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Cover image: FBI Director Christopher Wray testifies before the House Judiciary Committee on Section 702 renewal and other issues, July 12, 2023. (Photo: FBI)

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Contributors

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US Intelligence, Domestic Surveillance, and the Time of Troubles

David Robarge

> **The IC's protective "old guard" on Capitol Hill that had run the oversight committees since the late 1940s had largely dwindled through retirements, electoral defeats, and deaths. Replacing it was a younger, more liberal cadre of members much more inclined to criticize what the IC was doing.**

After a prolonged debate, in April 2024 Congress approved a two-year extension of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence and Surveillance Act (FISA).[a] Concerns about the risk to privacy of US citizens versus the Intelligence Community's role in defending against terrorism, cyber, and foreign malign influence and other threats with domestic components recalled revelations during the 1970s of domestic spying. Fifty years ago the political fallout led to lasting changes in IC practices and executive and congressional oversight.

The 1970s was a difficult decade for the IC, as it suddenly found itself under political attack from many quarters for conducting activities that, although presidentially sanctioned, were no longer considered appropriate for intelligence agencies or about which Congress and the US public had been unwitting. The IC was caught up in the nation's growing distrust of government caused by official evasion and prevarication about the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal. In addition, the IC's protective "old guard" on Capitol Hill that had run the oversight committees since the late 1940s had largely dwindled through retirements, electoral defeats, and deaths. Replacing it was a younger, more liberal cadre of members much more inclined to criticize what the IC was doing. CIA, NSA, FBI, and Army activities that involved technical and physical surveillance and collection against Americans and appeared to violate departmental charters or constitutional limitations caused the greatest alarm when they were disclosed through media exposés and official investigations in 1974–76.

Opening the Mail

For varying lengths of time between 1952 and 1973 in four US cities, CIA conducted four programs to cover (i.e., to record the sender and recipient) and open mail sent between the United States and the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba.[1b] The purpose of the programs was to acquire information about Soviet and Chinese intelligence activities in the United

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a. According to the Director of National Intelligence Section 702 Overview, "Section 702 is a key provision of the FISA Amendments Act of 2008 that permits the [US] government to conduct targeted surveillance of foreign persons located outside the United States, with the compelled assistance of electronic communication service providers, to acquire foreign intelligence information. The government uses the information collected under Section 702 to protect the United States and its allies from hostile foreign adversaries, including terrorists, proliferators, and spies, and to inform cyber-security efforts." (Source: https://www.dni.gov/files/icotr/Section702-Basics-Infographic.pdf)

b. The postmasters general and chief postal inspectors concurred with the mail covering, but only one inspector—a former CIA officer—clearly knew about the mail opening.

States, conditions inside denied areas, and tradecraft and potential counterintelligence leads. The programs took place in New York City (1952–73), Hawaii (1954–55), New Orleans (1957), and San Francisco (1969–71). The Soviet Union was the target of the New York project, known as SRPOINTER by the Office of Security and HTLINGUAL by the Counterintelligence (CI) Staff. Because the CI Staff directed the operation longer, the latter cryptonym is better known.

Soviet Russia Division in the Directorate of Plans (the Directorate of Operation's predecessor) and the Office of Security ran the program at first, and the CI Staff took it over in 1955. At that time, James Angleton, head of the CI Staff, proposed that CIA review all mail to and from the Soviet Union that went through New York and open about 2 percent of the letters (approximately 400) monthly. Richard Helms, then the CIA's second-ranking operations manager and later Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), approved this phase of the program, which began in early 1956.

The FBI became aware of HTLINGUAL in 1958 and began receiving information and levying requirements soon after. CIA's Technical Services Division opened a facility in New York in 1961 to work exclusively on mail opening. According to CIA records that were disclosed to Congress in the mid-1970s, more than 2,700,000 letters were covered and more than 215,000 were opened during HTLINGUAL's 21 years of operation.

The consensus of senior CIA officers was that HTLINGUAL produced some useful information about Soviet secret writing and censorship techniques and some counterintelligence leads but did not provide enough intelligence to warrant the effort it required and the "flap potential" it possessed. Angleton claimed the operation had been valuable, but internal reviews in the 1960s reached the opposite conclusion. DCI James Schlesinger terminated HTLINGUAL in 1973, agreeing with operations chief William Colby's judgment that the "substantial political risk [was] not justified by the operation's contribution to foreign intelligence and counterintelligence collection."

CIA's "Domestic Espionage"

On August 15, 1967, under presidential direction, CIA began investigating possible links between US antiwar protesters and hostile foreign governments.[2] Codenamed MHCHAOS, the program expanded to include overseas collection on the foreign contacts of other radical groups and a few operations inside the United States targeting American citizens. The program was publicized in 1974 and became one of the focuses of congressional and media scrutiny of CIA that further eroded public trust in the CIA during its "time of troubles" in the 1970s.

Seeing the growing intensity of domestic opposition to the war in Vietnam, especially from American youth in urban areas and on college campuses, President Lyndon Johnson became convinced that such dissent was not possible without foreign (and likely Communist) backing. In August 1967, Johnson tasked the CIA, NSA, and FBI with tracking down the links he presumed to exist between the protesters and foreign

governments—the Soviet Union and the PRC, but possibly also North Korea, North Vietnam, Algeria, and others—and what the secret funding and other support was being used for. DCI Richard Helms remembers Johnson saying, "Can't [the CIA] find out what's going on here? Look at these people in the streets; we can't imagine that good Americans do things like this."

Helms initially believed that CIA could support Johnson's request and stay inside the terms of its charter as long as it concentrated on the foreign countries or networks and deferred to the FBI on the domestic side. Because MHCHAOS was so fraught with potential controversy, however, Helms placed it inside the secretive CI Staff and had the program chief report directly to him.

CIA gave its first response to President Johnson in November 1967. The operation had uncovered no significant foreign support for the protests. Several months later, the agency concluded that the radicalism of many of US and other nations' youth stemmed from genuine domestic social and political factors and was not the result of manipulation from abroad. These findings, however, only made the White House keener to uncover foreign connections, which supposedly were so sophisticated that CIA would have to use more creative methods to find them.

At the behest of both the Johnson and Nixon White Houses, CIA pursued MHCHAOS more vigorously, including engaging in domestic espionage. In those instances—only a tiny part of the overall program—CIA officers recruited three US citizens as agents to penetrate dissident groups,

Seymour Hirsch's revelations marked a turning point in the IC's relationship with the media and congressional oversight. (Source: *New York Times*)

collected intelligence on antiwar and other left-wing groups, and amassed files on US citizens engaged in purely domestic activity (most of the content came from the FBI and open sources, not CIA clandestine collection). CIA served as the clearing house for the information that it, FBI, and NSA collected. This comprised eventually 300,000 names in its computer index and approximately 7,200 files on US citizens and 6,000 on political groups. Despite the huge amount of material obtained, the idea that the antiwar movement was a massive influence operation run out of the Soviet Union or China was not demonstrated.

Family Jewels

One of the most consequential journalistic exposés in CIA's history appeared on December 22, 1974, when the *New York Times* disclosed details about a secret compilation of alleged CIA charter violations known as the Family Jewels.[3] The leak prompted White House and congressional inquiries into some of the agency's more controversial espionage, covert action, and technical operations. As a result, CIA's political standing declined precipitously, its operational activities were curtailed significantly, and major, lasting

changes occurred in the oversight process.

After hearing that CIA officers had earlier contact with the White House "Plumbers" unit that conducted the Watergate break-in, DCI James Schlesinger on May 9, 1973, ordered CIA employees to report any activities that seemed to violate CIA's charter.[4] The Office of Security staffer in charge of the project flippantly dubbed the hundreds of pages of collected material the Family Jewels. Schlesinger's successor, William Colby, felt obliged to tell CIA's congressional oversight committees about the compilation, and *Times*

Myths and Misconceptions About the Family Jewels

For 50 years, the Family Jewels have clouded CIA's reputation, even though most of their contents have long been known from official reports and ad hoc disclosures. Colby, who oversaw the compilation of the Family Jewels while serving as the agency's operations chief and director-designate, is the source of some durable misconceptions about them. In his memoir *Honorable Men*, he wrote that they consist of "693 pages of possible violations of, or at least questionable activities in regard to, the CIA's legislative charter"; that among the contents are "bizarre and tragic cases wherein the Agency experimented with mind-control drugs"; and that accompanying them was "a separate and even more secret annex" that "summarized a 1967 survey of CIA's involvement in assassination attempts or plans against [Fidel] Castro, [Congo's Prime Minister Patrice] Lumumba and [the Dominican Republic's President Rafael] Trujillo."

These misstatements were repeated at least in part in several widely read works, including Thomas Powers's *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, John Ranelagh's *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA*, G.J.A. O'Toole's *Encyclopedia of American Intelligence and Espionage*, and Norman Polmar and Thomas Allen's *Spy Book*. Less informed observers also have suggested that the Family Jewels included details about political and paramilitary covert actions and definitive proof that Angleton ran MHCHAOS.

The declassification and release of the Family Jewels in 2007[19] should have ended much of the mythology about them. To begin with, the compendium is not a 693-page catalog of crime and immorality. Repetitive reports, duplicate documents, blank pages, file dividers, cover sheets, distribution lists, and news clippings comprise approximately 30 percent of the total. Among the remaining roughly 500 pages of substance, except for an account of the use of Mafioso Johnny Roselli in a plot to kill Castro, there are only passing references to already disclosed assassination plots and drug-testing programs and next to nothing of importance about purely foreign operations.

That should not be surprising because the whole point of Schlesinger's order that produced the Family Jewels was to get information about possible charter violations. Consequently, the collection is nearly all about activities involving US citizens or occurring inside the United States—most of the latter, as a CIA officer noted in one of the documents, were "completely innocent, although subject to misconstrual [sic]" in the political atmosphere of 1973—and includes many pages about CIA contact with the Plumbers and now-obscure characters such as fugitive financier Robert Vesco. The hypersensitivity at the time about anything that could be interpreted as having domestic political implications—or perhaps simply the bureaucratic instinct for self-protection—might explain the inclusion of the lengthy set of mundane documents about a small CIA expenditure for postal services on behalf of the White House and a memo about the Office of Logistics disposing of the National Security Council's classified trash.

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investigative reporter Seymour Hersh began to work on the story soon after.[a] (The source of his information is still unknown.) When Colby learned in early December 1974 that Hersh was looking into some potentially controversial operations the Agency had conducted in the United States—particularly MHCHAOS—he met with the journalist to try to set the record straight.

Instead, Hersh went far beyond what the DCI had told him and described a "massive, illegal" operation against US dissidents run by Angleton's CI Staff. In response to Hersh's story, Colby forced Angleton

into retirement, the White House quickly initiated an inquiry led by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, and the Senate and the House of Representatives set up investigative committees led by Frank Church and Otis Pike, respectively. By the time the public furor subsided around 1977, the agency's budget had been cut, some of its operations were restricted, and two permanent congressional committees oversaw its activities.

NSA and SHAMROCK

During this same time frame, NSA was investigated for its surveillance of US citizens through two programs.[6] SHAMROCK, started in 1945 by NSA's predecessor and active until 1975, involved collecting microfilm copies of telegraphic messages from the major US communications companies coming into, transiting, or being sent from the United States and reviewing them for actionable intelligence or law enforcement information, which was then passed to CIA, the FBI, the Secret Service, the Justice Department, or the Defense Department. At

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a. Hersh was one of a new cohort of investigative journalists working the national security beat that included Bob Woodward, Carl Bernstein, Daniel Schorr, and Jack Anderson later in his career. They moved beyond the gossipy reportage of Drew Pearson and made sensational scoops—often driven by leaks—about real and perceived government malfeasance and ineptitude.

SHAMROCK's peak, NSA collected 150,000 messages a month. The program had no court authorization and did not operate under any warrants.

More troubling in the context of the times was MINARET, a parallel program to the CIA's MHCHAOS, run from 1967 to 1973. It developed from a watch list begun in 1962 after the Cuban Missile Crisis to monitor who was traveling to Cuba and violated customary SIGINT rules by including information about US citizens along with that of foreigners. As dissent and violence intensified in the United States in the late 1960s, NSA expanded the watch list to include domestic terrorist and foreign radical suspects, drawing mainly on FBI information. Nearly 6,000 foreigners and 1,700 organizations and US citizens eventually were included on the lists, which were used for screening intercepted messages. NSA's Director, Lew Allen, testified in 1975 that the NSA had issued over 3,900 reports on the watch-listed Americans. Like SHAMROCK, MINARET had no court authorization and did not operate under any warrants.

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COINTELPRO

The FBI began COINTELPRO in 1956 to disrupt the activities of the Communist Party of the United States.[7] In the 1960s, it was expanded to include a number of other domestic groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, the Socialist Workers Party, the Black Panther Party, the American Indian Movement, and anti-Vietnam War organizers. All COINTELPRO operations were ended in 1971. Although

> ### Did CIA Spy on Martin Luther King, Jr.?
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> No. MHCHAOS investigated the foreign connections of, among other targets, Black civil rights activists and Black organizations such as Stokely Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver, and the Black Panthers, but that is as far as CIA went in looking at the civil rights movement in an organized fashion. The best treatment of MHCHAOS, by Frank Rafalko, who worked on the program, does not mention King as a target. In his book *The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.: From SOLO to Memphis*, historian David Garrow references CIA memos written in 1975 that contain denials that the CIA ever engaged in electronic surveillance or mail covers against King and state that no CIA representatives reported on his activities when he was overseas. The FBI, through its COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program, below) activities, surveilled and harassed King.

it represented a tiny fraction of the FBI's workload over those 15 years, it developed an outsized notoriety and was later criticized by Congress and the public for abridging First Amendment rights and in some cases using highly questionable methods, including forging documents, sending anonymous poison-pen letters, and falsely labeling members of a violent group as police informers.[a] FBI techniques did not include warrantless searches and electronic surveillance. COINTELPRO remained secret until March 8, 1971, when the Citizen's Commission to Investigate the FBI burgled the FBI field office in Media, Pennsylvania, took several files, and passed the material to news outlets.

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Army Surveillance Program

Starting around 1966, the US Army began tracking anti-war, civil rights, and other protesters in a program that grew over several years to include more than 1,500 overt and undercover operatives who monitored and infiltrated domestic groups and cataloged their members in a computerized database shared with service intelligence units throughout the country.[8] The program originated

in an effort to gather logistics information for the army's use during civil disturbances it might be called on to help quell. As riots and protests intensified in the later 1960s, it expanded well beyond those parameters. Run out of Fort Holabird, Maryland, the program appears to have been conducted with little or no oversight by civilian leaders in the army and the Department of Defense.

A former army intelligence officer exposed the operation in a magazine article in 1970 that prompted further journalistic investigations and, in 1971, a hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, chaired by Sam Ervin (D-NC) of later Watergate Committee fame. By that time, the press coverage had prompted Pentagon officials to curtail the program. Ervin, angered at its evident violations of constitutional rights, held the hearing anyway, taking testimony from top-ranking civilian and military officials of the Departments of the Army, Defense, and Justice along with that of former intelligence agents, analysts, and other witnesses. The subcommittee later issued two publications: "Federal Data Banks, Computers, and the Bill of Rights" in

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a. The FBI also ran a subsidiary operation to COINTELPRO called COMINFIL, which involved investigating legitimate non-Communist organizations that it suspected had been infiltrated by Communists to determine the extent to which they were influenced.

> *President Gerald Ford on January 4, 1975, established the President's Commission on CIA Activities within the United States, better known as the Rockefeller Commission after its chairman, Vice President Nelson Rockefeller.*

1972 and "Military Surveillance of Civilian Politics" in 1973.

Investigations

Soon after Hersh's article ran, the Ford administration and members of Congress mobilized in response. The White House's principal motive was damage control. Members of Congress had various purposes. Critics of US intelligence sought to expose IC excesses as a way to promote reform and meaningful oversight; friends of the IC wanted to protect it from what they saw as a threat to its operational effectiveness.

Rockefeller Commission

President Gerald Ford on January 4, 1975, established the President's Commission on CIA Activities within the United States, better known as the Rockefeller Commission after its chairman, Vice President Nelson Rockefeller. The commission was charged was charged with investigating the allegations in Hersh's exposé. Ford also hoped to forestall a congressional investigation into US intelligence, but the Senate and the House of Representatives soon began their own inquiries (see below).

The Rockefeller Commission examined CIA activities such as HTLINGUAL, MHCHAOS, and mind-control and drug-testing experiments on unwitting subjects (part of MKULTRA). It also reviewed CIA documents concerning the assassination of John F. Kennedy that CIA had withheld from the Warren Commission.

The commission issued its final report on June 6, 1975. Although defending the need for secret intelligence and concluding that some of CIA's domestic activities were legal, the report said that some CIA operations were "plainly unlawful and constituted improper invasions upon the rights of Americans."[9] The commission recommended that CIA be more clearly restricted to foreign intelligence activities and that it receive greater legislative and executive oversight. It found no credible evidence of CIA involvement in the Kennedy assassination.

The commission concluded this about MHCHAOS:

> *It was probably necessary for the CIA to accumulate an information base on domestic dissident activities in order to assess fairly whether the activities had foreign connections…. But the accumulation of domestic data in the Operation exceeded what was reasonably required to make such an assessment and was thus improper.*

> *The use of agents of the Operation on three occasions to gather information within the United States on strictly domestic matters was beyond the CIA's authority.*

The commission's report at the time was considered by many to be a whitewash, not least because its conclusions on CIA domestic surveillance were rather sympathetic. For example, the rebuke of the MHCHAOS operation depicted it as serving a valid foreign intelligence purpose and for being so compartmented that it was not subject to oversight. However, the commission did not address whether CIA should have been ordered to undertake the operation, which eventually violated the agency's charter by involving it in infiltrating domestic dissident groups.

Church Committee

Three weeks after the Rockefeller Commission was established, the Senate initiated its own investigation into the IC.[a, 10] On January 21, 1975, the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities—better known as the Church Committee, after its chairman, Frank Church (D-ID)—came into existence and was the first significant probe into the IC's activities that Congress had ever made. It lasted 15 months; held 126 full-committee hearings, 40 subcommittee meetings, 250 executive hearings, and 21 days of public hearings; conducted over 800 interviews; amassed 110,000 pages of documentation; issued 14 volumes of hearings and reports; and made 183 recommendations to the Senate.

Church started off the committee's work with his allegation that CIA was a "rogue elephant rampaging out of control" and with the intention to investigate any "illegal, improper, or unethical" behavior by the IC, including "the conduct of domestic intelligence or counterintelligence operations against American citizens." Much of the committee's effort

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a. See David Robarge, "Interview with Former US Senator Gary Hart," *Studies in Intelligence* 65, No.4 (December 2021).

went toward examining CIA activities in the Family Jewels, but it also addressed other sensational charges, such as assassination plots against foreign leaders and drug testing on unwitting Americans, as well as some covert actions and the IC budget. NSA and the FBI got their share of the investigatory spotlight for their domestic surveillance activities.

In its multi-volume final report issued in April 1976, the Church Committee concluded that rather than being out of control, CIA operated under presidential authorization—sometimes vague, sometimes explicit—but that congressional review of the IC had been lax. Among its more significant recommendations were the establishment of a standing Senate oversight committee, permanent intelligence agency charters, and controls on potential violations of individual rights.

The committee investigated COINTELPRO at length, including in a separate set of hearings over seven days. It concluded:

> *Many of the techniques used would be intolerable in a democratic society even if all of the targets had been involved in violent activity, but COINTEL-PRO went far beyond that. The unexpressed major premise of the program was that a law enforcement agency has the duty to do whatever is necessary to combat perceived threats to the existing social and political order…. [T]he Bureau conducted a sophisticated vigilante operation aimed squarely at preventing the exercise of First Amendment rights of speech and association, on the theory that preventing the growth of dangerous groups and the propagation of dangerous ideas would protect the national security and deter violence.*

Pike Committee

The Pike Committee, established on February 19, 1975, is the common name for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence during the period when it was chaired by Otis Pike (D-NY).[11] The committee's inquiry was the first significant House investigation of the IC since CIA's creation in 1947. Pike and his colleagues had a mandate, set to expire on January 31, 1976, to investigate similar subjects as the Church Committee, but unlike their Senate counterparts, they generally avoided sensational operational topics and focused on more strategic matters like the IC's analytical, operational, and budgetary effectiveness.

Despite that more measured approach, the Pike Committee had contentious relations with CIA and the White House over the committee's demand for voluminous documents, insistence on its own declassification authority, and propensity for leaking. Its final report was never officially published due to opposition from House members troubled by the potential effect on CIA activities. However, unauthorized versions of the final draft were leaked to the press, appearing first in *The Village Voice*. A full copy of the draft was later published in England.[12] Like Church, Pike backtracked from his initial contention that CIA was out of control and concluded that it operated under presidential authority. Among the committee's recommendations was one for a standing committee in the House that would have jurisdiction over all intelligence-related legislation and oversight functions.

Congressional Oversight

The committees significantly added to the new political environment in which US intelligence agencies were moved out of the shadows and expected to adhere to high standards of accountability. The emergence of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) amidst a growing climate of suspicion about US intelligence agencies marked a significant shift in public and congressional attitudes toward them and helped bring about a more regularized and professional oversight of intelligence.

SSCI

Believing Congress had not adequately monitored US intelligence services, the Church Committee in its final report in April 1976 proposed that a new body, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI), be created to provide the necessary degree of scrutiny.[13] The Senate moved quickly on that recommendation, taking up Senate Resolution 400 less than a month later. SR 400 stated that the IC members would keep the new committee "fully and currently informed" of their activities, including major anticipated ones.

On May 19, 1976, the Senate voted 72–22 in favor of the resolution.[a] The word "select" in the

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a. The Senate's changing attitude toward oversight, reflective of the changing times, is demonstrated in its votes on various legislation. In 1956, it voted down a proposal for a joint oversight committee, 59-27, and did so again 10 years later, 61-28. Then in 1975, the Senate

name meant that SSCI's members would be appointed by the Senate majority leader and minority leader, who would choose eight and seven, respectively. In addition to being briefed on IC activities, SSCI also would review the IC's budget and hold hearings on nominees for director and deputy director (and, later, the inspector general and general counsel).

HPSCI

At the urging of newly elected Speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill (D-MA), on July 14, 1977, the House passed a resolution creating HPSCI.[14] The lengthy delay in creating an oversight body on the House side is attributable in large part to the partisan rancor and confrontational approach of the Pike Committee. The less-than-overwhelming vote to establish HPSCI, 227 to 171, reflected lingering sentiments from that episode.

Despite a purported reluctance in the House to repeat the disagreeable experience of the Pike Committee, HPSCI was set up along distinctly partisan lines. Unlike the resolution that created SSCI, which mandated that no more than eight of the 15 members come from the majority party, the HPSCI resolution stipulated that membership of the committee would reflect the party strength in the House as a whole. Since 2003, the committee has had 11 members (excluding the chairman) from the majority party and nine from the minority party. Similarly, while the SSCI vice chairman was drawn from the minority party, the next ranking member of the majority party chairs

sessions in the absence of the HPSCI chairman.

Greater Accountability

During the next few years, Congress rode the momentum to launch several investigations into various intelligence matters. The Senate looked into IC estimates of Soviet strategic weapons, the IC budget, and CIA covert action. The House set up probes into CIA's use of journalists as assets, its connection to the Kennedy assassination, and its crisis warning process, and it closely examined CIA's budget and covert activities. Congress also considered new charter legislation for the agency, and in 1980 it passed the Intelligence Oversight Act requiring that it be "fully and currently informed" about covert action programs.[15]

FISA

Although a broad statutory charter for what the IC could and could not engage in proved too difficult for Congress to enact, the administration of President Jimmy Carter, both chambers, and the IC were able to agree generally on the need for more congressional oversight of intelligence, especially in the area of domestic operations. Warrantless electronic surveillance undertaken within the United States for foreign intelligence purposes drew especially close attention on Capitol Hill. Members wanted to preserve Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches of US citizens by instituting a review mechanism to ensure that only validated foreign intelligence targets were subject to non-consensual eavesdropping.

The result of congressional deliberations on this issue was the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA)—the first piece of legislation to emerge directly from the 1975–76 investigations.[16] The law passed easily in both houses, and President Carter signed it into law on October 25, 1978. FISA established a special tribunal, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC)—located at the Department of Justice and operating in secret—to hear detailed applications and justifications for electronic surveillance warrants. The new law set forth standards upon which such applications would be granted.

The law did not mention CIA per se and did not directly affect its activities. However, if the agency wanted electronic surveillance to be carried out in the United States for foreign intelligence purposes—which it typically requested the FBI conduct—such requests would have to meet the criteria of the FISA. Notwithstanding this potentially negative effect on operations, CIA supported the new law.

Executive Orders

As a result of the Rockefeller Commission and Church-Pike Committees inquiries, President Gerald Ford issued the first executive order governing US intelligence activities, E.O. 11905, on February 18, 1976. This order was intended not only to create clear guidelines for the intelligence agencies but also to protect the IC from more drastic curtailments Congress appeared set to impose. In an effort to address the real and alleged excesses revealed

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approved setting up the Church Committee with minuscule opposition and the next year established the SSCI in an overwhelming vote. Four years later, the Senate passed the Intelligence Oversight Act by an 89-1 vote.

The US polity has never developed a societal consensus on how to balance trust and suspicion in the context of national security.

in the various investigations, particularly when US persons were involved, CIA, NSA, and Defense Intelligence Agency were prohibited from collecting information on US persons, engaging in searches and seizures within the United States or against US persons, opening or examining US mail, investigating tax returns, or experimenting with drugs on humans. The FBI, which the order excluded as not being a "foreign intelligence (collection) agency," was not subject to these rules.

President Jimmy Carter's issued the more restrictive E.O. 12036 on January 24, 1978. Intended to close loopholes in Ford's order, E.O. 12036 demonstrated Carter's strong distrust of CIA and the other intelligence agencies in his early years in office and the impact of the recent disclosures about the IC's domestic operations. The new order contained provisions limiting certain collection activities in ways to "protect constitutional rights and privacy, ensure that information is gathered by the least intrusive means possible, and limit use of such information to lawful governmental purposes."

> *No agency within the Intelligence Community shall engage in any electronic surveillance directed against a United States person abroad or designed to intercept a communication sent from, or intended for receipt*

> *within, the United States except as permitted by the procedures established [elsewhere in the E.O.].*

> *No agency within the Intelligence Community shall use any electronic or mechanical device surreptitiously and continuously to monitor any person within the United States, or any United States person abroad, except as permitted by the procedures established [elsewhere in the E.O.].*

> *No agency within the Intelligence Community shall open mail or examine envelopes in United States postal channels, except in accordance with applicable statutes and regulations. No agency within the Intelligence Community shall open mail of a United States person abroad except as permitted by procedures established [elsewhere in the E.O.].*[17]

Conclusion

Debates about Section 702 renewal are the latest manifestation of Americans' vacillation between preferring an emphasis on liberty or on security. This pattern goes back to the earliest days of the republic with

the Alien and Sedition Acts and can be seen in episodes such the suspension of habeas corpus and press censorship during the Civil War, Red Scare after World War I, internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, Second Red Scare in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the domestic surveillance during the 1960s detailed, counterintelligence vigilance practiced after the arrest of Aldrich Ames in 1994, and NSA's post-9/11 communications and internet monitoring.

