

intelligence officer's bookshelf

Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake with contributions from Graham Alexander, J.R. Seeger, and John Ehrman, and R. Lee

General

The CIA Intelligence Analyst: Views From the Inside

Edited by Roger Z. George and Robert Levine (Georgetown University Press, 2024) 269 pages, index.

Most books about the CIA emphasize aspects of espionage or covert action operations. Few mention the many analytic disciplines employed, and fewer explain exactly how analysts do their work. (xiii) With one important qualification, *The CIA Intelligence Analyst* reverses those conditions. The qualification concerns the implication that readers will learn “how” analysts do analysis. It is more accurate to say that they can learn “what” the analyst does to allow their analysis to occur. No examples of the analytic processes that reduce the variables weighed to a final result are included.

The 10 contributing authors discuss their CIA personal experiences and the core intelligence disciplines they learned to become analysts. These include foreign political matters and military, economic, cyber, counterintelligence, counterterrorism topics, and leadership analysis. In many cases they also learn related science disciplines and statistical methods and models necessary to support policymakers.

For example, Cynthia Barkanic’s chapter on economic intelligence employs the concept of the “invisible hands” to describe the largely unseen economic analysts and what they do to respond to administration requests. She reviews how analysts work with CIA managers, policymakers, and collectors as well as sources such as public documents, diplomatic reporting from US embassies and consulates, and clandestine information.

To illustrate specific economic issues she has dealt with, Barkanic discusses CIA work on the international petroleum market necessary to make long-range output projections.

Other topics include financial technology, cryptocurrency, and supply chain analysis.

Barkanik also mentions a feature unique to the CIA: “opportunity analysis.” This art form involves finding and assessing potential policy options or opportunities that might exploit US strengths and a competitor’s vulnerabilities. (80) Not all of her examples end favorably, but they offer sound lessons.

The chapter on counterintelligence (CI) describes its history in CIA and discusses the challenges of CI analysts in the Ames case, among others. The authors emphasize the risks associated with cognitive and confirmation bias that can distort findings. They cite the WMD claims from the source CURVEBALL prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq to make their point. (147)

The CIA Intelligence Analyst reaches an important general conclusion: Each topic of analytic interest requires its own methods, models, and often techniques. They draw on a wide range of collectors, and serve various policymakers to which the analyst must adapt. A valuable contribution and an eyeopener for prospective analysts. ■

Intelligence Agencies, Technology and Knowledge Production: Data Processing and Information Transfer In Secret Services During the Cold War

Edited by Rüdiger Bergien, Debora Gerstenberger and Constantin Goschler (Routledge, 2022) 297 pages, index.

In June 2019, a conference in Potsdam, Germany titled “The Knowledge of Intelligence. Scientification, Data Processing and Information Transfer in Secret Services, 1945–1990”, was attended by the authors of the 12 chapters

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.

in this volume. The contributors are academics and researchers in Europe and South America. The countries studied include the United States, West Germany, Brazil, Poland, Turkey, and the Soviet Union.

The objective of each contribution is to show the progress made since the 1960s, when the “heads of intelligence in the West, the East and the South often described their agencies as scientific and technological enterprises.” They support this premise by quoting former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director William F. Raborn who stated “in a 1966 interview, that the main purpose of a modern intelligence organisation was scientific data analysis.” Heads of other services discussed in the book are also quoted with no better clarity. (1) This book attempts to show that intelligence since then has undergone “scientization”—become a science—doing much more than data analysis. (1)

Eleven of the chapters deal with Cold War intelligence services that employ computers and technical devices as well as scientific data analysis to accomplish missions. The twelfth concerns the Soviet Union. From the context provided, the KGB appeared to be behind its contemporaries in scientific know-how. Little clarification resulted from the author’s characterization of the KGB as “constituted scientificity at its core—universalism, reflectiveness, method orientation, critique—remained alien to the KGB until the end.” (276) Occasionally academic vocabulary intrudes; this is not a solitary example.

Applied digitization is a theme common to each service and its application to various surveillance techniques is discussed. At several points the Cold War boundary is exceeded when Edward Snowden’s revelations are considered. (85)

In general this volume paints a multilayered picture of the changes in the circulation of intelligence knowledge as a result of scientization and digitization that affect national security. The authors identify functions and conditions they consider questionable but do not always make clear. For example they refer to CIA’s so called “machine hegemony” over partners, (110) and the curious statement that the “politicisation of intelligence knowledge in the United States apparently went hand in hand with the elevation or even mythification of the “intellectual core” of the intelligence service. But overall “they are confident that the contributions in this volume are first and important steps on the way to a global history of intelligence knowledge in the Cold War world.” (282) Others may hold the view that the steps are not well defined.

Intelligence Agencies, Technology and Knowledge Production offers interesting views, expressed by academics, on how some intelligence agencies gradually adapted to the digital world during the Cold War. ■

Memoir/Biography

Humble Yet Fierce: My Life Behind the Curtain of the CIA

By Katy McQuaid
(New Degree Press, 2023) 236 pages.

