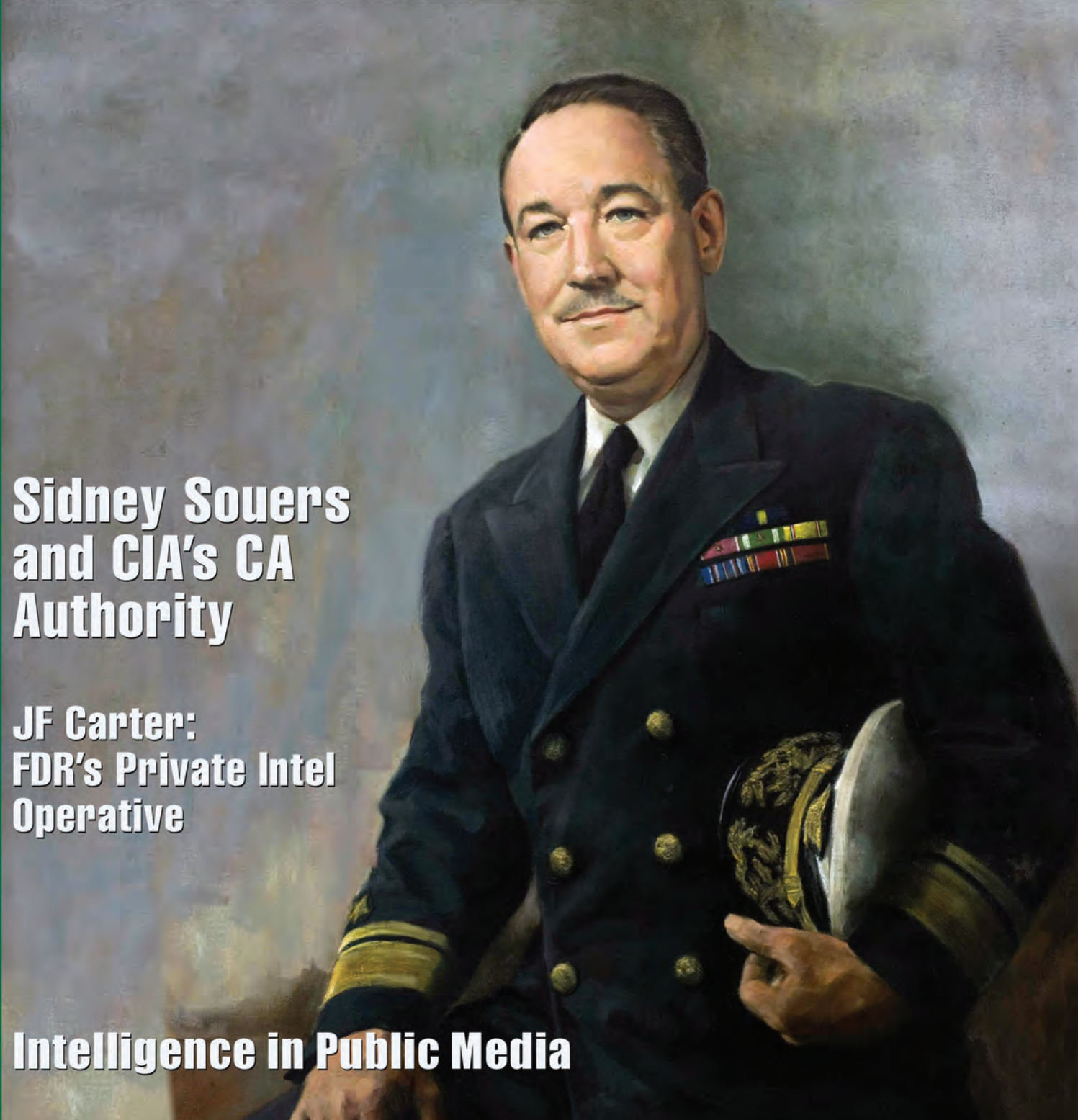


Studies in Intelligence

Vol. 65, No. 2 (June 2021)

Journal of the American Intelligence Professional

A portrait of a man in a dark blue military uniform, likely a naval officer, with several ribbons on his chest and a cap in his left hand. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

Sidney Souers and CIA's CA Authority

JF Carter: FDR's Private Intel Operative

Intelligence in Public Media

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ISSN 1527-0874

Cover: The portrait of Admiral Souers that hangs in the CIA's gallery of portraits of past DCIs and DCIAs.

Mission

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

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

Contributions

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

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Awards

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

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

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

The Editorial Board welcomes readers' nominations for awards.

In Memoriam

Editor's Note: With deep sadness I must note the passing during the past 12 months of four especially notable contributors to this journal.

Robert Kehoe, a veteran of OSS and long-time training officer at CIA died in late August 2020. Kehoe had contributed recollections of his years as a participant in the OSS Jeburgh program in Europe. In 2017 *Studies* published his recollections of the culture shock of transferring from Europe to China in early 1945 to carry out OSS advisory functions there.

Clayton Laurie, a former military historian with the Department of the Army and CIA staff historian, suffered a fatal heart attack in February 2021. He had retired in 2018 after a productive decade of producing internal histories and many contributions to *Studies*. His work for *Studies* included book reviews and an unclassified, annotated anthology of *Studies in Intelligence* material on the wars in Southeast Asia (1947-75).

James Burridge, a serving member of the Intelligence Community for more than 50 years died after a fall in May 2021. Jim had been working as a contract historian for CIA's History Staff. His career in a multitude of IC functions made him a particular asset for the History Staff and for *Studies in Intelligence* for which he wrote articles and many book (both fiction and nonfiction) and film reviews.

Bob Bergin passed away in early June 2021, the victim of a serious undiagnosed cancer. After he retired from government service in 1987 he pursued a lifelong interest in Asia, where he had previously served. Much of that interest found its way into the pages of *Studies* over the years. He wrote about aviation history in China, especially its response to US reconnaissance overflights during the Cold War, insurgency in Southeast Asia, and the intersection of US intelligence with communist movements in Southeast Asia and China, one of which will soon be published posthumously in these pages.



CENTER for the STUDY of INTELLIGENCE

Washington, DC 20505

Studies in Intelligence

Vol. 65, No. 2 (Extracts. June 2021)

Contents

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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

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Historical Perspectives

The Quiet Warrior
Rear Admiral Sidney Souers and the Emergence of CIA's Covert Action Authority 1
Dr. Bianca Adair

Stranger than Fiction
John Franklin Carter's Career as FDR's Private Intelligence Operative 19
Steve Usdin

Intelligence in Public Media

Undaunted: My Fight Against America's Enemies at Home and Abroad 35
Reviewed by Thomas G. Coffey

Becoming Kim Jong Un: A Former CIA Officer's Insights into North Korea's Enigmatic Young Dictator 37
Reviewed by Joseph W. Gartin

The Hardest Place: The American Military Adrift in Afghanistan's Pech Valley 39
Reviewed by Leslie C.

After the Wars: International Lessons From the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan 43
Reviewed by James H.

Anti-American Terrorism: From Eisenhower to Trump—A Chronicle of the Threat and Response, Volume II, The Reagan and George H.W. Bush Administrations 45
Reviewed by David B.

The Spymaster of Baghdad: A True Story of Bravery, Family and Patriotism in the Battle Against ISIS 49
Reviewed by Graham Alexander

Atomic Spy: The Dark Lives of Klaus Fuchs 51
Reviewed by Steven D.

Intelligence in Public Media (cont.)

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>War of Shadows: Codebreakers, Spies, and the Secret Struggle to Drive the Nazis from the Middle East</i> | 55 |
| Reviewed by Brent M. Geary | |
| <i>The Nazi Spy Ring In America: Hitler's Agents, the FBI, & the Case That Stirred the Nation</i> | 57 |
| Reviewed by David A. Welker | |
| <i>Spycraft (Netflix documentary series)</i> | 59 |
| Reviewed by Brent M. Geary and David Welker | |
| <i>Nos chers espions en Afrique (Our Dear Spies in Africa)</i> | 61 |
| Reviewed by William Brooke Stallsmith | |
| <i>Spying for Wellington: British Military Intelligence in the Peninsular War</i> | 63 |
| Reviewed by George P. Lewis | |
| <u>From the Readings of J.E. Leonardson</u> | |
| <i>Veritas: A Harvard Professor, A Con Man and the Gospel of Jesus's Wife</i> | 65 |
| <i>Young Heroes of the Soviet Union: A Memoir and a Reckoning</i> | 69 |
| <i>The Lockhart Plot: Love, Betrayal, Assassination and Counter-Revolution in Lenin's Russia</i> | 71 |
| <i>The Secrets We Kept (A Novel)</i> | 73 |



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Rear Admiral Sidney Souers and the Emergence of CIA's Covert Action Authority

Dr. Bianca Adair

Much has been made of the origins of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Shrouded in myth, the notion of the CIA ushers forth images of skulking in back alleys and fighting security threats in secrecy. Yet, to shield intelligence collection from the political maelstrom after World War II, the CIA needed quiet warriors who had mastered the art of bureaucratic diplomacy and understood the implications of effective intelligence and covert action. Not normally identified as a swashbuckling intelligence officer like Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Director William “Wild Bill” Donovan, RAdm. Sidney Souers served as a critical founder of the CIA even after his tour as the director of central intelligence (DCI) and director of the Central Intelligence Group (CIG—the immediate successor of OSS) ended. Souers understood how to move within a bureaucracy to win battles through compromise, wielding power and influence with a heavy hand only when needed. He balanced creation of an apolitical intelligence agency with the demands of the early Cold War and an equally demanding White House.

Marking the 75th anniversary of the completion of Souers's service as the first DCI (January 23, 1946–June 10, 1946), this article commemorates his leadership, which set the foundation for the modern CIA. Souers



Sidney William Souers's official Navy portrait. In private business, he had entered the US Navy Reserve shortly before WWII; he would be assigned to Naval Intelligence and by war's end he was deputy director of naval intelligence.

served as DCI for only six months, but his service to the agency extended well beyond his tenure in office.

One of Souers's key contributions—one for which he has received little credit—was the extension of CIA's authority to include conduct of covert action alongside clandestine collection of foreign intelligence. This article addresses Souers's central role in framing DCI and CIA authorities by leveraging his network of connections within the White House, the National Security Council (NSC), and

the Office of the DCI. While critics of CIA's covert action authority have voiced objections since the 1960s, the historic decision to have CIA take on that responsibility rested with the White House through Souers, who became the first executive secretary of the NSC after its creation in 1947.

Like many of his contemporaries, Souers understood the importance of accurate intelligence and focused covert action operations to meet the growing security challenges presented by the Soviet Union after World War II. The scholarly works on this subject underscore the prescience of the security planning of the period, which took place in the context of a developing US strategy of containing Soviet expansion. Soviet expert George Kennan had recognized the importance of covert action to address Soviet ambitions after WWII. Critical to his viewpoint, which was adopted by the White House, was that the conflict with the USSR was likely to be protracted and composed of multiple challenges to which the United States needed varied responses.¹

Determination of which government organization or agency would control covert undertakings lies at the heart of some current research that examines the evolution of CIA—including its covert action function—and focuses on the role of unelected

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

Souers played a critical role in facilitating through quiet compromise among senior executive branch officials the implementation of Truman's vision of a restructured US national security organization.

officials in creating what some regard as a “flawed” national security structure. Much of this research attributes the expansion of CIA’s role to such decisionmakers during the period of bureaucratic restructuring between 1945 and 1947 in which epic bureaucratic politics affected decision-making over broad areas of national security interests and structures.

The unelected figures involved were senior officials such as the secretaries of war, navy, and state, who could make decisions and reach agreements often shrouded in mystery to create the specific arrangements of national security institutions that had been mandated by legislative and top elected officials.²

In these studies, figures like Donovan tend to dominate the discussion about the original framing of CIA. But President Harry Truman rejected Donovan’s plan for a centralized intelligence organization in 1945. Donovan and his supporters tried to revive his plan between 1945 and 1947, but Truman’s lack of support left Donovan open to bureaucratic attacks from the armed services and the Department of State. Scholarship focusing on the Donovan Plan as the foundation of the CIA overlooks critical players within Truman’s circle who killed the Plan and supplanted it.

Richard Schroeder defied this trend in scholarship by examining the network of Missourians who surrounded Truman during the creation of the CIA. Schroeder highlighted enduring contacts that linked unlikely

leaders within the executive branch to one another. Truman relied heavily on unelected officials he knew, such as Souers, White House Counsel Clark Clifford, and Chief of Staff Admiral William Leahy, or those in whom he had confidence because of their work, such as Secretary of Defense James Forrestal.³

Likewise, former CIA analyst David Rudgers examined key advisors to Truman such as Harold Smith, the director of the Bureau of the Budget, who had the inglorious task of advising Donovan of Truman’s decision to disband the OSS and devising the way in which branches of the OSS would be divided among the armed services and the Department of State. Rudgers also echoed the point about Clifford’s importance in working through the legislative process to create the CIA. Clifford leveraged the required skills of persuasion, manipulation, and compromise when dealing with the personalities in the national security community executing Truman’s demands.⁴

Despite this evolving scholarship, Souers remains somewhat of an enigmatic figure. Rudgers acknowledged Souers as a “sagacious man, skilled at getting people to work together” but relegated him to the sidelines of the discussions in which he participated.⁵ Arthur Darling highlighted Souers’s activities but gave more credit to the bolder leadership style of DCI Hoyt Vandenberg, Souer’s successor, over the more conciliatory Souers.⁶ Conciliation, however, was necessary to bring together the personalities that

created the national security structure between 1945 and 1947.

Souers played a critical role in facilitating through quiet compromise among senior executive branch officials the implementation of Truman’s vision of a restructured US national security organization. Central to his accomplishment was the identification of CIA’s authority over covert action as complementary to CIA’s responsibility for foreign clandestine intelligence operations.

In general, the overarching foreign policy concern of thwarting the communist threat in Europe led these officials to understand the value of intelligence collection. By 1947, intelligence collection was a coveted mission that inspired stiff opposition to centralized reporting and analysis. The issue of covert action encouraged no similar inspiration; few wanted to claim control over it. Souers would ultimately build and use his network to frame within the new National Security Council the DCI’s and CIA’s authorities for clandestine intelligence collection and covert action.

Souers, Quiet Leadership, and Network Influences

As the assistant director and deputy chief of naval intelligence, Souers was no stranger to navigating the difficult waters of restructuring postwar intelligence organizations; he had been involved in the examination of intelligence organizations immediately after Truman had disbanded OSS and, as seen in his December 1945 memorandum to Clifford, had made the argument against a State Department proposal that it assume central intelligence duties.⁷ Soon after, in January 1946, Souers was

Sidney William Souers

1892 (March 30): Born, Dayton, Ohio

1911–12: Attended Purdue University

1914: A.B., Miami University of Ohio

1920–25: President, Mortgage & Securities Company, New Orleans

1925–26: Executive, Piggly Wiggly Stores, Memphis

1925–30: Executive Vice President, Canal Bank & Trust Company, New Orleans

1930–33: Vice President, Missouri State Life Insurance Company, St. Louis

1933–73: Executive, General American Life Insurance Company

1940–46: Officer on active duty, US Naval Reserve, rising to the rank of Rear Admiral

1944–46: Deputy Director and Deputy Chief, Office of Naval Intelligence

1946 (January 23–June 10): Director of Central Intelligence, Central Intelligence Group

1947–50: Executive Secretary, National Security Council

1950–53: Special consultant to President Harry S. Truman on military and foreign Affairs

1973 (January 14): Died, St. Louis, Missouri

Source: National Archives, Harry S. Truman Library and Museum at: <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/personal-papers/sidney-w-souers-papers#folder>

offered and agreed to serve as the interim DCI for six months.

Souers’s tenure is often overlooked because it lasted only six months, and his accomplishments seemed limited. In his short tenure he was heavily focused on establishing the internal structure of the CIG. His initial attention was given to addressing the president’s demands for a daily summary of international events and unified analysis of intelligence. Souers spent the bulk of his time negotiating cooperation with the national security leadership. All the while, Souers became acutely aware of the impossibility of his task without a budget or the authority to compel cooperation from officials who opted not to provide the DCI with intelligence required for the president’s daily summaries.⁸

By the time Souers’s DCI/CIG term ended in June 1946, the challenges he experienced had made a significant impression on him. At the end of his tenure, Souers argued that in order for CIG to function effectively, a budget was needed for operational activity, either within a separate agency or as part of the broader national security structure. In June 1946, the CIG was little more than a coordinating body with no statutory authority to operate outside of National Intelligence Authority (NIA) directives.^{a,9} These concerns would animate Vandenberg’s attempts during the following year to change the way the CIG operated.

a. The NIA was essentially a body created to coordinate intelligence activity in the US government. In addition to the DCI, it was composed of the secretaries of state, war and the navy.

Contrary to the oft-cited erroneous accounts of his career, Souers did not retire from CIG and return to businesses in St. Louis after serving as DCI. Instead, he returned to active duty in the Navy and took a position as one of Forrestal’s undersecretaries in the Department of the Navy, a post Souers recalled that Truman most likely obtained for him.¹⁰ Souers’s ongoing connections to individuals like Truman assured his importance as an unelected official facilitating the development of the nascent intelligence community. His own statements about his career downplayed the critical aspects of his influence between 1945 and 1947 and tended to undermine understanding of his importance to the evolving national security structure.

For example, Souers claimed he never met Truman until he became DCI, yet Souers later referred to the president as someone he knew casually in 1945.¹¹ Souers stressed that his primary contact with the White House before January 1946 was Forrestal, who became Secretary of Defense in 1947 after the abolition of his Navy Department. Forrestal and Souers had a longstanding relationship linked to their business careers prior to federal service. Souers credited Forrestal with obtaining for him the post of deputy director of naval intelligence Director Thomas Inglis.¹²

From ONI, Souers “brought an influential voice” when he wrote a memo for Forrestal about a Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) plan for a centralized intelligence agency.¹³ Souers claimed he wrote the December 27, 1945 memo at the request of Truman; in it he made the case to the president’s counsel Clark Clifford for the JCS plan. In weighing proposals from



As secretary of the navy, James Forrestal was a member of Harry Truman's cabinet, shown here in August 1945. Forrestal is sitting on the far right. White House photo.

the JCS and Department of State, Souers concluded that the JCS plan seemed "more likely to provide the President with unbiased intelligence, derived from *all* available sources, and approved by . . . all three departments . . . primarily concerned with foreign policy," the Departments of State, War, and Navy. Souers concluded his evaluation by pointing out that the JCS plan anticipated "a full partnership between the three departments, created and operated in the spirit of free consideration, and with a feeling of a full share of responsibility for its success."¹⁴

The points about partnership and shared responsibility struck at the heart of concerns in the White House for a unified national security structure. These were expressed in the instruction President Truman gave to the State Department on September 20, 1945 to "create a comprehensive and coordinated foreign intelligence program."¹⁵ Forrestal submitted Souers's memo to the White House to make the case for the JCS plan.¹⁶ The memo had the desired effect. On January 9, 1946, Truman held an "off the record" meeting in the

White House to ensure consensus among the armed forces and the Department of State. In attendance were Souers, Leahy, Clifford, Naval Aide to the President Cdre. James Vardaman, and BGen. Harry Vaughan, military aide to the president.¹⁷ Before the meeting, Secretary to the President Matt Connelly had called Director of the Bureau of the Budget Smith to advise him that a meeting about intelligence matters was about

to happen, and Smith immediately joined. Neither the Departments of War nor State were represented, although Souers claimed the Army backed the JCS plan.¹⁸

The discussion by supporters of the JCS plan implied that intelligence could not be handled by the State Department because it was too weak. In contrast, Smith highlighted the situation in Latin America, where he claimed officers from the FBI, Army, and Navy were falling over themselves in intelligence activity. He stressed that organization of intelligence activity was key and warned that leaving decisions about dividing up intelligence work among each other was likely to lead to "the worst possible compromise results." Moreover, he urged getting to a "clear understanding of what kind of intelligence was being discussed."¹⁹ Souers noted that Smith claimed Secretary of State James Byrnes did not support the JCS plan, a position Souers rejected based on his interactions with Forrestal in which Byrnes had agreed to the JCS plan privately.²⁰ Leahy characterized Smith's objections as

"instigated by the Department of State."²¹

Leahy's criticism had merit. Smith asked Col. Alfred McCormack, a former Army intelligence officer who by then was the secretary of state's special assistant for research and intelligence, to work on the State Department's proposal. Before the next meeting on the intelligence organization, Smith provided a copy of McCormack's report to Special Counsel to the President Samuel Rosenman and noted that State was not scheduled to be at the meeting and cautioned him to use it only for background information. Glum in the exchange, Smith characterized intelligence as "one of the most far-reaching problems of interdepartmental coordination" the administration faced.²²

The discussions in the next meeting were in line with Souers's recollection that the JCS plan was something the president "had been wanting to do for a long time."²³ The second meeting on January 12, 1946 at the White House included Souers, Leahy, Vaughan, Vardaman, Clifford, Smith, and Rosenman.²⁴ Again no representatives of the Departments of State or War were present. This meeting outlined the new structure of the intelligence community based on the JCS plan, including Truman's identification of Souers as the DCI. Truman's decision was documented in the January 22, 1946 Presidential Directive creating the CIG and NIA.²⁵

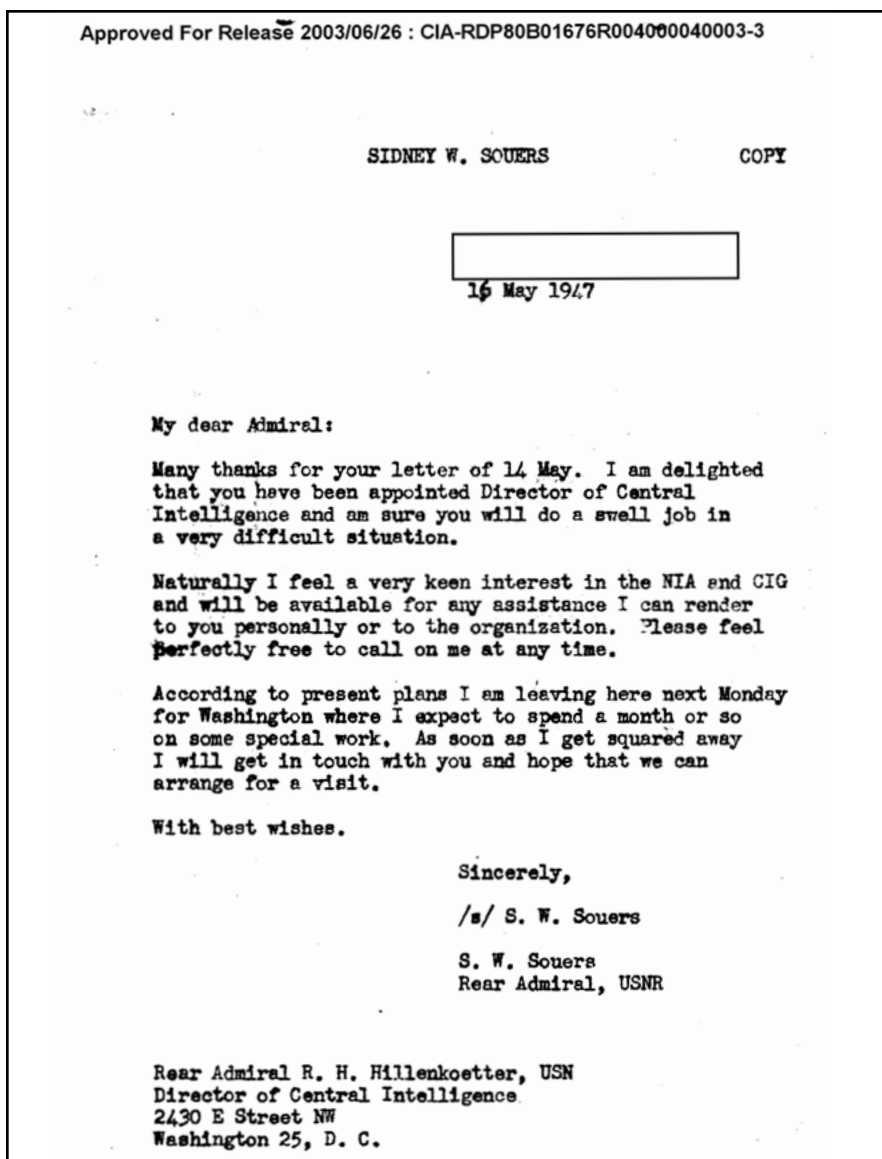
These events underscore Souers's direct contact with Truman during discussions that influenced the president's approval of the 1946 presidential directive. Souers's network of contacts through Leahy and Clifford

eventually became a well-worn path as the structure of the US intelligence evolved between June 1946 and 1947, after Souers had completed his term as DCI. Clifford, in discussing Truman's decision to appoint Souers as DCI, commented, "the relationship [with Souers] was valuable and the CIA grew and flourished under his leadership." (Clifford misremembered here: there was no CIA when Souers was appointed.)²⁶

The Atomic Energy Commission and Intelligence

That Souers continued to leverage his White House contacts became further evident as discussions emerged on how to implement Vandenberg's plan on atomic energy intelligence during the summer of 1946. Vandenberg (DCI, June 10, 1946–May 1, 1947), with a personality diametrically opposite to that of Souers, focused his directorship on expanding the authorities of the CIG at the expense of other national security officials and in contrast to Souers's more conciliatory tone. While praised for his drive, Vandenberg quickly became mired in bureaucratic infighting. Unafraid of addressing confrontational issues head on, Vandenberg trained his attention on the atomic energy intelligence controlled by the Foreign Intelligence Branch of the Army's Manhattan Engineer District.²⁷

The issue of atomic intelligence became a primary issue for the White House, and debate over the subject highlighted the disconnect within the national security structure. Driving the intelligence concern was the need to know how far the Soviet Union had come in making its own atomic bomb so US intelligence would avoid an "atomic Pearl Harbor."