As each period of conflict or perceived threat subsides, the public gets "security fatigue" and swings in the other direction until the next outbreak of hostilities or the next security or counterintelligence scandal. The US polity has never developed a societal consensus on how to balance trust and suspicion in the context of national security. This bifurcated view, built into our civic culture, is an inevitable and unchangeable trait of the US political system. Apropos here is former DCI Robert Gates's comment a week after Soviet and Russian spy Robert Hanssen was caught in 2001: "In any democratic society, counterintelligence [or counterterrorism] is decidedly difficult and will never be perfect. It wasn't perfect in the totalitarian Soviet Union, and it certainly won't be in America."[18]

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The author: David Robarge is CIA's chief historian.

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Endnotes

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Cambodia's Role in Shipping Arms to Communist Forces in South Vietnam, 1966–70: Competing CIA and US Military Estimates

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From the Introduction to ER IM 70-188, December 1970.

In September 1970, this Agency [CIA] *published ER IM* [Economic Research Intelligence Memorandum] *70-126,* New Evidence On Military Deliveries to Cambodia: December 1966 – April 1969, *which presented our preliminary analysis of documentary evidence on the flow of military supplies to VC/NVA forces via the port of Kompong Som (Sihanoukville). Since the publication of IM 70-126, CIA has received and made available to the community more than 12,000 pages of additional documentation providing detailed and highly reliable data on the scope and nature of the Communists' logistic activities carried out through Cambodia to support VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam.*

A special task force set up to exploit these documents has completed its validation and analysis of the new evidence, and this memorandum is the first product resulting from that effort. This memorandum presents revisions of the estimates made in IM 70-126 of the volume of military supplies delivered via Sihanoukville from December 1966 to April 1969 as well as new data on some overland deliveries via Laos.[1]

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With that extraordinary introduction to its revised estimates, CIA essentially signaled that it had finally lost its extended debate with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) and other military commands about the quantities and delivery routes of ordnance shipped through Cambodia to North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong (VC) units in South Vietnam. It was a consequential dispute, the outcome of which had the potential to influence US decisions to widen the Vietnam War to Cambodia and alter or end bombing campaigns in Laos.

At cost to CIA's credibility with the Nixon administration, its analysts had misinterpreted the importance of communist China's shipments into Cambodia's relatively new port, Sihanoukville, and underestimated the amount of ordnance being transported from there to communist forces in South Vietnam.

Vietnam-based military intelligence, in contrast, had consistently offered higher and—in hindsight—more accurate figures about tonnage reaching the communists through Cambodia. Gen. Bruce Palmer, a deputy commander of US Army forces in South Vietnam (1966–67), wrote in his 1984 assessment in this journal of the IC's performance during the Vietnam War that the failure was "one of the very few times CIA and the Washington-based

IC made a major misjudgment with respect to the Vietnam War."[2] This essay uses declassified CIA and military records to account for the failure while attempting to assess why MACV's estimates were closer to the mark.

The Beginning of the Unraveling of CIA's Position

As the introduction to ER IM 70-188 tacitly noted, CIA's failure became apparent after improvements in human intelligence (HUMINT) reporting begun by 1968 on the so-called Sihanoukville Route led to the acquisition of more than 12,000 pages of manifests and shipping documents of Chinese merchant ships offloading arms in Sihanoukville. This material provided extraordinarily detailed and reliable evidence about the magnitude of the Sino-Cambodian transshipment effort.[3]

The evidence provided a new, reliable baseline for assessing the validity of MACV and CIA estimates on the flow of munitions into South Vietnam. The shipping manifests and other documents supported the conclusion that CIA analysts had repeatedly underestimated the extent of PRC arms deliveries to Sihanoukville, its relative importance, and the quantity of weapons and ammunition transshipped from there to enemy forces in South Vietnam.

For example, even in mid-1970, CIA judged that only 7,100 tons of ordnance (part of a total of 11,200 tons of all military supplies) had been delivered via Sihanoukville; MACV, by contrast, had estimated 17,800 tons of ordnance alone.[4][5] With the publication of ER IM 70-188 and a followup unclassified memorandum

in February 1971, CIA revised its estimate to state more than 21,000 tons of munitions actually had been delivered along the Sihanoukville Route. (See bar graph below.)[6]

As we will see in this article, the divergences in CIA and MACV assessments reflected differences in how both organizations used evidence to answer key intelligence questions about the Sihanoukville Route. The questions pertained to the amount, composition, and ultimate destination for unidentified cargo delivered during at least nine port visits of Chinese-flagged ships to Sihanoukville following a military agreement signed between Cambodia and China in October 1966. Subsidiary questions included the role of the alternative delivery route overland down the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the amount of non-military cargo included in the Chinese deliveries, and the split in deliveries between the Cambodian military and the NVA/VC. MACV would argue

that most of the cargo was arms and ammunition intended for transshipment to enemy forces in much of South Vietnam. CIA argued that the tonnage of munitions being delivered could not be reliably estimated from the available sources, but it was likely to be much less than the amounts MACV estimated.

The Problem of Sources and Analytic Rigor

The multi-year debate between CIA (and other elements of the IC) and MACV shows that understanding the Sihanoukville issue was *not* straightforward, given major intelligence gaps and troves of human intelligence reports of questionable provenance. The suspect nature of the available evidence helps explain why a top-notch team of seasoned logistics analysts at CIA fared so poorly in assessing a critical line of communication while counterparts in MACV
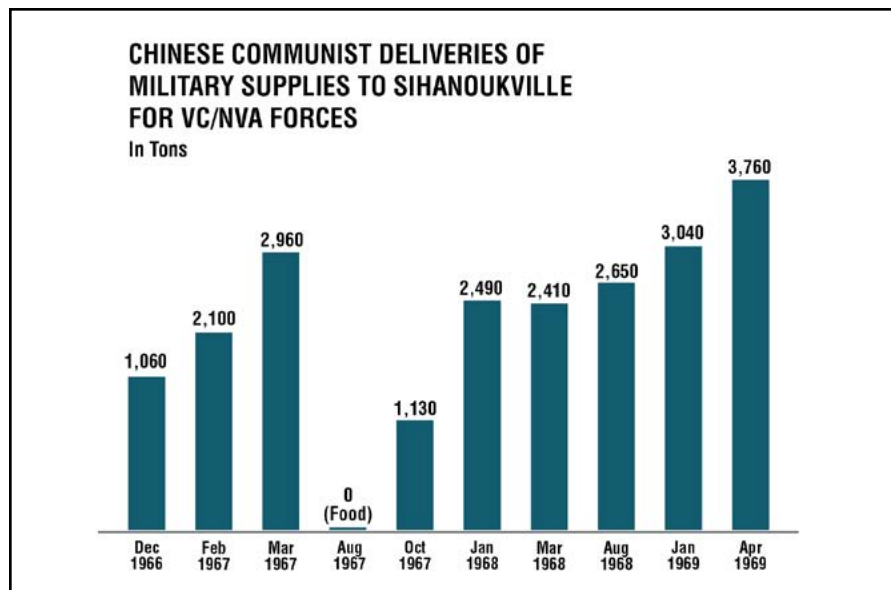
This bar graph contained in the February 5, 1971, memorandum shows the 21,600 tons of total volume of PRC military supply shipments (ordnance [21,000] and non-ordnance) aboard 10 freighters unloaded in Sihanoukville from December 1966 through April 1969.

J-2 devised far more accurate tonnage estimates.

The CIA Point of View

The logistics experts in the CIA's Office of Economic Research (OER) were respected for their earlier work in analyzing the effects of the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign.[7] They had also had a long record of evaluating the economic aspects of threats posed by the Soviet Union. According to a heavily redacted, declassified study of the Sihanoukville case by contract CIA historian Thomas Ahern in 2004,[8, a] OER analysts displayed great trust in their technically more rigorous conceptual models and their judgment of all-source reporting than did their counterparts in military intelligence. Analysts in OER also conducted periodic internal reviews that challenged the methodologies and conclusions of their previous analyses, according to Ahern.[9] Unfortunately, the results also revealed flawed assumptions about transportation facilities through Cambodia and about projected VC logistic requirements, according to Ahern's treatment of the subject in his recently published memoir.[10]

The CIA team was most vexed by the challenge of finding HUMINT sources which were deemed reliable but also offering sufficiently broad perspective for national-level finished intelligence reporting. CIA official documents and oral histories reveal the agency's high standards of analytic tradecraft for using HUMINT

a. Ahern's monograph, *Good Questions, Wrong Answers* provides a superb baseline for understanding the CIA-MACV debate. The book informed some of my conclusions here. Most of the raw reporting Ahern used has not been declassified so could not be weighed independently.

CIA Views on Reliability of Evidence

The following characterizations—relying on Ahern's study, declassified contemporaneous analytic products, and memoirs and biographies of CIA officials—reveal how fraught was the process of evaluating Sihanoukville HUMINT, particularly when trying to judge reporting from theater-controlled collection assets. Describing the difficulty of the process, Ahern wrote, "the Sihanoukville traffic required interpretation of each report, source authenticity and reliability, the access of both primary and subsources, and the inherent plausibility of content." He summarized: "Even the best reporting, up to the spring of 1969, was low-level and incomplete."[a] Additional observations include the following.

Sihanoukville as an analytical problem arose in a welter of raw reports, some of them alleging an arms traffic that did not exist for a full two years after the first claims for it.

Fanciful early allegations of deliveries through Sihanoukville inevitably and, to a point, legitimately discredited agent reporting. When knowledgeable CIA sources began producing better information, some of it as early as 1967, it was at first fragmentary and always subject to inconsistencies and even contradictions.

The modest flow of well-sourced, plausible information tended to be obscured by a flood of less credible material.[b]

Retired CIA Deputy Director for Intelligence R. Jack Smith would write of the challenges his analysts faced in his memoir:

Unfortunately, the intelligence reports they had to work with were of poor quality, full of hearsay from third- or fourth-hand sources. Exploiting the shoddy material to the maximum, and guided to a degree by the judgment that the flow down the Ho Chi Minh Trail was in itself almost sizeable enough to account for enemy materiel in South Vietnam, the DI analysts arrived at a figure for tonnage through South Vietnam that was approximately half of MACV's estimate.[c]

An October 1969 briefing paper on reporting and CIA analysis on the subject of Sihanoukville's relative importance noted:

In recent months there has accumulated a large body of clandestine reporting that points to Cambodia as an important route for such supplies which, as it is argued, arrive by sea at the port of Sihanoukville and are transported surreptitiously . . . to the South Vietnamese border."[d]

A January 1970 memo addressed to Secretary of Defense Laird observed:

Our knowledge of supply movements through Cambodia has improved markedly over the past several months. . . Nonetheless, we are not able to quantify the "Cambodian flow" with precision to permit meaningful arithmetic comparison with the Laotian flow."[e]

a. Thomas L Ahern, Jr., *Good Questions, Wrong Answers,* 18, 41.
b. All quotes are from *Good Questions, Wrong Answers*, vii, 48 and 9, respectively.
c. R. Jack Smith, *The Unknown CIA: My Three Decades with the Agency* (Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, Inc., 1989), 34–35.
d. CIA report, "An Evaluation of Recent Clandestine Reporting on Cambodia," October 1969, iii, in [3] CIA-RDP78T02095R000200090001-8).
e. DCI Richard Helms to Secretary of Defense Laird, January 28, 1970, forwarding blind memo "Logistics Flow to the Enemy in South Vietnam," in [5] CIA-RDP78T02095R000600200001-1).

> ***MACV admitted that many of its sources were low level but wrote that it had access to more reliable ones. Describing ordnance shipments through Sihanoukville, the Combined Intelligence Center wrote in May 1968 that they used "mostly low-level sources, many of which are unconfirmed, laced with ambiguity, and even in some cases fabricated."***

reports and skepticism about many of the reports coming in about the Sihanoukville Route. Summaries of the reporting reveal that few sources thought to be reliable were evident during much of the route's existence. Even by late 1968, CIA reporting suggested only modest improvements in sources, although OER analysts concluded they had sufficient evidence to show complicity by elements of the Cambodian government in shipping military supplies to Vietnam.[11]

That modest judgment, as we have seen in the late 1970 and early 1971 memorandums cited above, turned into the view that Cambodia had "acquired significance" as an arms supply channel in the last two or so years, although the alternative route through Laos continued to be the "predominant" supply channel.[12] The Sihanoukville Route by then carried as much as half of the military supplies destined for Communist forces in the southern part of South Vietnam, according to the revised CIA estimate.[13]

The MACV Point of View

In contrast, MACV and subordinate commands judged they had good sources by 1968, notwithstanding the IC's reservations and the suspicion that theater analysts were accepting sources and reporting with unwarranted credulity. Oral histories suggested that leaders in theater had better faith in some of the sources

than their CIA counterparts, although MACV did divide some of the reports into "probable" and "possible" categories. Additionally, CIA and MACV in some instances may have been referring to the same higher-quality sources that had begun to appear in 1968.

MACV admitted that many of its sources were low level but wrote that it had access to more reliable ones.[14] Describing ordnance shipments through Sihanoukville, the Combined Intelligence Center wrote in May 1968 that they used "mostly low-level sources, many of which are unconfirmed, laced with ambiguity, and even in some cases fabricated."[15] However, MACV J-2 reporting on arms deliveries into Sihanoukville in 1968 came from a variety of sources, including "two independent, reliable sources." MACV reported that its sources included the Australian military attaché in Phnom Penh, US Naval Forces Vietnam coded sources, and CIA.[16]

Under Adm. Elmo Zumwalt (Commander, Naval Forces Vietnam (CNFV)) and his deputy for intelligence, Capt. Rex Rectanus, MACV and CNFV made inroads against the Sihanoukville target in 1968. Gen. Phillip Davidson, the MACV J-2, lauded CNFV's success in his oral history:

> *They had some agents working in Sihanoukville. They began to*

put this stuff together, and they came up one day, and we had a big briefing and talk, and I said, "Well, it sounds really good, but I don't think we have enough to really go public with it at this time. Let's just keep watching it." And we did, and they were very convincing, I thought.[17]

Admiral Zumwalt also praised the theater intelligence effort in his autobiography: "He (Rectanus) had a very good network of agents in Cambodia, and he had a good network within the South Vietnamese. We were getting, generally, very good intelligence."[18] Zumwalt continued, saying that Rectanus

> *had completed an analysis of the entire VC logistics system that proved to be more accurate than anything either CIA or DIA had. He was the first person to conclude that Cambodia had become the major logistics depot for the VC delta operations and that this depot was being reinforced by Communist shipping into Sihanoukville and then by truck to the Cambodia border.[19]*

Even with what he considered to be good sources during his 1968–69 tour, Rectanus subsequently recalled that convincing national-level intelligence analysts of Cambodia's logistics role in the conflict was problematic:

> *The analysts that they (CIA and State) sent out there on numerous occasions just couldn't be budged. Now (I don't know) whether it's because the analysts themselves really didn't believe us, didn't believe that our analysis was good as it was (although we went over everything with*

them ad nauseam), or whether they were told by Washington.[20]

MACV's precise methodology in using each individual report is not available in the declassified documents, but the command seemed to have taken more of a statistical approach than national production centers in compiling its estimates. Implicit in some of the theater estimates seemed to be the concept that the more reports stating an event had occurred—however tactical they might be—the more probable it was. Reading the summaries from the command today almost seems like reviewing an early form of crowd-sourcing.

MACV several times referred to the number of reports as probable evidence of the reliability of an estimate. MACV Commander Gen. Creighton Abrams, for example, repeatedly used this technique in a "personal for" message transmitted to the chairman of JCS, in December 1968.[21] He sprinkled reporting statistics throughout the message. Building a case for the complicity of the Cambodian army (known as the FARK, from the French *Forces Armées Royales Khmères*), he wrote that 29 reports of varying reliability had described enemy personnel in the act of unloading ordnance from Cambodian army vehicles. Continuing to build the argument, Abrams observed that since October 10, 1968, nine reports from fairly reliable sources had implicated senior FARK officers as active participants in the growing arms traffic. Another 33 reports depicted the delivery of ordnance to border areas in II, III, and to a lesser extent in IV Corps.[22] This theme of conferring validity based on reporting volume appeared in other MACV estimates.

Map showing the four Corps Tactical Zones or Military Regions of the Vietnam War period. Source: *Studies in Intelligence* special edition, "Intelligence and the Vietnam War," (1984).

In-Country Meetings to Resolve the Dispute Inconclusive

Senior CIA officials— including DDI Jack Smith, George Carver, and James Graham (Office of National Estimates)—and analysts visited MACV several times between 1966 and 1970 in fruitless attempts to establish common ground on the Sihanoukville question. A summary of a single case illustrates the recurring dynamics of the debate throughout the period. A well-documented exchange between IC analysts led by James Graham and MACV personnel held in Saigon during November–December 1968 illustrated how issues of sourcing and estimates provided divergent answers to the questions of Sihanoukville's importance. In this instance, James Graham and members of CIA, DIA, and State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research visited the Commander in Chief/Pacific in Hawaii and major commands in Saigon to address the dispute.[23]

They were fully briefed in-country on collection and analysis on

arms shipments via Cambodia. They examined MACV's intelligence holdings, reviewed the methodology used to estimate munitions imports into Sihanoukville, and discussed problems relating to evaluation of intelligence reporting.[24] The exchanges revealed convergence on the issue of FARK complicity in the Sihanoukville Route and confirmed that CIA had access to all theater intelligence reports on Sihanoukville. At the same time, the documentation shows the gaps between their positions. The following illustrates elements of the debate.

In Graham's report of the meeting, he wrote that "essential differences" remained between the two commands:

- quantities of arms moving via Sihanoukville to Vietnam,

- the relationship between arms deliveries to Sihanoukville and Cambodian military requirements, and

- the extent to which Communist forces were denied access to other supply routes, notably the overland route through Laos.[25]

The differences had also been addressed at about the same time in 1968, when reconsideration of US bombing strategy prompted General Abrams to send a cable to Washington strongly denouncing proposals to end US bombing. The Abrams cable led to a flurry of CIA responses, both doubting the utility of the bombing campaign and MACV judgments about the role of Cambodia as a arms supply route, for example:

General Creighton W. Abrams, Commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, from 1968 until 1972, was a key proponent of the military's argument that the quantity of arms flows through Sihanoukville to southern South Vietnam was far higher than CIA acknowledged. Abrams appeared three times on the covers of the weekly between 1961 and 1971. © Collection Serge Mouraret/Alamy Stock Photo.

In our view, MAC-V is considerably overstating Cambodia's present role in the VC/NVA logistical system. We believe their long-standing north-south overland supply routes from North Vietnam through Laos, South Vietnam and border areas of Cambodia are still the principal supply channel for Communist forces in South Vietnam. These routes not only remain capable of meeting Communist needs despite allied air strikes but actual truck traffic detected moving to southern Laos indicates that the volume being moved southward is sufficient to meet the external needs of Communist forces in adjacent and more southerly areas of South Vietnam.[26]

What's more, a formal CIA/DI Intelligence Memorandum directly challenged Abrams' assertion that a halt to bombing would drastically increase the flow of equipment to communists. In effect, the then closely held memorandum said the bombing had been making no difference:

The experience of over three and one-half years of observing the impact of the Rolling Thun-

General Abrams summarized MACV's position by writing, "The Cambodia option remains as the enemy's logical if not his only choice. . . . Cambodia is the primary line of communication for arms and ammunition reaching enemy forces in II, III, and IV Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ)."

der bombing programs shows little direct relationship between the level and nature of given interdiction campaigns and the movement of supplies from North to South Vietnam. The level of logistics activity is more directly related to the size of the enemy forces in South Vietnam, the level of combat, and enemy intentions. Hanoi seems fully capable of delivering to South Vietnam the level of men and supplies it deems necessary, even though the bombings affect the ease, speed, and cost of delivery.[27]

Perhaps confidence in the effects of the Rolling Thunder campaign might explain MACV's propensity at the time to see, as George Carver would explain in 1970, Sihanoukville as a "major factor" since October 1966.[28] He elaborated that the IC felt there was little hard evidence for serious or significant use of the Cambodia channel before mid-1968.[29] General Abrams summarized MACV's position by writing,

The Cambodia option remains as the enemy's logical if not his only choice. . . . Cambodia is the primary line of communication for arms and ammunition reaching enemy forces in II, III, and IV Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ).[30]

Accordingly, MACV offered sharply higher estimates for ordnance being delivered to Sihanoukville than those prepared by the IC, while CIA publicly argued that it could not estimate the tonnage reliably given the available numbers, attacked MACV's methodology, and privately developed far lower estimates. General

Abrams wrote in December 1968 that 11 probable arms shipments had delivered more than 13,000 tons of materiel to Sihanoukville.[31] Abrams continued that, during the past year, approximately 10,668 tons of suspected ordnance had been delivered to Sihanoukville and 10,035 tons of ordnance had been delivered to NVA/VC camps along the Cambodian border.[32]

Washington analysts instead argued that no one knew for certain how many tons of arms entered Sihanoukville or what the consumption, equipping and stockpile requirements of the FARK might be.[33] They saw a "considerably smaller volume" of confirmed deliveries than MACV."[34] Another CIA memorandum complained, "MACV classed all the military deliveries to Sihanoukville as arms and ammunition and failed to distinguish between arms and other military supplies."[35] George Carver later wrote in 1970 that some military supplies were not manifested as such and others were mixed with ordnance consignment assigned to FARK. His note concluded, "The spongy nature of much of this evidence has not permitted precise quantification of the supplies via this route."[36]

Despite CIA's official position that the tonnage delivered could not be reliably calculated, CIA internal studies suggested a minimum figure of only 1,600 to 1,700 tons of arms and ammunition had been delivered during the same 21-month period for which

MACV previously cited imports over 13,000 tons.[37] The note added that the CIA figure was "almost certainly low, with "possible" tonnages added, it might reach 7,000 to 8,000 tons.[38]

In his December 31, 1968, report on the visit to Vietnam noted above, senior team member Graham, citing CIA positions, admitted that in theory the tonnage of ordnance delivered to the NVA/VC might be calculated by establishing amounts off-loaded in port and subtracting Cambodian military requirements. The CIA position was, however, that there was insufficient reliable reporting to do this.[39] Agency analysts noted that MACV was convinced that it had sufficient intelligence to perform these calculations and to reach "firm conclusions."[40] MACV's position had been that the "bulk of these shipments" went directly to the NVA/VC.[41] CIA implied that MACV's estimate that FARK required 350 tons of ordnance annually was low but did not offer an alternative.[42]

The argument over the role of a southern extension of the Ho Chi Minh Trail overland to Cambodia was almost as fierce as the fight over Sihanoukville, since the trails were linked in the eyes of the debaters. The overland route extended overland from North Vietnam through Laos, the tri-border area, and southward on a network of trails and road segments along the Cambodian border to the III Corps. The CIA position was that the evidence for the use of the extension was more substantial than evidence

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Abrams in December 1968 argued, "The contention that enemy forces in III CTZ are receiving the majority of their ordnance via the Laotian overland route still fails to be substantiated by the facts."

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of Sihanoukville's importance and, in effect, proved that the North Vietnamese relied "primarily on the overland route."[43]

Hanoi would not need both trail systems to support its forces in southern South Vietnam since each alone had the capacity to provide this support. So, the debate focused over which system was actually being used *more* and (from CIA's perspective) which was *more salient* to Hanoi. The debate again entailed attacks on each other's evidence, but before 1970, CIA used indirect evidence, some of it based on an unproven assumption, to buttress its case.[44][45][46]

CIA also argued that all the evidence—efforts to improve roads and trails, shipments south to the tri-border area, a few reports of logistic activity along the trails, and use of the trails for personnel movements—sufficed to indicate that the overland route was the "basic channel" for arms and ammunition to communist forces in I, II, and III Corps.[47] Agency analysts repeatedly argued that Hanoi would not abandon the proven overland trail for the Sihanoukville connection, a route it did not control, and which the Cambodian government could deny or obstruct without much warning—a judgment questioned in later investigations.[48]

In contrast, Abrams in December 1968 argued, "The contention that enemy forces in III CTZ are receiving the majority of their ordnance via the

Laotian overland route still fails to be substantiated by the facts," continuing that in Laos "below BA 610 there has been no change in the meager traffic flow recorded since December 1967."[a][49] He reported that an average of 8 tons per day was moving south of BA 610 toward the Cambodian border, and MACV judged that those shipments were primarily destined for enemy forces in southern I CTZ and local support forces in southern Laos.[50]

Stalemate Continued

The result of the November–December 1968 IC-MACV meetings was a stalemate with little movement on fundamental analytic issues, although some agreement on the issue of FARK complicity was reached. CIA leadership, according to a formerly classified biography of then CIA Director Richard Helms, concluded that OER's tonnage estimate was the best that could be established from inferior materials.[51] Their judgments reflected their confidence in the high quality of the CIA's logistics analysis in the past and their recognition of "the penchant for the military arriving at 'worst case' judgments," according to the biography.[52]

Ground Truth on Sihanoukville Route Finally Established in 1970

The major CIA intelligence breakthrough of 1970 finally answered the hotly contested questions, particularly

about the relative importance of the two trails, ordnance deliveries to Sihanoukville, long-term throughput on each trail, tonnage going to FARK, and quantities of ordnance finally reaching NVA/VC base camps along the border. According to Ahern, then assigned to CIA's Phnom Penh Station, a Cambodian officer named Les Kosem, who had been responsible for managing the flow of supplies from China to the NVA, volunteered to give CIA the records of all Chinese munitions and supplies sent to the Vietnamese Communists through Cambodia.[b] CIA headquarters sent its most knowledgeable analyst to work with Kosem's officer to exploit the 12,000 pages of data he provided. The insights became the foundation of CIA's reevaluations of its earlier estimates published in 1970 and excerpted above.[53]

To establish its new baseline, CIA that December forwarded the ER IM 70-188, *Communist Deliveries to Cambodia for the VC/NVA Forces in South Vietnam, December 1966–April 1969*, December 1970, along with an attached CIA history of the Sihanoukville Route to national-level decisionmakers and theater commanders. The memo noted, "We believe the documents constitute a virtually complete set of Cambodia's records on the supplies and materials furnished the Communists with the cooperation of the Cambodian government."[54] Characterizing the 12,000 pages of evidence, it explained, "The circumstances of acquisition were such as to establish the authenticity of the material."[55] The documents offered "the most conclusive available

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a. The general's comment suggest that BA 610 was located 350 kilometers north of the Cambodian border.
b. At this point, Prince Sihanouk had been ousted and shipping of Chinese weaponry to Cambodia had ended.

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CHINESE COMMUNIST MILITARY DELIVERIES TO VC/NVA FORCES VIA SIHANOUKVILLE, 1966-1970

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Table 5

Ordnance Deliveries
to Border Areas, by Province

	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970 (Tons)
Mondolkiri	20	3,090	850	380	300
Svay Rieng	--	900	2,160	700	100
Kompong Cham	70	1,480	1,120	270	90
Kratie	--	410	1,660	600	260
Ratanakiri	--	980	260	--	--
Kampot	20	440	260	200	240
Prey Veng/ Kandal/Takeo	--	260	--	200	610
Other	--	160	80	--	--
Total	110	7,740	6,390	2,360	1,600

Note: Information on border deliveries is incomplete. For this reason total tonnages delivered above do not exactly agree with tonnages delivered to Sihanoukville.

evidence of the critical importance of the Sihanoukville supply route."[56]

ER IM 70-188 pointed out that Cambodia in early 1966 had participated in PRC programs to provide mostly non-military supplies to Communists in the II, III, and IV Corps regions in South Vietnam. By December,1966, however, the Sihanoukville Route opened with the arrival of a PRC-flag arms carrier to Sihanoukville with arms bound for South Vietnam; the route became an "elaborate and sophisticated" network.[57]

Chinese merchant ships delivered 21,600 tons of military supplies to Sihanoukville from December 1966 through April 1969 as shown in the bar graph on page 12, according to the December 1970 intelligence memorandum.[58] Overall military deliveries included weapons, ammunition and explosives, radios, and engineering equipment, which were detailed in a separate memorandum summarizing some of this information in February 1971. The memo began by noting that all the figures were approximate, but were believed accurate within 10 percent.[59, a, 60]

The Sihanoukville Route was efficient because Cambodian officials rapidly unloaded Chinese arms carriers. Under FARK supervision, truck convoys then moved the ordnance to a storage depot at Kompong Speu for transshipment to Communist forces.[61] The FARK received a "cut" of supplies ranging as high as 10 percent

a. From July 1968 through May 1969, four Soviet arms carriers delivered ordnance to Cambodia under the Soviet-Cambodian military aid agreement of February 1968. CIA analysts assessed that the cargo was consigned to FARK.