In the 1970s, while in high school, Kathy McQuaid joined the all-male swimming team and got her first taste of what it was like to compete in a man-comes-first world. After graduating from Penn State she joined the CIA in 1983 and encountered a similar atmosphere during her early years there. In her memoir, *Humble Yet Fierce*, McQuaid tells how she dealt with two career-long challenges: job performance and leadership. She did well with the former, rising from a GS-7 to an SIS super-grade—the first woman to reach that level in the Directorate of Support. As to the latter, she “learned effective leaders don’t have to be loud to be strong. In fact, people who are humble, yet strong and courageous, are often the most effective leaders.” (14)

McQuaid’s CIA career included assignments in Asia, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf and Headquarters. Beside the normal logistical functions, she tells about “driving on dangerous roads in remote villages ... closing a CIA covert facility ... [and] experiences in war zones.” (15)

In 2004, while serving as deputy director of logistics, McQuaid became involved in contracting work supervised by “a very charismatic and influential leader named Dusty [she doesn’t give his surname]. He was relentless in pursuing a very large contract to a specific company for the movement of all air cargo.” (193) Despite pressure from Dusty, McQuaid refused to cooperate with what appeared to be questionable practices and learned later that she was right. Dusty was fired and eventually sent to jail.

Humble Yet Fierce also tells stories of McQuaid's personal life that shaped her character. They include unexpected losses of family members and CIA colleagues. She also discusses her unsuccessful marriage, which eventually caused considerable stress. Initially reluctant to seek professional counseling, she learned that "CIA encourages employees to get help before issues spin out of control" and does not penalize one's career.

Katy McQuaid decided to retire after an exemplary 32-year career at the CIA. She concludes *Humble Yet Fierce* with an account of her post CIA life as a writer and public speaker whose successful career was the result of a humble, firm, and unwavering commitment to her profession.

Indochina Hand: Tales of a CIA Case Officer

By Barry Michael Broman

(Casemate Publishers, 2024) 291 pages.

Reviewed by Graham Alexander

Retired CIA officer Barry Michael Broman's *Indochina Hand: Tales of a CIA Case Officer* is a sequel to his 2020 memoir, *Risk Taker, Spy Maker: Tales of a CIA Officer*. In *Indochina Hand*, Broman proffers vignettes culled from over seven decades of a life richly lived. Broman does well to illustrate quintessential qualities of an effective case officer throughout his narrative, even when discussing events outside his agency career, which lasted for a quarter of a century. He is, if nothing else, an adventurer who seems to embrace hard living just as easily as luxury in a wide array of geographic and geopolitical circumstances. Broman is a talented writer with an obvious eye for both the lurid and the beautiful and whose prose is only occasionally inhabited by small factual errors or political pronouncements. *Indochina Hand* is a consistently entertaining work for any intelligence professional who enjoys "war stories" from an experienced, accomplished colleague.

Indochina Hand begins like a traditional biography and stays roughly chronological throughout. Nonetheless, Broman displays no qualms in skipping between continents and assignments while relating his, and occasionally other's, most seminal or simply fascinating experiences. Readers will learn interesting details about Broman's time in Vietnam, his flight from the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, his asset meetings in Rome, and his later-life journey to Samarkand. Broman has a well-trained eye for tales that will engage the reader. Exotic foods, booze-fueled parties, ziplines over the Pecos River, and even a risqué

scavenger hunt through the streets of Bangkok all feature. Broman is modest when relating his own accomplishments, but the person that emerges from the prose was obviously well-suited for operations work. Offhandedly, Broman describes dozens of close friends, decades-long relationships, and a knack for building bridges with a wide spectrum of individuals. In one passage, Broman thinks nothing of befriending a Burmese border official despite a potentially hostile introduction. In another, he persuades a local contact to provide crucial information in response to a FLASH message on a European crisis.

Broman's goal in writing *Indochina Hand* seems to have been, foremost, to entertain. Unquestionably, he is successful in this objective. *Indochina Hand* feels like encountering the most interesting patrons at a local watering hole and listening wide-eyed as they relate, always interesting, and often amusing, stories that well encapsulate why operational intelligence work intrigues so many. The principal critique of *Indochina Hand*, if one might label it thus, is that Broman sometimes sells himself short. One chapter titled "On The Recruitment of Spies" consists, for example, of only four pages. Others on hard target recruitments and asset meetings are similarly brief. This is a pity, given that Broman obviously has the intellect, writing prowess, and experience to author a work that trades punch for nuance. Simply stated, he was clearly a high-performing professional, in many respects the consummate case officer, whose insights on intelligence operations likely would provide valuable learning tools for the generations of officers who have and will follow. Broman notes in the book's introduction that he has recently spent more time writing fiction than fact. Any reader of *Indochina Hand*, however, is likely to leave wanting more and hoping that a third volume in a life-trilogy, will emerge, one that emphasizes strategy and mentality over plot. ■

History

The CIA: An Imperial History

By Hugh Wilford

(Hachette Book Company, 2024) 366 pages.

