

The Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf

Intelligence in Recent Public Literature

Compiled and Reviewed by Hayden B. Peake

This section contains brief reviews of recent books of interest to both the intelligence professional and the student of intelligence.

James H. Critchfield. ***Partners at the Creation: The Men Behind Postwar Germany's Defense and Intelligence Establishments***. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2003. 243 pages, bibliography, glossary, photos, index.

In April 1945 Adolph Hitler fired Brigadier General Reinhard Gehlen, his intelligence chief on the Russian front, for producing pessimistic estimates. By the end of the war, one month later, Gehlen had buried his prolific files on the Red Army and soon surrendered to the Americans. He then proposed to make the files available to fill the intelligence gap in the Russian order of battle, if he and his staff could be put to work as an intelligence organization under the US Army. And that is what happened. In 1947, security, funding, and control problems prompted the Army to turn the organization, called simply The Org, over to the newly formed CIA. Organizationally, the transfer made sense since the CIA was concerned with foreign civilian intelligence services. But there was a problem: who would be in charge? The CIA officers in Germany thought The Org was staffed with Nazis—there were some in the counterintelligence element—and no one was "interested in picking up this hot potato," wrote Richard Helms, the CIA division chief tasked with filling the slot. Helms goes on to say, "At the moment I was most desperate, Colonel James Critchfield's file crossed my desk."¹ A regular Army armor officer, Critchfield had fought from Southern France to Bavaria. After the war he spent two years as a staff intelligence officer before returning to the States for advanced armor training. In school he decided that intelligence was the career he wanted to pursue and applied to the CIA. *Partners at the Creation* is the story of his assignment to Germany to make a one month study of The Org that became an eight-year tour. It ended only when The Org became the official foreign intelligence service, the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), of Federal Republic of Germany in 1956.

Critchfield went on to have a long and productive CIA career, serving, among other assignments, as chief of the Near East Division of the Deputy Directorate for Plans. But this book concentrates on his years in Germany, with emphasis on the political, operational, and organizational problems he encountered there and in Washington. In Germany, there were other intelligence services competing with The Org. Strong personalities in both countries held

opposing views about intelligence that had to be assuaged. Former Nazis were eased out. Perhaps most surprising were the conflicts with the Army Counterintelligence Corps (CIC). For reasons even Critchfield didn't entirely understand, the same Army that had asked the CIA to take over Gehlen's organization in 1947, later opposed The Org to the point of penetrating it with agents, without telling the CIA. When Gehlen discovered this, he suspected CIA complicity and complicated Critchfield's control problems. The CIC also withheld knowledge of a major KGB penetration of the BND, Heinz Felfe, allowing him to compromise agents and operations until 1961, when he was finally arrested.

Operationally, we learn that The Org produced analysis of Soviet forces when no other organization could, but one wishes there was more in the book about their content. Likewise, Critchfield mentions that "counterintelligence is the most sophisticated, intellectually demanding, and professionally complex of all intelligence tasks," (p. 163) and describes the persistent attempts, often successful, by the East German HVA and the KGB to penetrate The Org. But here, too, one wishes more specifics about the cases had been included.

That the CIA and James Critchfield played a role in the establishment of the new Federal German intelligence service has been mentioned elsewhere. The extent of their involvement is told here for the first time. *Partners at the Creation* is an important contribution from a member of the "Greatest Generation."

David Wise. ***SPY: The Inside Story of How the FBI's Robert Hanssen Betrayed America***. New York: Random House, 2003. 313 pages, photos, index.

This is the fifth and best book about the Robert Hanssen espionage case.² It is a strange story of a man who grew up in the Chicago suburbs, studied dentistry before becoming a CPA, married his sweetheart and converted to catholicism, became a Chicago cop, and then, in January 1976, an FBI special agent. Just three years later he began a parallel career as a sometime agent of the Russian GRU and then the KGB/SVR, a career that lasted until his arrest in February 2001. It was during this period that CIA officers Aldrich Ames and Harold Nicholson and FBI special agent Earl Pitts also spied for the Soviets. Both agencies knew there was a leak and each conducted a molehunt. In 1987 Hanssen himself was assigned to study the problem. This gave him access to all the material on previous and ongoing FBI penetration cases. Using his skill with computers, he also learned about the CIA molehunt. With this knowledge he was better able to avoid suspicion.

Wise devotes most of the book to telling how these cases interrelated. We learn how Hanssen managed his relationship with the Soviets, his sometimes skillful, sometimes risky, use of tradecraft and the indications that the KGB knew his identity. Then there was the claim (ignored) of convicted FBI special agent Earl Pitts that Hanssen was a KGB agent. Even more disturbing, was the conclusion (dismissed by the director) of FBI agent Tom Kimmel that the mole was in the Bureau. It is a disturbing tale of personal treachery and bureaucratic ineptitude.