Sihanoukville reinforced "the negative impression of the quality of CIA analysis held by members of the Nixon administration."

of all deliveries entering the pipeline, or about 459 tons in addition to 822 tons of legitimate military aid.[62] Ultimately, CIA traced 18,000 tons—85 percent of military deliveries—to NVA/VC base camps in Cambodia arrayed from the far northeast to the southern border.[63] These are shown in the map and table (facing page) that were included in the memorandum.

North Vietnam also occasionally used the overland route through Laos to funnel supplies directly into South Vietnam, according to the new study, but less than 4 percent of ordnance traffic to southern South Vietnam moved this way compared to the Sihanoukville Route.[64] The Vietnamese trucked ordnance down Route 110 in Laos to the Tonle Kong River where it was placed on boats and moved south to Stun Treng. There, they loaded it on trucks and delivered directly to Communist base camps along the Cambodian border as far south as Snoul and Mimot. Deliveries to Cambodia via this route totaled only about 850 tons in four shipments occurring between 1966 and 1968, according to the December 1970 memorandum.[65]

Impact and Investigations

Use of the Sihanoukville Route did not alter the war's outcome, but it provided the enemy a way of conveniently shipping large volumes of arms to South Vietnam without having to take the much longer, tortuous route down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. In the judgment of CIA analysts, North Vietnam had shipped "extremely large quantities" of ordnance via

Sihanoukville, in their estimation enough to equip on a one-time basis over 600 NVA/VC infantry battalions; the number of crew-served weapons would have equipped slightly more than 200 battalions. The deliveries included 222,000 individual weapons, more than 16,000 crew served-weapons, 173 million rounds for rifles and light machine guns, almost 11 million rounds for crew-served weapons, and over one-half million mines and hand grenades, according to the history accompanying the new baseline memorandum.[66 67]

Misjudging the Sihanoukville Route's role further damaged the agency's reputation in the Nixon White House. Within two years of the autumn 1968 meetings, CIA and its masters, including Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, viewed the flawed analysis as a major intelligence failure demanding formal reviews. Richard Helms stated the failure "was an acutely embarrassing moment for Directorate of Intelligence analysts, and even more so for the Director of Central Intelligence."[68] Sihanoukville reinforced "the negative impression of the quality of CIA analysis held by members of the Nixon administration," according to his formerly classified biography.[69] In the eyes of the new administration, CIA was again taking a negative, anti-war line. Its delay in recognizing Sihanoukville's importance followed its "opposition to MACV's order of battle figures and its pessimistic assessment of the Rolling Thunder bombing program," according to the biography.[70]

For example, in a meeting with his Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board in mid-1970, President Nixon wondered, "If such mistakes could be made on a fairly straightforward issue such as this, how should we judge CIA's assessments of more important developments such as Chinese communist military capabilities?"[71]

He went on to order the board to investigate the "entire background" to the IC's "misreading of the importance of Sihanoukville."[72] He closed that session by calling for the board to give "very close attention to the case," which represented "one of the worst records ever compiled by the intelligence community."[73] Adding, that he

> simply cannot put up with people lying to the President of the United States about intelligence. If intelligence is inadequate or if the intelligence depicts a bad situation, he wants to know it and he will not stand being served warped evaluations.[74]

Kissinger subsequently cited methodological problems as being at the heart of the failure, during a staff meeting in February 1971.[75] He said that Sihanoukville was "one of our greatest intelligence failures," and added, "After all, it isn't Outer Mongolia."[76] Kissinger wrote to Nixon that he was working with DCI Richard Helms on "appropriate personnel changes in the Agency."[77] Nixon responded, "I want a real shakeup in CIA, not just symbolism."[78]

Helms, however, backed his team, and CIA avoided a personnel purge, and rather than punish his analysts he would praise them for their forthrightness in revisiting their analysis

A CIA internal review of its finished intelligence reporting published in 1972 also questioned an underlying assumption that biased analysts against the Sihanoukville Route.

with the acquisition of reliable data.[79] But the damage to CIA's relationship with the Nixon administration had been done. George Carver commented that Helms was "vulnerable because in any future major controversy where he really held the line, he would have been vulnerable to: 'Yes, but that's what you said about Sihanoukville.'"[80]

The CIA itself and the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board both completed investigations, the details of which remain largely classified. The CIA teams working on the Sihanoukville connection were criticized for failing to fully adjust their model of arms transfers to reflect the wealth of evidence beginning to arrive to support the Sihanoukville assessment. They also were criticized for being insensitive to the lack of direct reporting proving that the overland routes through Laos to Cambodia were actively and currently being used to transport ordnance into southern South Vietnam.

To provide perspective on the postmortems, historian Tom Ahern concluded that there were "substantial flaws" in CIA analysis of the Sihanoukville Route, which emerged as a failure "only after the bulk of the empirical evidence, gradually increasing in volume and improving in source authenticity, began contradicting Agency estimates." Ahern concluded the problem in part was a "failure to modify conventional wisdom." CIA analysts failed to recognize they were applying a double standard as they attempted to compare the usage and relative importance of the Sihanoukville Route against the Laos overland trail. Instead, the analysts were more rigorous in attacking evidence that might

support the Sihanoukville Route hypothesis; Ahern noted, "Even the best agent reporting on quantities of munitions through Sihanoukville had inconsistencies and gaps that the orthodox school invoked to justify skepticism about the maritime route."[81]

In contrast, the same rigor was never applied to estimates of ordnance asserted to be coming overland south from the Laotian triborder area, about which there was little if any reporting. The lack of human sources below the triborder area allowed continuing faith in the overland thesis, but faith is what it was, according to Ahern. He concluded, "When the overland intelligence vacuum persisted as evidence for Sihanoukville grew, faith required rationalization to survive."[82]

A CIA internal review of its finished intelligence reporting published in 1972 also questioned an underlying assumption that biased analysts against the Sihanoukville Route—the premise that Hanoi would be unwilling to risk relying heavily on a trail not under its control, even if it had an entirely reliable trail system as a fallback. The Office of National Estimates wrote that Sihanoukville did not "surface in all its vigor" until 1968, but two Special National Intelligence Estimates published in 1967 had a "clearly conservative view" of Cambodia's role—current and potential—as a funnel for arms to NVA/VC forces in South Vietnam.[83] The study questioned the reasoning in the January 1967 estimate that "it seems unlikely that they [the

Vietnamese communists] would rely in any major way on such an important and indirect source [as the Sihanoukville Route]."[84]

George Carver judged in November 1970 that the CIA had been led astray by "capability judgments which became controlling assumptions that took conscious or unconscious precedence over judgments regarding intentions or actual performance." He elaborated that those conclusions probably caused OER's analysts "to be a shade more critically rigorous in weighing evidence that contravened these assumptions than evidence which tended to support them."[85] He also noted that a CIA analytic model of Sihanoukville's cargo-handling capacity was "ingenious and logically impeccable," but "it bore little relationship to concrete reality."[86]

In 1984, General Palmer summarized the CIA key judgments of the post-mortem, which concluded that the fact that Hanoi could service all its needs via the overland route did not necessarily mean that the regime would actually rely on the overland route. The low estimates on ordnance transshipment via Sihanoukville, coupled with the valid capability estimate on the overland route, "resulted in a mindset that led CIA astray in its judgments as to what North Vietnam was actually doing."[87]

The Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board delivered the results of the second inquiry to the President by January 1971.[88] The report may have used harsh language because Deputy

Commenting on one of CIA's internal postmortems on the failure, CIA's George Carver wrote in November 1970 that one such document was "not entirely free of a defensive tone or the subliminal imputation that it is better to have been wrong for the right reasons than right for the wrong reasons."

Director for Intelligence Jack Smith recalled that none of its "members seemed to find our accounting convincing."[89] Kissinger summarized the board's report in a memorandum written in January 1971, telling Nixon that the IC's failure to properly assess the flow of enemy material through Sihanoukville resulted from "deficiencies in both intelligence collection and analysis."[90] Kissinger concluded that CIA was primarily responsible for the failure.[91]

In fairness to CIA's analysts, they had drawn attention to what they perceived as Sihanoukville's growing significance, and estimated that it could be carrying nearly half of the ordnance bound for enemy forces in southern South Vietnam.[92] Additionally, Ahern rightly implied that the case supporting the Sihanoukville Route was not a 'slam-dunk' case even when better sourcing became available in early 1970. He refused to argue that "the DI should have assigned to Sihanoukville with the same degree of confidence—the importance that it had earlier attributed to the overland route. There were, after all, powerful circumstantial arguments against it. And if agent reporting had now proved a substantial flow of arms through Sihanoukville, exact quantification still eluded the analysts."[93]

Closing Observations

CIA analysts attempted to apply rigorous tradecraft to analyzing the North Vietnamese logistics flow related to Sihanoukville from 1966 through 1970, but they underestimated the port's overarching importance as an arms/ammunition conduit to enemy forces in southern South Vietnam as well as the quantity of tonnage shipped through the port. It simultaneously overestimated the importance and activity over the competing overland route, but for different reasons. The analytic failure reflected intelligence gaps, the agency's determination to set a high bar for using HUMINT reporting, and adherence to an inaccurate, alternative theory of North Vietnamese logistics routes feeding into southern South Vietnam.[94]

MACV estimates were closer to the truth, but they were also flawed in several ways. If the final tranche of shipping documents is indeed an accurate baseline, then MACV also made mistakes in reporting on individual arms deliveries, including misidentifying grain shipments as arms deliveries, over- and underestimating the amount of ordnance in individual deliveries, and ascribing arms deliveries bound entirely for the FARK as arms deliveries as ones destined for South Vietnam. Nevertheless, the number of reports they decided to use got them closer to the truth than CIA.

The CIA-MACV debate ultimately hinged on determinations about which sources and raw reports could be reliably used to build their cases in Washington and Saigon.[95] Ironically, CIA's use of more rigorous tradecraft than its military counterparts in handling suspect HUMINT sources contributed to its significantly lower assessments. Commenting on one of CIA's internal postmortems on the failure, CIA's George Carver wrote in November 1970 that one such document was "not entirely free of a defensive tone or the subliminal imputation that it is better to have been wrong for the right reasons than right for the wrong reasons."[96]

Lessons

What do we know about what CIA took to be the lessons of this experience to be applied in the future? Late in the Helms tenure as DCI, CIA had been under pressure to examine more effective alternative analytic techniques than those employed during the lengthy debate discussed above. Fragmented and heavily redacted archival material refers to the loss of analytic consensus within CIA (and even individual offices) on this topic by 1968. CIA offices routinely conducted periodic internal reviews that challenged the methodologies and conclusions of previous analyses. CIA did produce a lengthy scrub of clandestine reporting on the topic, and OER even attempted a version of a Team A/Team B exercise to inform the debate, though it failed to change the minds of proponents of the established analytical line.[97]

Thus, despite these efforts, CIA analysis remained undermined by underlying, flawed assumptions that were only reluctantly abandoned despite a steady increase of countervailing reporting, according to Ahern. CIA continued to judge that

Hanoi would be unwilling to rely on the Sihanoukville Route because it would be vulnerable to closure by the neutralist Prince Sihanouk. In fact, there was little cost in relying heavily on the route, which offered an easier way of shipping munitions to southern South Vietnam than did use of the overland route through Laos. When Sihanouk was ousted in March 1970 and Cambodia's arrangement with China ended, North Vietnam readily returned to the overland route to transport ordnance to South Vietnam, according to Ahern's account, which he focused on "a failure to modify conventional wisdom."[98]

Such shortfalls called for CIA to deploy more rigorous alternative analytic techniques, such as the implementation of the "challenge mechanism" that DCI William Colby attempted to create after the intelligence surprise of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War. Although the declassified record simply does not reveal what reforms—if any—were implemented following the Sihanoukville failure, contemporary records reveal that CIA was considering such techniques as early as during the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, when in 1966 it produced a report on the Vietnamese communist will to persist that employed a red team approach, according to James Marchio's recent study on devil's advocacy in IC analysis.[99] Analysts had used "solid alternative analysis techniques (red team, devil's advocate, and competing hypotheses),"

according to a CIA history of the Directorate of Intelligence.[100]

The CIA's experiments with alternative analysis continued during the Nixon administration, despite the stormy relationship between the Nixon and CIA. By 1970, CIA had drafted alternative analysis on Soviet strategic weapons programs for the White House, according to Marchio. The effort demonstrated a tentative interest in alternative analysis, which ultimately became institutionalized in so-called "Structured Analytical Techniques" as discussed by Heuer and others and addressed in a monograph, *A Tradecraft Primer: Structured Analytic Techniques for Improving Intelligence Analysis,* published by CIA's Center for the Study of Intelligence in March 2009.[101]

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Endnotes

All released documents can be found in CIA.GOV's Freedom of Information Act Reading Room ((https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/search/site/) by inserting the complete released document number in the search field at the top of the search page. For example the intelligence memorandum cited in endnote 1 below would be searched by inserting "CIA-RDP78T02095R000200050001-1" into the search field. (N.b. Do not include the bracketed numbers found below in front of document numbers. Those are intended for ease of reference in the following bibliography.) In most cases, each released item contains more than one document, along with transmittal slips and memos. The documents contained in the released packages are listed, along with release information, in the bibliography following these notes. The URLs for all documents available in CIA.GOV are shown in the bibliography.

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[2] CIA-RDP78T02095R000200050001-1 COMMUNIST MILITARY DELIVERIES TO CAMBODIA; 2007/10/23; 56 pages.	DI Intelligence Memorandum, ER IM 70-188, December 1970, "Communist Deliveries to Cambodia for the VC/NVA Forces in South Vietnam, December 1966-April 1969," 1–15; Also attached blind Memorandum of same title, dated 5 February 1971, detailing points in ER IM 70-188, with more tables, graph, and map showing "The Sihanoukville Route," 17–37; unclassified transmittal letters to senior military officers transmitting ER IM 70-126, September 1970, dated 8 September 1970; Intelligence Memorandum, ER IM 69 -177, "Chinese and Soviet Military Deliveries To Cambodia," December 1969, 53–44 (Introduction only, 47 pages denied). (https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/search/site/CIA-RDP78T02095R000200050001-1).
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Unpopular Pessimism: Why CIA Analysts Were So Doubtful About Vietnam

Hal Ford

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It is well documented and well known that for decades CIA analysts were skeptical of official pronouncements about the Vietnam war and consistently fairly pessimistic about the outlook for "light at the end of the tunnel."

In traveling through Tonkin, every village flew the Viet Minh flag, and had armed soldiers, many with Japanese weapons taken in raids. The women and children were also organized, and all were enthusiastic in their support. The important thing is that all were cognizant of the fact that independence was not to be gained in a day, and were prepared to continue their struggle for years. In the rural areas, I found not one instance of opposition to the Viet Minh, even among former government officials.

—0SS Report, October1945[2]

It is well documented and well known that for decades CIA analysts were skeptical of official pronouncements about the Vietnam war and consistently fairly pessimistic about the outlook for "light at the end of the tunnel." Less well known is why the Agency's analysts were so doubtful, especially because CIA was all the while a central player in US operational efforts to create and strengthen South Vietnam. Thus, it is important to examine the sources of CIA analyses' doubts about successive administrations' repeated assurances and claims.

Not all CIA analysts thought alike, and at times there were substantial differences of view. Skepticism and pessimism about Vietnam were present chiefly among those officers who produced finished intelligence in the form of National Intelligence Estimates and in Intelligence Directorate (then the DDI) publications: that is, analysts in the Office of National Estimates (ONE), the Office of [Economic] Research and Reports, and the South Vietnam Branch of the Office of Current Intelligence (OCI).Such views were generally a bit less evident among officers of the North Vietnam Branch of OCI, many of whom had been transferred there from previous Soviet and North Korean assignments. The situation among the Agency's operational offices at home and abroad was mixed: some enthusiastically shared official White House views, while others were remarkably caustic. In more than a few cases, the Intelligence

The fact that CIA judgments often were more candid than those of most other offices was due in important measure to the bureaucratic advantage the Agency's culture and purpose afforded.

Community's (IC) coordination processes and top CIA officers muted doubts about Vietnam expressed in CIA's analytic ranks, yet the finished intelligence produced by the DDI and ONE maintained definitely pessimistic, skeptical tones over the years.

The danger always existed that individual CIA analysts could get locked into constant dark points of view, reluctant to accept new evidence to the contrary. Also, at times some CIA analysts overreacted to certain assertive personalities from other offices who happened to be arguing wholly unsupportable optimism. And there were a few occasions where CIA judgments on Vietnam badly missed the boat, or where Agency judgments were too wishy-washy to serve the needs of policymaking or, in a handful of cases, where analytic officers caved in to pressures from above and produced mistakenly rosy judgments. Despite these hazards, and, as Robert McNamara's recent book *In Retrospect* maintains, the war's outcome justified many of the CIA analyses' doubts and warnings.

Officials in other entities, especially in the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, often came up with similar doubting judgments. At times, their doubts also were shared by certain officers in DIA and elsewhere in the Department of Defense and by certain junior and field grade intelligence officers in Vietnam. CIA's analysts had no special sources of data not available to other US Government offices, no unique analytic methodologies, no pre-computer–age Window 95s. The

Agency's analysts simply, if unscientifically, distilled their many sources of doubt into judgments that often did not square with official pronouncements—a record that the authors of *The Pentagon Papers* and numerous other historians have documented.

The following principal factors and forces are among the many reasons for the doubts exhibited by so many of CIA's Vietnam analysts:

CIA's cultural advantages.

The fact that CIA judgments often were more candid than those of most other offices was due in important measure to the bureaucratic advantage the Agency's culture and purpose afforded. The job of CIA analysts was to tell it like it is, freer from the policy pressures with which their colleagues in Defense, the military intelligence agencies, and, to a lesser extent, the Department of State had to contend.[3] Many CIA Vietnam analysts had been working on Indochina problems for some time, often longer than most military intelligence officers. Those Agency officers were familiar with how intelligence reporting had been distorted during France's fight against the Communist-led Viet Minh (VM) and how such unfounded optimism had contributed to the French defeat.

CIA analysts subsequently witnessed nearly identical patterns in much of the US military and diplomatic reporting from Saigon. In addition,they were at times told confidentially by middle-grade US military and Saigon Mission officers of such practices. A few CIA analysts served

in Vietnam and experienced firsthand such distortion by some senior US officials there. The resulting candor of CIA judgments flowed also from the fact that the reports Headquarters analysts received from CIA's Saigon station were much more factual and exacting in their demanded authenticity than was much of the other reporting from Vietnam.

Recognition of the Vietnamese Communists' (VC) enormous advantages.

CIA's analysts were aware that the basic stimulus among the politically conscious Vietnamese was nationalism and that, following World War II, the VM had largely captured the nationalist movement. Ho Chi Minh's apparatus came to be better led, better organized, and more united than any of the other competing, divided nationalist Vietnamese parties. Through a combination of some reforms and ruthless elimination of political rivals, the VM/VC dominated the countryside. Local populations seldom volunteered intelligence to the French, the South Vietnamese, or the Americans about Communist led forces in their midst.

Then, too, the VM's 1954 victory over the French at Dien Bien Phu and the end of French rule had been tremendous boosts to nationalist sentiment and Ho Chi Minh's status and popularity. At that time, most observers of Indochina affairs, including US intelligence agencies, judged that if nationwide elections were held, the VM would win by a large margin.

A similar view was even shared by DCI Allen Dulles, who, according to the record of a 1954 NSC meeting, told that senior group that "The most disheartening feature of the news from Indochina ... was the

> ***CIA analysts widely appreciated the fact that the enemy saw its battle as a long-range conflict and was prepared to go the distance.***

evidence that the majority of the people in Vietnam supported the Vietminh rebels."[4] South Vietnam's Ngo Dinh Diem (with subtle US backing) subsequently proceeded to frustrate the holding of elections, and this strengthened the determination of VM forces to continue subverting all Vietnam in order to redress their grievance at being robbed of what they felt had been their victory in the field and at Geneva.

And one of the greatest advantages Ho's movement enjoyed, at times indicated in reporting from the field, were the subversive assets the VM and the VC had throughout South Vietnam. Thousands of their agents and sleepers existed throughout South Vietnam's government, armed forces, and security/intelligence organizations. The dramatic extent of that advantage was not revealed until the fall of Saigon in 1975, when events disclosed how thoroughly the enemy had penetrated the society of South Vietnam, including some American offices there.

Recognition of VM/VC determination to try to meet South Vietnamese and US escalation, and willingness to suffer great damage, if necessary, in order to win eventual victory.

CIA analysts widely appreciated the fact that the enemy saw its battle as a long-range conflict and was prepared to go the distance. To sustain VM/VC morale, Hanoi repeatedly invoked past victorious Vietnamese heroes, even ancient ones who for nearly a thousand years had fought Chinese pressures to dominate Indochina. Like those heroes, Hanoi was confident that its many advantages in the field and the power of its forces to endure would in time frustrate more powerful, less

patient outside powers and cause them eventually to quit. For decades, CIA analysts again and again told policymakers that the enemy would doubtless persevere, counter-escalate as best it could, and do so despite suffering heavy damage.

Such Agency analysts' doubts were especially marked during the months in 1964 and 1965, when President Johnson's administration was stumbling toward carrying the war to North Vietnam and committing US combat forces in the South. During that time, and in the face of pressures to "get on the team," CIA analysts (as well as intelligence officers from other agencies) repeatedly warned decisionmakers that such US military escalation would not in itself save South Vietnam unless it were accompanied by substantial political-social progress in Saigon and especially in the villages of South Vietnam, where virtually all CIA officers at all levels had long maintained that the war had to be won. Agency officers made this point to policymakers through clandestine service reports, DDI and ONE memos, National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs), participation in JCS war games and in NSC-sanctioned working groups, and, in the end, warnings by DCI John McCone. But no one in the administration wanted to listen. It was not until about 1966 that frustrations in the field caused certain previous senior true believers to begin "defecting in place," especially Secretary of Defense McNamara, whose *In Retrospect* now holds that CIA warnings had been correct all along and that he and his

policymaking colleagues had been "wrong, terribly wrong."

Recognition of the great difficulties French and American military measures encountered in trying to combat VM/VC political-military warfare.

Virtually all CIA Vietnam officers, in the field and in Washington, remained strongly influenced by the French defeat in Indochina. They recognized how ill suited French military tactics had been for fighting the enemy; how the VM had chewed up elite French military units; and how the enemy had stunned the world by overwhelming the French forces at Dien Bien Phu. Because Agency officers were not burdened with the operational task of training and developing South Vietnamese armed forces, they were much freer of certain views more prevalent among US military personnel, such as disdaining the French experience, maintaining that US military know-how could prevail, and trying to impose upon Saigon governments US military tactics that were better suited to European battlefields.[5] Such appreciation by CIA officers found reflection both in the field and at Headquarters in CIA counterinsurgency measures that lost their effectiveness when later taken over by the US military, and in numerous Headquarters analyses that judged that US military tactics were not substantially reducing the enemy's ability and determination to continue the war.

Moreover, many Agency analysts were sensitive to the geographic and terrain features in Indochina that shielded enemy supply lines from

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Then, when finally asked by the White House in mid-1964 for its view of the domino thesis, ONE replied heretically: "We do not believe that the loss of South Vietnam and Laos would be followed by the rapid, successive communization of the other states of the Far East."

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outer view and helped enemy guerrilla tactics but impeded US mechanized forces. CIA analysts long at Indochina assignments recalled how reluctant the JCS and the US Army had been in 1954 to try to bail out the French militarily at Dien Bien Phu, in part because US military studies had concluded that Indochina's location and terrain were not suited for ready supply or effective US military action. These analysts also recalled, as most policymakers by the early 1960s seemingly did not, how reluctant US Army leaders had been to become engaged in war in Indochina, and how at the time the JCS had held that "From the point of view of the United States, with reference to the Far East as a whole, Indochina is devoid of decisive military objectives, and the allocation of more than token US armed forces to the area would be a serious diversion of limited US capabilities.[6]

Similar views following US expansion of the war to the North in 1965, together with available positive evidence, led most CIA and DIA analysts to conclude that, despite US bombing efforts, the level of Hanoi's arms shipments to the VC were continuing to rise. Subsequent accounts by Johnson administration decisionmakers confirm that those reports had a definitely depressing influence upon their earlier certainties, and, in some cases, were instrumental in causing some of those policymakers to lower their previous enthusiasm about the war's prospects.

Rejection of official claims that Moscow and Beijing were directing the enemy war effort and that international Communism was a monolith.

Many senior policymakers judged for years that the enemy's war effort in Vietnam was being run by" the Communist bloc." One such example: Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer, at the time JCS Chairman, stated in 1962 that Vietnam's fall was "a planned phase in the Communist time table for world domination" and that the adverse effects of Vietnam's fall would be felt as far away as Africa.[7]

By contrast, virtually all CIA officers held that available evidence clearly indicated that, although the USSR and Communist China were giving Hanoi defense assistance, the Vietnam war was Hanoi's show and had been from the outset. Moreover, with the exception largely of one CIA office, Agency analysts had been way ahead of the rest of the IC in pointing out—for years without much impact—that the Sino-Soviet alliance was coming apart at the seams; that the USSR and China were competitive with respect to the Vietnam war; and that their developing estrangement offered US administrations an exploitable opportunity. The principal exceptions to these views within CIA were largely confined to certain counterintelligence officers, who, even *after* the Sino-Soviet firefights that occurred along the Ussuri River border in 1969,

continued to maintain that the Sino-Soviet estrangement was a plot to deceive the West.[8]

Those CIA analysts who rejected the official view that Moscow and Beijing were largely running the Vietnam war effort based their skepticism on several sources. One was appreciation of the degree of independence from outside Communist control Ho Chi Minh's movement and fledgling government had enjoyed all along. Another was the fact that following the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Moscow and Beijing could have given Hanoi more support at 1954's Geneva Conference than they did. There also was evidence that all along the Soviets had less interest in promoting Communist aims in Indochina than in buttressing Communist Party fortunes in France and Western Europe. Most CIA analysts held that the various Communist movements in Southeast Asia each contained conflicting nationalistic elements as the later wars of Communist China versus Communist North Vietnam and Communist Cambodia versus Communist North Vietnam illustrated.

These judgments contributed to the doubts held by certain CIA analysts, especially within ONE, that the loss of Vietnam would inexorably lead to the loss of all Southeast Asia and the US defense position in the far Pacific. The doubts went unvoiced for years in the face of repeated embraces of the domino thesis by senior officials of the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations. Then, when finally asked by the White House in mid-1964 for its view of the domino thesis, ONE replied heretically: "We do not believe that the loss of South Vietnam and Laos

Criticisms by Community analysts raised a firestorm of protest among policymaking officers. They brought such pressure on DCI McCone and ONE that the latter caved in and agreed to a rewritten, decidedly more rosy NIE (53-63), in which the earlier criticisms of the ARVN were muted and the tone of the Estimate changed

would be followed by the rapid, successive communization of the other states of the Far East."[9] The impact of those doubts on policymakers was nil.

