

## **Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf—March 2024**

*Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake and other contributors*

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## General

***National Security Intelligence and Ethics***, edited by Seumas Miller, Mitt Regan, and Patrick F. Walsh (Routledge, 2022) 303 pages, end of chapter notes and references, index.

Ethics are specific rules, actions, or behaviors comprising general principles called morals. For example, if loyalty to an organization is a condition of employment, disloyal performance is unethical. Likewise, a dilemma arises in espionage if agent recruitment involves treason, which is immoral; does this make the recruiter's actions unethical?

The 17 chapters in *National Security Intelligence and Ethics* deal with the espionage dilemma (chapter 4), and other familiar topics such as covert action as the third option (chapter 10) and many new digitally related issues—digital sleeper cells—associated with the recent technological changes adopted by the intelligence profession, including GEOINT technologies.

The 21 contributors to this collection come from several countries and are mostly academics, though some, like Sir

David Omand—former director of GCHQ, and the first Security and Intelligence Coordinator—have professional experience. The authors assert that their overall purpose was to develop a “Just Intelligence Model”—analogous to “Just War Theory”—that accounts for the principles of collection, analysis, dissemination, necessity, privacy, proportionality, accountability and reciprocity as applied to national security intelligence and to consider ethical issues related to the acquisition of large data sets and the use of AI by intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

While the purpose of the Just Intelligence Model is described in the early chapters, there is no summary assessment showing how the individual contributions influence the model or if a model is really needed. Many of the techniques discussed are new to the profession, but the basic issues of right and wrong are not.

***Nothing Is Beyond Our Reach: America's Techno-Spy Empire***, by Kristie Macrakis (Georgetown University Press, 2023) 259 pages, end of chapter notes, bibliography, index.

The late Kristie Macrakis earned a PhD in history from Harvard, did post-graduate work in Berlin, where she interviewed Marcus Wolf, and then joined Michigan State University before becoming a professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology. She wrote and contributed to several books about her lifelong interest in espionage and intelligence technology. Her last, *Nothing Is Beyond Our Reach*, was published posthumously.

The title was taken from a 2013 NRO satellite mission logo “depicting an angry octopus latching its tentacles around the globe with a caption that read, Nothing Is beyond Our Reach.” (1) Macrakis wrote that what the NRO viewed as a global achievement provoked public outrage because the mission was close to the controversial Snowden document release. Perhaps, but the logo also roused her intense and often questionable views about intelligence and technology. She quickly established her position: America is creating a dominant global technological empire. The view becomes the central thesis of this book.

Macrakis argued that the growth of the global espionage empire by US technophiles was initially unintentional. She suggested that early photo satellites were not designed to capture the entire earth and that the capability only grew as technology allowed, not because there was a demand for it. She made a similar argument for ELINT satellites. And now that the United States can handle massive data collection, it has spies on land, spies underground, spies in the water, and spies in the mind. In fact she claimed, the United States has the entire planet covered with planes, satellites, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), radios, electronics, tunnels, and submarines; it also uses pharmaceuticals in the service of espionage. (2)

The growth and characteristics of the US global espionage program have unintended consequences that Macrakis warned are further reason for restraint. When a major technological intelligence operation is exposed, she wrote, political backlash results. She cited the Berlin Tunnel in 1956—offering no specific problem because there was general praise then—the U-2 spy plane

shoot-down, Ivy Bells submarine collection program, and armed drones among other examples. She makes no attempt to compare the value of the intelligence collected with circumstance of discovery. In any case, she never established that the United States has become a reckless global espionage superpower.

At one point, Macrakis suggested CIA did not collect the right kind of information. This observation reveals a certain lack of experience: how does one know the right kind of information before analyzing it?

**A** *Short Introduction to Geospatial Intelligence*, by John (Jack) O'Connor (CRC Press, 2024) 172 pages, end of chapter notes, index.

The name National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) does not suggest, even intuitively, the functions performed to acquire data as did the titles of its predecessors, the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) and the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC). NGA's product, geospatial intelligence (GEOINT), raises the question: what is GEOINT? Former CIA officer and current director of Geospatial Intelligence at Johns Hopkins University, John O'Connor, addresses that question in *A Short Introduction To Geospatial Intelligence*.

O'Connor begins by noting that the origins of the term geospatial intelligence are unknown, but the acronym GEOINT was first spoken in public—as witnessed by Peter Usowski, later the director of the Center for the Study of Intelligence—in the early 21st century at a NIMA offsite. (2–3)

The congressional act that created NGA provided the first definition of geospatial intelligence in law: The term “geospatial intelligence” means the exploitation and analysis of imagery and geospatial information to describe, assess, and visually depict physical features and geographically referenced activities on or about the earth. (3) To some photo interpreters, that may sound like what they have been doing for more than 50 years, but O'Connor has a different view.