The many threads of Robert Hanssen's life—family, devotion to the church, a stripper girlfriend, Internet pornography, and FBI career—each gave clues to his espionage, and Wise relates them all skillfully. The story of his wife's suspicions when she finds extra money—lots of it—Hanssen's confession of espionage to his priest, the incredible tale of his brother-in-law, also an FBI special agent, reporting him as a Soviet agent with no response by the Bureau, and Hanssen's own predilection that the end was near are just a few examples.

But the reason Hanssen was not caught sooner is even more bizarre: the FBI was convinced, despite a lack of hard evidence, that the mole was in the CIA and that they knew who it was! Once they had a CIA suspect, they never considered an alternative until given hard evidence of the mole's true identity. In a chapter called "The Wrong Man," Wise gives an astonishing account of the more than four-year personal disaster for the CIA officer suspect codenamed *Gray Deceiver*. He endured 24-hour surveillance, video cameras were installed in his office, audio devices were attached to his home and work telephones, and his personal and work computers were monitored. For the last two years he was placed on administrative leave. Curiously, though *Gray Deceiver* was serving under cover and the Agency requested his identity be protected, Wise gratuitously insisted on naming him.

In the end, Hanssen was identified through information from a CIA source and a skillfully designed and implemented FBI operation that led to an agent with access to portions of the KGB's file on Hanssen. The agent was eventually paid in the neighborhood of \$7 million dollars to provide portions of the mole's KGB file, including a tape of the mole speaking to his KGB control. Only then, after the voice was recognized, was Hanssen identified and FBI efforts redirected to Hansen's arrest, with legendary FBI efficiency. *The Gray Deceiver* was restored to duty.

In the epilogue, Wise describes the austere life Hanssen now leads in the Colorado supermax prison, noting that he apparently fails "to grasp fully the enormity of what he had done..." (p. 304)

Wise searches in vain for a reasonable way to explain why a man with a good job, a lovely and loving wife, and six fine children would betray his country. He finds no solitary cause. Robert Hanssen was truly a spy for all reasons.

Ronald Kessler. ***The CIA At War: Inside the Secret Campaign Against Terror.*** New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003. 313 pages, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

With a view to the post 9/11 era and the role of the CIA, journalist Ronald Kessler writes in his most recent book that "never in human history had a country relied so much on intelligence." But: "Could the CIA be trusted... was the Agency capable of winning the war on terror?" An important question, but Kessler never answers it directly. That task is left to the reader. The material on which to base an answer comes mainly from interviews with senior Agency officers, several of the DCIs, including George Tenet, and other members of the Intelligence Community, all cited by name. Kessler was also given a tour of the Headquarters compound, and he describes what he found in some detail. The arrangement of the book is a bit awkward—it does not have a table of contents and the 25 chapters are not titled.

The first three chapters are mostly about directors George Tenet, James Woolsey, and John Deutch. We learn what happened to Woolsey because of the Ames case and to Deutch when he tried to do a job he didn't want in the first place. The details on Tenet come later. The next 10 chapters provide background, with attention to Agency life and operations under directors from Richard Helms to Robert Gates, with flashbacks along the way to Allen Dulles and even William Donovan and the OSS. Kessler reviews much familiar Agency activity—the U-2 incident, the Bay of Pigs invasion, Operation MONGOOSE (the "get" Castro program run by the Kennedy White House) the Cuban missile crisis and the Penkovskiy case, the defections of Vitali Yurchenko and Edward Howard, the establishment of the Counterterrorism Center, and the Aldrich Ames case, to give just a few examples—and included interesting commentary from

those who participated in the events. While the book is not a history, those unfamiliar with the Agency will get a good overview of its pre-9/11 activity.

The balance of the book looks at the Agency under George Tenet and relies heavily on interviews with him, his executive director, Alvin "Buzzy" Krongard, Deputy Director for Intelligence John McLaughlin, plus former inspectors general, deputy directors, and case officers. There is also the view from the FBI that comes from interviews and Kessler's two previous books on the Bureau.

The treatment is balanced, though not always accurate, and there are a few surprises. In the latter category falls the statement attributed to a senior deputy general counsel, John Rizzo, that "a few waivers" were granted to allow use of journalists as sources. Another example is the inclusion of the Douglas Groat case that illustrates the potential problems of dissatisfied employees with secret knowledge. Finally, he tells the story of how the CIA employee picked the building in Belgrade that turned out to be the Chinese embassy the United States would bomb. It is a lesson in accountability.