Recognition of the fact that South Vietnam remained a fragile entity whose ability to cope effectively with the VC should not be overestimated.

These views, held widely among CIA analysts, if less so among CIA operations officers, for years ran headlong into repeated assertions by successive US administrations that Saigon's military effectiveness was rising. Subsequent events validated such CIA judgments: former NSC staff officer Chester L. Cooper, for example, later recorded that, as of 1962, "The fact was that the war was *not* going well, the Vietnamese Army was *not* taking kindly to American advice, and Diem was *not* following through on his promises to liberalize his regime or increase its effectiveness."[10]

In addition, over the years much field reporting underscored the fact that President Diem's government did not enjoy wide support in Vietnam's villages. His government was a minority Catholic one in a predominantly Buddhist country.[11] Diem was not a dynamic leader, and he could not compete with the widespread popularity Ho Chi Minh enjoyed. He was remote from the people, as attested even by Lyndon Johnson in early 1961 while still Vice President:

A final indication of the danger is the fact that the ordinary people of the cities [of South Vietnam] and probably even more of the rural areas are starved for leadership with understanding and warmth. There is an enormous popular enthusiasm and great popular power waiting to be brought forth by friendly personal political leadership.

But it cannot be evoked by men in white linen suits whose contact with the ordinary people is largely through the rolled-up windows of a Mercedes-Benz.[12]

Subsequently published documents indicate that MACV and Mission officers occasionally voiced despair at the Government of South Vietnam's (GVN) lack of military and political progress, but tended to confine their doubts to official, classified channels. Public official admission of serious GVN shortcomings was rare. Even more so, senior US military figures, at home and in the field, were almost always reluctant to admit that for years South Vietnamese military units (the ARVN), usually much better armed than the enemy, were no match for the VC. Criticisms of ARVN shortcomings were especially off limits, lest there be an implication chat US military advisers were not doing a good job of converting the ARVN into an effective fighting force.

Such sensitivity was particularly registered in early 1963, when DCI McCone, the JCS, CINCPAC, MACV, the US Embassy in Saigon, and other policymakers took umbrage at a draft NIE which ONE and the IC's working-level officers had agreed upon. It held that among Vietnam's "very great weaknesses" were a lack of "aggressive and firm leadership at all levels of command, poor morale among the troops, lack of trust between peasant and soldier,

poor tactical use of available forces, a very inadequate intelligence system, and obvious Communist penetration of the South Vietnamese military organization."[13]

Those criticisms by Community analysts raised a firestorm of protest among policymaking officers. They brought such pressure on DCI McCone and ONE that the latter caved in and agreed to a rewritten, decidedly more rosy NIE (53-63), in which the earlier criticisms of the ARVN were muted and the tone of the Estimate changed: the first sentence of the revised NIE now read, "We believe that Communist progress has been blunted [in South Vietnam] and that the situation is improving."[14] This was not one of CIA's proudest moments. And less than four weeks later, serious riots began in Hue which introduced the chain of events that culminated in the self-immolation of Buddhist monks and the murder of President Diem.

Areas of Doubt

These, then, were the principal areas of doubt that for years lay behind so many CIA analyses of the outlook in Vietnam. Except for those occasions where Agency officers produced flawed accounts or rosied up their judgments to meet pressures from above, the areas of doubt translated into the following fairly stark messages to successive policymakers:

For years, CIA's messages did not find ready response downtown because they were up against fearful odds.

- Do not underestimate the enemy's strength, ruthlessness, nationalist appeal, and pervasive undercover assets throughout South Vietnam.

- Do not underestimate the enemy's resilience and staying power. He is in for the long run and is confident that US morale will give way before his will. He will keep coming despite huge casualties. If we escalate, he will too.

- Do not overestimate the degree to which airpower will disrupt North Vietnam's support of the VC or will cause Hanoi to back off from such support.

- Do not overestimate the military and political potential of our South Vietnamese ally/creation.

- The war is essentially a political war that cannot be won by military means alone. It will have to be won largely by the South Vietnamese in the villages of South Vietnam.

- The war is essentially a civil war, run from Hanoi, not a Communist bloc plot to test the will of America to support its allies.

- Winning the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese is a tough task. Most Vietnamese simply want to be left alone, and most do not identify with Saigon. And many are either too attracted to the VC or too afraid to volunteer much information about the VC presence in their midst.

What CIA Analyses Were Up Against

For years, CIA's messages did not find ready response downtown because they were up against fearful odds. Outweighing intelligence facts and judgments were many views, factors and forces which for years obtained widely among the best and the brightest of our decisionmakers:

- World Communism is essentially monolithic, and the Vietnam war is part of a world conspiracy run from Moscow and Beijing.

- Khrushchev and the Russians are testing us: if the United States does not fulfill its stated commitments in Vietnam, our credibility among our allies elsewhere in the world will suffer seriously.

- Vietnam is the first domino. If it goes, the rest of Southeast Asia, as well as America's strategic position in the far Pacific, will crumble.

- Top policymakers were receptive to the views of progress given them for years by senior military and Mission officers, views that in many cases were distorted, optimistic versions of more candid appraisals initially registered by more junior officers in the field who were closer to the scene.

- There was a profound hubris among top policymakers. They believed their made-in-America schemes would work in Vietnam, where similar schemes by the French had not. We would succeed because of our superior firepower.

- Top officials believed that sustained US bombing programs will disrupt North Vietnam's supply routes to the VC, and would cause Hanoi to back off for fear of losing such industrial development as it has achieved.

- Many senior decisionmakers were confident that Vietnam's enormous complications could be reduced to systems analysis and statistical measures such as body counts—attitudes epitomized by Secretary of Defense McNamara's oft-cited assurance (1962) that "every quantitative measure we have shows we're winning this war."

- Senior policymakers were too harassed and bogged down in their many day-to-day tactical responsibilities to give intelligence or the longer range consequences of US initiatives in Vietnam the careful attention those matters deserved.

- There existed among senior policy makers what a US Army-sponsored history has since called "a massive and all-encompassing" American ignorance of Vietnamese history and society.[15]

- Caught up by their commitments and operational enthusiasm, most senior policymakers did not want to hear doubts from below. They tended to ignore such views, especially those of more junior experts unknown to them. Witness McNamara's subsequently telling us that there were no experts on Vietnam.[16] And Gen. William E. DePuy (1988): "We did intervene on behalf of a very weak and dubious regime, albeit better than Communism, but very dubious in terms of political weight and

> *Perhaps the most potent hurdle for intelligence was the fact that the decisions on what to do in Vietnam were not taking place within a vacuum but in a highly charged political arena.*

meaning. But I don't remember anybody saying that. Do you? Nobody. Not even the experts, not even the scholastics and academics said that."[17] Or, at times, policymakers denounced dissenters for "not being on the team"; or froze out doubters, as President Johnson did with the dissenting DCI McCone; or sent doubters to new, Siberia-type assignments, as State did with Southeast Asia expert Paul Kattenburg.

- Intelligence was only one of the many forces that crowded in upon policymakers. In addition, those decisionmakers were aware of dimensions of which intelligence officers were not. The record shows clearly that their chief concern was the US position in the world, not Vietnam per se, and that in their view Vietnam was so vital to broad US interests that we *had* to make a strong stand there.

- Perhaps *the* most potent hurdle for intelligence, however, was the fact that the decisions on what to do in Vietnam were not taking place within a vacuum but in a highly charged political arena. For some years, the Democratic Party had been vulnerable for having "lost" China and having been "soft" in Korea. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson repeatedly stated that they were not going to be the US presidents who "lost" Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

Classic Analytic Hazards

In short, the often pessimistic intelligence judgments that CIA and other analysts gave our Vietnam decisionmakers over the years did not have much impact, except on those occasions where senior consumers could use intelligence to buttress their own arguments, or where they had come to question the more optimistic reports they had been receiving from other sources, or where they had begun to doubt their own earlier enthusiasms. There has indeed seldom been a better example than Vietnam of the eternal occupational hazards intelligence analysts face: that the judgments they deliver do not necessarily enjoy careful, rational study, but disappear into a highly politicized, sometimes chaotic process where forces other than intelligence judgments often carry the day.

This is what CIA and other analysts experienced during the long years of the war in Vietnam, breaking their lances in trying to penetrate policymakers' consciousness that the actual facts of life were more grim than those senior consumers generally appreciated. Even so, those analysts performed well in trying to produce candid appraisals—inasmuch as the principal calling for intelligence analysts at any one time is to try to tell it like it is, to remain a unique calling within a policymaking process overburdened with prior commitments, emotion, special pleading, and hubris.[18]

Yet analysts have to keep in mind that hubris is not a monopoly of policymakers. Vietnam analysts sometimes got locked into mindsets. This contributed to their being wrong on occasion. Sometimes very wrong—especially in not sounding clear alerts that the enemy was about to launch an unprecedented Tet offensive in early 1968, and in later underestimating the amount of North Vietnamese military support being funneled to the VC through Cambodia.

Not least, at all times analysts had a much easier time of it than did harried decisionmakers: analysts operated in a protected, quiet atmosphere, whereas policymakers were beset by a weak Vietnamese ally, a tough Vietnamese enemy, and a US public that could not stay the distance in what came to be regarded, correctly or not, as an unwinnable war.

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The author: Hal Ford joined CIA in 1950 and served in a variety of positions focused on East Asia, Vietnam, and China. He left CIA in the early 1970s to lead a program on ethics and international affairs at Georgetown University. Ford also served on the staffs of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and then Senator Joseph Biden. He returned to CIA in 1980 to lead the newly established National Intelligence Council. Ford retired in 1986, but continued to serve as a contract historian on CIA's History Staff. His book *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers: Three Episodes, 1962–1968*, published in 1998, won an award for a history published in the Federal Government. Ford died in November 2010.

Illustrative Quotations

- [*CIA Intelligence Memorandum*, 1950]: "The Vietnamese insurgents are predominantly nationalists rather than Communists,but Communist leadership of the movement is firmly established. . . .These insurgents have long controlled most of the interior of Vietnam. Before 1954, they will probably have gained control of most, if not all, of Indochina."[19]

- [General Bruce Palmer, Jr., 1984]: "The first national estimate on Indochina, NIE 5, 29 December 1950, *Indochina: Current Situation and Probable Developments*, was a very pessimistic estimate."[20]

- [General Palmer]: "During the period 1950–October 1964, ONE produced 48 NIEs and SNIEs . . . dealing with Vietnam. In addition to estimates, ONE produced 51 Memorandums for the DCI concerning Vietnam over the same period. Indeed, ONE published more on Vietnam than any other single subject."[21]

- [NIE 35/1, 1952]: "Through mid-1952, the probable outlook in Indochina is one of gradual deterioration of the Franco-Vietnamese military position. . . . The longer term outlook is for continued improvement in the combat effectiveness of the Viet Minh and an increased Viet Minh pressure against the Franco-Vietnamese defenses." Unless present trends are reversed, this growing pressure, coupled with the difficulties which France may continue to face in supporting major military efforts in both Europe and Indochina, may lead to an eventual French withdrawal from Indochina."[22]

- [NIE 91, 1953]: "If present trends . . . continue through mid-1954, the French Union political and military position may subsequently deteriorate very rapidly."[23]

- [Senator John F. Kennedy, 1954]: "I am frankly of the belief that no amount of American military assistance in Indochina can conquer an enemy which is everywhere and at the same time nowhere, 'an enemy of the people' which has the sympathy and covert support of the people. . . . In November of 1951, I reported upon my return from the Far East as follows: 'In Indochina we have allied ourselves to the desperate effort of a French regime to hang on to the remnants of empire. There is no broad, general support of the native Vietnam Government among the people of that area. . . . [To try to win military victory] apart from and in defiance of innately nationalistic aims spells foredoomed failure.'"[24]

- [Former CIA officer Joseph Burkhalter Smith, 1978]: "I was stationed in Singapore then [1954], and British intelligence officers told me that they thought the United States was mad to prop up South Viernam."[25]

- [General Palmer]: "Overall, the situation in Vietnam inherited by the United States from France in 1955 was disadvantageous, if not hopeless. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the United States in deliberately pushing the French out of the way and replacing them in Vietnam acted unwisely."[26]

- [ONE Memorandum, 1960]: "The catalog of public discontent [in South Vietnam] includes a widespread dislike and distrust of Ngo family rule . . . Diem's tightly centralized control and his unwillingness to delegate authority . . . the growing evidence of corruption in high places;the harsh manner in which many persons, particularly the peasants, have been forced to contribute their labor to government programs . . . and the government's increasing resort to harsh measures as a means of stifling criticism."[27]

- [Gen. William E. DePuy, undated]: "Well, there wasn't a Vietnamese government as such. There was a military junta that ran the country. Most of the senior Vietnamese officers, as you know, had served in the French Army. A lot of them had been sergeants. Politically, they were inept. The various efforts at pacification required a cohesive, efficient government, which simply did not exist. Furthermore, corruption was rampant. There was coup after coup, and militarily, defeat after defeat. . . . The basic motivation of the ARVN seldom equaled the motivation of the VC and the NVA [North Vietnamese] . . . the ARVN was losing the war just the way the French had lost the war, and for many of the same reasons."[28]

- [Former Director of the CORDS program in South Vietnam, Amb. Robert W. Komer, 1986]: "In the first analysis, the US effort in Vietnam failed largely because it could not sufficiently revamp or adequately substitute for a South Vietnamese leadership, administration, and armed forces inadequate to the task. . . . As George Ball put it in his well known 1964 memorandum on 'Cutting Our Losses in South Vietnam,' 'Hanoi has a government and a purpose and a discipline. The 'government' in Saigon is a travesty.' In a very real sense, South Vietnam is a country with an army and no government."[29]

- [The authors of *The Pentagon Papers,* undated]: "In this instance, and as we will see, later, the Intelligence Community's estimates of the likely results of US moves are conspicuously more pessimistic (and more realistic) than the other staff papers presented to the President. This SNIE [October 1961] was based on the assumption that the SEATO force would total about 25,000 men. It is hard to imagine a more sharp contrast between this paper, which foresees no serious impact on the [VC] insurgency from proposed intervention, and Supplemental Note 2, to be quoted next . . . " the JCS estimate that 40,000 US forces will be needed to cleanup the Viet Cong threat."[30]

- [ONE Memorandum, 1962]: "The real threat, and the heart of the battle, is in the villages and jungles of Vietnam and Laos. That battle can be won only by the will, energy, and political acumen of the resisting governments themselves. US power can supplement and enlarge their power, but it cannot be substituted. Even if the US could defeat the Communists militarily by a massive injection of its own forces, the odds are that what it would win would be not a political victory which created a stable and independent government, but an uneasy and costly colony."[31]

- [Judgment by the intelligence panel of an NSC interagency working group, March 1964]: "It is not likely that North Vietnam would (if it could) call off the war in the South even though US actions [systematically bombing North Vietnam] would in time have serious economic and political impact. Overt action against North Vietnam would be unlikely to produce reduction in VC activity sufficiently to make victory on the ground possible in South Vietnam unless accompanied by new US bolstering actions in South Vietnam and considerable improvement in the government there."[32]

- [NSC Action Memorandum 288,17 March 1964]: "We seek an independent non-Communist South Vietnam. Unless we can achieve this objective in South Vietnam, almost all Southeast Asia will probably fall under Communist dominance . . . accommodate to Communism so as to remove effective US and anti-Communist influence or fall under the domination of forces not now explicitly Communist but likely then to become so. Even the Philippines would become shaky, and the threat to India on the west, Australia and New Zealand to the south, and Taiwan, Korea, and Japan to the north and east would be greatly increased."[33]

- [ONE Memorandum for the Director, June 1964]: "We do not believe that the loss of South Vietnam and Laos would be followed by the rapid, successive communization of the other states of the Far East. . . . With the possible exception of Cambodia, it is likely that no nation in the area would quickly succumb to Communism as a result of the fall of Laos and South Vietnam. Furthermore,a continuation of the spread of Communism in the area would not be inexorable, and any spread which did occur would take time—time in which the total situation might change in any of a number of ways unfavorable to the Communist cause. . . . [Moreover]the extent to which individual countries would move away from the US towards the Communists would be significantly affected by the substance and manner of US policy in the area following the loss of Laos and South Vietnam."[34]

- [CIA officers' comment on JCS war game, April 1964]: "Widespread at the war games were facile assumptions that attacks against the North would weaken DRV capability to support the war in South Vietnam, and that such attacks would cause the DRV leadership to call off the VC. Both assumptions are highly dubious, given the nature of the VC war. . . . The impact of US public and Congressional [and world] opinion was seriously underestimated. There would be widespread concern that the US was risking major war, in behalf of a society that did not seem anxious to save itself, and by means not at all certain to effect their desired ends in the South. In sum, we feel that US thinking should grind in more careful consideration than has taken place to date. This does not mean that the United States

should not move against the DRV, but that . . . we do so only if it looks as if there is enough military-political potential in South Vietnam to make the whole Vietnam effort worthwhile. Otherwise, the United States would only be exercising its great, but irrelevant, armed strength."[35]

- [The authors of *The Pentagon Papers*]: "However, the intelligence panel [of an NSC interagency working group, November 1964] did not concede very strong chances for breaking the will of Hanoi [by instituting a program of sustained US bombing of North Vietnam]. They thought it quire likely that the DRV was willing to suffer damage 'in the course of a test of wills with the United States over the course of events in South Vietnam.' . . . The panel also viewed Hanoi as estimating that the United States' will to maintain resistance in Southeast Asia could in time be eroded—that the recent US election would provide the Johnson administration with 'greater policy flexibility' than it previously felt it had."[36]

- [ONE officer memorandum, April 1965, written shortly after President Johnson's decision to begin bombing North Vietnam and committing US troops to combat in the South]: "This troubled essay proceeds from a deep concern that we are becoming progressively divorced from reality in Vietnam, that we are proceeding with far more courage than wisdom toward unknown ends. . . . There seems to be a congenital American disposition to underestimate Asian enemies. We are doing so now. We cannot afford so precious a luxury. Earlier, dispassionate estimates, war games, and the like told us that the DRV/VC would persist in the face of such pressures as we are now exerting on them. Yet we now seem to expect them to come running to the conference table, ready to talk about our high terms. The chances are considerably better than even that the United States will in the end have to disengage in Vietnam, and do so considerably short of our present objectives."[37]

- [General Palmer, 1984]: "[In late 1965,] W. W. Rostow requested an analysis of the probable political and social effect of a postulated escalation of the US air offensive. CIA's somber reply was that even an escalation against all major economic targets in North Vietnam would not substantially affect Hanoi's ability to supply its forces in South Vietnam, nor would it be likely to persuade the Hanoi regime to negotiate. Similar judgments were to be repeated consistently by CIA for the next several years."[38]

- [General Palmer, 1984]: "With respect to Vietnam, the head of the CIA was up against a formidable array of senior policymakers . . . all strong personalities who knew how to exercise the clout of their respective offices. . . . [But] McNamara was not entirely satisfied with his intelligence from the Defense Department and beginning in late 1965, relied more and more on the CIA for what he believed were more objective and accurate intelligencejudgments."[39]

- [Former NSC staff officer Chester L. Cooper, 1984]: "It is revealing that President Johnson's memoirs, which are replete with references to and long quotations from documents which influenced his thinking and decisions on Vietnam, contain not a single reference to a National Intelligence Estimate or, indeed, to any other intelligence analysis. Except for Secretary McNamara, who became a frequent requester and an avid reader of Estimates dealing with Soviet military capabilities and with the Vietnam situation, and McGeorge Bundy, the ONE had a thin audience during the Johnson administration."[40]

- [From a US Army-sponsored history, 1985]: "Added to this propensity to try to make something out of nothing was an American ignorance of Vietnamese history and society so massive and all-encompassing that two decades of federally funded fellowships, crash language programs, television specials, and campus teachins made hardly a dent. . . . If there is any lesson to be drawn from the unhappy tale of American involvement in Vietnam it is that, before the United States sets out to make something out of nothing in some other corner of the world, American leaders might consider the historical and social factors involved.[41]

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Endnotes

1. Editor's Note: The author of this study drafted his first National Intelligence Estimate on Indochina in 1952, and subsequently had Vietnam-related duties as staff chief of CIA's Office of National Estimates and as a CIA representative to certain interagency working bodies. Since retiring from CIA in 1986, when he was Acting Chairman of CIA's National Intelligence Council, he has prepared classified studies on Vietnam for CIA's History Staff.

2. OSS (Secret Intelligence Branch), "Political Information [from Swift]," October 17, 1945; Appendix to *Causes, Origins, and Lessons of the Vietnam War,* Hearings Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 92nd Congress, 2nd Session, May 9, 10, and 11, 1972 (USGPO, 1973), 319.

3. There were a few occasions where certain Directors of Central Intelligence (DCIs) brought pressure on Agency officers to make their Vietnam analyses more palatable to policymakers. In addition, numerous authorities attest that George A . Carver, who was CIA's Special Assistant for Vietnam Affairs (SAVA) for several years following 1966 and who enjoyed remarkable entree among the USG's top decisionmakers, fairly regularly gave them more optimistic judgments than CIA's analysts were holding at the time.

4. Report of NSC meeting of February 4, 1954. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Volume -XIII, Indochina, Part I, 1,014 (Hereafter, FRUS.)

5. As of 1959, for example, CIA's Saigon station officers were distraught because the then US military advisory group was bent upon training the nascent South Vietnamese in corps maneuvers rather than in effective small-unit counterinsurgency tactics. (This is from the author's personal experience.)

6. JCS Chairman Adm. Arthur Radford, Memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, May 20, 1954. FRUS, 1952–1954, Volume XIII, Indochina, Part 2, 1,591.

7. Lemnitzer, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, January 13, 1962. US Department of Defense, 1962. US Department of Defense, *United States-Vietnam Relations,* (*The Pentagon Papers*), Book 12, "US Involvement in the War, Internal Documents, The Kennedy Administration: January 1961–November 1963," Book II, 449, 450.

8. The author's personal experience. In holding their dissenting views, these counterintelligence officers and their boss, James Angleton, had been heavily influenced by the testimony of a defecting Soviet officer. By contrast, other offices of CIA's clandestine service had for a decade before 1969 been doing a superb job of reporting serious back stage rifts in the Sino-Soviet relationship.

9. Memorandum to DCI John McCone, 9 June 1964. *FRUS, 1964–68*, Vol. I, 485. See fuller quotation in Illustrative Quotations section. Without quoting that part of the memorandum, Robert McNamara claimed that ONE supported the domino thesis. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York Times Books, 1995), 124–25.

10. Cooper, *The Lost Crusade: America in Vietnam* (Dodd, Mead & Co., 1970), 196. (Emphases in the original).

11. "Because most of the people of Vietnam were Buddhists, President Eisenhower asked whether it was possible to find a good Buddhist leader to whip up some real fervor. . . . It was pointed out to the President that, unhappily, Buddha was a pacifist rather than a fighter (laughter)." Report of NSC meeting of February 4, 1954. *FRUS, 1952–54*, Volume XIII, Indochina, Part I, 1,014.

12. Trip Report by the Vice President, May 1961. *FRUS, 1961–63*, Vol. I, 154.

13. Harold P. Ford, "The US Decision to Go Big in Vietnam," *Studies in Intelligence* 29, No. 1 (Spring 1985), 3. (Originally Secret, declassified August 27, 1986).

14. CIA was not the only recipient of such policymaker wrath. Eight months after the above episode, INR issued a sharp critique of claimed ARVN military progress, which "evoked a monumental outcry" from Secretary McNamara and Gen. Maxwell Taylor. McNamara, heavily influenced by the testimony, phoned Secretary Rusk, denouncing INR for second-guessing military analysis; Rusk apologized to McNamara. Thomas L. Hughes (who had been INR's chief at the time), "Experiencing McNamara," *Foreign Policy*, No. 100 (Fall 1995), 161–62.

15. Ronald H. Spector, *Advice and Support: The Early Years of the United States Army in Vietnam, 1941–60,* rev. ed. (The Free Press, 1985), x, xi.

16. In Retrospect, (passim).

17. Statement made 1 August 1, 1988, to William C. Gibbons, principal author of *The US Government and the Vietnam War: Executive and Legislative Roles and Relationships,* Part III, January–July 1965, prepared for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations by the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, (USGPO, 1988), 455. General DePuy had been J-3 of General Westmoreland's MACV, and later commanded the Army's 1st Division in Vietnam.

18. See the Illustrative Quotations section.

19. Intelligence Memorandum No. 271: "Initial Alignments in the Event of War Before 1954," March 24, 1950. (Initially Secret, declassified January 4, 1978).

20. "US Intelligence and Vietnam," *Studies in Intelligence* (special issue, 1984), 4. (Initially Secret, subsequently declassified). General Palmer had been General Westmoreland's deputy in Vietnam and Army Vice Chief of Staff. After retiring, he was a member of the DCI's Senior Review Panel.

21. "US Intelligence and Vietnam," 12.

22. "Probable Developments in Indochina Through Mid-1952," March 3, 1952. *FRUS, 1952–54,* Vol. XIII, 54, 55.

23. "Probable Developments in Indochina Through Mid-1954," June 4, 1953. *FRUS, 1952–54,* Vol. XIII, 594.

24. Congressional Record-Senate, April 6, 1954, 4,673.

25. "Nation-Builders, Old Pros, Paramilitary Boys, and Misplaced Persons," *The Washington Monthly,* February 1978, 25.

26. "US Intelligence and Vietnam," 23.

27. Memorandum for the DCI, "Approaching Crisis in South Vietnam?," July 28, 1960. (Originally Secret; declassified 6 November 1980).

28. Lt. Cols. Romie L. Brownlee and William J. Mullen III, *An Oral History of General William E. DePuy, USA, Retired* (United States Military History Institute, n.d.), 123.

29. Robert Komer, *Bureaucracy at War: US Performance in the Vietnam Conflict* (Westview Press, 1986), 21.

30. (Govt. ed.), Book II, 82, 83.

31. Memorandum for the Director, "The Communist Threat in Southeast Asia," May 24, 1962. (Originally Confidential; declassified June 25, 1980).

32. As quoted in *The Pentagon Papers,* Gravel, ed. (Beacon Press, 1975), Vol. III, 156. The author of this article was a CIA member of that working group.

33. As quoted in *The Pentagon Papers* (Bantam/New York Times, ed., 1971), 283, 285. That portion of NSC 288 repeated, verbatim, a text which Secretary of Defense McNamara had written the day before. McNamara, Memorandum to the President, March 16, 1964. *FRUS, 1964–68, Vietnam,* Vol. I, 154.

34. As quoted in *FRUS, 1964–68,* Vol. I, 485.

35. Memorandum for the Record sent to the DCI [by an ONE analyst and an FE operations officer], "Comment on the Vietnam War Games, SIGMA I-64, April 6–9, 1964," April 16, 1964. As quoted in Ford, "The US Decision to Go Big in Vietnam," 7–8.

36. Gravel, ed., Vol. III, 213. The author of this article chaired that intelligence panel.

37. Memorandum sent to the DCI, "Into the Valley," April 8, 1965, as cited in Ford, "The US Decision to Go Big in Vietnam," 10, 11.

38. "US Intelligence and Vietnam," 43.

39. Palmer, *The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam* (Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1984), 166.