Vandenberg appealed to the NIA to assign the CIG coordinating control over atomic intelligence on August 13, 1946 in a draft NIA Directive 6.²⁸ In doing so, he placed the need to expand CIG authorities in a turf war with the Army, which viewed Vandenberg's move as duplicating efforts. The proposed draft also included a controversial proposal to send three intelligence officers and files on uranium deposits to CIG. The Army and State Department thus

became unified against the nascent CIG. Although the NIA had been approved on August 21, 1946, Truman delayed its implementation.²⁹ It remained stalemated in heated debates until 1947. The personnel transfer would not occur until February 12, 1947,³⁰ and takeover of the atomic energy document collection finally occurred as a result of a meeting on April 18, 1947.³¹

The slow implementation of NIA 6 underscored the continuing

refusal of the intelligence agencies to coordinate with the CIG, a problem that brought Admiral Souers back into the picture. After the initial failure to devise a satisfactory coordination plan, AEC Commissioner RAdm. Lewis Strauss asked Souers to investigate and report his recommendations.³²

Enter another admiral as DCI

Another naval officer, RAdm. Roscoe Hillenkoetter replaced Vandenberg in the spring of 1947. He began his DCI tenure (May 1, 1947–October 7, 1950) by adopting Souers’s leadership style with respect to the AEC. Two weeks after his appointment, Hillenkoetter wrote to Souers, who immediately wrote back to welcome Hillenkoetter and offered his assistance. In the letter, Souers



Hillenkoetter, in front on the far right, standing next to his replacement, Walter Bedell Smith. Undated CIA file photo.

also alluded to “some special work” that would bring him to Washington for a month—this is most likely an allusion to the AEC issue.

Indeed in his investigation, true to his manner, Souers worked in coordination with Hillenkoetter and avoided areas of confrontation with the armed services and Department of State. From early June until August 7, 1947, Souers and Hillenkoetter spoke often about AEC issues, sometimes communicating more than once a day. On June 3, 1947, Hillenkoetter, Souers, and Strauss discussed coordination between the AEC and CIG. That summer, Hillenkoetter explained in a staff meeting that his meetings with Souers focused on helping the AEC with its intelligence collection and analysis capability, with Souers devising AEC and CIG coordination procedures.³³

By July 1, 1947, after coordination with Hillenkoetter, Souers had completed his report and, true to his conciliatory style, opted not to address the evaluation of atomic energy intelligence sources. The CIG needed the information about the sources to evaluate the reporting, but the request required the AEC to open sensitive files that would reveal US Army sources. Rather than start a fight, Souers argued for elevating the role of the AEC in the NIA structure rather than forcing CIG control over the AEC. He recommended that

- the AEC be made a permanent member of the Intelligence Advisory Board (IAB) within the NIA,
- a director of intelligence position be created in the AEC, and

- permission be given to have the new intelligence director sit on the IAB.³⁴

The move built goodwill with the AEC and led to the sharing of AEC reporting and eventually the identification of sources.

Efforts to formalize the new AEC intelligence unit commenced almost immediately and in earnest. Hillenkoetter approved the new unit based on a paper AEC Chairman David Lilienthal had prepared. Hillenkoetter and Souers communicated daily about the progress of the unit’s establishment, even discussing suggestions about who its chief should be. Souers favored his old boss at ONI, Commodore Inglis. Ultimately, another Navy flag officer, RAdm. John Gingrich received the appointment. The AEC intelligence unit was approved in late July, with Hillenkoetter and Souers having working seamlessly together.³⁵

The National Security Act of 1947

That level of coordination between Souers and Hillenkoetter exemplified the close working relationships mandated by the NIA, but Souers and Hillenkoetter collaborated on other issues as well. In June Hillenkoetter brought Souers into matters raised during then ongoing negotiations about the content of the National Security Act of 1947 (H.R. 2319). For example, Hillenkoetter asked Souers to comment on a letter Hillenkoetter had written in response to issues raised by a military officers’ professional association, the Reserve Officers of the Naval Services (RONS). The association, which claimed to advocate on behalf of 36,000 reserve naval officers (Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard), among

whom Souers and Strauss could count themselves, inserted itself into deliberations about the act.³⁶

Hillenkoetter reached out to several officials and, on June 12, he agreed to meet RONS representative Minor Hudson. The comments on which Souers consulted with Hillenkoetter were thus likely to have been contained in the letter submitted to the responsible House committee on July 2, 1947 by RONS President John Braken. Braken recommended changes in the wording of H.R. 2319 to allow any commissioned officer to be considered for service as DCI provided the officer resigned his commission before taking office and the CIA “shall have no police, law enforcement, or internal security function.”³⁷ Both caveats and references to the DCIA’s salary were included in the final bill.

After the passage of the National Security Act, interactions between Hillenkoetter and Souers continued. On August 18, Souers contacted Hillenkoetter about an offer he had received to become the executive secretary of the NSC. During the call, Souers asked Hillenkoetter for his permission to have James Lay, the CIG director of the Office of Reports and Estimates (ORE), join Souers at the NSC. Lay had previously worked for Souers, and the new NSC executive secretary wanted Lay to brief him on international events. Hillenkoetter agreed to lend Lay to the NSC.³⁸ Upon arriving at the NSC in August 1947, Lay became Souers’s assistant executive secretary. The calls between Hillenkoetter and Souers into late August 1947 demonstrated Hillenkoetter’s importance as a node in Souers’s network.

Forrestal had apparently concluded that Souers would run the NSC in ways closer to his vision. If that is what he believed, he would learn that he was mistaken. . .

Perhaps even more interesting was how and why Souers became the NSC executive secretary. Newly appointed Secretary of Defense Forrestal recommended Souers for the position. Presumably because of their earlier relationships and Souers’s support of the JCS plan to centralize intelligence, Forrestal thought Souers would be more apt to favor a close NSC relationship with the military. Forrestal had been a proponent of an NSC structure that resembled the British Imperial Defense Council in 1908. In that arrangement, a security council would report to the secretary of defense, who then briefed the president. Forrestal was at odds with Truman on this construct because the president favored an NSC separate from the armed forces that answered to the White House.³⁹

Forrestal had apparently concluded that Souers would run the NSC in ways closer to his vision. If that is what he believed, he would learn that he was mistaken when Souers agreed with the White House plan. Souers viewed the NSC as an “advisory mechanism to the President.” Moreover, he viewed the NSC’s role to be a “coordinating agency” to help the president weigh the factors needed for foreign policy decision making.⁴⁰ No doubt Truman was aware of Souers’s views on the NSC prior to approving Forrestal’s recommendation. The president persuaded Souers to take the position as “a personal favor” to him.⁴¹ Having Souers hold the NSC position placed the NSC squarely under the president’s authority and set the stage for

the development of CIA authorities by the White House through the NSC.

Souers’s NSC assignment and his regular communications with Hillenkoetter illustrated the range of Souers’s activities during the early formative period of the modern national security structure. As a result, it should be no surprise that Hillenkoetter and Souers continued their coordination after the official creation of the NSC and CIA. Hillenkoetter built on Vandenberg’s work by following Souers’s guidance on how to navigate in the national security bureaucracy to manage White House demands.

What emerged from this collaboration, however, was not the CIA Hillenkoetter had envisioned. Souers pursued a compromise in which he straddled what was needed for the CIA to operate effectively and Truman’s demand for a unified national security structure.

Souers, Hillenkoetter, and the Battle over CIA’s Mandate

Coordination between Hillenkoetter and Souers intensified in September and October 1947 with heated debates about the new CIA’s authorities. For example, on September 22, 1947, Souers called Hillenkoetter to explain how he planned to deal with three memos Hillenkoetter had submitted for NSC consideration. Souers agreed to advance the two dealing with NIA and CIG directives, but, with Hillenkoetter’s concurrence, he withheld one about the IAB.⁴² The two

The following day, Hillenkoetter left open the question of CIA's involvement in psychological warfare.

memos Souers put forward kept in force existing NIA and CIG directives, in effect maintaining the status quo and ensuring the intelligence coordination function of CIA until the authorities of the DCI and CIA were more fully defined.⁴³

The memo Souers convinced Hillenkoetter to withdraw was significant. Hillenkoetter had taken the initiative with the new NSC to suggest an agenda for the first NSC meeting, recommendations he sent to the secretary of state, the armed services, and Souers on September 11, 1947.⁴⁴ Based, Hillenkoetter wrote, on legal guidance, he advised the IAB that he neither required consent nor participation of the IAB in the DCI's decisionmaking. Hillenkoetter expressed his preference to have State, the armed services, and the AEC sit in on discussions on intelligence issues within the new NSC structure.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the authorities for the DCI and CIA did not yet formally exist, having only been passed by Congress on July 26, 1947; the NSC had been stood up only the day before Hillenkoetter sent the memo.

Souers, in turn, having experienced the creation of the CIG, accurately foresaw the storm that Hillenkoetter's memo would provoke. As in the past, Souers sought to minimize contention while building consensus. With the IAB issue off the table in its inaugural meeting on September 26, 1947, the NSC passed without dissent the decision to work through DCI and CIA authorities, among other structural issues, within 60 days.⁴⁶ Between the first NSC meeting and the next, Souers worked in earnest with Lay to draft the

authorities of the DCI and CIA, all with Hillenkoetter's consent.⁴⁷

The question of IAB's role within the NSC-CIA structure could not be long avoided because it sat at the heart of the issue of broader CIA statutory authorities. Specifically, the 1946 presidential directive that established the CIG and the NIA also created the IAB. The IAB provided advice to the DCI and consisted of the heads of the principal military and civilian intelligence agencies.⁴⁸

As a coauthor with Clark Clifford of the 1946 directive, Souers would have known its meaning and intent.⁴⁹ As a result, he was sensitive to cabinet members' views of the IAB's role in the national intelligence structure. When he took over as DCI, Souers knew that officials resisted centralization of intelligence as threatening their authority. At the time, the absence of specific legislation cast doubt on the CIG's mandate.⁵⁰ The DCI's activities had been governed by IAB guidance, placing the secretaries of state and the armed services in coordination and oversight roles over the DCI.

What Hillenkoetter sought was to invert the IAB structure and shift power to CIA's statutory oversight role. To accomplish this, he needed Souers's help to maneuver around the powers of the secretaries of state and the armed services.

Beginning the Case for Covert Action

During the battle over the IAB, Hillenkoetter monitored a growing interest in "psychological

warfare operations." A subcommittee of the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee (SANACC)—a group established in 1944 to consider postwar reconstruction and political issues and that was to become an advisory committee in the NSC—had developed a plan for postwar psychological warfare. By October 1947, recognition had emerged that SANACC had no authority to examine peacetime psychological warfare, but on October 21, 1947, Hillenkoetter advised his staff of the renewed interest in psychological warfare and noted that the NSC had approved such activities. Who would lead such efforts had not been determined, however. Hillenkoetter noted in his diary that CIA may not want to take on another function, but it might be directed to do so.⁵¹

The following day, Hillenkoetter left open the question of CIA's involvement in psychological warfare. In a memo to the SANACC on October 22, 1947, Hillenkoetter acknowledged the need for immediate progress on such activities while recognizing the ongoing debate within the national security structure about what organization should coordinate covert action operations. He recommended deferring any decision, but he added that he planned to recommend that the responsibility fall to the JCS.⁵²

Undoubtedly, part of Hillenkoetter's rationale came from legal guidance he had received on September 25, 1947. General Counsel Lawrence Houston provided the DCI advice on CIA's involvement in "black propaganda" and "commando type functions." Houston warned that CIA's involvement in covert action "taken out of

context and without knowledge of its history . . . could bear almost unlimited interpretation, provided the service performed could be shown to be of benefit to an intelligence agency or related to national intelligence.”

Houston continued, saying these operations “would be an unwarranted extension of the functions” of the CIA under the National Security Act of 1947. He reminded Hillenkoetter that Congress had not even authorized CIA to conduct overseas collection activities, which, by extension led Houston to conclude there was likely no thought “in the minds of Congress that the [CIA] under this authority would take positive action for subversion and sabotage.” Houston concluded that any activity undertaken with respect to covert action must be approved by Congress.⁵³

Houston’s caution notwithstanding, Hillenkoetter understood the pressure for psychological operations at the same time he fought for authority over foreign clandestine intelligence collection. In the latter fight, he enlisted Souers’s assistance. Souers was in an optimal position to overcome any inertia against implementation of the NSC and intelligence restructuring. Through October 1947, fighting intensified over the authorities of the CIA, focusing on the need for a subcommittee within the NSC to operate as the IAB had. Souers and Hillenkoetter flatly rejected the ineffective IAB-CIG structure.

In late October 1947, Souers and Hillenkoetter resumed their almost daily meetings as Hillenkoetter addressed both the battle for CIA’s control over foreign intelligence collection operations and demands that he address the issue of psychological



A meeting of the NSC on August 19, 1948. Souers is the second from the left. Hillenkoetter is the last figure to the left of the table. Truman is second from the right. To his right are Secretary of State George Marshall and Secretary of Defense Forrestal. White House photo.

operations. On October 28, 1947, Hillenkoetter told his staff that interest in psychological operations continued and added that CIA was likely to be called on to furnish data to support them. The next day, Hillenkoetter received a call informing him that a directive assigning additional functions, like psychological warfare, to the DCIA’s advisory responsibility had been approved.⁵⁴ The battle over authorities for DCI and CIA heated up with increased bureaucratic resistance. In this battle, the DCI had behind him the National Security Act of 1947, Souers and the latter’s connections in the White House, and Secretary of Defense Forrestal.

Forrestal’s involvement in the expansion of CIA authorities was ironic. As secretary of the navy, Forrestal championed shared responsibility for intelligence collection and backed a decentralized CIG structure. Clark

Clifford claimed Truman selected Forrestal to be defense secretary in September 1947 because Truman believed Forrestal would “sit back and carve [another] to ribbons,”⁵⁵ likely ensuring the failure of the new structure from any other position. Later Truman felt justified in having selected Forrestal when he came to the president apologetically about how weak the previous system had made the secretary of defense. Forrestal pledged to work with the White House to fix it.⁵⁶ Working closely with Souers, Forrestal became a critical player in overcoming the inertia that had left unresolved the definition of the IAB’s role in the new national security structure.

Disagreement over CIA Authorities Boils Over

The alliance between Hillenkoetter, Souers, and Forrestal

The details of the IAB discussion are critical to understanding what would eventually, in early December, lead to a resolution of the issue.

proved imperative when disagreements between the DCI and the armed forces boiled over during an IAB meeting on November 20, 1947. Hillenkoetter opened the meeting with a summary of its purpose and an expression of hope that agreement could be reached that day.

At the first meeting of National Security Council on September 26, they said we would continue the NIA Directives for 60 days. We will have to submit some new ones on the 26th of this month. We sent a memorandum to the agencies on October 9 asking for any suggestions and to please let us know. We got a little help from the State Department. They came through with some suggestions. Today I don't know how long it will take to get an agreement on the four NSC directives. We will try to finish those at least so we can send those in, Is that all right?

Almost immediately it became clear that Hillenkoetter's hopes would not be achieved. The first to speak, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Research and Intelligence W. Park Armstrong said he could not represent the department, whose head had yet to weigh in. Hillenkoetter then came under fire from Chief of Naval Intelligence Inglis and the Army's G-2, Maj. Gen. Stephen Chamberlin, regarding the roles of the intelligence chiefs in the NSC system vice the roles of the departmental secretaries in the IAB. Chamberlin complained he could not turn off and on his responsibilities at

someone else's command, admitting that he was unprepared to discuss the papers before them. Maj. Gen. George McDonald, director of Air Force Intelligence, echoed the sentiment. Hillenkoetter fell back to suggesting that an ad hoc committee be formed to review the NSC directives. IAB officials then began arguing over the validity of an ad hoc committee and the need to complete deliberations so quickly.⁵⁷

McDonald asked for an extension of the deadline, a proposal Hillenkoetter rebuffed by suggesting the IAB adjourn to allow a subcommittee to begin work to meet the November deadline. Protests again followed about whether a subcommittee not formally designated in the National Security Act of 1947 could undertake such work. Members also picked at the proposed directives as driving wedges between intelligence chiefs and their departmental secretaries. Finally, the meeting adjourned with grudging agreement to create an ad hoc committee to review the four directives.⁵⁸

The details of the IAB discussion are critical to understanding what would eventually, in early December, lead to a resolution of the issue. The ad hoc committee formed on November 20 produced a set of directives for the DCI and CIA that were either fully or partially unacceptable to Hillenkoetter.⁵⁹ The DCI notified the IAB ad hoc committee of his disagreement on November 25, 1947.⁶⁰ With the NSC session set for the following day, the DCI received a memorandum from Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royall. Royall expressed

disagreement with Hillenkoetter's appointment of the subcommittee to draft the NSC directives on the DCI and CIA. He recommended the DCI himself draft a charter for the successor to the IAB.⁶¹ Royall sought to perpetuate the defunct CIG structure against the wishes of the White House, Souers, and Hillenkoetter. The implementation of the reformed national security structure again stood at an impasse.

Overcoming this stalemate required dislodging the entrenched opposition. The break came in a meeting Forrestal called in early December 1947.⁶² There, Hillenkoetter appealed to Forrestal to intervene with the Departments of Army and Navy over the authority of the DCI offered in Royall's memo. Whether on his own initiative or at the urging of Souers and the White House, Forrestal and Souers were in attendance with the secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, their intelligence chiefs, a State Department representative, and Hillenkoetter. Darling's account held that Forrestal let Hillenkoetter present his vision of the authority of the DCI and CIA. Forrestal then turned to the secretaries of the Army and Navy without offering any opportunity for a response and ordered them to run things the way Hillenkoetter described.⁶³ Forrestal compelled the armed forces to install the DCI and CIA authorities as a *fait d'accompli*. By using the authority of his position, Forrestal effectively "pulled rank" and left his military service leaders no recourse. It helped that he had the backing of the White House, represented that day by Souers.

Just before the meeting, Forrestal had received a memo about the confusion the battle over DCI and

CIA authorities had created among US intelligence organizations. Vannevar Bush, the director of the Joint Research and Development Board and chief adviser to Forrestal on scientific matters, highlighted the likely inability of CIA to answer questions from the joint congressional committee on atomic energy.^{a, 64} Bush believed that “Souers probably should be alerted and that the [NSC] ought soon to pass on some of the policy questions involved.”⁶⁵

Bush’s concerns came from Ralph Clark, the director of his Programs Division. Clark wrote to Bush about his December 3, 1947 meeting with officers from CIA, the AEC, and State Department. One stark issue confronting the coordination of atomic energy intelligence was the need for a clear delineation of CIA’s relationships with other agencies to facilitate the production of intelligence analysis. Perhaps more to the point was the note from chief of the Intelligence Section David Beckler on December 2, 1947, which addressed concerns about atomic energy intelligence in the AEC intelligence division:

...the present confusion is causing considerable embarrassment to the newly created Intelligence Division of the AEC, and greatly impedes its operations. Since the directives as finally decided upon may affect the nature and scope of AEC intelligence operations, the Army, Navy, and Air Departments as well as CIA—while agreeing in principle to cooperation with AEC—are deferring actual exchange of

a. Forrestal participated with Bush in the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy in the morning, followed by a private meeting in Forrestal’s office later in the afternoon.

On the same day, CIA Deputy Director Edwin Wright outlined his objections to the SANACC proposal in a memorandum to Hillenkoetter.

*information until the AEC-CIA relationship is crystallized.*⁶⁶

The confrontation between CIA, the armed services, and the State Department had taken its toll in an area of critical interest to the White House. The memo from Bush and Forrestal’s December meeting ended the fight over the authority of the DCI and CIA.

On December 8, 1947, in a meeting in the NSC the issue was put to rest. While no documentation is available on that meeting, Arthur Darling indicated that it went much like the one that took place in Forrestal’s office. Hillenkoetter opened the meeting by reading Vannevar Bush’s memo and ended with the armed forces reluctantly acquiescing to relegation of the IAB to a general advisory board.⁶⁷ The outcome of the meeting laid the foundation for the DCI and CIA to operate outside of the oversight and guidance of the IAB and formally abolished the defunct IAB-CIG system.

Winning CIA Authorities and Backing into Covert Action

The arguments in November and December 1947 allowed Hillenkoetter to establish the roles of the DCI and CIA over foreign clandestine intelligence collection. His vision aligned with that of the White House and had Souers’s support. Winning this battle established the basis for CIA’s taking over the coordination of covert action. The evolution of CIA’s control over covert action thus came as part of the

broader fight to clarify CIA’s authorities within the intentionally vague language of the National Security Act of 1947.

For senior State Department and military officials, the language of the legislation and restrictions on peacetime psychological operations led to confusion over what office would be given the authority to conduct such operations and to receive the needed resources. In mid-October 1947, the SANACC had proposed the creation of a psychological warfare organization to work under the direction of the NSC. It suggested the organization be led by a director appointed by the president. The director would also chair a policy planning board composed of representatives from the JCS, CIG, and the armed services.⁶⁸ In addition, the SANACC recommended that determination of missions be left up to the NSC and SANACC.⁶⁹ Hillenkoetter agreed to the plan on October 22, 1947, backed by Houston’s legal guidance.⁷⁰

Souers had a somewhat different view of the subject. On October 24, 1947, he sent a memorandum to Forrestal referencing a “very persuasive and accurate appraisal” he had received—from Secretary of Commerce Averell Harriman—regarding the need for “psychological warfare” operations to push back against “Soviet-inspired” propaganda in Europe. Souers wrote that a simple solution to the question of what organization should lead the effort was the assignment of “covert activities to the Central Intelligence Agency, since it already has contacts and communications with appropriate organizations

Settlement of the issue more broadly took place in the NSC on December 12, 1947, putting in place the final piece leading to CIA's receipt of the mandate for covert action.

and agents in foreign countries.” Souers noted that he understood the SANACC intended officially to send its proposal to the NSC.⁷¹

Upon receiving the SANACC memo, dated November 3, Souers’s assistant, James Lay, forwarded the memo to Souers with a long covering memo to Souers in which he wrote that the plan was not practical because it crossed over into CIA’s statutory authorities.⁷² Meanwhile, Forrestal discussed the SANACC proposal with his leadership on November 4, 1947, noting that the secretaries of defense and state were to discuss propaganda issues rather than a committee or the NSC. He made no mention of the CIA’s role.⁷³

On the same day, CIA Deputy Director Edwin Wright outlined his objections to the SANACC proposal in a memorandum to Hillenkoetter. Wright noted that the plan created another committee layer and the nucleus of yet another intelligence organization. Wright, citing his ongoing dialogue with Donovan, suggested a division between “black” (covert) and “white” (overt) propaganda. The latter he suggested should be headed by a civilian director, “the chairman of a Planning and Policy board composed of representatives of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, Air, the Central Intelligence Agency” and any other necessary government offices.⁷⁴

Wright’s memo included as an annex an account of a meeting with Donovan that he’d had not long before. Donovan, Wright wrote, recommended that the director of the

propaganda effort be appointed by the president and identified as a special assistant to the secretary of defense. but it should be understood that this officer was actually under the operational control of the DCI. Moreover, Donovan believed both “black” and “white” propaganda should take place under the sole purview of the DCI.⁷⁵ In contrast, the SANACC plan placed propaganda efforts under the control of the undersecretary of state and relegated the CIA to a support role, that of providing the State Department the necessary intelligence.⁷⁶

The SANACC psychological warfare plan was discussed in the NSC’s second meeting on November 14, 1947. The minutes of that meeting noted that Secretary of State George Marshall objected to use of the word “warfare” in connection with psychological operations; Secretary Royall, speaking for Defense Secretary Forrestal and Air Force Secretary Stuart Symington, said that the “Military Establishment did not believe that it should have a part in those [psychological operations]; and the security council staff was ordered to revise the SANACC proposal “in the light of comments at the meeting.”⁷⁷

As the NSC staff focused on revisions to the SANACC proposal, DDCI Wright found “very alarming” a proposal that had been made to place an armed forces panel within CIA to ensure “close cooperation” of psychological efforts abroad. Wright warned in a December 2 memo that to “sabotage” the principle that CIA must be “the sole agency to conduct

organized foreign clandestine operations” sowed the seeds of “chaos” [emphasis in the original]; CIA determined best how to disseminate propaganda he concluded.⁷⁸ Wright wrote his strongly worded memo just a week before the December meeting in Forrestal’s office that ended the debate about CIA covert action authorities within the armed services.

Settlement of the issue more broadly took place in the NSC on December 12, 1947, putting in place the final piece leading to CIA’s receipt of the mandate for covert action. Executive Secretary Souers, through two memos to NSC members prepared the members for discussion of two documents: NSC 4 (“REPORT BY THE NSC ON COORDINATION OF FOREIGN INFORMATION MEASURES”) and NSC 4-A (“PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS”—a draft directive to DCI Hillenkoetter). The documents followed Souers’s logic and divided responsibilities for psychological operations and reaffirmed CIA’s mandate over foreign clandestine operations, both collection and covert action.

In NSC 4, the council recommended that State take on the role of coordinating *overt* information efforts:

*Para 8.a. The Secretary of State should be charged with formulating policies for and coordinating the implementation of all information measures designed to influence attitudes in foreign countries in a direction favorable to the attainment of US objectives and to counteract effects of anti-US propaganda.*⁷⁹

The draft directive to Hillenkoetter contained in NSC 4-A followed closely the language Souers used with Forrestal in his October 1947 memo.

2. The similarity of operational methods involved in covert psychological and intelligence activities and the need to ensure their secrecy and obviate costly duplication renders the [CIA] the logical agency to conduct such operations.

With a nod to DDCI Wright's concern about attempts at oversight by the armed services, the NSC noted that nothing in the recommendation should be construed as a requirement for the CIA to disclose its "secret techniques, sources, or contacts."⁸⁰

The decision to assign CIA the covert action mission derived from the interpretation of the National Security Act of 1947 by White House advisers on the NSC, including Souers and Lay.⁸¹ The position taken by Souers and Lay reflected what Clifford claimed was the intention with respect to covert action when the legislation passed in July 1947. That interpretation clashed with the legal advice Hillenkoetter received from CIA General Counsel Houston. While agreeing in principle to Houston's assessment that issues of covert action should go to Congress for approval, White House advisers pressed the exigent need for efforts to counter Soviet propaganda. They concluded the vague language of the National Security Act of 1947 permitted the NSC to assign responsibility for covert action to the CIA predicated on the NSC having the statutory authority to expand CIA's duties. Whatever private misgivings Hillenkoetter may have had about CIA taking over

Souers's effectiveness came from his ability to work well with powerful individuals and spot avenues to obtain smaller victories before marching into protracted conflicts.

covert action, he took on the responsibility without complaint.