Reviewed by JR Seeger

Hugh Wilford is an author who should be familiar to readers in the Intelligence Community. His book *The Mighty Wurlitzer* described early CIA operations in the 1950s and early 1960s, beginning with the creation of the Office of Policy Coordination headed by Frank Wisner and eventually expanding to include every type of political warfare against the USSR and the Warsaw Pact, ranging from Radio Free Europe to CIA funding of cultural and scientific exchange programs. In his book *America's Great Game*, Wilford described in detail the lives of multiple CIA Arabists in the early Cold War. In this new book, Wilford has decided to use his research and writing skills to create a broad-brush polemic hostile to CIA operations from 1947 to 2020. Along the way, he follows the careers of multiple CIA officers, from Sherman Kent through Gina Haspel. In each and every case, he focuses on the perceived flaws of these officers and how their decisions created what he calls the unintended consequences of an "imperial CIA."

Wilford's primary premise here is that CIA followed in the footsteps of the British and the French colonial security services and, in doing so, created multiple catastrophes in the developing world, while also creating "an imperial boomerang," which significantly disrupted the United States internally from 1960 to the present. It is clear from the first few pages that Wilford has decided to prosecute the CIA as an organization and intends to place the responsibility for nearly every US foreign policy catastrophe, including covert action programs in Iran, Guatemala, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Southwest Asia.

Wilford mixes facts uncovered in declassified archival material and "whistleblower" writings with periodic caveats that allow him to appear to be even handed. He regularly ends a damning study of a CIA operation by stating "To be fair, many CIA officers were aware of these complexities" (63) or in an accusation that the CIA made extensive use of unwitting anthropologists by stating, "A complete picture of the CIA's influence on the discipline is probably unattainable due to the continuing official secrecy." (253)

Along with broad brush criticisms, Wilford also makes assumptions unsupported by facts. For example, he suggests that the WWII US intelligence community and, most especially, OSS commander William J. Donovan were completely under the control of the British, specifically under the control of the British Secret Intelligence Service. OSS histories—including the official *OSS War Report* but also more modern histories—and OSS and British archives are clear that Donovan and his OSS lieutenants regularly were at odds with their British counterparts, both in London and in the field. In fact, it was only after D-Day that SIS was willing to openly cooperate with OSS/Secret Intelligence officers in the field. OSS/Special Operations teams were regularly in direct conflict with their Special Operations Executive counterparts. While not openly hostile to OSS/X2 (counterintelligence), British Security Service officers in London were overly cautious in revealing too much of their Double Cross System both for operational security reasons and because BSS already had a detailed working relationship with the FBI.

Once Wilford moves into the early Cold War, he focuses on historic figures familiar to CIA officers: Sherman Kent, Frank Wisner, Edward Lansdale, Cord Meyer and James Angleton. As with his version of the OSS, Wilford is very selective in his descriptions of each of these men and, most especially, the historic context of the early Cold War. One thing Wilford seems to ignore completely is that covert action from 1947 to today is directed by the president of the United States. CIA officers may design a specific operation but the strategic purpose of the operation comes directly from the White House with the expressed understanding that since the operation is "covert," the White House and the president of the United States will have some degree of plausible deniability.

The most difficult argument to understand is Wilford's view on the importance of conspiracy theories that center around the CIA, including conspiracies related to the assassination of JFK, the rise of the crack cocaine crisis in Los Angeles, and the role of CIA in the 9/11 attacks. Throughout Chapter 6, "Unintended Consequences," Wilford never accuses CIA of any heinous crimes in this episodes, but he implies that there must be some as yet undiscovered bases for the theories.

In sum, in *The CIA: An Imperial History*, he uses writing skills to craft a polemic against the historic sins of CIA and CIA officers. He makes no effort to explain how the CIA or any other intelligence organization—foreign or domestic—could better have addressed the historic challenges of the Cold War or the new challenges of Cold War v2.0. It is a book of no real use to anyone who wants to understand the complexities and challenges of the Intelligence Community. ■

Mission to Mao: US Intelligence and the Chinese Communists in World War II

By Sara B. Castro
(Georgetown University Press, 2024) 215 pages, index.

Before WWII, US intelligence collection in China depended on the reporting of diplomats and attachés. In 1943, responding to the demands of war and Nationalist Chinese intelligence chief Dai Li, President Roosevelt and Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek negotiated an agreement that created the Sino-American Special Technical Cooperative Organization, commonly referred to as SACO. A principal provision prevented intelligence collection by US officials in China—especially about the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)—without Chiang's permission, a constraint no intelligence operation desires.

In late 1943, Lt. Gen. Stilwell (the overall commander in China) and the US embassy received reports that CCP forces were having more success against the Japanese than the Nationalists. There were also indications that Chiang was content to let the US fight the war with Japan. To determine the reality a 'liaison staff' of diplomats, intelligence officers and support troops, was dispatched to CCP headquarters in Yanan and "slightly insulated it from intrusion by SACO." (54) Officially designated the US Army Observer Mission To Yan'an, unofficially it was called the Dixie Mission, a reference to the CCP "rebel" territory. (1) For the next four years, despite Chiang's opposition, it reported intelligence, diplomatic events, and the political situation to Washington.

