal was ignored. (239–40)

Philipps's account of Maclean's views on communism, his outspoken anti-American sentiments—even

when serving in Washington—and his occasional drunken claims that he was a British Hiss, are well documented. Seriously flawed, however, are the details of the Volkov incident in Istanbul in 1945 that could have exposed Maclean, Philby, and possibly the rest of the Cambridge Five. Likewise, the description of how American and British intelligence services learned of Soviet wartime penetration of their countries is inaccurate; for example, Philipps's account and the Venona decrypts that led to Maclean's exposure are muddled. Further, the statement is incorrect concerning the GRU mole, Igor Gouzenko, that “the Washington Embassy was the forwarding office for the traffic between Ottawa and London” (174): the channel used for those events was through MI6 in New York. Thus, Maclean could not have learned about those details the way Philipps suggests.

*A Spy Named ORPHAN* concludes with an account of Maclean's life in the Soviet Union, where he learned Russian, wrote a book on British foreign policy, and worked for the Institute of World Economics and International Relations. Although Philipps paints him as devoted to his work and—for a time—to his family after they joined him, by his death in 1983, his wife had returned to the United States and his children had gone to live in England. While he apparently retained his not uncritical communist beliefs, at his request, his ashes were buried where he was born, in England.

*Enemies Within* also considers Donald Maclean's espionage as well as the careers of his four Cambridge colleagues that the author erroneously calls “Philby's ring of five.” (513) British historian Richard Davenport-Hines is not new to the subject of British espionage. In *Hugh Trevor-Roper: The Wartime Journals* (I. B. Tauris, 2012), he edited Trevor-Roper's accounts of his service in the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), kept in defiance of service regulations and discovered after his death. The following year, in *An English Affair* (HarperCollins, 2013), he told the story of aviation minister John Profumo, his mistress Christine Keeler, and her lover, GRU Captain Yevgeny Ivanov, in an affair that brought down the Macmillan government.

In *Enemies Within*, Davenport-Hines advances a revisionist interpretation of the Cambridge Five, challenging other authors and historians who have written about them, and the conventional wisdom about the collective impact they had on British society. As he views the matter, the “significance of [the Five] and the actions of the counter-espionage officers pitted against them, make sense only when they are seen in a continuum” with the other Soviet agents operating at the same time. *Enemies Within* is only incidentally a study of “individual character.” It is rather, by design, “primarily a study of institutional character.” (xxiii)

A dominant sub-theme in *Enemies Within* is that it “hinders clear thinking if the significance of the Cambridge spies is presented, as they wished it to be, in Marxist terms. I argue that the Cambridge spies did their greatest harm to Britain not during their clandestine espionage in 1934–1951, but in the insidious propaganda victories of British government departments after 1951.” (xxiv)

Davenport-Hines asserts that “the Burgess and Maclean defection” led to Brexit. (xxv) While no further attention will be given to the latter statement, the former deserves some attention: according to Davenport-Hines, these “insidious propaganda victories” had to do with “the entrenched assumptions about upper-class corruption

and Establishment cover-ups that began with the disappearance of Burgess and Maclean in 1951, intensified by Philby’s defection in 1963, and became unassailable after Blunt’s public shaming in 1979.” He argues that the Cambridge spies justified their espionage activities in the language of class-struggle and their “propagandistic explanations were magnified and distorted by journalists who wanted to profit from angry headlines.” (545)

In reaching these conclusions, Davenport-Hines reviews the principal British (and some American) spy cases since World War I and the careers of those involved. When he turns to accounts by British authors, he attacks the authors by name for their errors and judgments, and for focusing excessively on their subjects’ sexual preferences. He ignores the fact that most of these accounts were written long before archival material was available.

In the end, Davenport-Hines supports the work of the intelligence services and lays blame for what he deems a distorted view of British espionage on “the Establishment”—never more specific than that—for protecting itself by covering up its responsibility and placing blame elsewhere. As a contribution to the literature of intelligence, *Enemies Within* offers nothing new about the cases presented. As a study of “institutional character,” it is unpersuasive.

**A Most Enigmatic War: R. V. Jones and the Genesis of British Scientific Intelligence, 1939–1945**, by James Goodchild. (Helion & Company, 2017) 658, footnotes, bibliography, appendices, photos, index.