Souers's Role and Influence in the National Security Structure

The role Souers played in the evolution of DCI and CIA authorities illustrated the importance of key officials in the institutional development of the national security structure. Souers embodied the ideal of conciliatory leadership operating behind the scenes to bridge the gaps amidst bureaucratic turf wars. As Vandenberg had shown, confrontation worked only to a limited extent, in part, because of the weakness of the intelligence organization within the broader national security structure.

At the same time, Souers appreciated the need to confront senior officials who impeded the progress of developing the nascent intelligence apparatus. Conciliation had its place except in periods of impasse when the very leaders entrusted to implement institutional reforms were the primary obstacles to change. The confrontation between Forrestal and his subordinate commanders exemplified an optimal time to exert the full authority of the new Office of the Secretary of Defense.

All the while, Souers sought to avoid critical missteps by maintaining open lines of communication between officials that mattered the most in this process. By leveraging his power network, Souers was able to steer discussions, frame fights, and

influence decisionmaking in favor of the president and the DCI.

Yet the DCI did not get everything he wanted. Was Hillenkoetter a pawn? Souers spoke derisively about Hillenkoetter in the 1960s, describing him as a "disaster" as DCI and noting that he should never have been appointed to the position.⁸² Admittedly, Hillenkoetter was an outsider to the political gamesmanship required in Washington. He had neither the experience nor the political clout of officials like Souers and Forrestal.

Indeed, Hillenkoetter may well have been the weakest DCI:⁸³ he did not launch large initiatives and tended to navigate around confrontation when possible. Souers had clearly leveraged Hillenkoetter after having established an early working relationship with him. Referring to Hillenkoetter as Souers's pawn, however, may be a bit too strong. Hillenkoetter fought for the mandates of the DCI and CIA in the critical showdown in the fall of 1947. He merely ended up with more than he bargained for when the CIA was also given the authority for covert psychological operations. The ability to maneuver Hillenkoetter demonstrated Souers's political savvy; his manipulation of Forrestal, however, underscored his mastery of bureaucratic gamesmanship.

Souers's effectiveness came from his ability to work well with powerful individuals and spot avenues to obtain smaller victories before marching into protracted conflicts. His ability to maneuver rested on the power

that came from his network of contacts. Initially, Forrestal was central to how Souers vaulted into a position of authority that garnered Truman's respect. He also recommended Souers to be the executive secretary of the newly created NSC, an outcome that would undermine Forrestal's attempts to shape the NSC structure. Once in the NSC, Souers became a critical node in constructing the national security system according to the president's vision. Yet Forrestal's meeting with armed forces heads in early December 1947 was critical to overcoming resistance to the change in the power dynamic of the intelligence system—a change that did not reflect Forrestal's preference for how the NSC and CIA operated with respect to the armed forces. The only White House representative at that fateful meeting was Souers, and the views of the president trumped all other disagreements.

The key to understanding how these events played out was Souers's direct communication and regular contacts with the White House. Counsel Clifford remained one of Souers's most crucial contacts other than the president himself. Clifford and Souers wrote the 1946 Presidential Directive that created the



In 1952, President Truman awarded Souers the Distinguished Service Medal. The two also exchanged portraits of themselves with affectionate inscriptions to one another. White House photo.

CIG.⁸⁴ There seems little reason to doubt that as DCI, Souers operated in lockstep with the White House because he knew exactly what the president wanted.

Likewise, when the CIG system proved to be impractical, it was no wonder that Souers emerged again to facilitate the reform of the national security structure. Between 1946 and 1947, Souers maintained a close connection with Clifford, who joined Souers in critical meetings on intelligence and worked with Souers on preparation of the National Security Act of 1947.

Souers carried that effort one step further when the NSC enumerated the DCI's and CIA's authorities, to include covert action. Through

Clifford, Souers retained insight into the president's plans and preferences. Any doubt as to Souers's work on behalf of Truman in creating the CIA can be dispelled with the letter Souers wrote to Truman in 1963. Lamenting CIA's activities in the 1960s and subsequent scandals, Souers acknowledged that he had attempted to build a CIA for Truman that was vastly different from the one that came to exist in 1963.⁸⁵

How CIA gained authority to conduct covert action is significant. The DCI did not want it, Donovan wanted control over all aspects of propaganda, and Houston believed CIA needed congressional approval for each covert action activity. The CIA did not win any of these battles. The reason the CIA ended up with covert action authority was because the White House needed to address the existential threat presented by the Soviet Union and covert action was one part of the broader containment strategy. For that reason, quiet warriors like Souers worked behind the scenes to include covert action. The question was not how popular covert action operations were but rather what was needed to protect US interests, a testament to the enduring ethos of the CIA from its inception.



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The author wishes to thank Professor Stephen Slick, Director of the Intelligence Studies Project at the LBJ School of Public Policy, for his review and comments on the research.



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27. Rudgers, *Creating the Secret State*, 109–27.

28. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 162. Memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence (Vandenberg) to the National Intelligence Authority, August 13, 1947.
29. Footnote 1 in *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 164. Telegram from the President's Chief of Staff (Leahy) to President Truman, August 21, 1946.
30. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 185. Minutes of the 9th Meeting of the National Intelligence Authority, February 12, 1947
31. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 194. National Intelligence Authority Directive No. 9, April 18, 1947.
32. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 667, 669.
33. Rear Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter Diary, 71; available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1947-04-09a.pdf>.
34. *Ibid.*, 670, 672.
35. *Ibid.*, 77–124.
36. *Ibid.*, 54.
37. *The Hearings Before the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments*, House of Representatives, 1947, 728; available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d03603976d&view=1up&seq=3>.
38. Hillenkoetter Diary, 137–38, 145.
39. The initial clash in views can be found in Forrestal's overview of his first meeting about the NSC shortly after he was sworn in as Secretary of Defense; available in James V. Forrestal Papers, Vol. VIII 1947, Box 150, Folder 17, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, September 26, 1947, 1839. The explanation of the differences of opinion are also found in J. Larsen and E. Mahan, *Establishing the Secretary's Role: James Forrestal* (National Defense University Press, 2011), 9–10; Admiral Sidney Souers testimony on May 10, 1960 in the *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery of the Committee on Government Operations*, United States Senate, Volume 1 (Government Printing Office, 1961): 562; Clark Clifford, *Counsel to the President* (Random House, 1991), 162–64.
40. *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery*, 561, 572.
41. Andrew, For the President's Eyes Only, 169.
42. Hillenkoetter Diary, 175.
43. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 222. Memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence (Hillenkoetter) to the National Security Council, September 19, 1947; *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 223. Memorandum From the Director of Central Intelligence (Hillenkoetter) to the National Security Council, September 19, 1947.
44. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 220. Memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence (Hillenkoetter) to the National Intelligence Authority, September 11, 1947.
45. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 600, 606–607.
46. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 225. Minutes of the First Meeting of the National Security Council, September 26, 1947.
47. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 612.
48. See para 7 in *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 71. Presidential Directive on Coordination of Foreign Intelligence Activities.
49. Schroeder, *Foundation of the CIA*, 90.
50. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 234.
51. Hillenkoetter Diary, 224.
52. *FRUS*. 244. Memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence Hillenkoetter to the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee, October 22, 1947.
53. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 241. Memorandum from the General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency (Houston) to Director of Central Intelligence Agency Hillenkoetter, September 25, 1947.
54. Hillenkoetter Diary, 233, 235.
55. Clark Clifford Oral History, March 23, 1973 by Jerry N. Ness, 21; available at <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/oral-histories/cliford1>. Further discussed in *Clifford, Counsel to the President*, 153, 158.
56. Clark Clifford Oral History, April 19, 1971 interview with Jerry N. Ness, 114–17; available at <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/oral-histories/cliford3#11>. Forrestal's change of heart between 1947 and 1948 is outlined further in *Clifford, Counsel to the President*, 160–62.
57. *FRUS*. 332. Minutes of a Meeting of the National Intelligence Board, November 20, 1947.
58. *Ibid.*
59. Footnote 2 in *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 334. Memorandum from the Executive Secretary (Souers) to the National Security

Council, December 10, 1947.

60. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 630.

61. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 230. Memorandum from the Secretary of the Army (Royall) to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Souers), November 26, 1947.

62. James V. Forrestal Papers, Vol. IX 1947, Box 151, Folder 2, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, December 9, 1947, 1968.

63. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 631–33.

64. James V. Forrestal Papers, Vol. IX 1947, Box 151, Folder 2, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, December 5, 1947, 1963–1965. Forrestal also had a close working relationship with Bush, in whom he placed considerable trust and leading him to recommend Bush for his directorship, in Forrestal Papers, Vol. IX 1947, Box 151, Folder 2, 1835.

65. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 333. Memorandum From the Chairman of the Research and Development Board (Bush) to Secretary of Defense Forrestal, December 5, 1947.

66. Enclosure from Beckler, in *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 333.

67. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 636–37.

68. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 242. Memorandum from the Secretary of the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee (Moseley) to the Undersecretary of State (Lovett), October 15, 1947.

69. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 243. Memorandum by the Army Member of the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee, undated.

70. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 244. Memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence Hillenkoetter to the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Committee, October 22, 1947.

71. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 245. Memorandum from the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Souers) to the Secretary of Defense (Forrestal), October 24, 1947.

72. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 246. Memorandum from the Assistant Executive Secretary (Lay) to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Souers), November 3, 1947.

73. James V. Forrestal Papers, Vol. IX 1947, Box 151, Folder 1.

74. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 247. Memorandum from the Deputy Director (Wright) to the Director of Central Intelligence (Hillenkoetter), November 4, 1947.

75. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 247, Annex 1 entitled, “Psychological Warfare.”

76. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 249. *Report by an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee*, November 7, 1947.

77. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 250. Memorandum of Discussion of the 2d Meeting of the National Security Council, November 14, 1947.

78. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 251. Memorandum from the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Wright) to the Chief of the Interagency Coordinating and Planning Staff, *The Central Intelligence Agency* (Childs), December 2, 1947.

79. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 252. Memorandum from the Executive Secretary (Souers) to the Members of the National Security Council, December 9, 1947.

80. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 253. Memorandum from the Executive Secretary (Souers) to the Members of the National Security Council, December 9, 1947.

81. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 725.

82. Henhofer and Hanrahan, “Notes on the Early DCIs,” 32.

83. Andrews, *For the President’s Eyes Only*, 170.

84. *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 137, Memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence (Souers) to the National Intelligence Authority, “Proposed Tentative Operation of the Central Intelligence Group,” February 2, 1966; *FRUS, 1945–1950*, 138, “Minutes of the First Meeting of the Intelligence Advisory Board,” February 4, 1946.

85. David Rudgers, “The Origins of Covert Action,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35, 2 (2000): 260.



John Franklin Carter's Career as FDR's Private Intelligence Operative

Steve Usdin

In the real world and in popular imagination, spies, journalists, and the authors of espionage fiction are intimately linked.^a From Somerset Maugham and Ian Fleming to E. Howard Hunt, Milt Bearden, and Valerie Plame, there is a rich tradition of intelligence officers and former officers writing fictional accounts of espionage. The use of journalism as a cover for covert intelligence collection dates back at least to Daniel Defoe in the 18th century and in the 20th century was practiced with exuberance by Soviet intelligence agencies and intermittently by authors of spy stories such as Graham Greene and James Forsyth. Since 1976, the CIA has had a policy in place that prohibits its use of journalists accredited to US news organizations or their parent organizations for intelligence purposes.¹

It is unlikely, however, that anyone has fused—and confused—the work of spies, journalists, and novelists as thoroughly as John Franklin Carter, a journalist who ran a secret, off-the-books intelligence operation for President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Carter may be the only writer who first created a fictional intelligence agency and then persuaded a government to put him in charge of a real organization modeled on it.

a. This article is adapted from the author's *Bureau of Spies: The Secret Connections Between Journalism and Espionage in Washington* (Prometheus Press, 2018).



Carter used journalism as a cover for intelligence operations, and as soon as his covert career was terminated, wrote a fictional account of some of his exploits.²

Carter's espionage career further blurred the lines between espionage, journalism, and creative writing because the reports he provided to Roosevelt contained an undifferentiated mix of fact and fiction. While some of the intelligence Carter and his organization obtained was accurate, and a smaller portion was consequential, much of the information Carter personally delivered to the president was so farcical that it would have been more appropriate

John (Jay) Franklin Carter pictured in 1935.

This Library of Congress capture of a 35mm, nitrate negative is credited to the photographer of the Resettlement Administration, where Carter was the director of the Division of Information. At the Resettlement Administration, Carter worked with Pare Lorentz on a series of documentary films about the New Deal, including *The Plough that Broke the Plains*, an exploration of the causes of the dustbowl, and *The River*, a history of the Mississippi Basin. Carter also found time during this period to write two books, *The New Dealers* and *American Messiahs*

to submit it to the humor magazine he had edited as an undergraduate at Yale.^b

There is no evidence, however, that Roosevelt lost confidence in Carter. From February 1941 until shortly before his death in April 1945, FDR entrusted Carter and his organization with a continuous stream of unorthodox missions, conferring stature on the amateur spymaster that cabinet members, military leaders, and the heads of America's wartime intelligence organizations, including FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and Office of Strategic Services

b. Carter attended Yale with Thornton Wilder, Henry Luce, and Archibald MacLeish. He edited the *The Yale Record*.

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

Instead of centralized organizations with professional staff, Carter's vision resembled Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars, a group of talented amateurs running circles around hidebound bureaucrats.

head William J. Donovan, could not ignore. Carter concerned himself with an extraordinary range of topics: collecting dirt on FDR's political opponents, assessing the loyalty of Japanese immigrants in the months before the Pearl Harbor attack, commissioning a former associate of Hitler's to compile a psychosexual profile of the Nazi leader, obtaining reports from the Polish underground on the Holocaust, spying on New York society, and much more.

The aspiring spymaster explained his approach in 1942 in response to a request from Roosevelt for suggestions about the organization of American intelligence. Carter advocated a pre-modern version of intelligence, one that George Washington, Thomas Jefferson or Queen Elizabeth I would have recognized. Instead of centralized organizations with professional staff, Carter's vision resembled Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars, a group of talented amateurs running circles around hidebound bureaucrats.³ In addition to bringing on Carter, Roosevelt commissioned Vincent Astor to operate an informal intelligence operation.⁴ Two years later, Carter wrote a similar plan for post-war intelligence that Donovan characterized as "horse and buggy" thinking.⁵

The Bureau of Current Political Intelligence

Carter started his government career in 1928 as a midlevel State Department employee. His official duties must not have been taxing as

over a four-year period Carter found time to write articles for magazines, a book advocating a new constitution and warning that economic depression could spawn "an American Spartacus," and four novels—all published under various pseudonyms.⁶

In *Murder in the State Department*, a novel attributed to "Diplomat," Carter introduced the Bureau of Current Political Intelligence (CPI), a supersecret agency with tentacles reaching to the Kremlin and the Vatican, among other places. It was run by Dennis Tyler, a wisecracking, debonair diplomat. Although Tyler's CPI was described as an espionage outfit, the character was more detective than spy.

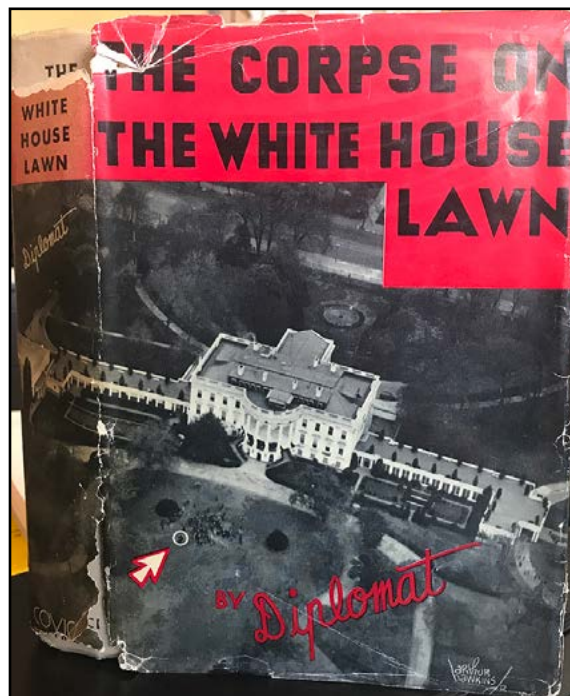
A *New York Times* review of Diplomat's second novel, *Murder in*

the Embassy, observed that the author "displays a close knowledge of the diplomatic service and a sense of humor that is refreshing in the serious business of concocting successful mystery tales."⁷ From the point of view of Carter's colleagues and employers, the biggest mystery posed by his stories was the identity of their author. As the *American Foreign Service Journal* noted, "The question is, who is 'Diplomat?'"⁸ Diplomat's cover was maintained for two additional novels about the CPI: *Scandal in the Chancery*, published in 1931, and *The Corpse on the White House Lawn*, published the following year.

The mystery was solved in the spring of 1932, and an unamused State Department forced Carter to choose between his job and a prolific but barely remunerative writing career. He chose the latter and hastily finished a book about the upcoming presidential election, according to an interview of Carter by noted

oral historian Charles Morrissey.⁹ The publisher sent parts of the draft manuscript of *What We Are About To Receive*, without revealing the identity of its author, to both candidates. Herbert Hoover did not reply. Roosevelt invited the author to meet with him at Hyde Park, New York. Carter decided that the opportunity to visit the next president outweighed the merits of maintaining anonymity.¹⁰

When Carter mentioned his plans to travel to Europe to work as a freelance reporter,



Roosevelt suggested that he look up an old acquaintance, the German-born, Harvard-educated Ernst Sedgwick Hanfstaengl.¹¹ Hanfstaengl was the son of a German art publisher and American mother. A talented pianist, he had played the piano for Theodore Roosevelt in the White House and for Franklin Roosevelt at the Harvard Club in New York before returning to Germany in 1921. There he became a member of Hitler's earliest inner circle, participated in the Munich beer hall putsch, and helped finance publication of *Mein Kampf*.¹²

At the time Carter visited, Hanfstaengl was the Nazi Party's liaison to the foreign press. The two men exchanged life stories, discovering that Carter's parents had decades earlier been friends with Hanfstaengl's mother.¹³ Hanfstaengl arranged an interview with Herman Göring, but Carter failed to find a market for his stories. Returning to the United States, he found a job at the Department of Agriculture, serving as a publicist in the Resettlement Administration and as director of the Division of Information in the Farm Security Administration, where he commissioned documentary films from Pare Lorentz.

In 1936, Carter relaunched his journalism career, renting an office four blocks from the White House in the National Press Building. Written under the penname Jay Franklin, his syndicated pro-Roosevelt column *We, the People* appeared in newspapers across the country. In 1940, Carter used the column to promote a third term for FDR, while working behind the scenes with Roosevelt advisers Thomas Corcoran and Benjamin Cohen to press Democratic leaders to

At a meeting with Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles in February 1941, with the war in Europe well under way, Carter expressed the opinion that American intelligence was "pretty well loused up and floundering around."

accept the break from the two-term precedent set by Washington.¹⁴

A Small and Informal Intelligence Unit

After FDR's reelection, Carter felt he had earned the right to a reward for services rendered. Unlike countless aspirants who, having provided real or imagined political services, sought prestigious positions or government sinecures, Carter made an unusual request. At a meeting with Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles in February 1941, with the war in Europe well under way, Carter expressed the opinion that American intelligence was "pretty well loused up and floundering around." He suggested creating and putting himself in charge of "a small and informal intelligence unit operating out of the White House."¹⁵

Welles arranged a White House meeting, and on February 13, 1941, FDR gave Carter's plan the green light.¹⁶ The approval was contingent on the arrangement being kept secret and with the understanding that if any hint of the columnist's covert activities leaked to the public the White House would deny any connection to him. That afternoon, FDR instructed Secretary of State Cordell Hull to make a payment of \$10,000 (about \$150,000 today) to Carter, ostensibly for a report "on the political and economic factors of stability and instability" in Germany and neighboring countries. The money was drawn from funds Congress had

appropriated to the White House for unspecified "emergencies."¹⁷

After the initial payment, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Adolph Berle, who served as interagency coordinator for the government's intelligence operations, managed the payments to Carter—\$64,000 in 1941, increasing to \$121,000 in 1943 and more than \$10,000 per month by the spring of 1945.¹⁸ Berle was not informed of the amateur spy's activities, disapproved of those he learned about, and tried to undermine Carter, for example by suggesting that the FBI "use the utmost discretion in dealing with Carter and any of his representatives" and "that under no circumstances should any confidential data be furnished or should these people be granted access to Bureau files."¹⁹

Carter's first report and FDR's response set the pattern for the coming years. The March 1, 1941 memo was typed under Carter's letterhead: "JOHN FRANKLIN CARTER (Jay Franklin), 1210 National Press Building, Washington DC," followed by the names of his column, "We, the People," and radio program, "This Week in Washington." The report, titled "Raw Material Situation in Belgium, as reported by Antwerp factory manufacturing electrical equipment for the Occupying Authorities," was a list of materials, from benzene to zinc, and notations about whether they were readily available, scarce, or unobtainable in the by-then German-occupied country.

Carter also played a role in an effort to defang Charles Lindbergh, a powerful proponent of isolationism and one of FDR's most potent critics.

Roosevelt's response two days later, typed on White House stationery, was addressed to "Jack Carter." It instructed him to show the list to the "Army, Navy and State Department—and also to the British Embassy." It was signed with the typed initials "F. D. R." In his next report, Carter summarized the observations of "an American businessman just returned from three months visit to Berlin on company business." It noted labor shortages, good morale, and a "determined effort being made by German authorities to take over ownership of American plants, etc., in Germany."

A March 8, 1941 memo from Carter on "Nazi Activities in the Union of South Africa" employed more colorful language. A quarter of a million South African nationalists "of all sexes, shapes, ages and sizes" were sabotaging the British war effort. Soldiers on their way to England "are set upon and beaten up in dark alleys, they are spat at by foul-breathed women." The South Africa report, attributed to an unidentified informant in Cape Town, was followed by a series of summaries of conversations with businessmen who had recently returned from Europe and Japan, and a March 31 "Summary of Conditions in Nazi Germany (and occupied countries) as reported by American businessmen recently returned from Europe."

Much of Carter's work in spring and summer 1941 was what today would be called opposition research. Some involved spying on politicians, including members of Congress. In April he passed on an account

of a conversation with British Ambassador Lord Halifax, who had described comments from Wendell Willkie. The failed Republican presidential candidate, Halifax told Carter, had observed that many Americans found FDR "indirect and tricky." Willkie, and Halifax, felt that the president was being too cautious about providing assistance to Britain.

Carter also played a role in an effort to defang Charles Lindbergh, a powerful proponent of isolationism and one of FDR's most potent critics. The president asked Carter to prepare a detailed study of the "copperheads," a term of derision that had been applied during the Civil War to Southern sympathizers and defeatists in the North. Carter delivered a 55-page report on April 22 and was in the Oval Office three days later for a press conference when, responding to a planted question, the president lectured reporters about the Civil War and labeled Lindbergh a copperhead.²⁰ The comments outraged the famous aviator, leading him to resign his cherished commission in the Army Air Corps Reserves.²¹ The

New York Times editorial page said Roosevelt had spoken impetuously but also accused Lindbergh of petulant behavior;²² his reputation took a hit and never rebounded.

On May 14, 1941, Carter forwarded to FDR a report written in confidence by a reporter for *Time* and *Life* magazines that painted a picture of Japanese infiltration, subversion, and espionage in the Philippines. The Japanese, FDR was informed, had deployed agents under a variety of covers, especially as the owners of photography studios, to every corner of the archipelago, had blanketed the country with propaganda, and corrupted members of parliament, all in preparation for invasion and occupation.

Two days after sending the Philippines report, Carter informed FDR that a member of the Swedish parliament had provided intelligence on Germany's plans to invade the Soviet Union. Millions of German and other Axis troops were massed on the Soviet border, maps of Russia were being printed in large quantities, and it was "considered a toss-up whether there will be a war." Unidentified "observers" were

Aviator and isolationist Charles Lindbergh—shown here as Herman Goering presents him a medal in 1938—became the subject of a 55-page report from Carter's organization in 1941. Source: WikiCommons.



predicting an invasion around June 1, 1941.^a

In June FDR passed a report to Carter warning that the Vichy government in Martinique was preparing to withstand an embargo or siege. The president asked Carter to send an operative to assess the potential for the Caribbean island to become a base for hostile military operations against the United States. Carter recruited Chicago businessman Curtis Munson to visit Martinique under cover as a consultant compiling a report on food security for the Department of Agriculture. In a meeting that was not noted on White House logs, Munson and Carter personally briefed Roosevelt on their conclusion that fears about military preparations on the island were overblown.²³

A Persistent Busybody

During the first year of his covert work for FDR, Carter frequently asked the White House to provide him and his agents some sort of official recognition or credentials. Roosevelt ignored the requests or batted them aside, telling Carter that he'd have to rely on his powers of persuasion.²⁴

Indirectly, however, Roosevelt signaled to top government officials that Carter was working for him. The president instructed White House staff to disseminate Carter's reports to cabinet officials, the FBI, and military intelligence agencies, as well as to Vincent Astor and Nelson Rockefeller who, like Carter, were running informal, off-the-books intelligence

a. Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, began on June 22, 1941.

