

Studies in Intelligence

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Journal of the American Intelligence Professional

On Oversight:

Interview with Former Sen. Gary Hart

On Becoming DCI:

George H.W. Bush's Nomination

Principles of Intel Analysis:

A Veteran's View

Estimating Cuba's Latin
America Strategy in the 1960s

Past Efforts to Foster
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Intelligence in Public Media



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Principles of Intelligence Analysis

Robert Levine, PhD

Insights matter only if they are accurate, relevant, timely, and persuasive.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the foundational elements of intelligence analysis. Although these may be familiar individually to practitioners, and the broad topic has been the subject of many *Studies* articles, I wanted to add my perspective from a career in analysis that included 33 years as an analyst, instructor, and in my final five years as the leader of CIA's Quality Evaluation Program (QEP)—a post-production, “peer review” system in the Directorate of Analysis (DA) that examined thousands of products.

My fellow evaluators—all with decades of experience—and I saw brilliant work as well as products that reflected poorly on our analytic practices. Attention to these fundamental principles can contribute significantly to the quality of analysis.^a

Customer and Context

There are probably many ways to define intelligence analysis. For my purposes, I posit that the role of intelligence analysis is to provide value-added insights to information that is collected through secret or overt means. The insights matter only

if they are accurate, relevant, timely, and persuasive.

For the analyst, these straightforward requirements bump up against the realities of the job. Time is a tyrannical boss. Developments may occur rapidly, demands for quick processing reduce opportunities to consider different possibilities, and review and coordination demand a quick pen but risk introducing unintended messages.

Customers have multiple sources of information, their own biases and preferences, and terrible time pressures of their own. Analysts are competing for their attention. They must protect their intellectual integrity and analytic objectivity zealously, avoiding internal or external attempts to bend their judgments to satisfy political or bureaucratic goals.^b

Many factors can influence a customer's receptivity to intelligence analysis: the political, economic, military, and social milieu of the moment; the customer's preferences, norms, and values; and the bandwidth to make and act on a decision. In candid moments, senior decisionmakers have said that they seldom can deal with more than one or two major

a. This article was inspired by two works: James J. Brosnahan, “Basic Principles of Advocacy: One Trial Lawyer's View,” *American Journal of Trial Advocacy* (1979) and Charles Schultze, *Memos to the President: A Guide Through Macroeconomics for the Busy Policymaker* (Brookings Institution Press, 1993).

b. See Barry Zulauf, “Safeguarding Objectivity in Intelligence Analysis,” *Studies in Intelligence* 65, no. 3 (September 2021).

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Customers have varying depth on intelligence and even on their own areas of responsibilities.

foreign affair crises at a time. All experienced analysts have presented convincing material to decisionmakers only to see those authorities shake their heads in acknowledgement of the need to act without the capacity to do so. Analysts must be attuned to the opportunities for action as well as the broader picture of where action might be prioritized (or shunted aside).

Turn customer questions into viable intelligence topics and requirements.

Customers have varying depths of knowledge on intelligence and even on their own areas of responsibility. The questions they ask often try to probe mysteries, such as predictions of the likely occurrence of conflicts. Analysts must use their expertise and their understanding of the customer's interests to refine broad questions into intelligence questions that can be answered logically, based on evidence and informed judgments. Analysts must then translate those intelligence questions into clear and practical collection requirements to generate additional evidence.

This is anything but a straightforward matter. If a decisionmaker asks if a foreign state is stable, analysts must tease out the real concern (coups, economic stability, or popular revolt?) and craft intelligence questions that get to each dimension. Those questions must be refined in the context of the specific country—its history, ethnic composition, officer

corps loyalty, monetary reserves and balance of payments, etc.

Without subject matter expertise this refinement can produce wasteful dead ends and spurious pursuits. Each of those questions, in turn, needs to be translated into specific collection requirements with due consideration for which entities would possess the information needed, how it would be stored, and which collection capability is best suited to obtain the information needed.

Understand the customer's perspective.

People's judgments and willingness to accept analytic findings are framed by multiple factors, including backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs. Every decisionmaker has cognitive biases, including theories that guide them (e.g., the liberal international order), beliefs about how the world works (e.g., the arc of history bends in a particular direction), or sacred beliefs (e.g., all things happen for a reason). Thus it is essential for the analyst to understand as much as possible about the decisionmakers and the environment in which they operate. Each analytic claim as well as the evidence and logic used to support it should be prepared with the decision makers in mind.

Be attentive to the interplay of cognitive biases and metaphorical reasoning.

Beginning in the 1970s, cognitive psychologists like Daniel Kahneman,

Vernon Smith, Richard Thaler, and Amos Tversky unlocked some of the secrets behind how human beings make decisions and evaluate risk and rewards, and their work would greatly influence the field of intelligence analysis.^a Today, through training and tradecraft standards, the IC stresses the need for analysts to beware of how mental shortcuts can lead them astray. For example, the confirmation bias may dissuade analysts from questioning the accuracy of new evidence and their judgments, based on reporting received earlier.^b

Analysts should pay attention to unrecognized metaphorical reasoning—their own and that of their customer. People perceive, think, experience, and act through metaphors. In Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker's words, "metaphor really is a key to explaining thought and language."^c Metaphors translate amorphous concepts into concrete analogies. They provide coherent structures that aid in understanding new information or possibilities, highlighting some characteristics of a problem while obscuring others. If an argument is a war, we aim to defeat the other side, not persuade it with accommodation.

In 2011, a fascinating study by Paul Thibodeau and Lera Boroditsky examined the influences (the metaphorical entailments) on policy choices for different metaphorical models of crime. People who were subtly primed to think of crime as a rampant, dangerous beast gathered information and proposed solutions

a. Kahneman's *Thinking Fast and Slow* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013) is an accessible overview of his work on bias, risk, and decision-making. See also Zvi Lanir and Daniel Kahneman, "Speaking to Policymakers: An Experiment in Decision Analysis in Israel in 1975," in *Studies in Intelligence* 50, no. 4 (December 1975).

b. See Dan M. Kahan, Ellen Peters, Erica Dawson, and Paul Slovic, "Motivated Numeracy and Enlightened Self-Government," *Behavioural Public Policy* (September 2013).

c. Steven Pinker, *The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window into Human Nature* (Penguin Books, 2007), 276.

that differed markedly from those primed to think of crime as a virus.^a Their work showed that we often do not recognize the existence of our metaphorical models, much less their entailments or influences.

Terrorism analysts, for example, may not recognize the influence of studying recruitment as gang-like behavior or disease-like contamination. Similarly, intelligence customers may not recognize how seeing foreign leadership cadres as Mafia dons or corporate executives affects their judgments. Their metaphors, nevertheless, shape what information they seek and react to, and which types of actions and reactions they anticipate and believe are likely. Just consider the consequences of visualizing a war on drugs rather than an effort to treat addiction.

Preparation

Preparation is the most important principle of analysis. Done well, it may overcome other shortcomings. Deep immersion into the evidence, background, implications for foreign actors, and implications for our own national security are essential. Analysts must examine every report's strength and weakness, its provenance, and consistencies and inconsistencies among the available reports.

Analysts cannot accept an intelligence report without probing for the circumstances of the collection, motivations, access, and

My observation from five years in the QEP suggests multidisciplinary analysis is more commonly praised than practiced.

miscommunications. Human source reporting passes through many hands and the chance for unintended loss or distortion of information is too high to ignore. Denial and deception must be considered. Technical collection is seldom as simple as “just read the transcript of the conversation.” Even an intercepted conversation involves interpretations of intonation, tempo, and translation, among other factors.

Analysts should always provide perspective. Intelligence agencies wrestle with the concept of analytic expertise, both defining and measuring it for personnel decisions. The most consistent feature of analytic expertise, and the most valued by customers, is deep and broad knowledge that offers perspective, draws comparisons, and contrasts situations and times. Customers have told us again and again that they value relevant historical background, cross-country comparisons, and trend analysis over months and years.

Contextual insights are often the very materials cut during the editing process to shorten the published article. Analysts must push back on this tendency to overemphasize brevity, arguing that these insights establish credibility and enhance understanding. A few extra paragraphs or an additional visual (e.g., a timeline of past events) can be worth their weight in gold.

A closely related characteristic to perspective is multidisciplinary analysis. The all-source analytic community prides itself on integrating political, economic, military, leadership, and other facets of analysis into comprehensive products. My observation from five years in the QEP suggests multidisciplinary analysis is more commonly praised than practiced.

It is similar to the endorsements of many militaries of combined arms operations. Serious integration of disciplines, like integration of different combat arms, is complex and risky. Falling back on sequential treatment of disciplines is easier and consistent with the years of specialized education and training most analysts have under their belts. We should strive to make multidisciplinary analysis a reality, not merely an aspiration.

Know and consider opposing viewpoints.

Engraved on the wall inside the CIA entrance is the quote from the gospel of John, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” In an intelligence context, it is misleading. Analysts do not have a lock on the truth.^b They discover facts, connect them to plausible explanations, and build lines of argument to support their judgments. It is generally the case that there are alternative viewpoints and advocates for them. Ignoring opposing viewpoints does a

a. Paul H. Thibodeau, Lera Boroditsky, “Metaphors We Think With: The Role of Metaphor in Reasoning,” *PLOSone* 6, No. 2, (February 2011). For a comprehensive survey, see George Lakoff and Mark John, *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, 1980).

b. Stephen Marrin, “Analytic Objectivity and Science: Evaluating the US Intelligence Community’s Approach to Applied Epistemology,” *Intelligence and National Security* 35, No. 3 (2020).

Intelligence integration since 9/11 has changed that for the better, but there are still gaps between operators and analysts.

disservice to the customers, and may well sink the analyst's case.^a

A few years ago a colleague and I interviewed analysts working on an ongoing insurgency. We elicited their judgments and the evidence and logic for their claims. When I asked for alternative views, they said there were none. Pressed, they admitted another agency might have some, but "you don't want to waste your time talking to them." Such arrogance and shortsightedness—maybe the others have useful insights—was hardly a unique instance.

Understand the full picture.

Intelligence integration since 9/11 has narrowed the gaps between collector, analyst, and intelligence consumer, but analysts need to be attuned to the continued risk that intelligence operations and decisionmaker actions can obscure causes and effects. For example, if a foreign power acts in what seems to be an irrational or paranoid way, analysts might conclude that its leaders are poorly informed or misled by their intelligence services. But I have found on more than one occasion that foreign actions were in fact motivated by US covert actions that I stumbled upon. Analysts must expose themselves to the panoply of intelligence activities, though information compartmentation and good security practices make this challenging.

There is another dimension to this problem of the unknown catalyst. Non-intelligence activities including diplomacy, military actions, and private-sector and non-governmental involvement can have profound influences on foreign actors' perceptions and actions. Analysts must understand what forces are influencing the actions of foreign actors.^b

Develop consistent and comprehensive models.

One of my former colleagues described the typical analytic process as gathering a bunch of reports, reading them, spreading them out on your desk, and coming up with plausible ways to fit them together. That may be a good description, but it is lacking. Analysts must understand complex situations well enough to offer customers coherent and persuasive theories that logically tie together the available evidence. Analysts may argue inductively (from specifics to the general), deductively (from general rule to specific instance), or analogically (this case is like that one, and so the following holds). Other structures can work, depending on the particular case and evidence. A case without an overarching theory of argument, however, is especially vulnerable to rejection.^c

None of this is to suggest that analysts ought to bury inconvenient evidence (gaps, contrary evidence) or suggest there is only one explanation. Nor does it mean that a theory should

become an intellectual straightjacket. However, without clearly articulated explanations customers are left with messes of partially digested evidence that force them to take on the jobs of analysts.

It is also incumbent on analysts to specify key assumptions, to explain how widely accepted those assumptions are, to provide major counter-assumptions, and to explore what happens if assumptions are wrong. No analyst can cover all assumptions and their implications. However, in too many cases analysts leap past key assumptions with no discussion. For example, it is common for analysts to assert, "the four major drivers in this situation are . . ." without backing up such claims or explaining that they are key assumptions.

Support the judgments.

Few faults stand out so baldly and undercut an oral or written presentation more than unsupported judgments or unexplained evidence. If a judgment or claim is made, the customer expects it will be supported by evidence and logic. If a judgment is unsupported or poorly supported, the whole presentation may suffer from a reverse halo effect, that is, one weakly supported claim taints the credibility of other arguments.

As currently practiced, sourcing is often pro forma. If we state that some point was made by a clandestine source, are we inherently endorsing it? Or are we saying, "Here is where it comes from, now you decide if you trust it?" We seldom provide a good

a. A colleague suggested this passage from John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*: "He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion."

b. See Robert M. Hathaway, "Confrontation and Retreat: The U.S. Congress and the South Asian Nuclear Tests," *Arms Control Today* 30, No. 1 (January/February 2000): 7–14.

c. See Chip and Dan Heath, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (Random House, 2007).

sense of how much we understand an issue based on our collection posture, redundant and confirmatory sources, and why we trust a particular source.

Do not overpromise.

Analysts should be humble about their ability to see into the future. Many intelligence issues are highly complex problems with multiple, independent actors; hidden features; and evidence manipulated by willful, deceptive opponents. Moreover, predictions are seldom just about facts (e.g., what will be the value of the stock market index in six months) but rather about causal relationships. Just like all humans, analysts by nature try to find relationships and explanations even when the data to support such claims are weak and inconsistent.^a

Pay attention to sequence and structure.

There are alternative ways to present an analytic finding and it is seldom if ever the case that only one way will do. Early in the production process authors should consider the best way to convey the analysis and the relative balance of text and visuals, and when relevant in-person briefings. Visuals can be graphs, photographs, illustrations, maps, physical or interactive media displays, and any number of these combined. Too often visuals are used to “pretty up a piece” of text, sometimes merely repeating points from the text. They should be used more frequently to carry the core analytic message and evidence to take advantage of the different mental channels consumers use to gather information.

Too often visuals are used to “pretty up” the text, sometimes merely repeating points from the text.

In QEP reviews, we identified a number of products in which a visual accompanying a text contradicted and, sometimes, even disproved the basic judgment of the article’s text. These errors occurred because of poor collaboration, coordination, and review.

One of the most glaring instances of insufficient attention to presentation comes in the use of bullets in writing or slideware presentation such as PowerPoint. It is common to see intelligence products written as a series of similarly structured paragraphs or slides—each as a long declarative sentence followed by a series of bullets. Often, bullets lack an inherent logical role or order.^b They may be a list of examples, key pieces of evidence, steps in a sequence, events in a chronology, etc. Without explanatory linking language (e.g., “the following are the most important reports supporting this claim”) there is no way to know what kind of logic is being applied. As commonly used, bullets lead to an approach that can be described as analysis by anecdote.

Use language suited to the customer.

A skilled analyst tailors language to the customer with prose that is clear and direct. That might mean avoiding jargon or needlessly long and complex words, replacing nominalizations (e.g., the noun “intervention”) with active verbs (“intervene”), or as George Orwell famously advised, replacing Latin-based words with shorter

Anglo-Saxon words (“about” rather than “approximately”).

Vary the length of sentences and avoid long ones. Readers and listeners get lost in 50-plus-word sentences, especially with multiple clauses and parenthetical phrases. In one case, I could find no one who could read a published lead sentence of an important classified assessment in a single breath. Moreover, no one could summarize it for me after reading it once quickly.

Readers can follow active voice more easily and prefer it to passive voice.^c Moreover, as a subject becomes more complex inherently, the more important it is to present it clearly. Simplicity is not about dumbing down analysis but about being able to present the core finding and its support succinctly and accurately.

Use numbers correctly.

When I taught an economics course at the National War College, I told students that I sensed their discomfort: “You can face incoming 107-mm rockets, but you are scared of numbers and economic theories.” Many intelligence analysts have a similar discomfort with numbers and statistics. This leads them to make mistakes that misinform their customers and undercut credibility.

In QEP reviews, we found examples of per capita GDP numbers off by a factor of 10. In some cases, totals and percentages were incorrectly calculated. One egregious study cited

a. See Steven Sloman and Philip Fernbach, *The Knowledge Illusion: Why We Never Think Alone* (Riverhead Books, 2017).

b. Gordon Shaw, Robert Brown, and Philip Bromley, “Strategic Stories: How 3M Is Rewriting Business Planning,” *Harvard Business Review* (May–June 1998).

c. See Christopher R. Trudeau, “The Public Speaks: An Empirical Study of Legal Communication,” *Journal of Legal Writing* (2012).

Analysts need to write or speak directly to their audiences, not down or up to them.

factors that were likely to contribute to an undesired outcome without noting that the same factors appeared in instances of desired outcomes. Counting rules were changed without pointing out the change. Samples were used that were not random, large enough, or appropriately measured, without informing the reader.

Be alert to the audience.

Analysts must develop and practice their briefing skills, and just as in written products tailor them to their audience. Although the content of the intelligence finding is key, it must be delivered effectively. Word choice, intonation, pace, pauses, volume, gestures, facial expressions, and any number of other non-substantive aspects can ensure success or doom it. That said, sometimes the most important skill in a briefing is listening. Analysts must balance their own presentation with a keen interest in their audience's reactions.

Analysts should know their material so well that they can deliver a planned 20-minute presentation in one minute (what is often dubbed the elevator speech), or elaborate to fill an hour if the customer wants it. Each of those, regardless of length, should cover the same general contours. Analysts are taught that all presentations, written and in-person, should be fractal; that is, similar patterns should recur at progressively smaller scales.

Present analysis as a professional.

Analysts need to write or speak directly to their audiences, not down or up to them. This calls for a confident but conversational tone. Some analysts exhibit false modesty,

condescension, or diffidence. Others fail to make their points because they are intimidated. All can lead to problems.

This sounds like an easy and obvious matter. It is not. Audiences can be intimidating, whether they intend to be or not. I recall a large meeting with a US defense secretary in which a principal offered a claim made by a foreign power, asking if it was true. The heads around the table nodded like a display of bobble-heads. But they knew better—the foreign power had lied to the secretary. The people attending the briefing, though senior themselves, could not bring themselves to tell this man that he was the victim of a lie and attempted manipulation.

Anticipate questions and objections.

Too many presentations are crafted as one-sided briefs and fail to address reasonable questions and counter-arguments. Well-informed audiences often ask for elaboration or confront analysts with alternative viewpoints or evidence (or have staffers or other analysts alongside to challenge the main presentation). Intelligence customers often learn the most when they can ask questions that answer their particular needs or fill specific gaps in their understanding. Some briefers even structure their presentations as a series of questions and answers; this encourages the audience to prioritize the questions and add their own. This question-and-answer approach can be used effectively in written products as well.

As a junior analyst I was convinced that particular words mattered, and frequently argued with editors who, to my mind, changed the meaning of my work. Words do matter, but I neglected to pay enough attention to their reception. This is particularly telling in terms of probabilistic language, and is best illustrated by a story I heard at the National Academy of Sciences around 2005.

A group of 17 seismologists meeting in the San Francisco Bay area in the late 1980s were asked to write down whether they agreed with the following statement: “A moderate-to-large earthquake likely will hit the San Francisco area in the near term.” All 17 of the participants answered yes. The participants then were asked to write down answers to the following questions: What do they mean by moderate-to-large? What do they mean by likely? What do they mean by San Francisco area? What do they mean by near term?

Answers that related to moderate-to-large varied by a factor of 500; some respondents assumed this range excluded very large earthquakes. The percentages they offered for probability varied from 5 to 90 percent. The San Francisco Bay Area differed from the city boundaries to the entire bay area. And the near term meant anything from months to 10,000 years (still near term in geologic terms).

Obviously, their agreement on the initial statement did not mean consistency among the participants' individual views. Analysts who think they are being clear when they use terms such as probably, unlikely, or remote have in their own minds a sense of what they mean. But there is no reason to assume that briefing

audiences assign the same meaning to the terms.^a

For example, on March 12, 2018, British Prime Minister Theresa May told the House of Commons it was “highly likely” (corresponding to a probability of 75–85 percent, in the UK’s system) that the Russians were responsible for poisoning former Russian intelligence officer Sergei Skripal and his daughter. A few days later, then-Foreign Minister Boris Johnson described the likelihood as “overwhelmingly likely”—a term that is not in the UK’s formal system but presumably equated to the next, and highest, level of likelihood, “almost certainly” (over 90 percent). He did not cite new information, suggesting his comment reflected the common problem of confidence creeping upward each time a judgment is restated.

Similarly, during White House deliberations over whether bin Laden was inside the Abbottabad compound

Analysts who think they are being clear when they use terms such as probably, unlikely, or remote have in their own minds a sense of what they mean.

before the US raid in May 2011, members of President Obama’s national security team offered probabilities of 30 or 40 percent at the low end to as high as 95 percent.^b The president was confused and frustrated by his advisers’ inability to explain their different subjective, numeric estimates. After a short discussion the president said, “I know we’re trying to quantify these factors as best we can. But ultimately this is a fifty-fifty call. Let’s move on.”^c He told a reporter later, “What you start getting was probabilities that disguised uncertainty as opposed to actually providing you with more useful information.”^d

Conclusion

One cannot overstate the importance of analysis that is objective, thorough, timely, relevant, accurate,

and rigorous. Analysts must hold themselves to the highest possible standard, and the intelligence agencies should strive to promote such standards through training, management, structure, and operations, as IC Directive 203 makes clear. Continuous learning, not one-time inoculation, is essential.

Attending to all the basic principles outlined in this paper reminds me of acrobats spinning plates on poles. And yet, like acrobatics, intelligence is an art that can be learned and practiced intentionally. James Brosnahan noted that lawyers needed to absorb the principles of advocacy: “To read them and to use them is one thing, but consistent success will only come when these principles become an integral part of the advocate’s thinking.” Precisely the same thing can be said for intelligence analysts.



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Cuba's Strategy in Latin America: Intelligence Estimates and the Historical Record

Matthew J.

Given the opening of archives in Latin America over the last two decades, it is an opportune time to look back at how accurate assessments were and what lessons, if any, can be learned for intelligence professionals today.

Soon after taking power in 1959, Fidel Castro became one of the most difficult adversaries the United States faced, attracting the masses with promises of revolutionary change and directly challenging US interests not only on the island of Cuba, but also throughout Latin America. In February 1962, speaking before almost one million Cubans in downtown Havana's Plaza de *Revolución*, Castro declared, "It is the duty of every revolutionary to make the revolution."¹

Brian Latell, a former CIA Cuba expert, noted that "Fidel's speeches were broadcast by powerful Radio Havana antennas and were easily heard through much of Latin America...[to] a huge, sympathetic following."² Occurring at the height of the Cold War, the prospect of Castro "making the revolution" in the Western Hemisphere was unacceptable for President John Kennedy, who labeled Latin America the "the most dangerous area in the world,"³ due to the prospect of more Cuban-style revolutions. Very quickly, US policymakers looked to the Intelligence Community (IC) analytic cadre to provide insights on Castro's intentions and capabilities.

This article examines how key IC assessments made during the 1960s on Cuban foreign policy in Latin America compare to what we now

know about Havana's regional adventurism from the historical record.⁴ It draws on declassified IC publications, the Wilson Center's Cold War International History Project, published oral histories, and documents from Latin American archives, including the Cuban foreign ministry.

The IC provided the White House, policy community, and intelligence leaders a wide range of analytic products on Cuban policy in the Western Hemisphere in the form of special memorandums, National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs), and items in the President's Daily Brief (PDB).

Comparing IC judgments to the historical record, we gain a better understanding of how well analysts contemporaneously understood decisionmakers in Havana. Moreover, given the opening of archives in Latin America over the last two decades, from the Andes to the Caribbean, it is an opportune time to look back at how accurate assessments were and what lessons, if any, can be learned for intelligence professionals today.

IC Assessments

Published a little over a year after Castro took power and in the last few months of the Dwight Eisenhower administration, an NIE in June 1960 provided policymakers with several

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.

Collection became quite difficult in the early 1960s as US-Cuban relations soured and Castro cemented his relationship with the Soviet Union.

stark judgments. The IC assessed that Castro “will almost certainly continue his extensive propaganda and proselytizing activities in Latin America, seeking thereby to undermine Western Hemisphere solidarity, to reduce US influence in Latin America, and to replace unfriendly governments with ones more closely oriented to his own.”⁵

The IC also estimated there was an “appreciable” chance that more “Castro-like regimes” could take power in Latin America over the next year or so.⁶ Historian Piero Gleijeses argued that “fired by the Cubans’ example, and by Castro’s call to the true revolutionaries to fight, guerrillas became active in Venezuela, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, [and] the Dominican Republic.”⁷

Causing further alarm for intelligence officials working the Cuba issue was the deteriorating collection environment as US-Cuban relations soured and Castro cemented his relationship with the Soviet Union. By 1961 security cooperation between Moscow and Havana made Cuba one of the most difficult operating environments for intelligence collectors, thanks to KGB assistance to Cuba’s *Dirección General de Inteligencia* (General Directorate of Intelligence, DGI, later renamed the Intelligence Directorate).

The Kremlin sent officers to Havana and also provided training in Moscow, teaching Cubans how to recruit sources and implement a strict counterintelligence program on the island. With Soviet assistance, the DGI became a formidable service,

providing Havana tools to project influence abroad through covert action and to monitor the activities of Cuban dissidents.⁸ Furthermore, when US-Cuban diplomatic relations broke in January 1961, Havana became an even more difficult collection environment.

Yet, even with these challenges the IC produced timely and relevant analysis. A July 1961 NIE, published only three months following the failed Bay of Pigs operation, provided policymakers insights on Havana’s current standing and how the revolution might influence political developments in the future. Recognizing the challenge that Castro posed to the existing power structure in Latin America, which greatly benefited ruling elites at the expense of economic and social development, the key assessment read, “

Although the initial impact of the Cuban revolution has been blunted to some extent, the Castro/communist potential inherent in the social dissatisfaction pervading Latin America remains.”⁹

The IC based this judgment on reporting indicating that while many leaders in the region “disapprove of the way things are going in Cuba,” few were willing to take concrete actions, fearing “demonstrations and riots” by local pro-Castro elements. The NIE provided a blunt conclusion for policymakers: “The Castro regime and the revolutionary approach it exemplifies will continue to exert a strong influence on the process of political, economic, and social change throughout Latin America.”¹⁰

Serving the President

Along with detailed NIEs, policymakers’ understanding of Cuban foreign policy in Latin America also benefited from the CIA’s analytic flexibility and willingness to provide more concise judgments to support the nation’s top intelligence consumer. In the initial months of his presidency, Kennedy regularly received a large stack of CIA papers, Defense Department reports, and State Department cables, but after the Bay of Pigs, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy argued in favor of a more efficient process. One White House aide told CIA officials that what “they wanted was a product that will have everything in it that is worth the president’s attention.”¹¹

In June 1961, CIA began producing the President’s Intelligence Check List (PICL, the forerunner of today’s PDB). Kennedy’s first PICL contained 14 two-sentence pieces, six slightly longer notes, and a few small maps, according to David Priess in his definitive history of the PDB.¹² Initial items in the PICL on Latin America concentrated on Cuba’s regional standing, including one item noting that one of Castro’s key foreign policy advisers, the Argentine Ernesto “Che” Guevara, had been lobbying his home country’s president against supporting collective inter-American action against Havana.¹³ The PICL also had updates that were similar to assessments in the longer NIEs, particularly on countries considering breaking diplomatic relations with Havana, such as Venezuela, expecting local pro-Castro elements would spark unrest.¹⁴

Throughout 1962 the president received consistent updates on the ways in which Cuba was

actively promoting revolution in Latin America. Just days apart in November, the Checklist included an item noting that Chilean authorities arrested four members of a pro-Castro group carrying Cuban propaganda and a cache of dynamite, while another entry stated that Venezuela planned to publicly call out “Cuban inspired subversion and sabotage.”¹⁵

Additionally, an NIE published in November 1962 judged that the Castro regime was committed to fomenting revolutions throughout Latin America and was providing support to its allies in the region.¹⁶ Analysts wrote that “thousands of Latin Americans have been brought to Cuba; about 1,200 foreign trainees are believed to be there now” to learn guerrilla warfare and revolutionary techniques.¹⁷ The assessment also highlighted intelligence gaps, noting that while “arms shipments have also been reported...the evidence is unclear as to quantities shipped and the extent of Cuba’s role in these transactions.”¹⁸

Given the timing of the NIE’s publication, soon after the Cuban Missile Crisis, the IC examined the political fallout for Havana and assessed Castro’s acceptance of Soviet missile bases in Cuba damaged his reputation among some non-communist nationalists in Latin America, though his most ardent regional supporters remained committed to the revolution.