Inaccuracies include the statement that Richard Stolz was the first station chief in Moscow; that honor belongs to Paul Garbler; that Bill Hood was Peter Popov's case officer (it was George Kisevalter), and the statement that the CIA rejected Penkovskiy at first because they thought he was a plant (never happened).³ And for many, the comments attributed to the FBI about ineffective CIA analysis and weak polygraph policies associated with the Ames case will seem ironic at best.

The final chapters of *The CIA At War* describe some of the counterterrorist successes after 9/11, the intense interagency multi-source approach to collection, the search for weapons of mass destruction in a less risk-averse atmosphere, and the value of judicious interrogation. Kessler leaves the impression that the CIA under Tenet has rebounded from the over-cautious days of his predecessor and that the outlook for the future is positive.

John Miller and Michael Stone with Chris Mitchell. ***The Cell: Inside The 9/11 Plot, and Why the FBI and CIA Failed to Stop It.*** New York: Hyperion, 2002. 336 pages, no index.

In 1998, Usama Bin Laden told John Miller that he was "declaring war on the United States." "We are sure of our victory," he added (p. 4). Miller believed him. Miller had been following al-Qa`ida operations since at least 1990, when the terrorist cell that would eventually fly planes into the World Trade Center assassinated Rabbi Meir Kahane in New York. *The Cell* tells Miller's story in easy reading journalistic style—no table of contents, source citations, or index—and that of several FBI special agents, fire marshals, and policemen. The group, a kind of cell of a different kind, had since the early 1990s foreseen the coming of a severe terrorist attack, but they could not get their managements to take them seriously. In a risk-averse atmosphere they were frustrated and the reasons become clear in this book. While there is some overlap with other books about 9/11, the central characters are different, and there is a much more detailed account of the hijackers planning and preparations right up until they pass through airport security.

The final portion of the book covers early US military operations in Afghanistan and the hunt for Bin Laden. When one of Bin Laden's subordinates defects to the Americans he is interrogated with less than satisfactory results. Then, with White House approval, he is turned over to the Egyptians where a different method of interrogation was applied, but with no better results.

One might expect from the subtitle that the book blames the CIA and FBI for failing to stop 9/11 but that is not its approach. The authors merely point out the many turf battles and occasional failures to exchange information to emphasize their point that management was not getting the message or properly understanding the urgency.

The Cell is a worthwhile working-level view of the pre-9/11 counterterrorist problems from a New York perspective.

Samuel M. Katz. ***Relentless Pursuit: The DSS and the Manhunt for the Al-Qaeda Terrorists***. New York: Forge, 2002. 299 pages, endnotes, no index.

The Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) is a relatively little known law enforcement element of the State Department whose primary mission is the protection of the secretary of state and the embassies around the world. *Relentless Pursuit* is the first book to tell the DSS story, and, after a short summary of its history, the focus is on the DSS role in the fight against terrorism and the hunt for Ramzi Yousef, the Usama Bin Laden disciple who planned both attacks on the World Trade Center. The account of how DSS agents Bill Miller and Jeff Riner captured Yousef in Su Casa Guesthouse in Islamabad, Pakistan, is well told and based on interviews with both agents. Also of interest are the stories of the attacks on the embassy and Marine barracks in Beirut and the changes those events brought about in DSS. The learning process was not over as demonstrated by the attacks on the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. In the latter case the damage would have been much worse had the DSS agent in the embassy not imposed restrictions on all trucks trying to enter the compound a week before the event. This forced the bombers to explode the bomb outside the main gate. These events and the bombing of the USS Cole, writes Katz, resulted in further increases in DSS personnel and resources. The seldom mentioned DSS agents have a difficult job, and Katz tells their story well.

Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon. ***The Age of Sacred Terror***. New York: Random House, 2002. 490 pages, endnotes, glossary, index.

The authors served on the National Security Council in the Clinton administration as specialists in counterterrorism. They began the book in 1999 to raise American awareness about a new breed of terrorist led by Usama Bin Laden and his al-Qa`ida organization and motivated by a radical form of Islam that justified killing infidels on a mass scale. After 9/11 the authors added the objective of determining what went wrong and why warnings signs had gone unheeded.