In the fall of 1941, Roosevelt asked Carter to assess the loyalty of Japanese living on the West Coast.

operations. Carter was in touch with Donovan by August 1941, if not earlier, and mentioned conversations with the Coordinator of Information in several reports to Roosevelt, suggesting that the two had a cordial working relationship.²⁵

On September 5, 1941, Carter telephoned Hoover, saying that FDR had requested that he and Munson meet with the FBI director. It was their first meeting and Hoover prepared by reading the bureau's file on Carter; he did not like what he saw. It started with a column Carter had written in 1937 that included derogatory remarks about the bureau and its thin-skinned director. A memo about the column had been routed to Hoover, who characterized it as "regurgitated filth" in a handwritten note.²⁶ The most recent item in the file was a March 1941 "We, the People" column that accused Hoover of attempting to create a US gestapo and predicting that as a result of congressional investigations into illegal arrests and wiretapping "our No. 1 G-man may become the first American political casualty of World War 2." Americans, Carter had written, "don't want a gang of G-men to go around beating us up and destroying our liberties in the name of high-pressure patriotism."²⁷

In a note to the file dictated after meeting Carter and Munson, Hoover made it clear both that he had read the clips and that he was aware of Carter's relationship with Roosevelt. "J. Franklin Carter, who writes under the name of Jay Franklin, has always viewed the FBI as a fascist organization and has stated that we are opposed to liberal thought." The memo

noted that Munson was traveling to New York at Roosevelt's request to study the refugee situation and instructed the special agent in charge of the bureau's New York office "to be very courteous to Mr. Munson in view of his influential backing."²⁸

This was the high point of Carter's relationship with the FBI. Years later, Hoover summed up his feelings about the amateur spy in a handwritten note scrawled at the bottom of an internal FBI memo: "We know Carter well & most unfavorably. He is a crackpot, a persistent busy-body, bitten with the Sherlock Holmes bug & plagued with a super-exaggerated ego."²⁹

Assessing the Loyalty of Japanese Americans

In the fall of 1941, Roosevelt asked Carter to assess the loyalty of Japanese living on the West Coast. Carter assigned the task to Munson, who spent three weeks in California interviewing FBI agents, military intelligence officials, and people from all walks of life, including first- and second-generation Japanese immigrants.

Rather than restricting himself to the immediate task, Munson felt it necessary to analyze the Japanese mind and soul.

Munson's amateur sociology was of questionable value, and even at a time when xenophobic views were pervasive in US society, his casual racism should have had no place in documents that were presented to the president. Nonetheless, Carter and Munson provided sound advice that the Roosevelt administration would

The shock of the Pearl Harbor attack made clear the need for greatly enhanced intelligence capabilities. Among the men scrambling to persuade Roosevelt to give them a chance to fill the gap were Hoover, Donovan, and Carter.

disregard. Except for a small number who had already been identified, individuals of Japanese descent living in the United States posed no threat to national security, they reported. They went further, pointing out that Japanese Americans were at risk from their neighbors. Instead of interning them, the US government should take steps to protect Japanese, Carter advised.

Ignorance in the Place of Secrecy

The shock of the Pearl Harbor attack made clear the need for greatly enhanced intelligence capabilities. Among the men scrambling to persuade Roosevelt to give them a chance to fill the gap were Hoover, Donovan, and Carter.

The FBI director barely hid his contempt for Carter, but Donovan maintained cordial relations. "Yesterday afternoon," Carter wrote in a January 9, 1942 memo to Roosevelt, Donovan's aide "David Bruce showed me the master plan he has developed for organization of a general world-wide secret intelligence service for the United States." Carter damned the plan with faint praise, writing that it was a good "model for a central-office organization of intelligence" but was "very hazy on actual operations." He added that the plan was based on British and German methods that were not suitable for the United States.

Summarizing his own approach, Carter suggested that "we should

strive to develop something much simpler, more happy-go-lucky and casual, and utilize ignorance in the place of secrecy as a method." By ignorance, he meant a decentralized intelligence system composed of teams that operated independently and without knowledge of each other's existence. Carter knew just the man to lead such an organization. "I am very ambitious to be allowed to try to do something along these lines on a modest and experimental scale and would like to tell you my concrete plan of operations the next time you can spare a couple of minutes after a press conference," he wrote to the president. Roosevelt occasionally invited Carter to linger behind as reporters filed out of press conferences, exchanging a few words with his operative. Probably because there was no indication that Carter's columns contained privileged information from the president, the visits didn't provoke complaints from other reporters accredited to the White House.

In arguing for expansion of their remit, especially in the Western Hemisphere, Donovan and Carter were walking into a bureaucratic minefield. Since 1940, the FBI had been conducting intelligence operations in Latin America based on a verbal directive from Roosevelt. A vague delineation of authority between the FBI and the Army had sparked a fierce turf war between the two organizations.³⁰ The last thing Hoover wanted was to cede authority or be forced to cooperate with Donovan's or Carter organizations.

On January 16, 1942, Roosevelt signed a secret directive that assigned to the FBI authority for intelligence and counterintelligence throughout the Americas, from the Arctic to Tierra del Fuego. That evening, Hoover wrote notes to the file memorializing telephone conversations with Army BGen. Raymond E. Lee, assistant chief of staff for intelligence; RAdm. Theodore S. Wilkinson of naval intelligence, and Berle at the State Department. Hoover reported that the "President had made the following notation on the Directive: 'I think that the Canadian and South American fields should not be in the Coordinator of Information field, nor in that of the J. Franklin Carter organization.'" Wilkinson, who had criticized Carter in a December 29, 1941 memo to Navy Secretary Frank Knox as "a sort of one-man Secret Service" who operated outside proper lines of authority, told Hoover "he was sorry the President had not seen fit to ignore publicly the Carter organization, but otherwise he thought it was fine."³¹

Credible and Incredible Intelligence

Carter's organization, which never had a name or a bureaucratic identity, grew to 25 employees.³² They were an eclectic collection of businessmen, journalists, and academics. In March 1941, Carter recruited Henry Field as his second in command.

Field, scion of Chicago retailer Marshall Field, had grown up in England and had been educated in anthropology at Eton and Oxford. Field's manners and erudition produced a good first impression, but his slippery relationship with

the truth often soured relationships. Shortly before Carter met him in 1940, Field's uncle, who ran the Field Museum, had been forced to recall a book Henry had written about folklore in western Asia after it was discovered he had plagiarized much of it.³³

One of Field's first forays into intelligence was a series of incredible reports that he claimed had been produced "under conditions of extraordinary secrecy from a man who is believed to have accurate and swift means of communication with Moscow." The reports, which were delivered to the president and forwarded from the White House to military intelligence agencies, spun a tale that would have seemed ridiculous even in one of Carter's novels.³⁴

Field's source claimed that an American military genius working for Stalin was directing the operations of the "Siberian Army," an entity that was poised to attack Japan within days using 8,300 planes that had been hidden in underground hangars. Subsequent reports claimed the USSR had spent \$6 billion building a series of underground forts from Leningrad to Odessa that were stuffed with troops waiting for orders to emerge and vanquish the Wehrmacht.

While there is no evidence that FDR or anyone else took accounts of the Siberian Army seriously, the president did accord some credibility to equally incredible reports. For example, on January 9, 1942, Roosevelt dictated a note requesting that Carter inform army and navy intelligence of his concerns that Nazis had infiltrated the United Service Organizations, the voluntary organization formed to entertain US troops. FDR instructed

Shortly after the Pearl Harbor attack, Carter assigned one of his operatives, a journalist named William Irwin, the task of investigating Japanese intelligence activities along the US-Mexican border.

Gen. Henry "Hap" Arnold, chief of the Army Air Forces, to read and respond to Carter's suggestion that bombing Japanese volcanoes would set off earthquakes. Other government officials were pressed to consider Carter's reports asserting with great confidence that the labor leader John L. Lewis was conspiring with French intelligence to mount a coup and depose Roosevelt, warnings about Ukrainian terrorists hell-bent on assassinating the president, and other tall tales.³⁵

Shortly after the Pearl Harbor attack, Carter assigned one of his operatives, a journalist named William Irwin, the task of investigating Japanese intelligence activities along the US-Mexican border. Irwin drove thousands of miles through Mexico and Texas compiling lists of Japanese doctors, dentists, and ice cream shop proprietors and assigned them roles in a massive, and imaginary, intelligence operation directed from Tokyo. Carter forwarded scores of pages of Irwin's notes to FDR, the FBI, the State Department, and military intelligence organizations.³⁶

Not all of Carter's work was frivolous. He sent FDR an accurate and chilling account of the Soviet government's abysmal treatment of Polish soldiers and civilians who had been arrested when the USSR occupied half of their country. Tens of thousands, Carter informed Roosevelt, were suffering in Russian prisons and labor camps.³⁷

Of the thousands of pages Carter sent Roosevelt, possibly the most important were the 130 pages in a dossier titled "Reports on Poland and Lithuania." Compiled by the Polish underground, it was a detailed real-time report about the Holocaust. The dossier, which Roosevelt and Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles received on December 30, 1942, reinforced and expanded on information the administration had received from other sources.³⁸

The file included the first news to reach Washington about the Belzec concentration camp in southeastern Poland: "Inside and outside the fence Ukrainian sentries are posted. Executions are carried out in the following manner: a train carrying Jews arrives at the station and is moved up to the wire fence where the guards are changed. Now the train is brought to the unloading place by German personnel. The men are taken into barracks on the left, where they have to take their clothes off, ostensibly for a bath." It went on to describe how men and women were herded into a building and killed, their bodies buried in a ditch that had been dug by "Jews who, after they have finished the job, are executed."³⁹

The dossier revealed the existence of mobile extermination trucks in which poison gas was used to murder Jews, described the Auschwitz concentration camp, liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, and atrocities in Lithuania. An appendix containing photographs of corpses stacked like firewood and other horrors made it

difficult to doubt the authenticity of the information.⁴⁰

The S Project

The most elaborate of Carter's operations involved Ernst Hanfstaengl. Since they met in 1932, Hanfstaengl's life circumstances had changed dramatically. As Hitler consolidated power, the aristocratic Harvard graduate gradually fell out of favor with the Nazi leadership, but there was no overt break. In February 1937, Göring summoned Hanfstaengl to Berlin and announced that the Führer had personally ordered him to travel on a secret mission to Salamanca, Spain. In midflight, the pilot informed his passenger that rather than landing in a city controlled by pro-German fascists, his orders were to eject him over Republican-held territory. Terrified that he would not survive his first parachute landing or that he would be killed by antifascist forces, Hanfstaengl wasted no time when the plane developed engine trouble and landed near Leipzig. He fled, first to Switzerland and later to Britain, defying Göring's orders to return home.

At the start of the war the British government interned Hanfstaengl as an enemy alien and, in September 1940, shipped him along with hundreds of Nazis to an internment camp in Ontario, Canada. In February 1942, Carter, seeking information about a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt's whom he erroneously believed was a Nazi spy, asked the FBI to track down Hanfstaengl and obtain permission from British intelligence to conduct an interview. When Carter met with Hanfstaengl in March 1942, instead of interrogating him he proposed that the former Hitler confidant travel to



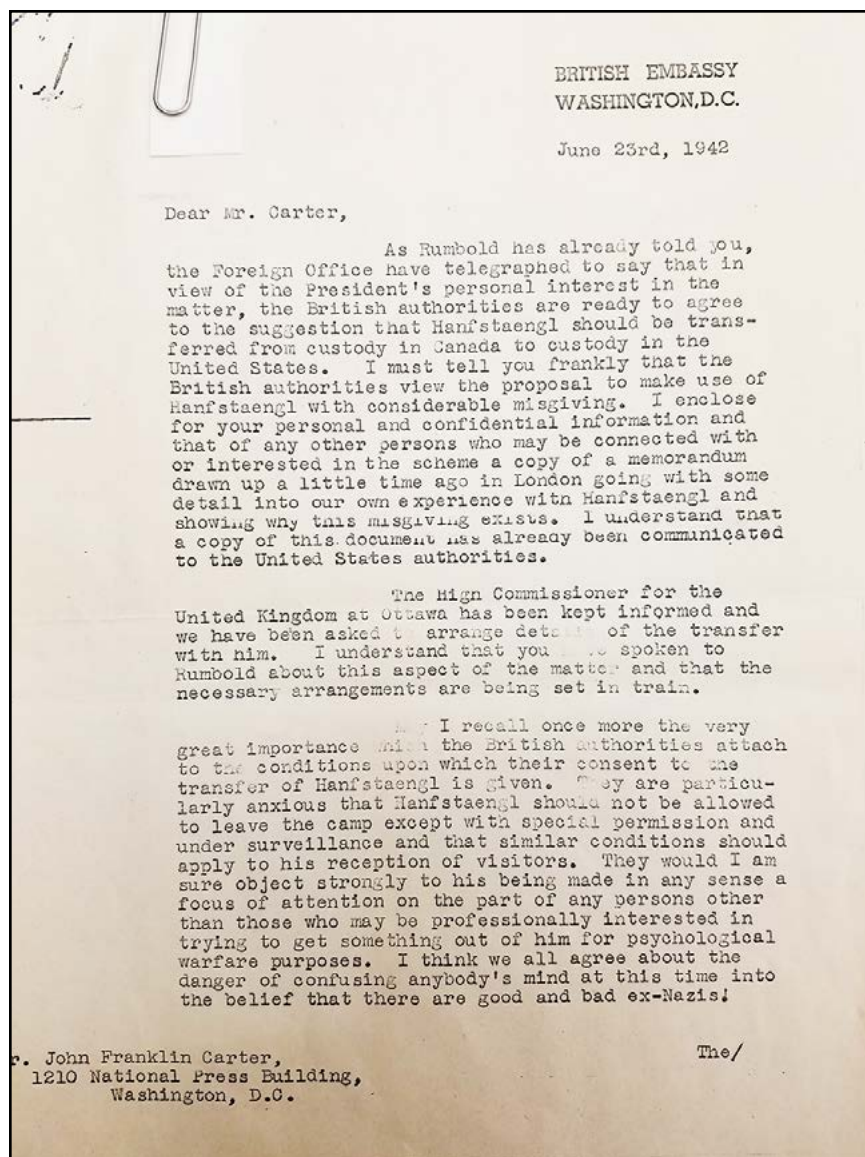
Washington and help defeat Hitler. Tormented by untreated dental maladies, as well as Canadian guards who treated him with all the tenderness they believed a Nazi deserved and by German inmates to whom he was a traitor, Hanfstaengl readily agreed.

Back in Washington, Carter pitched the idea of bringing Hanfstaengl to the United States to Roosevelt and Welles. Asked how Hanfstaengl could contribute to the war effort, Carter replied, "He actually knows all these people in the Nazi government. He might be able to tell you what makes them tick."⁴¹ It took Roosevelt's personal request to Churchill to gain the British government's reluctant acquiescence and release Hanfstaengl to Carter's custody. London agreed on the condition that the arrangement be kept secret and that the German remain under guard.

Ernst "Putzi" Hanfstaengl at the piano. Putzi had played for Theodore Roosevelt as well as for Franklin Delano before he returned to Germany from the United States, where he represented the family art business. He would become prominent in the rise of Hitler, earning places in several biographies of the Nazi leader. Undated photo: Sueddeutsche Zeitung Photo / Alamy Stock Photo

Sir Gerald Campbell, British consul general to the United States, wrote to Carter in June 1942 stating that "in view of the President's personal interest in this matter, the British authorities are ready to agree to the suggestion that Hanfstaengl should be transferred from custody in Canada to custody in the United States." He said the "British authorities view the proposal to make use of Hanfstaengl with considerable misgiving." He added, "I think we can all agree about the danger of confusing anybody's mind at this time into the belief that there are good and bad ex-Nazis." (See facing page.)⁴²

In fact, Carter believed in good and bad Nazis. In a May 1941 newspaper column, Carter had suggested that the flight to Scotland of Rudolph Hess was a sign that the conflict between warring Nazi factions was coming to a climax. He wrote that one faction wished to "stabilize



BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 23rd, 1942

Dear Mr. Carter,

As Rumbold has already told you, the Foreign Office have telegraphed to say that in view of the President's personal interest in the matter, the British authorities are ready to agree to the suggestion that Hanfstaengl should be transferred from custody in Canada to custody in the United States. I must tell you frankly that the British authorities view the proposal to make use of Hanfstaengl with considerable misgiving. I enclose for your personal and confidential information and that of any other persons who may be connected with or interested in the scheme a copy of a memorandum drawn up a little time ago in London going with some detail into our own experience with Hanfstaengl and showing why this misgiving exists. I understand that a copy of this document has already been communicated to the United States authorities.

The High Commissioner for the United Kingdom at Ottawa has been kept informed and we have been asked to arrange details of the transfer with him. I understand that you have spoken to Rumbold about this aspect of the matter and that the necessary arrangements are being set in train.

I recall once more the very great importance which the British authorities attach to the conditions upon which their consent to the transfer of Hanfstaengl is given. They are particularly anxious that Hanfstaengl should not be allowed to leave the camp except with special permission and under surveillance and that similar conditions should apply to his reception of visitors. They would I am sure object strongly to his being made in any sense a focus of attention on the part of any persons other than those who may be professionally interested in trying to get something out of him for psychological warfare purposes. I think we all agree about the danger of confusing anybody's mind at this time into the belief that there are good and bad ex-Nazis!

John Franklin Carter,
1210 National Press Building,
Washington, D.C.

The/

UK Embassy note to Carter noting British skepticism about Hanfstaengl's utility and the conditions of his transfer from Canada to the United States. (FDR Library)

German victories, leaving Germany the supreme power on the continent, but foregoing (sic) political empire," while the other "propose to follow the world-revolution to world supremacy at any cost to German manpower and German ideas." He informed his readers that "from the start of the Hitler revolution it has been obvious that there was a group of sincere, able and patriotic Germans who worked whole-heartedly for a greater

Germany and a German mission which would create a Germany and a German people free to work out their destinies and to socialize and to rationalize the life of Europe."⁴³

In agreeing to bring Hanfstaengl to Washington, Roosevelt told Carter, "You can tell him that there's no reason on God's earth why the Germans shouldn't again become the kind of nation they were under Bismarck.

Not militaristic. They were productive; they were peaceful; they were a great part of Europe. And that's the kind of Germany I would like to see. If he would like to work on that basis, fine." Hanfstaengl and Carter believed the president wanted them to help devise a strategy to inspire the German military to depose Hitler, negotiate peace with the Allies, and combine forces against the Soviet Union.⁴⁴ In the interests of secrecy, while Hanfstaengl was in the United States, Carter and Roosevelt referred to him as "Dr. Sedgwick" after his mother's maiden name, or simply as "Dr. S.," and the enterprise was referred to as the S Project.

Initially housed at Fort Belvoir, in Virginia near Washington, DC, Hanfstaengl quickly antagonized the base commander and was moved to Bush Hill, a crumbling estate in Alexandria, Virginia, that Carter rented from two of Field's relatives. The scene quickly degenerated into a farce featuring drunken rebellious servants, balky plumbing, and a leaky roof. The drama centered on the moody and petulant Hanfstaengl, who spent much of his time at an out-of-tune Steinway banging out Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner, music that he'd once used to arouse Hitler. For a time the highest ranking Nazi to step onto American soil during the war was "guarded" by his son Egon, by then a US citizen who had enlisted in the Army.⁴⁵

Technicians from the Federal Communications Commission installed a shortwave receiver at Bush Hill that Hanfstaengl used to listen to German radio broadcasts. He wrote memos suggesting counterpropaganda, lacing his recommendations with information that he believed

Hanfstaengl wrote a psychological profile of Hitler, spicing it up with salacious tidbits and speculation about the Führer's sex life.

would get under the Hitler's skin. Roosevelt took an active interest in Hanfstaengl's work, reading his reports and sending questions through Carter. For example, FDR asked for Hanfstaengl's ideas about how "word could effectively be brought to reach the German people with the assurance that we do not propose a general massacre of Germans and that in the future a peaceful German people can protect and improve their living standards."⁴⁶ Hanfstaengl suggested a broadcast to German soldiers by Generals Eisenhower or Marshall. The idea, which was never put into practice, was to plant the seeds for a German military coup against Hitler.

Hanfstaengl wrote a psychological profile of Hitler, spicing it up with salacious tidbits and speculation about the Führer's sex life. Hitler had an erotic fascination with whips, and he had probably been infected with a venereal disease by a Jewish prostitute in Vienna in 1909, his former supporter and confidant wrote. Roosevelt praised Hanfstaengl's Hitler profile, advising Harry Hopkins and other White House officials to study it carefully.⁴⁷ Hanfstaengl also wrote profiles of 400 "key Nazis" that were turned over army intelligence.

In December 1942, journalists at *Cosmopolitan* magazine learned of Hanfstaengl's presence in the United States—probably from British intelligence—and the broad outlines of his activities. The magazine's editor told Carter he planned to give the story to the anti-Roosevelt Hearst newspapers. Carter convinced him to hold off until the first of February 1943. The

State Department and White House agreed to Carter's plan to get in front of the story by issuing a press release on January 28th.⁴⁸

Carter broke the news in an article distributed by the company that handled his "We, the People" column. Writing as if he had only recently learned the bare outlines of the story, Carter told his readers that the "government is making public one of the best-kept secrets of its psychological warfare against Hitler and the Nazis, the fact that Dr. Ernst Sedgwick (Putzi) Hanfstaengl has been giving our government the lowdown on Hitlerism for several months." He added that "details of the transfer from Canadian to American jurisdiction are still shrouded in official secrecy." The story ran in newspapers around the country, including without a byline on the front page of the *New York Times*.⁴⁹

While the *Times* didn't reveal Carter's role in the affair, other newspapers mentioned that he was involved in the operation. Carter lied to his colleagues, minimizing his role. If his fellow reporters knew anything about the covert services Carter was providing the White House or the existence of his intelligence unit, they kept the information to themselves.

The publicity prompted an immediate and vociferous demand from the British government to return their prisoner.⁵⁰ Roosevelt resisted the pressure, but in the summer of 1944, London turned up the heat, threatening to leak information about the administration's codding of Hanfstaengl to Roosevelt's

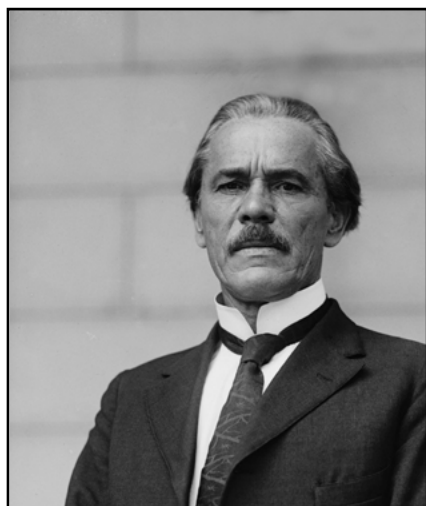
Republican challenger. The threat of newspaper stories about the White House pampering a Nazi in a mansion with servants was the last straw.

The British and Canadian governments squabbled over which country should take him, delaying Hanfstaengl's departure. In the end, Roosevelt said, "Hell, just put him on a plane and fly him over to England and turn him over. That's it." On September 24, 1944, that was what was done.⁵¹

The M Project

Carter's last large-scale mission for FDR was the M Project, a secret analysis of options for postwar migration (hence "M") of the millions of Europeans expected to be displaced by the war. In the summer of 1942, Roosevelt asked Carter to sound out Aleš Hrdlička, curator of physical anthropology at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, about leading the project.⁵² The president knew Hrdlička and was aware that the prominent scientist was convinced of the superiority of the white race and obsessed with racial identity. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, Hrdlička had written to FDR expressing the view that Japanese had a lower level of evolutionary development than other races. The president wrote back asking whether the "Japanese problem" could be solved through mass interbreeding with other races.⁵³

Hrdlička's views were not problematic for FDR, but he warned Carter that he could be difficult to manage. Carter wrote to FDR about their first meeting, describing the anthropologist as a "stubborn, erudite, arrogant, charming, authoritarian,



Aleš Hrdlicka (on left, pictured in 1922) Czech American anthropologist and curator of physical anthropology at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History began the M Project. but he was replaced by a member of the project team, the renowned geologist and president of Johns Hopkins University, Isaiah Bowman (pictured in 1940). Hrdlicka photo © Everett Collection Inc / Alamy Stock Photo; Bowman photo © Sheridan Library, JHU/Gato/Alamy Stock Photo.

friendly, difficult, delightful old gentleman.” The president responded on July 30, 1942: “I love your memorandum in regard to the multi-adjec-tived anthropologist. I think you are completely right. I know that you and Henry Field can carry out this project unofficially, exploratorially, ethnologically, racially, admixturally, miscegenationally, confidentially and, above all, budgetarily. . . . Any person connected herewith whose name appears in the public print will suffer guillotinally.”⁵⁴

Outlining the president’s charge for the committee, Carter told Hrdlička it was expected to “formu-late agreed opinions as to problems arising out of racial admixtures and to consider the scientific principles involved in the process of miscegena-tion as contrasted with the opposing policies of so-called ‘racialism.’”⁵⁵

The committee’s task, Roosevelt told Carter, was to identify “the

vacant places of the earth suitable for post-war settlement” and the “type of people who could live in those places.” Initial work was to focus on South America and Central Africa. Roosevelt wanted the committee to explore questions such as the prob-able outcomes from mixing people from various parts of Europe with the South American “base stock.”

FDR posed some specific ques-tions, such as: “Is the South Italian stock—say, Sicilian—as good as the North Italian stock—say, Milanese—if given equal economic and social opportunity? Thus, in a given case, where 10,000 Italians were to be offer[ed] settlement facilities, what proportion of the 10,000 should be Northern Italians and what Southern Italian?”⁵⁶

Roosevelt “also pointed out,” Carter informed Hrdlička, “that while most South American coun-tries would be glad to admit Jewish

immigration, it was on the condi-tion that the Jewish group were not localized in the cities, they want no ‘Jewish colonies,’ ‘Italian colonies,’ etc.” Keeping with this theme, the president also tasked the committee with determining how to “resettle the Jews on the land and keep them there.”