One of the key questions many US policymakers had at this time was what countries in Latin America were most susceptible to Cuban subversion? The November 1962 NIE sought to answer that, judging that Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican

The Kremlin’s assistance to Havana was important for Castro’s agenda in Latin America.

Republic, Nicaragua, and Venezuela and all had communist-inspired elements who would welcome Cuban support.¹⁹ Toward the end of the assessment, the IC provided some alternative analysis on what could change the trajectory of Cuba’s willingness to support revolutionary movements.

One scenario supposed that if the Soviet Union withdrew all of its support, Castro’s capabilities to export revolution would be considerably reduced, while a second scenario presumed that if Kremlin increased its support, Castro could use the additional resources for more external operations.²⁰ The point was clear for readers: the Kremlin’s assistance to Havana was important for Castro’s agenda in Latin America. Additionally, CIA assessments published in 1962 and 1963 in the PICL also regularly discussed Cuban support for, and training to, revolutionary movements in Latin America.

Kennedy received regular updates that leaders in Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Venezuela believed Havana was engaging in subversive activities and seeking to undermine their governments.²¹ At the end of 1962, analysts judged that Cuban spokesmen “are now beginning to talk more openly than before the [missile] crisis of Cuban support for insurrectionist movements in the rest of Latin America,” citing Guevara as an example. The PICL also noted in early 1963 that Cuba increased the budget for a front organization covering the expenses of Latin Americans brought to Havana for training and in the summer of that year, analysts wrote that Guevara had a plan for

subversion in at least five Latin American countries.²²

What do the Archives Tell Us?

In many instances, the historical record available supports the analytic judgments made by the IC. Documents from Havana’s Foreign Ministry archive demonstrate that Cuban leaders gave particular attention to better understanding the prospects for revolution in Latin America. In February 1960, Cuban policymakers in Havana received a report from their embassy in Guatemala City with a list of more than 20 individuals, including a well-known columnist and economist, characterized as “friendly.”²³

Reports from Cuban representatives in Caracas portrayed the guerilla forces within Venezuela as a “great power” and if guided correctly, could play a decisive role in blunting U.S. designs on the region.²⁴ In Honduras, Castro regime officials reported home that while some students, writers, and other intellectuals favored Cuba, Havana still had a lot of work to do in order to gain support from critical groups such as peasants, urban workers, and women.²⁵ Cuban officials received word from Costa Rica that any leftist opposition had little chance of victory as *figueristas* (those aligned with former pro-democracy President Jose Figueres) had a tight grip on power.²⁶ The Foreign Ministry also received similar reports on the situation in Nicaragua, where the security forces of the Somoza dictatorship were described as formidable and that Cuba needed to “keep in mind that the struggle will be long...refrain

Havana's spies supported Mao Zedong's view that revolutions needed to be exported through armed struggle.

from attempting decisive action at an untimely period.”²⁷

Scholars who have also conducted work in foreign archives have documented how the Castro government made increasing Havana's influence in Latin America a top foreign policy priority. Jonathan Brown's 2017 book, *Cuba's Revolutionary Worlds*, which relied not only on research in Cuban archives but also Mexico and the former East Germany, found that Mexican officials concluded that the DGI took the lead in “foreign operations including the collection of information and promotion of revolutionary subversive activities.”²⁸ East German diplomats believed that “those following the Chinese position are to be found in the Cuban intelligence services,” suggesting that Havana's spies supported Mao Zedong's view that revolutions needed to be exported through armed struggle.

Cuba's Training Program and the Archival Record

On specific issues, such as Castro's efforts to bring Latin Americans to Havana for training, documents from Cuba's foreign ministry and Colombia's national archive also support IC assessments. Cuban diplomats based in Guatemala noted in 1961 that the several members of a pro-Cuba group traveled to Havana and received training in guerilla warfare.²⁹ The number of individuals making the trip from Colombia for training increased to the point that officials in Bogota began producing classified reports through the *Ministerio de Guerra* (Ministry

of War) that included detailed background information on each individual.³⁰

Moreover, scholar Hal Brands, who conducted research in numerous Latin American archives, found that Castro “regularly welcomed insurgent leaders to Havana” and that Havana provided funding to revolutionary groups throughout the region.³¹ Some of the best evidence supporting analytic judgments on Cuba's support for subversion comes directly from Manuel Piñero, Castro's top intelligence officer who led Cuban covert actions in Latin America. Known as *barbarroja* for his red beard, Piñero was Deputy Minister of the Interior and helped create the DGI.

Mexican academic and former Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Jorge Castañeda, observed that Piñero personified the armed revolutionary struggle “in Latin America and played a key role in building what became one of the most successful security agencies ever constructed.”³² Cuban historian Luis Suárez Salazar repeatedly attempted to get Piñero on record discussing his role in the Cuban Revolution, only to be told by the spy chief that “the time is not ripe for talking about that yet,” or “another comrade should tell you that part.”

In 1997, however, Piñero agreed to sit for an interview and discuss his relationship with Che Guevara, one of Castro's key foreign policy advisers.³³ He recalled that his work with Guevara really began in 1961 when he was “responsible for dealing with revolutionary and political leaders of other Third World countries who came to learn from the experience

of the Cuban Revolution.”³⁴ He also recounted late night meetings with Guevara and visitors from around Latin America in Havana for training. Nicaraguans, Guatemalans, Peruvians, Colombians, Brazilians, Dominicans, Haitians, Chileans, and Venezuelans, all gathered at one time or another for meetings. Guevara sipped mate, Argentina's national drink, and smoked a cigar as discussions ensued on the prospects for revolution in their respective nations, always with a map of the country under discussion on top of the table at Guevara's request.³⁵

IC Reassessments in the Late 1960s

One of the most important elements to quality analysis is maintaining the ability to recognize that a target's intent or capabilities can change. While analysis on Cuban foreign policy in Latin America in the early part of the 1960s consistently judged that a strong revolutionary fervor permeated Cuban decision making, estimates published in the mid to late part of the decade often assessed that Castro's calculus for spreading the revolution, and willingness to support subversion, in Latin America had changed.

An NIE from February 1966 judged that “Fidel Castro has been greatly disappointed by the meager results of seven years of effort... He appears to have abandoned his expectation of an early general revolution in Latin America.”³⁶ Titled “Insurgency in Latin America,” the estimate focused on intelligence reporting outlining discord between Castro and communist party leaders in Latin America, who believed that

Havana's support for subversion was a direct intervention in their local affairs. Analysts further concluded that "the growth of Latin American insurgencies has been hindered by the disunity of extremist groups, the want of willing martyrs, and the failure to attract much popular support."³⁷

The NIE also provided policymakers an understanding of how Cuba fit into the Sino-Soviet split, as analysts wrote that Moscow wanted to lessen Beijing's influence in Latin America and to ensure that Castro stayed on the Kremlin's side.³⁸ The crux of the split was that Mao's China supported revolutionary violence in Latin America as a means for political change while the Soviets proposed a more cautious route focused on taking power through established electoral processes.

President Lyndon Johnson's White House began receiving analytic updates on Cuba's involvement in the

Guevara's support for the Chinese position put him in direct conflict with Raul Castro, who was advocating the Soviet line.

rift as early as summer 1964, when a PDB entry noted that Guevara's support for the Chinese position put him in direct conflict with Raul Castro, who was advocating the Soviet line.³⁹

A PDB from October of that year mentioned a conference in Havana, where heads of Latin American communist parties and representatives from Moscow met to agree on a "common policy on the Sino-Soviet rift."⁴⁰ That conference became a key element of the February 1966 NIE, because during that meeting Cuba agreed to only support insurgencies in Venezuela, Guatemala, Colombia, and Honduras, where they already were occurring at various levels, and Haiti and Paraguay, where right-wing dictators held power.

In 1967, the CIA's Office of National Estimates published an

update to the February 1966 NIE, providing further information on the revolutionary environment in Latin America. The special memorandum judged that "insurgencies in Latin America have retrogressed over the past year and their prospects for the coming year are not bright. Fidel Castro continues his efforts to stimulate revolution, but the Soviets, as well as most Communist leaders in the area, seem increasingly skeptical about the efficacy of this approach."⁴¹ Insurgencies in Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, and Venezuela were assessed to have achieved only little progress over the previous year. The special memorandum also judged that while Castro and Guevara had hoped to replicate what happened in Cuba, their own revolution had gained the support of the middle class due to the lack of a communist label at its outset. Many of the movements supported by Havana were immediately cast as communist-backed, given Castro's close alliance with Moscow.⁴²

The authors, utilizing Castro's own public speeches, noted that while he "has been continuing his verbal efforts to stimulate revolutions and has provided some additional aid and training, this has neither given major new impetus to already active insurgencies, nor caused any new one to take the field."⁴³ More to the point, "Soviet policy in Latin America appears to reflect increasing doubts about the efficacy of armed struggle as a revolutionary tactic in most Latin American countries."⁴⁴

CIA analysts reiterated some of these key assessments in the PDB



President Johnson convening his national security team in 1967, including Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms, for a "Tuesday lunch," where a broad range of foreign policy issues were discussed on a weekly basis. (Photo Lyndon Johnson Library).

Castro's embrace of military leaders like Torrijos and Velasco signaled a recognition that political change did not have to come as the result of a leftist revolution.

on 8 March, writing that while “Castro will almost certainly persist in encouraging and training foreign insurgents. . . . Poor prospects in Latin America, however, are already causing him to increase his attention to Africa, where opportunities are greater and risks fewer.”⁴⁵

Death of the “Heroic Guerilla”

In fall 1967, Johnson received a memorandum from National Security Advisor Walt Rostow informing him that the “Bolivians got Che Guevara. . . the Bolivian unit engaged is the one we have been training for some time.”⁴⁶ Guevara, whose role in promoting subversion and revolution throughout Latin America was regularly discussed in NIEs and PDBs throughout the 1960s, was executed after being captured while leading a failed insurgency in Bolivia. His death further signaled Cuba’s inability to replicate its revolution in the region. Analysts judged in a late October 1967 PDB that reactions to Guevara’s death in Latin America “reinforce our view that Guevara’s fate was the sharpest psychological blow ever suffered by Castro’s guerilla warfare program in the hemisphere.”⁴⁷

The final NIE of the 1960s, published in March 1969, titled “The Potential for Revolution in Latin America,” made the overall judgment that “because discontent has not yet become organized or critical among the populace generally, and because existing radical organizations lack strong and appealing leadership, the prospect for successful

revolution through violence within this period does not seem strong in any country.”⁴⁸ CIA analysts further judged that “insurgency movements supported by Castro remained in only three countries, Colombia, Guatemala, and Venezuela and had attracted “little sympathy among the populace.”⁴⁹

The assessment did not discount that sudden political change could take in the region, “only the factors and forces likely to bring them about will probably be some years in developing.”⁵⁰ The NIE clearly stated that “existing communist parties [and] Castroist parties. . . will not play the central role” in bringing about revolutionary change.⁵¹ Rather, the analysts wrote, “Castro-style insurgency maybe part of the broader revolutionary pattern in a few countries, but we do not believe that it will develop either the potency of the appeal to play a leading revolutionary role in the areas as whole.”⁵² To support these assessments, analysts looked at the example of Guevara’s Bolivia expedition, which they judged failed, in part, by the lack of support he received from local communist party members. In fact, according to the NIE, Castro lacked working relationships with many regional communist leaders and also provided “irregular financial support” to insurgent movements.

Did a Cuban Shift Occur?

The historical record largely supports the IC analysis that by the mid-to-late 1960s Cuban foreign policy in Latin American underwent a

shift. Tanya Harmer, who conducted research in the former Soviet bloc, Chile, and Cuba, including interviewing former Cuban diplomats and intelligence officials, argues that Che’s death initiated a time period of reflection amongst officials in Havana. In her view, “quite simply, the conclusion reached was that Havana’s regional approach to date had not worked and that Cuba’s position in the Americas was in crisis.”⁵³

Moreover, one of the key Cuban officials responsible for providing support to insurgent groups in Latin America, Manuel Piñeiro, told Cuban intelligence officers in the early 1970s that “the prospects for Latin American liberation now appear to be medium-or long-term. We must prepare ourselves to wait – to wait as long as necessary: 10, 15, 20, 25, or even 30 years.”⁵⁴

Cuban archives also demonstrate that Fidel Castro began to accept different paths to political change and did not precondition his support on an individual’s commitment to leftist or socialist revolution. A notable example came in Panama, where Castro embraced General Omar Torrijos, who took power following a military coup but at that same time, promoted land reform and improvements to healthcare and education access for Panamanians. Torrijos also took on the US over ownership of the Panama Canal, stating that “I don’t want to go into history, I want to go into the Canal Zone.”⁵⁵

A diplomatic cable from Cuba’s Foreign Ministry indicates that Havana-Panama City relations developed during the late 1960s and early 1970s, with Torrijos relaying to Castro that he considered Cuba

an important ally and visiting the island in the mid-1970s for an official visit.⁵⁶ Additionally, Castro almost immediately sought a relationship with Peru's military general Juan Velasco after he took power in 1968 through a coup, identifying the dictator as "man of the left" for the military government's willingness to nationalize certain economic sectors and focus on social development.⁵⁷ Castro's embrace of military leaders like Torrijos and Velasco definitely signaled a recognition that political change did not have to come as the result of a leftist revolution.

IC analysts were also correct to note the importance of the Sino-Soviet split and its influence on Cuban foreign policy. Numerous historical studies support IC assessments on Cuba being an element of the rift. Jeremy Friedman's book, *Shadow Cold War*, focused on the competition between China and Russia for allies in the Third World and highlighted that by the early 1960s Cuba became even more important to the Kremlin as Moscow lost favor with North Vietnamese communists in Hanoi, who believed that Beijing was a more stalwart ally for nations in the Third World.⁵⁸

While continually seeking to keep Castro in the Soviet camp, Moscow grew increasingly tired by the late 1960s of Cuban support to revolutionary movements in Latin America, seeing it as counterproductive as they worked for *détente* with the United States. In fact, the Kremlin strongly objected to Che's mission to Bolivia and even curtailed economic support to Havana in 1967. Castro's dependency on Soviet aid became obvious, as the Cuban economy took a significant hit.

Moscow grew increasingly tired by the late 1960s of Cuban support to revolutionary movements in Latin America.

When Cuba publicly supported the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia to crush a popular uprising a year later, Moscow restored economic support in return.⁵⁹ One Soviet diplomat recalled that "it [was] vital for us that Cuba doesn't slide gradually into the Chinese camp. We have to hold on to Castro tight, and we can only do it with economic aid. This the Chinese cannot give."⁶⁰

Interestingly, the November 1962 NIE previously judged that the Kremlin's decreasing support to Cuba might limit Castro's willingness, and ability to devote resources, to supporting revolutionary movements in Latin America. Ultimately, Jonathan Brown viewed the Sino-Soviet dispute as a critical episode of the Cuban Revolution, dedicating an entire chapter in his book on how Havana navigated the competition.

Conclusion

During his confirmation hearing to be the Director of National Intelligence in 2010, James Clapper stated, "Normally, the best that intelligence can do is to reduce uncertainty for decisionmakers—whether in the White House, the Congress, the Embassy, or the fox hole—but rarely can intelligence eliminate such uncertainty."⁶¹

Collectively, the products produced on Cuban foreign policy in Latin America in the 1960s demonstrated the IC's ability to quickly shift resources and mindset as the challenge posed by Havana was new, given that Cuba had been squarely in the US camp throughout the 1950s.

Additionally, given the intelligence gaps that existed on Cuba, a byproduct of the vast capabilities of Castro's security services, providing analytic assessments on Havana's foreign policy in Latin America added additional challenges. Yet policymakers in both the Kennedy and Johnson White Houses received consistent, timely, and judging from archival records fairly accurate assessments that reduced the uncertainty key decision-makers had about Havana's foreign policy toward Latin America.

Additionally, the IC's coverage of Cuban foreign policy in Latin America during the 1960s offers some lessons for today. First, the president and their key advisers will always be keenly interested in better understanding the intent and capabilities of allies and adversaries, making leadership analysis critically important. For the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, gaining a better sense of decisions being made in Havana was paramount, just as US leaders today continue to prioritize gaining advantage by understanding internal deliberation processes in numerous capitals around the world.

Maintaining consistency in analytic lines across different product types remains an essential part of good tradecraft and one of the ways to maintain credibility with intelligence consumers. From NIEs to special memorandums to PDBs, the words chosen to make an argument should strive for clarity and consistency. The broad range of products published during the 1960s on Cuba did a very good job on this front.

Analysts did not shy away from providing policymakers with their best understanding on how Havana viewed the prospects for revolution in Latin America

This does not mean analysts should not highlight shifts or changes; on the contrary, recognizing when an adversary such as Cuba has a different approach on a particular issue is vitally important. In fact, while consistency in written products is essential for a reader to understand bottom lines on key issues, it also helps better position an intelligence consumer to recognize analytic shifts when new judgments are made.

The record shows analysts regularly used open-source information in NIEs and PDBs. While much of the intelligence community's value rests in its ability to collect and analyze secret information, open-source material can provide valuable insights. Fidel Castro's penchant for lengthy public speeches, often discussing his views on adversaries

and the prospects for revolution around the world, offered a window into his mindset. Analysts correctly took Castro's speeches seriously and incorporated his public pronouncements into their finished products.

Lastly, analyzing a hard target, a country where collection is severely limited, should not preclude key judgments from being made. Analysts and their managers can be, at times, hesitant to make direct assessments when collection is limited, producing watered down assessments that are limited in their impact. Despite the difficulty of collecting intelligence on Cuba, analysts did not shy away from providing policymakers with their best understanding on how Havana viewed the prospects for revolution in Latin America and what kind of support it was willing to provide

to certain groups and countries. On Cuba during the 1960s, analysts told policymakers what they knew and also more importantly, were clear about what gaps existed and what the IC did not know.

Given that the US continues to face national security threats from hard targets, namely China, Russia, North Korean, and Iran, it has never been more important for analysts to remain willing to provide clear judgments, but also the necessary context and gaps when appropriate. As more records become available related to Cuban foreign policy during the Cold War, particularly from the Ministry of Interior in Havana where key decisions were made, a more complete history may be able to be told regarding assessments and their accuracy. Even so, with the documentary record available today, a compelling argument can be made that the IC provided policymakers with timely, credible, and relevant analysis.



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46. Memorandum from National Security Advisor Walt Rostow to President Lyndon Johnson, October 9, 1967, National Security Archive, available from <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/documents/che-guevara-cia-mountains-bolivia/22.pdf>
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57. Harmer, 72–73.
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Fostering Creativity in the IC: Insights from Four Decades Ago

James D. Marchio

Ode to Creativity

To be creative is oft taken for granted,

*If you're a Brahms, a Poe or a
Rembranted . . .*

In Elysian fields, a muse may be hid,

*To inspire tomorrow's PDB, CIRL
or NID.*

We report and write in prose Miltonic,

Of agents run on gins and tonic,

In Maputu, London, Quito, or Madras,

*We pledge to create or we'll cover
our...*

Written by students in a CIA midcareer training course ca. July 1977 and transmitted in a memo to the Acting Deputy Director of Central Intelligence.^a

a. For source, see endnote 3.

Creativity in a bureaucracy may seem to be an oxymoron, but it is an essential element of success for organizations large or small, including those in the Intelligence Community (IC) charged with tackling exceptionally difficult problems that demand innovative solutions. Scholars of bureaucracies have long highlighted the tension between control and innovation “as organizations rely on a certain level of bureaucracy, prioritizing establishing and sticking to a beaten track, while also desiring creativity—which by definition entails stepping off the beaten track.”¹ Deliberate attempts to foster creativity often fail as they encounter formal and informal barriers or are unable to translate good ideas into concrete results, even with senior-level sponsorship.² These challenges were on display—together with some creative expressions of humor (see left)³—during one CIA effort in the 1970s to foster creativity in the workplace on the heels of a particularly damaging period for the CIA and the broader IC—with, I contend, lessons for today.^a

Between November 1976 and March 1978, CIA held multiple symposiums and meetings addressing the issue of creativity. These sessions—initiated at the behest of Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (DDCI) E. Henry Knoche and

involving all elements of the agency—emphasized how controls instituted in the wake of the congressional investigations were constraining creativity in its analytic and collection workforce. Despite the multiple reports and recommendations that resulted from these sessions, their impact was limited and ephemeral.

Continued calls to increase creativity in the IC workforce in the decades since attest to the reality that building and protecting an environment in which creativity is nurtured and rewarded is not a new requirement but rather an enduring challenge that has become even more important and daunting. At the same time, the lessons from the late 1970s remind us that success in fostering and protecting creativity in today's IC workplace will come only with a renewed sense of urgency, a shared understanding of what creativity is and is not, and sustained efforts targeting all echelons of the IC workforce. These initiatives must be part of a larger integrated effort to shape the IC's culture and leverage the new technologies and analytic tools now available.

Time of Troubles

Profound unease and uncertainty confronted the CIA and the larger

a. I wish to acknowledge the valuable comments and insights Douglas Garthoff and Josh Kerbel offered on reading earlier drafts of this paper.

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.

“It goes without saying that the future will require the most effective and imaginative efforts possible to give us good internal oversight while not stifling the creativity so essential to intelligence work.”—G. H. W. Bush

IC in the mid-1970s. Following a largely acrimonious relationship with President Nixon and his top national security advisers earlier in the decade, amid social strains at home and setbacks abroad, public confidence in the IC was rocked by the 1974 revelation of the CIA’s so-called Family Jewels (a list provided by CIA to Congress of possible illegal activities carried out since its creation), multiple tell-all books written by former CIA employees, and revelations of domestic wiretapping operations by the then unacknowledged National Security Agency.³ The ensuing hearings and investigations conducted by the presidential commission headed by Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller, the Senate’s Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities led by Senator Frank Church, and the House of Representative’s Pike Commission all exposed shortcomings in IC activities and ultimately led to increased congressional oversight and restrictions on its operations.⁴

When George H.W. Bush took the reins as director of central intelligence (DCI) in January 1976, he inherited an agency and a community reeling from multiple blows to its sense of purpose and morale and confronting new restrictions on how it executed its mission. Bush summed up the critical challenges facing CIA and the IC in May 1976:

*It goes without saying that the future will require the most effective and imaginative efforts possible to give us good internal oversight while not stifling the creativity so essential to intelligence work.*⁵

Bush’s comments and the challenges he alluded to became even more evident in the ensuing months as CIA’s senior leadership took steps to discern and gauge their nature and scale. The deputy director for administration (DDA) surveyed a random sample of 25 percent of CIA employees in the last half of 1976. The survey revealed that while 60 percent felt that CIA morale had been affected negatively by the congressional investigations, only 10 percent said they had had a serious negative impact on their feeling about employment with CIA.⁶ Concurrently the CIA inspector general conducted a comprehensive survey of the four CIA directorates (at the time operations, intelligence, science and technology, and administration) to determine whether the agency was in compliance with the new legislative regulations and guidelines.⁷ Lastly, the Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI), then under the Office of Training, took the lead in planning two experimental seminars to assess various problems facing the agency.⁸

Responding to the Challenge

One of the earliest and most significant DDCI initiatives to address these perceived challenges was a two-day session held in November 1976 identified as “Seminar on Creativity and Ethics in the CIA.” Reflecting both a sense of urgency and the level of concern, it drew together more than a dozen senior officers from throughout the agency with the charge from DDCI Knoche to “brainstorm” the challenges facing it.⁹ Knoche opened the session and asked the group to suggest ways to advance “innovation and creativity in the CIA under the constraining impact of inspection and controls.”¹⁰

During the next two days, the senior officers spent most of their time discussing creativity and ethics in the agency. They also looked closely at what effect controls were having on CIA’s foreign intelligence liaison relationships. As part of these discussions, senior leaders examined management structure and processes as well as avenues of dissent available to the workforce.¹¹

Although views differed on the scale and impact of the proposals, the group acknowledged CIA was wrestling with multiple problems in the wake of the congressional investigations. For example, in discussing creativity it was noted, “Individual initiative down the line has been dampened in the past several years to the point where a lack of it is having serious negative consequences on our overall performance.”¹² One participant blamed new outside authorities

a. This period in IC’s history, known colloquially as “the time of troubles,” has been explored frequently by the Center for the Study of Intelligence. For a contemporaneous view, see Timothy Hardy, “From the Inside Looking Out: Intelligence Reform in the Mid-1970s,” *Studies in Intelligence* 20, no. 2 (June, 1976). For the recollections of one participant who would later become CIA general counsel, see L. Britt Snider, “Unlucky Shamrock: Recollections From the Church Committee’s Investigation of NSA,” *Studies in Intelligence* 43, no. 1 (March 1999).

“Creativity”: In Search of a Definition

The IC did not have a standard definition of creativity in 1977; 44 years on it still does not. This void highlights in part the challenges of defining the term. CSI prepared talking points, based on issues raised at creativity seminars, for DCI Turner in February 1977. They asserted “creativity” should be seen as both “the ability to stimulate new and fresh ideas on what and how we do things” and a “willingness to take new initiatives and risks.”