In *Mission to Mao*, historian Sara Castro, formerly a Wilson Center China Fellow, 2020–21, and currently an associate professor of history at the US Air Force Academy, reveals the history of these organizations, while seeking "to center the Dixie Mission as the locus of first official contact between the United States and the CCP

and as an example of an interagency intelligence mission during World War II." (7)

Although initially headed by an Army G-2 officer with Chinese experience, the Dixie Mission didn't have a formal military structure. The "OSS had a fairly significant presence among the initial Dixie Mission roster," with other members coming from the Army Air Force, the Signal Corps, the Navy, and the State Department. (57)

Mission to Mao first reviews what others have written about the Dixie Mission, most of which focused on its role in the Chinese Civil War and that Castro characterizes as "historical scholarship with no recognition of American imperialism or the hubris driving the deployment of Americans to Yan'an." (4) Then she describes "her fresh look" approach: "*Mission to Mao* is a social history of US intelligence focused on the role of human relationships, social networks, factions, rivalries, and personalities involved in the Dixie Mission—a root-up, everyday perspective on events. This approach pushes presidents, ministers, secretaries, and ambassadors to the periphery. that emphasizes Chinese actors and US officials, including those at the lowest levels of their respective organizations... who ate watermelon with Mao Zedong and coped with a lack of plumbing and heat in order to collect and report intelligence." (9)

Castro writes that the "CCP leaders were aware that the visitors might help them fight enemies and boost their legitimacy if they handled the relationship well." (63) In general, the mission activities went well, although disagreements led to several commanders declared persona non grata. The turnover in theater commanders, ambassadors, and mission personnel was high, and Castro deals with them at length, particularly the OSS role. She argues that Donovan thought "the Dixie Mission showed the greatest potential" for cutting-edge intelligence work ... particularly the dramatic operational successes "in China through Yan'an-based activities and cooperation with the CCP." According to Castro, General Donovan "used stories of successful operations to persuade Roosevelt and others in Washington of the need for an independent peacetime strategic intelligence organization in the United States after the war's end," a topic she mentions frequently. (150)

The Dixie Mission ended in 1947, and Castro doesn't discuss its final composition. She does note that its post-war reputation was mixed because "Policymak-

ers, journalists, and scholars in the 1950s and 1960s frequently linked the activities of the Dixie Mission with the American 'loss of China' to the Communists." (5) Castro sees it differently, concluding that "instead of the loss of China," the actions of the Dixie Mission represented a "lost chance in China," whereby US statesmen squandered opportunities for engagement with the CCP in lieu of an exclusive partnership with what the scholars termed 'the corrupt and dysfunctional' (but non-Communist) government led by Chiang Kai-shek." (10) She reasons the "positive tone of [John] Service's initial reports ... throughout his official correspondence dispatched in August and September 1944" and similar diplomatic post-war statements would have consequences in a McCarthyite Washington. (71ff) However, she declares that the "OSS officers at Yan'an showed the most enthusiasm among all the Dixie Mission participants for proposals that supported the CCP." (149)

Mission to Mao does indeed, as Castro promised, present a fresh look at the Dixie Mission, showing in part that in "China (as elsewhere), US officials often created their own obstacles." But it is also an important contribution to intelligence and especially OSS history.

Neither Confirm Nor Deny: How The Glomar Mission Shielded the CIA from Transparency

By M. Todd Bennett

(Columbia University Press, 2022) 374 pages, index.

Author Todd Bennett edited the Foreign Relations of the United States series at the State Department before joining East Carolina University as an associate professor of history. In *Neither Confirm Nor Deny* he argues that the CIA adopted a "new category" of response to FOIA requests for details of clandestine operations, which unnecessarily limits transparency.

For background, Bennett first reviews the events that unintentionally contributed to the creation of the "new category." They began with the CIA's response to the March 1968 accidental sinking of a Soviet nuclear-armed Golf-class (diesel powered) submarine in the Pacific Ocean. Thought to contain a nuclear warhead, a ballistic missile system, code materials, and cryptographic gear, a covert operation was proposed to retrieve the wreckage. After the project—named Operation AZORIAN—was approved, Bennett summarizes its cover story and implementation plan designed to raise the wreckage using a special ship named the *Glomar Explorer* built by the

Hughes Corp. Next he describes the recovery efforts and the results obtained. Finally he notes that the remains of Soviet sailor were returned with honor to the Yeltsin government.

None of this is new and merely provides the foundation for Bennett's account of the reason the "new category" was created. While acknowledging that some data need to remain classified, he expresses frustration with the CIA's application of the current system that often fails to release other requested details of the operation in a timely—in his judgment—manner, citing classification, a response that admits the data exists. What the CIA needed, according to Bennett, was a response that met legal requirements and yet did not indicate whether or not it possessed the desired information in any form, thus limiting further inquiries.