The book has three parts. Parts Two and Three are concerned with the reaction in the White House and the national security elements to the first World Trade Center bombing, the escalating terrorist acts against America elsewhere in the world, the actions taken or not taken to combat the growing influence of Bin Laden, and the root causes of the problem and role of religions. Part Two has a strong political element and ends with comments on how the incoming Bush administration handled the terrorist threat before 9/11. Then, NSC staff member Richard A. Clarke, author of the recent book *Against All Enemies*, plays a significant role. Part Three makes some recommendations for the future and focuses at some length on the religious aspects—not just Islamic—of the terrorist threat and what that means in what they see as a "never ending war." (p. 423)

For many, Part One of *The Sacred Age of Terror* will be of greatest value. After a brief summary of

the most significant terrorist acts against America in the 1990s, the authors examine the history of Islam that has led to the present situation. They answer the question, to the extent possible, why do Bin Laden Islamists kill on a massive scale to achieve their goals? Here the authors describe the history of Bin Laden's movement with its medieval origins and links to the *Muslim Brotherhood* and its credo (p. 57). They also explain the reasons for the various versions of Islam, the different forms of jihad, and the rationale for a Islamic world based—however long it takes—as required in the Koran.

By combining history with insights based on current real world experience, the authors have provided a valuable, well-documented perspective on a topic that demands attention.

Peter Lance. ***1000 Years For Revenge: International Terrorism and the FBI –The Untold Story.*** New York: HarperCollins, 2004. 539 pages, endnotes, appendix, photos, index.

The 9/11 attacks could have been prevented, writes Peter Lance, lawyer, novelist, and investigative reporter. He makes this position clear at the outset and then provides extensive documentation to support his conclusion. He tells the story around the lives of three participants: FBI special agent Nancy Floyd, whose persistence in trying to alert the FBI to a terrorist cell in New York City ruined her career; New York fire marshall-investigator Ronnie Bucca, who lost his life on 9/11; and Ramzi Yousef, the bomb-making terrorist and principal player in both World Trade Center attacks. Of course there were many others involved, so many in fact, that Lance included a 32-page color chronological insert with their pictures and notes on their roles.

While "each of the nation's spy agencies was responsible in part," writes Lance, the evidence collected during his 18-month investigation "shows that the FBI in particular had multiple opportunities to stop the devastation of 9/11 and simply failed to follow through." (p. 4) To make his case, Lance analyzes the first WTC bombing showing the links between al-Qa`ida, the blind Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, Ramzi Yousef, and his helpers. When one tower did not collapse into the other, the seeds for 9/11 were planted, and Yousef went to the Philippines to nurture them. There, working with family members and trusted colleagues, he drafted a plan to attack the WTC with aircraft. Soon, suicide pilots began training in the United States. He also conceived Operation Bojinka, a plan to blow up several airliners in flight. It failed only because Yousef accidentally blew up his bomb factory, and he had to escape to Pakistan. It is there that he is captured by the DSS. Yousef was in a supermax prison on 9/11.

Lance analyzes clues to 9/11 developed by a wide variety of skilled collectors. For example, FBI agent Nancy Floyd recruited an Arab associate of the blind Sheikh Rahman the old fashioned way—after careful development; but in the end her efforts were dismissed by her superior. Fireman Ronnie Bucca spotted a mole in the Fire Department who had stolen plans to the World Trade Center, but he could not convince the brass he was right. The statement by the FBI director six days after 9/11 that there were "no warning signs" of the attacks caused Coleen Rowley in the FBI office in Minneapolis to write a 13-page letter containing evidence that he was mistaken. Another memo, this time from FBI special agent Ken Williams, in Phoenix asked for background checks on eight Middle Eastern men studying at local flight schools; no action was taken. Later James Hauswirth, also in the Phoenix field office, wrote to point out that al-Qa`ida members had been reported training there in 1994. Reports from Philippine intelligence linked al-Qa`ida to the Bojinka plot and Usama Bin Laden were noticed, but no action was taken. There is much more, including possible al-Qa`ida links to Timothy McVeigh and the explosion of TWA flight 800 over Long Island Sound.

Despite a very complex story with a large cast of unfamiliar names, many only pseudonyms and all dedicated to the destruction of Western society, *1000 Years For Revenge* avoids reading like conspiracy theory. Lance finds widespread fault and is pessimistic about improvements, even from the congressional commissions. He is currently working on a sequel that examines the post 9/11 corrective actions and their long range implications.

Leigh Platt Rogers. ***Sticky Situations: Stories of Childhood Adventures Abroad.*** Haverford, PA, 2004. 184 pages, photos, no index.