Ultimately, Carter was unable to handle Hrdlicka and Roosevelt de-cided to replace him with a member of the M Project team, Johns Hopkins University President renowned ge-ographer, Isaiah Bowman. Roosevelt knew Bowman well, and was aware of his anti-Semitic views. In 1938, FDR had asked Bowman to undertake a study similar to the M Project, but on a smaller scale. Roosevelt told Bowman: “Frankly, what I am rather looking for is the possibility of un-inhabited or sparsely inhabited good agricultural lands to which Jewish colonies might be sent.” Bowman, who played a prominent role in the redrawing of European and Middle Eastern national boundaries at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, counseled the president to avoid permitting Jewish immigration to the United States, to try to keep Jewish populations in Europe, and if they left the continent to disperse them in rural areas as far away from the United States as possible.”⁵⁷

Under Bowman’s and Fields’s joint leadership, the M Project expanded far beyond Roosevelt’s original charge, producing tens of thousands of pages of reports, maps, and charts, analyses of the supposed characteristics of myriad racial and ethnic groups, and theories about optimal proportions in which to com-bine them in their new homelands. (See next page for a sampling.)

JOHN FRANKLIN CARTER
(Jay Franklin)
1210 NATIONAL PRESS BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D. C.

J.F.C.

Metropolitan 4112
Metropolitan 4113

January 7, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR MISS TULLY: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOWMAN-FIELD COMMITTEE ("M" PROJECT)

Herewith is the annual report on the administration of the "M" Project--
Bowman-Field Committee on Migration and Settlement.

J.F.C.

REPORT SERIES

| <u>Number</u> | | <u>1943</u> | <u>Copies</u> |
|---------------|--|-------------|---------------|
| R-1 | GROWTH OF SOVIET POPULATION | 6/18 | 1 - 30 |
| R-2 | POPULATION PROBLEMS OF FRANCE | 6/28 | 1 - 30 |
| R-3 | POSSIBILITIES OF SETTLEMENT IN BAJA CALIFORNIA | 7/21 | 1 - 30 |
| R-4 | SUDETEN SETTLERS AT ST. WALBURG, SASKATCHEWAN | 6/25 | 1 - 30 |
| R-5 | POPULATION MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE, 1939-1942 | 7/28 | 1 - 4 |
| R-6 | SETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES IN THE NEGEB, PALESTINE (Uncompleted) | | 1 - 3 |
| R-7 | SETTLEMENT OF PONTINE MARSHES | 11/25 | 1 - 30 |
| R-8 | SETTLEMENT IN NORTHERN FINLAND | 8/5 | 1 - 30 |
| R-9 | ITALIAN SETTLEMENT IN ETHIOPIA | | |
| R-10 | GROWTH OF THE GERMAN POPULATION | 8/5 | 1 - 30 |
| R-11 | TRANSFER OF PEOPLES IN EUROPE, 1939-1942 | 8/4 | 1 - 30 |
| R-12 | POLISH REFUGEES IN MEXICO | 8/4 | 1 - 3 |
| R-13 | SUDETEN SETTLEMENT AT TUPPER, BRITISH COLUMBIA | 8/19 | 1 - 30 |
| R-14 | A STUDY OF SETTLER' PROGRESS IN NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN | 8/30 | 1 - 30 |
| R-15 | TWO REFUGEE CAMPS IN UGANDA | 7/6 | 1 - 3 |

The covering memo and a portion of the first page of appendices (then labeled exhibits) of the "M" Project Annual Report for 1943. The appendices listed, with a few titles omitted, 117 items, including reports, memoranda, translations, and treatments of Nazi German "administrative" behavior. A statistical summary (a page count) of the activity showed that 3,912 pages had been produced; the work including generation of 2,355 maps, photographs, and photostate.

More than 30 contributors were listed as helping in the project, including a number of OSS employees —secretarial and cartographic specialists. The dissemination list showed 29 recipients. The first recipient outside of the White House on the list (copy #3) was "Dr. William L. Langer, O.S.S. for Research and Analysis."

While settlement contingencies for a wide range of peoples were studied, when Roosevelt described the M Project to Churchill during a lunch at the White House in May 1943, he focused on one group. It was, he said, an effort to solve "the problem of working out the best way to settle the Jewish question," Vice President Henry Wallace, who attended the meeting, recorded in his diary. The solution that the president endorsed, "essentially is to spread the Jews thin all over the world," rather than allow them to congregate anywhere in large numbers.⁵⁸

FDR tightly controlled the distribution of reports from the M Project. There is no evidence that it had any influence on policy. In retrospect, it is most important as a window into FDR's thinking about race and immigration.

Terminated by Truman

When Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, his personal files contained more than 3,000 pages of correspondence with Carter, profiles of hundreds of Nazis that Hanfstaengl had compiled, plus the massive outpouring from the M Project.

Carter wrote to Truman explaining his work for FDR, offering to continue his unit's covert activities, and urging the new president to fund completion of the M Project. Truman was deeply skeptical about the need for espionage or secret intelligence, and he had been informed by the State Department that the \$10,000 per month that was being spent on the M Project was a waste of money. He terminated Carter's operations, cut off funding for the migration studies,

and rejected Carter's requests to be reinstated.^{a, 59}

Carter finally received official recognition of his activities in a December 11, 1945 letter from Truman thanking him for his service. Addressed to "Jay Franklin," one of Carter's pseudonyms, Truman wrote: "In liquidating your office I want to

take this opportunity to thank you for the patriotism and insight with which you and your staff handled the duties assigned to you. There are people in the Government who have done a heroic job with no other object in view but the welfare of their country. I think your organization was in that category." Thus ended one of the stranger episodes in American intelligence.⁶⁰

Just as he had written columns about the Roosevelt administration while secretly working to undermine its political opponents, in 1948 Carter joined the Truman campaign as a speechwriter and continued to publish articles about the election. As the Cold War came to define US politics, Carter shifted his allegiance to Republicans. On November 28, 1967, age 70, Carter suffered a heart attack and died in his office in the National Press Building in Washington, DC.⁶¹

a. The OSS was disbanded on September 20, 1945.



The author: Steve Usdin, an independent scholar based in Washington, DC, is the author of two books about intelligence history, *Engineering Communism: How Two Americans Spied for Stalin and Founded the Soviet Silicon Valley* (Yale, 2008) and *Bureau of Spies: The Secret Connections Between Espionage and Journalism in Washington* (Prometheus 2018). His articles about intelligence history have been published in *Studies in Intelligence*, the *Journal of Cold War History*, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, *Politico*, *Weekly Standard*, *Tablet* and other publications.

Endnotes

General note: Unless otherwise noted, reports and memorandums sent by John Franklin Carter to Franklin Roosevelt and correspondence from "FDR to JFC" referenced in this paper can be found in Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers as President: The President's Secretary's File (PSF), 1933–1945, available online at <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/collections/franklin/?p=collections/findingaid&id=502&rootcontentid=140730&q=john+franklin+carter#id140730>

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58. Rafael Medoff, "What FDR Said About Jews in Private," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 April 2013, A26.
59. Carter to Benjamin Cohen, Office of the Secretary of State, 7 August 1945, University of Wyoming archives.
60. Letter from Harry Truman to John Franklin Carter, copy provided to the author by Richard Hiscock, son of Earle Hiscock, a member of Carter's staff.
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Intelligence in Public Media

Undaunted: My Fight Against America's Enemies at Home and Abroad

John O. Brennan (Celadon Books, 2020) 446 pages, illustrations

Reviewed by Thomas G. Coffey

Only three pages into the preface and it's clear that John Brennan is annoyed. Quoting from a letter to CIA Director Gina Haspel, he writes, "It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Agency's refusal to grant my [official records] request reflects the current administration's desire to punish and retaliate against me for speaking out as a private citizen—an abuse of power designed to chill the exercise of my first amendment rights."⁽³⁾ Of course, Brennan is not exactly your average private citizen, having once served as CIA director (DCIA) and now as a regular pundit on cable news. The withholding of his records may indeed be the reason *Undaunted* does not provide the level of detail found in memoirs by other former directors. Stylistically, Brennan's narrative lacks the intrigue and excitement we would expect to see from the head of the CIA. *Undaunted* is a book that does not do justice to a momentous life.

And what a life Brennan has lived, starting from his blue-collar upbringing in northern New Jersey to eventually serving as President Clinton's briefer, DCI George Tenet's chief of staff, the senior intelligence liaison in Saudi Arabia, director of the Terrorist Threat Integration Center (TTIC) and its successor the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), President Obama's chief White House assistant for homeland security and counterterrorism, and DCIA. Rich material for a life story and yet *Undaunted* lacks the rich storytelling and eye for detail of Robert Gates's classic *From the Shadows*^a or the well-paced and interesting, if less vivid, recollections of Michael Morell in *The Great War of Our Time*.^b Even when it comes to coverage of their mutual antagonist, President Trump, Brennan's book is no match for the wry humor and lucid prose on display in John Bolton's *The Room Where It Happened*.^c In the acknowledgements section, Brennan graciously thanks by name the many intelligence officers and policy officials who affected his

career. Their voices, however, are largely missing from the narrative.

The chapters on the takedown of Bin Ladin, hardly a surprise with its can't miss material, and the rendition, detention, and interrogation (RDI) uproar with Congress, give *Undaunted* some spark. Apparently, the Pakistanis had scrambled fighter jets at the end of the assault on the compound. (245) After pouring cold water on a raid in an earlier National Security Council meeting, Vice President Biden later told Obama that he should approve the operation. (240) All the camera lenses in the Situation Room were covered during the meetings on this subject so there would be "no inadvertent hemorrhaging" of the discussions via secure video. (231) On RDI, then DCIA Panetta granted the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) direct access to any related operational files, including background investigation reports and polygraph results of CIA officers involved in the program, which Brennan describes as "an unprecedented intrusion by Congress into the private lives of American citizens working at the CIA." (305) Of course, just who was intruding on who is a matter of debate, given the controversy surrounding CIA officers accessing SSCI's RDI database to discover how the Panetta review, compiled to flag issues and actions that could get raised, found its way into SSCI's possession. (315) Biden mediated a sit-down between Brennan and SSCI Chair Dianne Feinstein that helped ease tensions. (321)

Brennan is a pioneer in the successful US counterterrorism effort undertaken in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. So it's a letdown to have him coast through arguably his grandest achievement in laying a firm foundation for integrated counterterrorism intelligence work through the creation of TTIC and NCTC. Former officers this author has interviewed swear that, if not for Brennan's tenacity and commitment against stiff opposition, these centers would

a. Robert Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (Simon and Schuster, 1996).

b. Michael Morell (with Bill Harlow), *The Great War of Our Time: The CIA's Fight Against Terrorism—From al Qaeda to ISIS* (Hachette Book Group, 2015).

c. John Bolton, *The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir* (Simon and Schuster, 2020)

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have failed. Indeed, Brennan claims the FBI and CIA directors only agreed to cooperate on information sharing after Brennan threatened to go to President Bush. (147) And, that's about it for the legendary dustups between Brennan and his Intelligence Community counterparts. The chapter's routine treatment sells short all Brennan's hard work.

Much of the passion in *Undaunted* is reserved for Trump, which gives the narrative an element of being preordained. Many episodes of his career are summed up with an unfavorable comparison to the former president's handling of the issue, from the guidelines for taking direct action against terrorists, to managing presidential transitions or pandemics, to separating politics from national security work. (220, 192, 196, 274) And so it's no surprise the final chapter that shares the memoir's title is devoted to his rows as a former DCIA with the then-president. The section is a rundown of earlier Brennan criticism of

Trump's behavior toward President Vladimir Putin, his treatment of Obama administration officials, along with his unusual approach to the office. (401, 400, 402)

Being undaunted, Brennan raises few second thoughts about entering into the public fray. His one stab at reflection notes "my caustic criticism of Trump would trigger a sharp backlash from Trump supporters as well as from individuals who believe a former CIA director should not engage in public denunciation of a sitting president." (401) But he follows this stocktaking with a reference to being denied service on corporate advisory groups and remunerative speaking engagements. Nothing about whether Brennan considered the impact such outspokenness might have on the CIA or the Intelligence Community, for better or worse. What is clear is that Brennan is at peace with his decision and is set on his course. "It's a path I have freely and willingly chosen." (410)



The reviewer: Thomas Coffey is a member of the Lessons Learned Program of the Center for the Study of Intelligence.

Becoming Kim Jong UN: A Former CIA Officer's Insights into North Korea's Enigmatic Young Dictator

Jong Un Pak (Random House, 2020), 317 pages, map illustrations, map, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by Joseph W. Gartin

If timing is everything, the publication of Dr. Jung H. Pak's *Becoming Kim Jong Un* in April 2020 could hardly have been more propitious. Indeed, it looked for a time that it would become the go-to reference for obituary writers as the North Korean leader disappeared from public view that month amid reports he was gravely ill or perhaps even dead. When Kim emerged on May 2, 2020 for the opening of a fertilizer plant, looking cheerful and portly and completely alive—the kind of performative leadership appearance that is a staple of the seven-decade Kim family dynasty—many commentators fell back on clichés. Kim is a pampered, idiosyncratic, and ruthless leader, overseeing a vast if underfed army and a growing arsenal of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles that threaten South Korea, Japan, and the United States. His disappearance from public view was just another example of his reclusive and enigmatic rule.

Getting beyond these tropes to craft a more nuanced and objective view of Kim Jong Un is the goal of Pak's book. She brings an impressive resume to the task. Born in South Korea, Pak came to the United States as a child, earned a PhD in Korean studies from Columbia University, and studied in South Korea as a Fulbright Scholar. Pak then joined the Central Intelligence Agency, where she would serve as one of the Intelligence Community's foremost experts on North Korea, the Kim family, and its unique brand of autocracy wrapped in the rhetoric of socialism and self-reliance. After leaving CIA to become chair of the Korea program at the Brookings Institution, Pak joined the Biden administration as a deputy secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs.

For this reviewer, Pak's book has special relevance. I served in CIA's precursor to today's Korea Mission Center for most of the 1990s, including in 1994 when North Korea state news announced President Kim Il Sung had died after five decades of iron rule. Every Korea-watcher from Seoul to Washington was fixated on the stability of the new regime led by Kim Il Sung's loyal if unprepossessing son Kim Jong Il. When Pyongyang

announced in December 2011 that Kim Jong Il had died of a heart attack, I was beginning a four-year stint as vice chairman of the National Intelligence Council (NIC). Once again, the Intelligence Community would be focused on the unique hereditary succession dynamics of the Kim regime, this time without the decades-long effort of propaganda and purges that had paved the way for Kim Jong Il. Pyongyang's advancing nuclear and missile programs, obsolescent but lethal conventional forces, and brittle economy compounded concerns over the risk of instability. It was in this milieu that the NIC created a National Intelligence Officer (NIO) for North Korea and hired Dr. Pak as deputy NIO.

Pak's deep expertise, fluent Korean, and IC leadership made her indispensable in crafting the intelligence assessments that informed US policy discussions about how to deal with Kim Jong Un, and she employs these same skills to good effect in *Becoming Kim Jong Un*. Pak guides the reader briskly but competently through Kim Chong Il's tangle of wives and mistresses, Kim family intrigue, and Kim Jong Un's privileged upbringing. Like his half-brothers and half-sister, Jong Un was raised in luxury in Pyongyang, and he later was sent to study in Switzerland while the North suffered through the economic dislocation of the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991—Moscow had long propped up the regime with cash, weapons, and oil—and the largely man-made famine of the 1990s.

For average North Koreans, it was a grim period. Pak observes:

Corpses piled up near train stations; roving bands of starving orphans stole what they could or collapsed when they couldn't find anything; women turned to prostitution in an attempt to survive and feed their families. People of all ages . . . foraged in the woods to find roots, mushrooms, and other wild plants, often with tragic consequences. . . . People ate garbage, rats, frogs. (55)

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Pak details Kim Jong Un's return in 2001 from Europe to a country beset by economic collapse, growing military obsolescence, and tensions with its neighbors and foes alike. It must have been a jarring contrast, she notes, from his life in Switzerland, protected as he was from the privations facing most of the country. (57) Kim Jong Un's preparation to succeed his father, who was increasingly frail as the decade wore on, unfolded against the backdrop of al-Qa'ida's attacks on the United States, US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and increasing US pressure on the Kim regime. Private markets emerged in fits and starts to ease shortages, but the regime remained quick to crack down whenever it sensed entrepreneurship might turn into anti-dynastic sentiment. And while the multi-lateral talks known as the Six-Party Talks resulted in a joint statement in 2005 promising a reduction in tensions and end to the North's nuclear weapons ambitions, the following year Pyongyang tested a nuclear device. New ballistic missiles and more nuclear tests would follow. (67) The rest of the decade would be filled with the familiar cycle of negotiations, sanctions, provocations, and more negotiations that have long marked North Korea relations.

When Kim Chong Il died in December 2011, the regime put the transition machinery into high gear. With characteristic rhetorical flourishes, state media called on "the whole Party, the entire army, and all the people" to become "human shields in defending Kim Jong Un to the death." (73) He appeared determined to lead North Korea in his own way. Pak observes, "during those tense years, we started to talk about the 'new normal'—in which we saw ballistic missile tests almost every two weeks and heard sustained, alarming rhetoric that most veteran watchers of North Korea agreed was the worst observed in twenty years." (81)

Kim spent much of the decade fleshing out his vision for North Korea as a kind of technocratic, nuclear-capable, socialist dynasty, modern yet isolated, that despite its inherent contradictions could stand toe to toe with its allies and adversaries. Pak argues that Jong Un made progress in advancing "both the economy and the nuclear weapons program, building monuments of leisure and monuments for national defense, and seemingly ushering in a new and modern North Korea after decades of decline." (154) As the decade came to an end, he would score other high-profile successes with his high-stakes

meetings beginning in 2018 with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, (179) Chinese President Xi Jinping and—most historically significant—President Donald Trump. As Pak notes, "Kim would get what his grandfather and his father were never able to obtain—a meeting with a sitting US president." (202) Kim also demonstrated the kind of ruthless pruning of the family tree that has sustained the Kim dynasty since 1945, most dramatically by publicly executing his powerful uncle Jang Song Taek (104) and authorizing the murder of his half-brother Kim Jong Nam (145) in a brazen nerve-gas attack in the Kuala Lumpur airport.

Pak's book succeeds in giving the reader a greater understanding of Kim Jong Un as the product of a unique dynastic regime and his own ambitions, along with casting some light into the shadows of one of the hardest of hard targets. *Becoming Kim Jong Un* also pulls back the curtain on analytic tradecraft, as Pak invokes intelligence pioneers like Richards Heuer^a (118) to examine her sources of information and the logic behind her judgments. At times, however, both bump up against the firewalls of secrecy and uncertainty, and Pak resorts to assertions in the absence of ground truth. "Perhaps," she speculates, "Jong Un hated his brother—Westernized, gluttonous, corrupted—for what he represented." (149) Writing about Kim Jong Un's motivations for a cyber-attack on Sony Pictures Entertainment in 2014, Pak suggests "Perhaps exposing the regime's propaganda of Kim's godlike status and its farcical claims that North Korea was a land of prosperity hit too close to home." (129) Perhaps is a probabilistic coin toss; something might or might not be the case. Better to say we simply do not know.

A year on from publishing *Becoming Kim Jong Un*, Pak is now on the policymaker side of the intelligence-customer divide, and Korea watchers are still challenged to predict Kim's actions and divine his motives. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, his frequent weeks-long disappearances from public view remain as newsworthy as they are unexplained. When he does appear, typically to exhort Korean Workers Party bureaucrats to improve living conditions or to showcase Pyongyang's military capabilities, experts dissect every word and gesture. For anyone trying to understand what makes Kim tick on the basis of such fragmentary information, Pak's book is an invaluable companion.



The reviewer: Joseph Gartin retired from CIA as its chief learning officer. He recently joined the Studies Editorial Team.

a. Richards Heuer, *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis* (Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1999).

Intelligence in Public Media

The Hardest Place: The American Military Adrift in Afghanistan's Pech Valley

Wesley Morgan (Random House, 2021), 644 pages, color illustrations, maps, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by Leslie C.

“Journalists write the first rough draft of history” is a shopworn assertion that does insufficient justice to Wesley Morgan’s *The Hardest Place: The American Military Adrift in Afghanistan’s Pech Valley*. Because this book is the fruit of 10 years of research, interviews, and writing, it could fairly be characterized as a stylish second draft, with a final product pending the availability of still-classified primary sources unavailable to Morgan. Given this constraint, it would have been difficult for him to produce a more complete treatment.

Reduced to its essence, the book describes what can happen when the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing—and frequently does not know what it has itself already done. Morgan shows that the actions of US special operations forces and intelligence officers were inextricably linked with those of the regular Army companies that manned the scattered and vulnerable outposts in Kunar and Nuristan Provinces in the Pech Valley region. Morgan demonstrates the consequences of fighting a conventional counterinsurgency war at cross-purposes to the secret war waged by the Special Forces “man-hunting machine” and the intelligence apparatus behind it.

Morgan presents a credible periodization of the US effort, beginning with the initial special operations and CIA presence in Kunar, based on the theory that Osama Bin Laden fled there after Tora Bora. The gradual augmentation of specialized units focused on eliminating al-Qa’ida with infantry battalions whose mission encompassed broader goals highlights a tension between counterterrorism and counterinsurgency that American leaders struggled to reconcile. This tension exposed cracks in the US presence that widened as the war continued, expanding into frequent combat and ultimately contracting as Americans disengaged and sought to turn the fight over to ill-prepared Afghan government forces. All the while, the secret war remained in the background, though it too evolved. SEAL and CIA proxy raids increasingly gave way to drone strikes, while the target deck shifted from al-Qa’ida to affiliated militants and ultimately, in the years

following Bin Laden’s 2011 death, to the Afghanistan-based arm of the Islamic State.

The Hardest Place is well-written and well-paced. One of Morgan’s strengths is giving voice to the company and battalion commanders whose soldiers bled attempting to secure the Pech Valley, while placing their struggle in a wider context. Another strength is Morgan’s assessments supporting his contentions; these, in my judgment, are the chief value of his narrative. Much of these come in the book’s first quarter, suggesting the primary problems that would mar the campaign manifested themselves early.

Morgan describes Afghanistan as an “intelligence nightmare” (16) and elaborates the reasons. He regards signals intelligence as the US Intelligence Community’s strong suit but argues that Afghanistan in 2002 was a poor theater for it, thus forcing a reliance on traditional human intelligence (HUMINT) against a backdrop of thorny cultural and language barriers. In Kunar and Nuristan, residents of neighboring valleys spoke differing dialects that stymied interpreters embedded with US units. Morgan shows that faulty intelligence triggered incidents that had serious consequences as US forces squandered initial goodwill and engendered mistrust.

American actions perceived as abuses, such as the 2002 death of Abdul Wali at the hands of his interrogator, or the late October 2003 airstrike on Maulawi Ghulam Rabbani’s compound—which Morgan characterizes as the “original sin” of US involvement in the Pech Valley—caused far more damage than the accidental deaths of civilians during heavy fighting later. Indeed, Morgan concludes that American troops venturing into the valley following these incidents reaped the consequences and, “because of the secrecy surrounding the strike, would only know about it what the locals did, which wasn’t much.” (66) The standard special operations tactic of “night raids” on compounds suspected of harboring militants—which became a consistent irritant of then-Afghan President Hamid Karzai—only exacerbated the problem.

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The tracking of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar—whom CIA identified as a likely fallback host for Bin Laden if the Taliban was overthrown—to remove him from the battlefield had repercussions and illustrated the limits of the US propensity to deal with local warlords and power brokers. The failure to understand the dynamics among these players, or when they and US proxies in the counterterror pursuit teams and the Afghan intelligence service (NDS) were compromised by personal vendettas and business rivalries—such as an ongoing dispute over control of valuable lumber resources in which US forces unwittingly took sides—tainted the campaign by association and hamstrung operations.

Anyone who has grappled with war zone staffing will recognize Morgan's critique of military personnel policies. Turnovers, whether every six, 12, or 15 months, he writes, "would prove to be the bane of American efforts not only in the Pech but in dozens of other Afghan valleys and districts where the military struggled and often failed to maintain much consistency in its approach." (69) Morgan recounts how Special Forces teams rotated out, replaced by conventional formations that were "taking over missions started by special operators, often with little preparation or understanding of the work of the units that had preceded them." (96) Likewise, "it was a rare unit in Afghanistan that had an accurate understanding of how the base it occupied had come into being, or of what had been transpiring outside the base's gates more than one rotation into the recent past." (97)

Morgan judges that the US military suffered from a form of tunnel vision by focusing on certain targets at the expense of others, a tendency militants exploited. Ahmad Shah, the primary target of Operation Red Wings, a disastrous June 2005 mission in which 19 SEALs and special operations aviation personnel died in an attempt to neutralize a low-level militant leader, is a prime example. The failure of Red Wings, which exposed the "complex parallel chains of command governing conventional and special operations," (123) also had a longer-term significance. It led to military escalation in Kunar, focused on the Korengal Valley. After Red Wings, Morgan asserts, the region was no longer the sole preserve of Special Forces teams, CIA operators, and their indigenous proxies. It became the focus—and the home of—a regular army battalion, five of which would subsequently rotate through the valley. It also became, in Morgan's estimation, a "self-licking ice cream cone" in which "American military activity was driving insurgent attacks,

and insurgent attacks were driving American military activity." (95) This condition prevailed until another high casualty engagement, the July 2009 Battle of Wanat, which Morgan calls the regional "high water mark," forced a reassessment of the viability of a permanent presence in the Pech Valley. (249)

The decision to withdraw from the Pech occurred within the context of preparing the Afghan government to defend itself. While I tend to skepticism of facile comparisons, reference to "Vietnamization" is apt, inasmuch as it conjures the specter of building the army one is advising in one's image, complete with the same problems and the same fixations on firepower, body counts, and big-unit offensives. Morgan notes that this "fear was common among American troops who spent time advising the Afghan National Army (ANA) and other Afghan security forces." (408) The ghost of Vietnam lurks also in a thread present throughout the book, in which US commanders working in the Pech Valley sought to draw lessons from counterinsurgency efforts of the past, including Algeria, Malaya, and of course, Vietnam.