“telling us what we should be doing.” Going even further, participants asserted; “Outside scrutiny of the agency has inevitably accelerated a trend toward centralization and a ‘sucking upward’ of the authority for decisionmaking in the CIA, undercutting at lower levels at least, the climate needed for creative initiative to flourish.”¹³

Other factors perceived as diminishing creativity were internal to CIA. A paper written for the November conference bemoaned the fact that “we do not understand and adequately provide the necessary creative climate.” Then it added: “For creativity to flourish, there must be a rather permissive climate within the organizational structure, with some autonomy for the creative individual. Most of our organization, however, is increasingly bound up in red tape and paper work, with increasingly structured and rigid rules of operation.”¹⁴

Additional challenges were posed by leadership turnover, which had prompted “rapid changes and some contradiction in marching orders.”¹⁵ Management by Objective (MBO) procedures also were seen by some as contributing to both confusion and diminished initiative.^a

Lastly, “frenetic distractions” were identified as “impinging upon the climate for initiative and innovation.” Time spent on such things as the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and responses to investigation information requests were cited as examples. The threat from these perceived distractions was that “attention to form and artificial deadlines will outweigh attention to substance in our work.”¹⁶

Nonetheless, the conclusions drawn by the senior officers from the November 11–12 symposium were relatively positive. The symposium report concluded on a hopeful note: “If creativity within the Agency is defined as the ability to stimulate new and fresh ideas on what to do and how to do it, then creativity is alive and well in the CIA today.” The report cited the recent reorganization of the Directorate for Intelligence (DI) and its efforts to seek “a fresher, more effective product and a better climate for creativity,” asserting “from this perspective, the challenge with creativity is probably that mainly of protecting the climate we have now and of encouraging it more.”¹⁷

In that spirit the report singled out elements viewed as essential

to maintaining and improving the climate for creativity in CIA. These included clarifying aims and goals, reversing the tendency to “suck up to authority for decisionmaking,” and encouraging a style of leadership that supported creative initiative and innovation. The need to improve the climate for “responsible dissent” also was noted.¹⁸

A second “Seminar on Creativity and Ethics in the CIA” was held in January 1977. The demographics for this seminar differed significantly from the November one, comprising a “relatively young group of agency officers, male and female, black and white.”¹⁹ That said, the sentiments expressed in this seminar “did not depart radically from the attitudes expressed in the first seminar,” although some additional perspectives emerged.²⁰

Participants in the January seminar were asked to review the first group’s findings and recommendations pertaining to creativity and ethics and CIA’s climate.²¹ This group was much more concerned with the inadequacy of communications across bureaucratic and other compartmented walls. Beyond eliminating the bureaucratic isolation of the offices and directorates from one another, seminar participants called for a clearer statement of CIA’s goals and “more feedback to individuals on the value of their professional efforts.”²² Lack of, or distortion of, information coming down from senior staff meetings was cited as “unnecessarily depriving lower ranking officers of the kind of stimulus they

a. MBO, also known as management by results, was described in Peter Drucker’s 1954 book *The Practice of Management*. MBO is a comprehensive management system based on measurable and participative objectives. It was widely adopted by both the government and private sector during the 1960s and 1970s. MBO was brought to CIA by DCI William Colby in 1974 as part of his larger effort to improve the performance and efficiency of the IC. See Douglas Garthoff, *Directors of Central Intelligence and Leaders of the US Intelligence Community, 1946–2005* (Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2005), 94–95.

DDCI Knoche continued to show high-level support for efforts to address the creativity challenges as CIA transitioned from the supportive directorship of DCI Bush to that of Admiral Stansfield Turner.

need for new approaches and creative ideas.²³

Overall, the January seminar endorsed the conclusion of the November session: CIA had “a rich repository of creativity and initiative in our personnel today. But participants questioned “whether the environment of the Agency today really reinforces doing things creatively.” They “suspected, rather, that the environment tend[ed] mainly to reinforce conventional wisdom as the proper approach” and that the “accumulation of rules, paper work, coordination, staffs, and the like often tends to institutionalize the avenues of inertia rather than creativity.”²⁴

The seminars also differed in the recommendations advanced to protect and nurture creativity in the agency. These differences largely reflected the perspective and seniority of participants. The more senior members of the November seminar urged CIA to “stress that individual officers should try to exercise their responsibility and authority to the fullest” while conveying the “interest in and receptiveness of management to individual initiative.” Conversely, the more junior and diverse January group focused on fostering “better communications” and breaking down “the bars of isolation of office-level components.” Their recommendations were more specific as well, calling for attendance of senior managers at lower-level staff meetings and greater participation of all office-level components across directorates.²⁵

The January group also advanced multiple recommendations on how to use rewards—monetary and non-cost recognitions—to “foster greater flexibility in response to creative initiative and bolster management requirements for a climate of creativity.” There was some convergence in the recommendations advanced as both groups urged a review of the application of MBO in the agency and each endorsed the recommendation to encourage “the further development of component-level ‘developmental’ or ‘think’ units.”²⁶

Follow-up Discussions and Issues

Knoche continued to show high-level support for efforts to address the creativity challenges as CIA transitioned from the supportive directorship of DCI Bush to that of Adm. Stansfield Turner, a leader more inclined to question CIA practices and professionalism. In discussing the November and January symposiums while serving as acting director before Turner’s arrival, Knoche declared, “I believe the findings that have resulted are thoughtful and deserving of serious study regarding implementation.” Consequently, he ordered each of the operating components to discuss the findings from the November and January seminars in “special staff meetings” led by their director or deputy.²⁷

Describing the November and January symposiums in a memorandum to newly installed DCI Turner, Knoche wrote:

You will recall our discussion a few weeks back when I told you I thought our foremost challenge is to insure a spirit of creativity and willingness to consider risks. . . . Two important conclusions seem to suggest themselves: 1) the quality of leadership at all levels has as much influence on initiative, creativity, and morale as the burden of regulation and oversight, force of public criticism or frustration of leakage...2) concern should be focused on the longer trend not on the daily ups and downs.”²⁸

The follow-up discussions directed by Knoche took place over the next five months. These sessions hit many of the same issues identified and discussed in the November and January seminars. However, criticism and new topics and priorities also surfaced, reflecting in part the different missions and challenges confronted by each component.

Representatives of the Directorate for Operations (DO) and DI, for example, did not shy away from finding fault with the November and January symposiums. During their March session, DO discussants characterized the recommendations emerging from the earlier symposiums as like “motherhood.”²⁹ DI representatives, on the other hand, criticized the composition of these sessions, stressing, “It would have been difficult to convene a less representative group than that put together by [CSI].”³⁰

Despite this criticism, the core issues discussed in the follow-on sessions mirrored those raised in November and January: leadership, communications, rewards, dissent,

and organizational structure and procedures. DI representatives, for instance, argued that there was “a clear correlation between delegation of responsibility and increased initiative and creativity” and that “a response from below depends in part on a style of leadership that demonstrates receptivity to initiative, creativity, and reasonable dissent.”³¹ Participants from the Directorate for Science and Technology (DS&T) echoed these sentiments. “We agreed,” the report noted, “that a key ingredient in fostering creativity was communications, both up and down the line [but] existing channels for dissent are not adequate.”³²

Issues not touched on in the November and January symposiums emerged from the DS&T and DI sessions as well. DS&T participants highlighted the resource constraints stifling creativity. These constraints forced “new programs to show an early (premature) observable pay off.” Thus, the group argued, “agency management must be more imaginative and forceful in supporting a budget that allows for risk taking and innovative thinking.”³³ Beyond fiscal constraints, the DS&T report cited the “lack of time for creative thought and planning” as a key constraint.³⁴

The spring 1977 organizational discussions also revealed mixed views on the perceived value and effectiveness of recommendations advanced from the November and January sessions. How to recognize creativity and innovation was one area where differences surfaced. DI participants argued that “psychic awards,” identified as more frequent feedback from senior management and policy-level consumers on the value of the professional efforts of analysts, were far and

The points advanced from the follow-on discussions between March and June 1977 laid the groundwork for a larger symposium on “Creativity, Controls, and Ethics” in March 1978.

away the more important inducements to individual creativity and initiative than monetary rewards.³⁵ Another controversial recommendation was whether “think tanks” should be created. Some DI respondents believed “every unit should be a ‘think’ unit.” On the other hand, some thought the very need for such a unit, be it formal or informal, implied that the “proper participation and stimulation is not being provided as a matter of normal policy within an organization.” Still others worried such forums could potentially be a serious drain on scarce research and analytical talent but were amenable to the idea of holding occasional “retreats.”³⁶

Symposium on Creativity, Controls, and Ethics

The points advanced from the follow-on discussions between March and June 1977 laid the groundwork for a larger symposium on “Creativity, Controls, and Ethics” in March 1978. This two-day gathering—involving close to 100 participants—garnered high-level support and included prominent guest speakers such as distinguished Harvard Professor Graham Allison.³⁷ Defining the mission of the symposium, DDA John Blake urged participants “to provide a final distillation of the discussion of the topics so that the report of the [earlier] deliberations can be forwarded to the DCI for his comment and be given wide circulation within the Agency.”³⁸

The symposium included panels on “controls” and “creativity and

resources” as well as a small group discussion on “creativity and controls in CIA.” However, the majority of the panels and discussion over the two days addressed various aspects of ethics and its application in the intelligence profession, not creativity. Even the panel on creativity and resources spent limited time addressing issues raised in the November 1976 and January 1977 seminars. The panel dedicated the bulk of its effort to discussing the need for more effective coordination and management of the CIA’s activities and its products, highlighting challenges posed by the lack of coordination between the various intelligence disciplines and the need for better tasking mechanisms. However, the panel acknowledged “there was a disturbingly large number of instances cited of restraint on creativity in all directorates.”³⁹

The discussion directly addressing creativity echoed points raised in the preceding 15 months by different directorates. DS&T representatives cited financial limits, multiple approval levels, and paperwork requirements as constraints on “doing things in a new or better way.” Analysts pointed to the strong pressures created by ad hoc requirements and the need for short-focus reports as contributing to “the inability to isolate analysts from all of these day-to-day pressures as well as a reluctance on the part of the analysts themselves to devote a substantial portion of time and effort to longer-range issues.” In the DA, pressures for conformity and a desire for noncontroversial reporting were key factors. Restraints on creativity

The recommendations advanced in the March 1978 symposium were lofty but impractical.

in the DO were attributed to “ad hoc pressures, personnel cuts, from a sense of professional and personal uncertainty, from difficulty in interpreting new directives, policies, and orders, as well as pending legislation, operational personnel changes, and continued impact of a changing social environment.”⁴⁰ Also raised as part of the general discussion on creativity was the need for “clearer communication” to CIA personnel about their mission and role. “Without such clear statements and adequate communication,” the report noted, “we are continuing in a period of uncertainty which is debilitating in terms of creativity, in terms of morale, and in terms of energy and esprit de corps.”⁴¹

The recommendations advanced in the March 1978 symposium were lofty but impractical. Omitted were specific recommendations that had been advanced in previous sessions, such as the call for “think units” and actions to encourage individual initiative and push decisions downward. What was identified as “the most urgent and vigorous recommendation of the symposium,” allegedly supported by “unanimous consent and call for prompt action,” was to reaffirm “the character and purpose of national foreign intelligence as those in our profession today and the dedicated officers before us know them to be.” This recommendation was followed by another arguing CIA needed “a clear perception of its role, mission, and mandate. On this basis it must communicate in a forthrightly manner

with the executive, the legislative, and with its own personnel.”⁴² While effective communication and a clear sense of mission were essential, they were not the only ingredients needed to nurture and protect creativity at CIA.

In the Years Following

Lack of access to the complete classified record may obscure what resulted from 24 months of discussion and meetings on ways to increase and nurture creativity within CIA. However, I found no record of comparable large symposiums addressing this issue in the years that followed or, more importantly, evidence that the symposiums’ recommendations were implemented. There was nothing to indicate “think units” were created or measures taken to systematically address management and communication issues. The only concrete step taken—likely spurred by the sessions held between 1976 and 1978—was in training, where the curriculum for midlevel managers was revised to include instruction on how to foster a creative climate and better articulate goals.⁴³

Anecdotal evidence in the ensuing decades suggests that concerns over threats to creativity did not dissipate. For example, Richards Heuer published an article in 1981 on “Creativity and Intelligence Analysis” in the agency’s internal journal *Analytical Methods Review*.⁴⁴ Heuer speculated some innate creative talent may be a necessary precondition for innovative

work, but he also argued that creativity could be learned and provided ideas on how analysts could improve their creative skills. At the same time, he emphasized the importance of the environment in which analysts worked. He cautioned that “new ideas are most likely to arise in an organizational climate that nurtures their development and communication.”⁴⁵

Larger efforts to improve the overall quality of CIA analysis tried to address issues that had been highlighted in the late 1970s symposiums. In 1982, Robert Gates, then deputy director for intelligence, launched a program to improve the quality of analysis that rested on three pillars, one of which was “stimulating creative and imaginative analysis by opening to an unprecedented extent a dialogue with experts in business, academia, and think tanks.” This initiative, which Gates called “Letting in Fresh Air: Open Minds and Candor,”⁴⁶ went beyond outreach, encouraging diverse views and creating “an atmosphere in which differences of view and unorthodox approaches were encouraged and welcomed.”

In November 1984, DCI William Casey established a top-level forum to review and react to “new ideas concerning ways to accomplish our mission better.” Casey invited all employees to send their ideas for new or better ways to respond to critical intelligence problems directly to him, the DDCI, or the executive director, promising to “decide in short order on the merit and feasibility of such proposals and, if appropriate, arrange

a. The three pillars of Gates’ program were: (1) improving the relevance of the product through a coherent research planning process and a dramatic increase in contacts with users of our analysis; (2) stimulating creative and imaginative analysis by opening to an unprecedented extent a dialogue with experts in business, academia, and think tanks; and (3) improving quality control within the directorate by intensifying the review of draft papers and increasing accountability up and down the line for the quality of the work.

to implement them rapidly.⁴⁷ Yet the absence of evidence as well as periodic calls for greater creativity suggest no sustained, high-level efforts continued in the years that followed.

Growing Need for Creativity in the Post-Cold War World

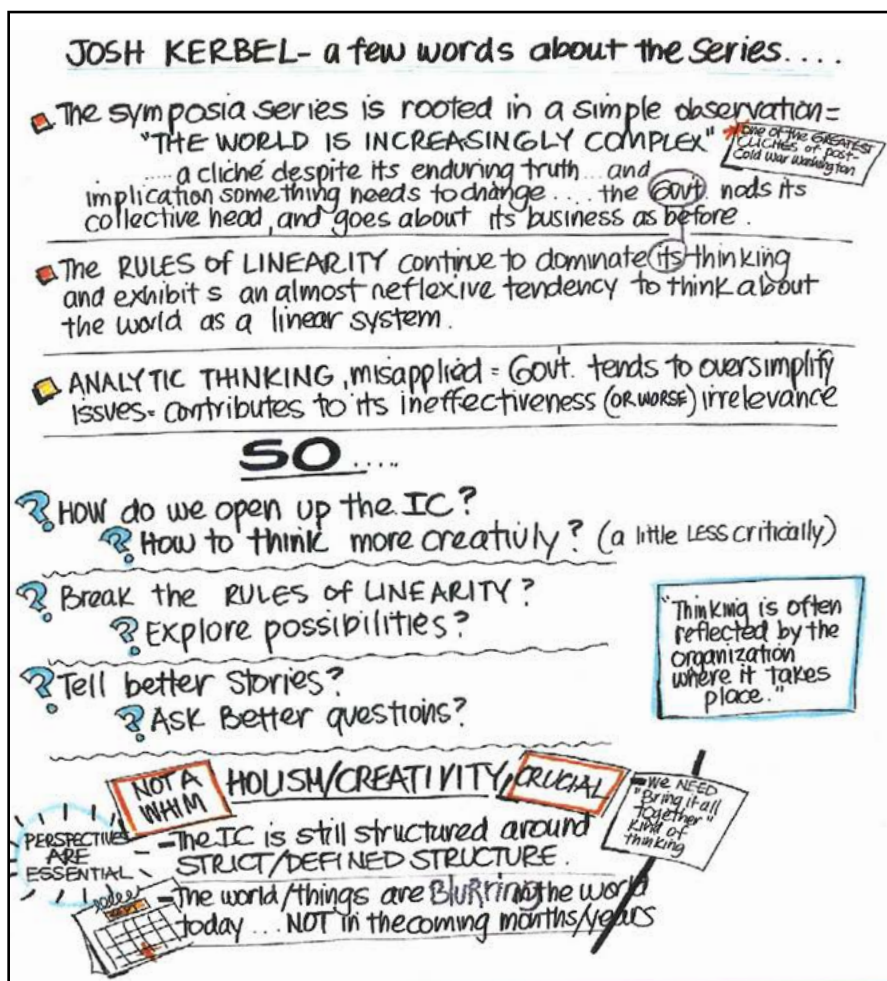
The destruction of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and collapse of the Soviet Union two years later placed an even greater premium on the need for and value of creativity in the IC. In the 1990s, new and growing threats emerged: ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, genocide in Africa, terrorist attacks at home and abroad, and nuclear proliferation to name a few. The events of 9/11 and the failure to discover weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq in 2003 further highlighted a “failure of imagination” and the need for greater creativity. The 9/11 Commission argued that it was “crucial to find a way of routinizing, even bureaucratizing the exercise of imagination.”⁴⁸ A year later the report on Iraq WMD echoed this sentiment: “A renewed focus on traditional tradecraft methods needs to be augmented with innovative methodologies and tools that assist the analyst without inhibiting creativity, intuition, and curiosity.”⁴⁹

On the horizon were more threats that would come into clear view in the 2010s, including a rising China, a more belligerent Russia, cyber warfare, and election interference. As Josh Kerbel and others have argued, “The past 30 years have seen complexity increase on a scale and a clip that far exceeds what came before.”⁵⁰ Kerbel points to advances in technology, the speed of communication, and the rise of multiple nonstate actors

as key drivers.⁵¹ He also was one of the first and most vocal critics of the IC and its seeming unwillingness to adapt to the challenges posed by complexity despite the efforts to do so by organizations outside its ranks.⁵² Kerbel singled out the IC’s continued reliance on analysis vice synthesis, its largely vertical and hierarchical structure, its culture, and even its analytic standards as inhibiting creativity and its ability to assess ongoing events accurately.⁵³

In this author’s view, while Kerbel’s criticisms are largely valid, the IC has

also taken steps over the past 15 years to encourage and foster creativity. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) spearheaded the creation in 2006 of the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Agency (IARPA). Modeled after the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, IARPA is charged with conducting cross-community research, targeting new opportunities and innovations, and generating revolutionary capabilities by “drawing upon the technical and operational expertise that resides within the intelligence agencies.”⁵⁴



During September 2010–January 2011, Josh Kerbel of the ODNI Lessons Learned office led a four-part exploration of creativity in a bureaucracy during a new era of complexity. The above is Kerbel’s introduction in graphic form.

CIA’s efforts to foster creativity more than 40 years ago illustrate this is not a new requirement but rather an enduring challenge that remains as urgent now as then.

At the same time ODNI initiated the Galileo Awards to “find bold, innovative ideas and creative solutions to our nation’s intelligence challenges,” with awards to the best submissions.⁵⁵ A 2007 award winner—*To Improve Analytical Insight Needed: A National Security Simulation Center*—typifies the hoped-for outcome from this competition.⁵⁶ The IC also held a series of four symposiums in fall and winter 2010–11 titled “Creativity in Bureaucracy.” The first session focused on “Using Creativity to Confront Complexity”, the second on “Organizing for Creativity”, the third on “Where Good Ideas Come From”, and the last “Using the Right Tools and Metrics to Ensure a Creative Organization”. (See graphic on previous page.)⁵⁷

Training, as in the 1970s, is perhaps where the IC has most directly tried to address the challenge of fostering creativity. CIA’s Sherman Kent School for Intelligence Analysis has been offering a course on creativity for almost two decades.⁵⁸ Established in the aftermath of 9/11, “Creativity in Intelligence” teaches students how to think more divergently, exploring all possibilities to get a solution with few or no limitations on time and imagination. Of note, this course—previously an elective—is designated now for credit toward the CIA’s advanced analytic training program.⁵⁹

Insights for Today

CIA’s efforts to foster creativity more than 40 years ago show this is not a new requirement for the IC but rather an enduring challenge that

remains as urgent now as then. As in the mid-1970s, CIA and the IC confront an operating environment characterized by scrutiny, criticism, controls, and uncertainty about resources as the United States reemerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and untangles from its long military and intelligence war in Afghanistan. The historical record also reminds us that encouraging and nurturing creativity is a tough challenge. Despite CIA’s actions to stimulate and protect creative thinking after the time of troubles in the 1970s, the impact of these actions was limited and short lived.

History offers insight, as well, into the ingredients essential to building and protecting an environment for creativity. The discussions conducted in the November 1976 and January 1977 symposiums and subsequent directorate sessions highlighted the importance of effective communication, decisionmaking pushed downward vice “sucked upward,” and the need to foster a “permissive climate within the organizational structure, with some autonomy for the creative individual.” The sessions also revealed the need for adequate resources to support innovative ideas and training as well as simply time to think and to think differently.

How can the IC avoid the shortcomings of these earlier efforts and improve the chances for success now, particularly given the increasing need for creativity to confront our ever more complex intelligence environment? The IC needs to regain the sense of urgency and high-level engagement CIA had in 1976, when DCI Bush acknowledged the

importance and centrality of creativity to our profession and its ability to execute its mission. This sense of urgency must be shared at all levels in the IC if efforts are to succeed.

There must be a recognition as well that this is an enduring problem, not one resolved by the creation of a single “think tank” or a new training course. Attacking the issue requires sustained effort and support at multiple levels, with different groups targeted with tailored initiatives. This is not simply a leadership problem or a challenge limited to analysts and operators.

If initiatives to foster and increase creativity are to succeed, they must be integrated into larger efforts to change the IC’s culture. Part of this push for change should be to continue and expand on measures initiated since the passage of the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act. IARPA, CIA and other IC creativity training programs, and crowd-sourcing challenges like the Galileo and SPARK programs that encourage innovative solutions are fostering creativity and reinforcing its value. IC directives that encourage alternative analysis and dissenting views also have been valuable in facilitating an environment conducive to creativity.

However, more needs to be done to set aside time for analysts and operators to think. The “distractions” preventing analysts and operators from doing more than “putting out fires” in the 1970s pale in comparison to those limiting deep and strategic thinking today. Attention should be given as well as to how IC professionals think, the methods they employ, and the tools used to aid them. In a

world where artificial intelligence, machine learning, and big data play a greater role, we need to ensure that creativity is not delegated to

technology while human creativity and innovation are allowed to atrophy.⁶⁰ In sum, creativity must not be merely an encouraged quality

or a niche activity practiced by few, but rather a core value central to IC thinking, organizational structures, and leadership practices.



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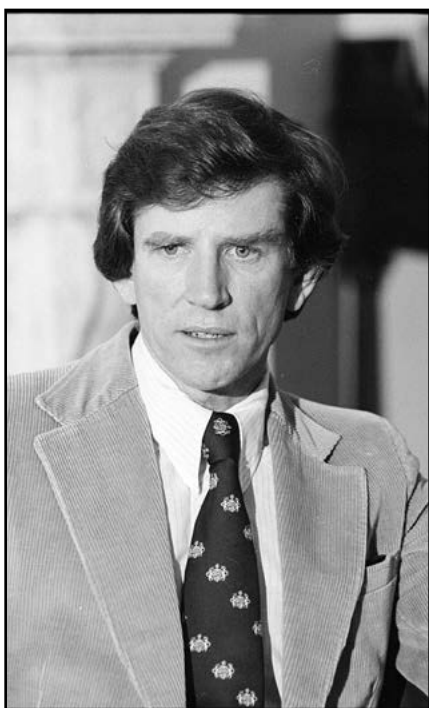
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Interview with Former US Senator Gary Hart

Interviewed by David Robarge

The following are excerpts from an interview with former US Senator Gary Hart by CIA Chief Historian David Robarge on January 23, 2020. A freshman senator in 1975, Hart (D-Colorado) had a front-row seat on a tumultuous period that marked a new approach to congressional oversight. Questions are italicized, and the content has been edited for clarity and length.



Colorado Senator Gary K. Hart in January 1979. Photo: Warren K. Leffler, *US News and World Report*, Library of Congress collection.

“If I had one message to the agency, it would be that people like me—and I think the majority of those on the committee—wanted to protect the CIA, not destroy it.”

Let’s begin with a little bit about what you knew about and thought of intelligence and the CIA before you got to the Senate and got involved with the Church Committee. Did you have any particular perceptions of our business and our institution, and what events or information formulated those perceptions for you?

I graduated from Yale Law School in 1964. My first job out of law school was with the Department of Justice in what is now the National Security Division. I had to get a full background investigation to get the clearances needed to conduct that job. I was at Justice for a year and a half. That would have been from spring 1964 until probably summer or fall 1965 when I transferred to the Interior Department, and then I went to Colorado full time, and then

to Washington to be sworn in to the Senate in January 1975.

Within a month or two, I was asked to serve on the Church Committee^a to investigate the intelligence agencies of the United States government by Majority Leader Mike Mansfield.^b I believe there were 11—six Democrats, five Republicans. That continued through the end of 1976. Then I was a charter member of the first Senate oversight committee [the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI), created May 19, 1976]. I served in that capacity for two or three years.

Did you have a general sense of CIA’s reputation for overthrowing governments, trying to assassinate leaders, doing various nefarious things that had been already

a. Formally the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, led by Chairman Frank Church (D-Idaho, 1957–81). The committee operated from January 27, 1975, until April 29, 1976.

b. Michael Mansfield (D-Montana, 1953–77).

The views and opinions expressed by the interview subject 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.

Various presidents and administrations had ordered actions to be taken that exceeded the charter of the CIA.

publicized in the newspapers? Was that your general perception of what the CIA was and did, or did you have other views and those were just rogue operations?

My general sense as an involved citizen was that the CIA and its sister agencies were absolutely necessary for the security of our country and had played very positive roles by and large in developing information domestically and internationally to help in formulating national security policy, in many cases leading to military policy as well in various venues. Needless to say, the reason for the select committee was operations that did not comport in the minds of many of us with the constitutional protection of American citizens and, generally, the conduct of American foreign policy, according to the high principles that we claimed.

On the other hand, even as a young man, I was pragmatic enough to know that occasionally under duress, corners had to be cut and actions taken that at the very least operated on the margins of our constitutional principles. It was a combination of respect and pragmatic necessity, tempered a bit by the excesses that had happened. My guiding principle even in those days—and I was quite young—was that if mistakes were made or excesses occurred, they were prompted by political involvement and political order. I had—and I think several of us had—a sense that

various presidents and administrations had ordered actions to be taken that exceeded the charter of the CIA, and in the case of the FBI certainly violated constitutional rights of American citizens.

Along those lines about where the authorization or the explanation for the various, more controversial operations occurred—particularly assassinations, which we'll get back to in more detail—I'm referring to Loch Johnson's book on the Church Committee.^a He writes that from the witnesses' voluminous testimony came three major theories regarding the origins of authority for the assassination plots: rogue elephant, presidential authority, and misunderstanding. Do you ascribe to any of those particular ones?

Presidential authority, broadly defined. I would say administration political instruction. Sometimes, euphemistically—the famous theatrical line, I think—it's the question about who will save me from this troublesome priest?^b The president's not saying, "go kill somebody," or "go overthrow this government." Euphemisms usually were used in those days to provide the cover for the president, to give plausible deniability.

Why do you think you were picked as a junior senator to serve on the committee?

Because I was so early in my first term and young, I didn't question the appointment. I came to believe—because there were other instances where the majority leader, Senator Mansfield, had favored me in one way or another—he had a tendency to mentor younger senators. My colleagues, like Joe Biden and Patrick Leahy,^c were encouraged and given favorable assignments by Mansfield. He saw his role as leader as developing a new generation of leadership by experience.