The solution, according to Bennett, was provided by Walter Lloyd, "the program's cover director, and a lawyer" in the CIA's Office of General Counsel. (272) By adapting a response previously used by Kissinger at State Department—"We can neither confirm nor deny the existence of the information requested, but hypothetically, if such data were to exist, the subject would be classified and could not be disclosed."—the CIA achieved the flexibility it required to deal with the complex AZORIAN-GLOMAR operation on its terms. (273)

Bennett is not unconcerned with the need for oversight of intelligence agencies and concludes with a summary of events that justify close scrutiny. But, in his view, the CIA's "neither confirm nor deny solution" is unsatisfactory and merely continues the dilemma faced by those seeking information and those charged with protecting it. This is an old problem and no solution is offered. ■

Tripping On Utopia: Margaret Mead, the Cold War, and the Troubled Birth of Psychedelic Science

By Benjamin Breen

(Grand Central Publishing, 2024) 269 pages, index

Anthropologists Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson (Mead's first husband) are central characters in *Tripping On Utopia*, a book that barely mentions anthropology. The lightly disguised dominant theme of the book is suggested first by the word "tripping" in the title, as in the experience after taking psychedelic drugs, and second by the word "utopia," the desired but illusionary state of consciousness sought. Author Benjamin Breen, professor of history at the University of California (Santa Cruz),

has written a history of US psychedelic science from 1920 to 1980, with its links to intelligence. Many American interdisciplinary scientists made contributions. Most were connected to Mead and Bateson. (3)

Breen's study is chronological, beginning in the inter-war period with the 1938 discovery of LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) in Switzerland, the event that launched an "era of utopian drug research." (4) After the United States entered the war, Mead, Bateson, and the intellectual circle forming around them considered one of the "newest and most controversial methods of waging war: psychological warfare." (45) The OSS soon showed interest.

Contrary to Breen's erroneous claim that OSS was started with a push from British Naval Intelligence and Lt. Cdr. Ian Fleming, OSS started on its own to explore the potential of hypnosis and truth drugs as methods for interrogating captured enemy soldiers and agents. (49) Mead, Bateson, and several of their scientist colleagues were hired and their contributions are described. In mid-1942, Stanley Lovell, the OSS chief of research, began to dream up ideas for weaponized "altered states." (51) Breen's detailed accounts of these projects lays the foundations for much of the post war research presented later in the book.

In his discussion of the scientists' contributions to OSS, Breen gives their professional and sometimes their personal backgrounds. In the case of Mead and Bateson he notes they had been married, that she was bisexual, and the FBI was investigating her. And while their professional paths would cross on experimental techniques, and while he tried LSD, she never did, though she did become a CIA consultant. (143)

After OSS was abolished in October 1945, the scientists continued their work in what would become think tanks, private research institutes, academia, and eventually CIA. Some believed "LSD and other psychedelics could open a new world of experience that would help redirect global culture away from its pathological addictions to nationalism and violence." (104) Many "considered collaboration with the CIA to be a patriotic duty and a professional honor." (114)

Others, like Timothy Leary and actor Cary Grant, explored psychedelics as means to mind-expanding pleasure—the "search for Utopia." Some former OSS officers were among this group and Green describes their activities at length.

At the same time, though treated later in the book, a group of serving CIA officers "began conducting their own amateurish experiments with consciousness-expanding drugs, testing them on themselves and on poorly informed "volunteers" from a host of settings, including hospitals, military bases, and psychiatrists' offices." They were not experts and "much of the Agency's work with psychedelics was a toxic mishmash of amateurism, unchecked megalomania, and simple incompetence." (119-120) Breen's detailed account of the MKULTRA program is based on the Church Committee Report.

Tripping On Utopia reveals a more extensive intelligence agency role in the development of psychedelic science than has previously been presented. While informative, it is not an inspiring story, but it is part of intelligence history. ■

The Unvanquished: The Untold Story of Lincoln's Special Forces, the Manhunt for Mosby's Rangers, and the Shadow War That Forged America's Special Forces

By Patrick K. O'Donnell

(Atlantic Monthly Press, 2024), 410 pages, index.

Reviewed by David A. Welker

Author of 13 books focusing mostly on special forces, Patrick O'Donnell's latest volume turns to considering irregular forces of the American Civil War. A topic of considerable interest to intelligence officers who want to know just how far US intelligence has come in 150 ye

ars, a comprehensive, accurate, accessible single volume on this issue has long been wanted. Although its subtitle suggests this might be the volume, *The Unvanquished* falls short of these ambitious promises.

Organized into three parts, the book's first part recounts the running competition between the Union Jessie and Blazer Scouts and Mosby's Confederate Rangers that extended throughout much of the war in Northern Virginia. Offering many first-hand accounts, the author explores not only these units' formation and actions, but also how and why the Union played catch-up in creating irregular forces. The second major section considers the Confederate Secret Service's operations, chiefly those in the Shenandoah Valley, where its interests and mission most clearly overlapped with Mosby's irregular troops and their Federal counterparts. The closing section considers the rise of Union irregular forces toward the war's end, as Gen. Phillip Sheridan builds the shattered remains of earlier Union scout units into his

own irregular force during his late-war operations that secured the Shenandoah Valley before joining Grant's drive to finish off Lee's Army of Northern Virginia to end the war. This section interestingly extends to consider these irregular troops' post-war actions, particularly offering a rare look at the US response to France's 1866 political and military maneuvering in Mexico that threatened the wounded, recovering reunited nation.