In the second volume of his WWII memoirs, Winston Churchill told how he learned it was possible to defeat a new navigation technique that made it possible for the Germans to bomb England whether or not there was moonlight. “With anxious mind,” he wrote in *The Gathering Storm* (Houghton Mifflin, 1948), he summoned the deputy director of intelligence research at the Air Ministry to a cabinet meeting in Downing Street to explain how it could be done. Twenty-eight year old R. V. Jones convinced the prime minister that the technique would work and was granted permission and resources to test his theories in what came to be called the Battle of the Beams. (In his own memoir published some 38 years later, R. V. Jones gave his version of the story, adding that

“Churchill’s subsequent description of the meeting . . . was not quite correct.”<sup>a</sup>)

In *A Most Enigmatic War*, the first comprehensive biography of Jones, British historian James Goodchild mentions the meeting with Churchill and notes, “Churchill’s account of the Battle of the Beams is highly praising of Jones and his work in countering the German bombing raids. This is of little surprise, for Jones assisted Churchill in drafting ‘The Wizard War’ chapter,” (103) an anecdote that typifies the tone Goodchild adopts toward his famous subject.

From the outset and throughout the book, Goodchild takes aim at Jones and his most famous work, *Most Secret*

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a. R. V. Jones, *Most Secret War: British Scientific Intelligence, 1939–1945* (Hamish Hamilton, 1978), 100.



*War*. For example, he writes, “Perhaps because of Jones’s air of factual certainty and often self-confessed arrogance within *Most Secret War*, no dedicated history of scientific intelligence followed. Nor has there been a biography of Jones.” (xxiv) As to his reputation, Goodchild is unequivocal: “The obvious reason Jones has a larger reputation than his lifetime career should allow . . . was [for Jones] not the scientific intelligence organization he headed that was ‘a vital cog in the defence machine,’ but he himself.” (xviii)

Goodchild is not unfair to Jones’s book or career. He acknowledges accolades from Oxford historians A.J.P. Taylor and Michael Howard, as well as criticism from fellow scientist Solly Zuckerman and author Christie Campbell, who concluded after reviewing Jones’s work on the wartime “V-weapons” campaign, that Jones “was not as indispensable as he thought he was.” (576) And he carefully points out that “this book, while critiquing *Most Secret War*, is not entirely critical of Jones and his work. In many instances, Jones’s contributory war effort was exemplary, and credit is emphasized where due.” (xxix)

Goodfellow discusses Jones’s wartime assignment to MI6, his participation on various defense intelligence his

committees; his work with Bletchley Park and the photographic interpreters at Medmenham (sometimes controversial); and his role in the use of the Oslo Report, including his eventual identification of the initially anonymous source. The Oslo Report, writes Goodchild, acquired through espionage channels, “was one of the greatest sources of intelligence on German scientific and technological capability during the Second World War.” (81)

*A Most Enigmatic War* also covers Jones’s post-war career, including his brief return to government; his scientific contributions while a professor at the University of Aberdeen; the worldwide recognition he received, which Goodfellow judges was often excessive; and the lack of suitable honors from his government that Jones found difficult to understand. There is a brief comment on the intelligence medal CIA created in his name, of which he was the first recipient. (573)

R.V. Jones made a major contribution to the creation of scientific intelligence as a field of endeavor. And despite Goodchild’s critical assessment, *A Most Enigmatic War* makes this clear while acknowledging Jones’s *Most Secret War* remains a great read.

***Neither Peace Nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America***, by Patrick Iber. (Harvard University Press, 2015) 327, endnotes, photos, index.

After World War II, the Soviet Union established front organizations like the World Peace Council (WPC) that sponsored intellectuals to spread the word about peace and equality under communism, according to the party line. The United States soon countered with the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), though the government links via the CIA were officially obscured, thus freeing members to participate without the taint of being labeled government propagandists. The resulting battle came to be called the Cultural Cold War, whereby the United States advocated freedom through the arts and the Soviet Union promoted peace through communism.