The final phase of the book covers Operation Haymaker, which was "an aerial man-hunting campaign that would use drones and other aircraft to find and strike remote al-Qa'ida targets." (418) While in one sense a return to the earlier regional focus on man-hunting, the new iteration was complicated by a history of civilian casualties. For Morgan, Haymaker illustrates the conundrum of trying to do "low-risk" counterinsurgency and counterterrorism in a place regarded as too dangerous for in-person operations. Predator and Reaper drones, which Morgan regards as "a tool of narrow usefulness," (59) also demonstrate what he assesses as "misplaced American confidence in their cameras in the sky at time when there were no longer ground troops around to maintain relationships with local people." (447) Another part of that conundrum resides in the debate over the viability of a CIA footprint in the absence of a US military presence (452–55)—a debate that will resonate today as the US military's complete withdrawal from Afghanistan looms.

Reflecting on the limits of what American power can accomplish—and at what price—in a remote and challenging environment seems poignant in the immediate wake of the announcement of the final US withdrawal from Afghanistan set for the 20th anniversary of September 11, 2001. Morgan's book is an effective companion for such reflection, for military and

intelligence practitioners alike. The author is sympathetic to his protagonists, without eliding the serious problems they encountered, and sometimes caused, and is mostly balanced in his assessments of them.

Morgan's work is based on a variety of sources, including standard works on the Afghanistan war, a slew of memoirs, and numerous interviews. In the case of the regular army, the interviewees are named. With the Special Forces, and with CIA, most are cited as anonymous intelligence officers or operators. This is problematic, given well-known limitations and source biases associated with interviews and memoirs. Similarly, his CIA

sources appear to have been largely paramilitary operators, as opposed to officers mainly involved in HUMINT or other operational activity. This is not a criticism, given the book's subject; rather, it is to observe that the choice of interview subjects produces a specific narrative result, potentially at the expense of other aspects of a complex operational intelligence picture, something readers might wish to know. Morgan could hardly have done it differently, given what was available to him, and it is clear that he went to great lengths to corroborate his information. The result is both judicious and wide-ranging.



The reviewer: Leslie C. is a CIA Directorate of Operations officer who has served in Afghanistan.

Intelligence in Public Media

After the Wars: International Lessons From the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

John Gentry and William Nolte, eds. (National Intelligence University Press, 2018), 344 pages, notes, index, contributors.

Reviewed by James H.

Drs. Gentry and Nolte's empowering compilation of diverse perspectives in 11 chapters, each written by a different, highly reputable contributor, is a compelling read for those engaged in US foreign policy, military history, or the instruction of the implications of global war. Each chapter—written independently with no apparent attempt to find common ground—gives readers peeks into what some of our most influential foreign policy thinkers have observed when examining the consequences of the decades-long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Observations made regarding foreign ground battles, cyber operations, domestic security, and pressing diplomatic issues barely scratch the surface of how deeply these contributors go to share what they've experienced or seen. From the beginning, readers will understand that the reflections shared in the book could only have been explained so thoroughly by experts engaged in the events day after day.

Drs. Gentry and Nolte invited the contributors to think about 14 points when writing. The effort they claimed would cover subjects important in coming years of international relations. These points included lessons useful to designing attack strategies against the United States and its interests, perceptions of US friends and allies regarding the United States in general, and implications for international intelligence sharing.

As US combat operations in the region near an end after two full decades, they do so having drastically evolved following the attacks of 9/11. The sustained US military involvement in the Middle East is now regularly regarded as a topic of political discussion and debate. However, every chapter of this book reflects solely on the lessons to be learned from those actions and their impact on international relationships. The integrity of the career officials who contributed to this book means it does not serve as an outlet for political dissertation on how the contributor views the US policy toward engaging in war.

Because so many perspectives could be included in such a task, the editors agreed that "This book therefore

is not a comprehensive examination of the wars." Former NSA Director of Signals Intelligence, Maureen Baginski, wrote a glowing foreword, speaking of this book as an essential work. I was more than pleased to see a career intelligence official appreciate their work. She made clear that current US officials would benefit from this collection when evaluating strategic decisions.

Most international policy oriented publications about the wars' impact on US international relations almost exclusively cover relationships with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Iran. In this compilation, readers will learn of less frequently evaluated US relationships, such those with our allies and nongovernmental organizations, among others.

However, the book's chapters seem to me to be organized in a disagreeable order. The work begins with a challenging, though important, analysis of historical combat in Libya and Mali. This foundation does build on itself and successfully outlines implications for future transatlantic cooperation, an especially meaningful topic with respect to European counterparts. Yet, not until the next-to-the-last chapter of the book, chapter 11 ("Learning By Insurgents"), will readers look at modern insurgent groups such as ISIL and the Taliban. I think that for at least nonacademic professionals, a key to understanding the decades-long wars is understanding of modern insurgent forces and strategy. Addressing this subject earlier might have provided readers a stronger foundation with which to understand European involvement in historical and modern combat operations than do the chapters that now precede it

In sum, I believe, considering the experience and reputations of its contributors, this book is a gem that cannot be ignored by anyone interested in learning from our combat history and improving our understanding of the implications of engaging other partners in future military action. In short, public servants, academics, and historians will all gain valuable insights from this work.



The reviewer is a CIA Directorate of Operations officer.

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Anti-American Terrorism: From Eisenhower to Trump—A Chronicle of the Threat and Response, Volume II, The Reagan and George H.W. Bush Administrations

Dennis A. Pluchinsky (World Scientific, 2020), 630 pages, introduction, footnotes, photographs, appendix, index.

Reviewed by David B.

Terrorism is an evolving threat that changes with the politics of its era. *Anti-American Terrorism: From Eisenhower to Trump—A Chronicle of the Threat and the Response*, Volume II focuses on what author Dennis Pluchinsky refers to as “the second of the four phases of the international terrorist threat” coinciding with the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush presidencies. (xxxix) Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter faced threats mostly from left-wing and secular Palestinian terrorist organizations during their respective administrations. Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush, however, largely confronted state-sponsored and Islamic Revolutionary Terrorism (IRT) during this second phase of anti-American terrorism. Pluchinsky argues international terrorism continued to evolve with the changing geopolitical landscape of the late 20th century.

The author contends that overseas anti-American terrorism reached the high-water mark during the Reagan administration, which faced a more geographically and philosophically diverse group of terrorist threats than at any other point in American history.

This terrorist threat was composed of left-wing, secular Palestinian, Islamic revolutionary, and state-sponsored/supported terrorist organizations. These organizations carried out over 1,600 terrorist attacks worldwide that killed over 570 Americans. This death toll was five times higher than in the 1970s. (202)

International attacks grew as a result of a confluence of important events that would also help shape US government responses to future terrorist incidents. Left-wing and the secular Palestinian terrorist strains began to ebb during this time frame. The US government instead faced the evolving tactics and ideological messages that emerged with IRT and state-sponsored terrorist threats.

Pluchinsky works hard to classify different terrorist incidents and situate them within a discrete typology for the reader, though he freely acknowledges there is

considerable overlap when attempting to do so. He also discusses the analytic difficulties in determining whether an attack qualifies as a state-sponsored or an IRT attack. Nevertheless, he attempts to examine every terrorist incident based on the logistics and operational support a state provides, as well as trying to determine who may have benefited most from its execution. Sometimes, however, this exercise becomes nearly impossible because of reporting gaps or the complex relationships between state sponsors and their various proxies.

The emergence of Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and its attacks against US personnel and facilities in Lebanon during the early 1980s is a prime example of how difficult it can be to attribute attacks based on this analytical framework. Pluchinsky defines IRT as

Muslims and converts who believe that it is necessary and appropriate to use political violence to redress their individual and collective grievances against the West and other enemies of their version of Islam in order to restore Islam to its rightful position in the world. (63)

Later in the volume, he defines state-sponsored terrorism as consisting of “those states that engage in external terrorist activity aimed at other states and dissident exiles and is carried out by a state’s intelligence services or contracted non-state terrorist organizations.” (107) The author clearly documents LH’s responsibility as a terrorist organization in its early attacks. Some of the LH attacks discussed include its pioneering uses of suicide-vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (SVBIEDs) in 1983 against the US embassy and the US Marine Corps battalion landing team headquarters and the French paratrooper barracks in Beirut. He also describes LH kidnappings of US citizens in Lebanon and its tactics in hijacking airliners. Based on these and other incidents, the author describes LH as an early example of the IRT strain. One could reasonably argue, however, that Iran enjoyed most of the long-term benefits from the LH model. It was Iran, after all, that played a critical role in creating and

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supporting LH to further its own foreign policy agenda. Once tested, Iran would use this same template in the future to fund, train, equip, and support similar organizations throughout the Middle East.

Pluchinsky's analysis concerning Washington's approach to state-sponsored terrorism will be of particular interest to readers looking for answers on the Reagan administration's national security policy calculus. Libya, Syria, and Iran occupied the attention of senior policy-makers on state-sponsored terrorism issues during this period. Pluchinsky argues that the Reagan administration made a conscious decision to aggressively target Libya with military action and chose not to follow the same policy for Syria or Iran. He writes:

The US picked on Libya because it could. The Reagan administration needed a big "win" against terrorism to support Reagan's 27 January 1981 Rose Garden "swift retaliation" boast and to prevent any identification of Reagan with the "Carter Syndrome." (425–26)

This policy was counterproductive in pressuring Libya to give up state-sponsored terrorism as an asymmetrical tactic against its enemies. To the contrary, Libya and the United States embraced a cycle of retaliatory violence, culminating with the bombing of Pan American Airlines Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. In a warning highlighted throughout the centuries from Carl von Clausewitz to terrorism scholars such as Ian Lustick, Pluchinsky shows the reader that armed conflict often takes on a life of its own and can lead to severe unintended consequences.^{a,b}

Hostage-taking also had a significant influence on President Reagan's strategic thinking about terrorism. Pluchinsky argues Reagan's desire to avoid an "Iranian hostage trap" (552) was an important factor that shaped US counterterrorism (CT) policy for decades to come. While other books such as Mark Bowden's *Guests of the Ayatollah*^c or David Crist's *The Twilight War*^d provide more detailed accountings of the 444-day US hostage crisis in Iran, Pluchinsky highlights with equal clarity that the impact of these events on President Reagan's mindset cannot be understated. Reagan molded his political image to stand in stark contrast to President Carter's, often choosing aggressive policy measures and hardline

political rhetoric toward terrorist adversaries or state sponsors of terrorism.

Pluchinsky argues that terrorism and US CT policy were not initially top priorities for President Reagan, but terrorist events beginning in 1983, driven largely by LH and Iran, forced his administration to react as these crises developed. Despite this preoccupation with terrorism, Reagan frequently delegated operational decisionmaking to the National Security Council (NSC), leading to unforced errors in CT policy such as exchanging US hostages for weapons during the Iran-Contra affair. While readers may disagree with Pluchinsky's assertions concerning President Reagan's staff, those interested in the evolution of US CT policy will find many details about the origins of CT programs and organizations that continue to disrupt terrorism. Pluchinsky offers valuable insights to the creation of CIA's Counterterrorism Center, the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Department of State's Rewards for Justice program, and several important legislative developments that remain critical tools in the US response to terrorist threats.

The Reagan administration served as an important historical benchmark on CT policy for another reason. It was the first time the US government considered terrorism to be more than a mere nuisance or a law enforcement issue and chose unilateral military force as an option to address this threat. Pluchinsky highlights that Reagan approved 10 different National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs) on terrorism, more than any other president in US history. He further argues that "NSDD-207 was the most significant NSDD created by the Reagan Administration." (278) This NSDD affirmed that the United States would not negotiate with terrorists, sought to deny terrorists safe havens, and declared that the United States "was prepared to act in concert with other nations or unilaterally when necessary to prevent or respond to terrorist acts." (279) This aggressive and far-reaching directive would serve as the blueprint for future US CT strategy, including post-9/11 CT operations in the 21st century. Volume II provides historians, political scientists, and intelligence professionals with important context to understand the origins for an approach to terrorism that would have profound and long-lasting consequences in the decades to come.

Readers interested in US domestic terrorism's evolution during the Reagan administration will find chapters

a. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* [Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret] (Princeton University Press, 1976).

b. Ian Lustick, *Trapped in the War on Terror* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

c. Mark Bowden, *Guests of the Ayatollah: The First Battle in America's War with Militant Islam* (Grove Press, 2007).

d. David Crist, *The Twilight War: The Secret History of America's Thirty-Year Conflict with Iran* (Penguin Books, 2013).

four and five to be a good baseline tracing the decline of left-wing groups and the reemergence of right-wing terrorism that would come to pose a far more significant threat during future presidencies. Pluchinsky contends that “right-wing terrorism is an umbrella term used to differentiate a type of political violence from left-wing terrorism.” (175) This term is often used to describe racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, conspiracy theory, and antigovernment extremists that adopt terrorist tactics. He writes of the Reagan-era domestic terrorism threat: “Right-wing terrorism never posed as serious a domestic terrorist threat in the U.S. as left-wing terrorism.” (174) There is evidence to support this claim, given the overall frequency of recorded right-wing attacks within the context of President Reagan’s policy priorities related to terrorism.

To his credit, Pluchinsky covers significant developments in the 1980s and 1990s in the white supremacist movement that would shape the thinking of right-wing terrorists responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing during the Clinton administration. Right-wing organizations such as The Order, Bruder Schweigen, and Posse Comitatus, plus a discussion of their various domestic terrorist campaigns in 1984—often colloquially described as “The war in 84”—are treated in this volume. Criminologist Mark Hamm has drawn similar parallels, tracing right-wing groups and their impact on what remains the deadliest domestic terrorist attack in US history.^a

Only two chapters in this volume are dedicated to George H.W. Bush’s presidency. While serving as

Reagan’s vice president, Bush played a leading role in creating and implementing US CT policy.

Given Bush’s role in the 1985 Vice President’s Task Force for Combating Terrorism, and the implementation by President Reagan of most of the task force’s recommendations, it was unlikely that Bush would make any major changes to U.S. counter-terrorism policy. (457)

Once he became president, Bush simply tweaked the policies his working group initially created. World events did, however, shift Washington’s focus on state-sponsored terrorism in the Bush administration. Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and various threats from Saddam Hussein’s regime to launch attacks using the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) were two important factors leading the Bush administration to shift focus onto Iraq as the world’s primary state-terrorism sponsor. Iraq would remain central to US CT policy concerning state-sponsored terrorism until the George W. Bush administration began Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

As with Pluchinsky’s first volume, which covers the Eisenhower through Trump administrations, this volume is densely packed with information on terrorist incidents and the US responses to these developments. The author maintains his strong methodological and a detail-oriented approach to addressing this topic. Policymakers and terrorism scholars will find Volume II to be an invaluable desk reference highlighting the changing nature of terrorism and the US approach to addressing terrorist threats.^b



The reviewer: David B. is a CIA targeting officer. His work focuses on terrorism, counterterrorism, and national security issues.

a. Mark Hamm, *Apocalypse in Oklahoma: Waco and Ruby Ridge Revenged* (Northeastern University Press, 1997).

b. Volume I was reviewed in *Studies in Intelligence* 65, no. 1 (March 2021)

Intelligence in Public Media

The Spymaster of Baghdad: A True Story of Bravery, Family, and Patriotism in the Battle Against ISIS

Margaret Coker (HarperCollins, 2021) 309, bibliography, photos, index.

Reviewed by Graham Alexander

Investigative reporter Margaret Coker spent the years from 2003 through 2019 reporting from Iraq. In 2018 she was the *New York Times* bureau chief. The experience obviously provided her an excellent vantage point for observing many cataclysmic events that have shaped the country over that period, including the 2003 US invasion, the ensuing civil war, US withdrawal and, finally, the rise and fall of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). These events form the backdrop of her book, *The Spymaster of Baghdad*, which details the lives of four key protagonists motivated by personal and ideological forces to immerse themselves within the world of secrets and terrorism. The book is a briskly paced and usually entertaining read, but it might have more impact had Coker drawn on deeper research and had a firmer grasp of the intelligence profession.

Coker frames her narrative through the eyes of Abu Ali al-Basri, the leader of a cell within Iraqi intelligence known as al-Suqor, or the Falcons. Al-Basri ascended to the position in 2006 after his longtime colleague and newly minted Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki tasked him to establish a viable counterterrorism unit outside the purview of the ineffective, sectarian leader of Iraq's National Intelligence Service (INIS), Mohammed al-Shahwani. Al-Basri gradually demonstrates his mettle, first by apprehending the mastermind of the 2003 Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad, Ali al-Zawi, and then by capturing a top al-Qa'ida leader in Iraq, Munaf al-Rawi. Al-Basri's narrative runs concurrently with the stories of two ambitious Shia brothers, Harith and Munaf al-Sudani, and an embittered Sunni chemistry student, Abrar al-Kubaisi. Both brothers escape their lower-class upbringing in Baghdad's Sadr City neighborhood to become members of the Falcons. Harith eventually volunteers for a successful mission to penetrate ISIS, with Munaf as his handling officer, while al-Kubaisi radicalizes on message boards before deciding to abandon her family for work with ISIS. She later returns to Baghdad prepared to poison water supplies with ricin.

Coker's experience as a newspaper reporter becomes obvious as the book unfolds. In fact, it reads like an extended exposé that makes scarce use of the voluminous sources Coker claims to have used and wears its occasionally hagiographic biases on its sleeve. Coker wrote, for example, that she interviewed Prime Ministers Haider al-Abadi, al-Maliki, and Ayad Allawi and that she conducted more than 90 hours of meetings with the Falcons, to say nothing of examining the 30,000 pages of declassified documents in the US Army War College's official history of the Iraq War. This impressive array of sources makes few appearances in the tale told in the book, however. Discussions of larger events in Iraq such as the bombings in 2006 and 2007 of the al-Askari Shrine in Samarra or ISIS's lightning campaign against Mosul in 2014 are mentioned only as brief scene setters before the plot segues again into the personal lives of its protagonists. There are no new insights or interpretations of these events.

Elsewhere, key elements of Coker's book seem to rest on unverified, single-source claims. For example, her description of al-Maliki's meetings with al-Basri bend strongly toward the latter's emotions, suggesting that the author never discussed them with al-Maliki. Coker writes, "He [al-Maliki] was desperate for splashy, positive news, like successful counterterrorism operations" and that this was the reason he commanded al-Basri to find and capture any major al-Qa'ida terrorist ahead of the January 2010 elections. The passage describes al-Basri as "incredulous" and states that "what al-Maliki didn't care to understand was the time and diligence to assemble good intelligence." (103) Separately, she details how al-Kubaisi began to become radicalized after the death of her sister in 2007 in an incident on the highway leading to Ramadi. Coker admits "it's unclear what exactly happened" but appears to accept a one-sided claim from the al-Kubaisi family that US forces were responsible because they had shut down the highway and then, as "some say," they opened fire at a checkpoint prompting a massive and deadly pileup. (84–85)

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Similarly, there is great reliance in the book on retelling experiences shared only between Harith and Munaf, where a clear motive exists for the participants to recount events in the most positive light possible. Coker generally accepts these claims uncritically. She mentions but rationalizes less savory elements of Harith's character such as his dismissal from school for failing grades, his distant relationship with his wife and children, and highly questionable operational decisions made during his time as a penetration of ISIS.

The book offers tantalizing details of al-Suqor's operations, but the author would have benefited immensely by vetting her text through experienced intelligence personnel and amplifying key operational details, none of which would have sacrificed narrative flow. Her lack of familiarity with the basic tenets of intelligence work is obvious, for example, when she characterizes al-Rawi's capture as a successful counterintelligence operation, when it was really a law-enforcement-like capture, using various strands of collection. Al-Basri is obviously a key source for the book and an individual with decades of experience in intelligence work, but Coker focuses almost

exclusively on his emotions at various points when additional discussion of his tradecraft, analytical practices, and personnel management would have proven illuminating. Frustratingly, Coker skips almost entirely over important events detailing Harith's training, his success in penetrating ISIS, and al-Suqor's apparent success in persuading ISIS to accept Harith's bona fides. This omission does not appear to be one based on any specific sensitivity: there are numerous details on Harith's ISIS contacts, their locations, his operational objectives, and al-Suqor's communication methods. Coker's penchant for highlighting the most savory aspects of a Hollywood-caliber spy story simply keeps her from surfacing information that might have inserted a needed sheen of authenticity.

The Spymaster of Baghdad is a relatively short story supplemented by various historical and personal atmospherics that will entertain those interested in Iraq and its long-simmering conflicts. Coker's writing style is punchy but, ultimately, the book pursues its protagonists and their narratives at the expense of more informative, groundbreaking details of the intelligence landscape in Iraq during the last two decades.



The reviewer: Graham Alexander is the pen name of a Directorate of Operations officer currently assigned to the Lessons Learned Program of the Center for the Study of Intelligence.

Intelligence in Public Media

Atomic Spy: The Dark Lives of Klaus Fuchs

Nancy Thorndike Greenspan (Viking, 2020), 400 pages, plates and illustrations, abbreviations, notes, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by Steven D.

The USSR's acquisition of the atomic bomb in 1949 was a turning point in modern history. In addition to providing Soviet dictator Josef Stalin greater ability to expand and maintain his influence across the new post-WWII international system, it introduced a nuclear edge into the nascent Cold War standoff. This development also represented a significant intelligence coup as the USSR's atomic test in 1949 was the direct result of its infiltration of the Manhattan Project during WWII. Nancy Thorndike Greenspan's book *Atomic Spy: The Dark Lives of Klaus Fuchs* provides a good introduction to this aspect of WWII/Cold War history and the intelligence success story at the center of it as she presents an uneven but generally informative reexamination of Klaus Fuchs, the Soviet Union's most important "atomic spy."

This book shows more sympathy to Fuchs and his espionage than previous works. The author establishes early on her view that Fuchs's "unwavering commitment to ideals" defined him as a person and contributed to his decision to spy for the Soviet Union. (14, 23) Instead, the author judges that British authorities deserve a significant portion of the blame for Fuchs's espionage: first, in their harsh treatment of Fuchs as an enemy alien at the start of WWII; second, in their willful ignorance of Fuchs's known communist identity, which allowed the UK to exploit his scientific brilliance; finally, in their decision to withhold these security concerns from US officials when Fuchs was assigned to the Manhattan Project, thus enabling his most lucrative espionage collection. As she phrases it, the UK played "Russian roulette" with Fuchs and "failed to tell the Americans about the bullet in the chamber." (14) Witticisms aside, the author's conclusions about Fuchs's moral convictions are unconvincing because she repeatedly touches on but fails to resolve contradictions in Fuchs's experience and decisions that challenge her depiction of the man. She also leaves notable gaps in Fuchs's history that, if explored, might have helped her resolve some of them.

Despite these limitations, the book is worth reading. The author has an effective writing style and her

depictions of Fuchs's spying contribute to a better understanding of intelligence operations in this period. Her new insights on Fuchs's personal history are also noteworthy. They do not support her final arguments that Fuchs might be reconsidered as a "hero," but they do succeed in producing a more holistic picture of Fuchs as a complex, brilliant, but ultimately flawed individual who chose to ignore "the truth" of the totalitarian dictator he was enabling. (353, 278)

The personal biography of Fuchs is the most cogent part of the book. The author presents the many forces that shaped a young Fuchs into the successful scientist and espionage agent he would become. Her use of first-person interviews with Fuchs's surviving family members, along with his own personal correspondence, contributes to the high quality. Greenspan traces how a young Fuchs and his idealistic family pay a heavy price for their political convictions in the face of Nazism's rise. The book also clearly shows how Fuchs's background as a communist on the run from Nazi authorities in the early 1930s included experiences he'd draw upon later to operate successfully as a Soviet spy in the West.

Notwithstanding this strong beginning, the primary flaws in the work become apparent when it transitions to Fuchs's arrival in the UK as a refugee from Nazism. Despite efforts to portray Fuchs as a man of "consistent" ideals, the author fails to explore some of his more interesting contradictions, such as the irony of Fuchs, the dedicated communist, turning to the capitalist West to protect him from Nazism rather than the "workers paradise" of Stalin's Soviet Union (353, 83). This is a curious omission mainly because the book gives the impression that Fuchs might have known about, or been part of, Soviet backed plans to infiltrate communists into Western governments to help hasten their collapse. Fuchs's record shows he coordinated with Soviet-linked Comintern officials just before his arrival in the UK. The author also largely avoids any in-depth analysis of Fuchs's first seven years in the UK (1933–40). Within the few pages she does offer, there is only a cursory look at Fuchs's use

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of freedoms of the “bourgeois” West to protect himself, finance his education, and nurture his scientific talent. (40, 89) The book leaves one to speculate how Fuchs reconciled such benefits of life in the West with his “revolutionary” activities on behalf of global communism. (72) Regarding these activities the book also briefly describes Fuchs’s network of communist friends in the UK and how he supported a few secret communist efforts, but the descriptions noticeably lack depth and context.

This flaw becomes most acute when the book alludes to Fuchs and his fellow UK communists debating whether Stalinism might be a “betrayal of their ideals,” but Greenspan offers no real analysis of where Fuchs stood in such discussions then or later in his career as one of Stalin’s premier spies. (83) The book has a few references to Fuchs becoming somewhat “disillusioned” with Stalin, but it never explores what disillusioned him or why it took him so long to be question a dictator who had established his totalitarian system almost 15 years before Fuchs began spying for it. (258, 283) This is problematic in a book attempting to establish Fuchs as a moral “hero.” (352)

This error becomes more noticeable when the author decides to focus attention on Fuchs’s moral indignation at the UK’s “shameful compromises” to Nazism, both before and in the early days of WWII as motivating, in part, his decision to spy for Stalin’s Soviet Union. (103) Similar to the fleeting treatment of Fuchs’s early UK period, the author briefly mentions but does not examine the cognitive dissonance of an individual outraged at the idea that the UK was too sympathetic to Nazism even as it fought a war against Hitler’s Germany but was quick to accept Stalin’s wartime alliance with Hitler (and subsequent invasion and dismemberment of Poland) as “pragmatic.” (94) Rather than explore this apparent moral contradiction, the author simply concludes that Fuchs’s reasons for supporting Stalin’s Nazi alliance had “substance.” (94)

Greenspan is not so forgiving of the UK and its wartime mistakes. Two chapters provide in-depth (and graphic) descriptions of the government’s internment of Fuchs for eight months as an enemy alien in 1940 when the UK was under threat of Nazi invasion. In these chapters the author shows how the internment experience enhanced Fuchs’s Soviet connections, hardened his support for communism, and allowed him to further discipline his emotions in order to serve “the cause.” (125)

The speed with which Fuchs returned to work upon release and methodically used his scientific brilliance and elite contacts to gain a position in the UK’s atomic

program is remarkable. The ease with which he used his new position to immediately begin passing sensitive information to Soviet intelligence is disturbing. The author conclusively shows that MI5 ignored the security threat Fuchs posed in order to ensure the UK could exploit his abilities. That MI5 then hid this information from the United States on Fuchs’s transfer to the Manhattan Project is damning. The book offers a compelling account of how these mistakes and MI5’s efforts to cover them up would haunt the MI5/FBI relationship for years after the discovery of Fuchs’s espionage.