There certainly are some bright spots to recommend the book. O'Donnell spends much of his work telling exciting, fast-paced stories of derring-do by Civil War scouts and rangers, who frequently risked life and limb to gather intelligence by penetrating deep behind enemy lines in disguise, risking execution as spies if discovered. The author has a dramatic flair for such storytelling, which perhaps derives from his own experiences accompanying today's US Special Forces into combat zones. Skillfully weaving together participants' own postwar writings, these passages have readers riding along with these courageous soldiers, and while telling only their own first-hand accounts, O'Donnell adds context that brings this material to vivid life. Pulling these disparate accounts into one volume and weaving them nicely within a comprehensible narrative is a genuine contribution.

The volume first stumbles, however, in frequently stretching to make Civil War scouts and rangers fit modern special forces concepts as "Lincoln's special forces." Despite some general overlapping actions—collecting intelligence, harassing enemies behind lines, etc.—today's US Special Forces' mission and role derives mostly from two 20th century world wars, which makes the frequent comparisons to concepts and applications unknown in the 1860s inaccurate and stilted. Another shortcoming is in trying to make too much of the contributions of these scouts and rangers. The truth is that unlike today, irregular forces in the Civil War were odd men out, playing a periodically useful role but one that the top generals on both sides didn't fully understand or appreciate, leaving irregular troops a "sideshow of the main show." Examples of this include claims that a Jessie Scout's "information gleaned while posing as a Confederate no doubt had a role in the Battle for Fort Donelson," accepting unquestioned Mosby's postwar claim to have launched the 1862 Battle of Cedar Mountain, asserting that General William Averell's 1863 "raid may well have contributed to breaking Longstreet's siege of Knoxville," and many more.

Similarly, the book spends considerable time on the plot to capture or kill President Lincoln, weaving throughout a distracting story of Confederate Secret Service operations that is but thinly connected to Mosby's Rangers or any other irregular units. The revealed point of this diversion is to show that Confederate President Davis and other Richmond officials were behind the plot but, like previous generations of those inclined to this view, in the end lack of documentation and data leads to unsupported accusations and nothing truly new. Such "gilding the lily"—making a good story, better—reflects the book's overall misplaced nature. Rather than being a scholarly work of history, *The Unvanquished* would work better as popular history, meant not to break new historical ground but rather to inform while entertaining.

Similarly, despite the subtitle's promises, the book notably and oddly omits any mention of the Union's Bureau of Military Information, its head Colonel George Sharpe, or the scouts operating under him, commanded by Captain John McEntee. Their exploits were no less daring than those of the units included and arguably had the greatest impact of any irregular troops on the war's course, so no study of Civil War irregular forces would be complete without them.

Lt. Gen. Philip Sheridan, whose experience with scouts later in the war developed his appreciation for the emerging value of irregular troops, wrote that the scouts "kept me constantly informed of the movements of the enemy and brought in prisoners from brigadier-generals down. The information gained through [them] was invaluable." Although the book that fully examines these irregular forces has yet to be written, *The Unvanquished* provides interested readers a lively, engaging way to learn of Civil War scouts and rangers' exciting personal stories. ■

Non-US Intelligence

The Factory: The Official History of the Australian Signals Directorate—Volume 1 – 1947 to 1972, Incorporating the History of Australian Signals Intelligence from 1901 to 1947

By John Fahey

(Sidney: Allen & Unwin, 2023) 568 pages, index.

In 2022, the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) commemorated 75 years of service and decided to mark the occasion with a history from its origins until 1972. Former ASD officer John Fahey, currently an Honorary Fellow in the Department of Security Studies and Criminology at Macquarie University, Sydney, was selected as the author. His mandate was to discuss the organizational development, some operations conducted, the serious security issues that were overcome, and the people involved. *The Factory*, ASD's nickname, is the result.

In his chronological account, Fahey begins by noting when war broke out in 1914, Australia was conducting signals intelligence through the Royal Australian Navy. As the need for an Australian national signals intelligence capability grew, he reviews the various organizations created to meet it. During WWII, it was conducting research on Japanese army codes and ciphers, monitoring traffic and working with its allies as part of Fleet Radio Unit, Melbourne (FRUMEL), a United States, Australian, British signals intelligence unit.