40. Cooper, "The CIA and Decision-Making," *Foreign Affairs,* January 1972, 227.

41. Ronald H. Spector, *Advice and Support: The Early Years of the United States Army in Vietnam, 1941–60,* rev. ed. (The Free Press, 1985), x, xi.

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Project Management Training at CIA

Joe Keogh and Richard Roy

> *Under this initiative, a DS&T senior intelligence officer teamed with two private sector consultants and conceived, based on experience, a revolutionary method of training students in the techniques of project management and systems engineering.*

The Project Management Course (PMC) was an initiative by CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology (DS&T) in the 1980s to improve the management of technical projects across the directorate. The learning content was based on lessons from historical CIA development projects and best practices in industry. Under this initiative, a DS&T senior intelligence officer teamed with two private sector consultants and conceived, based on experience, a revolutionary method of training students in the techniques of project management and systems engineering. The course introduced a unique project management model that became internationally recognized and formed the basis of a widely used project management book.

The course and its derivatives had a positive impact on the CIA's project performance. A one-week Directorate of Support course called Managing Agency Projects was based on the concepts of the PMC but tailored to less complex projects. It was taught to hundreds of support officers and received high ratings for its relevance and impact on missions. The PMC also spawned a DS&T Software Project Management Course using applicable project management concepts from the PMC but designed for software projects and taught by computer science professors Richard Fairley and Richard Thayer. The Directorate of Operations' course for managing complex operations developed a project cycle for operations, based on the structure of the DS&T project cycle.

The PMC had a considerable influence on how industry partners and other government agencies worked with the CIA by providing a forum for discourse about the behaviors of each in managing CIA projects.

Origins of PMC

The first PMC was taught in 1989, and ultimately the course was delivered 130 more times until 2001. The two-week course was attended by more than 2,600 CIA, NSA, NRO, and IC staff personnel along with their industry partners. The course was certified as Level III training, meaning that personal interviews in which students proved with evidence that they were applying what they learned to performing their jobs; it was the first course to be so designated.

The course was unclassified and taught in CIA facilities and a conference center in West Virginia. A DS&T office director briefed the students about project management successes and challenges in their components during each course, demonstrating executive leadership commitment for the training and its impact on missions.

The PMC Model

The PMC was built around a model of project management developed by Kevin Forsberg, Hal Mooz, and Howard Cotterman, authors of *Visualizing Project Management* (John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1996). The book provided clear visualizations of complex processes, simplified understanding of the interaction of the many diverse players involved, and showed how to assess a project's progress. Their companion book, *Communicating Project Management,* provided the first integrated vocabulary of project management and systems engineering. This important addition served to resolve the gaps and overlaps caused by the Project Management Institute (PMI) and International Council on Systems Engineering (INCOSE) separately developing concepts and lexicons.

The model had five essentials.

1. Project cycle containing three aspects (business, budget, and technical).

2. Ten project management elements, each containing the techniques and tools of that element:

 • Project requirements

 • Organizational options

 • Project team

 • Project planning

 • Opportunities and their risks

 • Project control

 • Project visibility

 • Project status

 • Corrective action

 • Leadership

3. Teamwork between the buyer and seller.

4. Integrated project management and system engineering terminology.

5. Management commitment.

During the late 1990s there was increased demand for more non-residential local training to better balance the work and life of employees, and the agency sought options other than two weeks of offsite training. In 2000, the CIA held a competition for DS&T project management training to address this concern. The winner provided the CIA with Project Management Institute (PMI) certified project management training, enabling DS&T staff officers to take local one-week courses and to be nationally certified in project management.

In 2009, a DS&T project management task force led by James Wilkerson and composed of representatives of each office in the DS&T found that PMI based training was not providing directorate officers with an understanding of how to apply the project management principles and theory in the DS&T mission environment and PMI training for the DS&T was terminated. As a replacement, the DS&T instituted a new case-study-based training approach embodying the principles from PMC to develop employee's skills in system engineering and project management. This case-study–based course continues today.

Why PMC?

Two system development cultures existed in the DS&T. There were large, complex, highly visible, and expensive systems expanding the way intelligence was collected, such as KENNEN, a near-real-time imaging satellite system launched in 1976. These large and complex projects could not be accomplished by the CIA alone or by a single company. These projects utilized many documents, sophisticated configuration control techniques, and had significant oversight. DS&T along with its partners in industry had developed techniques that enabled the successful management of these types of projects meeting cost, schedule, and performance.

At the same time, there were many smaller projects in the CIA such as the Tropel camera, for example, which was built by a single person and was so small that it was able to be integrated into many types of concealments such as a pen, a lighter, or a key chain. The camera was made with such precision and unique craftsmanship that it could not be replicated by others. There were companies employing fewer than 10

people working with DS&T officers to build devices such as the "Jack-in-the-Box," a three-dimensional pop-up manikin that would look like a passenger in a car seat. These projects were successful without the full suite of project management and system integration processes needed on the larger more complex endeavors.

During the early 1980s, when the CIA was experiencing a growth in budgets under President Reagan, many DS&T projects were experiencing budget overruns and late deliveries. To address this issue, R. Evans Hineman, the deputy director of the DS&T, asked Len Malinowski to develop a project management training course for the directorate. Len was a senior intelligence officer in the DS&T with more than 20 years of CIA experience managing complex technical projects in the directorate. Len also had industry experience prior to joining the CIA.

Len solicited help from Consulting Resources International (CRI) in San Francisco. Hal Mooz was the founder of CRI, and had a master's degree in in engineering and more than 25 years' experience as a chief systems engineer and project manager at Lockheed Missiles and Space Corporation (LMSC), now Lockheed Martin Corporation. Most of Hal's experience was on CIA projects. Later Dr. Kevin Forsberg joined Hal as a principal in the company. Kevin had more than 30 years of experience as a materials engineer and project manager of NASA's Space Shuttle tile program. Both Hal and Kevin worked with Len to develop the PMC and the three jointly taught the first running of the course.

Len was introduced to Hal at a PM course Hal was teaching at TRW. Len felt the ideas being taught by Hal were consistent with the philosophy of the DS&T and began sharing ideas on teaching project management. Len's concept of a project cycle and Hal's PM elements model along with a repertoire of techniques were combined to form the beginning of a unique PM model.

During the PMC development Hal and Kevin formed the Center for Systems Management (CSM) dedicated to serving the government, industry, and academia in all matters relating to managing complex technical developments. Clients ranged from CIA, NSA, NASA, and Department of State to most CIA partner contractors and academic institutions including George Washington University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University, and the Naval Postgraduate School.

Initially the PMC was jointly taught by these three individuals, enabling the students to gain experienced insight into both the world of industry as well as the Agency. Later, the CIA and CSM added qualified instructors to handle the increasing demand for the PMC. Discourse often evolved into a lively back and forth debate exploring both industry and CIA perspectives and rational for the actions taken by each.

Both Hal and Kevin received a CIA seal medallion in recognition for their unique contribution to project management methodology and to the CIA's mission. The CIA Seal Medallion (now the Agency Seal Medal) is awarded to non-CIA personnel who have made significant contributions to the CIA's intelligence efforts. Hal

and Kevin were also awarded the International Council on Systems Engineering (INCOSE) Pioneer Award for their pioneering work.

Unique Aspects

Looking back, a few things distinguished the PMC from general courses.

Government and industry partners (buyers and sellers) jointly attending an in-residence two-week course. The PMC introduced the practice of teamwork through a novel teaching concept that emphasized managing the relationship between the CIA buyer and industry seller. Recognizing the issues caused by a lack of a mutual understanding and differing goals, the PMC trained buyers and sellers together to foster teamwork focusing on mission success. The team focus was on mission success while maintaining a professional, ethical business relationship. To our knowledge the PMC is the first and only course dedicated to improving the communication and understanding of the relationship between government and industry partners throughout the project lifecycle.

This joint training was implemented in three ways. First, the instructor team was composed of an experienced DS&T officer and an experienced industry project manager. Second, CIA officers and their industry development project manager attended the course together, worked class exercises together, took identical final examinations, and shared meals together. Third, the officer–industry pair were provided with living arrangements containing a private area to discuss the application
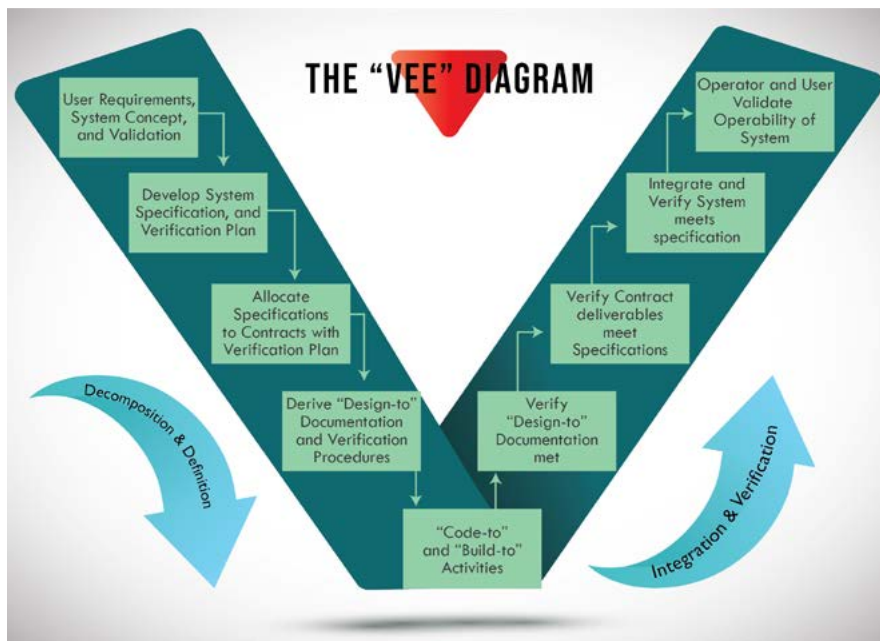
The Technical Aspect of the Project Cycle, or the Vee diagram, depicts decomposition and integration in the vertical dimension. Decomposition steps break down the overall functions of a system into its smaller parts that can be analyzed and built. An example of decomposition in designing a house would be to identify the functions and needs of each room before construction. Integration is the process of bringing together the smaller components into a single system. An example of integration in building a house would be adding plumbing, heating, and air conditioning to the building. The Vee diagram was first presented in Chattanooga, TN, in 1991 at the first INCOSE convention (then known as NCOSE, it became "International" in 1995). The Vee diagram has since been incorporated into the INCOSE Systems Engineering Handbook and has spread worldwide as the systems-engineering standard.

of their learning experience to their specific project.

The course attendees started skeptical on day one of what value the course could provide them but were vocal with praise at the end of the second week. It gave both buyers and sellers valuable insight for more effective communication and helped gain appreciation of each other's circumstances that could not be obtained in any other way. This was the true uniqueness and value-added provided by the PMC.

Project cycle matched to the best business practices of the DS&T. One of the lessons learned from the KENNEN project was to start a project with a series of studies;

including requirements analysis, program definition, and system vulnerability, and to conduct advanced technology development activities prior to commencing acquisition. This was a different approach than most of the technical support to HUMINT operations which was to build something and deploy it quickly to meet the dynamics and urgency of the mission. The most successful CIA projects were ones in which the development team knew exactly what was needed. The effort expended doing studies allowed the development team to understand the operational opportunity or problem and identify the "right" and affordable thing to do to be successful.

The PMC project cycle incorporated this lesson along with additional lessons learned from other DS&T and industry projects. The original cycle contained three periods—study, acquisition, and operations—later updated to four with deactivation as the final stage. The logic used in selecting activities and control gates for the transition from development to operations was based on best practices lessons learned from technical collection operations. The cycle provides control gates to control the progress and manage risk.

A copy of the project cycle was given to each student as a large, fold-out chart that included logically sequenced activities, associated documents, and control gates. Bear in mind this was before the advent of automated dashboards like Tableau. An appendix to the course material contained exemplar documents and guides for control gates as an aid to understanding the context and value.

Tailoring the project management to the needs of the project. Recognizing that projects in the DS&T can have a range of complexities, different motivation factors, and different execution tactics, the project cycle and project techniques included the flexibility to address these differences. Participants were encouraged to tailor or adapt the project processes to the uniqueness of their project and not to follow the project cycle and elements blindly.

Integration of system engineering and project management. The KENNEN project had seven major segments. The development team had the challenge of identifying the necessary systems image quality, feasibility of the concept and how to

partition the system into segments that could be built within industry's capabilities at the time. The development of these multiple segments required different contractor capabilities along with options preserved in each and yet be able to be integrated into a system. Strong system engineering talent in the government as well as project management capability was required to frame and direct the system definition studies.

Once the definition studies were complete the requirements and interface documents had to be updated requiring robust system engineering talent in the government. The development of this system required integrated system engineering and project management on the DS&T and industry sides to build and successfully integrate the seven segments into an operational system. The successful development and operation of this system fostered the integration of system engineering and project management throughout the DS&T.

The integration of system engineering and project management was implemented into the course in two ways: through the technical aspect of the project cycle (the Vee diagram) and through the project requirements that covered all aspects of managing requirements in a systematic and logical way.

Cards-on-the-wall planning technique. Planning is a key part of any project, but difficult to accomplish with a team larger than a few people. The course introduced the Cards-on-the-Wall technique, which used the wall as a planning landscape enabling teams to visibly interact, establish, and challenge the plan.

Periodic corrective action reviews. The course clarified the purpose of periodic reviews used on cost reimbursable contracts by introducing the idea that these reviews have a purpose to keep the project on plan and are more appropriately called "corrective action reviews." This requires the project have a plan, a mechanism for authorizing activity to expend resources against the plan, reporting project status by comparing activity accomplished to the plan, and then taking the actions necessary to get the project on plan or keeping on plan. Students often commented that action items assigned at the routine "periodic" reviews often do not relate to getting the project back or keeping on plan and become unplanned work that contributes to cost and schedule overruns on completion type contracts.

Active project leadership. Project leadership was emphasized as an active role in managing a project. One memorable Hal Mooz quote: "Project management is not a spectator sport." The image of a symphony conductor was used to convey the important role of the project manager.

Control Gates

Another key innovation introduced in the course was the use of joint control gates rather than milestones. A control gate was labeled as "a milestone with teeth" meaning a decision had to be made at a control gate. The purpose of a control gate was twofold; measure accomplishment and establish an executable plan. Criteria for completing the control gate was established by the government and included in the contract Statement of Work. The

decisionmaker was the government project manager who had four options:

- Proceed as planned; all required accomplishments were achieved, and plans are executable.

- Proceed as planned; all required accomplishments were almost achieved, and plans are executable, with minor corrections to be resolved within a set date.

- Redo the control gate after all required accomplishments have been achieved and plans executable.

- Terminate the project.

Industry was expected to provide evidence that the criteria had been met. Control gates were scheduled when the evidence was complete, not at an arbitrary target date. The message was that both government and industry had active roles at a control gate with a joint focus on mission success.

Importance to Stakeholders

One of the PM elements in the model is the project team. The natural tendency is to think about the personnel executing the project, but there are often many additional personnel that have a stake in the project. The course provided insight and tools necessary to involve all critical stakeholders.

The first two phases of a project are typically performed by the CIA system engineer, COTR, and industry contractor. The role of operations and mission data user personnel is typically not well understood, and many times not considered during these

phases. The course provided role definition of system validation for the operations officer and intelligence analyst during these initial periods of a project life cycle.

The transition from development COTR to operations personnel is often "throw it over the transom" behavior. Instead, PMC treated the management of this transition activity as control gates—dubbed readiness and acceptance reviews—with criteria established by the operations officers and intelligence analysts to be satisfied by the COTR prior to transition. The course material was written in engineering terms, but instructors were able to convert this terminology into terms used by the CIA's non-technical workforce using "war stories" and case studies to enable the understanding and application to the entire life cycle of a project.

On the industry side, companies are initially concerned with winning the competition and invest corporate independent research and development funds to increase their probability of winning. The course emphasized the value of integrating system engineering into these early activities and highlighted the need to ensure these activities were on track with what the customer was requiring by utilizing internal corporate control gates with criteria important to the capture team.

The language used in projects is not always understood by the broader industrial and CIA communities. To remedy this, there was a three-day course for executives, partnered with industry senior executive to explain the PM model, terminology, and need

for senior management commitment. Executive attendees commented that the executive course allowed them to quickly learn the broad concept of how projects were executed, the logic of the steps, and the language used. They also shared experiences and gained insight into each other's environment. An important aspect for an executive is the critical points to engage with a project and the types of resources needed. Robert Wallace, an experienced Directorate of Operations and DS&T leader, attended the executive course and recounted:

> *The criticality of a positive, mutually respectful COTR-contractor relationship, technical and personal, the lack of which became an element of every project requiring attention.*
>
> *For Office of Technical Services (OTS) project managers, "fluency" in project management was as important to their success as language training was to a case officer being assigned to a foreign county."*

PMC's Legacy

The Office of Technical Collection (OTC) had a mix of projects, some complex and some simple. The challenge the OTC director had was how to consistently apply adequate and efficient PM practices across this mix of projects. Peter Daniher, the OTC director, commented:

> *At some point, circa 1993, enough staff members had been through the Project Management Course to reach a tipping point where the training caught*

on. There had been enough issues in many small to medium cost programs (relative to the multi-billion satellite development programs) that staff members began to see the value of applying the project management precepts, even if notionally. The gap between no formal oversight processes and full-blown oversight processes gradually closed. Application of project management guidelines on a level suited to the scope and cost of projects became more routine.

When industry partners returned to their companies after attending the PMC, their positive feedback often prompted their companies to contract with CSM to teach the PMC messages to their internal project teams. This secondary effect enabled partner industries to incorporate PMC techniques for managing projects and to have a clearer understanding of how to work with the CIA.

Project management is a natural partner to all aspects of the agency because it is about doing things and doing things "right." While the joint training has been lost, the value of teamwork to the agency both in its relationships with industry and other entities is an important characteristic and value to accomplishing its mission. These unique PMC practices are key to the CIA project management philosophy, continue to be taught, and will benefit the agency long into the future, especially for today's mission-center structure where multiple cultures must be integrated.

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The authors: Joe Keogh and Richard Roy were staff officers in CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology when they helped develop and teach the PMC during the early 1990s. Both are now retired.

How the Intelligence Community Has Held Back Open-Source Intelligence, and How It Needs to Change

Chris Rasmussen

Integration is not the main problem to solve when it comes to improving OSINT operations. Overuse of mission-integration jargon has hampered the professionalization of OSINT. In fact, in my view more OSINT silos—clusters of tightly connected business functions—are critically necessary to improve OSINT operations in the IC.

Plans and strategies for improving open-source intelligence (OSINT) operations in the Intelligence Community often suffered from framing challenges. Many proposals for the way forward framed OSINT primarily as a collection challenge, which reduced OSINT to a collection supplement to classified analysis. This collection framing did not adequately help OSINT professionalize as a full-fledged analytic discipline. Moreover, it perpetuated the thinking that OSINT requires more "integration" into classified operations to be successful. Integration is not the main problem to solve when it comes to improving OSINT operations. Overuse of mission-integration jargon has hampered the professionalization of OSINT. In fact, in my view more OSINT silos—clusters of tightly connected business functions—are critically necessary to improve OSINT operations in the IC.[a]

All businesses and endeavors, public or private, for profit, or non-profit, or mission driven, form specialized and shared vocabularies around their execution of tasks and labor. Jargon helps specialized teams communicate and coordinate. However, the overuse of jargon to the point where the words and terms are not reevaluated with frequency in relation to changing business, political, or technological dynamics leads to groupthink and hinders the flow of new ideas. The overuse of jargon within a specialized field causing harm by reducing honest dialogue and obscuring problems is not unique to the IC. The physicist Richard Feynman, who helped investigate the *Challenger* space shuttle disaster in 1986, argued that if you cannot explain advanced scientific concepts without the use of jargon, there are not only gaps in your knowledge of the subject itself, but the inflated jargon-laden language creates an illusion of authority on the subject itself that lacks introspection and limits creative thinking.

Common IC jargon used often within the context of OSINT includes the words "integration," "tipping and queuing," "enhancement," and "foundational." All these terms are reductionist and subordinate OSINT to classified operations. Was SIGINT professionalized in the 1950s and 1960s to "enhance" imagery intelligence (what we now refer to as geospatial intelligence, or GEOINT)? Was GEOINT professionalized in

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a. Recently, there has been positive energy and movement around OSINT in the IC, including promulgation of the *IC OSINT Strategy 2024–2026* in March 2024. Framing OSINT more as an analytic discipline, in addition to collection, would add to the momentum. The strategy document is available on both odni.gov and cia.gov.

> *Integration was and remains a noble goal. However, the word's overuse as a remedy for most intelligence challenges beyond the context of post-9/11 horizontal-sharing reforms is impeding the professionalization of OSINT as a full-fledged analytic discipline.*

the early 2000s with an eye toward "tipping and queuing" HUMINT? No, these INTs were developed through labor specialization, clear mastery levels tied to promotion paths, tradecraft and quality standards, flagship outputs, journals to advance the field, and intentional hiring and recruitment. The objective was to create intelligence insights that could stand shoulder to shoulder with one another. Only OSINT is viewed as a building block for other INTs and nested under adjacent disciplines. OSINT also lacks many elements of professionalization noted above such as the lack of a flagship product.

Integration

The IC's focus on integration has turned it into unchecked jargon that adversely affects OSINT in a unique way. It has been used extensively in the wake of the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) as a rallying cry to pull information together and to reduce stovepiping. Although still a continuing challenge in the IC, the information-integration push has had the opposite effect on OSINT by reducing it to a collection supplement for classified content.

On a personal note, I started and advanced my career heeding the post-9/11 integration call after the IRTPA created the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). During 2005–2009, I worked (and received joint-duty credit) with Intelink under the new ODNI structure.[a] I was an energetic advocate for the deployment, growth, and use of new Web 2.0 collaborative technologies inside the IC such as Intellipedia (wiki technology), blogging and social bookmarking software, and collaborative picture and video tagging services to flatten the IC and bust silos.

Before the introduction of these Web 2.0 technologies, IC users relied on email, message traffic, and maybe some boutique collaborative functions in Lotus Notes to share content. Web 2.0 collaborative technologies helped change the information sharing culture, and the IC is a far more integrated place today than it was before 9/11. While I am appreciative and proud I was able to be a part of this, more integration won't scale and professionalize OSINT.

Integration was and remains a noble goal. However, the word's overuse as a remedy for most intelligence challenges beyond the context of post-9/11 horizontal-sharing reforms is impeding the professionalization of OSINT as a full-fledged analytic discipline. It misidentifies the problem to be solved with OSINT as one needing more integration rather than the need for more OSINT silos to help with OSINT professionalization.

The groupthink in the IC holds the view that multi-INT fusion where OSINT, SIGINT, HUMINT, and GEOINT come together in a classified environment is the ultimate end state. Of course, serious policy decisions are made with all available intelligence. No one debates that. What is up for debate is how to achieve integration with OSINT front and center, not just supplementing other INTs or serving only as a tipping and cueing tool.

As in academia, the IC uses citations to demonstrate research, share information, and enhance credibility. GEOINT reports cite SIGINT reports, SIGINT reports cite GEOINT reports, and so on. How is OSINT cited currently? Some IC products use endnote citations with formatting modeled on academic styles mostly noting open press reporting. But where is the more analytic, professionalized, and official OSINT report for citation? It does not exist in the IC. How does an INT professionalize without a flagship publication? It cannot.

Datasets, requests for information (RFIs), librarian notes, and collection summary reports are not the same as an official, serialized analytic product line with an agency logo on it. There is something special about the written word when narratives are typed out, the content is coordinated for feedback, and editors are involved with sharpening the words. Looking at an open-data dashboard or commercial data-visualization system simply does not carry the same gravitas and seriousness of the written word.

Silos and Stovepipes Are Good

Silos and stovepipes are good things. I know this sounds counterintuitive because the operative

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a. Intelink was organized under ODNI's Central Information Office after the standup of ODNI. This was fertile agency-neutral territory where Web 2.0 tools were protected and grown.

word in the IC since 9/11 has been integration. Even outside the IC, the concept of breaking silos in the business world is viewed primarily as an unalloyed good. The negative mental image of information hoarding and the connected power plays within an organization is the dominant one, but the positive aspects of silos when it comes to professionalizing and effectively executing a discipline or function is often overlooked. For substantial tasks, you need specialists working closely together. To do this, silos frequently form within organizations to focus expenditures and execute core functions: recruiting, training and development, professional standards, customer service, knowledge management, labor segmentation, and so forth. Jargon emerges to convey specialized tasks.

Looking back at the history and evolution of SIGINT, GEOINT, and HUMINT, one can see how silos formed over time to effectively execute the function of the INT, just as in other sectors. OSINT is often called an INT but few of the things noted in the silos above exist in the current execution of OSINT in IC, nor does the history of OSINT match the history of professionalization compared to the other INTs.

OSINT needs its own silos and must go through the evolution of siloed formation and function noted previously just like every other INT. If OSINT is not "siloed," OSINT in the IC will never be effectively professionalized because without the elements noted previously, no enterprise can effectively operate at scale. Because OSINT lacks silos,

it has been executed as a support function within the other silos that have formed over time. More simply, OSINT is a support function of the other INTs and is therefore not really an INT at this time.

Substantial OSINT silos can be formed within existing organizations, but this has not materialized to date in the IC as the residue of embedding minor OSINT functions with other classified INTs hinders the evolution of the silos needed for OSINT to professionalize and scale. To restate the elements of siloing mentioned previously in the context of OSINT professionalization as questions: Is there a substantial OSINT recruitment pipeline? Are there many OSINT jobs available in the IC? Are new job titles being developed to handle labor specialization? Is there an OSINT school? Is there an OSINT journal? Does OSINT have specialized and large IT investments? Does OSINT have a content or product voice? Does OSINT have official narrative outputs? Are there clear promotion paths for OSINT specialization? Compared to the other INTs, the answer is no to all the above.

From Collection Mindset to Analytic Mindset

OSINT's framing as a collection discipline to supplement classified operations needs to shift to thinking of OSINT as full-fledged analytic discipline on its own. For example, the ordering of Intelligence Community Directives (ICDs) as shown above reinforces the idea of OSINT as collection, not analysis.

In 2006, ICD 301 was drafted in an effort to make OSINT the "INT of first resort." However, note that the 300 series deals with collection, not analysis (200 series). ICD 301 was a progressive move at the time—it was rescinded in 2012—to nudge along the discipline of OSINT, but the ordering as a 300 series shows that even helpful OSINT moves in the past were viewed through the collection lens. This collection framing undermines the professionalization of OSINT as a real analytic discipline in the long term. Collection is a part of any holistic INT, but not the whole thing in the way that OSINT has been defined. I would add the term collection to the list of the words we need to rethink in the context of OSINT professionalization.

IC as Large Publisher

The US IC is arguably one of the larger publishers in the world measured by the number of analysts. The IC is substantially larger than the reporting arms of the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, Bloomberg News, and CNN combined.[a] However, when it comes to doing more OSINT work at greater scale, a common retort is "we don't have the resources." This is reflective of the groupthink around classified-first workflows; it is not solely about money. As one of the largest publishing labor forces, the IC has the existing resources to create more quality and shareable OSINT content. It is time to reimagine workflow and labor. Additional funding requests should be pursued after classified-centric workflows have been

a. Judging from various corporate and journalism websites, the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, Bloomberg News, and CNN employ approximately 10,000–13,000 reporters and editorial staff as of early 2024. Conservatively, IC analysts number in the tens of thousands.

