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The Secret Sharers

THE SUPER SPIES. By Andrew Tully.
256 pages. Morrow. \$5.95.

American espionage officials seem to operate on the assumption that they must know virtually everything about nearly everybody, from hostile foreign nations to trusted allies—even this country's college students. A second assumption is that nobody ought to know anything about U.S. intelligence. Washington columnist Andrew Tully in 1961 wrote a book that exhibited some of the CIA's dirty linen. In this illuminating book, Tully revisits the CIA and looks at the rest of the spy community: the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and National Security Agency (NSA).

The novels of John Le Carré de-romanticized the spy, and Tully strips still more glamour away by claiming that, for the most part, the agent in the field has been superseded by technology. Take NSA, the nation's largest intelligence agency, for example. From its \$47 million complex at Fort Meade, Md., the civilian agency calmly and unobtrusively performs its duty of finding out what everyone is saying about everyone else. It does the job extremely well, thanks, in part, to a network of spy satellites called SAMOS (Satellite and Missile Observation System). Orbiting at 17,500 miles an hour 150 miles above the earth, SAMOS eavesdrops on radar, radio and microwave telephone communications and transmits the findings ultimately to NSA where they are decoded and analyzed. The messages reveal anything from the morale of Soviet jet pilots to what an Eastern European Communist Party official thought of the musical "Hair" (it was "decadent"). Besides this, SAMOS is equipped with cameras sophisticated enough to photograph clearly, say, Russian jets parked on an airfield. NSA also operates electronic spy ships such as the ill-fated Pueblo and Liberty.

Just what sort of job are NSA and the rest of the 60,000 spies doing for American taxpayers, who underwrite their ac-

tivities at an estimated \$4 billion a year? "Some foolish things are done and more foolish things are said," writes Tully, "but this gigantic spying machine *does* work." Indeed, he points out that U.S. intelligence provided, among other things, advance word about the moon-circling mission of Russia's Zond 5, the Mideast war of 1967, North Vietnam's Tet offensive and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The U.S. declined to act on the last bit of information for fear that it would ultimately lead to a confrontation with Russia, says Tully.

Rivalry: There have been, to be sure, intelligence failures that have embarrassed the U.S., and in the case of the Cuban missile crisis nearly caused a nuclear war. Blunders, claims Tully, are usually a result of "intellectual friction" and "jungle-like competition" between agencies. The CIA and DIA differed bitterly about the intelligence obtained during the missile crisis: "Had [JFK] heeded the DIA-INR counsel, he could have acted much sooner and probably with less risk in calling the Russians' bluff," Tully contends. Yet another example of such fierce inter-agency rivalry was North Vietnam's murderously successful Tet offensive nearly two years ago. Tully claims the DIA had adequate warning about the conflict, but the CIA—on whose advice Gen. William Westmoreland was acting—did not. And "apparently nobody from the DIA told the CIA anything—and vice versa." Tully further charges that the intelligence establishment occasionally exceeds its bounds of helping to guide policy in order to direct foreign policy.

That American foreign policy can be determined by esoteric agencies and largely unknown men is frightening. Moreover, the confusion—to say nothing of the expense—caused by duplication of intelligence gathering is unconscionable. Thus, Tully suggests that Congress "should launch a major examination of the intelligence community with the twin aim of reorganizing its structure and realigning its operations . . . Certainly there would be fewer personality clashes among the tribal chiefs if there were fewer chiefs, and perhaps the U.S. would get into less trouble."

—ARTHUR COOPER