It was during his period that serious security problems arose. The first concerned leaks to the Japanese that were eventually attributed to the Nationalist Chinese. The second and more serious, involved leaks revealed to Britain and the United States by VENONA decrypts. MI5 led the efforts to determine the source. The Americans refused to have classified contacts with Australia, a position that lasted into the 1950s. "The hard reality was that the Americans rated Australian security as being nonexistent and thought that Australia could not be trusted at all." (318) In what came to be called "The Case"—not to be confused with a post 1972 Australian molehunt given the same name—Fahey examines these developments and their resolution closely. (293)

After summarizing ASD's contributions to the Malayan emergency, its operations in Indonesia, and its support to NSA in Vietnam, Fahey concludes with a discussion of postwar staffing problems complicated by poor facilities, and low salaries. Only after a lengthy search for a permanent home was progress made. (578)

Nevertheless, Fahey stresses that throughout the entire period covered by this history, Australia's signals intelligence people established themselves, directly or indirectly, as major contributors of intelligence to the liberal democracies of the world. "By the end of 1972, they had indeed earned their nickname." (602)

The Factory tells an interesting and important story. A positive contribution to the intelligence literature. ■

Spies For The Sultan: Ottoman Intelligence in the Great Rivalry With Spain

By Emrah Gürkan

(Georgetown University Press, 2024) 232 pages, index

Emrah Gürkan is a history professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Istanbul 29 Mayıs University. He received his doctorate from Georgetown University, where among other interests he did research on intelligence. *In Spies For The Sultan* he documents the intelligence activity during the heyday of the Ottoman Empire—a Turkish-led Islamic Caliphate—that existed between 1330 and 1922.

Although Gürkan acknowledges Ottoman intelligence existed from its earliest years, he concentrates on how it influenced the 16th century political-military and religious rivalries with the Habsburg Empire—which included Spain at the time—and the other regional Mediterranean powers.

The central focus of the book is revealed in four chapters discussing how the Ottomans used intelligence to deal with the rivalries. The first concerned the characteristics they required in their agents to accomplish functions "such as intelligence gathering, assassinations, bribery, and agitation" to obtain the information needed. (76) The second topic is a discussion of "the civilian, military, and diplomatic sources of Ottoman intelligence." (148)

Next Gürkan describes the operational consequences arising from organizational differences. The Habsburgs and Venetians had centralized organizations that controlled intelligence from the seat of government. Ottoman secret service control "did not have a formal institutional structure and functioned primarily on the basis of personal networks, in keeping with the patrimonial structure of the Empire." (189) In practice this complicated Istanbul's efforts to control operations.

The forth topic concerns Ottoman counterespionage or the struggle to detect and deal with enemy spies. The Ottomans established an effective intelligence system that, “with the help of various news sources and their spies operating out in the field, they managed to kept abreast of military and diplomatic developments” while protecting their own spies. (260)

As Gürkan stated at the outset “The purpose of this book is... to show how the Ottomans had great success collecting information about other states” and outperforming their archrivals the Habsburgs. (19) While he has

accomplished that goal with a thoroughly documented work, it is not easy to read. This is mainly because of the unfamiliar names and places and inadequately explained political arguments of the time, which readers are left to learn about on their own. For example, he takes issue with any suggestion that the religious clashes of the period are analogous to Samuel Huntington's concept of the Clash of Civilizations, but he doesn't explain why.

Nevertheless, *Spies For The Sultan* fills an important gap in intelligence history, especially for English-language readers, and is a positive contribution to the literature. ■

Fiction

A Reluctant Spy

By David Goodman

(Headline Publishing Group, 2024) 401 pages.

Reviewed by John Ehrman

The Secret Intelligence Service has a problem. When one of its officers, Jeremy Althorp, returns to London after having been arrested and tortured in Kyrgyzstan, he tells his disbelieving superiors that their simple, old-fashioned cover identities aren't working any more. “My cover fell apart as soon as their interrogators gave it the slightest digital prod,” says Jeremy, describing how with a few internet searches “They picked my story apart like they were deboning a chicken.”

Sound familiar? But the clever lads at Vauxhall have a solution. “The Legends Programme asks real people to lead lives that lend themselves to effective cover,” Jeremy explains a few years later to Jamie Tulloch, a young university graduate he recruits to be one of the Legends. They embark on careers in which, with SIS steering behind the scenes, they develop plausible contacts and access. At the same time, they live under the radar, with few friends or serious relationships and minimal internet presence. “Then, when the time comes, a trained agent who resembles you, who knows everything about you, will step into your life.” Identities and photos on the web are swapped, the Legend goes on a holiday where he can't be reached, and the SIS officer assumes his identity for a few weeks or months.

Truly, an elegant solution for a thorny problem. Maybe we should adopt it.

A Reluctant Spy, David Goodman's first novel, starts with Jamie Tulloch's “activation” after a quiet decade as a Legend. All he has to do, he's told, is fly to Charles de

Gaulle airport and meet the SIS handler who has been steering his life, who then will take him to the officer taking on his identity. Unfortunately, when Jamie goes to the rendezvous in a men's room, he finds his handler with his throat slit from ear to ear. (Is this a nod to William Goldman's classic thriller *Marathon Man* [1974], which also featured a men's room assassination?) Instead of doing the smart thing and returning to the safety of London—which, admittedly, would not make for much of a spy novel—Jamie decides to take up his doppelganger's mission, even though he has no clue what it is or what he's doing. Indeed, maybe Jamie would have thought better of the idea had he known that, back at Vauxhall, Jeremy is discovering that someone has penetrated the Legends Programme's super-secure network, stolen all the data, and wiped the servers clean.