I posit that creating an ODNI-hosted OSINT product line akin to CIA's WIRe or DIA's Defense Intelligence Digest on unclassified networks would help jumpstart broader OSINT professionalization.

reimagined with OSINT production serving as the base of operations.

Culture is not an Excuse

OSINT, a hot topic within the IC and industry conference circuit for several years, garnered new attention after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Commercial GEOINT, social media, and other open sources created new avenues for open-source analysis. When the question is asked of panel members why OSINT is not the INT as first resort or why OSINT does not receive equal billing with other INTs, the answer typically given is "culture." By this, people seem to mean there's a lack of desire to put unclassified work on a par with traditional, classified work.

The culture argument is too vague, in my view. Instead, the core issues are twofold. First, we lack flagship analytic products. Second, OSINT in the IC is centered within the classified domain, rather than in the unclassified domain where OSINT originates. Let me elaborate.

I posit that creating an ODNI-hosted OSINT product line akin to CIA's WIRe or DIA's *Defense Intelligence Digest* on unclassified networks would help jumpstart broader OSINT professionalization. It would elevate OSINT above just collection, making the unclassified domain the locus of open-source work, focus multi-agency labor against common topics and priorities,

and places leadership at the ODNI level where OSINT professionalization belongs, not buried within other agencies' functions.[a] The "INT of first resort" claim would finally be credible.

Building on the first-resort concept, IC research and writing labor would be focused to answer and publish official OSINT reports tackling the intelligence topics with judgements drawn only from unclassified sources.

After this professionalized OSINT output is published, a classified annex can fill any remaining gaps and linked together with registration numbers for pairing and discovery. The official OSINT report version is then distributed to the widest possible audience to include allies and coalition partners on unclassified networks and the classified version is then distributed on classified networks, which reduces exquisite expenditures with OSINT truly leading as the first analytic resort. The reduction in classified research labor would be channeled into unclassified work; classified inputs would be added toward the end of the production process.

This new OSINT report would be a real professionalized INT that can be cross-referenced and cited after going through a professionalized quality control process like the other INTs. OSINT is now co-equal, officially. Fusion or integration is achieved through citation, not nested unofficial collection formats

informing existing classified product lines.

Bigger Silos for OSINT Production

By deliberate design stretching over seven decades, OSINT in the IC has been primarily regarded as an input to classified production, not a coequal. In fact, the majority of IC OSINT functions are housed in collection or technology components, not analytic components. OSINT collection informs classified analysis but is not formally involved in its production. This traditional workflow should be inverted. OSINT collectors, who typically work mostly in the open domain, should start the OSINT production effort with analytic line workers joining them on the unclassified domain to create OSINT-first analysis. This would cluster OSINT expertise together in larger silos and help professionalize OSINT.

Because the analytic product would reside on unclassified domains, the IC could shift workers off of the "high side" (i.e., classified) to the "low side," where most data resides. It would have the added benefit of reducing the amount of work spent verifying or debunking open-source analysis produced outside of the IC. The IC's current classified-first design principles must be reimagined with new design principles, otherwise we will continue to tinker around the edges as we have for decades.

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a. Based on my Intelink experience, I posit that substantial OSINT moves should also be protected and grown initially within agency-neutral space under the ODNI.

Tools-driven Discipline and Misaligned Industry Incentives

Viewing OSINT as collection has produced an environment where chasing the latest data-management technology has obscured the focus on analytic fundamentals. Staying current on tools and technology is a large part of any knowledge worker's portfolio, but the focus on tools in the OSINT world seems to top most discussions in OSINT circles when compared to other INT working-group meetings and conferences that are less tools-focused.

Because OSINT in the IC lacks product lines and the number of OSINT practitioners is limited, technology discussions often fill the void. This tech and contracting focus in OSINT is somewhat logical as it can be easier to put millions on contracts to buy services and tools from industry than it is to create or redirect government billets and labor to write narrative intelligence in official channels. However, perpetual outsourcing and chasing the latest technology delay the critical reforms needed for OSINT to professionalize.

The emphasis on collection and tools has also meant that industry has responded primarily by developing front-end portals aimed to "save time" from "information overload," which has been a sales rallying cry for over 20 years with mixed results. If the IC internally shifts its focus on OSINT toward a full-fledged analytic discipline backed by officially written products, the messaging to industry would change more toward the delivery of fully analyzed and shareable OSINT content rather than collection dashboards, data scraping, or embedding cleared personnel in secure facilities to assist with collection-centric workflows.

Focus on Fundamentals

OSINT is a technical discipline and all practitioners need a high data IQ and must stay current on the evolving tech landscape such as advances in AI. However, buying more AI-fueled tech is like buying a baseball pitching machine when OSINT in the IC cannot hit well off a batting tee. OSINT needs to focus on the fundamentals of professionalization first and then work technological advancements with haste. OSINT fundamentals include creating official product lines, growing the number of practitioners, founding an OSINT journal, and upskilling the workforce. Some of these fundamentals require tech investments but most are not tech related but desperately needed to truly professionalize OSINT.

In addition, a robust training program focused on creating OSINT analysis should be established to help launch this new OSINT production line. Existing courses on analytic standards, writing, user design, and data science could be consolidated and integrated with private-sector OSINT consulting advice and other IC OSINT creation exemplars to establish a prestigious "schoolhouse."

I ask all readers moving forward to reduce and rethink terms like integration, tipping and cueing, enhancement, foundational, and collection when talking about OSINT. As a community, we need to construct a new vocabulary that matches the goals of making OSINT a real INT that can stand shoulder to shoulder with the other INTs, with official products, analytic disciplines, official citations, professionalized work roles, and even organizational silos.

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Conflict: The Evolution of Warfare from 1945 to Ukraine

David Petraeus and Andrew Roberts (Harper 2023), 544 pages, maps, bibliography, notes, index, photos.

Reviewed by Michael J. Ard

Former CIA director and USCENTCOM commander David Petraeus and renowned historian and biographer Andrew Roberts join forces to present an often insightful, if conventional, overview of how war has evolved since the end of World War II. Roberts serves as lead author, with Petraeus contributing an analysis on Vietnam and his first-person perspective on our wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The book is strong on detail and Roberts, a virtuoso of narrative history, spices the account with telling anecdotes and quotations. The book joins other notable efforts, like Lawrence Freedman's *The Future of War*" (2017) and Sean McFate's *The New Rules of War* (2019), that assess and forecast the nature of contemporary armed struggle.

Conflict has two purposes: tracking the uneven evolution of conflict and emphasizing the importance of leadership in command. The authors describe war's protean nature; on one hand, its increasing reliance on high-tech, civilian-driven technology, and on the other, its inexorable tendency to regress to more brutal forms. War's rapid advances can shock—as can its sudden reversals.

At 442 pages of main text, the book is hardly short, yet it is selective in what it covers, focusing on conflicts the authors judge contributed to warfare's evolution. (2) The book surveys a variety of unique conflicts of our era, such as the "slow burn" of Kashmir (39), and near-forgotten wars in Borneo (1963–66) and Oman (1962–76), which later influenced counterinsurgency theory. This reader would have welcomed the authors' views on the Middle East twilight wars now led by Iran's "axis of resistance" militias.

What are the main lessons of war in our era? The authors point out that the Korean conflict (1950–53) foreshadowed how modern wars end "more messily." (35) Likewise, they maintain that superior technology not always—or even often—is the deciding factor. Training and morale still are decisive. In the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973, the superb training of Israeli soldiers enabled them to prevail. High morale was key to Britain's

Falklands War (1982) victory over Argentina. (163) In Ukraine, superior training and morale have permitted Ukrainian forces to stave off defeat. Even in high-tech modern warfare, "Man still stands at the center of the picture." (152)

Another lesson is the paradox of war's regressions. The use of gas in the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88) is one example; the use of famine in Somalia (1991–) another. In Yugoslavia (1991–96), militias employed rape and death squads and commandeered UN peacekeepers as human shields. (Meanwhile, their NATO opponents employed precision guided munitions.) (219). In the South Ossetian War (1991–92), virulent nationalism, ethnic cleansing, deliberate attacks on civilians, cities divided into warring zones—all sinister elements that reappear in later conflicts. (209)

Modern sensibilities about war also come into play. The authors claim a new feature—especially seen in the 1991 Gulf War—is "democracies worried about the acceptable level of enemy deaths." (199) Likewise, if a democratic government fails to recognize that "all wars are profoundly political," (230) its army may be undermined by betraying its nation's principles, as happened to the French Army in the Algerian War (1954–62). (65)

Modern commanders must understand the type of war that they're in—not always an easy feat. (44) As disciples of Clausewitz, Petraeus and Roberts insist that strategic leaders master four major tasks: grasp the overall strategic situation, the "big idea"; communicate sound strategy effectively; press the campaign "relentlessly and
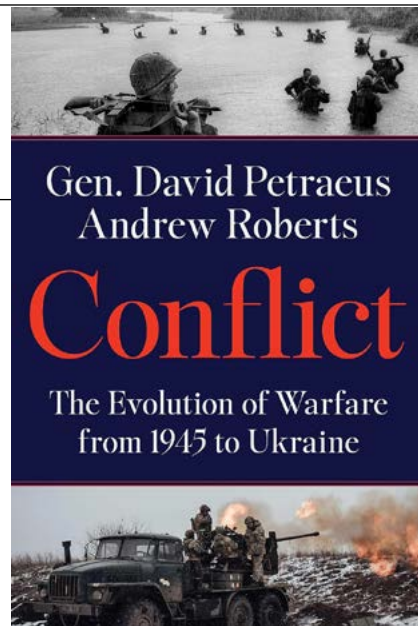
determinedly;" and adapt strategy to changing circumstances, "again and again." (4) Successful leaders like Mao Zedong in the Chinese Civil War (1927–49) and David Ben Gurion in Israel's war for independence (1948) intuitively executed these tasks; unsuccessful commanders, like General Westmoreland in Vietnam, did not. (130)

In Vietnam, we "failed the Clausewitz test" (79) by misunderstanding the nature of the conflict. The authors believe a better strategy emerged after 1968, which also featured the CIA-led Phoenix program to weaken the Viet Cong. But efforts were made too late to secure the population. Vietnam ended messily indeed; the Paris Peace Accords in 1973 permitted 200,000 North Vietnamese troops to remain in the south. (123) Getting "the big idea" right ultimately might not have mattered against a more determined enemy.

The Afghanistan chapter is a frank portrayal of the challenges of counterinsurgency. With its tradition-minded population and mountainous terrain, obstacles to success in Afghanistan were well known. Petraeus acknowledges our rapid early success outstripped policy. (246). We never solved the Taliban sanctuary problem, and many of our warlord allies were abusive and corrupt. We lacked an able and willing partner in the distrustful President Hamid Karzai. Moreover, the war never achieved the wholehearted commitment of Presidents Bush and Obama. After a major troop reinforcement, Obama compromised by announcing a timetable for withdrawal. Petraeus calls this a failure of policy and strategy. (274) He still believes success was possible if we had maintained our commitment while the Afghan National Army matured. (277)

Petraeus also presents the painful tragedy of errors in Iraq. The policy of firing Saddam's military and civilian leaders— "de-Baathfication" —led to self-created insurgency, an outcome CIA predicted. (297) Eventually by employing a new counterinsurgency doctrine and the surge of more troops, we better secured the population and reduced violence. Theory can look a lot smarter with more well-armed and highly motivated battalions behind it. As in Afghanistan, we were foiled by a local partner, the vengeful Shia Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki (ironically backed by our enemy Iran), who dismantled our progress with the Sunni Arab tribes and opened the door to the ISIS insurgency.

Petraeus argues he executed the major tasks of counterinsurgency theory, and he clearly believes sound strategy leads to success. But after two attempts employing his counterinsurgency model, Petraeus might have offered more analysis on how theory matched practice. Did our lack of ultimate success in Afghanistan and Iraq reveal some inherent flaws in modern counterinsurgency strategy? Can we win in the long run against an enemy fighting for their homes—a key factor he recognizes in other conflicts—with an American public tired of long-running conflict and unclear of the "big picture"? Petraeus laments the inconsistent support from Barack Obama for US efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. But Obama did seem to recognize that wars are indeed political, especially those fought by our impatient democracy.

Conflict offers an inspiring chapter on Ukraine's innovative and spirited defense against Russia's clumsy invasion in 2022. The book underscores the importance of President Zelensky's inspiring leadership and the "moral forces" of people fighting for their homes. Russians, the supposed asymmetric-war masters, were surprised by their own non-military tactics. (363) The authors highlight this first "open-source war" and enthuse about the Ukrainians' embrace of new technology. As of now, the Russians are still in Ukraine and far from beaten. Yet the authors strike a hopeful note. Since 1914, they ask, when has a war of aggression ended in a positive result? (361)

How do modern wars end? They don't, really. War and peace are blurred, perhaps because new technology and hybrid-war concepts make it easier to compete without open combat. (406) Petraeus and Roberts emphasize that money spent on deterrence is well spent, and we should not skimp on air-power dominance—no F-35 second-guessing here. Nuclear weapons have placed undefined limits on war (435), but otherwise, the authors avoid contemplating the worst outcomes of the nuclear age. As for disinformation, we must get there "first with the truth." (439) *Conflict* says little about what war might look like for modern navies, but if Beijing maintains its Taiwan ambition, we may find out before long.

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The reviewer: Michael J. Ard is director of intelligence analysis studies at Johns Hopkins University.

North Korea & the Global Nuclear Order: When Bad Behaviour Pays
Edward Howell (Oxford University Press, 2023) 300 pages, bibliography.

### The United States–South Korea Alliance: Why It May Fail and Why It Must Not
Scott A. Snyder (Columbia University Press, 2023), 318 pages, notes, index.

Reviewed by Yong Suk Lee

The two Koreas are a study in contradiction. In the northern half of the peninsula is a hermit kingdom ruled by a despotic, hereditary dictatorship. In the south, the most free, abundant, and successful political entity in Korean history. One thing they have in common is that relations with the United States, positive or negative, are key influences in their national security thinking. First-time author Edward Howell and long-time Korea watcher Scott Snyder offer readers a close look at how different opinions about Washington shape this debate in Pyongyang and Seoul.

North Korea's transgressions are well documented: prison camps, drug and wildlife trafficking, counterfeiting, cyber-attacks, and now selling missiles to Russia for use against Ukraine. Kim Jong Un is the third generation of Kims to lead the North, founded by his grandfather Kim Il Song in 1949. Already there is speculation that a fourth generation is in training: Kim Jong Un's young daughter lately has been seen accompanying him on inspections of factories and farms.

North Korea & the Global Nuclear Order traces the history of the North's nuclear program and its negotiations with the United States. Howell describes North Korea's stratagem as "strategic delinquency" and asks "how North Korea has become a nuclear-armed state and how we might account for its behavior over the past thirty years?" (2) Howell argues that Pyongyang has benefited materially and socially from delinquency and flouting international norms. Its weapons of mass destruction deter rivals, help to shore up the regime, and convey status in negotiations during bilateral and multilateral talks. (72–81) The collective lessons the international community taught Pyongyang's leaders is that breaking global rules
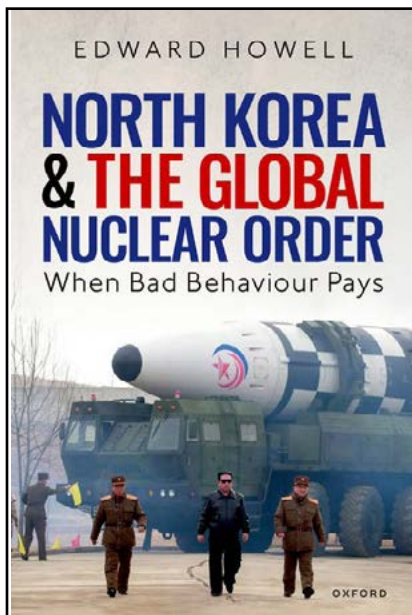
and threatening the world order bring benefits. North Koreans who suffer from economic sanctions and chronic food shortages are not priorities for Kim Jong Un and his elites. Kim may genuinely care for his people and want to improve their lives but this desire takes the backseat in policymaking, when eternal perpetuation of the Kim family rule remains the top goal.

Howell shows that North Korea made its nuclear goals clear as early as the 1990s, when the United States and its allies began their hopeful engagement with Pyongyang. An unnamed US official told Howell that Pyongyang's lead negotiator claimed that a nuclear-armed North Korea could be a US ally and the North could become "your Israel in East Asia." (107) A decade later, during the Six-Party Talks, former US officials claimed that the North wanted to be accepted as a legal nuclear weapons state and saw the talks with the US, China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea as an opportunity to draw attention and get free goods. (138)

North Korea & the Global Nuclear Order is Edward Howell's first book. A lecturer in politics at New College, University of Oxford, he places North Korea's foreign policy behavior of the last 30 years in a theoretical framework. The book does not offer solutions; instead, it spotlights, dissects, and examines a story well known among international observers and assumed as an inevitable cycle of threats, negotiations, and lies. Readers are left with little doubt that this is a course of action the leaders in Pyongyang will continue in the future.

What is left out in Howell's excellent debut is discussions about North Korea's strategic credibility. North Korea has not bargained in good faith and most experts

agree that it is not likely to give up nuclear weapons, yet policymakers are drawn to the negotiating table again and again, looking for a deal or are encouraged to do so. Pyongyang is able to get away with bad behavior because it has convinced the world that it will follow through with its threats to drown its neighbors in a "sea of fire" if the United States and its allies try to forcibly disarm the regime. The North's strategic credibility goes hand in hand with its strategic delinquency. Washington and its allies may have overwhelming military advantage over the North, but Pyongyang has managed to erode this lead by developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

Former and current intelligence analysts who worked on Korea issues will grin and cringe while reading Howell. Some may see *North Korea & the Global*

Nuclear Order as vindication of their analysis that Pyongyang has lied and cheated for the last 30 years. While analysts can feel proud for telling truth to power, facts and hard-nosed analysis do not help policymakers come up with a solution nor make military action on the Korean Peninsula any more palatable. How far can all-source intelligence help policymakers discern North Korea's threats? How much assurance can the Intelligence Community provide? And, how are our leaders supposed to balance threats of delinquency with possible loss of thousands of lives and billions of dollars in damage to one of the most populous corners of the world? Regardless of who wins the 2024 US presidential election, one thing is for sure in North Korea policy: Washington's choices are likely to remain the least worst options in a warehouse full of bad options.

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With so much attention focused on North Korea's bad behavior, South Korea is frequently overlooked. Scott Snyder in **The United States-South Korea Alliance: Why It May Fail and Why It Must Not** argues that a key linchpin of the US security system in Asia is often taken for granted and provides a passionate argument for why it must not.

Snyder is a Korea specialist who has spent a large part of his career studying South Korea. His last book was *South Korea at the Crossroads: Autonomy and Alliance in an Era of Rival Powers* (Columbia University Press, 2018). While North Korea frequently hijacks the center stage, South Korea has moved from an impoverished developing country to a G20 nation, its consumer electronics and pop culture exports ubiquitous worldwide. South Korea today is also a thriving democracy, having shed its authoritarian roots. US aid, investment, and access to opportunities abroad played a big role in South Korea's rise, and the US-South Korean alliance was the bedrock of its economic, social, and political transformation. However, domestic political antagonism and populist politics within
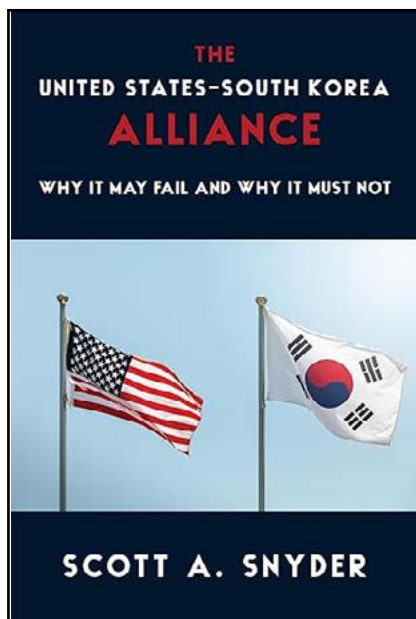
the United States and South Korea are eroding this foundation, according to Snyder.

The United States-South Korea Alliance is focused on the here and now. Snyder touches on but does not dive into the history of US-South Korea relations, which provides helpful context when trying to understand the dilemma Washington and Seoul face today. The Cold War made for strange bedfellows, and the United States supported leaders who were less than democratic but were staunchly anti-communist and pledged allegiance to Washington. In South Korea, longtime US support for brutal dictatorships fueled left-wing radicals in the 1970s and the 1980s, who distrusted US motives and are now in positions of influence and power.

Broadly labeled as progressives, most of the current leaders and future progressive presidential candidates for the foreseeable future suffered under US-backed South Korean dictators either as labor activists, human rights lawyers, or student protesters. The progressives are currently in the opposition after losing the 2022 presidential election by less than 1 percent to the conservatives, who

are generally pro-US in their world view. Progressives returning to power in Seoul is a question of when, not if, and distrust of the United States and improving relations with North Korea are their core national security principles. Snyder writes, "South Korean progressives have tended to believe that the United States perceives continued Korean division as being in its interest because it provides a pretext for maintaining US forces on the Korean Peninsula." (89)

The progressive-conservative divide in Korean politics extends to Japan as well, especially the issue of "how to deal with the legacy of the Japanese imperial rule." (108) The starkest example of this is how quickly Seoul's ties to Tokyo changed following the election of conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol, who shelved historical grievances to prioritize security relations with Japan and the United States to counter North Korea. This was in stark contrast with his predecessor progressive President Moon Jae-in who weaponized historical grievances against Japan for domestic political purposes. (115) As South Korean dictators once unfairly labeled progressive activists "communists," the Moon administration labeled critics of its Japan policy as "Japanese sympathizers," evoking "historical analogies to play on Korean emotions in opposition to Japan." (115)

Hotly contested elections and changes in policy orientation are characteristics of a healthy democracy. However, the possibility of a dramatic shift in Washington and Seoul—from pro-alliance to anti-alliance or from pro-North Korea to anti-North Korea—makes longterm planning and trust-building difficult. In the end, such a schizophrenic approach only benefits North Korea and China, which share the strategic goal of eroding US influence in Asia. Snyder shows that deeply divided and polarized domestic politics is not only an American problem but a global phenomenon; it is not any less disconcerting for it.

The United States-South Korea Alliance outlines the key drivers of domestic politics in US-South Korea relations, with precise analysis of how they shaped the alliance in the last five years. It is a wonderful addition to the field, and Snyder shows his mettle as a key observer of Korean affairs. In the end, Snyder falls victim to his own successes. He does such a great job identifying the challenges facing the alliance, his policy recommendations come across as shallow and unconvincing. The author, in the last chapter, recommends that "as part of its alliance-strengthening efforts, the United States should consistently make the case for forward-deployed influence on the Korean Peninsula through the deepening of institutionalized policy coordination between the two sides" and that the United States should "critically evaluate domestic South Korean obstacles to the perpetuation of the alliance and pursue counters to overcome such obstacles." (270) Internationalists in the United States and South Korea who value allies and alliances can hope for such an outcome, but this reader is left to wonder if it's not a bridge too far.

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The reviewer: Yong Suk Lee is a visiting scholar at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Russia in Africa: Resurgent Great Power or Bellicose Pretender

Samuel Ramani (Oxford University Press, 2023), 455 pages, introduction, postscript, notes, index.

Reviewed by Charles Long

When reflecting on their long-standing distrust of their Russian neighbor, Finns often observe that "a Russian is a Russian even fried in butter." Despite the nearly 4,000-kilometer distance from Finland to Africa, this word of caution is equally appropriate to African countries currently engaging with Russia. Dr. Samuel Ramani authoritatively analyzes the several stages of Russia's experience in Africa in his book, *Russia in Africa: Resurgent Great Power or Bellicose Pretender?* Little of Ramani's book concerns Russian intelligence, but his serious research is well worth the attention of intelligence, security, and policy professionals who focus on Africa, Russian power projection, and the attraction of African governments to Russia.

Ramani, an associate fellow at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), based his analyses on an impressive body of research that included scholarly literature on the Soviet Union's Africa policy, media coverage of Russia's more notable recent actions on the continent and the products of reputable think tanks and subject matter experts of mostly non-Russian origin. As he points out, there is a lack of published work on Russia's post-1991 Africa policy. Ramani does not let this keep him from offering his readers a broad and objective analysis.

He begins with a brief but very useful history of Russia's experience in Africa, beginning with the spread of Orthodox Christianity in the Maghreb (particularly Egypt) and the Horn in the late 16th century. These partnerships evolved over time and the regions have remained key Russian zones of influence. As the Cold War kicked off and Africa states decolonized, the USSR amplified its efforts across the continent. Russia made inroads through weapons sales and military and development assistance. Cuban and Warsaw Pact surrogates in Africa acted as force multipliers for Russian interests. Ramani points out that while the US supported decolonization to counter Soviet outreach in the newly independent countries, Russia armed and supported national liberation movements. As a celebrated CIA Africa officer has observed, with ruling parties in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola and Mozambique that grew out of movements at least partially supported by the USSR, one can conclude the United States lost the Cold War.

Ramani recounts the low points in Russia's Africa policy. Burdened by its own socio-economic and political crises in the late 1980s and 1990s, Russia was forced to scale back its activities and presence. It lowered Africa's strategic priority, reduced arms sales, and closed 10 embassies on the continent. It even allowed its normally close bilateral relations with Libya and Sudan to atrophy, and at times it coordinated with the United States on African initiatives in the UN.

Ramani also illustrates how, under Foreign Minister Primakov, Russia reversed course and became more independently engaged on the continent. To reassert itself, Russia used a combination of debt forgiveness (in return for privileged access to African markets), closer commercial ties with key countries and expanded arms sales to traditional partners and fragile states. These have been some of the underpinnings of Russia's strategy in Africa. Years later, Yevgeny Prigozhin's Wagner Group and other private military contractors conveniently dovetailed into this strategy by supporting weak or authoritarian regimes in return for allowing the Russians to engage in predatory mining and exploitation of valuable natural resources. African regimes apparently agreed to these practices with little regard to Russia's sloppy environmental record.
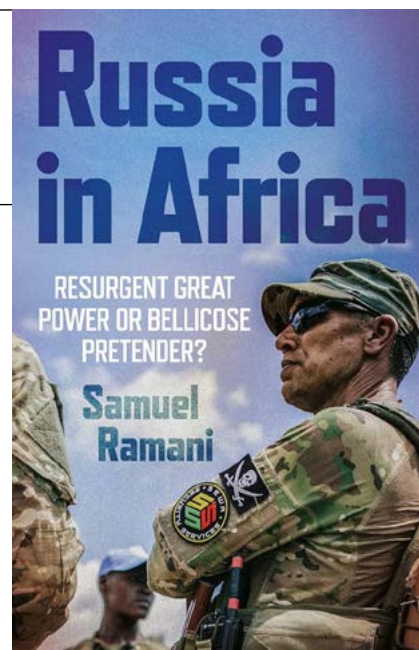
By the mid-2000s, Russia began devoting even more attention to Africa, supporting development through institutions such as the UN, the African Union, various African regional organizations, and the BRICS alliance. Russia presented its Africa policy as principled. It increasingly used soft power such as foreign aid and commercial relations to advance its interests. This allowed Russia to portray itself as an alternative partner to the West, a critic of France on the continent, a bridge between underdeveloped and developed economies, and a crisis mediator.