The book’s treatment of Fuchs’s espionage in the United States is informative, showing the challenges Soviet intelligence faced in handling this unique asset. Intelligence professionals will appreciate the depictions of the intellectual Fuchs critiquing the lax tradecraft of his Soviet handlers, the difficulties these handlers faced in attempting to control an ideological asset who refused to accept money, and the anxiety of an intelligence service scrambling to locate the prized asset after he disappears for months at a time. The book’s transitioning back and forth from Fuchs’s intelligence collection to MI5 and FBI’s counterintelligence efforts to track and unmask him is well done.

Here again, however, the author shows the weakness of her overall argument by avoiding another interesting contradiction. The book convincingly depicts the difficulties British and US authorities encountered in investigating and prosecuting Fuchs because of the due process guaranteed to him as a British citizen. But as in other instances, Greenspan chooses not to contrast this process or explore Fuchs’s thinking about how his espionage patrons would have dealt with him if the situation were reversed. The author, perhaps unintentionally, draws attention to this in briefly describing how Fuchs thanked the British authorities for his “fair trial” and listened quietly as the trial judge voiced frustration that British law required him to give Fuchs a light sentence (14 years), since Fuchs’s crime was “technically” not high treason (297).

However, the opportunities the author misses in such opportunities to contrast two systems of governance ultimately help reveal a clearer image of Fuchs. The author may have hoped it to be a man of conviction following a “moral course within his soul,” but the portrait she provides of a convicted/imprisoned Fuchs reveals a remorseful individual who realized too late that he betrayed his friends and his country in support of a totalitarian dictatorship.

Greenspan asserts that Fuchs had few regrets about betraying the UK or enabling Stalinism, but she writes that in the latter stages of his spying career, Fuchs withheld sensitive information from Soviet intelligence because of “questions” he had about Stalin. Here too, she offers no insight on what those questions might have been. (265) Nor does she offer an explanation of why Fuchs abandoned the espionage relationship in the late 1940s. Considering that Stalin wanted a hydrogen bomb and Fuchs might have helped in that effort, a careful reader might deduce he had second thoughts about whether working for Stalin was leading to the “betterment of mankind” as the author claims. (352) Instead, Fuchs’s time in the UK comes to an end with the convicted spy

tearfully “pleading” to keep his British citizenship and pledging his loyalty to the UK from then on. (315)

The book would have been on firmer ground if Greenspan had considered if this reaction indicated that Fuchs in fact regretted his espionage and/or genuinely feared he might have to live in the Stalinist reality he had avoided while serving it skillfully. Nonetheless, that the author doesn’t address the issue does not undermine the impact of reading how the UK ignored these pleas and Fuchs spent the rest of his life being monitored, mistrusted, and marginalized in the communist “paradise” of East Germany. That he endured this new life while also being largely ignored by the USSR for his espionage services is an ironic but appropriate end to this story.



The reviewer: Steven D. is an officer in CIA’s Directorate of Operations.

Intelligence in Public Media

War of Shadows: Codebreakers, Spies, and the Secret Struggle to Drive the Nazis from the Middle East

Gershon Gorenberg (Public Affairs, 2021), 474 pages, map, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by Brent M. Geary

For nine months in 1941, besieged by German and Italian forces under the command of German Field Marshall Erwin Rommel, “British” Army forces in the Libyan port city of Tobruk had held out. The defenders were a hodgepodge of Australians, Poles, New Zealanders, South Africans, Indians, Free French, and Greeks. They had provided for many around the world a sense of solidarity and hope in the face of Adolf Hitler’s seemingly unstoppable conquests. Then, in June 1942, Tobruk fell to Axis tanks in less than a day. Only 90 miles from the border with Egypt, Rommel now had a clear path to the Persian Gulf and its rich oil reserves, control of the Suez Canal, and the destruction of the Jewish settlements in Palestine and annihilation of those who lived there. Or so it seemed.

War of Shadows, by Israeli historian and journalist Gershon Gorenberg, is a riveting, exhaustively researched account of how Allied intelligence services undermined Rommel’s drive across North Africa and ultimately helped stop him before he could reach Cairo and dash unimpeded into the wider Middle East. It is the story of clerks, adventurers, soldiers, politicians, aristocrats, codebreakers, diplomats, and one very devoted wife who refused to be evacuated to safety and chose to fight on however she could.

Now famous figures such as Rommel, Alan Turing, and Anwar Sadat feature prominently, but so too do many most readers will meet for the first time in this book. Gorenberg stitches their stories together, taking readers from British colonialism in North Africa to the German invasion of Poland in 1939, from the creation of Britain’s renowned Bletchley Park to the United States during its prewar struggle with isolationism, and back again to Egypt and Palestine. Reading like the best of historical fiction, his tale pulls readers along through the personal experiences of its many characters, in service of the larger narrative of how they all contributed to Hitler’s defeat or, in the case of Italian and German actors, their ultimately unsuccessful efforts to secure Axis victory.

Marian Rejewski, for example, was the brilliant Polish mathematician who led a team for the Polish General Staff that, starting in 1931, found a way to crack the Enigma machines that enciphered German military communications. As Gorenberg explains, by 1932 Rejewski calculated that the elaborate wiring of the machines—which he had never seen—had a number of possible configurations, with an approximate number written as five followed by 92 zeroes. “Obviously, no codebreaker was ever going to look at messages and figure out the wiring—not in a trillion years,” he writes. Rejewski and his tiny team of Jerzy Rozycki and Henryk Zygalski did it in three months. (27) By 1933, they were able to read every encrypted German message that Polish radio interceptors could provide them, but their efforts were not enough to stop the Blitzkrieg. Polish commanders ordered the team to flee and try to provide their expertise to the Allies, which helped form the foundation of French and later British codebreaking efforts that would prove decisive in North Africa and elsewhere.

Gorenberg recounts the creation of Bletchley Park in some detail and, more briefly, the story of its most noted figure, Alan Turing. He shines more light, however, on other British codebreakers—many of them women—who found the human errors that pervaded German communications and provided avenues for revealing their most sensitive operations, and helped identify and crack Nazi intelligence networks. Margaret Storey, for example, whom a contemporary recalled as being “a woman of daunting intelligence,” helped identify a human source who was providing the Germans with spectacular information from Cairo that was aiding Rommel’s efforts in North Africa. Storey and untold hundreds like her worked maniacally to pull coded needles from haystacks to stop the Axis powers from taking over the world. Many suffered from nervous breakdowns. In the process, though, one of her superiors, Gordon Welchman, recalled that he and many others were also having “the greatest fun that life would ever offer.” (256)

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Another aspect of the war that Gorenberg illuminates is the lack of trust between conventional military and intelligence agencies and those created during the war. Many authors, for example, have discussed this phenomenon in relation to the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the US military. In Egypt, the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) operated often without the knowledge of local British Army commanders, leading the latter to take extraordinary measures to keep tabs on the former. One SOE clerk, a lesser English noblewoman formally known as Countess Hermione Ranfurly, smuggled documents in her brassiere from the Cairo SOE office to a disgruntled SOE officer who was working secretly for British Army authorities across town. Ranfurly and others viewed their superior as being personally and financially corrupt and as “spending more on women than on war.” (179) Ranfurly later quit the SOE and transferred to Palestine to work for the British Army commander there.

But Gorenberg does not limit himself to examination of the Allied intelligence effort. He also describes an operation in Rome that began in the mid-1930s and later provided the Axis with insights into British Army order of battle and defensive plans against Rommel’s forces. Elements of the Italian security services—led by the daring Major Manfredi Talamo—over several years broke into foreign embassies in Rome, stole, copied, and replaced code books, and used that information to read encrypted messages. Additionally, and in stark contrast to the Italian successes against Allied embassies in Rome, Gorenberg recounts “Operation Condor,” the tale of two comically inept German spies a Hungarian explorer and

army officer smuggled across the southern Egyptian desert to the Nile valley. Once they reached Cairo, in the months leading up to Rommel’s advance toward the Egyptian capital, Johann Eppler and Heinrich Sandstede spent their time and Nazi money at expensive night clubs and on female companions while doctoring their journals to make it appear they had tried to do their jobs, concocting “evidence” they planned to provide to their superiors when the Axis forces conquered Egypt. Despite their incompetence, Rommel received better intelligence from Cairo than his two wayward spies could have ever hoped to acquire. That exquisite intelligence was provided by his Italian allies in Rome, sourced to a well-intentioned and loyal American officer in Cairo. The flow of intelligence was ultimately identified and stopped by Bletchley Park codebreakers. It would not do to reveal more; readers deserve to have their fun unspoiled.

While this book is riveting and highly recommended, it is not always easy to follow and might be somewhat of a commitment for casual readers. To call it complex is probably an understatement. Gorenberg, for example, provides eight pages at the beginning of the book listing the “cast of characters” from across 11 countries and 18 separate intelligence agencies. But for intelligence professionals, the effort is worth it. *War of Shadows* is not just highly entertaining, it is positively filled with examples of innovations, successes, and failures in collection, analysis, counterintelligence, liaison relationships, interagency teamwork, and timely information sharing with policymakers and warfighters. Gorenberg’s ensemble helped save the world from fascism, and his telling of their story is inspirational.



The reviewer: Brent M. Geary is a member of CIA’s History Staff.

Intelligence in Public Media

The Nazi Spy Ring In America: Hitler's Agents, the FBI, & the Case That Stirred the Nation

by Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones (Georgetown University Press, 2020) 237 pages, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

Reviewed by David A. Welker

Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones's new book on the pre-World War II Rumrich spy ring is an engaging new look at an often-ignored case that bears lessons worth remembering today.

The story begins in January 1938, when US Army intelligence provided the FBI with a British MI-6 warning—obtained by monitoring the communications of Jessie Jordan, a Scotland-based “letterbox” operator managing Abwehr communications with the field—that German intelligence had hatched a plot to kidnap or kill an American colonel with access to US East Coast defense plans. Placed in charge of the resulting investigation was FBI Special Agent Leon G. Turrou, who thwarted the plan through dogged investigation, his unique ability to obtain intelligence from interviews and questioning, and a deep-seated hatred of the fascist machine operating in Hitler's Germany. A series of arrests quickly began peeling back the onion of Germany's Abwehr, its external intelligence service, and operations within the United States.

Although the public was largely ignorant of these efforts, German agents had worked since the late 1920s to penetrate US industry, government, and academia. Initially, intelligence collection was focused on commercial technology useful in rebuilding Germany from the devastation of World War I, but as Germany grew increasingly powerful and aggressive, Abwehr efforts expanded to include military and political intelligence as Hitler realized his global expansion plans would eventually lead to confrontation with the United States. Americans, however, remained blissfully ignorant in the haze of neutrality which enveloped President Franklin Roosevelt's administration, business leaders, and much of the public.

The growing FBI net soon swept up its first major figure, Guenther Gustave Maria “Gus” Rumrich,^a who quickly revealed to the FBI all he knew about the Abwehr's US operations and the names of other German agents. These revelations not only ripped open several

agent networks, but they also revealed Germany's use of its extensive fleet of commercial ships to support intelligence operations. It was this highly secure communication and support network that several of the compromised spies used in fleeing to Germany. In response, the ever-ambitious FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, pushed for a public trial, rather than continue to run the remaining agents to deepen the FBI's counterintelligence haul. Hoover's decision also reflected the growing pains of the bureau in its new role as the nation's lead counterspy agency.

London's *Daily Express* labeled the October 1938 New York City trial the “biggest show in town in twenty years.” Four Nazi spies were eventually sentenced to between two and six years for their crimes. Jeffreys-Jones notes that the case did not inspire American belligerency but rather—perhaps as importantly—began the increasingly rapid erosion of US neutrality. When the Abwehr tried once again in 1940 to infiltrate spies into the United States, specifically the Fritz Duquesne ring and Wilhelm Sebold, thanks to the experience of the Rumrich case, the FBI was ready. The Duquesne ring was quickly exposed and Sebold was turned into a double-agent to more effectively frustrate the Nazi services. When Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor finally brought the United States into the war, the US public was temperamentally prepared for conflict in ways that it had not been in 1938.

Jeffreys-Jones tells this often-complicated story in a clear, relatively easy-to-follow way that brings the characters and events to life. Although the book would benefit from more clear explanations of the significance of some persons and events raised early on, it includes a “dramatis personae” list at the back to help readers juggle the many new names and their roles until they become more familiar. Still, the narrative is well-constructed and several secondary stories are seamlessly woven into the text, particularly the complicated life of Leon Turrou and his fall from grace with Hoover and the FBI.

a. The case would be publicly named after Rumrich, although he was never the spy ring's leader.

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This tale of ambition, ego, patriotism, and fortune could easily be its own, stand-alone story but charting it alongside the larger Rumrich spy ring story offers context that would otherwise be lost. Similarly, Jeffrey-Jones's thorough research and use of new material adds to the volume's value to historians. These materials include recently-released FBI records that correct Turrou's published accounts of the identity and motivations of the Abwehr officer whose security breach initially exposed the ring.^a The author also isn't afraid to confront conventional wisdom, for example, debunking Hoover's image of the FBI by noting its frequent CI failures and reminding readers that the lingering popular belief that as early

as the late 1930s President Roosevelt was secretly leading America into inevitable war with fascism is simply false.

The Nazi Spy Ring in America demonstrates that by failing to make intelligence collection a priority and clinging instead to preferred illusions, 1930s America provided Nazi Germany technology and political breathing space that unintentionally enabled Hitler's fascist regime. By breathing new life into this often-ignored spy story and its implications, Jeffrey-Jones provides readers an important reminder that although the United States today faces different adversaries, seeing the actions of any nation in a clear, honest light is vital to avoid repeating the failures of the 1930s and once-again paying the disastrously high cost of fixing them.



The reviewer: David A. Welker is a member of CIA's History Staff.

a. Turrou's accounts inspired several Hollywood films. One was *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, starring Edward G. Robinson. Turrou was given writing credits. Another was *House on 92nd Street*, which was released after the war.

Intelligence in Public Media

Spycraft

Netflix documentary series, eight episodes.

Reviewed by Brent M. Geary and David Welker

The new documentary series *Spycraft*, which debuted on Netflix in January 2021, mostly succeeds as an entertaining overview for general audiences of the world of intelligence during roughly the last century. Reflecting mostly strong research, high production values, and good storytelling, the series most likely will teach viewers fascinating things about famous spies, devices, and events in intelligence history over eight episodes ranging from 29 to 36 minutes in length. Consumers of strategic history, however, especially intelligence practitioners or subscribers to *Studies in Intelligence*, will likely find little here that is new and much that is annoying, sensationalized, or—in a few cases—just plain wrong.

On the plus side, *Spycraft* is at least partly the work of seasoned intelligence experts. Two of its producers are International Spy Museum founding board members, intelligence artifact collector, and writer Keith Melton and his frequent co-author of intelligence-related books, former CIA Office of Technical Service Director Bob Wallace, both of whom appear frequently as talking heads in the series. In addition, several other noteworthy former intelligence professionals appear throughout *Spycraft*, including Directorate of Operations legend Waldimir “Scotty” Skotzko, former CIA Chief Historian Ben Fischer, and Sandy Grimes, one of the counterintelligence officers who uncovered the KGB mole Aldrich Ames. Their reflections on pivotal cases are the highlights of some episodes and lend greater credibility to the overall product.

With such intellectual firepower, many of the stories the series touches upon are well-told, even riveting, with frequently entertaining reenactments and high quality cinematography and digitized graphics. The episode on surveillance, for example, features retired CIA and FBI experts describing events and technologies such as the passive cavity resonator installed by the Soviets in a wooden replica of the Great Seal of the United States presented as a gift to the US ambassador to Moscow in 1945. (The CIA museum has a copy of the seal on display.)

Other strengths of the series include the range of topics covered, at least somewhat. Entire episodes, for example, are dedicated to clandestine collection techniques, covert communications, counterintelligence, codebreaking, and the intelligence nexus with special operations. Less justifiably, however, but likely driven more by the perceived need to titillate audiences, are episodes focused entirely on assassination operations—primarily deadly poisons—and the use of sex as a means to compromise potential agents. The latter episode, unoriginally named “Sexpionage,” features a claim by the narrator that this term is used to describe such operations, which is utter nonsense and yet indicative of a larger weakness in the series overall.

First, *Spycraft*’s narrator routinely mispronounces words throughout, to the point that it becomes a distraction. From the World War I spy “Meta” Hari, to “new-cue-ler” weapons, to the Office of “Personal” Management, to creative takes on several Slavic names, the garbled words come fast and furious and would make for a lively drinking game. Such frequent mistakes in something so easy to spot, however, highlight an overall shoddy effort from the series’ editors and post-production staff. Only once or twice do the authoritative professionals misstate details about the cases they discuss—such as Melton saying that the operation to take down Usama bin Laden originated in Pakistan rather than Afghanistan—but the narrator does so repeatedly, suggesting that the project was overly rushed. One such example was the claim that the so-called Russian “illegals” arrested in the United States for spying in 2010 were a “new type of Russian officer.” The Soviet Union had used such deep cover officers for generations; nothing was “new” about them except that they were rounded up at the same time and in such large numbers.

Likewise, the series claims that aerial photographs were taken from a balloon during the American Civil War to collect intelligence on Confederate troops when, in reality, Union forces considered the idea but never attempted it because of the poor quality of cameras then

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available. Instead, messages were sent from the balloons by telegraph or delivered upon landing.

Probably because of the involvement of experts such as Melton and Wallace, many finer details of intelligence history are accurately depicted, and the series deserves credit for that. However, perhaps owing to the number of directors (three) and producers (eight), the episodes are of uneven quality. Much of the material is needlessly sensationalized, with the use of “sexpionage” only the most egregious example. In discussing the effects of polonium poisoning on Russian investigator Alexander Litvinenko, the narrator declares that the drug caused Litvinenko’s organs to “literally explode,” followed by a three dimensional animation depicting the same. It was unnecessarily graphic and undercut an otherwise accurate telling of Litvinenko’s 2006 assassination. Also, the episode about special forces and future technology veered away from

intelligence altogether at times, seemingly in an effort to get as many clever gadgets on the screen as possible but detracting from the overall purpose of the series.

Despite these faults, *Spycraft* makes for an entertaining diversion with brief, dense episodes that competently depict some of the most important chapters of intelligence history and technology since World War I. The authorities who appear on the screen provide real heft to the proceedings, though they could have been filmed better and should have been given more air time. The slick, jumpy cinematography, reenactments, and digital effects are reminiscent of the Jason Bourne movies and work reasonably well. As it is, relative to other television depictions of the intelligence business, *Spycraft* is an above-average series. With better narration and editing—and less sensationalism—it could have been even better.



The reviewers: Brent M. Geary and David Welker are members of CIA’s History Staff.

Intelligence in Public Media

Nos chers espions en Afrique (Our Dear Spies in Africa)

Antoine Glaser and Thomas Hofnung (Fayard, 2018), 239 pages.

Reviewed by William Brooke Stallsmith

Like the United States, France is a member of the select club of countries with a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, nuclear weapons, and an intelligence apparatus with global ambitions and reach. Unlike US leaders, French policymakers and spy services assign a top priority to Sub-Saharan Africa, reflecting 150 years of colonial, postcolonial, cultural, economic, political, and people-to-people ties. In *Nos chers espions en Afrique* (Our Dear Spies in Africa), journalists Antoine Glaser and Thomas Hofnung offer a detailed look at how, where, and why the French External Intelligence Service (DGSE—Direction générale de la sécurité extérieure—the country’s premier foreign intelligence service) and other spy agencies operate in Africa.^a

Much of the book’s focus is on the DGSE’s major role in French military operations in Africa. In Chad, for example, Glaser and Hofnung say the DGSE provided “the decisive intelligence support that saved the Chadian President” from rebels in 2008. They quote a colonel attached to the service’s *antenne*^b in N’Djaména: “I was in the operations center with Chadian officers. I had my direct communications with Paris. I received French information and I knew the rebels’ position to the very centimeter, minute by minute. I transmitted this strategic data to the Chadian general staff.” (19–20) In Mali, where since 2013 Paris has deployed thousands of troops, dozens of military aircraft, and hundreds of vehicles, Glaser and Hofnung highlight the intricate and often contradictory ties the DGSE’s paramilitary Service Action—counterpart of CIA’s Special Activities Center—has developed with both the beleaguered and ineffective Bamako government and Tuareg tribal militias in campaigns to roll back local branches of al-Qa’ida and the Islamic State. (75–82)

The DGSE and its sister services the French Internal Security Service (DGSI—Direction générale de la sécurité intérieur) and the Military Intelligence Service (DRM—Direction du renseignement militaire)—use a

wide range of tactics to pursue Paris’s main non-military interests in the former French colonies, according to *Nos chers espions*. A top priority is maintaining access to critical energy sources.

- In oil-producing Congo-Brazzaville, President Denis Sassou-Nguesso has enjoyed “powerful godfathers” in the DGSE and other power centers in Paris (26) during his four decades dominating the country. These ties are reinforced by a network of Corsican businessmen—“honorable correspondents” of the DGSE who, while collecting secrets and supporting operations, benefit from well-connected friends in both Paris and African capitals. (83–87)
- In Gabon, another petrostate, the late president Omar Bongo considered himself “an integral part of our [DGSE] services.” When Bongo died in 2009, the DGSE was intimately involved in the clan and political maneuvering to select a new president, ultimately the old man’s son Ali. (32–34)
- Niger is the main source of the uranium that fuels nearly three-quarters of France’s electricity supply. According to *Nos chers espions*, French support of the Niamey government has included having the DGSI surveil the activities in Paris of a Nigerien journalist critical of President Mahamadou Issoufou. The Nigerien leader has reciprocated by providing France (and other Western powers, including the United States) with on-the-ground reporting on terrorists and by rendering other, unspecified services. Issoufou reportedly noted in this context, “In human intelligence, you [France] always need someone smaller than yourself.” (43–45)

Notwithstanding these and other continuities, the intelligence ties between France’s former African colonies have changed in some significant ways since the turn of the century. *Nos chers espions* details at length the aggressive marketing by Israeli firms—in a mutually supportive relationship with Mossad—that has eroded

a. All translations in this review are the author’s. The book is not available in English.

b. A DGSE *antenne* corresponds to a CIA station.

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what had been a French monopoly in providing SIGINT, other technical gear, and close protection training to countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Togo, and Guinea. (119–28) French officials have also admitted their dependence on overhead surveillance provided by US intelligence agencies, described as “determining for our operations” in the Sahel and for hostage rescue missions in Somalia. (129–30)

The DGSE's relations with other French agencies and the profile of its personnel have also evolved, albeit unevenly. Glaser and Hofnung describe “diplomats and spies as an unnatural couple,” (143) but they also document how the DGSE has increasingly integrated its work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Senior diplomats now routinely serve as the DGSE's director of strategy, which in turn seeds the MFA with top officials who “speak DGSE” and “understand the tool box that its services have.” (145–47) Relations with the armed forces have been rockier, even though DGSE is, bureaucratically, part of the Ministry of Defense. Bad blood between the Service action and French Special Forces is chronic, aggravated by harsh operating conditions in Africa. The uniformed services suspect DGSE of withholding critical information and accuse the DGSE of exhibiting a “superiority complex.” As for the DGSE, it fears the military will expose sensitive sources and methods. (159–78)

Many of the issues that Glaser and Hofnung describe in the French intelligence apparatus will be familiar to US intelligence professionals. Close liaison ties with a corrupt, brutal regime like Chad represent a moral and political minefield for a spy service from a country upholding universal democratic values, whether the French DGSE or the US CIA. Bureaucratic rivalries are inevitable between internal and external security services or between civilian and military organizations with similar goals and areas of operations. Also mirroring the experience of veterans of the US intelligence and military services, the French services—as well as private companies with operations in unsettled African locations—increasingly rely on personnel contracted from private companies, following a change in law making it easier for retired spies and soldiers to join such firms. (103–17)

But important differences remain between French and US intelligence practices, in Africa and elsewhere. Most notably, the DGSE and its sister services receive relatively scant legislative oversight; Glaser and Hofnung make no mention of any interaction between the French intelligence agencies and the Assemblée nationale or Sénat. Moreover, the DGSE has a much more military cast than the CIA—about a third of DGSE personnel are active-duty military. This is especially true in the Africa section, where “the dominant color . . . remains khaki” and the section's head at headquarters and the chiefs of field *antennes* are almost always military officers. (153) Finally, the DGSE's hands-on role in advancing the interests of French energy and other companies in Africa reflects Paris's traditionally interventionist approach to economic issues, which differs from how US administrations have framed similar issues—and from the way CIA formulates its operating directives.

The strengths and weaknesses of *Nos chers espions* both stem from the journalistic background of its authors. The book is rich in detail as it paints telling, human-scale portraits of how French and Africans alike view the intelligence relationship. However, this also means it relies heavily on the authors' access to sources. For example, this reviewer suspects Israeli activities receive extensive coverage because Israeli officials and businesspeople were willing to talk—in fact, boast—to Glaser and Hofnung about their exploits. For the same reason, there is an encyclopedic level of detail about “Franco-French” political maneuvering around the intelligence enterprise that might baffle anyone who doesn't regularly read *le Monde*. Russian and Chinese intelligence activities on the continent, on the other hand, get only scant mention, no doubt because no one from the GRU in Moscow or Ministry of State Security in Beijing was willing to grant an interview. The reviewer also caught one factual error—the claim that French deployments to Mali represent “the biggest military operation since the Algerian War”^a (151)—which made him wonder whether there were similar misstatements that he missed. Still, on balance, this book is a useful resource for anyone seeking a better understanding of a key US ally's role in combating terrorism and bolstering stability in Africa and of the part played by the DGSE and its sister services.