This is a solid piece of entertainment, the classic story of the outsider stumbling into a world of intrigue. The plot is up-to-the-minute, with brutal Russian mercenaries up to mischief in Africa, and a subplot about the mole hunt. None of it is in any way believable, but Goodman moves the story along at a breathless pace and without a wasted word. The mayhem mounts, the betrayals and bodies pile up, and you will overlook the absurdities and keep turning the pages. (Note to readers: the speed with which Goodman portrays MI5 making decisions and moving across London strains credulity, to say the least.)

It's clear by the end that the Legends Programme is not the solution to our cover problems. But SIS is nothing if not determined to keep trying, and it looks like Goodman may have a follow-on adventure in mind for Jamie. Here's hoping it's as much fun as *A Reluctant Spy*. ■

The Year of the Locust: A Thriller

By Terry Hayes

(Simon and Schuster, 2024) 800 pages.

Reviewed by Resolute Lee (pen name of a DNI officer)

The Year of the Locust, the long-awaited follow-up to Terry Hayes's highly acclaimed, bestselling debut novel *I Am Pilgrim* (2013), is a captivating, vividly descriptive epic, immersing the reader in the moral ambiguity of espionage, told in a genre-defying novel. The book is lengthy for a modern thriller, at 800 pages and told in four parts. The novel hearkens to the groundbreaking techno-espionage thrillers of a Tom Clancy.

Although not a sequel to *I Am Pilgrim*, *The Year of the Locust* is similarly told through the eyes of a first-person narrator, reminiscent of *A Legacy of Spies* by John le Carré (2017), where Peter Guillam, the disciple of the legendary George Smiley of the British Secret Intelligence Service, now long retired, offers a retelling of his role in an operation decades earlier. The opening line of *The Year of the Locust* hooks the reader from the beginning, "I once went to kill a man," (1) immediately setting the tone for the well-paced narrative that follows. The narrator and protagonist, Ridley Walker, a CIA denied area access officer, also known as Kane among other names, is an old-fashioned intelligence officer, a man "in the field" who has spent years studying and threading himself into the cultures and languages of other societies to understand the world through the eyes of others.

The reviewer could visualize Ridley, seemingly sharing the recollection through the reflective eyes and experience of an older self, lifting the veil of secrecy, offering snapshots of intimate moments of a life lived within the shadows. Ridley is an immediately likable and multidimensional character, woven in idealism and emotional vulnerability, elements of the character that bleed through in flashbacks and fleeting moments with his love interest. A highly skilled officer adept at infiltrating inhospitable hard-target countries like Iran and Russia, Ridley uses an array of tradecraft along the way, including cover identities, languages, navigational knowledge, escape and evasion tactics, technical capabilities, and the will to act.

When an asset contacts the CIA advising that he has sensitive threat information warning of a 9/11-scale spectacular, Ridley is sent to the badlands, the border of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran to exfiltrate the asset. He stealthily infiltrates into Iran, with a kit even James Bond would envy. This is where Hayes elevates the techno-espionage aspects of the story. The navigational and cloaking

capabilities, though yet to exist, are believable in the context in which they are used in the story. The surveillance, targeting, and tracking technologies leveraged by Ridley and his colleagues at headquarters entail facial and voice recognition capabilities that are certainly authentic and demonstrate the exhaustive nature of identifying and tracking illusive priority targets across the globe.

During the infiltration, Hayes first foreshadows that Ridley has a sixth-sense-like ability guiding him. Coming upon a vivid desolate landscape depicted via the author's gift for cinematic screenwriting, Ridley hears "gunfire from the future," altering course, only later discovering the decision saved his life, setting the stage for a cat-and-mouse game with a formidable, yet unidentified, ISIS foe known only as al Tundra, all leading to a drastic plot pivot in the third act. The descriptive scenes and high-speed action sequences keep readers on the edges of their seats, eagerly turning the pages.

Two-thirds into the book, the story takes a startling pivot that pulls it—and the reader—out of the espionage thriller genre altogether. With Ridley aboard an experimental submarine, in the Pacific Ocean, readers are propelled into a post-apocalyptic sci-fi story through an unexpected time jump decades later. While the shift is jarring and an explanation of the submarine's time traveling technologies are all but ignored along with any understanding of the esoteric complexities and paradoxes of time travel, those who fancy a merger of *The Hunt for Red October* and *The Walking Dead* would be pleased. Having invested much time into the novel by this point, this reviewer allowed Hayes's strong writing and Ridley's emotional vulnerability to carry through the time leap, before ultimately returning to the original timeline.

Despite the dissonance as the third act unfolds, what emerges is a love story woven within the broader thriller. After what felt like, and perhaps was, a fever dream, Ridley has the motivation to complete the mission—to save his family and of course humanity—at all costs. *The Year of the Locust* is an enthralling, evocative story; while not for the faint of heart, if you hold fast, and keep faith in Terry Hayes's artistic storytelling you'll appreciate the explorations of an old-fashioned intelligence officer in this modern spin of a classic espionage thriller that dares to defy genres. ■