For example, in addition to serving on the Church Committee, I was appointed to the first Senate delegation to the Soviet Union in what became a series of inter-parliamentary exchanges. Members of the Duma [the Soviet assembly] would come here and be toured around and hold meetings. In the middle of the Cold War, there were efforts being made to reduce misunderstandings by inter-parliamentary and political exchanges.

I came to believe that Mike Mansfield wanted to help me out, and there were various instances where this was apparent. I think he obviously knew that I had had the experience at Justice in the national security field. That was a plus. But I think—because almost all of the members of the committee were senior figures in both parties—that he thought it might be helpful to have a generational oddball to push the wisdom of the senior members.

a. Loch Johnson, *A Season of Inquiry* (University of Kansas Press, 1986).

b. "Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?" Attributed to King Henry II of England in reference to Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, in June 1170. Henry and Becket were locked in a dispute over church versus royal authority. Henry's exact words are disputed, but the intent was clear: in December, four of his knights hacked Becket to death.

c. President Joseph Biden represented Delaware in the US Senate (1973–2009). Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont), was sworn into the Senate in 1975. He recently announced he would not stand for reelection in 2022.

Before the committee really got started with its work, did you ask more of the senior members for guidelines, rules of the road, how to handle this series of potential controversies?

I don't recall any, because this had never been done before. There had not been any official oversight of the intelligence agencies. And the focus came to be, of course, on the Central Intelligence Agency. But it clearly included in those days the FBI, NSA, and whoever else was around. Those were the principal ones. In the case of NSA particularly, the emphasis was on clandestine surveillance of American citizens. The FBI, not even clandestine surveillance, but mail openings.

A lot of things had come out in Watergate; this was a post-Watergate exercise. It was to assure the American people that Congress was going to do its job of oversight, that those agencies should not be manipulated by presidents and their administrations. That was the ultimate goal. There were a lot of side chats; various members coming out of a closed-door session, particularly when a testimony began, asking each other's reflections on what they had just heard. But it was not a regular procedure. It was just hallway conversations. We were very conscious of leaks.

One of the arguments against the select committee to begin with and with a permanent oversight committee later was "politicians can't

There had not been any official oversight of the intelligence agencies.

keep secrets." And therefore, that's the reason why we haven't had our constitutional oversight responsibilities all these years, because members of Congress would go out and blab to the public or the press. To my knowledge, that never occurred—with one or two exceptions—during the Church Committee or for the many years of oversight since then.

Turning to the Committee itself and its investigation, one of the perceptions of the Church Committee—and much of this comes from Senator Church himself—was a preoccupation with headline-grabbing revelations, in contrast to the Pike

Committee.^a The Pike Committee set out to answer basic questions about the intelligence business: Are we getting our money's worth? Is it something we need to change a bit? What are the risks involved?

I can't remember the sequence. Most of 1975 was spent behind closed doors and hearing testimony from Director [William] Colby of the CIA fairly early that spring about what came to be called the Family Jewels, which revealed assassination attempts and foreign government overthrows.^b



Members of the Church Committee confer just before hearing testimony from then-Director of Central Intelligence, William Colby on May 15, 1975. Conversing from left to right are Chairman Frank Church, Cochairman John G. Tower, and Howard Baker. Senator Gary Hart was not in camera's view. Photo © Henry Griffin/AP/Shutterstock

a. The Pike Committee is shorthand for the US House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence under Chairman Otis G. Pike (D-New York, 1961–78), which functioned from July 1975 into January 1976.

b. William Colby was Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) 1973–76. On June 26, 2007, the CIA publicly released a 700-page collection of documents colloquially known as the Family Jewels. These were compiled in 1973 under Colby's short-lived predecessor James Schlesinger (February–July 1973) and provided to Congress by Colby. See "Reflections of DCI Colby and Helms on the CIA's 'Time of Troubles,'" *Studies in Intelligence* 51, no. 3, (Extracts, September 2007).

The plots against Fidel Castro stood out because of their almost demented insistence and, finally, the use of the Mafia.

The question was not, “You shouldn’t have been doing things like that”; it was really a search for authorization and responsibility, “Who ordered this done? Did you do it on your own, or were you told to do it?” That’s when we got into the political uses of the Intelligence Community to carry out covert operations and the use of plausible deniability. That is to say, after hours and hours and hours of testimony by former Eisenhower and Kennedy administration officials, we were never able to pin down who ordered the assassination of [Cuba’s] Fidel Castro. There’s a library full of books as to who and why and how.

But then in 1976, I think the chairman began to feel pressure—not just from the press but his own constituents and concerned citizens at large—to begin to open up what we were finding. That is to say, to begin to crack the veil and share what information we could, and that led to dramatic hearings in which Senator Church held up a gun, a picture on the front page of all the newspapers worldwide. Shortly thereafter, I think, the next senior person on the committee was the Senator from Minnesota, [Walter] “Fritz” Mondale, who gave a speech back in Minnesota in which he began to talk about the committee’s work.

I was so dismayed personally because I thought we were going to go off the rails, destroy the whole purpose of this investigation and any positive results that might come from it in terms of oversight, that I went to Senator Mansfield and

uncharacteristically said, “Leader, if this thing falls apart, if people begin to grandstand—and I was talking particularly about the two most senior Democrats—I don’t want to have any part of it. It will destroy the whole purpose. I don’t want to have to go to Colorado and justify unauthorized politicization of this very delicate business. It’s too important going forward.”

Senator Mansfield—who was not loquacious, I’d say—he was very abrupt and said, “Stick with it. Don’t leave. I’ll talk to them.” It never happened again after that. I think Senator Church continued a few more public hearings, but I think Senator Mansfield got the message and warned the people more senior on the committee—the Democrats, particularly—not to mess this up and not to politicize it. And things did calm down a good deal at that point.

One of the complaints that people have made about Church’s leadership is that he was going to use this as a platform for his presidential aspirations. DCI Richard Helms said of Church, “It struck me that Senator Church’s political ambitions ran far ahead of his interest in really doing a thoughtful and serious job with the committee.” Comment?

I would not criticize the late Senator Frank Church or anyone who’s passed on, because they can’t defend themselves. I know there was a great deal of press speculation about political ambitions and how they might just derail the efforts of

the committee. It was complicated because political observers—whoever they are—often saw Senator Church and Senator Mondale as generational competitors for national leadership.

And I think the question was not only about Frank Church but whether Senator Mondale’s response to the public hearings in Minnesota might have put them on a racetrack for national leadership. It wasn’t just Frank Church. There was a bit of competitiveness there, I think. I couldn’t document it, just an impression that here were two ambitious political figures out for national recognition.

How about your perceptions of the other committee members, Goldwater, Tower, anyone else who comes to mind?

Well, I misspoke. The second on the Democratic side was not Fritz Mondale, it was the late Philip Hart, my namesake, and then Fritz Mondale in the seniority. And, of course, the story I could never authenticate was that Mike Mansfield wanted Philip Hart to be the chair, and at that point he was ill, beginning to be ill, an illness that cost him his life later. He demurred—said he would serve but could not bear the burden of being chair. He was a very strong anchor.^a

Hart was beloved literally by almost everybody in the Senate, respected, admired. He did not play politics. He did not grandstand. He did not seek the limelight, an institution noted for that. He was very quiet behind the scenes. And I was always honored when he was alive that the rollcall would be Senator Hart of

a. Philip Hart (D-Michigan, 1959–76).

Colorado, Senator Hart of Michigan. I loved that linkage.

I mentioned earlier that whatever suspicions conservatives had about me were based on my McGovern experience. And by the way, my involvement in politics started with John Kennedy when I was a student in law school and continued with Robert Kennedy,^a whom I met when I was working at the Department of Justice, and only transferred to George McGovern in 1972 because of his support for the Kennedys. He became a surrogate really for a lot of Kennedy supporters. I think Robert Kennedy late in life came to be considered much more liberal in the traditional sense than his brother.

Among the committee members and the staff, what—if any—particular issues became the most contentious?

After Director Colby's testimony, the so-called Family Jewels, those activities involving the stability of foreign governments. Those have been widely publicized, but the shockers were the assassination attempts, which you mentioned. The concern of Republicans was that too much focus on the bad behavior would undermine the credibility of the agencies, particularly the CIA, and weaken us in terms of the Cold War.

The ones against Fidel Castro stood out because of their almost demented insistence and, finally, the use of the Mafia. And that was the hand-grenade that could potentially blow everything up. Everybody wanted to tread around that lightly, but not

You had an attempt to assassinate a foreign leader 90 miles off our shore, under two presidents of both parties.

ignore it, because for the Central Intelligence Agency to be making partnerships with senior Mafia figures in America didn't look good at all, from any point of view. There were differences over how to handle this.

The plots began under a Republican president, Dwight Eisenhower, but continued under a Democratic president, John Kennedy. And we tried very hard—as I said before—to find out who authorized the plots themselves, but who particularly was involved in the use of the Mafia. The implications of that got to be very serious, and they became even more serious when the three Mafia figures involved in the Castro plots were brought in to testify, or attempts were made to bring them in to testify.

We were successful twice with a man called John ["Johnny"] Roselli, [born Filippo Sacco]. We and the Pike Committee were seeking to subpoena Sam Giancana, [born Salvatore Giangana], whose lawyer demanded that he have a subpoena, when both of them were killed. So, now you had a really serious situation. You had an attempt to assassinate a foreign leader 90 miles off our shore, under two presidents of both parties. You had the CIA's use of the Mafia in this effort, and it was because the Mafia ran Cuba more or less in the heyday of the casinos and the gambling and everything else, and therefore left behind some key contacts. The CIA gave every evidence of not even knowing—with due respect—street

names in Havana. So, they needed help, and the Mafia was there.^b

Our effort to get information from those three figures led to the death of two of them. These were big senior Mafia figures whose murders were never solved, opened up incredible questions—in my judgment, still unanswered. We don't know who killed Johnny Roselli. He was murdered brutally. We don't know who killed Sam Giancana in the basement of his house. And why were they killed? They were semiretired, men in their mid-to-late 70s, not active, particularly. So, it had to be something to do with our committee.

And finally, the man who knew about this was Allen Dulles, who was a member of the Warren Commission, and he did not tell Chief Justice Earl Warren or any other members of the commission about the Castro plots or the use of the Mafia. You had the official examination of the Kennedy assassination conducted without critical information that may have changed the outcome of the Warren Commission's conclusions.

The CIA at the time had concluded that Castro was not involved in killing Kennedy. Therefore, to send the Warren Commission on a wild goose chase looking after Castro assassination plots could have led to all sorts of conspiracy theories that the agency simply didn't think was warranted. That's why former DCI John McCone (1961–65) told Helms,

a. Robert Kennedy was attorney general (1961–64) under Presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson.

b. See Thomas Coffey, "Driving the Yanquis Bananas (The Feeling Was Mutual)," *Studies in Intelligence* 55, no. 4, (Extracts, December 2011).

Many of the excesses, contrary to popular wisdom, didn't emanate from this building, but came from the White House.

James J. Angleton, and others to not discuss it with the committee.

Let's look at this through another lens. Why would the Mafia—key figures—collaborate with the CIA, with the US government? Johnny Roselli was under a standing order for exile because of his criminal record. He needed to curry favor. He said to us, "I'm a loyal American. I wanted to help my country." Well, good luck with that. They had an angle. Havana had been their principal source of income in the Western Hemisphere for 30 or 40 years, and it was cut off. The only way they were going to get that back was to get rid of Castro.

So, the Mafia had a reason to collaborate with the CIA. As they saw it, for the US government to get back into Havana after the Cuban missile crisis, the Kennedy administration more or less pulled the plug, not just on assassination attempts but the overthrow of the Castro regime. Suddenly, the Mafia was hanging out there without a chance of getting back into Havana. An awful lot of very, very conservative Americans were as angry as they could be. You had a whole new panoply of people with grievances against President Kennedy.

Do you think the revelations of the use of the Mafia against Castro was the most startling revelation to come out of the committee?

Yes. And it still haunts me years and years later.

You've been quoted as saying that you thought the committee should have spent more time looking into the CIA's use of journalists as sources and for operational coverage. This came in an interview you did with Democracy Now in 2006. Why did that topic interest you so much, and why didn't the committee pursue it as much as you thought it should have?

I was trying desperately to recollect my feelings about that issue. And on a scale of 10, I wouldn't put that issue up at a seven or eight. I'd have it about a three. In trying to go back 40 years now or more—if I had a strong feeling about that—it was because I had friends in those days in journalism, and they knew I was on the committee. I don't think I ever granted an interview, but I would talk to them. And there were efforts made for me to get to tell stories and so forth, which I resisted, I think successfully. But there was a complaint: if this happened or if this did happen in a few cases, it taints our whole profession and no one will talk to us.

They had a legitimate argument. I'm talking about younger reporters, basically, my generation, Bob Woodward and people like that. And it was, "We can't do our job particularly internationally because everybody will think we're working for the CIA, and they won't talk to us." I think I made that argument, and others on the committee did as well. But I'm struggling to raise it on the radar screen of my own mind as to something I was especially exercised about.

Given your academic training in religion, did the revelation that the CIA was using individuals involved in religious organizations either for cover or recruiting them as assets or pretending to be members of those organizations so they could go to places they couldn't normally get to, did that trouble you much at the time?

It did trouble me. Again, it's an issue of degree. And when you say much, I'm trying to quantify something that's not quantifiable. But it would have been a matter of concern. I was thinking back to a previous discussion between pragmatism and idealism. Ideally, none of these things would happen in a perfect world. The CIA or any agency like it would not do things that it was doing.

But why focus so much on the politics of it? It was because my friendship with Director Colby and others led me to believe that many of the excesses, contrary to popular wisdom, didn't emanate from this building but came from the White House or representatives of the White House. If I had one idealistic goal, a desire, it was to liberate the CIA and other agencies from those political pressures. Even as a young man, I was experienced enough to know 100 percent was probably never going to happen.

One of our recommendations was to create a permanent oversight [committee] and to prove by our own conduct that politicians could keep secrets, and therefore get beyond the John Stennis^a generation of "I don't want to know." We had to know. We had to know to protect the CIA. If I had one message to the agency, it would be people like me—and I

a. John Stennis (D-Mississippi, 1947–89).

would think the majority of those on the committee—wanted to protect the CIA, not destroy it. And the only way to do that was to lessen the political pressure to do bad things—overthrow governments, assassinate foreign leaders—and make the CIA and sister agencies responsible to Congress, and not to presidents and the executive branch. That was the central goal.

Today, a lot of people say that if Helms had been running the CIA, it probably would have been destroyed because of his lack of cooperation. Is that your general sense?

Destroyed is perhaps too strong a word. It would have opened warfare in a destructive way that would not have been good for the agency. And the warfare would have been between the agency and presidents who had ordered certain actions by the CIA [one one side] and Congress [on the other]. Keep in mind the timing. This is on the heels of Watergate, where accountability, transparency—the two key words—did not mean everything. All of us believed there had to be secrets.

Nobody wanted reporters—or members of Congress, for that matter—walking the halls of the CIA. But accountability under the Constitution. The Congress is mandated by Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution’s implied powers, to oversee the operations of the executive branch, all of it. It doesn’t say, “except for intelligence.”

Intelligence is really a World War II, post-World War II, and Cold War phenomenon. Did Abraham Lincoln have spies? Yes, of course. He didn’t have a CIA to my knowledge. And, by the way, we’re talking about the CIA, but you had that legacy of

So, Helms had a failed model. I think—to answer a question you haven’t asked—William Colby saved this agency.

[FBI Director] J. Edgar Hoover in all of this, too. To simplify things, the CIA’s role was offshore, by and large, and the FBI’s operations were onshore.

People, I would say, were frightened. The committee knew Americans were frightened of the FBI. And I knew that from contacts with my constituents. Are they listening to my phone calls? Are they opening my mail? All of which happened under previous administrations. In the case of overthrowing foreign governments, there was a deep concern on the part of the intelligentsia in America about should we be doing this, but not the day-to-day citizen concern that you had with the FBI. It was almost two different operations. NSA was kind of out there by itself.

Had Helms’s theory prevailed, I think it would have been very, very dangerous because Congress by that point was not about to take a slap from the director of the CIA who would say, “Keep your nose out of our business.” They weren’t about to. My generation was coming in. We weren’t the old timers. We hadn’t been there 30 or 40 years and made our deals. We had to be accountable post-Watergate to our constituents, and they were demanding action. So, Helms had a failed model. I think—to answer a question you haven’t asked—William Colby saved this agency.

When we look back on Colby’s role in the hearings, he said, “We approached the investigation like a major antitrust action. In those cases, an enormous number of documents



The Church and Pike Committees carried out their hearings as North Vietnamese communist forces overran South Vietnam and forced the US evacuation of Saigon in April 1975. Here on April 28, DCI Colby (left) briefs President Ford and National Security Council members about the situation in Vietnam. Photo courtesy of Gerald R. Ford Library; photographer David Hume Kennerly.

By and large, members of Congress have taken their oversight responsibilities very seriously.

are demanded by the prosecution, meticulously examined, and then three or four specific papers are extracted to prove the case. The only real defense in such actions, I pointed out, was not to fight over the investigator's right to the documents as the courts would almost invariably rule against you, but to come forward with documents and information so as to place in proper context these selected documents and explain that they had another significance besides guilt."

I hadn't thought about it that way, and I wasn't familiar with that quote. I saw Director Colby in a different light, if you will. That he was a man who cared deeply about the agency that he had worked in virtually all of his life and its mission and its importance in the Cold War, who saw a seismic political shift in America, and was calculating almost every day how to accommodate that shift. Sticking with the old system was going to endanger the agency; adjusting to the new realities was the best way to save it. Now, I wouldn't have used his language or perhaps his mind-set, but it worked for him.^a

As I've just said, in my judgment, only Vice President Mondale is left to testify on this.^b And I would urge you to talk to him if you can. Colby was making some serious decisions, and he understood the consequence of those decisions, cooperate or not cooperate, stonewall or adjust. He opted in both cases for the latter, and I think that saved the agency.

In the new regime with oversight, congressional oversight has built protection for the agency. Now, he couldn't have predicted that. He was taking a gamble that politicians would keep their mouths shut, and it paid off. I don't know that there's been one leak of consequence since 1977 in the creation of the oversight committees in the Senate and House. I may be wrong about that because I don't follow it on a day-to-day basis.

But I think, by and large, members of Congress have taken their oversight responsibilities very seriously. There is, by the way, a practical consequence if you don't. If you are fingered giving away important national security information, your constituents are going to string you up. You won't get reelected. So, it's not just idealism. There's a practical consequence here, too. You can't go home saying, "I'm a member of the oversight committee, and let me tell you some really fascinating stuff that I have learned." Goodbye, you go back to law practice.

At the same time that Colby was doing this calculated openness with the committee, he was under a lot of pressure from the White House to clam up. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was telling him that he shouldn't be doing this. Looking back at the relationship between the committee and the White House, did you find obstructionism or any effort to steer the committee in a different way, any political pressures being exerted on it from the White House?

I did not personally. Now that does not eliminate the possibility that the Ford White House would have used its support from Senators Goldwater, Tower, Baker, and others to send messages to Frank Church, "Don't do that, or there will be consequences." I think if pressure from the administration had occurred, that's the way it would have happened. It wouldn't have happened at my level. It would have been at the top. And it would have been John Tower going to see Frank Church saying, "The president's very, very concerned. If you do this, the consequences could be very dire, and we don't want that to happen." And I think that's the circuit that would have been used.

Getting to the reports that the committee produced, which were you most involved in?

The Kennedy assassination report. Senator Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania^c and I were the two most exercised about the Mafia's role in all this and wanted to dig deeper. By and large, other members of the committee—I think—wanted it to go away. The two of us were concerned enough that they had to pursue it. And that was my direct involvement. On the major part of the report that had to do with recommendations, I think all of us were involved in some degree because that was really what our purpose was. It wasn't solely to protect the agency. It was not to attack the agency. It was to set up a new system of accountability and relative transparency, and protect the CIA and other agencies at the same time.

a. See Harold P. Ford, "An Honorable Man: William Colby: Retrospect," *Studies in Intelligence* 40, no. 1 (1996).

b. At the time of this interview, Vice President Mondale was still living. He died April 19, 2021. A Democrat, Mondale served as vice president (1977–81) and represented Minnesota in the US Senate (1959–76).

c. Richard Schweiker (R-Pennsylvania, House of Representatives [1961–69], Senate [1969–81]).

The principal recommendation was congressional oversight and a presidential finding or memorandum of reasons for almost any serious covert operation. Up to that point, it was all off the record. We wanted a record. The findings were put in safes. And as we know, [with the] Iran-Contra [scandal] it wasn't one of those findings that unhinged part of the Reagan administration. And a whole series of other things that I think that took us out of the early-Cold War model and put us into a late-Cold War model. And as I've already said several times, I think preserved the agency. An equal if not stronger recommendation had to do with the FBI and what it should and shouldn't be doing with people's mail, with their phone calls, and so forth, that took them out of the Hoover era and put them in the post-Hoover era of citizen surveillance.

I think also back to the international operations, admonitions against the use of journalists and clergy and cutouts of various kinds. I don't know that we absolutely prohibited them. I'd have to go back and look, but at least we admonished the CIA to be very, very careful about compromising whole sections of society by using them [as cover] in their operations.

In looking at the committee's coverage of covert actions, the point of the inquiry was to look at what were perceived as excesses and abuses. However, because the US government had not acknowledged any other covert actions besides those to date, it gave a distorted view of what covert action was. Would it have been better if the committee had done a more

The mentality of the members of the committee was not to prohibit everything. The CIA couldn't do its job.

comprehensive look at covert action, or did it just not have the time to do so?

It was a question of time. There were so many things we could have done, but the resolution that established the select committee. . . . This is very rare. Select committees—at least in the Senate, I don't know about the House—are rare creatures. And by and large, the Senate doesn't like them because anything that came up, you could create a select committee, and it could undermine and cut across the standing committees. It had a 24-month life, and we couldn't go beyond that. We could go back to the Senate and seek more time, [but] probably would have been rejected.

We did as much as we could in the time we had. We could have been more discriminating in terms of covert operations. Yes. And I would say 40 some years later, I think there's language suggesting that not everything the CIA does covertly is bad. That may or may not be true. I just can't remember. But I certainly know the mentality of the members of the committee was not to prohibit everything. The CIA couldn't do its job. The kinds of operations that you're talking about really below the radar that do not directly compromise the principles of the Constitution and our democracy would almost certainly go forward. We didn't want to have a blanket prohibition against those. It would be impractical.

At the same time that the Church Committee is doing its work, you have the Pike Committee in the other chamber. Were you watching

and taking cues from what the Pike Committee was doing or the way it was handling its relations, for example, with the White House, with the press?

I only paid attention to what they were doing through two channels: the popular press to the degree they were publicizing Pike Committee activities and scuttlebutt between staffs and members and comparing notes, ad hoc, in the hallway and things like that. I had personally no structured system of monitoring Pike Committee activities. I'm sure at the leadership level, the chairman level, there was very, very close cooperation and notes being shared and experiences and so forth. And to my knowledge, there were few, if any, conflicts that I was aware of in terms of operations.

You said in a previous interview that you thought the establishment of the FISA court was one of the major accomplishments of the committee.^a What went into the conceptualization of that institution? Has it done what you hoped it would?

We deliberated whether if we insisted that court orders were necessary for intercepts—particularly electronic intercepts—could the government go to any federal judge in the system and get an order, which would have been chaos because you can't have a full background investigation of however many federal judges there are in America. That then led to an obvious conclusion that it has to be a defined number of judges who have the authority to hear classified cases, appeals, before ruling on the intercept

a. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) court was established October 25, 1978.

It's a very, very important institution of government, if it operates within constitutional bounds and does not violate our principles and our values.

or surveillance or whatever it was. That's what eventually happened; we adopted a special system.

I'm sure there was contact with the chief justice and others in the federal district courts in Washington about how this might operate structurally, how judges would be selected, how many were needed, and all the operational questions. But if you wanted a judicial warrant for surveillance under the Constitution, you had to have a system of the third branch of government, and that's what eventuated. I think with very few exceptions, it's worked pretty well.

FISA judgments have occasionally been accused of being rubberstamps because of the high percentage of filings that the court approves. The contrary argument to that is you only bring your best cases there; the government has done the triage already. Is that your perception?

Yes, very much the latter. I don't think there's been wholesale surveillance applications for judicial warrants to my knowledge. I haven't followed it closely. I know there are critics of the system who make the rubberstamp argument, but I think, by and large, the system has worked pretty well with very, very few exceptions.

Another suggestion was eventually realized in 1982 with the Intelligence

Identities Protection Act to prevent unauthorized disclosures of operatives' names, such as Richard Welch,^a and disclosures by Philip Agee. Were you satisfied overall with how Congress and the executive branch carried out the recommendations of the committee?

Overall, yes. And as I've said repeatedly, I think it helped save the CIA we have today, which would have been much, much different—and I think much weaker—without those protections. The protections weren't totally to harness the CIA and prevent it from doing bad things. They were to protect the agency—in my judgment at least, and I think that of the majority on the committee—from politicization. That is to say use by various administrations of both parties to achieve what was perceived to be a political objective and not an intelligence objective. And that was, of course, the covert side.

Everybody believed the agency should be out collecting information and analyzing it. And that the more various politicians wanted the agency to achieve political objectives, the more it detracted from or distracted from the intelligence collection and analysis and that you were draining away resources to carry out quasi-military operations. Now, there have been very famous ones, Usama bin Ladin and others, where CIA personnel operated in a quasi-military

capacity. That still needs to be very carefully examined.

I haven't had access, obviously, for decades into how CIA personnel and US special operations forces work together. And why do you need a CIA paramilitary force: that concerns me a bit. We've got special operations forces. Why do CIA personnel have to suit up in that capacity? I'm sure there's strong arguments for it. I don't know what they are.

How has your perception of CIA changed over the years? I know you're dealing principally with, of course, open-source material, but a lot of that is pretty revelatory.

This may sound like pandering, but it's genuine. My respect for the agency has increased. And I know a number of retired agency officers I've kept in touch with on the occasions I come to Washington, which is less frequent these days. I won't comment on why. But I do keep in touch. If something happens and I want an intelligence aspect on that, I will contact one of those friends and we exchange observations.

The view I had as a 37-year-old hasn't changed all that much. It's a very, very important institution of government, if it operates within constitutional bounds and does not violate our principles and our values. It's imperative that we have this capability, and I haven't changed on that a bit.



a. Richard Welch was the CIA chief of station in Greece. After the anti-CIA publication *Counterspy* revealed his affiliation, Welch was gunned down outside his Athens residence on December 23, 1975.

Nomination of George H. W. Bush as DCI

Timothy Ray

As President Gerald Ford's nominee to lead the Intelligence Community and CIA, Bush marked an important inflection point in the nomination and confirmation process.