The reviewer: William Brooke Stallsmith is a contract analyst on the Lessons Learned Program of the Center for the Study of Intelligence.

a. As of mid-2020, France had deployed 5,100 troops to Mali. The French contribution to Operation Desert Storm in 1991 was 18,000.

Intelligence in Public Media

Spying for Wellington: British Military Intelligence in the Peninsular War

Huw J. Davies (University of Oklahoma Press, 2018), 328 pages, notes, illustrations, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by George P. Lewis

Intelligence aided the British military victory over France in the Iberian Peninsula during the Napoleonic Wars, argues Huw Davies in *Spying for Wellington*. Based heavily on primary sources, Davies's book shows how the Duke of Wellington, his military subordinates, and his civilian counterparts built an informal but sophisticated network of intelligence collection and analysis during the Peninsular War. In fact, Wellington's ability to use intelligence was one of several characteristics that made him such a successful general.

Davies does not limit himself to one type of intelligence in this study; instead, he focuses on numerous forms of intelligence, including human intelligence, open-source intelligence, intelligence gathered from Royal Navy operations, reconnaissance, and topographical intelligence. Surprisingly, he spends little time discussing the most famous aspect of Peninsular War intelligence—George Scovell's breaking of the Paris Grand Cipher, arguing that, while useful, it was not as significant as some historians have claimed. Beyond the substance of Davies's study itself, readers will also appreciate that he did not overly romanticize intelligence work but rather described it as involving much drudgery, even as valuable as it was.

British intelligence during the Napoleonic Wars offers a fascinating juxtaposition to modern intelligence. Britain had no single clearinghouse for intelligence. Instead, disparate entities including, but not limited to, the Foreign Office, the War Office, the admiralty, and military commanders in the field were responsible for their own intelligence collection and analysis. Thus, British intelligence success during the Peninsular War was enabled by the informal partnerships formed between Wellington, the Royal Navy, British diplomats, and their liaison relationships with both the Spanish and Portuguese governments and the Spanish guerrilla bands.

All the intelligence collection that this informal network produced still had no centralized body of analysts to study it. Instead, the British relied on collectors, agents, intelligence officers, diplomats, commanders, and ultimately sometimes even Wellington himself to do the analysis, a system which was largely successful.

Exploiting the chokepoints of the Pyrenees—the mountains separating France from Spain—British agents were able to record most French troop movements in and out of the Iberian Peninsula. This informal network of analysts then evaluated the reliability of these reports and developed a comprehensive and remarkably accurate assessment of how many troops the French had committed to the Peninsular War at any given time.

Much of the last three chapters of *Spying for Wellington* are focused on describing the maneuvers, sieges, and battles of the Peninsular War, but Davies does highlight points at which intelligence played key roles, and two episodes are particularly fascinating. As Wellington prepared for his 1813 campaign, he dispatched numerous intelligence officers to collect topographical intelligence (a predecessor of geospatial intelligence) on the rugged and poorly mapped parts of the peninsula where he planned to campaign. This intelligence, along with outstanding operational security and deceptions, allowed him to exploit the terrain to catch the French by surprise, ultimately resulting in his victory at the Battle of Vitoria.

Nonetheless, Wellington also experienced intelligence failures. Earlier in the war, he had the army of French Marshal Auguste Marmont under continuous surveillance. However, Wellington lacked intelligence on Marmont's intent, allowing the marshal to use rapid maneuvers to deceive Wellington into thinking his army was crossing the Duoro River at a different point than he actually was. Had Wellington questioned his assumptions about the intelligence provided by his surveillance, he might have been able to intercept Marmont at the river crossing, though thanks to his skilled generalship he overcame this intelligence failure and beat Marmont at the Battle of Salamanca.

Huw Davies has written a well-researched and thorough account of Wellington's use of intelligence during the Peninsular War. The book provides insight into a different era of human intelligence, open-source intelligence, topographical intelligence, reconnaissance, and intelligence analysis. Readers with both prior knowledge of the Napoleonic Wars and an interest in intelligence will find *Spying for Wellington* a useful study.



The reviewer: George P. Lewis is the pen name of an officer in CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology.

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Intelligence in Public Media

Veritas: A Harvard Professor, A Con Man and the Gospel of Jesus's Wife

Ariel Sabar (Doubleday, 2020—Kindle Edition), 401 pages in print, plates, illustrations, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by J. E. Leonardson

A book that centers on debates about the place of women in Roman Catholicism might at first glance seem an unlikely recommendation for an intelligence audience, but bear with me. *Veritas* is the story of an academic scandal that, in its complex threads, is an important cautionary tale for intelligence collectors and analysts alike.

The details of the story are too tangled to recap here, but the basics are straightforward. Karen King, the Harvard professor of the title, is a historian of early Christianity at Harvard Divinity School, whose specialty is the study of ancient Christian papyrus texts. These documents, written in Coptic in the first few centuries AD and found in the Egyptian desert, are from the era when Christianity still was forming and debating many of its fundamental tenets; the papyri often contain texts that later were dropped from the New Testament and, in many cases, suppressed by the Catholic Church as heretical. King, in particular, is world renowned for her work on texts that debated the role of women in the Church before it became a male-dominated institution, and her publications have challenged centuries of orthodoxy to Church teachings on sex, women's capacity for leadership, and priestly celibacy.

In July 2010, King received an email from a man who said he was a manuscript collector. Would she, the collector asked, be interested in examining some fragments of Coptic papyri that he had acquired? She said yes, he emailed images of a dozen fragments and, when King examined one of them, she saw that the text strongly suggested that Jesus had been married to Mary Magdalene. King believed the fragment to be a modern fake, however, but nonetheless a year later offered to the collector to have papyrological specialists examine it. He agreed and King sent the image to AnneMarie Luijendijk, a religion professor at Princeton. Luijendijk then showed it to Roger Bagnall, a New York University professor who is one of the world's leading papyrologists. Both agreed that it was genuine. With those assurances, King announced the find at a scholarly conference in Rome in September 2012, and a global sensation ensued because, as King put it, the fragment would force the Catholic Church to "completely

reevaluate the way in which Christianity looks at sexuality and at marriage."

King's announcement also brought global scrutiny of the papyrus. Unfortunately for King, as more and more experts in papyrology, Coptic, and early Christianity looked at it, the more reasons they found to doubt its authenticity. King defended the papyrus—the April 2014 issue of the *Harvard Theological Review* carried her scholarly translation and analysis of what she called "the Gospel of Jesus's Wife," along with several scientific evaluations of the fragment that concluded it was genuine—but, by 2016, further textual analyses and improved technical processes made it clear that the text was, in fact, a forgery. (The papyrus itself was genuine—real pieces of ancient papyri are widely available—but the writing was fake.)

While King and her supporters may be content to forget the entire embarrassment, not so Ariel Sabar. A journalist who began covering King's find shortly before the Rome conference, Sabar followed the story for more than five years. His investigation centered on two questions—who was the forger (King refused to identify the collector, citing his request for privacy), and how had King and others been duped by what was, in fact, a crude effort? *Veritas* is the result of his inquiries and, even if the book is overly long and sometimes focuses more on the politics of the Harvard Divinity School or Sabar himself than the story, it is a captivating account of how a clever manipulator can deceive even the most sophisticated analysts.

After months of detective work, Sabar found that the forger was a man named Walter Fritz, a middle-aged German immigrant living in Florida. Fritz, as Sabar describes him, is a protean figure who at school and in jobs "made careful studies of the views and motivations of his superiors" to ingratiate himself and had a "preternatural gift for turning himself into a mirror of other people's beliefs and desires." At the same time, though, he had a "knack for exploiting people's vulnerabilities." Fritz had a troubled family background—his father abandoned his

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mother, his stepfather wanted nothing to do with him, and he may have been molested by a priest—before he appeared in the 1980s as a student in Egyptology at the Free University in West Berlin. He showed some promise but did not finish his degree, though he still managed in the early 1990s to become the director of the newly established Stasi Museum in the former East Berlin. His museum performance, however, was disastrous and he soon was out and on his way to start over in Florida, where he engaged in several failed ventures. Eventually he found modest success running a pornographic website on which he sold videos of his wife having sex with other men. Sabar cannot say conclusively why Fritz turned to forgery, but he believes it was a “settling of scores with all the male authority figures who had robbed Fritz of his potential” and especially the Egyptology professors “who had seen him as a middling student instead of the prodigy he felt himself to be.”

Whatever Fritz’s talents, however, forgery was not among them. King and the other scholars who examined the fragment early on all saw that the handwriting was, as one put it, “really ugly” and far from the norm for sacred or other important ancient documents. The layout of the text, too, was wrong and contained egregious grammatical errors that, another scholar noted, showed the writer was “thinking in English, not Coptic.”

The obviousness of the fraud makes Sabar’s explorations of how and why the academics fell for the hoax the most valuable parts of the book. The overarching reason, he argues, is that King desperately wanted the fragment and the text to be real, as it would crown her career. Furthermore, the communities of papyrology and historians of early Christianity are small and close, with the scholars closely linked by ties of mentorship and common outlook—they held the same views as she on women and the Church—and thus shared King’s desire for the fragment to be genuine. They also brought additional biases to their work. Luijendik, for example, specialized in the study of religious texts found in ancient trash heaps, where torn-up papyri were dumped. Looking at the fragment through her “garbological” lens, says Sabar, she saw what she was used to seeing—a bit of ancient junk that “would be impossible to forge.” Bagnall’s examination was even worse. He invited several colleagues to examine it with him and, looking at the handwriting, the group instantly saw it was a forgery. But then, Sabar writes, the “scholars doubled back. Soon a full reversal was underway: the appalling handwriting, which Bagnall first saw

as a tell of forger, became an obvious mark of authenticity. . . . A papyrus that looked like a clumsy fake was apt to be real, because an actual forger would have tried harder.” Finally, Sabar details several conflicts of interest among the scholars and the scientists who carried out the technical examinations of the fragment.

From then onward, Sabar tells a sad, if familiar, story. The papyrus and the version of history it supported was, for King, too important for the text to be labeled a fraud, and she took no steps that would risk exposing it. Indeed, King never tried to do any of the detective work that Sabar undertook and, when she learned that an anonymous peer reviewer for the *Harvard Theological Review* had concluded the fragment was a fake, simply told Sabar that “it just doesn’t count.” After the Rome conference, moreover, there was no going back. Harvard put its full weight behind the find, as did the Smithsonian, which produced a documentary, and King—in Sabar’s portrayal, a skilled self-promoter—hit the lecture circuit to publicize the papyrus and her arguments about Church history. In the end, says Sabar, King still refused to admit what everyone knew, deciding instead to “shift the criteria for the adequacy of truth claims away from objectivity to ethics.” King believed so deeply in the correctness of her historical views that, in her view, the Gospel of Jesus’s Wife had to be accepted as genuine not because it was an authentic artifact but, instead, because it advanced arguments that needed to be true.

Amidst all the wishful thinking, did anyone get it right? The answer is yes, some did, but King and the others always found reasons to dismiss them. The most prominent critic was a Brown University Egyptologist named Leo Depuydt, who focused on the grammatical errors and argued that the author was likely a modern-day European who “might have benefited from one more semester of Coptic.” King’s response to Depuydt, echoing Bagnall, was that she “couldn’t imagine a con artist capable of getting so many details right and so many others wrong.” Others who spotted the forgery were outside the academic mainstream—one was a dropout from academia who worked as a regulatory compliance officer at a vocational school in Portland, Oregon, and another was an evangelical Christian associated with the Museum of the Bible and thus was looked down upon by university-based scholars who viewed people like him as “irredeemably biased.” These outsiders found what no one else had bothered to look for—images and translations on the Internet of other Coptic texts that Fritz copied

for his forgery. “Truths hounded in basements might take a bit longer to find their way into the ivory tower,” says Sabar, “but they got there eventually.”

Intelligence officers should have no trouble listing the causes of the debacle. In our terms, a volunteer wrote in offering exactly what King wanted, in this case a document validating decades of scholarly research and argument. From there, all other errors flowed. King made no effort at asset validation—rather than make even rudimentary checks on Fritz or disclose his identity to enable others to check his story, she simply accepted him as legitimate. The analysts who should have been more careful—Luijendik, and Bagnall and the other papyrologists—also wanted to believe, and thus fell into a groupthink in which they contorted the logic to come up with a desired result. Nonacademic dissenters, lacking the prestige of institutions to back them up, were dismissed with no consideration of their arguments or facts. As the months went by and the evidence piled up, King dug in even more and refused to reconsider her basic assumptions while inventing new reasons to believe.

Before shaking your head at the foolishness of the professors, however, ask yourself this question: how many times have you found yourself in a similar situation? Anyone who has been in the intelligence world for more than a few weeks likely has heard someone say, “I’m the expert, it’s my account, and I say. . .” or “Yeah, we’ve checked this guy and he’s reliable. . .” or “You’re not cleared for that information, so you can’t see the source documents. . .” only to hear later that the analysis was wrong and all the reporting has been recalled as fabrication. Anyone who sticks around for more than a few years, moreover, will at some point be thinking, “I can’t believe how wrong I was, maybe there’s some way I can avoid admitting it.”

Intelligence officers of all specialties would be well advised to read *Veritas* and ponder how easily they might fall into the same traps as King and her colleagues. And if you read *Veritas* and don’t think it can happen to you, then you might want to think about reading it twice.



The reviewer: J. E. Leonardson is the pen name of an analyst in the CIA’s Directorate of Analysis.

Intelligence in Public Media

Young Heroes of the Soviet Union: A Memoir and a Reckoning

Alex Halberstadt (Random House, 2020—Kindle edition), 289 pages in print, illustrations.

Reviewed by J. E. Leonardson

Alex Halberstadt's *Young Heroes of the Soviet Union* is the latest example of a type of book—one combining family history, personal memoir, and meditation on how the Soviet experience continues to shape Russia today—that has become common since the turn of the century as journalists and emigrés seek to explain Russian political culture and the rise of President Putin's dictatorship.^a In this vein, Halberstadt, a journalist who emigrated with his mother and grandparents to the United States as a young boy, writes of the experiences of his half-Russian, half-Lithuanian Jewish family in the late Tsarist, interwar, and World War II periods, as well as of his childhood in Brezhnev-era Moscow and adjustment to life in New York. Halberstadt's account is interesting and at times affecting, though in most ways not much different from many others.

What makes *Young Heroes* worthwhile for readers of *Studies*, however, is the first part of the book, that describes Halberstadt's return to Russia as an adult, when he tracks down his paternal grandfather, Vassily, an old man living in a small apartment in Vinnytsia, Ukraine. Vassily, it turns out, is a retired intelligence officer, but not just any old KGB hack—he was one of Stalin's bodyguards from 1941 until the dictator's death in 1953. Halberstadt gradually gets the old man to give up enough details about his past to reconstruct his career. Following a stint in the Red Cavalry, Vassily came to Moscow in the early 1930s to attend the OGPU Academy.^b From there, he was assigned to the Lubyanka during the height of the Terror to do the “daily work of the purges,” as Halberstadt puts it.

Vassily survived by keeping his head down, though somehow he managed to be noticed by Lavrentiy Beria,

the last and longest-lived of Stalin's secret police chiefs. It was Beria, who in late 1941 brought Vassily back from the front—he had been near Smolensk, serving in one of the NKVD detachments that shot Red Army soldiers accused of cowardice or desertion—to become a bodyguard. The price was that in addition to guarding Stalin, Vassily became one of Beria's loyal henchmen, sent in 1944 to Crimea to help deport the Tartars. He served Beria reliably until Stalin's death and then, perhaps seeing the handwriting on the wall, requested in April 1953 a transfer to Vinnytsia so he could look after his aging parents. Beria was himself executed soon after, and Vassily spent the rest of his career in Vinnytsia, keeping an eye on Ukrainian nationalists.

Halberstadt does a neat job of unpacking the contradictory ways in which Vassily, decades later, sees himself and his work. Sometimes he is proud. “I was a major,” he tells his grandson, “I had an office in Lubyanka and supervised fifty-five men.” Sometimes he is self-justifying. “Of course, we believed” in the communist cause, he says when he talks of the purges. Sometimes he is evasive. “Beyond ‘interrogation’ and ‘paperwork,’ he refused to elaborate” on his duties, writes Halberstadt. Other times, he is resentful. Beria “used me like a common thug. Beria was the smartest of [the leadership], and I loathed him.” Finally, he is a sad and exhausted old man who had been “frightened every single day” for almost two decades and is grateful just to have survived.

For anyone interested in the question of how Stalin's secret policemen did their work, and what the work did to them, *Young Heroes of the Soviet Union* is well worth a read.



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a. See, for example, Masha Gessen, *The Future is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia* (2017); Gessen, *The Man Without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin* (2012); and Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy, *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin* (2012), all reviewed in earlier issues of this journal.

b. Acronym from Russian *Obedinënnoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie* “United State Political Directorate,” an organization for dealing with counterrevolutionary activities in the Soviet Union, existing from 1922 (1922–23 as the GPU) to 1934 and replacing the Cheka. It was absorbed into the NKVD in 1934.

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Intelligence in Public Media

The Lockhart Plot: Love, Betrayal, Assassination and Counter-Revolution in Lenin's Russia

Jonathan Schneer (Oxford University Press, 2020), 340 pages, notes, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by J. E. Leonardson

On the penultimate page of *The Lockhart Plot*, Jonathan Schneer, a retired US historian, summarizes his story. It is, he says, a tale of “suspense, treachery, violence, love and desire, larger than life personalities.” As if this isn’t enough to recommend the book, one could add that it is an incredibly complex story of revolution, espionage, and counterintelligence that, in Schneer’s capable hands, becomes clear and gripping.

Bruce Lockhart was a British diplomat posted to Moscow during World War I. He was a talented and perceptive officer whose dispatches were read carefully in London, but he was also reckless, a risk taker, and a serial womanizer. In the early days after the November revolution, Lockhart believed Britain could work with the new Bolshevik regime to protect the interests of the UK and its allies, but he soon realized that this would be impossible. Working with a motley collection of Western diplomats, Russians, and adventurers, he organized a plot to, in conjunction with Allied military intervention, bring down Lenin’s regime. The effort no doubt was doomed from the start, as it was run by amateurs (including Sidney Reilly, the famous “Ace of Spies”) who were guided by their own illusions and ambitions rather than any rational evaluation of the situation or expectation of success.

Plotting a counterrevolution against Lenin’s regime, in any case, was no job for beginners. Lockhart’s opponent was Feliks Dzerzhinsky, the founder of Soviet intelligence, who quickly penetrated the British diplomat’s ramshackle organization and outwitted him at every turn. The plotting and counterplotting became “wheels within wheels, mirrors reflecting mirrors reflecting mirrors,” most of them controlled by Dzerzhinsky and his equally able deputy, Jakov Peters. Lockhart’s conspiracy came crashing down in August 1918, and he and almost all his confederates (many of whom were diplomats) were arrested or forced to flee. Lockhart returned to England in a prisoner exchange, while Reilly made it out of Russia by means still not clear.

The details of the conspiracies and events are too complicated for any attempt at a summary here, but no matter. For intelligence officers today, the key reason to read *The Lockhart Plot* is to see the contrast between Dzerzhinsky’s counterintelligence operation, which deserves a great deal of professional respect, and Lockhart’s slapdash efforts. It is an object lesson in how, in the absence of rigorous planning and analysis, operations can quickly go wrong, as well as the need to know your opponent.



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Intelligence in Public Media

The Secrets We Kept (A Novel)

Lara Prescott (Alfred A. Knopf, 2019—Kindle Edition), 349 pages in print.

Reviewed by J. E. Leonardson

Few writers are as lucky as Lara Prescott. Her debut novel, *The Secrets We Kept*, was auctioned for \$2 million and before the 200,000-copy print run was delivered in late summer 2019, the movie rights were sold as well. With such a large investment to protect, Prescott's publisher's publicity department made her available for interviews that led to gushing prepublication profiles in the *New York Times*, *New York* magazine, on NPR, and various websites. It should surprise no one that *The Secrets We Kept* hit the *Times* bestseller list almost immediately after it appeared.

Good fortune, indeed, but does the book justify the hype? The answer is more complicated than usual for spy novels. First, *The Secrets We Kept* is a spy novel only under an expansive definition of the genre. On one level a novel about women in the CIA in the 1950s, *The Secrets We Kept* is also about class and gender, the role of ideas and literature in politics, Cold War culture, and recovering lost histories. In that sense, it is better described as being about the world of intelligence than about espionage. While certainly a compellingly written and interesting book for an intelligence audience, how individual readers react to it will depend entirely on how they decide to approach it.

On the surface *The Secrets We Kept* is a straightforward historical novel. Irina Drozdova, a young Russian American woman, is hired in the mid-1950s to be a typist at CIA. Assigned to the large, all-female typing pool at the agency's early headquarters on E Street, she spends her days clattering away on her machine until she is chosen for operational training, though not as a case officer but rather as a support asset—"We're good at spotting hidden talent," her boss tells her.

Meanwhile, Prescott cuts away to Moscow, telling the story of how Boris Pasternak and his mistress/muse Olga Ivinskaya, collaborate to write *Doctor Zhivago* and smuggle it to the West. When CIA realizes the propaganda and political potential of *Doctor Zhivago*, Irina

is assigned to the operation to print Russian copies and smuggle them to the Soviet Union.^a The operation is a success, and Irina goes on to a long career in operations.

This, of course, is only one part of the story. The second main thread of the plot concerns Irina's coming of age and understanding of herself. It begins conventionally, as Irina and the officer who trains her, Teddy, become a couple and then become engaged. (Teddy's upper-class background, so common in the CIA of the 1950s, stands in contrast to that of Irina's, who grew up on the edge of poverty.) At work, however, Irina meets Sally Forrester, who had been a star officer in the OSS but in the postwar agency is relegated to clerical work and other duties believed suitable for women. Irina and Sally gradually realize that their true passion is for each other and, after an agonizing period of indecision, Irina breaks off her engagement to Teddy. Unfortunately, the CIA of the 1950s was not inclined to tolerate lesbians on the staff, no matter how talented or discreet, and as rumors about her swirl and a boss assaults her, Sally is fired; Irina saves her own job only by lying with the skillfulness Teddy taught her.

Prescott employs an unusual technique to tell this story. The narrator gradually fades into the background as the various characters—Irina, Sally, Olga, Teddy, and a number of others—tell the story in their own voices and from their own points of view. The effect is to make *The Secrets We Kept* read like an oral history, a device that to my knowledge has not been used before in intelligence fiction, and also enhances the impression that the forgotten women of the CIA's early days are now telling their stories.

This works best with Irina. As Prescott fills in her biography and portrays her work life, Irina becomes a sympathetic and engaging character. Just as interesting as her gradual falling in love with Sally, moreover, is Irina's discovery of how she can break free of the subordinate roles and strict limits into which 1950s society and the CIA forced women. Early on, she says, "I preferred

a. For the true story of the operation to distribute *Zhivago*, see Peter Finn and Petra Couvec, *The Zhivago Affair* (Pantheon, 2014). The book was reviewed in *Studies in Intelligence* 59, No. 2: (June 2015).

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fading into the background. Life was easier being unnoticed,” but she soon enjoys the freedom that comes with assuming different roles and covers. “That was the best part: the moment you become someone else. New name, new occupation, new background, education, siblings, lovers, religion—it was easy for me.” Her agency-taught skills, of course, are what enable Irina to hide the secret of her sexual orientation and have a career—both a neat way of subverting the system and giving the book’s title a double meaning.

Prescott does less well with her true historical characters. Her research on Pasternak, Ivinskaya, and the grim atmosphere of the Soviet Union is solid, and she drops real figures from the OSS and the CIA’s early days into the story to give it verisimilitude: Sally, for example, worked with Julia Child on Ceylon during the war, and Frank Wisner and Alan Dulles make a couple of appearances. This works for the Russian characters, with whose experiences and ways of thinking most US readers will be unfamiliar, but not as well for the Americans. The reader starts to get the feeling that Prescott is using real people and well-known tales from CIA’s early days (I first read the one about the snake in Thomas Powers’ *The Man Who Kept the Secrets* [1979]) to show that she’s done her homework rather than use Dulles’s womanizing or Wisner’s breakdown as plot devices.

Still, Prescott’s use of history succeeds in a different way, in evoking an intellectual world that disappeared several decades ago. All of the characters, whether Russian or American, believe deeply in the political power of ideas and literature—Olga goes to the gulag for her belief in literature, Pasternak agonizes about his

inaction during Stalin’s Terror, Teddy is himself a would-be novelist, and even the bland men of the CIA are alert to the possibilities of *Zhivago*—and, therefore, believe deeply in the importance of their work. This is an aspect of the Cold War that in today’s cynical era is overlooked or even disparaged, very much to the detriment of efforts to combat modern threats, whether of extremism or the systematic dissemination of falsehood. Prescott’s point that lies can be refuted by people who believe in the power of truth is one well worth remembering.

Any final evaluation of *The Secrets We Kept* depends on what a particular reader is looking for. Anyone who wants a spy thriller should go elsewhere, as Prescott simply has not written that kind of book. If you are seeking a complex, multilayered novel with more than a few intellectual and philosophical musings, however, *The Secrets We Kept* delivers and will leave you hungry for more—you likely will find yourself wanting to read *The Zhivago Affair*. If you are interested in how women approach and are shifting the espionage genre, moreover, *The Secrets We Kept* is important reading in its own right. Women long have been absent from the front ranks of espionage writers, but the publication of *The Secrets We Kept* and Kate Atkinson’s *Transcription* (2018) suggests this is changing.^a The theme of women using intelligence work to break free of their assigned gender roles is front and center in both Prescott’s and Atkinson’s work, and they also remind us that the history of women in intelligence remains underexplored. If Prescott continues to work in these areas, and other women writers build on her and Atkinson’s examples, the espionage genre will be all the richer for it.



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a. Atkinson’s book was reviewed in *Studies in Intelligence* 62, No. 4 (December 2018).