Jack Platt's often colorful exploits as a CIA operations officer have been mentioned from time to time in books, most recently in *The Main Enemy* by Milt Bearden and James Risen.⁴ Now he comes to our attention in an entirely new light—father and family man. But he is not the central character in *Sticky Situations*; that role goes to the author, Platt's daughter Leigh. She tells what it is like to grow up undercover and overseas—Vienna, Laos, France—and what happened when she found out where dad really worked—thanks to Philip Agee. Leigh goes on to tell about school in Vienna, going to a market in Laos, babysitting in Paris, and how her dad impressed her dates, among other adventures. This is a charming book for its friendly candor and may well help other young dependents adjust and even look forward to life as a CIA brat.

Murray Weiss. ***The Man Who Warned America: the Life and Death of John O'Neill, the FBI's Embattered Counterterrorism Warrior.*** New York: HarperCollins, 2003. 450 pages, endnotes, photos, index.

A briefcase containing classified documents about sensitive sources was stolen from the Tampa hotel room of FBI special agent John P. O'Neill during the summer of 2001. It was recovered, and an investigation determined the contents had not been compromised. O'Neill was not punished, but he soon decided to take early retirement after 31 years in the Bureau, 25 as a special agent. He was the Bureau's resident expert on international terrorism. On 22 August 2001 he left the FBI to become director of security at the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001. O'Neill never finished his first day on the job.

Nearly all the books about 9/11 mention O'Neill and note the irony of his leaving the Bureau when he did and the tragedy of his death. Murray Weiss has written a biography of the man that explains the severity of his loss and shows what inside-the-box thinking by management can do to creative, inspired, dedicated, passionate—if somewhat unorthodox—field agents. O'Neill played roles in most of the major terrorists incidents of the 1990s, including Oklahoma City, Khobar Towers, the embassy bombings in Nairobi and Tanzania, and the USS Cole suicide attack, all of which he viewed as tests of America's reaction and resolve. He was also involved in the capture in Qatar of Wali Khan Anim Shah (a participant in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing), and he headed the Washington end of the capture of Ramzi Yousef by Diplomatic Security Service agents in Pakistan. As he gained experience and a reputation for success, O'Neill also became the Bureau's guru on the perversely attractive Usama Bin Laden and al-Qa`ida—he believed what they said and was concerned others in government were indifferent.

Bureaucratic and interagency conflicts are inescapable with such an aggressive and competent personality, and Weiss deals with many such incidents. One involved a laptop belonging to Wali Shah in Qatar that the CIA acquired after Shah's capture by FBI. CIA was reluctant to share the data on the laptop, but O'Neill persisted and eventually got his copy. Overall he was fair and

respected by all the agencies involved in counterterrorism with the exception of the embassy in Yemen. The ambassador had maintained the terrorism threat was minimal in Yemen. As Weiss tells the story, the Cole bombing and other incidents suggested her estimate lacked credibility. Still, she made life difficult for O'Neill and his team investigating the case. She chose to demonstrate that her power trumped the counterterrorism investigation and eventually banned O'Neill from the country. Her position did not alter O'Neill's judgment that Usama Bin Laden was heading for an attack on American soil.

The approach Weiss takes in his book does more than tell the story of John O'Neill's career. It also gives a look at the FBI and the way it functions, its traditions, its rigid rules that often result in self-inflicted wounds, and the reasons why it was something less than an efficient counterterrorist organ. Those concerned with how America fights counterterrorism—in or out of government—need to understand how the Bureau operates at the working level and how management affects its results. Murray Weiss offers a step toward this goal.

Footnotes

1. Richard Helms, with William Hood. *A Look Over My Shoulder: A Life in the Central Intelligence Agency* (New York: Random House, 2003), 89.
2. Adrian Havill, *The Spy Who Stayed Out in the Cold: The Secret Life of FBI Double Agent Robert Hanssen* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001); Elaine Shannon and Ann Blackman, *The Spy Next Door: The Extraordinary Secret Life of Robert Philip Hanssen, The Most Damaging FBI Agent in U. S. History* (Boston: Little Brown, 2002); David A. Vise, *The Bureau and the Mole: The Unmasking of Robert Philip Hanssen, The Most Dangerous Double Agent in FBI History* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2002); Lawrence Schiller, *Into The Mirror: The Life of Master Spy Robert P. Hanssen*—based upon an investigation by Norman Mailer and Lawrence Schiller (New York: HarperCollins, 2002). Vise's is the only book to include the correct photo of Hanssen's final drop site.
3. See Jerrold Schecter and Peter S. Deriabin, *The Spy Who Saved the World: How a Soviet Colonel Changed the Course of the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1995).
4. Milt Bearden and James Risen, *The Main Enemy: The Inside Story of the CIA's Final Showdown with the KGB* (New York: Random House, 2003).

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