As Ramani points out, at the same time, Russia often showed counterrevolutionary tendencies by dithering on popular uprisings against old regimes during the Arab Spring and by opposing Libyan dictator Gaddafi's overthrow and international efforts to intervene on behalf of popularly elected Ivoirian President Ouattara when incumbent Laurent Gbagbo refused to step down. Russia's anti-Western tone in Africa also became more pronounced. Russia opposed and undermined US initiatives in Africa and capitalized on apparent US neglect. It reached out to smaller nations to garner more support (or less opposition) in the UN to its global activities.

Ramani documents how, by Vladimir Putin's fourth term as president, Russia appeared to have regained its status as a continent-wide great power in Africa. A highly symbolic event, the first Russia-Africa Summit in 2019 in Sochi, highlighted Russia's accomplishments on the continent and its commitment to Africa's future. Amid the flash and the customary anti-Western hyperbole, Russia trumpeted $12.5 billion in new ventures with African partners. Ramani carefully researched Russian commercial activity across the continent and their mixed results.

Russia's bread and butter, however, remains its military sales. Intervention in Syria created new opportunities for security cooperation across Africa and showcased Russian military equipment and capabilities it then promoted on the continent. Credible reports of civilian massacres conducted by Russian mercenaries in the Sahel, however, called into question the effectiveness of Russian-supported security. [a] [b] African countries partnering with Russia on security may soon learn the hard way that Russia's poor record in transnational counterterrorism and its disastrous "Grozny Model" of counterinsurgency could very well accelerate terrorist and popular threats to their regimes.

The book's chronicle of Russia's return as a great power in Africa can make readers conclude that Moscow capitalized off a corresponding drop in Western interest in the continent, perhaps due to wars, threats, and crises elsewhere. This conclusion has merit. As Ramani points out, in recent years the United States has been more focused on China's actions in Africa and has dealt with Russian initiatives there on an ad hoc basis. At least symbolically, the US position in Africa was not helped when then President Trump omitted any mention of Africa during his 2019 address to the UN. Some observers believe Russia is filling a vacuum left by the West in the Sahel and in the Central African Republic (CAR). Russia may in fact be chiefly responsible for this vacuum through disinformation that incites fragile and exploitable African governments into believing the narratives that the West is unreliable and that Russia offers a panacea to their problems.

Russia is often the partner of last resort for African pariah states and countries that have exhausted the budgets and patience of traditional partners in development. These regimes still need basic assistance to operate (or to protect their skins from their own people) and tend to under-price their mineral wealth in return for Russian security lifelines. As a *préfet* (governor equivalent) in a particularly violent area of the CAR told the BBC, "When your house burns and you shout: 'Fire! Fire!' You don't care if the water you are given is sweet or salty. All you care about is that it extinguishes the flames." [c]

Russia's poor record of delivering on its promises calls into question the longterm sustainability of its model in Africa. By the time of the second Russia-Africa Summit in 2023 in St. Petersburg, Russia direct investment in

a. Catrina Doxsee, Jared Thompson, "Massacres, Executions, and Falsified Graves: The Wagner Group's Mounting Humanitarian Cost in Mali," Center for Strategic & International Studies, May 11, 2022. https://www.csis.org/analysis/massacres-executions-and-falsified-graves-wagner-groups-mounting-humanitarian-cost-mali.

b. "Central African Republic: Human Rights Violations against Civilians by the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) Are Unacceptable, Says UN Expert." February 20, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/central-african-republic-human-rights-violations-against-civilians-central. Accessed April 15, 2024.

c. Yemisi Adegoke, "Why Russia Is Winning Hearts in the Central African Republic" BBC News, December 10, 2023. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-67625139.

Africa remained at about 1 percent of the continent's total inflow. Despite the lofty promise Putin made four years earlier in Sochi to double trade with Africa in five years, Russian trade with Africa had in fact fallen.[a] Seventy percent of that trade was with four countries: Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, and South Africa. [b]

Ramani also analyzes how Russia used instruments of national power in six of its interventions in Africa from 2018 to 2020: Guinea, CAR, Libya, Sudan, Madagascar and Mozambique. Not all the interventions were successful, but the Russian approaches were illuminating. Ramani's examples of Moscow's diplomatic, informational, military, and economic levers would be suitable for military war college students researching the DIME framework. His chapters on Russia's COVID-19 policy and the new frontiers of Russian security in Africa are timely retrospectives of significant recent Russian actions on the continent.

In Africa at least, Russia's default is to act unilaterally. Russia and China may appear to have common interests, but the two countries do not really cooperate with each other on Africa outside of UN Security Council voting. As Ramani points out, Russia sees instability in Africa as a geopolitical opportunity while China sees it as an existential threat to its Belt and Road Initiative, which is intended to expand China's economic and political power (249). Despite its attention-getting recent gains, Russia may ultimately be destined to remain a second-tier power in Africa, alongside the UK, India, Japan and Turkey and looking up at the US, China, and France (246).

Ramani finished this work before the Wagner mutiny and before Prigozhin had cause to worry too much about air travel. Therefore, the book does not cover Russia in Africa in the post-Prigozhin era, but Ramani addresses the minimal adverse impact Russia's now two-year war in Ukraine has had on its Africa strategy and relations. Indeed, as this review was written, Russia continued preparing its summer offensive against Ukraine and Russian military advisers had arrived in Niger at a time when the US-Niger security partnership was under unprecedented stress.

Russia in Africa is well written and straightforward. Readers who are not steeped in Russia or Africa will find it easy to follow. In addition to the book's thorough research and balanced analysis, Ramani does a service to readers wanting to undertake further study by listing his wide range of sources. Had there been room for another chapter or two in this book, Africa watchers would have probably welcomed a longer and deeper look at the history of Russia in Africa to better appreciate Russia's long legacy. Intelligence officers working Africa will find this book exceptionally useful in gaining a solid understanding of Russia's national strategy and its methods in Africa.

Perhaps African governments and regimes that partner with Russia will find another Finnish proverb useful: "When you'll try to be a friend with a Russian, keep the knife near!"

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The reviewer: Charles Long is the pen name of a retired CIA operations officer who served in Africa.

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a. Vadin Zaytsev, "Second Russia-Africa Summit Lays Bare Russia's Waning Influence," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 31, 2022. https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90294.
b. Joseph Siegle, "The Russia-Africa Summit is coming, but Putin barely invests in the continent while the mercenary Wagner Group rages across the countryside," *Fortune*, July 24, 2023, https://fortune.com/europe/2023/07/24/why-russia-africa-summit-vladimir-putin-yevgeny-prigozhin-wagner-group/.

Sparks: China's Underground Historians and Their Battle for the Future
Ian Johnson (Oxford University Press, 2023), 381 pages, illustrations.

Reviewed by Emily Matson

"Even in the darkest of times we have the right to expect some illumination," states Hannah Arendt in her introduction to *Men in Dark Times* (1968). As a German Jew who observed the rise to power of Hitler and the Third Reich, Arendt herself knew well what the "darkest of times" meant. After she fled Germany in 1933 and emigrated to the United States in 1941, Arendt became one of the 20th century's most esteemed philosophers and historians. To describe how a seemingly ordinary man like Adolf Eichmann could become so heavily implicated in the Nazi atrocities of the Holocaust, Arendt coined the now famous phrase "the banality of evil." Yet alongside such men existed others who gave Arendt hope: "Whether their light was the light of a candle or that of a blazing sun."

It may come as a surprise that Ian Johnson used Arendt's quote to open a book not on early to mid-20th century Europe, but rather 20th and 21st century China. Furthermore, Johnson's protagonists are not well-known dissidents such as Rosa Luxemburg or Karl Jaspers or others chronicled in Arendt's book, but rather ordinary Chinese such as Ai Xiaoming and Jiang Xue who often remain inside the system to attempt to "correct the [Chinese Communist] Party's misrepresentation of the past and change their country's slide toward ever-stronger authoritarian control."(x) This, however, is precisely why Johnson chooses to open his latest book with Arendt. These ordinary Chinese, who Johnson calls "historians"—meaning "shorthand for a broad group of some of China's brightest minds: university professors, independent filmmakers, underground magazine publishers, novelists, artists, and journalists."(x) To Johnson, these historians represent a "spark," whether "flickering candles or blazing suns," that illuminates the past and challenges the Western misconception that China today is merely an authoritarian monolith. (xv)

Spark also was the name of a short-lived, 1960 student-run journal in the town of Tianshui (near Wuhan) that challenged official accounts of the Great Leap Forward (1958–62). While the CCP claimed it was a resounding success, it tragically became the greatest man-made famine in world history.[a] The first issue of *Spark* draws on the theme of flickering light to illuminate the crimes of an oppressive regime through a poem written by one of its founders, Peking University student Lin Zhao. In "A Day in Prometheus's Passion," Lin details an encounter between the Olympian god Zeus and Prometheus, who is eternally damned for daring to give humans fire. Zeus explains it thus to Prometheus:

> But you ought to know, Prometheus,
> for the mortals, we do not want to leave even a spark.
> Fire is for the gods, for incense and sacrifice.
> How can the plebeians have it for heating or lighting in the dark? (74)

Spark would challenge the presumption that "fire is for the gods" and provide at least a "spark" of truth to the "plebeians."[b] Although *Spark* was quickly snuffed out,

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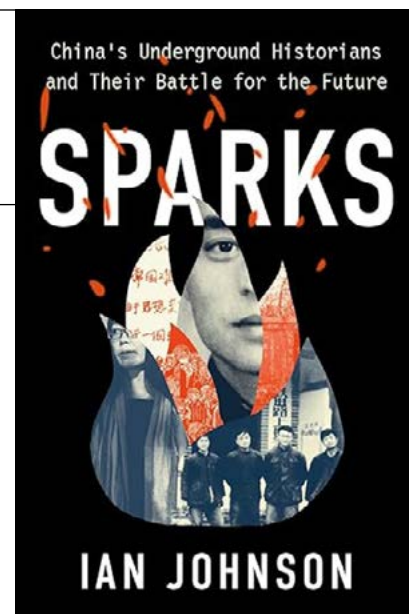
a. The Great Leap Forward was originally envisioned as a two-pronged campaign by Mao for rapid collectivization and industrialization. However, it failed on both counts – the intensive "backyard furnace" campaign meant that farmers were even "stripped of the tools they needed to farm." Furthermore, efforts at collectivization within a system that brooked no opposition meant that statistics of grain yields were often inflated in order to placate higher-ups. This, in turn, led to the heavy taxation of the countryside for grain that did not, in fact, exist, meaning that people starved to death. (49–50) For one of the most complete works on this period, Johnson recommends Yang Jisheng's *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958–1962,* translated by Stacy Mosher and Guo Jian (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013)

b. Perhaps ironically, the name of the journal *Spark* invoked a phrase popularized by Mao Zedong's writings: "xinghuo liaoyuan," or "a single spark can start a prairie fire" (75).

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its rediscovery decades later by underground historians such as Hu Jie and Cui Weiping unearthed the bravery of individuals such as Lin Zhao, Zhang Chunyuan, and Tan Chanxue, who were ultimately martyred for daring to speak out.

Between 2008 and 2020, Johnson visited many underground historians in their homes and as they worked in the fields to uncover the truth about China's recent history in the vein of the *jianghu*—a term that literally means "rivers and lakes," connoting an untamed wilderness and a place of escape for bandits who lived outside of the law. Yet these *jianghu* bandits in traditional Chinese culture often lived by their own strict code of moral conduct, acting as Robin Hood figures who stole from the rich and corrupt and championed the poor and downtrodden. *Jianghu* historians, as Johnson calls them, have existed since the beginning years of the People's Republic of China but, he asserts, more recently have "melded into a nation-wide network that has survived repeated crackdowns,"(xi) in part thanks to new digital technologies and other techniques that more successfully bypass the CCP's sophisticated censorship apparatus.

In chronicling these historians and their work, *Sparks* is divided not only chronologically (past, present, and future), but also geographically (the book takes us from the northwest Hexi Corridor in a roughly clockwise direction to the north, east, and south, until we end up on the Tibetan Plateau to the southwest) and by a dozen evocative vignettes that Johnson labels as "memories." Here, Johnson borrows from Pierre Nora's early 20th century concept of "places of memory," or *lieux de mémoire*. Johnson defines these "places of memory" as "physical locations where history resonates – battlefields, museums, or execution grounds" (xiii).

However, I prefer to use the English translation "sites of memory" rather than "places of memory" to emphasize that while many of these "sites" are indeed physical locations, Nora's original definition is actually more all-encompassing. According to Nora, a "site of memory" includes "any significant entity, whether material or nonmaterial in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element in any community."[a] Thus, while a concrete physical site such as the notorious Ditch (Jiabiangou)—at the edge of the Gobi Desert in Gansu Province[b]—or a museum such as the National Museum of China[c] can be "sites of memory," so, too, could the journal *Sparks* or even the concept of the *jianghu* that informs so much of the zeitgeist of underground historians in China today. While the dozen vignettes that Johnson includes were indeed powerful, I do wish that each "site of memory" was a bit more distinctly defined.

This quibble aside, I highly recommend *Sparks* to anyone who wants to understand China better today. In Johnson's in-depth coverage of so many inspiring individuals and their important work, *Sparks* challenges the notion that the CCP has succeeded in thoroughly whitewashing history to adhere to its perspective.[d] The books chronological span, from the Yan'an era of the 1930s to the Covid-19 pandemic, is impressive, as is the diversity of its subjects. Moreover, I particularly appreciated Johnson's conclusion, which challenges us to "retire certain cliched ways of seeing China" (298). We must engage with China's "counter-historians" and their important contributions to global conversations about the past, present, and future. Furthermore, we must avoid making the mistake, which the CCP is all too keen to promote, that the party *is* China and the sole representative of 1.4 billion people. With increased authoritarian rule under Xi Jinping in China and threats to democracy

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a. Pierre Nora, 'Preface to English Language Edition: From Lieux de Mémoire to Realms of Memory,' in Pierre Nora, ed., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (Vol. 1: Conflicts and Divisions) (Columbia University Press, 1996), xvii.

b. This was the "most notorious labor camp in China, a place where thousands were worked and starved to death in the late 1950 and early 1960s" (16). For a detailed description, see Richard Brody, *Dead Souls*, Reviewed: A Powerful New Documentary About Political Persecution in China" in *New Yorker*, December 19, 2018.

c. Xi Jinping made his famous visit here in 2012 to visit the exhibit "The Road to Rejuvenation" (fuxing zhilu), which summarizes the CCP's legitimizing narrative – after the Century of Humiliation by Western powers and Japan, the CCP saved the Chinese people from disgrace and destruction after coming to power in 1949. The Great Leap Forward and the equally tragic Cultural Revolution, however, are all but skipped over. (130)

d. According to the CCP, its armies did the majority of the fighting against Japan; the party's campaign of land reform was just; Lei Feng did indeed write the patriotic diary entries published by the People's Liberation Army as a model of loyalty and selflessness; and China entered the Korean War in self-defense. Although Johnson admits that "some of these issues might seem trivial," he effectively argues that "allowing a discussion on these topics would challenge key tenets of why the Chinese Communist Party ruled China" (123).

on a global scale, Johnson has reminded intelligence and national security professionals to nevertheless remain on the lookout for the "sparks" that might ignite the passion for positive change, even in places as tightly controlled as China.

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Cashing Out: The Flight of Nazi Treasure 1945–1948

Neill Lochery (Public Affairs, 2023), preface, acknowledgments, notes, index, photos, 336 pages.
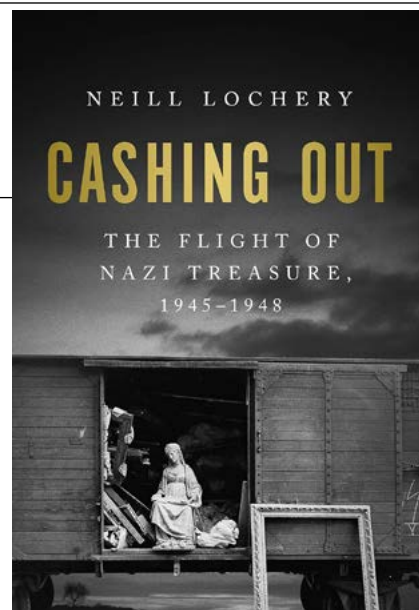
Reviewed by JR Seeger

Cashing Out provides an interesting perspective on a well-known story of the looting of European treasures by senior Nazis and their efforts to evade capture at the end of the war. While most books focus on Allied efforts to hunt down Nazis and recover art and other valuables, Neill Lochery used extensive archival research (primarily from the UK national archive) to tell the story from the perspective of the Nazis involved. His research included reviewing the interrogation files of captured Abwehr and Sicherheitdienst (SD) intelligence officers resident in neutral countries in 1944–45. For this reason, the book is important to anyone interested in how some Nazis successfully evaded capture and moved funds into neutral areas for this success.

Lochery, a historian who has written extensively on World War II and modern European history, begins with a detailed account of the interrogations of senior SD intelligence officer Walter Schellenberg, whose eventual revelations assisted the US-UK intelligence effort known as Operation Safehaven. Safehaven was designed to build a detailed picture of the efforts by Nazi seniors to evade capture beginning shortly after D-Day. As the war progressed, Safehaven became the tool for the US and UK intelligence services to prevent the escape of Nazi war criminals and their use of the ill-gotten funds and treasures. Schellenberg was a reluctant and unreliable witness because he knew that he would eventually be indicted in Nuremberg. What he and other witnesses revealed over time was the extensive network in Spain, Portugal, and Sweden that Nazis leaders used to move themselves and their fortunes. Lochery makes clear that some of Nazis were able to move funds and treasures from Portugal to South America. By 1945, that route was closed and many low-ranking Nazis and their interlocutors from neutral countries ended up Spain.

Lochery primarily researched British archives, so it should come as no surprise that his chapters are very much British centric. He often refers to UK and US intelligence stations in neutral countries, but provides few details on how those stations conducted their business or how (or even if) they coordinated their efforts. Further, he periodically strays into a common prejudice by the British Secret Intelligence Service members that their Office of Strategic Services counterparts were amateurs. His discussions of local conflicts between the two organizations always offer a UK perspective, although he acknowledges, "[OSS Director William] Donovan had a much more future facing, global perspective than his British counterpart." (54)

One criticism is that Lochery jumps back and forth in the timeline as he looks at different ratlines, or escape routes. Rather than a chronological review, each chapter focuses on a specific person, place, or looted material. It can be hard to follow the transition from Nazi looting as a national strategy, through a program where Nazi seniors were building their own personal wealth, to the final days when Nazis were doing everything they could to escape justice, whether at the hands of the Red Army or in Allied courts. Regardless, for any intelligence officers interested in operations against Nazi Germany or, for that matter, interested in how war criminals past and present might use a conflict to enrich themselves, *Cashing Out* is an essential read.

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The reviewer: JR Seeger is a retired CIA operations officer.

The Age of Eisenhower: America and the World in the 1950s

William I. Hitchcock (Simon and Schuster, 2018), 672 pages, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index, photos.

Reviewed by James Van Hook

Occasionally, we realize that we have overlooked an important contribution to the literature of intelligence. Reviewer James Van Hook corrects one such oversight in this assessment of William Hitchcock's best-selling history of the Eisenhower administration, first published in 2018.
— Ed.

The 1950s—and especially the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration (1953–61)—were foundational in CIA's development. Although created in 1947, not until the early 1950s did the CIA begin to develop its place in national security policy making, consolidating around a stable bureaucratic structure and able to undertake long-term collection and analytic programs that by the end of the decade provided a more detailed and strategically accurate picture of the Soviet threat. Intelligence professionals today continue to look to the 1950s for lessons learned on everything from covert action to analytic support to policymakers. Yet one of the enduring challenges for intelligence professionals and scholars is placing the agency into its historical context.

William Hitchcock's history of the Eisenhower administration provides just such context. Hitchcock has spent his career writing about the Western allies during the early Cold War—his first book was on US policy toward post-World War II France—and he is now Corcoran Professor of History at the University of Virginia. In *The Age of Eisenhower: America and the World in the 1950s*, Hitchcock aims to make three general points about the Eisenhower presidency. First, he shows how Eisenhower established the foundations for a long-term Cold War strategy, instead of Truman's ad hoc containment approach epitomized by the Korean War. Second, Eisenhower set out to create an enduring political-social consensus in the United States that combined core elements of the New Deal, such as social security, with traditional moderate, pro-business Republicanism. Lastly, and perhaps the element least appreciated at the time, he established a modern presidential mode of governance that lent a greater discipline to structures that had arisen since the Roosevelt administration.

Central to Eisenhower's presidency was his strategy for the Cold War. He became president in 1953 in part by promising to end the Korean War, which he felt had grown into a quagmire. He walked away from that conflict determined to avoid getting entangled in proxy wars, as shown by his frantic efforts to avoid involvement in Vietnam, when French forces there collapsed in 1954. Instead, he aimed to develop a long-term strategy for the Cold War that would survive the vicissitudes of US politics and economic fluctuations.

On the surface, Eisenhower's strategy, and that of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (brother of CIA Director Allen Dulles), offered a "New Look" that promised to roll back Soviet influence rather than just contain it. In reality, however, recognizing that the United States could not match the Soviet Union weapon by weapon or in manpower, Eisenhower reshaped the nascent national security enterprise into a system centered on policymaking led by the National Security Council and based on a manageable defense budget focused around nuclear weapons rather than expensive conventional forces. Eisenhower's reliance on CIA-led covert action—about which more below—were crucial to this strategy.

The flip side of Eisenhower's long-term Cold War strategy was his effort to guide American politics and ease, or at least, recast, the ideological conflicts that had driven the US political system since the Great Depression. To that end, he was determined to shape American conservatism in the Republican Party in ways that lasted

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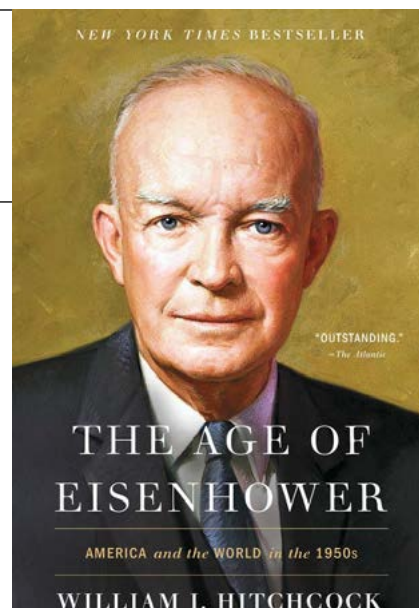
All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

until the arrival of Ronald Reagan 30 years later. As he entered the race for the party's presidential nomination in 1952, he blocked the Old Guard around Senator Robert Taft, a wing that with the help of McCarthyism had come to dominate the Republicans. Taft, and by extension McCarthy, represented the small-town Midwestern form of conservatism: suspicious of government and virulently anti-communist. To relative moderates in the party who felt more comfortable with two-time nominee Thomas Dewey, Eisenhower saved the party and big-business capitalism from the radical populists. As president, Eisenhower shaped a consensus later known as Rockefeller Republicanism that ideologically pushed back against the dynamic of the New Deal while retaining its popular programs, with balanced budgets and pro-market ideology.

CIA played a crucial role not just in Eisenhower's Cold War strategy, but indirectly in his overall governing philosophy of keeping costs low; a prime motive for making use of CIA's covert action capabilities was to achieve vital foreign policy ends on the cheap. Hitchcock adopts a critical view of CIA's role within Eisenhower's overall Cold War strategy. He implies that DCI Allen Dulles, who took over from Bedell Smith in 1953 and led the CIA until John F. Kennedy fired him after the Bay of Pigs disaster, capitalized on Eisenhower's effort to avoid a hot war with communist forces after the Korean War ended in 1953, while pushing back on perceived communist inroads into what Eisenhower administration officials and the coalescing foreign policy establishment referred to as the "free world." Dulles spotted this willingness of Eisenhower to embrace covert action with the 1953 coup against Iranian premier Mohammed Mossadegh, a feat repeated in Guatemala with the ouster of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman in 1954. Along with covert action, Eisenhower enthusiastically embraced Dulles's sponsorship of the U-2 program, which provided a gold mine of intelligence on Soviet strategic capabilities.

By the late 1950s, Eisenhower's system began to unravel. Hitchcock's account of the last years of Eisenhower's presidency is the book's most dramatic and offers a brilliant narrative of how all the different strands of Eisenhower's governing strategy—an enduring Cold War defense posture resting on a continuum from nuclear threats to covert action combined with balanced budgets and sober administration—began to fall apart under the onslaught of a reinvigorated Democratic Party with a youthful leader in John F. Kennedy.

Eisenhower's approach had always been vulnerable to the widespread fear during the 1950s that the Soviets represented a larger, almost omnipresent threat. Unbeknown to most of the public until 1960, Eisenhower administration officials and some in Congress benefited from the groundbreaking U-2 intelligence that revealed the Soviet Union's nuclear forces were not as robust as commonly thought. When the Soviets launched Sputnik in 1957, however, the dam holding back the sum of all fears broke and the administration struggled to address public pressures to acknowledge—inaccurately, according to CIA assessments at the time—that Eisenhower had underestimated the Soviet threat. Democrats, including Kennedy, who had access to CIA analysis, hammered the Eisenhower administration relentlessly on all manner of domestic and foreign policies, especially Eisenhower's containment strategy as both too dangerous (as it relied too much on nuclear retaliation), and too weak (with insufficient conventional forces to counter Soviet proxy wars in the developing world), including in Southeast Asia. With this in mind, the Bay of Pigs invasion, green-lighted by the Eisenhower administration in 1960, represented an ignominious end to Eisenhower's foreign policy and the Allen Dulles era at CIA.

Hitchcock offers a comprehensive and helpful history of the Eisenhower administration that should resonate among readers who may not specialize in any particular aspect of the Eisenhower era but who require a good overview to guide them to the larger arena of historical literature on the 1950s and America's role in the Cold War. For intelligence historians and readers of this publication in particular, *The Age of Eisenhower* offers a well written, judicious, and appropriately critical account of Eisenhower presidency that is well worth the read.

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The reviewer: James Van Hook is an analyst in CIA's Transnational and Technology Mission Center.

American Traitor: General James Wilkinson's Betrayal of the Republic and Escape from Justice

Howard W. Cox (Georgetown University Press, 2023), 367 pages, illustrations, endnotes, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by David A. Welker

Former assistant CIA inspector general Howard Cox's look at one of America's worst—and the highest placed—traitors in the nation's nearly 250-year history is a well researched, thorough volume that stands as the definitive work on this unfortunate figure. Although most Americans know about Benedict Arnold, Rick Ames, and other infamous spies' treachery, Wilkinson's has long gone unnoticed, even though it had the potential to inflict significant damage on the United States. Moreover, unlike those traitors, Wilkinson repeatedly evaded justice throughout his long life. Cox's volume examines not only Wilkinson's deceit but, perhaps most importantly, how and why he evaded justice for so long. It marks a welcome contrast to some earlier biographies.

Cox weaves the fascinating story of Wilkinson's life throughout. Born March 24, 1757, in Charles County, Maryland, Wilkinson studied medicine before the Revolution interrupted and in 1775 was commissioned an infantry captain. He took part in the Battle of Bunker Hill and operations around Boston. Exceptionally ambitious, he quickly realized that line command was thankless work and instead obtained a position as an aide to Generals Nathaniel Greene and later Benedict Arnold during the retreat from Canada. In 1777, Wilkinson became General Horatio Gates' adjutant-general, carrying messages between Gates, Arnold, and other senior commanders at the Battles of Saratoga. This role took Wilkinson's natural penchant for self-serving intrigue and backstabbing to a new level, leading to his playing a central role in infighting between the top Continental generals that denied Arnold credit for his leadership accomplishments, feeding bitterness that played into the onetime patriot hero's later treason. Rising again through scheming, Wilkinson played a central role in the Conway Cabal, which used back-channel maneuvering to attempt to replace Washington with Gates as army commander. Forced by the Cabal's exposure to resign his commission, Congress appointed Wilkinson the army's "clothier-general" supply master, but later removed him for "lack of aptitude."