President George H.W. Bush holds a special place in the canon of CIA directors. Despite serving as director of central intelligence (DCI) for less than a year during a period of relative calm, his support for the CIA workforce lifted morale and rehabilitated the agency's public image at a low point in its history. His backing for the CIA and the broader Intelligence Community (IC) continued under his presidency and after leaving the White House. CIA's main campus in McLean, Virginia, is named the George Bush Center for Intelligence in his honor.^{1,2}

As President Gerald Ford's nominee to lead the Intelligence Community and CIA, Bush marked an important inflection point in the nomination and confirmation process. Before Bush, the process was relatively free of politics, and new presidential administrations customarily kept an incumbent in office

temporarily on the principle that the position was above politics.

John McCone's contested nomination—a first—in aftermath of the Bay of Pigs, William Raborn's unhappy tenure (1965–66), and Richard Helms' dismissal in 1973 amid the unfolding Watergate scandal showed this consensus was fraying. With Bush's nomination, it unraveled permanently. After his tenure, confirmation of US intelligence leaders has been a more partisan affair, and with the exception of George Tenet, CIA directors have been shown the door when the White House changes political parties.³

Halloween Massacre

President Ford overhauled his administration on Sunday, November 2, 1975, replacing his secretary of defense and DCI and shuffling his national security adviser and White

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.

A lingering sense of transition had clung to Ford's administration in the wake of Nixon's resignation.

House chief of staff. He also accepted Vice President Nelson Rockefeller's decision to bow out of the 1976 presidential campaign.

Ford's actions surprised the nation. The White House press corps branded the turnovers the "Halloween Massacre," or the "Sunday Massacre," in a tendentious attempt to draw parallels with Richard Nixon's sacking of Justice Department officials in October 1973. The fumbling to find the right label matched the clumsiness of Ford's sudden move. Some of Ford's staff even thought the seeds of his defeat in 1976 were sown that Halloween weekend.⁴

The abrupt shakeup was understandable, though. A lingering sense of transition had clung to Ford's administration in the wake of Nixon's resignation. Ford knew he had to distinguish his presidency from his predecessor's, but once sworn in, he could ill-afford a wholesale turnover in personnel because he had made his way to the executive branch from Congress, where as the House minority leader he had only a small staff. Ford retained Henry Kissinger, for instance, who served simultaneously as secretary of state and national security advisor.

Ford's decision to keep Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger (a former DCI) quickly became problematic. The two clashed over *détente* with Moscow and, more ominously,

Schlesinger refused to authorize airstrikes that Ford had ordered during the SS *Mayaguez* incident in May 1975.^a The resulting strain weakened Ford publicly, and with headwinds building on the GOP's right flank against his re-election bid, Ford acutely felt the need to clean house more thoroughly by fall 1975.^{6, 7}

DCI William Colby had become a similar political liability for Ford but for different reasons.^b Watergate, for all the tumult, had little impact on the CIA, even though the infamous "smoking gun" was a recording of Nixon's approval of a plan to have the CIA warn off the FBI's investigation into the scandal. Watergate raised a few questions about oversight of CIA, but because no abuse of power had occurred, these concerns were dismissed as "so minor that reform might do more harm than good."⁸ Likewise, allegations in September 1974 that the CIA had been involved in Salvador Allende's ouster in Chile failed to capture the attention of Congress and the public. Everything changed in late December, when it was revealed that CIA had spied domestically on the anti-war movement. The bombshell sparked an outpouring of condemnation.⁹ The "year of intelligence" had begun.

Trying to head off Congress, Ford created a "blue-ribbon" panel in early January 1975 to investigate alleged Intelligence Community abuses and suggest reforms. It was not enough. A few weeks later the Senate stood

up the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, known as the Church Committee after its chair, Senator Frank Church (D-Idaho). The House piled on, establishing its Select Committee in February.¹⁰ It soon became clear that the domestic spying had been ordered in contravention of the CIA's charter, but more lurid revelations tumbled out, leading Church to declare in July that the CIA "may have been acting like a rogue elephant on the rampage."¹¹

Colby tried to quiet the uproar with "selective disclosures" (such as confirming domestic surveillance had occurred), but he abandoned the effort altogether as hearings continued, increasingly irritating the White House by his willingness to answer requests from the Hill. Colby's public display in September of a "nondiscernable microbioinoculator," an assassination gadget, especially angered the administration. "Every time Bill Colby gets near Capitol Hill, the damn fool feels an irresistible urge to confess to some horrible crime," Kissinger fumed.¹² Colby's appearances undercut the blue-ribbon panel and left the CIA's public image in tatters. Concerned for the IC and feeling political heat on his right flank, Ford resolved that Colby had to go.^c

Ford felt confident in his changes even as the Halloween Massacre played out in the press. "I strongly feel a president should have his own well coordinated, cooperative team," he told advisers. But the suddenness

a. On May 12, 1975, Khmer Rouge forces seized the US merchant ship SS *Mayaguez* off the coast of Cambodia (then Kampuchea). Forty-one US servicemembers were killed in an attempted rescue operation. The crew and ship were released after four days.

b. See Harold P. Ford, "An Honorable Man: William Colby: Retrospect," *Studies in Intelligence* 40, No. 1 (1996).

c. For a perspective of a Church Committee member on the proceedings see in this issue CIA Historian David Robarge's interview of former Senator Gary Hart (page 29).

of the turnovers also highlighted that Ford's eye was on his political future. Either way, he was pleased with the nominations of Bush as DCI and Donald Rumsfeld, a longtime friend and aide, as secretary of defense. "These are my guys," he said.¹³

Career Dead End

News of Ford's shakeup literally caught up with Bush while he was bicycling home from church in Beijing, a favorite weekly activity. The US Liaison Office's car pulled up with an "Eyes Only" dispatch.¹⁴ Bush had become the top US envoy to China by way of service in the House of Representatives, as UN ambassador, and the Republican National Committee (RNC), where he became the chair not long before Watergate broke.¹⁵ Bush had twice been considered for vice president, most seriously in August 1974 as Ford's replacement, but Rockefeller got the nod instead, in part because



Chief of the US Liaison Office in China Bush about to mount his bike in Beijing, China. On one such weekend ride in November 1975, he was handed an "Eyes Only" cable. Photo: George H. W. Bush Library and Museum, undated, #HS 1075.

Bush had no substantive policy role in Beijing—Kissinger maintained tight control—and had grown restless throughout 1975, particularly when contemplating his political future.

Bush had publicly defended Nixon until Watergate's bitter end.¹⁶

Passed over, Bush was nonetheless determined to leave the RNC, but Ford loathed the idea that Bush would leave his administration. "I don't want to lose your talents," he told Bush, as the two kicked around ideas.¹⁷ Talk turned to ambassadorships, and the US Liaison Office to China—diplomatic relations and an embassy had yet to be formalized despite the opening of ties in 1972—quickly became the preferred choice of both. Kissinger concurred and Bush was easily confirmed in September.¹⁸

Bush viewed service in China as "a tremendous challenge and a tremendous opportunity of substance leading to somewhere." It would also

allow Watergate's fallout to pass him by.¹⁹ He won praise from his hosts and, later, Kissinger, who noted he was "very, very impressed" with how Bush had "grown into the job."²⁰ To Bush's disappointment, however, he had no substantive policy role in Beijing—Kissinger maintained tight control—and had grown restless throughout 1975, particularly when contemplating his political future.²¹

Bush "whipped open" the sensitive dispatch only after reaching his official residence in Beijing, the safest place to do so.²² It was from Kissinger:

The President is planning to announce some major personnel shifts on Monday, November 3, at 7:30 P.M. Washington time. Among those shifts will be the transfer of Bill Colby from CIA.

The President asks that you consent to his nominating you as the new Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The President feels your appointment to be greatly in the national interest and very much hopes that you will accept. Your dedication to national service has been unremitting, and I join with the President in hoping that you will accept this new challenge in the service of your country.

*Regretfully, we have only the most limited time before the announcement and the President would therefore appreciate a most urgent response.*²³

Just as Bush had not actively sought to be DCI, he was not the White House's first choice to head the CIA.

Bush had to have been surprised, if not disappointed. While eager to return home, accepting the nomination for DCI came with serious drawbacks. Most immediately, how would China react? A natural assumption would be that he had been a spy all along, and Bush worried this would undermine the good will cultivated between the United States and China since 1972. More selfishly, it meant sacrificing his political future—something hard to contemplate after his brush with the vice presidency. “[Even in] the best of times the CIA job wouldn’t be considered a springboard to higher office,” Bush later recalled.

The DCI was not a policy adviser to the president, except where covert action was required, and Bush could not build a political following as DCI. Because it was also customary to maintain a DCI from administration to administration, Bush assumed that even if Ford lost in 1976, he might spend the next five years as DCI, maybe more, which would completely erase him from public life. And there was a final drawback: no DCI had ever become president. “Anyone who took the job,” Bush remembered, “would have to give up any and all political activity. As far as future prospects for elective office were concerned, the CIA was marked DEAD END.”²⁴

Bush touched on his concerns in his reply to Kissinger. Foremost, it was not “the best of times” at the CIA. Being so far away, Bush admitted that he could not “[assess] the entire situation,” but he knew enough about the Church Committee hearings to declare, “In all candor I would not

have selected this controversial position if the decision had been mine.” Bush also understood that serving as DCI meant “the total end of any political future.” But duty outweighed his reservations. He went on:

Henry, you did not know my father. The President did. My Dad inculcated into his sons a set of values that have served me well in my own short public life. One of these values quite simply is that one should serve his country and his president.

And so if this is what the President wants me to do the answer is a firm “yes.”

Almost as an afterthought, he added that he did not “believe in complicating [the president’s] already enormously difficult job.”²⁵ Bush’s reply cheered both Ford and Kissinger, who responded back, “The President was deeply moved—as I was—by your message. He is deeply appreciative of the nobility of your decision. . . . You are indeed a fine man.”²⁶

Despite the good news, Ford briefly backtracked on the nomination. The administration had overlooked that Bush needed to stay in Beijing through Ford’s scheduled visit in early December. Colby graciously agreed to remain at the CIA for another month.²⁷ It was not the last time the impulsiveness of the Halloween Massacre would embarrass Ford.

Bush learned, at least, that his fears regarding the Chinese were unfounded. At the meeting between Ford and Mao Zedong, the aged

dictator warmly greeted Bush with the remark, “You’ve been promoted.” He then turned to Ford and said, “We hate to see him go.” Another Chinese official subsequently confided to Bush that “they felt they’d spent a year ‘teaching’ me their views on the Soviet threat and now, as America’s chief intelligence officer, I’d be able to ‘teach’ them to the President.” The good feelings would not last.

An Undesirable Political Cast

Just as Bush had not actively sought to be DCI, he was not the White House’s first choice to head the CIA. When Ford’s advisers began discussing replacements for Colby in summer 1975, Bush made—just barely—the list.²⁹ Feelings about Bush were mixed. He had domestic and foreign policy experience, familiarity with intelligence, and “high integrity,” an “ability to rein in a wildcat organization” because of his competent handling of the RNC during Watergate. But this also hurt him. “[The] RNC post lends an undesirable political cast,” one adviser noted.³⁰ Any nominee for DCI from outside the CIA would have to reassure the Senate that he could withstand unethical or illegal requests from the White House, never mind serving in an apolitical fashion.

Moreover, Bush had not escaped Watergate’s shadow, despite being virtually out of sight in Beijing.³¹ Given the tensions between the White House and the Hill over intelligence hearings, a tough fight over Bush was expected. Nonetheless, Ford eventually found that his closeness to Bush and faith his abilities overrode any reservations. “I need a team that I am most comfortable with,” he told his

advisers in November. “I need people close to me.”³²

The scrutiny began as soon as Ford announced the nomination—and the tone indicated a tough road ahead. As White House advisers feared, critics viewed Bush as too partisan and too politically ambitious to lead the CIA in a professional manner. Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Washington), a Cold War hawk and member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, bluntly disparaged Bush. “[He cannot] hold a candle to . . . Bill Colby in terms of judgment, knowledge, or intellectual ability,” Jackson said, adding that Ford needed “strong men,” not “yes-men.”³³

Senator Church was equally harsh. “I think there could not be a poorer choice than to take a past chairman of the Republican Party and put him in as director of the CIA, because the agency was created to

The scrutiny began as soon as Ford announced the nomination—and the tone indicated a tough road ahead.

be professional, to be independent, and to be non-partisan, and that’s the kind of director the agency should have,” he said. Church signaled he might lead a floor-fight if Bush’s nomination cleared the Senate Armed Services Committee.³⁴ There was also opposition at the CIA. One CIA officer sputtered, “Why didn’t [Ford] name [Spiro] Agnew? He’s already been vice president.”³⁵

Colby was one of few voices of support. He thought CIA could look to its future under Bush’s leadership, rather than the abuses of the past, because he was an outsider.³⁶ Richard Helms was another. Writing to a mutual friend, he enthusiastically endorsed Bush:

Frankly I think George Bush is a good choice . . . I have known George mildly well over the

years and have found him to be intelligent, energetic, and decent. . . . [H]is political abilities will stand him in good stead when he has to face that Congress . . . How anyone expects [a] professional intelligence officer or an ordinary [citizen] from business or the law to stand up to Frank Church . . . I do not understand. Intelligence has been thrown into politics, so why should it not be headed by a politician? And an honest one at that!³⁷

Knows Nothing of Intelligence

Bush, still in Beijing waiting on Ford’s visit, was hampered in his efforts to answer critics and gather support. His first step in this regard—and set his own mind at ease—was to seek Ford’s assurance that he would have “free and direct access to the president in conjunction with my new duties.” Bush saw restoration of the CIA’s importance and role in national security as his primary duty as DCI, and the unfettered freedom to speak with the president would jumpstart the process.

Bush also felt that only an open relationship would help prevent future intelligence-related abuses. Such a demand did not worry him, because he was confident Ford shared the view “that the USA must retain a strong . . . intelligence capability.”³⁸

Bush also tried to work the Hill. On November 7, 1975, he cabled the White House with talking points to help both deal with queries and raise support (he also noted his distaste for



Bush’s arrival to CIA was delayed because he was needed to participate in President Ford’s state visit to Beijing in December 2, 1975. Above Ford and Bush are escorted from a meeting by Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping. Photo: Gerald R. Ford Library and Museum.

Bush did not shy away from his political background, but, as he had signaled earlier, pitched it as an advantage.

Church's attack). Aside from emphasizing his use of intelligence at the UN and in China, Bush stressed his "total commitment to laying politics totally aside." He recognized that "it is essential to do that in the new job," and highlighted he had done just that at the UN and in Beijing.³⁹ It made little impression. On November 20, Bush cabled again, ratcheting efforts up a notch:

There are several incidents of my having to resist White House pressure during Watergate times that Tom Lias at [the then US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare] can give you if you need them. Without giving details to senators, which I will do if necessary, the theme should be emphasized that Bush did withstand . . . pressure, but did not do it glamorously on the front pages. I will approach my CIA job in the same way.

He also pivoted to the offensive, arguing his political background could be a positive asset at the CIA. "Further point should be made," he wrote, "that someone with some feel for public opinion might better keep Agency out of illegal activities." In other words, as a politician, he had a better sense of what Congress and the public would not tolerate in an intelligence organization.⁴⁰

Bush began jotting down his thoughts to assure himself he could do the job and to answer his critics. He echoed some of these sentiments later in his confirmation hearing. To those who thought he was ill-prepared to be DCI, he scribbled:

charge: Knows nothing of 'intelligence'

answer: a) dealt with product—access to CIA reports for 3 years

b) [illegible] "dealt with CIA people["]—NSA product etc

c) dealt with the policy—UN wide range

China—specific

d) dealt with "reporting" which becomes part of intel. Product

e) extremely [illegible] & practical "security" procedures

f) strong feelings, based on experience—of need for intelligence

g) personal backing of President⁴¹

He noted that he viewed working at the CIA like working at the UN. He might not know everything at first, but he could learn, while relying on professionals to help cover his weak spots. He also indicated he was "glad" that excesses committed by the CIA had been exposed, specifically allegations about assassinations. The CIA, as he typed in another series of notes, "must be postured so as never to involve itself in this kind of murder plotting again," although he hedged in "war-time—is a question." He was determined to get the CIA "off the front pages" and to implement "guidelines" and "review" of future operations to avoid past abuses. Even more important was the protection of "sources and methods."⁴²

A Tame Elephant

By the time Bush arrived in December 1975, events in Washington appeared to be breaking in his favor. The year of intelligence was winding down, in part, due to dwindling public interest and the recognition that the House and Senate hearings had taken on a partisan cast. In particular, Senator Church, who harbored presidential aspirations, had come under fire. "[W]e really don't know if he truly is running the CIA investigation in a nonpartisan manner, do we?" one columnist asked.⁴³ Others pushed back on objections to Bush's nomination. "[I]t comes down to the question of whether one trusts Gerald Ford and George Bush. Is it their aim to reform the CIA and bring it back under control, or is it their aim to implement still further excesses of its awesome power for partisan advantage?" asked another.⁴⁴

Friends nonetheless warned Bush that he faced a hostile climate. When one asked what he could do help, Bush quipped, "Give Frank Church a call. Tell him I'm a tame elephant."⁴⁵ He might have caught a break had opposition to his nomination not coalesced around the real possibility that Ford might pick Bush to be his vice presidential running-mate. Ford had not yet made a decision, but Bush was an attractive prospect, having made the president's short list once before.

Sen. Walter Mondale (D-Minnesota), a Church Committee member, summarized the concern in a speech on the Senate floor. Mondale explained that he did not oppose Bush's nomination because of Bush's political background. On the contrary, he noted that partisan figures had served in government impartially and

quite well. Rather, Mondale opposed the nomination because, if chosen to be Ford's running-mate, Bush would serve about six months as DCI before hitting the campaign trail. The CIA needed more stability.

Further, Mondale was concerned Bush might compromise—even if unconsciously—his impartiality as DCI as long as he remained a potential candidate. Even if Bush did stand up to the president, there would always be suspicion that he was angling for higher office. Mondale concluded it was better for Bush to renounce any interest in the vice presidency. In fact, if Bush declared a two-year moratorium on seeking higher office, Mondale indicated he would consider Bush for DCI.⁴⁶

Bush strongly objected. He was committed to professional and

Bush's advocacy on behalf of the CIA and sure hand at a moment of great institutional turmoil earned lasting praise from its personnel.

apolitical service as DCI, but the sacrifice of what he saw as another call to service was not a prerequisite for the job. He would not campaign for the vice presidency, but "if drafted, legitimately, I would serve; unless the Senate votes specifically on this question," as he had written to himself in Beijing. And he firmly opposed such a vote. "[N]o one should be asked not to accept a legitimate call to service in high office," he wrote. "No one at all."⁴⁷

The White House agreed, with Ford publicly defending Bush. "I don't think people with talents, individuals with capabilities and a record ought to be excluded from

any further public service," he said. Ford's advisors also advocated that Bush "avoid such a pledge," although they acknowledged such a call was up to him.⁴⁸

Hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee began on December 15th and deadlocked almost immediately along party lines. Giving his statement, Bush reaffirmed that a strong CIA was vital to US defense, and he pledged that he would not repeat past abuses as long as he was DCI. He affirmed his commitment to proper oversight, restoration of Agency morale, and the protection of sources and methods.

Bush did not shy away from his political background, but, as he had signaled earlier, pitched it as an advantage: "[s]ome of the difficulties the CIA has encountered might have been avoided if more political judgment had been brought to bear." He added, "I am not talking about narrow political partisanship. I am talking about the respect for the people and their sensitivities that most politicians understand."⁴⁹

He did not comment on his political future until last. Bush declared he was not actively seeking to be Ford's running-mate, and promised not to do so as DCI, but he objected to making his confirmation conditional on the surrender of his possible candidacy. "To my knowledge," Bush told the committee, "no one in the history of this Republic has ever been asked to renounce his political birthright as the price of confirmation for any office." He concluded, "In this new job I serve



DCI-designate Bush on December 15, 1975 engaging in a cordial exchange with Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) just before the Senate Armed Services Committee began to consider Bush's nomination. At the time, Church was also chairman of a Senate select committee, the "Church Committee," to investigate alleged abuses of the US Intelligence Community during the Vietnam War and before. Church had said publicly he would oppose Bush's confirmation. (See interview of Gary Hart, a member of the Church Committee on page 29.) Photo: © Henry Griffin/AP/Shutterstock.

Bush entered the Oval Office better prepared to use intelligence than any of his predecessors since Dwight Eisenhower.

at the pleasure of the President. I plan to stay as long as he wants me here.”⁵⁰

Bush’s statement had little effect, and he even raised eyebrows when, despite declaring that assassination plots were “morally offensive,” he refused to rule out CIA participation in coups or other similar operations in the future. Committee Democrats remained opposed to Bush’s nomination because of his potential candidacy.

Sen. Church, in his statement before the committee, played up this fear, warning that Bush had been nominated only to groom him for vice president. Even when Bush revealed that he had urged Nixon to resign during Watergate, something he had not previously divulged, it made no impression. “Lord, I know I’ve got a heck of a problem,” he lamented following adjournment, but he would not back down.

The deadlock extended into a second day. Sen. Jackson blamed Ford. The president, he said, should not have offered Bush the job without pledging to exclude him from consideration for higher office. Echoing Mondale, Jackson underscored that without such an assurance, Bush would hold office for only six months before hitting the campaign trail.⁵¹

After the second day of hearings, a vote was imminent and Ford’s aides reckoned that Bush would be confirmed only by a slim margin. All six Republicans on the committee were counted on for favorable votes, and at least three Democrats, including Chairman John Stennis

(D-Mississippi), were expected to cross the aisle. It would constitute a majority of the committee’s 16 members, but the tally was so thin it would probably “lead to an active floor fight” that might unite “rank and file Democrats together in a vote which will embarrass the President and badly tarnish, if not destroy, one of his brightest stars,” wrote one adviser. Yet nobody recommended that Ford should promise to exclude Bush as a running-mate.⁵²

The Halloween Massacre then sounded a last discordant note. Anxious for resolution, Ford reversed himself a day later and pledged to Stennis that “if Ambassador Bush is confirmed by the Senate . . . I will not consider him as my Vice Presidential running mate in 1976.”⁵³ Ford could not risk a confirmation setback in a

campaign year. With the back-peddling, confirmation came easily. The Armed Services Committee approved Bush 12 to four, and the entire Senate, after a two-hour debate, followed in January with a 64-to-27-vote in Bush’s favor.⁵⁴ He was now DCI, for better and for worse.

Best Job in Washington

Bush quickly grew to love the job, despite his initial reservations. The education, competence, and professionalism of CIA personnel frequently amazed Bush, and he became a devoted public advocate. “I realize that dirty-tricks artist James Bond is far more fascinating than a scholarly analyst of foreign political or economic trends, but in seven months as Director of Central Intelligence, I have never met anyone remotely like James Bond,” he said in one such speech. “[D]uring any lunchtime visit to our headquarters cafeteria, I may



Bush sworn in by Justice Potter Stewart on January 10, 1976. Outgoing DCI Colby (left) attended the ceremony and, with few friends remaining to bid him farewell, immediately drove off alone into retirement. Photo: George H. W. Bush Library and Museum.

be sharing the room with enough scholars and scientists who hold enough advanced degrees in enough disciplines to staff a university,” he marveled.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, he had to know his future at Langley was uncertain if Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter won the 1976 election.

In a key campaign speech, Carter obliquely referred to Bush as a political failure and his appointment to the CIA as an ill-advised political favor (which Bush charitably dismissed as “a one-time shot”). Carter’s constant drumbeat of “Watergate, Vietnam, and the CIA” on the stump was more troubling. The attacks on the agency, Bush felt, were too “frequent and vituperative.”⁵⁶

Carter, of course, narrowly beat Ford. When he later delivered a series of customary intelligence briefings to the president-elect, Bush found Carter focused, but wary. Bush felt Carter “harbored a deep antipathy to the CIA,” despite his “surface cool.” The two, however, remained cordial, and Carter even complimented Bush by suggesting he might one day become president.⁵⁷ He also later wrote to thank Bush for the quality, depth, and professionalism of the briefings.⁵⁸

Bush asked to stay on as DCI, if only a few months, so Carter could pick a solid replacement and avoid politicizing the office, but he was ignored. In January 1977, Bush

Bush’s advocacy on behalf of the CIA and sure hand at a moment of great institutional turmoil earned lasting praise from its personnel.

became the first DCI to step down solely because of a change in administration. He had held office only six months longer than he would have if he had been Ford’s vice-presidential candidate. Whether he recognized the irony or not, Bush hated to leave.^a Stansfield Turner, his successor, later remembered that Bush said about being DCI, “It’s the best job in Washington.”⁵⁹

Bush’s advocacy on behalf of the CIA and sure hand at a moment of great institutional turmoil earned lasting praise from its personnel. Yet his confirmation as DCI was not without significant controversy. With his partisan background, Bush was not a politically safe nominee for an intelligence job—perhaps in any era, let alone 1975. In fact, Bush’s confirmation probably ranks among the most contentious in US intelligence history.

Ford deserves at least some credit for the esteem given to Bush, because he was willing to risk a political fight due to his faith in Bush’s abilities. While Bush arguably took a principled stand that a call to higher service should not prejudice his confirmation as DCI—which the White House also backed—it only added to the clamor. Indeed, his refusal to act in a

politically expedient manner almost cost him the job.

Ford’s reversal on the matter, while embarrassing, was an attempt to thread the political realities of the moment. Ford needed to act aggressively if he wanted to hold onto the presidency, and he did, but he also felt he could not afford to lose Bush in the process. The net result, coupled with the broader changes brought about by Watergate and the year of intelligence, politicized the office of DCI. Bush’s later dismissal signaled as much.

Carter was more prophetic than he knew. Bush entered the Oval Office better prepared to use intelligence than any of his predecessors since Dwight Eisenhower. It is therefore hard to argue that events did not turn out well for both him and the IC in the end. Few would have thought so, however, given the emotion and politics of his confirmation hearings, or later after his dismissal. As new debates embroil the nominations of future US intelligence leaders—which are sure to come—it is worth keeping in mind the uproar over Bush. Despite the drama and heat, the confirmation of even controversial nominees like Bush may result in sound leadership for the CIA and IC.



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a. Bush, ever mindful of morale, took advantage of his Republican National Committee connections to invite Lionel Hampton (a staunch Republican at the time, whom Bush would describe as a “friend”) to bring his band to Langley. On December 7, 1976, he brought a 12-piece group, which performed to a full house in the CIA auditorium. (*Washington Post*, Personalities, December 8, 1976: B2.)

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Intelligence in Public Media

The American War in Afghanistan: A History

Carter Malakasian (Oxford University Press, 2021), 561 pages, 20 maps, 62 pages of notes, glossary and abbreviations, bibliography, and index.

Reviewed by J. R. Seeger

As the war in Afghanistan ends in a dramatic and chaotic withdrawal of Western allied forces from Kabul, there will be many “after action” books and articles identifying “what went wrong” or “what we did right.” Their findings most likely will vary according to the experiences and political persuasions of the authors. The most credible of these are and will be written by individuals who have had long experience in Afghanistan and, ideally, a deep understanding of the military and political context of the tale of an Afghan civil war that begins in 1973 and continues to this day.^a Of course, Americans want to focus on our 20 years of combat operations that began shortly after the 9/11 attacks, but any credible effort has to consider more than the “American experience.”