These topics are popular with ivory-tower historians some of whom attack the United States for attempting, secretly and immorally, to influence other governments to support its own anti-communists policies. Examples include the work Oxford University honors graduate Frances Stoner Saunders, author of a wonderfully suggestive title, *Who Paid The Piper? The CIA and the Congress*

*of Cultural Freedom* (Granta Books, 2000) and Sarah Harris’s *The CIA and the Congress of Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War: The Limits of Making Common Cause* (Routledge, 2018)—but neither author mentions the extensive WPC and CCF efforts in Latin America that, for the CCF, began in 1954. University of Texas history professor, Patrick Iber, addresses that gap with his book *Neither Peace Nor Freedom*.

Iber views the cultural cold war in Latin America as different in several respects from the North Atlantic version, as far as the United States was concerned. First, after the Cuban revolution in 1959, there were “three international players: the Soviet Union, the United States, and Cuba. (10) Second, US efforts in the region were more difficult because of its overwhelming economic power and its covert action operations. Furthermore, the Latin American states were conflicted by CIA anti-communist programs that supported newspapers, artists, and writers who also admired Cuba for standing up to America.

The efforts of the CCF in cultural Cold War in Latin America failed to produce social democracy in the region. Iber labels its efforts toward this goal as “farce and tragedy, not in sequence but simultaneously” (15) and he examines in great detail the complex reasons for this, among them the hypocrisy of the CCF that advocated “the freedom of the individual artist or writer to produce as he or she pleased” while at the same time “the US government was interfering in the production of thought and culture.” (109)

***Taking of K-129: How the CIA Used Howard Hughes to Steal a Russian Sub in the Most Daring Covert Operation in History***, by Josh Dean. (Dutton, 2017) 431, bibliography, photos, index.

The story of how a sunken Soviet, diesel-powered submarine—K-129, carrying nuclear missiles—was found at the bottom of the Pacific and partially recovered in 1974 is not new. The 1977 book *The Jennifer Project*<sup>a</sup> the basics right with the exception of the title: Jennifer was the codename selected for the security portion of the operation. In 2010, naval expert Norman Polmar and documentary film producer Michael White used the correct project name in their book, *Project AZORIAN: The CIA and the Raising of the K-129* (Naval Institute Press, 2010), that provided much more technical detail and was concerned primarily with the recovery of the submarine.<sup>b</sup>

*The Taking of K-129* revisits the operation, adding new personnel as well as organizational, and administrative detail. The book does not, however, confirm the assertions in the subtitle. These were no doubt due to an overzealous editor—Howard Hughes didn’t steal anything, and AZORIAN was one of many daring CIA operations.

Typical of the new personnel detail, journalist Josh Dean adds biographical material on the key players. For example, the role of John Parangosky, the CIA project manager, team leader, and one of the original 50 CIA Trail Blazers, is not confined to AZORIAN. Dean mentions his WWII service, his decision to join the CIA, and his

*Neither Peace Nor Freedom* is not comfortable bedtime reading (or daytime reading, for that matter); it is, however, a thoroughly documented analysis of the CCF and the Soviet Union attempts to influence their proxies amid the political turmoil of the times. It is also a balanced account, dismissing, for example, the “black legend: that [the CCF] was an accessory of US power and part of the CIA’s strategy to ensure capitalist hegemony around the globe.” (240)

pioneering work on the U-2 and OXCART programs. He does the same with the principal Navy contributors, and the civilians involved.

Dean also includes information on Global Marine, which built the ship, the *Glomar Explorer*, that contained the barge and claws constructed by Lockheed Corporation. These would raise the K-129, using cables manufactured by the Hughes Corporation, which would also provide the cover story for AZORIAN. Known for his underwater exploration interests, Hughes agreed to the public story that his firm would “hire” Global Marine to conduct seabed mining. Dean describes the complicated arrangements Parangosky undertook to coordinate and implement the operation.

While covering the circumstances surrounding the location, identification, details of the partially successful raising of K-129, and the roles of the players involved, Dean discusses the complex security arrangements that were implemented to keep the public—and consequently the Soviets—from learning what was going on.

In the end, it was a story in the press that revealed AZORIAN. Dean explains how this happened and discusses for the first time the complex legal and tax complications that resulted. For his own reasons, Dean does not include endnotes to document the many details and quotations in the book. He does note they are provided on his website, but they are totally inadequate for those seeking specifics. *The Taking of K-129* is the most complete account of the AZORIAN project to date. It is well told and adds much clarity to this now famous operation.