Settling in Kentucky after the war, Wilkinson led efforts to split the region from Virginia. In 1787 he traveled to the Spanish colonial capital New Orleans to arrange trade deals for Kentucky but found instead an unexpected opportunity for personal profit and advancement. Meeting with Spanish officials, he proposed leading Kentucky not into statehood but rather into becoming a Spanish possession—which he would head—and offered to spy for Spain in exchange for support and money. Spain quickly accepted, dubbing Wilkinson "Agent 13." This bit of good timing was followed by another when Wilkinson's failed business efforts led him back into the US Army at just the moment President Washington needed to rebuild the military from the Continental Army's remains. By swearing allegiance to the United States as a military officer, having just sworn allegiance to the king of Spain, James Wilkinson became a spy and traitor to the United States.

Rising exceptionally rapidly through the ranks of the infant US Army, in 1792 Wilkson was appointed second-in-command to army chief and Revolutionary War hero General Anthony Wayne. This assignment offered new possibilities for his career and for spying for Spain. Tension between the two appeared instantly, and upon discovering his deputy's Spanish ties, Wayne moved to file charges. But Wayne's sudden death—Wilkinson was suspected of poisoning him—not only ended the investigation but at once made Spain's Agent 13 the US Army's commander.
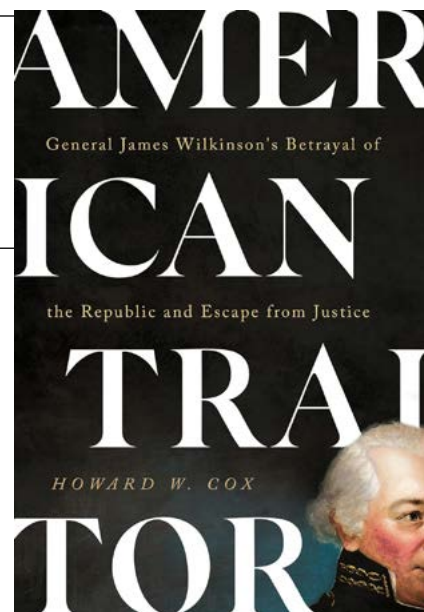
Switching his political affiliation and the Founders' disdain for things military enabled Wilkinson's to remain as head of the army through four presidential administrations. Throughout much of that time Agent 13 was reporting to his Spanish handlers and readily taking their money in return. Although Wilkinson flirted with Aaron Burr's cabal, which was planning to create a new nation beyond the Appalachians, in the end calculated self-interest led him to abandon Burr and become one of Jefferson's key witnesses in advancing charges against the former vice president. Yet Wilkinson was more loyal to Spanish gold than to President Jefferson, not only revealing to Spain the routes of American exploration parties of Lewis and Clark and others, but advising Spain to attack or capture them and offering other ideas to boost Spain at America's expense. Although later Spain's retreat from much of North America gradually ended his value as a spy, Wilkinson never ceased pursuing a pension from the king.

Cox explains and explores these and many more of Wilkinson's failed and often despicable acts—lapsed leadership during the War of 1812, leaving his troops in starving squalor so he could pursue his wealthy soon-to-be second wife, and backstabbing rivals, colleagues, and presidents—through the 1815 end of his army career and his 1825 death in Mexico City, where he was trying to exploit that nation's political upheaval for his own gain. Nowhere will readers find a more detailed, thorough biography of James Wilkinson.

Perhaps of even greater value, however, are the book's later chapters that explore the 1808, 1811, and 1815 legal inquiries and courts martial convened to weigh charges brought against Wilkinson for spying, malfeasance, and corruption. That despite the weight of considerable evidence in each of these cases Wilkinson managed to dodge justice each time has long challenged historians' understanding. Cox's conclusion shows that Wilkinson was as lucky as he was deceitful, in each case benefiting from facing imperfect and nascent US laws or being either useful or inconvenient to political leaders' agendas. Wilkinson became helpful in Jefferson's ongoing struggle with Burr, but leaders like Washington, Adams, and Madison seemingly chose to ignore inconvenient facts about their army commander lest those issues further complicate or undermine their administrations' policy efforts. Cox, a former trial attorney, brings a unique mix of legal and historical analysis in evaluating and explaining each of these cases that will stand for years as the best explanation for Wilkinson's surviving these professional legal storms.

If Cox wrote this volume in part to fill a void left by the only other recent biography of Wilkinson—a work that has been criticized for being too indecisive and "fair" in weighing Wilkinson's actions—then he succeeds admirably.[a] Readers never wonder about Cox's view that Wilkinson's life was one of self-serving treachery, betraying the nation that had given him so much. Reflecting this, nearly every chapter carries subhead quotes by contemporaneous fellow Wilkinson critics that will have the reader periodically laughing aloud with their intended snark.

My only quibbles with Cox's work are minor. His pursuit of detail sometimes heads so deep into rabbit holes that a reader must pause to recall how it fits with the main narrative, although patience is rewarded in each case. Infrequently, the author misuses intelligence terminology—for example, labeling Wilkinson in one instance a double agent, when in fact he was never doubled and spied only for Spain—but this is offset by applying his valuable legal insight to these historic intelligence issues.

Cox's book is particularly valuable as the nation begins celebrating its 250th birthday, adding scholarly insight about a little known—if despicable—figure whose account deserves to be recalled honestly and accurately. Intelligence officers interested in the early American role of their craft will particularly find Cox's *American Traitor* an informative, enjoyable read.

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

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a. Andro Linklater, *An Artist in Treason* (Walker Books, 2009).

Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf—June 2024

Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake and other contributors

General

A New Vision of Spycraft: Or Necessary Notations on Espionage, by Daniele-Hadi Irandoost

Memoir

CLASSIFIED!: The Adventures of a Molehunter, by Nigel West

History

Alfred Dreyfus: The Man at the Center of the Affair, by Maurice Samuels
The Red Hotel: Moscow 1941, the Metropol Hotel, and the Untold Story of Stalin's Propaganda War,
  by Alan Philps
Women In Intelligence: The Hidden History of Two World Wars, by Helen Fry
World War I and the Foundations of American Intelligence, by Mark Stout

Fiction

Ilium, by Lea Carpenter

General

A *New Vision of Spycraft: Or Necessary Notations on Espionage,* by Daniele-Hadi Irandoost (Manticore Press, 2023), 184 pages, endnotes, bibliography, no index.

In his preface to this book, British poet and essayist David William Parry notes, after some muddled irrelevant commentary, that "Spycraft and the world of espionage have always been very far from me." But this doesn't stop him from "heartily recommending" *A New Vision of Spycraft* to anyone interested in the mechanics of espionage including its institutional links to the "deepest and darkest type of occultism." (11)

Aberystwyth University historian, Daniele-Hadi Irandoost does state that a connection between intelligence and occultism—oracles—is affirmable in ancient societies, though he doesn't suggest any contemporary relevance. But he does add semantically confusing comment on the notion that spying is the second oldest profession: "in reality, what a strain of astonishment and terror, a concerted hypocrisy and conspiracy, an ambition of intrigue and secret influence, and a series of servility and cabal, does this scene present to the present state of modern times!" This assessment leads to the equally ambiguous statement that the "civilizing of intelligence opens a door to the revisal of our intelligence community." (14)

His semantic difficulties continue when he turns to what he terms the mechanics of espionage. After outlining the traditional basic functions of intelligence, he concludes that "mass of practical inferences that flow from it in moral and political calculation, and the method I adopt is to clear the ground, more rigorously than ever, penetrated by the genial dew of the soil in which socio-political-cultural melioration is found to germinate." (25)

With similar clarity, the balance of the narrative discusses the ethics of intelligence, as exemplified by the ticking bomb scenario, the "deontology of torture," Irandoost's version of the "Just Intelligence Theory," the legal weaknesses of cyberspace, and intelligence oversight in a democratic society.

Throughout, his views on espionage remain well concealed and the precise parameters of his new vision of spycraft are never articulated. His afterword strengthens these assessments. Caveat Lector!

Memoir

C*LASSIFIED!: The Adventures of a Molehunter,* by Nigel West (Biteback Publishing, 2024), 362 pages, endnotes, photos, index.

Before he had any thought of becoming Nigel West, Rupert Allason, in his early teens, became aware of the British intelligence services—MI5 and MI6—during the Profumo Affair. That scandal contributed to the fall of the Macmillan government in 1963 and the disgrace of John Profumo, secretary of state for war, after he lied to Parliament about his affair with 19 year old Christine Keeler who was also seeing a GRU officer.

Allason's interest followed naturally from two facts of the case. The first was that Profumo's personal private secretary was young Allason's father, also an MP. The second fact was that the Profumos and Allasons were close family friends. By 1964 public attention in the

Profumo case had diminished, but young Rupert's interest in intelligence matters was permanently established.

Classified! tells the story of how his interests developed at school, thanks in part to a teacher, Henry Coombe-Tennant, a former Benedictine monk and MI6 officer who also served OSS as a Jedburgh during the war. Coombe-Tennant's best friend from MI6 was David Cornwell (aka: John le Carré), who had retired in 1965 and occasionally spoke to the class. Seeking further information, a trip to the library revealed a single volume on intelligence: *The Venlo Incident* (1951), by former MI6 officer, Sigismund Payne Best.

This was a defining moment for Allason in several respects. First it led to a job as researcher for espionage author Richard Deacon. Second, the Best book was engulfed in controversy and efforts to sort things out, including Allason's finding and interviewing the reclusive Best himself, established part of his research methodology. Third, on Deacon's recommendation, he became an adviser on a six-part BBC film series and then wrote the book version *SPY!* by Richard Deacon and Nigel West (1980). This was the first appearance of that pen name. West would write more than 30 more books over the next 44 years.

The broad scope of West's work includes intelligence service histories, molehunts, World War II double agents, defectors, cryptography, published fabricated accounts, biographies, military intelligence, and the occasional teaser. For example, West shows how he confirmed that Admiral Canaris' mistress, Halina Szymańska, served as his link to MI6. (147) Whatever the topic, he includes related cases, books and legal battles, thus providing valuable ancillary and bibliographic data.

West's first independent book, *MI5: British Security Service Operations 1909–1945* (1981) set several precedents. First, its subject did not officially exist. Second, its very interesting case studies were not sourced. Third, ironically, scholars cited the book anyway. *Classified!* finally identifies the sources, many of them senior officers, and explains how he gained their confidence, why he couldn't mention them earlier, and how they assisted in later books.

While doing his research, West observed that many books about WWII intelligence operations excluded interviews with the agents involved—they were hard to find. He worked to fill the gap and tells how he found and debriefed 40 WWII sources, including Anthony Blunt, John Cairncross, and George Blake. The most difficult case concerned GARBO, the Doublecross agent who made a difference in the success of D-Day. GARBO was long thought to be dead, but West tells how he found and presented GARBO to Prince Philip at Buckingham Palace and later co-authored the story with GARBO.

Not all topics in *Classified!* deal directly with espionage agents. West recounts interesting contacts with Sir Dick White—the only officer to head both MI5 and MI6—CIA Director Bill Casey, KGB officer Oleg Tsarev, and

Geoffrey Elliott to name a few. One that he came to know well, in a sense—though never met—was Guy Liddell, who became MI5 deputy-director general. Liddell kept diaries of his MI5 duties—often involving US agencies—for the last 14 years of his service. After MI5 released them, West edited and published those covering the war years in two volumes.

West's account of the Tsarev connection is interesting and informative in its origins and execution. Two extraordinary, co-authored books, both published by Yale University Press and based on KGB documents—translations included—were the result. *The Crown Jewels* (1999) revealed the existence of an Oxford spy ring analogous to the Cambridge Five, but provided no names. It also explained the recruiting roles of the illegal rezidents Alexander Orlov, Arnold Deutsch (Philby's case officer), and other KGB agents. *Triplex: Secrets From the Cambridge Spies* (2009) exposed Blunt's role among others, in the MI5–MI6 Triplex project, which routinely opened the diplomatic pouches of foreign missions in London during the war.

When New York banker Geoffrey Elliott wrote West in 1996 requesting information on Elliott's father, who had served in the Special Operations Executive (SOE), neither man could have anticipated that they would create St. Ermin's Press and publish a number of important intelligence books.

Classified! mentions them all, and West's comments about one, *The Private Life of Kim Philby: The Moscow Years*, by Rufina Philby with Mikhail Lyubimov and Hayden Peake (1999), require clarification. West explains that we took Rufina to dinner in Moscow to encourage her to accept me as a co-author of the English edition and St. Ermin's as the publisher. He then explains that she agreed after learning we shared the same birthday and year. (319) That discovery was indeed a factor in her decision she later told me, but the conversation occurred at the Philby flat the following day, not at the restaurant.

Classified!—that title is not explained—tells too little about the most prolific contemporary intelligence historian, a great deal about his writings, and much about his sources and related books, some not well known. A unique and valuable contribution to intelligence literature.

History

Alfred Dreyfus: The Man at the Center of the Affair, by Maurice Samuels (Yale University Press, 2024), 224 pages, notes, acknowledgments, index. Reviewed by John Ehrman.

Few of the dozens of books on the Dreyfus Affair pay much attention the man at the core of the political convulsion that engulfed France at the end of the nineteenth century. After all, as the drama unfolded, Alfred Dreyfus—the Jewish French army captain wrongly accused of espionage and then railroaded in a rigged trial—was thousands of miles offstage, rotting in a small hut on Devil's Island off the coast of French Guiana. Some 130 years later the Dreyfus Affair continues to affect French politics, but Alfred Dreyfus himself remains little understood.

This is why Maurice Samuels's short biography of Dreyfus, part of Yale University Press's Jewish Lives series, is so welcome. At about 170 pages of text, it is admirably concise but still packed with detail and insights about Dreyfus who, though in many respects ordinary to the point of blandness, had an enormous impact on his times and the decades that followed. Samuels brings Dreyfus to life and does a masterful job of explaining him in his various contexts—as a Frenchman, an Alsatian, an army officer, and a French Jew—as well as the object of hope and hatred.

Samuels assumes a familiarity with the Affair, so *Alfred Dreyfus* is not for readers new to Dreyfus. But for anyone seeking to learn more about the life and times of an important figure in counterintelligence history, it is well worth reading.

The reviewer: John Ehrman is a retired CIA intelligence analyst and frequent contributor to *Studies*.

The Red Hotel: Moscow 1941, the Metropol Hotel, and the Untold Story of Stalin's Propaganda War, by Alan Philps (Pegasus Books, 2023), 451 pages, footnotes, photos, index.

In the summer of 1998, retired DIA senior intelligence executive Jack Dziak and I had lunch at the Metropole Hotel in Moscow with the former case officer of the Cambridge Five, retired KGB Colonel Yuri Modin. Although the announced reason for the meeting was to discuss Kim Philby and his colleagues, Modin's initial comments were about the Metropole which he had last visited in the Stalin era. Somewhat in awe, he said it was now refurbished though it retained many of its signature features, especially the fountain in the dining room with its glass dome. As the conversation shifted to Modin's relations with the Cambridge Five, thoughts about the Metropole in Stalin's time faded. In *The Red Hotel*, British journalist Alan Philps tells the story we missed.

Opened in 1905, the Metropole became the playground of wealthy Tsarist era merchants and high society. After the Bolshevik revolution it served as a home for the "girls of the Metropole." (48) By the time Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, it had seen much better days, although it was still the best hotel in town.

As the Wehrmacht advanced, Prime Minister Winston Churchill persuaded Stalin to allow some journalists to be based in Moscow and to visit the battlefield to document the heroic Soviet resistance. Few will argue with Philps that Stalin's concurrence was not a tribute to the principle of a free press but given to keep the flow of British, and eventually American, aid coming. The journalists were one of three groups working in and from the Metropole.

The second group consisted of translators, usually multilingual women. Each journalist was assigned one, who became their eyes and ears. Some, at huge personal risk revealed the truth about life under Stalin to their journalist. Philps writes that their story is told here for the first time. (3) The third group, NKVD security officers, monitored the first two in the hotel and in the field.

To the surprise of all the journalists—British and American, communist and non-communist—who had struggled to be assigned to Moscow, not a one ever saw the Red Army in action. Every word they wrote was censored to meet Stalin's propaganda objectives. Philps shows they were treated well and went on many field

trips, but reporting on the war was not permitted. The most outspoken and dedicated communist of the group on arrival, Charlotte Haldane, eventually returned to England frustrated and disillusioned with communism. George Bernard Shaw saw things differently and dined with Stalin, though he didn't stay long. One British correspondent and Moscow friend of Guy Burgess, Ralph Parker, was apparently converted from a trustworthy MI6 informant to a Kremlin asset. (149, 195)

The translators were in a precarious situation. Some had served the NKVD and GRU for years. All had valuable language skills. GRU agents Alex and Nadya (aka: Ulanovsky), worked with Richard Sorge in China and later recruited Whittaker Chambers in America. (198) Nadya's quiet opposition to Stalin is impressive and she

survived the war. Tanya's story follows a different path and depended at first on her English language skills. She would marry her correspondent in the hotel and despite her anti-communist views, survive. Philps makes her an important character in the story.

The Red Hotel conveys a detailed view of Stalin's Soviet Union as it dealt with the press at the working level. It will come as no surprise that Philps finds many parallels with contemporary Russia. The Metropole has been refurbished but, Philps concludes, the Russian government has not.

Well written, well documented, and a valuable and unusual contribution.

*W*omen In Intelligence: The Hidden History of Two World Wars, by Helen Fry (Yale University Press, 2023), 435 pages, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

While researching British intelligence operations prior to WWI, historian Helen Fry became convinced that for intelligence leaders the idea of "employing women in intelligence … was absolutely unthinkable." (5) Of necessity, this view would change forever during WWI, though in many cases the details of their contributions, and those of their successors in WWII, received relatively little attention. Based on interviews with participants and recently released official documents, *Women In Intelligence* tells stories of previously unknown contributions by women and adds operational detail to some formerly reported. The case of the British nurse is an example of the latter.

Google "Edith Cavell," and one discovers she was a British nurse who operated a medical clinic and nursing school in Brussels at the start of the war in August 1914. But as some historians have noted, she was also probably a spy, and that is the reason she was killed by the Germans. Fry uses recently released archival material to document her espionage and names her sub-agents for the first time.

The WWII account of Lesley Wyle's unusual recruitment and her secret recording, transcription, and translation of Nazi communications finally places her in the public record. Fry notes that she is just one of many who performed similar tasks.

But these accounts are exceptions. The presumptive entry level position for women was as a secretary. Fry describes many cases of "well educated, highly efficient and feisty characters," overcoming this potential limitation and successfully running agent networks, serving as analysts, field radio operators, codebreakers, debriefing defectors, and photo-interpreters. (88ff) An outstanding example is Jane Archer, who became one of the first MI5 staff officers and also served in MI6. (103)

With two exceptions, Mata Hari and Virginia Hall, Fry's subjects are British. Mata Hari is included to contrast the popular misconceptions of the spy-seductress with the realities of cases Fry presents. Virginia Hall, although American, is included because of her distinguished service in Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) before she joined OSS.

Women In Intelligence contains a most curious and unexplained factual error: Fry's observation that "France remained neutral and unoccupied" during WWI. (10)

A principal conclusion of *Women In Intelligence* is that the contributions of women to the secret world of intelligence, too long obscured by official secrecy, are now known to history. A valuable contribution to the literature.

World War I and the Foundations of American Intelligence, by Mark Stout (University Press of Kansas, 2023), 388 pages, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

Former CIA analyst and lecturer at Johns Hopkins University, Mark Stout, has written an interesting and provocative account reconsidering the origins of "American intelligence." The use of quotes here is intended to emphasize the importance of the term to Stout's thesis, which he articulates first in his introduction.

On page one Stout writes: "Ask an American intelligence officer to tell you when the country started doing modern intelligence, and you will probably hear something about the Office of Strategic Services in World War II or the National Security Act of 1947 and the formation of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)." (1)

Stout attributes this view to the general acceptance of two "CIA-centric" myths about modern American intelligence that originated more than 25 years after World War I. "According to the first, the United States neglected intelligence for far too long, and it really took World War II to change things … little of importance happened before the establishment in 1941 of the Office of the Coordinator of Information, which was reorganized as the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)." (2) Stout quotes several intelligence officers who have expressed related views including former director Allen Dulles, who wrote "in each of our crises, up to Pearl Harbor, workers in intelligence have had to start in all over again." (264) Also cited: "a glossy publication from the CIA's History Staff—which should know better—is titled The Office of Strategic Services: America's First Intelligence Agency."

The second myth focuses on the Intelligence Community and the National Security Act of 1947. "This myth says that a necessary component of modern American intelligence is the existence of a community of agencies that somehow exhibits centralization, a function of how intelligence agencies interact rather than what goes on inside them." (3) Since these organizations did not exist until after WWII, that is when modern American intelligence began.

Stout doesn't accept either view and *World War I and the Foundations of American Intelligence* presents a chronology of the sometimes bumpy growth of intelligence in the United States from the Civil War to WWII that he argues supports his position. The development of new military intelligence organizations such as the Office of Naval Intelligence "some fifty-eight years before the OSS was created," and the War Department's Military Intelligence Division shortly thereafter (13) are principal examples, though the State and Justice Department had intelligence units. And when necessary, ad hoc groups were created to assist the president.

In this thoroughly documented account, Stout discusses the principal intelligence concepts and functions, the foreign liaison relationships developed, the players involved, and how the units were employed in all the wars and threats before WWII. He concludes that by the end of World War I, almost all the ideas that define modern American intelligence, including the moral necessity of espionage, were commonplace among intelligence personnel and that "World War I laid the foundations for the establishment of a self-conscious profession of intelligence." (14)

The one question not addressed concerns the need for a central source of national intelligence for the president as recognized by Presidents Roosevelt and Truman. WWI intelligence certainly helped, as Stout makes clear, but at the outbreak of WWII the military intelligence organizations were still independent and competing. Donovan's Central Intelligence Group was the first step toward that goal and one reason modern American intelligence is reckoned from that event. In short, the answer depends on whether one views "American intelligence" as a reference to national or subordinate unit control.

Fiction

*I**lium,*** by Lea Carpenter (Alfred A. Knopf, 2024), 220 pages. Reviewed by John Ehrman.

Lea Carpenter's *Ilium* at first glance appears to be a straightforward novel of espionage, love, and revenge. It is all those things, but also an ambitious novel, with much to say. It doesn't work quite as well as Carpenter must have hoped, but before we get to that, here's something to keep in mind: Ilium is the Latin name for Troy, the setting of Homer's epic poem.

Carpenter's story revolves around an unnamed woman narrator who relates events from two decades ago, when she was 21. Already orphaned by then, she had grown up in London, where her mother had been a housekeeper for a wealthy widow but tried to elevate her status by claiming to be a "personal assistant." Thus, our narrator explains, she learned early in life how to pretend to be someone she wasn't, and that "pretending is freedom." Later, too, she's told that "espionage loves an orphan," and especially one who is naïve, poor, and still lacking in self-awareness. In other words, she was born for espionage.

Espionage, and love, come in the form of Marcus. He's a mysterious man, some 30 years older than our narrator, whom she meets at a party in London. Marcus sweeps her off her feet and they quickly marry, seeming to be destined to live happily ever after in Paris.

Of course, it's not that simple. Before our narrator can live her dream, Marcus's equally mysterious Lebanese friend Raja asks her to do a small favor for them—visit some friends at their family compound at Cap Ferret, on the Atlantic coast of France, and report back on the comings and goings of the father of the family, a mysterious Russian named Edouard. We want to know everything you can learn about him," Raja tells her. Naturally, there's also a cover story and a legend for her new identity.

Now realizing that Marcus has recruited her into espionage, our heroine slips into her role and performs perfectly. On her return from Cap Ferret, she reports to Raja and he, in turn, begins to let her in on the secret behind her mission. Unfortunately, however, Marcus is man with health problems and he dies almost immediately after the Cap Ferret assignment, leaving our narrator pregnant and

in the hands of Raja—"the one person on whom I had, in an instant, become entirely dependent."

Most of the remaining two-thirds of the book is a complex story of personalities and relationships. Edouard is an artist and lover of the classics who instructs his visitor on the finer points of Homer and the *Iliad*; she, in turn, becomes ever closer to Edouard's wife, her daughter and, especially, Felix, Edouard's young soccer-obsessed son from a previous relationship.

Eventually Raja lets her in on the rest of the secret, which we need not go into here, and our narrator, in turn, embraces her new world and self. "Espionage is simply human interaction performed under exceptional circumstances…at its essence, [it is] observation, seduction, patience…you have to be willing to forget who you are in order to inhabit someone else." Indeed, it turns out that almost everyone else in *Ilium* also has transformed their identity at some point and has a secret past. The gradual revelation of who has done what to whom and what motivates them makes this a very human tale.

But it's also a very complicated story, especially with Carpenter's thoughts about the nature of espionage and the fluidity of identity running through the narrative. "Most people take a lifetime to find themselves," our heroine says, even as she admits that Marcus "was handing me an identity I had been looking for without knowing it." Shifting identities is not a new theme in spy novels but, perhaps in a reflection of today's concerns, these musings about its fluidity sometimes go on a bit too long. You'll mostly forgive this, however, as Carpenter is a writer of great skill and subtlety. Her prose is elegant and she never lets things get bogged down. Indeed, the story moves along, the tension builds and, at under 250 pages in the print edition, it is concise by today's standards. The climax of the book is what you expect, though the end contains some interesting surprises.

But then there is the part doesn't quite work. Carpenter says in her author's note that *Ilium* is about "war's essential subjectivity, how a hero to one side is an assassin to another." For Carpenter, the Trojan War and the *Iliad* are templates for using the worlds of intelligence and

espionage to make this point. Edouard recounts the story of the rage of Achilles after Hector kills his close friend, Patroclus. Achilles kills Hector in revenge, and Hector's father, Priam, sneaks into Achilles tent to confront him and convince him to return the body. "Priam knew he and Achilles shared in the slaughter, in different ways," says Edouard. Carpenter agrees and, ultimately, comes to see it all as pointless. If only the spies in *Ilium* had "been able to sit, and talk, like Piram and Achilles, they might have discovered the things they shared, like loss. They might have wept and seen at once the joy and futility in their work, that the reckoning they sought was the real chimera." Carpenter lays it on a bit thick, and I suspect that few readers of *Studies* will find this convincing.

Carpenter isn't above playing a few more literary games. With all the talk of Greeks, love, war, and revenge, why not just giver her protagonist a name—Helen would do nicely—and be done with it? And what's with introducing a character, late in the story, a CIA officer called Tracy Barnes, the name of the man who oversaw the Bay of Pigs invasion? Is this a less-than-subtle hint that all intelligence operations tend toward disaster? If so, I'm pretty sure it's lost on almost all of Carpenter's readers, few of whom are likely to know the reference.

Ilium isn't for everyone. Those looking for realism or thriller-style action had best go elsewhere. If your taste runs toward psychological or literary approaches—think Graham Greene—you'll enjoy this, despite its flaws. But if you want something Homeric, stick with the original.

The reviewer: John Ehrman is a retired CIA analyst and frequent contributor to Studies.

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