In this book, Carter Malakasian begins with a short description of the culture, the economy, and the political history of this landlocked South Asian state. Malakasian has the critical benefits of having a PhD from Oxford and Pashtu language skill. He served for years in Afghanistan as a Department of State officer as well as a special assistant for strategy to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford. Malakasian has a very clear view of what went wrong, which he details through the 500 pages of text. He explains the reasons for writing this book in the introduction, listing a number of issues he wants to explore:

Whether better decisions could have brought a better outcome. . . . Themes of mistreatment, Pakistan, tribalism, and Islam and occupation run throughout. They set the war on a windy and rocky course. Was there anything the United States could have done to chart a calmer course? Could it have defeated its adversaries? Could it have fought a less costly war? (7)

If Malakasian writes in an effort to explain his position on these questions, the primary question for readers in the IC remains: Does his selection of these themes or his case

studies within the book serve intelligence professionals? The easy answer to the question is “Yes, but . . .” In the introduction, Malakasian encourages readers to explore other books focusing on these questions—although more than enough articles contributing to the discussion have already been published in US, Canadian, UK, and European journals since the evacuation during July and August 2021.

Malakasian begins his analysis of the “American war” with the 2002 expansion of US forces in country. He summarizes the reasoning behind this expansion from a few hundred to several thousand in a single paragraph.

In early 2002, 8,000 US and 5,000 allied troops were in Afghanistan. Before the war had started, Bush, Powell, Rice, and Rumsfeld had assumed that the United States would have to leave thousands of troops to prevent terrorists from coming back. All agreed that the overriding lesson of the 1990s in Afghanistan was that the United States had created a vacuum by ignoring the country after the fall of the Soviet Union. Within that vacuum the conditions were generated for the rise of the Taliban and Al Qaida. (81)

After that brief statement of purpose, Malakasian strays into a diatribe against senior leaders in the Pentagon and the US general officer corps. He states categorically that he sees “no greater villain in America’s Afghan War than Donald Rumsfeld.” (81) In campaign after campaign, he points to officers who continued to argue they were winning when it was clear by 2008 that winning battles was not enough. They were, Malakasian writes,

too dedicated to winning, too prideful to accept losing, at the cost of flexibility. Instead of cutting a bad investment, they toughed it out. A little more

a. For example, see the set of articles in *Foreign Affairs* titled “We all lost Afghanistan” (www.foreignaffairs.com) and the articles by Robin Wright and Stephen Coll for the *New Yorker* (August 15 and 16, 2021)

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

entrepreneurship would have been good for the whole strategy. (215)

Malakasian's book follows the detailed story of 20 years of deployments with some successes and many failures. If there is a single criticism that can be weighed against the book, it is his apparent disinterest in any of the unconventional warfare or even irregular warfare successes waged by US Army Special Forces along with other elements of the US Army Special Operations Command including the Military Information Support Operations (MISO) teams and the US Army Civil Affairs teams. A quick scan of the index demonstrates this gap in his interest and research. Also missing is any discussion of CIA efforts beyond a brief mention of the CIA partnership with Special Forces teams in 2001. This means a reader with little background in Afghanistan attempting to understand the history of "the American war in Afghanistan" is going to miss all the smallscale efforts/successes such as the counterterrorism pursuit teams (CTPTs) and the USASOC program of village stability operations.

The book follows the maxim, "Where you stand depends on where you sit." Malakasian was involved in stability efforts in Garmsir in southern Afghanistan. Given his Pashtu language skills and his experience, he makes assumptions about "Afghans" based on the common prejudice of Pashtuns throughout Afghanistan: Pashtun culture *is* Afghan culture. That is a fallacy in many ways, given that Pashtuns themselves have multiple subcultures, and even in totality, they do not represent anything but a plurality in the Afghan population. This prejudice also reinforces his argument that Americans did not and do not understand Afghan culture and therefore all "Afghans" resisted US operations. That is simply not true. Many of the Afghans committed to a modern state were Tajiks and Hazaras from northern Afghanistan, who saw the US effort to free Afghanistan from the harsh tribal laws of the Kandahar-based Taliban as a positive force for liberation from generations of Pashtun dominance.

Since Malakasian raises the question of "what might have been," it is reasonable to assume that he might look at alternative scenarios where there were successes. He does not do so. Others have discussed alternative

scenarios and their works should be considered. In her recent book, *Bullets Not Ballots*, Jacqueline L. Hazelton uses six case studies from the 20th century to argue that there are multiple roads to success in counterinsurgency but, in her opinion, none of those roads start or finish with creating anything resembling participatory democracy.^a In fact, the most successful counterinsurgency case studies demonstrate the value of coercive military measures coupled with direct engagement with local elites who have a direct stake in the civil war that boils around them. None of the successes had any focus on the general population. She argues that her research results "are likely to be controversial because they challenge conventional wisdom on counterinsurgency success, a conventional wisdom that many analysts and pundits rely on as a professional position and even personal brand, and a conventional wisdom that carries significant emotional power." (151)

Other works on counterinsurgency such as the book *The Clandestine Cold War in Asia, 1945–65* edited by Richard Aldrich, Gary Rawnsley, and Ming-Yeh Rawnsley offer discussions of alternative methods that worked. The editors have assembled 11 case studies of successes and failures by the United Kingdom in the field of counterinsurgency and countersubversion.^b Finally, Max Boot's recent biography of Edward Lansdale, *The Road Not Taken: Edward Lansdale and the American Tragedy in Vietnam*, reinforces the same theme that there were other policies and campaigns that could have been studied by planners focused on counterinsurgency.^c

The single thread in all of these books that Malakasian ignores is the importance placed on small-scale military deployments. These small-unit operations (usually, though not exclusively well-trained special operations forces) were integrated with local forces. It is consistent with the successes of the US campaign in Afghanistan in 2001 and also consistent with one of the "27 Articles" that T.E. Lawrence offered in 1917:

Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them. Actually, also, under the very odd con-

a. Jacqueline L Hazelton, *Bullets Not Ballots. Success in Counterinsurgency Warfare* (Cornell University Press, 2021).

b. Richard Aldrich et al., *The Clandestine Cold War in Asia, 1945–19: Western Intelligence, Propaganda and Special Operations* (Frank Cass Publishers, 2000).

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

ditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is.^a

Probably the most important single lesson in irregular warfare is that no matter how careful a conventional military component is and no matter how sincere a senior military commander is about winning campaigns and not just counterinsurgency battles, a large military mission is likely to fail. As stated above, Malakasian wishes to make failure the result of commander mismanagement or, at worst, perfidy. In fact, based on the history of counterinsurgency campaigns in both the 20th and 21st centuries, it seems far more likely that the structure of conventional military units and their training for general-purpose war

make it nearly impossible for anyone inside that conventional system to understand the challenges of counterinsurgency, much less design solutions. At least in that sense, Malakasian's general view is correct: certainly by mid-2006, the US Army, US Marines and the conventional allied forces were considered an occupation force that would never be acceptable to the Afghan population, no matter how hard they tried to protect that population from Taliban and al-Qa'ida terrorism. Unfortunately, Malakasian does not relate to the US and allied units conducting successful unconventional warfare tactics, techniques and procedures. In sum, *The American War in Afghanistan* is an incomplete history of the last 20 years of conflict.



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a. Malcom Brown, editor. *T.E. Lawrence in War and Peace: The Military Writings of Lawrence of Arabia. An Anthology.* (Frontline Books, 2015), 144–45.

Intelligence in Public Media

Clarity in Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the CIA

Marc Polymeropoulos (HarperCollins, 2021), 168 pages, notes, index.

Reviewed by Mike R.

Clarity in Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the CIA by Marc Polymeropoulos is an unusual amalgam: a mix of leadership, intelligence—and baseball. The 26-year veteran CIA operations officer who retired in 2019 as a member of the Senior Intelligence Service puts forward his core leadership principles in a series of chapters illustrated by a combination of baseball stories and vignettes from his intelligence career. Though packaged in a new way, the principles are not groundbreaking, and the operational sections are thin on detail. But if one looks beyond these flaws, at the heart of the book are nuggets illuminating the human element at CIA in a way not often exposed to public view. This counterbalances the other shortcomings, even if in the end it isn't enough to make for a fully satisfying read.

Those seeking tales of a CIA operative's exploits will find that Polymeropoulos barely skims the surface of a career steeped in the Middle East, war zones, and counterterrorism, with a final position overseeing operations in Europe and Eurasia. He was one of CIA's most decorated officers, in the middle of some of the agency's key events in a post-9/11 world. If his operational career were fleshed out more, he could have written a welcome addition to the ever-multiplying volumes of memoirs by retired case officers. Instead, his chapters are more like a pilot's touch-and-go landing, quickly plopping down on an intelligence issue, then taking off right away without providing extensive detail or context. And they focus predominantly on war-zone-related service to the exclusion of other locales and issues.

Polymeropoulos dishes up a series of appetizers, treating operational events concisely and keeping much of the information generic. For example, his tale of redemption, tracking down a terrorist high-value target (HVT) responsible for the death of a colleague years earlier, has enormous potential but is over almost before it begins. After noting briefly that months were spent recruiting sources to attempt to report on his location somewhere in South Asia, he cuts to the chase in record time:

One day, the HVT went to a local market, and we had our agents on the ground in short order to positively identify him; it was seamless. With some later help from the US military, the HVT ultimately met his demise and was no longer a threat. An unforgettable moment for so many. (40–41)

On his central theme of leadership, Polymeropoulos has chosen something at once both easy and challenging. The shelves are full of volumes on this subject, and the public has an insatiable appetite for it, but given such competition, the odds are stacked against any new entrant's ability to rise to the top of the heap. Polymeropoulos tries to stand out by creating a new niche – that of the intelligence leadership manual. Former military practitioners no doubt helped point the way, achieving success parlaying their experiences into military leadership lessons—witness *It's Your Ship* by Captain Michael Abrashoff from a decade ago. Polymeropoulos probably was particularly inspired by 2017's *Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life . . . And Maybe The World* by Adm. William McRaven. Similarly constructed, both are thin reads, easily digested in one sitting, and contain a comparable number of guiding leadership principles—10 key lessons for McRaven, nine core concepts for Polymeropoulos.

But the parallels only go so far. McRaven—a former SEAL and head of Special Operations Command, who went on to become chancellor of the University of Texas system—has a certain gravitas. Polymeropoulos presents himself as an Average Joe on a soapbox, conjuring images of a John Madden of the intelligence world, an outsized personality providing color commentary *Monday Night Football*. For fans of the book and movie *Charlie Wilson's War*, Gust Avrakotos, another larger-than-life CIA officer of similar background, might come to mind. Polymeropoulos proclaims, “My voice is loud, and my laughter is even louder—being of Greek heritage, that's the only tone we have, and we embrace it fully.” The reader's taste for melodrama will color his enjoyment of *Clarity*.

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The book also is not as polished as it could be. The chapters might have worked better as a series of magazine columns or segments over the airwaves. Here, trying to tie everything together into a unified concept is a case in which the sum is less than the parts. It exhibits signs of hasty compilation; it would have benefited, for example, from an editor's pruning of the inordinate number of references to the author's favorite dive restaurant and brand of watch. Intelligence professionals might also find discomfiting Polymeropoulos shoehorns a "Mad Minute" trope of checklists into each chapter, recognizing the term as the practice of covering the most essential items at the start of an officer's meeting with an asset. His alteration of the rubric to include longer-term thought pieces and placement at the end rather than the beginning of each section strains its meaning. To be fair, though, it might also reflect an attempt to capitalize on the success of *The One Minute Manager*, the seminal 1982 work that dispensed management advice in 60-second chunks.

What to make of the author's extensive use of baseball analogies? Forgive the pun, but it comes out of left field. The title or dust jacket offers no clue. Polymeropoulos notes in the text how his love of baseball has been on par with that for CIA and that the game has been a family affair, a shared passion with his grandfather carried over to a bond with his son. His son's adolescent adventures provide some of the stories, supplemented by episodes from the professionals. The sport hasn't featured so prominently in intelligence since the tale of Moe Berg, the major leaguer turned World War II spy. *Clarity* could have been titled *Sandlots, Spying, and the Secrets of Success*.

Polymeropoulos makes some convincing parallels between baseball and intelligence, noting that "Hitting .300 will keep you on the top of both professions." And his tale of a passing of the torch from a high school senior catcher to his freshman son helps set the scene for a chapter titled "Be a People Developer." But some of the examples are a bit more tenuous. Legendary all-time hits leader Pete Rose can be a model for many things, but it seems somewhat forced to compare his habit of daily batting practice with the need to adhere to a surveillance detection route (SDR) to determine if hostile surveillance is tracking a case officer en route to an asset meeting.

In "The Process Monkey" chapter, even though it contains the less-than-apt reference to Rose, Polymeropoulos showcases a strong operational example to drive home

one of his concepts. His title is meant to encapsulate the importance of sticking to fundamental processes. With the author on his way to a meeting to gain key foreign intelligence in a Middle East location, bad traffic delays his progress, and he wrestles with abbreviating the SDR to make it in time. He chooses not to cut corners; not running a proper SDR would put the individual's life in danger and risk blowing his own cover. Even though Washington would be disappointed that the valuable information would have to wait, he knows he made the right call. He is no slave to the rules and lauds creativity and flexibility, but relying on well-established guidance helps protect all parties and ensure both he and the asset can continue their relationship over the long term rather than risking it all for short-term gain. That said, while the guidance is sound, it is not a revelation; one can quibble over whether sticking to procedure really rises to the level of a "leadership" lesson, and the application of the term "monkey," usually a term associated with denigration, undercuts the message.

Notwithstanding the above criticisms, the author exceeds expectations in his treatment of the human aspects of espionage. Polymeropoulos cares about people. He believes that CIA has a long history of doing likewise, and his stories serve as a proxy for the larger organization. He expertly conveys the crucial personal elements of the espionage business in ways that few other nonfiction authors have captured, whether discussing the seriousness of assets putting their lives in the hands of case officer, the humorous elements of a bungled recruitment attempt, or the lengths the agency will go to for its officers' families. In the latter case, Polymeropoulos describes how, on the sidelines of an awards ceremony in the early 2000s, then-CIA Director George Tenet engaged in an extended private conversation with his father, in Greek, to address concerns about the son's career choice, given the father's strong opinions about CIA's support of the Greek junta decades earlier. That the CIA director would take the time to do that for an employee well down the organizational ladder spoke volumes about where he was employed.

"Band of Brothers" has a military connotation, but it aptly describes the Polymeropoulos view of CIA. When suffering from PTSD after returning from Iraq in 2003, for instance, he relays how a senior officer took care of him, his teammates, and their families by hosting a two-week retreat on Cape Cod, allowing for some valuable decompression and family bonding, in addition to

encouraging professional help. encouraging professional help. Notwithstanding later health challenges stemming from a possible anomalous health incident of his own,

his love of CIA and its people shines throughout *Clarity in Crisis*.



The reviewer: Mike R. is a member of CIA's History Staff.

Intelligence in Public Media

Sleeper Agent: The Atomic Spy in America Who Got Away

Ann Hagedorn (Simon & Schuster, 2021, Kindle edition) 259 pages, illustrations, portraits, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by J. E. Leonardson

Have you ever heard of an atomic spy named George Koval? Probably not, as he never achieved the notoriety of such major figures as Klaus Fuchs and the Rosenbergs. That's too bad because, as Ann Hagedorn's riveting biography of Koval shows, this Soviet intelligence officer not only played a significant role in stealing secrets from the Manhattan Project but slipped away and returned to the Soviet Union, where he lived to a ripe old age. *Sleeper Agent* provides a case study of what a determined service with talented officers can accomplish—midcentury Soviet espionage at its professional best.

Koval was born in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1913. His parents, Abram and Ethel, were Jewish immigrants from Czarist Russia who came to America to escape Russia's crushing anti-Semitism and build better lives for themselves. They also, not unusual for Russian Jews, believed in socialism and passed the secular faith to George and his two brothers. For his part, George was an excellent student, graduating high school at 15 and then enrolling at the University of Iowa's College of Engineering. There, as the Great Depression gathered force, he became active in communist politics. Meanwhile, Abram fell on hard times and, concerned by growing anti-Semitism in the United States, decided to take the family back to the USSR to settle in Birobidzhan, the administrative seat of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, the Soviet Far East. They arrived there in July 1932.

Birobidzhan was a miserable place, but George apparently worked hard enough that he won an award that enabled him to travel to Moscow, where he gained admission to the Mendeleev Institute (today the Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology of Russia). By then a Soviet citizen, Koval spent the purge years of the late thirties at Mendeleev, his faith in the Soviet system apparently undimmed as he excelled in his studies and married a fellow student. Graduating in 1939, he was immediately taken up by the GRU and trained to return to the United States where, with his native English and American mannerisms, Koval was to collect on military research into chemical and biological weapons. He arrived in San

Francisco in September 1940, and by January 1941 he was in New York City. Koval lived in true name though, of course, never mentioning his political activities in Iowa, years in the USSR, or Soviet citizenship.

In New York, Koval was handled by a GRU officer with an established network and, in the fall of 1941, enrolled in chemistry classes at Columbia University. By then, Moscow was aware of the nascent US atomic program and Columbia was at the cutting edge of not only chemistry but also physics. Koval's goal there, according to Hagedorn, was to "get to know the chairman of his department, who worked closely with the chairman of the Department of Physics, to learn about the breakthrough science surrounding him." Koval stayed at Columbia only long enough to make contacts and burnish his resumé and by early 1942, Hagedorn believes, may have expected to be recalled to Russia rather than be drafted and serve as an ordinary enlisted man in the US military. Instead, however, he remained in New York, working on war contracts at a small electronics company run by a GRU agent, until he was drafted into the US Army in February 1943.

Koval mixed lies and truth in his induction paperwork. He claimed his parents were dead (they were still alive and well in Birobidzhan), listed false jobs in Iowa and New York to cover his years in the USSR, and noted his Columbia coursework but, of course, made no mention of his Mendeleev degree, let alone his GRU training. The Army recognized his potential and after basic training placed him in a scientific and technical training program, which included engineering training at City College of New York. From there he was assigned in August 1944 to Oak Ridge, where enriched uranium was to be produced for the atomic bomb. Exactly how Koval was selected for Oak Ridge, says Hagedorn, has never quite been explained. She notes that some have seen the assignment as the result of some clever GRU machination but believes it far more likely that the army's bureaucracy simply made a sensible personnel decision. The one thing that is certain is that no one carried out more than the most cursory background check.

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Koval's job at Oak Ridge was to be a health physicist. These were the people, Hagedorn explains, who undertook a new type of work created by the bomb project—"measuring workers' tolerance to radiation, shielding exposure levels, inventing the monitoring instruments, and conducting chemistry lab tests." The job came with a top-secret clearance, access throughout the vast Oak Ridge complex, and close working relationships with the scientists on the bomb project. "So it was," writes Hagedorn, "that in the autumn of 1944, a Red Army spy was driving his US Army jeep daily across a swath of land in Tennessee at a crucial location in America's top-secret military project," while using his leave to meet his handlers in New York. Things only got better in June 1945, when Koval was transferred to be a health physicist in Dayton, Ohio, where polonium—the rare element used in the bomb's trigger—was produced at a facility operated by Monsanto.

There is little doubt that Koval was a successful collector. Citing GRU documents and histories, Hagedorn credits him with providing Moscow with details about the layouts of plants at Oak Ridge and Dayton, and methods for producing plutonium and polonium. This was "priceless information [that] eliminated certain time-consuming and costly experiments" the Soviets otherwise would have had to carry out for their bomb program. On top of that, Koval's information on health physics no doubt aided the Soviet effort, and his reporting also helped Moscow corroborate that of other atomic spies.

Alas, all good things must come to an end. Koval was discharged in February 1946 and, while an offer from Monsanto to stay on in Dayton meant that he had great professional and espionage opportunities, he knew better than to press his luck. With the urgency of the war now in the past, security checks were tightening, and the one for Monsanto no doubt would have found the lies Koval had told the Army. Added to that was the defection in Canada of GRU code clerk Igor Gouzenko in September 1945 and the start of the hunt for atomic spies, which meant growing risks every day he stayed in the United States. In October 1948, Koval packed his bags and by November was back in Moscow.

No hero's welcome awaited. Koval wrote a lengthy report for the GRU, but in the renewed paranoid, anti-Semitic atmosphere of postwar Stalinism, the service would not keep him. After his discharge from the Red Army

in July 1949, Koval returned to Mendeleev to work on a doctorate, which he received in 1952. Between being Jewish and unable to discuss his wartime work, however, Koval could not get a job; only after Stalin's death did the GRU pull strings to get him one at Mendeleev, where he taught chemistry until he retired in the late 1980s. Meanwhile, the FBI's espionage investigations ground on. In 1954, as part of the investigation of another suspect, the Bureau began looking for Koval and then uncovered the truth of his past and role. With Koval safe in Moscow, the investigation eventually petered out.

For more than 40 years, Koval taught and lived quietly, never saying anything about his wartime espionage. In 1999, however, he was retired, widowed, and—like so many Russians—broke, and so walked into the US Embassy in Moscow to ask about his eligibility for veteran's benefits. He turned out to be ineligible, but the GRU, most likely fearing the bad publicity of one of its wartime officers going begging to the Americans, dusted off his file, increased his pension, showered him with awards, and then wrote an official history of his case. Koval died in January 2006, honored if still somewhat obscure.

Sleeper Agent is an excellent intelligence biography. Given that Koval left such a vague trail, Hagedorn's main accomplishment has been to put the story together—her notes show deep research in both the Russian sources and FBI files—while still acknowledging where gaps remain and, as with the question of how Koval was assigned to Oak Ridge, distinguishing between fact and speculation. A journalist by training and author of several other books on history and current affairs, Hagedorn also is a skilled writer and her prose is clear and concise, which makes *Sleeper Agent* a pleasure to read. The only glaring flaw in the book is its title. Koval was not a "sleeper agent," a term so overused as to have lost almost all its meaning, but, rather, a serving intelligence officer.

It is hard to read *Sleeper Agent* without respecting the GRU's accomplishment. It was not just a question of spotting and training the right man for the job of overseas scientific and technical collection, but also of having the infrastructure in place to support him. Hagedorn's description of the GRU network in New York shows how well the Soviets prepared for opportunities that might come years in the future. It is a textbook case of the benefits of long-term thinking and patience for intelligence operations.

That said, the man at the center of *Sleeper Agent* remains a cipher. No doubt because so many of her sources are official files and the participants are long dead, Hagedorn gives little sense of Koval as a person. He was exceptionally intelligent, to be sure, but what are we to make of a man who, having grown up in the United States and then returned there for eight years, still remained loyal not just to the ideals of socialism, but to Stalinism? Did living through the Terror while he was at Mendeleev not have any effect on him? Did he carry out his mission and then return to Moscow out of loyalty to his youthful ideals or, perhaps, because he knew what would happen to

his parents, siblings, and wife if he did not? Did Koval, an American and a Jew who had spent years abroad, ever in his long life, think about the ironies of his parents' efforts to escape anti-Semitism or how lucky he was not to have been shot when he returned to Moscow? Did he never have any misgivings or doubts? Unfortunately, we will never know.

These are minor quibbles, however. For anyone interested in the history of Soviet and Russian intelligence, the atomic espionage cases, or just a well-written spy story, *Sleeper Agent* is a solid choice.



The reviewer: J. E. Leonardson is the pen name of a CIA intelligence analyst and a frequent contributor.

Intelligence in Public Media

Agents of Influence: Britain's Secret Intelligence War against the IRA

Aaron Edwards (Merrion Press, 2021), 291 pages, photographs, endnotes, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by Joseph W. Gartin

In Liam O'Flaherty's 1925 novel *The Informer*, set in the aftermath of Ireland's civil war, Gypo Nolan has a terrible, not well-kept secret: he has sold out his friend—a fellow revolutionary and wanted man—to the police for £20. It is fair to say that Gypo's security practices are poor, and he quickly falls under suspicion after flashing his money in Dublin's poorer quarters. Every outlawed organization fears one thing the most: the informer who can bring the movement to ruin. The commandant vows to hunt him down. "Good God! An informer is the great danger. Every man's hand is against me. It's only fear that protects me. I must make an example of this fellow."^a So he does. Gypo is betrayed by his own Judas and is shot dead outside the flophouse where he had taken refuge.

Fifty years on, such scenes of betrayal, suspicion, and retribution would play out repeatedly during the Troubles, the grimly understated name for the period (roughly 1968–98) that began with a civil rights movement and devolved into a bitter political and sectarian divide that killed more than 3,500 people in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, England, and continental Europe. More than two decades after most of the violence ended in 1998, scholars, combatants, and survivors are still trying to make sense of a conflict that was fought in the streets and in the shadows.

Aaron Edwards, a professor of history at the British military academy and an expert on the Troubles, aims to cast some light into the corners of the shadow war: "*Agents of Influence* is chiefly concerned with learning the lessons of our secret past in Northern Ireland." (xix) Edwards draws out the differing perspectives of the

three groups charged with defeating the Provincial Irish Republican Army (PIRA, or commonly the IRA).^b One prevalent view among the British military and ruling elite had Northern Ireland as an extension of the lessons learned in the unraveling of Britain's colonial empire in places like Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus, and Yemen. Others, especially from the intelligence services, saw Northern Ireland as akin to the clash between Western democracies and Soviet communism to be combated through steady influence and careful espionage. And a third group, mostly comprising the Royal Ulster Constabulary and its Special Branch, viewed the IRA as a problem to be solved through aggressive policing, much like fighting organized crime. The challenges London faced well into the 1990s in coordinating and deconflicting these efforts, despite having a common goal and bureaucratic structures in place since at least 1980, (xvi) will resonate with US intelligence practitioners still grappling with Intelligence Community integration 20 years after 9/11.

In *Agents of Influence*, Edwards has two fundamental theses: British intelligence was engaged in a secret intelligence war against the IRA, and that war succeeded in defeating the IRA and other Republican terrorist groups.^c The former is true mostly by degree, and a *Studies* reader might be forgiven for asking if "Secret" in the title was an editor's idea. Protecting specific operations, sources, and methods was vital contemporaneously and in some cases even today, especially concealing the identity of the modern-day Gypo Nolans who were informing on IRA plans. But like the US response to 9/11, much of Britain's "secret" war against the IRA (and its belated effort against loyalist terrorists) (204) played out in the open: high-level

a. Liam O'Flaherty, *The Informer* (Wolfhound Press reprint, 2001), 97.

b. For most of the Troubles, British officials tended to regard loyalist terrorism as simply reactive and generally overlooked, and sometimes covered up, connections between the members of the army, police, and loyalist terrorist groups. See Anne Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Ireland* (Mercier Press, 2013).

c. Edwards sidesteps what could have been his first question: Whether better intelligence and more adroit leadership by London in the mid-to-late 1960s to end the Northern state's systemic and often violent discrimination against its Catholic population might have forestalled the Troubles altogether. London's poor intelligence picture of Northern Ireland in the late 1960s and early 1970s is readily clear in now-declassified Joint Intelligence Committee deliberations. See inter alia Robert Dover and Michael S. Goodman, *Learning from the Secret Past: Cases in British Intelligence History* (Georgetown University Press, 2011), which Edwards also cites in his bibliography.

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appointments of counterterrorism coordinators, strategy announcements, memoirs, press conferences and speeches, public bureaucratic squabbles, the vast and visible surveillance infrastructure, and most of all the terrible toll playing out in the streets, homes, and pubs.

Edwards's contention that the sustained intelligence pressure on the IRA—driven by technical collection, informers and agents of influence, covert action, and judicial judo—defeated Republican terrorism is much less contestable. He draws on government records, prior scholarship, and interviews to detail how by the early-to-mid-1990s, after some two decades of on-and-off conflict, the IRA and its offshoots were still lethal but constrained by intelligence-driven counterterrorism efforts that disrupted attacks and stemmed the flow of recruits, funding, and weapons. Senior IRA leaders knew they had a problem, but often no one was watching the watchers. Edwards quotes former IRA internal security chief Brendan Hughes: “The Army, the IRA, always had a problem with informers; there were always informers around—low-level informants, high-level informants—but by that stage, by the late 1980s, there was an awful sense of mistrust.” (189)

Edwards carefully sifts the documentary evidence, much of it recently declassified, and interviews, many self-serving, to begin teasing apart some of the most tangled mysteries of the Troubles. High-level informers within the IRA often gave London the ability to disrupt attacks, uncover bombmaking materials and weapons caches, and capture or kill IRA volunteers. One of these

sources, Freddie Scappaticci (codenamed Stakeknife by his military intelligence handlers) was himself a mole hunter in the IRA; it was as if the KGB had recruited CIA spy hunter James Angleton.^a “The more the IRA tried to enforce some counterintelligence tradecraft, the more they were disrupted,” notes another recent account of Scappaticci's efforts to play both sides.^b

Edwards treads with admirable caution around claims and counterclaims involving British intelligence's long and complicated relationship with senior Republican leaders, including senior IRA commander Martin McGuinness (who died in 2017) and former Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams. Intelligence officers know that two contradictory things can be true at once: counterterrorism agencies wanted them dead and needed them alive. British intelligence services played a key role in facilitating the numerous secret contacts between IRA and Sinn Fein leaders, British and Irish officials, and intermediaries like Brendan Duddy (209) that started almost as soon as the Troubles began. The importance of these back channels grew steadily through the early 1990s despite countless setbacks as emissaries probed for opportunities amid the carnage. They would be instrumental in achieving the Good Friday Agreement and the subsequent power-sharing agreement ratified in 2007.

Agents of Influence is an important contribution to understanding Britain's secret and not-so-secret war against the IRA. Intelligence was not the only factor that helped end the Troubles, but Edwards makes clear it was a significant one.



The reviewer: Joseph W. Gartin is managing editor of *Studies in Intelligence*. He retired from active CIA service as the agency's chief learning officer.

a. Scappaticci, who is in hiding, denies the allegation.

b. James Harkin, “Unmasking Stakeknife: the most notorious double agent in British history,” *GQ* (United Kingdom edition), November 1, 2020

Intelligence in Public Media

Intelligent Analysis: How To Defeat Uncertainty in High-Stakes Decisions

Jay Grusin with Steve Lindo (Intelligent Risk Management Publications, 2021), 258 pages, graphics, appendices.

Reviewed by Joseph W. Gartin

Intelligence, once the province of governments working with unique information gathered at great risk and expense, has in the past few decades become more commonplace in the public sphere. The reasons are multiple and the subject of considerable attention in these pages, among them advances in information technology, the rise of big data and in turn market-driven analytics, and the privatization of intelligence gathering-systems like ubiquitous technical surveillance (geolocation and facial recognition, for example) and satellite reconnaissance.

Concurrent with the democratization and commodification of intelligence collection capabilities has been the emergence of nongovernmental intelligence analysis. This has spun well beyond the traditional realm of business intelligence—such as understanding a competitor’s strategy or conducting due diligence before a merger—to assessing strategic risks, identifying terrorist and insider threats, spotting supply-chain vulnerabilities, and defending against cyber attacks. A quick spin through LinkedIn, Twitter, ClearanceJobs.com, and other social media will turn up dozens of individuals or companies offering to meet the demand, including many former Intelligence Community officers ready to lend their expertise.

Intelligent Analysis takes a slightly different tack, one signaled by the change of intelligence from noun to adjective. Jay Grusin and Steve Lindo argue that beyond risk management and threat mitigation, the analytic processes that have been developed within the US IC should have wider use in the business world. “This book,” they write, “uses *Intelligent Analysis* to signal a change in the narrative, incorporating important changes in how some of the concepts are framed, explained, and applied in exercises, while keeping the process intact.” (12)

Grusin and Lindo make for a compelling collaboration. Grusin, the principal author, is a former CIA analyst and manager, and after retiring from CIA in 2008 he served for many years as an instructor at CIA’s Sherman

Kent School for Intelligence Analysis. Lindo is a financial risk manager with more than 30 years of experience in his field. Together they argue that the conceptual model for the intelligence cycle—requirements, collection, analysis, etc.—and the standards used to evaluate analysis can be used in many lines of work. Decision advantage, as former CIA and NSA director Michael Hayden termed it, has universal applicability where variables are many and stakes are high.

Intelligent Analysis differs from many familiar textbooks on intelligence, like *Analyzing Intelligence* or *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*,^a in its brisk presentation and focus on application rather than theory or history. Here Grusin’s experience as an intelligence educator for practitioners (and former school board member) comes through. In 11 chapters of about 20 pages each, readers are presented with main points, key takeaways, and learning objectives.

For example, in chapter 5, the discussion of key intelligence questions (KIQs) promises that at the end of the chapter analysts will be better able to explain the significance of the KIQs and understand the importance of collaborating with the intended audience to develop a precise KIQ. (89) Grusin and Lindo then walk through a bit of theory about the need for collaboration between the expert and the intended customer, establish the importance of open-ended questions, and highlight the need for analytic objectivity. Finally, a set of short exercises and worksheets guides readers through the process of getting KIQs right. (101) A helpful set of appendices explains key terms and acronyms along with an interesting case study of Target Corporation’s disastrous foray into the Canadian retail market that shows how faulty key assumptions doomed the endeavor from the beginning.

As a handy reminder of fundamentals presented in classes like CIA’s Career Analyst Program or DIA’s foundational Professional Analyst Career Education,

a. Roger George and James Bruce, eds., *Analyzing Intelligence: National Security Practitioners’ Perspectives* (Georgetown University Press, 2014, 2nd edition.); Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy* (CQ Press, 2021, 8th edition)

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Intelligent Analysis is a worthwhile addition to the intelligence practitioner's bookshelf. Beyond the IC—the authors' intended audience—*Intelligent Analysis* is an accessible and concise examination of tools and techniques

that could readily form the basis of an in-house training program or help busy executives think their way through hard problem.



The reviewer: Joseph W. Gartin is managing editor of *Studies in Intelligence*. He retired from active CIA service as the agency's chief learning officer.

Intelligence in Public Media

3-chung sogisil ui amho: chon Yongguk chujae Pukhan kongsa Thae Yong Ho ui chungon (Password of the Three-Story Secretariat: Testimony of Thae Yong Ho, Former Minister of the North Korean Embassy in Britain)

Thae Yong Ho (Kiparang, 2018) 542 pages, illustrations.

Reviewed by Stephen C. Mercado

Thae Yong Ho,^a minister of the embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) when he defected in 2016 with his family to the Republic of Korea (ROK), wrote after his intelligence investigation in Seoul a book that sold well and became the latest account of an elite defector to offer insights to analysts and others interested in Korean affairs.

In publishing his tale, Thae has joined a number of previous standouts in defector literature:

- Sin Sang Ok (Shin Sang-ok) a prominent ROK film director, and his wife, the movie star Choe Un Hui (Choi Eun-hee), following their separate 1978 abductions to the DPRK and subsequent Pyongyang film careers, escaped their minders at an Austrian film festival in 1986. Their account of their years in Pyongyang was an early open source of information on the character of leader Kim Jong Il, his love of cinema, and developments in the DPRK film industry.^b
- Kim Hyon Sik, a professor of Russian with ties to the ruling Kim clan, defected in 1992 from Moscow. His subsequent book included inside information on the DPRK and revealing details on how the ROK Agency

for National Security Planning (NSP) had targeted, pitched, and exfiltrated him from the Soviet Union.^c

- Hwang Jang Yop, widely credited as being the “father” of Pyongyang’s political ideology of Juche, wrote following his 1997 defection an autobiography that included details of political developments in Pyongyang under Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.^d
- Fujimoto Kenji, Japanese sushi chef to Kim Jong Il and his family, published several books following his 2001 defection with information ranging from ground photographs of Kim’s country estates to firsthand information on the boyhood character of present leader Kim Jong Un.^e

Thae Yong Ho’s book is an excellent addition to this body of literature in that it offers credible insights while largely avoiding claims that would fall outside the expected knowledge of a DPRK diplomat. Thae recounts his upbringing, education, and career, thereby giving us many details of Pyongyang’s foreign policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and the structure, purposes, and exploitation of the DPRK’s system of education in foreign languages.

a. Korean, Japanese, and Chinese names in this review appear in traditional order, with surname preceding given name. Korean names are written according to Pyongyang’s variation on the standard McCune-Reischauer system. In some cases, Seoul’s variants follow between parentheses. The following: Korean book titles in this review are transliterated according to the McCune-Reischauer standard used by the Library of Congress and university libraries in their catalogs, minus the diacritical marks.

b. Choe Un Hui, Sin Sang Ok. *Kim Chong-il wangguk* (The Kingdom of King Jong Il) (Tonga Ilbosa, 1988). Each later wrote an autobiography with more details of their time in Pyongyang. Choe Un Hui, *Choe Un-hui ui kobaek* (Confessions of Choe Un Hui) (Random House Korea, 2007). Sin Sang Ok, *Nan, yonghwa yotta* (I Was Film) (Random House Korea, 2007).

c. Kim Hyon Sik. *Na nun 21-segi inyom ui yumongmin* (I Am a 21st-Century Nomad of Principle) (Kimyongsa, 2007). The NSP succeeded the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) and preceded today’s National Intelligence Service (NIS) as the leading ROK intelligence organization.

d. Hwang Jang Yop, *Na nun yoksa ui chilli rul poatta* (I Saw the Truth of History) (Hanul, 1999).

e. Fujimoto Kenji. *Kin Seinichi no ryorinin* (Kim Jong Il’s Chef) (Fusosha, 2003), *Kin Seinichi no shiseikatsu* (Kim Jong Il’s Private Life) (Fusosha, 2004), and *Kaku to onna wo aishita shogun-sama* (The General Who Loved Nuclear Weapons and Women) (Shogakukan, 2009). Perhaps the only defector from the Kim clan’s inner circle to go back to the DPRK, Fujimoto wrote of his 2012 return to Pyongyang, reunion with Kim Jong Un, introduction to spouse Ri Sol Ju, and the dissension that he witnessed in the presence of the new leader. See Fujimoto Kenji. *Hikisakareta yakusoku* (A Promise Torn Apart) (Kodansha, 2012).

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Thae was born in 1962 in Pyongyang to a family that, while relatively comfortable, was not in the cadre class of families that enjoyed privileges from their connections to the Kim clan or to the partisans who had fought under Kim Il Sung against the Japanese prior to Korea's liberation in 1945. At the end of elementary school, a key moment in an education system where middle school largely determines a child's future as an adult, Thae's ambitious mother overrode her husband's doubts in 1974 and sent her son to the Pyongyang Foreign Language Institute (PFLI)^a to specialize in English. (482) Two years later, Pyongyang sent him as part of a group to learn English in China, leading in 1978 to the placement of Thae and his classmates in a middle school attached to the Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU). Pyongyang recalled them short of graduation in 1980 in reaction to Beijing's reforms and criticism of Mao Zedong in the years after his death in 1976. (429)

In 1980, Thae entered Pyongyang's University of International Relations (UIR). Most of his classmates were older, having completed their military service before enrollment, but Thae was part of a group from PFLI and regional language schools that started immediately after senior middle school. (429) At UIR, in addition to courses in international law and other standard academic courses, students prepared for careers as Pyongyang's "diplomatic warriors" in "war without the sound of gunfire" by reading of the exploits of the Soviet intelligence officer Richard Sorge and the intelligence operatives of the Imperial Japanese Army's Nakano School in books that Kim Jong Il had personally donated. UIR instructors urged their students to sacrifice themselves for the Fatherland, as intelligence officers of the Nakano School had done for Japan.^b (436) On graduating UIR in 1984, Thae returned to Beijing for another four years at BFSU before receiving orders in 1988 for the MFA Department of European Affairs.

Thae began his diplomatic career at the Cold War's end. Within a few years, the Berlin Wall fell; Moscow's

Eastern Bloc collapsed; the Soviet Union disappeared; and both Beijing and Moscow established full diplomatic relations with Seoul. The DPRK—failing to refashion its diplomacy and economy quickly enough for the new times—descended into isolation, economic devastation, and widespread famine. Pyongyang's diplomats abroad worked desperately, at times illegally, to secure hard currency, food, and other aid for the regime. Thae, at one point in his time working at the DPRK embassy in Denmark (1996–98), scored a major triumph in obtaining a donation of 3,200 tons of feta cheese from a Danish manufacturer for his famished countrymen. (488)

From his success in Denmark, Thae went to work at the embassy in Sweden (1998–2000). Following a stint from 2000 to 2004 in the MFA's Department of European Affairs, where he was responsible for Britain and northern Europe, Thae served at the embassy in Britain from 2004 to 2008 as counselor. After serving in Pyongyang from 2008 to 2013 as vice director of the Department of European Affairs, Thae returned to London in April 2013 as minister, the embassy's second position.

Fluent in English and experienced in British affairs, Thae worked on tasks both great and small. As such, he was part of the delegation that traveled to London for the signing in December 2000 of the document establishing relations between Britain and the DPRK.^c In 2015, he showed Kim Jong Chol, older brother of Pyongyang's incumbent leader Kim Jong Un, the sights around London and took the enthusiastic fan of guitar legend Eric Clapton to two concerts in what was a secret trip before the ever-alert Japanese press spotted him on the first night. (394)

Thae defected with his wife and children from London to Seoul in 2016, apparently driven by personal ambition, a strong will, fear of punishment, and disapproval of the regime he had served as a diplomat for nearly 30 years. Seeking advantage for his family, Thae had arranged his life and bent or broken the rules multiple times to have both his sons with him on overseas assignments and to

a. In addition to the PFLI, also known as the Pyongyang Foreign Languages School, Thae refers to sister schools in Chongjin, Hamhung, and Sinuiju. The schools feature six-year programs that train students in foreign languages during the equivalent of the junior and senior high school years of US students.

b. Kim Jong Il, relaxing one day with Fujimoto on a firing range, lauded his chef's marksmanship as worthy of an operative of the Nakano School. See Fujimoto, *Kin Seinichi no ryorinin*, 97. For a history of the Nakano School, see my *Shadow Warriors of Nakano* (Potomac Books, 2002).

c. James Hoare, Britain's first charge d'affaires in Pyongyang, engaged Thae for years in the establishment of diplomatic relations. See James E. Hoare and Susan Pares. *North Korea in the 21st Century: An Interpretive Guide* (Global Oriental, 2005).

educate them in Europe.^a Many of his friends and colleagues had suffered in the course of Pyongyang's many purges. His father-in-law, a general, was close to Jang Song Thaek (145), a connection that must have posed a threat to the Thae family's future after Kim Jong Un had Jang executed in December 2013. When Thae managed to bring his older son from Pyongyang to London in March the following year to join the rest of the family, he was at that point in a position to defect. (411)

Thae omits from his book all details of his actual defection, only mentioning briefly that the NIS interrogated him until the end of December 2016. (15) Nor does he dwell on his brief employment as a researcher with the NIS-affiliated Institute for National Security Strategy (INSS).^b

What the author does give us in this book are credible insights into areas within his purview. One of Pyongyang's leading diplomats for British affairs, Thae writes of Kim Jong Il seeking diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom to escape diplomatic isolation and deter attack from the United States. Thae describes how Pyongyang saw establishing diplomatic relations with London as part of a larger effort to shift from its previous policy of global revolution and focus on the non-aligned movement to one of deterring a US military attack by greater engagement with Europe. (66) Particularly interesting is Kim's view that British participation had been

essential to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and that diplomatic ties with Britain lessened the odds of the United States striking North Korea. Also, once Pyongyang established its embassy in London, DPRK diplomats engaged British officials and experts outside the government, putting Pyongyang's points across and eliciting British views on developments in Washington. (238)

Another area of insight is the MFA itself. Thae gives various details regarding the ministry, from training to regulations to its various components. Then there is the field of education in foreign languages, where Thae offers a myriad of details, such as President Hafez al-Assad making available training in Arabic in Syria to North Korean students in 1974 in appreciation for DPRK military support. (418) We learn that PFLI students of English in the author's student days were learning from British textbooks and watching such films as *Mary Poppins* and *The Sound of Music*. (488) From Thae, we read that students learn foreign languages in preparation for operations in intelligence as well as in diplomacy.^c

Books from defectors provide insights and a wealth of details on Korean affairs. Together with publications by foreigners with firsthand knowledge of the DPRK and the daily stream of journalism in and beyond the Korean Peninsula, they are a key tributary of the river of open sources on Pyongyang matters.



The reviewer: Stephen C. Mercado is a retired CIA open source officer. He enjoys reading intelligence literature in several languages.

a. Thae and his wife had wished to have their second child three years after the first one but waited seven years in order to bring them both overseas with them under the regulations for the schooling of the young children of diplomats in Pyongyang. Several years later, flouting a regulation that required flying from Beijing to his new post in London, Thae decided to broaden his family's horizons with a leisurely transcontinental train trip, including stops in Warsaw, Berlin, and Paris, before reaching the British capital.

b. Thae resigned from the INSS in May 2018, days after this book became a best seller. See "High-Profile Defector Quits State-Sponsored Job" (*Korea Joong Ang Daily*, May 24, 2018, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3048523>). Still ambitious and willful, Thae then ran for public office, winning a seat from Seoul in the National Assembly in 2020.

c. Kim Hyon Hui, one of the two operatives implicated in the DPRK's 1987 bombing of Korean Air Flight 858, had been one year ahead of Thae at PFLI before later graduating from the Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies (PUFS) as a specialist in Japanese.

Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf—December 2021

Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake*

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* Unless otherwise noted at the end of a review, all have been written by Hayden Peake.

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

Current Issues

The Chinese Invasion Threat: Taiwan's Defense and American Strategy in Asia by Ian Easton, (Eastbridge Books, 2019), 383 pages, map, bibliography.

The author, who has extensive background in Asian defense matters, has produced a remarkably cogent, richly researched, and highly readable study of potential invasion of Taiwan by the People's Republic of China. Using largely open-source materials from the PRC and Taiwan, he has graphically outlined the planning, preparation, and execution scenarios of both protagonists.

For the practitioners of the arcane, complex, and often overlooked science of operational war planning, this book is essential reading since it lays out in detail the myriad considerations needed to formulate both offensive and defensive war plans in regard to Taiwan. Easton provides everything—from seasonal and maritime weather conditions and potential landing areas to key inland terrain features and timelines for unit embarkation locations and transit times. The author even identifies the likely PLA units for the invasion and how and where they might be employed, as well as the forces on Taiwan that would respond. The book examines how the PLA might conduct an invasion, the various and significant problems it would have to overcome to have a reasonable chance for success, and how a land campaign might be fought once the PLA had successfully landed its forces ashore.

Of significant importance to the United States, the book provides information on the key indicators for an invasion and how these indicators would provide both the United States and Taiwan with at least 30 days, and more likely 60 days, of warning, which means the PLA could not achieve strategic surprise. The book also clearly shows that Taiwan has a detailed understanding of how the PLA might attempt an amphibious invasion and the most likely targets for PLA forces both before and after a landing is attempted. This clarity facilitates Taiwan's defense.

In the final chapter, the author provides a rather low-cost solution to Taiwan's defense, one that would provide a menu of options that might preclude the need for US active engagement in Taiwan's defense. Most of these actions involve US intelligence and surveillance, as well as the sale of critical US military equipment. Many readers will probably disagree with some of Easton's solutions, but they will find ample food for thought on how best to deter a PRC invasion of Taiwan.

The reviewer: Col. Andrew R. Finlayson, USMC (Ret.). As a Marine officer he led a Provincial Reconnaissance Unit as part of the Phoenix Program in Vietnam during 1969–70. See *Studies in Intelligence* 51, no. 2 (June 2007).

General

Spy Sites of Philadelphia: A Guide to the Region's Secret History, Second Edition, by H. Keith Melton, Robert Wallace with Henry R. Schlesinger. (Georgetown University Press, 2021) 259 pages, bibliography, appendices, photos, index.

With 118 additional pages, more photos, new material in many entries, and a different publisher, this edition of *Spy Sites of Philadelphia* is a great improvement over its predecessor published in 2013 by the mysterious Foreign Excellent Trenchcoat Society.

Some of the new entries are significant for multiple reasons. For example, Quartermaster General (there was no G-2 in those days) Thomas Mifflin, was appointed by

George Washington to oversee the creation of stay-behind networks of agents when the Yanks had to evacuate Philadelphia. He would go on to sign the Constitution and become the first governor of Pennsylvania.

The case of sculptress Patricia Wright is of interest for different reasons. She had contacts with Hercules Mulligan the New York City tailor and Continental Army agent recommended by Alexander Hamilton. With the

help of Benjamin Franklin, she left her Philadelphia home and moved to London where she spied for Washington.

Turning to the Civil War era, *Spy Sites of Philadelphia* documents the 1860 test-flight from Philadelphia of balloonist Thaddeus Lowe. He would go on to observe and telegraph Civil War battlefields from the air for the Union army.

Another example concerns Philadelphia bar owner, distiller, and supporter of Irish independence, Joseph McGarrity. The Germans tried to recruit him during WWI to sabotage British shipping, among other targets. *Spy Sites of Philadelphia* tells how it turned out.

More recently, Philadelphia was the boyhood home of Samuel Cummings, who the authors call “the cheerful merchant of death.” Cummings joined CIA in 1950 and later became a successful arms dealer with a warehouse in Alexandria, Virginia, which was only recently demolished.

The appendices provide maps of Philadelphia that indicate where the sites discussed are located.

For those interested in Philadelphia espionage history, *Spy Sites of Philadelphia* is a real treasure.

Historical

The Anatomy of a Spy: A History of Espionage and Betrayal, by Michael Smith. (Arcade Publishing, 2020) 326 pages, chapter endnotes, glossary, index.

The primary title of this book is suggestive of a biological investigation of a particular spy. But that is not what the book is about, as the first chapter quickly makes clear by its attention to motivations for spying. Although intelligence services have staff psychologists to help deal with that topic, *The Anatomy of a Spy* takes a more practical, intuitive approach.

Author Michael Smith has written several books on intelligence, including a history of MI6. *Anatomy of a Spy* draws on his writings, his service in British military intelligence, and interviews with intelligence officers in various services. He begins by raising some fundamental questions that influence all agent–case officer relationships: Why are agents prepared to put their lives and their loved ones at risk in order to collect intelligence, often for a country to which they have no natural allegiance? How do intelligence services induce ordinary men and women to spy for them? How do they ensure agents will do what is asked and not betray their handlers? (8) Then he identifies motivations that experience has shown can help answer these questions: sexual relationships, money, patriotism, adventurers (fantasists and psychopaths), revenge, the right thing to do, and the unwitting agent. *Anatomy of a Spy* devotes a chapter to each topic.

While many of the examples given in each chapter are well known, Smith does include some that are not mentioned frequently. For example Paul Fidrmuc (Ostro),

the WWII Double Cross agent, whom he places in the adventurer-fantast category. Unlike the respected Garbo, who created fantasy agents for a good purpose, Fidrmuc, according to Smith, “was completely unscrupulous.” (145) His case is one of many that support Smith’s contention that more than one motivation can be involved in a case, successively or simultaneously. The Ames and Hanssen cases are given as examples of the latter.

The lack of source notes is a bit of a problem. While a list of sources is provided at the end of each chapter, they are not cross-referenced to the text, making it unclear which statement or statements they support. For example, Smith quotes Ames as telling the BBC that he “discovered” that Oleg Gordievsky was the KGB source of material provided by MI6 to the CIA. The presumption is that he is the one who also alerted the KGB, which then recalled Gordievsky to Moscow. A specific source in these instances would have been helpful.

Smith places Edward Snowden in the “unwitting agents” category because it remains unclear, at least to some, that he knew the SVR and the Chinese would acquire his stolen secrets. Kim Philby also plays a role in the category because he sent unwitting agents to their deaths from Turkey.

The Anatomy Of A Spy concludes there is no single motivation that answers the question, why do spies spy, and

“no single reason for betrayal.” (245) The narrative

supports this view while providing some interesting reading. Overall, a positive contribution.^a

Double Crossed: The Missionaries Who Spied for the United States During the Second World War, by Matthew Avery Sutton. (Basic Books, 2019) 401 pages, endnotes, photos, index.

Washington State University history professor Matthew Sutton begins *Double Crossed* with a story about William Eddy, a multilingual World War I Marine veteran who “became a missionary” after the war. (1) When a new world war appeared imminent, he rejoined the Marines as a lieutenant colonel and was sent to Cairo as the naval attaché. After Pearl Harbor, William Donovan, an “Irishman who had gone from marine, to lawyer . . . to spymaster,” (1) recruited Eddy into the OSS. He was, Sutton asserts, “exactly the kind of person Donovan needed . . . not to share the love of Christ, but to orchestrate assassination plots, and foment uprisings.” (59)

Putting aside the fact that Donovan was in the Army, not the Marines, Sutton’s claims that Eddy “became a missionary” or “thought of himself as a missionary” (61) will surprise those familiar with OSS history since those assertions are not made elsewhere. Not in Eddy’s *New York Times* obituary, or in descriptions of his career in other books—not even in Thomas Lippman’s biography of Eddy. Now it is true, as Lippman points out, that Eddy’s parents were missionaries in what is now Syria-Lebanon. It is also true that Eddy had a PhD in English literature from Princeton, was fluent in Arabic, studied the Koran, and taught in the English Department of the American University in Cairo from 1923 to 1928. Returning to the United States the same year he accepted a position at Dartmouth teaching English before becoming president of Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

Sutton’s assessment of Eddy is important because the central theme of *Double Crossed* is that “dozens of missionaries, missionary executives, priests, religious activists, and at least one rabbi, worked for the OSS,” a fact that Donovan “intentionally hid.” (3–4) He goes on to amplify the point saying, “OSS holy spooks fought to implement FDR’s religious ideals.” In particular he states that dozens of missionaries worked “in the Research and Analysis Branch of OSS.” (8) It is a doubtful proposition as they go unnamed. More broadly, in a fit of conjecture

typical of Sutton throughout the book, he writes that the “OSS religious activists believed that expanding American power and influence would enhance their efforts to build the kingdom of God around the globe.” (10) Since no sources are provided for these avowals, one must look to the rest of the book for substantiation. That exercise was not fruitful.

In fact, *Double Crossed* deals primarily with four officers who served mainly in the field, though he adds some detail on their postwar careers. In addition to Eddy, there is John Birch a missionary in China, fluent in Mandarin. Birch volunteered for duty in the US Army, aided the downed air crews after the Doolittle Raid, and served on General Chennault’s intelligence staff until 1944, when he was unwillingly transferred to OSS, where he performed well. He was later captured by the Chinese communists and executed.

Steven Penrose, recommended to OSS by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, was a missionary executive who recruited missionaries, among others, for OSS. While rising to senior managerial positions he retained his interest in Middle East issues.

Stewart Herman, a prewar pastor in Berlin, repatriated with George Kennan, was recommended to OSS by John Foster Dulles. He would be involved with plans for the invasion, but he later resigned because he felt OSS was not handling the “German angle” well. (218)

The *Double Crossed* narrative views the OSS intelligence operations through a religious lens. Moreover, it strives hard to make the case that religion was a driving factor in OSS personnel recruiting and operations as opposed to operational necessity. But the facts presented support an equally plausible theory: that men who spoke foreign languages, had proficiency overseas, were patriotic and coincidentally had religious experience made good intelligence officer candidates.

a. Readers with an interest in motivations for spying may visit CIA psychologist Dr. Ursula Wilder’s unclassified treatment of this topic in “Why Spy? The Psychology of Espionage and Leaking in the Digital Age,” in *Studies in Intelligence* 61, no. 2 (June 2017).

Sutton's final chapter summarizes the strict current executive policies that limit CIA recruitment of religious personnel as agents, a practice he wishes were otherwise,

perhaps for religious reasons. Were the religious portions of the narrative removed from *Double Crossed* nothing new would be left.

Ian Fleming's Inspiration: The Truth Behind the Books, by Edward Abel Smith. (Pen & Sword, 2020) 205 pages, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

Ian Fleming was dismissed from Eton for a sexual encounter, then from Sandhurst when he caught gonorrhea. When he failed the Foreign Office exam, scoring 20 percent on his English test, his mother arranged employment with the Reuters News Agency for a starting salary of £150 a year. An assignment to Moscow earned him good marks as he polished his writing skills, which served him well as a naval officer during World War II. His James Bond books and films have generated more than \$7 billion to date. (ix)

Author Edward Abel Smith became a James Bond fan watching the films. But only after reading the Bond books, short stories, and Fleming biographies did he appreciate that many of Bond's eccentricities and penchants were possessed by Fleming himself. These features are examined in *Ian Fleming's Inspiration*.

Each chapter of the book is named after a Bond novel or short story. But while chapter 1 is titled "Casino Royal" after Fleming's first novel, succeeding chapters are arranged chronologically according to Fleming's life, not the publication date of the book whose titles appear as chapter titles.

Common to many of them, Bond mirrors Fleming's passion for fast cars, fine food and drink, travel, gambling, and glamorous women. In the telling, Smith also explains the source of names associated with Bond. For example, Goldeneye (the name of his Jamaican home and a wartime operation), M (the head of the British Secret Service), Bond's codename 007 (18), and Octopussy. (120)

Although not a full biography, Smith does comment on Fleming's family connections, famous people he encountered, and his secret trip to Moscow for *The Times*. (10) Of equal interest is how Fleming joined naval intelligence as an officer without prior service, (16) the nature of his wartime postings, and when he first thought of writing a novel. Smith usually includes a comment on the origins of the novel discussed. For example, *From Russia With Love*, the book that made SMERSH popular, is linked to Fleming's wartime experience with Enigma and code-breaking. (40)

For James Bond lovers, *Ian Fleming's Inspiration* is informative, documented, and a reading pleasure.

Nixon's FBI: Hoover, Watergate, and a Bureau in Crisis, by Melissa Graves. (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2020) 246 pages, end of chapter notes, bibliography, index.

In *Nixon's FBI*, lawyer/historian Melissa Graves, an assistant professor of intelligence and security studies at The Citadel, analyzes two principal issues. The first challenges the conventional wisdom that *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein were, with Deep Throat's help, responsible for the demise of the Nixon presidency. The second concerns the nature of the proper relationship between the Bureau and Nixon.

Professor Graves does not spend a great deal of time with Woodward and Bernstein's role, which she grants did keep an interested public informed. She does discuss Mark Felt's contributions as Deep Throat before asking

the perceptive question: Where did Felt get the details that he leaked? He didn't do any investigative fieldwork. He, and thus Woodward and Bernstein and any other Bureau sources they had, were dependent on the case agent reports. The case agent for the Watergate investigation was Special Agent Angelo Lano, and Graves documents his determined successful contribution.

The relationship between the Bureau and Nixon is more political and more complicated. In 1970, Hoover was still FBI director and he shared Nixon's concerns with the turmoil—bombings, hijackings, sit-ins—conducted with "malign influence" by the "New Left," as it was called,

and that it was most likely infiltrated by communists. (12) Hoover attacked the problem with an open letter to university students. (17) Nixon took a more rigorous approach. He tasked a White House staff lawyer, Tom Huston, to draft a plan of action to deal with the unrest, using burglary, illegal electronic surveillance, and opening the mail of domestic radicals, to name a few tactics. The 43-page report was called the Huston Plan.

Hoover chaired the committee of Intelligence Community directors who would carry it out. Then after signing the official version, he withdrew his approval five days later and frustrated the plan's implementation "at every turn," demonstrating he would not "offer up the Bureau to do the President's political bidding." (21) When Nixon failed to get support from the CIA and the Intelligence Community, he assembled "a group of former Intelligence Community officers . . . loyal only to him"—Gordon Liddy (ex-FBI), Howard Bunt (ex-CIA) and James McCord (ex-CIA, not FBI as Graves writes, page 2), and others: the Plumbers were born. (42)

Graves describes the deterioration of the Hoover-Nixon relationship resulting from collapse of the Huston Plan and the reasons Nixon didn't dismiss Hoover outright. At the same time, as she shows, there was constant

organizational havoc among domestic intelligence operations within the FBI as well as elements of the Intelligence Community. These events were compounded by criticism following revelations of FBI domestic spying exposed by the burglary of one of its field offices in 1971. Then two events occurred that changed everything. The first was the death of Hoover on May 2, 1972, which set in motion a succession battle. That, coupled with the second event on June 17, 1972, the Watergate break-in, brought down a president.

Graves's account of Nixon's appointment of Patrick Gray as acting FBI director is informative, if not inspiring, as he attempts to deflect the blame for Watergate from Nixon. During that process, Angelo Lano and his team, working to complete its investigation, has sharp encounters with Gray and Woodward and Bernstein.

Nixon's FBI concludes with an assessment of how Watergate led to permanent changes in presidential power. But at the same time, Graves concludes, the investigative special agents remain independent, resistant to cover-ups, threats, lies and intimidation. *Nixon's FBI* makes powerful, well documented arguments. A worthwhile contribution to intelligence literature.

No Moon as Witness: Missions of the SOE and OSS in World War II, by James Stejskal. (Casemate, 2021) 180 pages, bibliography, photos, index.

Before he became an author, James Stejskal (pronounced Stay-skel) served in the Army Special Forces and the CIA as a case officer. In *No Moon as Witness*, he has produced a summary of OSS and SOE operations in Europe and the Far East during WWII. After discussing the key individuals and the history associated with the origins of both organizations, he compares their structures, personnel selection and training methods, and the special equipment they developed and used.

The balance of the book is devoted to operations performed jointly and separately. Many will be familiar. There are for example the contributions of Nancy Wake, William Colby in Norway, Virginia Hall, and the Jedburghs. Others, like the SOE Kriepe Operation in Crete, will be new to some. All are of interest and provide a good sampling of the SOE and OSS roles in WWII provided one qualification is kept in mind: Stejskal does not provide any source notes. This creates problem for readers

and the author. Reader must trust the author's judgments or check sources if a statement or a name doesn't seem correct or if further information is desired.

The author's problem is the large number of unforced errors. A few examples make the point. First, Stejskal writes that at "the beginning of WWII," Britain faced an "Axis alliance of Germany, Italy, and later Japan." (xi) But Italy didn't declare war until June 1940, and the inclusion of "later Japan" is grammatically incompatible. Second, it is the "chief" of the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), not "director." (9) Third, William Donovan was appointed coordinator of information in July 1941, not coordinator of strategic information. (17) Fourth, after noting a lack of military capability early in the war, Stejskal asserts that Churchill had expectations "the resistance in Europe (and elsewhere) along with naval blockades and strategic bombing would bring about the defeat of the Axis." (167, 168) This was never the case. The SOE and OSS

capabilities were meant to irritate, constrain, and provide intelligence until sufficient military force was assembled.

In his epilogue, Stejskal raises the most pertinent and difficult question concerning SOE and OSS: Was it worth the sacrifice and effort? (167) From the qualitative

evidence presented he concludes that “overall their operations contributed greatly” to winning the war and holding the peace. A comprehensive study evaluating specific operations in each theater of war is required before his judgment can be accepted. *No Moon as Witness* can serve as a primer for those interested further study.

The Secret History of STASI Spy Cameras 1950–1990, by H. Keith Melton, Detlev Vreisleben, with Michael Hasco. (Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2020) 240 pages, bibliography, photos, glossary, index.

After the KGB relaxed its control over the East German Ministry of State Security (MfS) in 1957, East Germany and Czechoslovakia gradually became major sources of cameras and optical systems used by Warsaw Pact intelligence services. The KGB did continue to supply specialized items, like surveillance lenses. (129) These were described in an earlier book and also included here. After German unification, coauthor Vreisleben gained access to the Stasi Records Agency and Archives (BStU). Working with the collectors and camera specialists Keith Melton and Michael Hasco, he selected the cameras and optical devices described in this book.

The first two of the book's nine chapters discuss the structure and history of the principal organizations mentioned, with particular emphasis on the photographic elements of the Stasi and the Czech State Security Intelligence and Counterintelligence Service (StB). Some operations are examined and pictures of the equipment and associated artifacts are included—e.g., Putin's Stasi ID card. Most Stasi terms are explained in the glossary. An exception is the frequently mentioned noun “camouflage” used to indicate how a camera is hidden during an operation. For example, a buttonhole can serve as a lens camouflage. (23)

The Cold War ended before smart phones simplified copying secret material, and chapters 3–5 of *STASI Spy Cameras* present a show-and-tell of how it was done in the days of film. Still, motion, and portable document cameras are pictured and their operational uses are described in detail. From microdots to Polaroids—the Stasi would adopt Western techniques when necessary—the authors reveal how they accomplished their missions.

The Stasi was famous for its almost blanket surveillance at home. Its foreign intelligence counterpart, the HVA—under Markus Wolf—conducted foreign operations. The final four chapters present and discuss the methods and equipment used in various situations. The camera types range from hand operated, to remote-controlled-through-wall systems, to brassier camouflaged cameras. (134–37) The concealment devices developed were equally innovative and ranged from household items to musical instruments. Several examples of Stasi, KGB, and Swiss motorized cameras—spring wound and electric—are also shown.

For those interested in how the Warsaw Pact nations accomplished human surveillance in the predigital age, *The Secret History of STASI Spy Cameras* is the book to study.

Spy Swap: The Humiliation of Russia's Intelligence Services, by Nigel West. (Frontline Books, 2021) 202 pages, endnotes, photos, appendices, index.

The *Spy Swap* portion of the title refers mainly to operation Ghost Stories that ended in 2010, when 10 Russian illegals were swapped for three imprisoned Russian intelligence officers—Gennady Vasilenko, Aleksandr Zaporozhsky, Sergei Skripal—and one Russian scientist, Igor Sutyagin. Considering the number of officers returned to each service, one might reasonably ask if the Russians were the ones humiliated, as the title suggests.

But it soon becomes clear that Nigel West has a broader context in mind.

In West's view, *Spy Swap* is the story of the counterintelligence foundation laid by James Angleton that led to “a remarkable period of operational activity that resulted in unprecedented success and brought the once mighty Soviet (and then the Russian) intelligence monolith to the point of collapse.” Thus, there is no ambiguity here, and

the readers are justified in expecting the book to support his position.

In *Spy Swap*, West first explains how several CIA, FBI, and KGB officers who would become involved in Ghost Stories got to know each other. These accounts are followed by summaries of the Ames and Hanssen cases to establish how the KGB and its successor organizations—the SVR and FSB—operated prior to the Ghost Stories period.

For historical perspective, West then discusses a number of Soviet legacy cases, including Walter Krivitsky, Robert Gordon Switz, and Vladimir Kuzichkin, the Rote Kapelle, and Alexander Foote, to cite a few. None of the legacy cases are directly linked to Ghost Stories but they do show how the Russian services have functioned since the revolution. Likewise, the chapters succeeding the one on Ghost Stories are included to show that intelligence under Putin has changed little.

The key points in *Spy Swap* have to do with deciding when to arrest the 10 illegals, how to go about it, and the selection of the imprisoned Russians to be exchanged. Not all authors agree with West's views on these points, especially when it comes to the inclusion of Gennady Vasilenko. BBC journalist Gordon Corera links the

decision to arrest the 10 illegals with the imminent defection to the West of a KGB officer and CIA agent who has supported the illegals and thus knows them. He says the choice of Vasilenko was because he helped the FBI and CIA in the Ames case.^a

Gus Russo and Eric Dezenhall take a different position on Vasilenko linking his inclusion in the trade to the influence of his retired CIA friend, Jack Platt. They argue that Vasilenko was not a CIA or FBI agent or asset, just Platt's friend, who was unjustly imprisoned.^b

West's explanation differs from both. He concludes that Vasilenko was a CIA agent and that the decision to arrest the illegals when they were was in part driven by the desire to get Vasilenko released. While he presents no direct evidence, West does acknowledge interviews with the key players in the CIA and FBI.

Spy Swap leaves to the reader with two mysteries. One must ask whether the narrative supports the assertion that the Russian intelligence services were brought to the point of collapse by the unprecedented success of Western intelligence services. The other concerns the reason Vasilenko was included in the swap. Whatever your conclusion, *Spy Swap* provides a fine review of the espionage cases discussed.

The Spy Who Was Left Out in the Cold: The Secret History of Agent Goleniewski, by Tim Tate (Bantam Press, May 2021) 398 pages, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

The Spy Who Would Be Tsar: The Mystery of Michal Goleniewski and the Far-Right Underground, by Kevin Coogan (Routledge, September 2021) 358 pages, end of chapter notes, bibliography, appendices, index.

The late Kevin Coogan was an investigative journalist from Philadelphia. While researching conspiracy theories and far-right secret societies, he found references to a Michal Goleniewski, who claimed to be the son of the last Russian Tsar, Nicholas II. Further inquiries revealed that Goleniewski was a Cold War Polish spy linked to the CIA, the FBI, and the KGB about whom little had been written. Coogan decided to write his story, *The Spy Who Would Be Tsar*. He was unaware that at the same time Tim Tate was writing his own biography of Goleniewski, *The*

Spy Who Was Left Out in the Cold, which was published just four months before Coogan's book.

Both authors agree that in 1958, while he was a serving Polish intelligence officer, Goleniewski began sending double-wrapped letters to the US embassy in Bern, Switzerland. The inside letter was addressed to J. Edgar Hoover because Goleniewski thought the KGB had penetrated CIA. Nevertheless, following embassy protocol, each letter was given to CIA officers for action.

a. Gordon Corera, *Russians Among Us: Sleeper Cells, Ghost Stories and the Hunt for Putin's Agents* (HarperCollins, 2020), 224. Reviewed in *Studies in Intelligence* 64, no. 2 (June 2020).

b. Gus Russo & Eric Dezenhall. *Best of Enemies: The Last Great Spy Story of the Cold War* (Twelve, 2018), 224. Reviewed in *Studies in Intelligence* 62, no. 4 (December 2018).

They contained information that, when coupled with data he provided when he defected in January 1961, proved Goleniewski's bona fides and led to the exposures of the Portland Spy Ring; the KGB illegal Gordon Lonsdale; the ensnarement of John Vassall in a KGB honeytrap; Heinz Felfe, who gave the KGB data on CIA operations in Germany; and the KGB penetration of MI6 by George Blake.

The books reveal differences in the authors' interpretation of various events. For example, Tate argues that Goleniewski's deranged contention that he was the Tsarevich was a consequence of CIA's broken promises and bad treatment of him. Coogan, on the other hand, acknowledges some problems in the defector's relationship with CIA, but he points out that the agency provided Goleniewski and his family with an income and apartment for life. He also maintains that Goleniewski's issues with CIA were the result of natural mental illness brought on, in part, by the CIA and British intelligence deciding not to undertake counterintelligence operations he had recommended. It was hard to take Goleniewski seriously after he announced that "Henry Kissinger was a Soviet agent

code-named 'Bor'" (xv)^a Coogan presents a strong case—supported by a timeline of events backed up by solid sources—that Goleniewski's mental deterioration left CIA little choice but to discontinue operational contact and to discourage official contact with congressional committees.

Another difference in the accounts concerns Goleniewski's life after his CIA debriefings ended. Tate dwells more on issues surrounding his extensive attempts to convince the world he was the Tsarevich, that most of his siblings had survived, and that he was the rightful heir to the Romanov fortune. Although Coogan also covers these topics, *The Spy Who Would Be Tsar* places greater attention on two other subjects, CIA and MI5 attempts to show that Goleniewski was, at some point, under KGB control and Goleniewski's tenuous links to far-right secret societies. From an intelligence reader's point of view, Coogan spends far too much time on the convoluted behavior of these groups.

For a balanced, unembroidered account of Goleniewski's intelligence contributions and his post-career life, Coogan is the one to read.



a. In 1963 during a visit from congressional staffer Herbert Romerstein, Goleniewski asked him, "how would you like to be Duke?" Author conversation with Romerstein, September 29, 2000.

Fiction

Geiger, by Gustaf Skördeman (Zaffre, 2021—Translated from the Swedish/Originally published in Sweden by Bokförlaget Polaris in 2020) 424 pages.

Is anyone in Scandinavia happy? Not if the authors of Scandinavian noir novels are to be believed. Just when you thought that Maj Söwall and Per Wahloo, Jo Nesbo, and Stieg Larsson had exposed the entire seamy underside of social democratic paradises, along comes Swedish screenwriter Gustaf Skördeman with his first novel, *Geiger*, which takes the Scandi-noir genre into the world of spy novels.

The plot has something to do with old Stasi agents, a Soviet-era KGB illegal, and terrorists, who have been hanging around since the seventies waiting for their chance and now are about to set off atomic bombs hidden in Germany for all these years. They are, to be sure, an ancient bunch, and their fiftyish pursuer is a Stockholm policewoman named Sara Nowak. Assigned to the prostitution squad, Sara stumbles into the case by accident. At first she has no comprehension of the world of spies and espionage, but gradually catches on. Basically, *Geiger* is the latest iteration of the classic plot of the clueless outsider stumbling across a dastardly plan to devastate the world and then racing to save civilization. Think *The Thirty-Nine Steps* or *North by Northwest*.

Skördeman certainly knows how to tell a story. The chapters are short, the prose is direct and punchy, and the action shifts back and forth among the different characters and locations. Bodies pile up, the plot twists, and the

growing suspense will keep readers turning the pages. It's a hard one to put down and, while the ending is ridiculous, you won't care.

How does *Geiger* work as Scandinoir? Alas, not quite as well as one would hope. Corruption certainly abounds, beloved national figures and leaders turn out to be pedophiles and hypocrites of the worst type, and Sara's personal life is a depressing brew of a troubled childhood, marital problems, and a violent temper that is destroying her career. But Skördeman lays it on a bit too thick, with the result that he sometimes seems to be parodying the conventions of Nordic angst and introspection to share a knowing laugh with readers. That's too bad, because with some self-restraint Skördeman might have been able to say something more about the choices Sweden made during the Cold War and the near-universal disappointment with how the world has turned out since the heady days of 1991.

Still, *Geiger* is an enjoyable thriller, one no doubt destined soon for streaming or the big screen. We can only hope the screenwriter will give us a version that draws out the story that lies within.

The reviewer: J. E. Leonardson is the pen name of a CIA Directorate of Analysis officer.



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

Books Reviewed in 2021

Studies in Intelligence

CURRENT TOPICS

Becoming Kim Jong UN: A Former CIA Officer's Insights into North Korea's Engimatic Young Dictator, Jung H. Pak (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by Joseph W. Gartin)

The Chinese Invasion Threat: Taiwan's Defense and American Strategy in Asia, by Ian Easton, (65, 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf—Reviewed by Andrew Finlayson)

After the Wars: International Lessons From the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, by John Gentry and William Nolte (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by James H.

The American War in Afghanistan: A History, by Carter Malakasian (65 4 [December 2021], reviewed by J. R. Seeger)

The Hardest Place: The American Military Adrift in Afghanistan's Pech Valley by Wesley Morgan (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by Leslie C.

We Are Bellincaat: An Intelligence Agency for the People, by Eliot Higgins (65 1 [March 2021] reviewed by J. E. Leonardson)

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Intelligent Analysis: How To Defeat Uncertainty in High-Stakes Decisions, by Jay Grusin with Steve Lindo (65 4 [December 2021], reviewed by J. W. Gartin)

Spy Sites of Philadelphia: A Guide To The Region's Secret History, Second Edition, by H. Keith Melton, Robert Wallace with Henry R. Schlesinger (65 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf)

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Review Essays

Review Essay: Evaluating Resistance Operations in Western Europe during World War II, (65 1 [March 2021] by J. R. Seeger)

Agents of Influence: Britain's Secret Intelligence War Against the IRA, by Aaron Edwards (65 4 [December 2021], reviewed by J. W. Gartin)

Following book titles and author names are the *Studies in Intelligence* issue in which the review appeared and the name of the reviewer. Unless otherwise noted, all "Bookshelf" reviews are by Hayden Peake.

The Anatomy of a Spy: A History of Espionage and Betrayal, by Michael Smith (65 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf)

Anti-American Terrorism: From Eisenhower to Trump—A Chronicle of the Threat and Response, Volume I, The Eisenhower Through Carter Administration, Dennis A. Pluchinsky (65 1 [March 2021], reviewed by David T. Berg, PhD)

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 (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by David B.)

Atomic Spy: The Dark Lives of Klaus Fuchs, by Nancy Thorndike (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by Steven D.)

Behind the Enigma: The Authorized History of GCHQ, Britain's Secret Cyber-Intelligence Agency, by John Ferris (65 1 [March 2021] reviewed by Jessica Garrett-Harsch)

Chaos: Charles Manson, the CIA, and the Secret History of the Sixties, by Tom O'Neill with Dan Piepenbring (65 3 [September 2021], reviewed by Leslie C.)

Dead Doubles: The Extraordinary Worldwide Hunt for One of the Cold War's Most Notorious Spy Rings, by Trevor Barnes (65 3 [September 2021], reviewed by Graham Alexander)

Double Crossed: The Missionaries Who Spied for the United States During the Second World War, by Matthew Avery Sutton (65 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf)

Ethel Rosenberg: An American Tragedy, by Anne Seba (65 3 [September 2021], reviewed by J. E. Leonardson)

Geospatial Intelligence: Origins and Evolution, by Robert M. Clark (65 1 [March 2021], reviewed by Joseph W. Caddell Jr.)

Ian Fleming's Inspiration: The Truth Behind the Books, by Edward Abel Smith (65 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf)

The Light of Days. The Untold Story of Women Resistance Fighters in Hitler's Ghettos, by Judy Batalion (65 3 [September 2021], reviewed by J. R. Seeger)

The Lockhart Plot: Love, Betrayal, Assassination and Counter-Revolution in Lenin's Russia, by Jonathan Schneer (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by J. E. Leonardson)

The Nazi Spy Ring In America: Hitler's Agents, the FBI, & the Case That Stirred the Nation, by Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by David A. Welker)

Nixon's FBI: Hoover, Watergate, and a Bureau in Crisis, by Melissa Graves (65 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf)

No Moon As Witness: Missions of the SOE and OSS in World War II, by James Stejskal (65 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf)

Nos chers espions en Afrique [Our Dear Spies in Africa], by Antoine Glaser (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by William Brooke Stallsmith)

- The Secret History of STASI Spy Cameras 1950–1990***, by H. Keith Melton, Detlev Vreisleben, and Michael Hasco (65 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf)
- Sleeper Agent: The Atomic Spy in America Who Got Away***, by Ann Hagedorn (65 4 [December 2021], reviewed by J. E. Leonardson)
- Spy Swap: The Humiliation of Russia’s Intelligence Services***, by Nigel West (65 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf)
- The Spy Who Was Left Out in the Cold: The Secret History of Agent Goleniewski***, by Tim Tate (65 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf)
- The Spy Who Would Be Tsar: The Mystery of Michal Goleniewski and the Far-Right Underground***, by Kevin Coogan (65 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf)
- The Spy Masters: How the CIA Directors Shape History and the Future***, Chris Whipple (65 1 [March 2021], reviewed by Thomas Coffey)
- Spycraft*** (Netflix documentary series), (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by Brent M. Geary and David Welker)
- Spying for Wellington: British Military Intelligence in the Peninsular War***, by Huw J. Davies (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by George P. Lewis)
- The Spymaster of Baghdad: A True Story of Bravery, Family and Patriotism in the Battle Against ISIS***, by Margaret Coker (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by Graham Alexander)
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- War of Shadows: Codebreakers, Spies, and the Secret Struggle to Drive the Nazis from the Middle East***, by Gershon Gorenberg (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by Brent M. Geary)

MEMOIR

- Clarity in Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the CIA***, by Marc Polymeropoulos (65 4 [December 2021], reviewed by Mike R.)
- Undaunted: My Fight Against America’s Enemies at Home and Abroad***, by John O. Brennan (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by Thomas G. Coffey)

INTELLIGENCE ABROAD

- 3-chung sogisil ui amho: chon Yongguk chujae Pukhan kongsa Thae Yong Ho ui chungon*** [Password of the Three-Story Secretariat: Testimony of Thae Yong Ho, Former Minister of the North Korean Embassy in Britain], by Thae Yong Ho (65, 4 [December 2021], Reviewed by Stephen Mercado)
- The Grey Men: Pursuing the Stasi into the Present***, by Ralph Hope (65 3 [September 2021], reviewed by J. E. Leonardson)

Iran Reframed: Anxieties of Power in the Islamic Republic, by Nargess Bajoghli (65 1 [March 2021]
Reviewed by Brian C. Dudley)

Operation Dragon: Inside the Kremlin's Secret War on America, by R. James Woolsey and Ion Mihail
Pacepa (65 3 [September 2021], reviewed by Graham Alexander)

Top Secret Canada: Understanding the Canadian Intelligence and National Security Community by
Stephanie Carvin (65 3 [September 2021], reviewed by Joseph W. Gartin)

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Geiger, by Gustaf Skördeman (65, 4 [December 2021] Bookshelf—Reviewed by J. E. Leonardson)

The Secrets We Kept, by Lara Prescott (65 2 [June 2021], reviewed by J. E. Leonardson)

Untraceable, by Serfei Lebedev (65 1 [March 2021] reviewed by J.E. Leonardson)

Young Heroes of the Soviet Union: A Memoir and a Reckoning, by Alex Halberstadt (65 2 [June 2021],
reviewed by J. E. Leonardson)