Historically, he argues, geospatial intelligence evolved from a government study conducted in 1957 to determine “what could be learned from aerial photography about Soviet Strategic missiles” when considering a

*Nothing Is Beyond Our Reach* looks at the Intelligence Community from its origins until 2013. The author concluded that the metaphor of the IC as a globe-straddling octopus is correct. In her view it had become an evil in and of itself using geopolitics, technology, and intelligence to create a global espionage empire. She presented her case with passion but without substantiation. Read with care.

combination of “imagery, imagery intelligence, and geospatial information;” in other words “its genome, its DNA.” Then he defines and examines the history and development of each of the five intellectual activities that he suggests underpin geospatial intelligence: envisioning, discovery, recording, comprehending, and tracking.

After further comments on variations of the definition, O'Connor turns to the current state of geospatial intelligence with its ever increasing data inputs, which have led to “tension between what human analysts ought to do for geospatial intelligence and what geospatial technology ought to do for human analysts.” (135) He attempts to clarify this point in several ways. In one, he applies the “contexts of faith and science” expressed in “The Dynamo and the Virgin,” that Henry Adams used in his book, *The Education of Henry Adams*, to express the distinction between the human and the technical. One of O'Connor's not so obvious conclusions from this analogy is that increasing amounts of all kinds of data are being imaginatively used to inform geospatial analysis and that has itself transformed human ability to capture changes on the planet. (134) To illustrate his point, he devotes chapters to the analysis of geospatial intelligence to two contemporary intelligence issues: the current war in Ukraine and the impact of climate change on the planet. The topics are well known, his analysis is confusing.

O'Connor clearly hopes that new digital geospatial technology will bring more accuracy to precision measurement from space and more penetrating insights from analytic minds. (145) But his sleep-inducing narrative is

difficult to follow, and he never does explain the need for the term geospatial.

Even so, *A Short Introduction to Geospatial Intelligence* discusses many topics worthy of further discussion and clarification.

## Memoir

***Nothing If Not Eventful: A Memoir of a Life in CIA***, by Thomas L. Ahern, Jr. (Central Intelligence Agency, Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2023) 177 pages, photos, no index.

In CIA, operations officers are involved in espionage and in some cases paramilitary activities, among other assignments. Although each career is unique in many respects, there are elements that apply to all, and the sum, when revealed, provides a window into what it can be like to join and serve in CIA. Thomas Ahern's career is a case in point, and *Nothing If Not Eventful* tells his story.

To those who recall the Iran hostage crisis of 1979–82, Ahern's name will ring a bell. He was chief of station in Tehran at the time radical students seized the embassy. That event, including Ahern's story was described in *Prisoners of the Ayatollah*,<sup>a</sup> Mark Bowden's account of the crisis. *Nothing If Not Eventful* adds what Ahern endured and how he reacted. In fact, Ahern opens his otherwise chronological memoir with a summary of the impact of his 444 days in captivity: "The Tehran episode remains the one most vividly embedded in my memory. Being beaten with a rubber hose early in my captivity and subsequently threatened with public execution and other psychological torments throughout my captivity, together with a continuous and oppressive sense of utter helplessness, combined to instill in me an indelible set of recollections." (7)

Ahern provides more detail in a later chapter devoted to that episode, but before then he tells how, as a young man from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, with a liberal arts degree from Notre Dame University and on the recommendation of his faculty adviser was recruited by, and somewhat to his own surprise, accepted by CIA.

During the next 60 years, Ahern would learn other languages and serve in 10 foreign countries, performing both paramilitary and case officer (human intelligence) duties.

He discusses many of his assignments, beginning with military service—then mandatory prior to entry on duty in the Junior Officer Training (JOT) Program in 1954. In retrospect, he characterized the course as weak in "the recruitment and handling of agents.... I remember just one imperative about agent recruitment: 'Rapport.'" (30) But it would serve him well. Overall, he concludes that "the quality of training for the directorate remained a contentious issue for a good many years." (31) Such criticism of weaknesses in agency performance and sometimes agency policies appears as he reflects on each of his assignments.

Before starting the JOT course, Ahern's profile pointed toward a career as an intelligence analyst. But his Army experience had instilled a desire for action-oriented work; he was a member of CIA's clandestine service. After some headquarters duty and an interview with Allen Dulles, he began a series of oversea tours, first in Japan (1957) and then Southeast Asia (1960–65), where he entered the paramilitary world. Here, Ahern notes that CIA provided "no instruction in intercultural communication" (59) leaving those abilities to be acquired on-the-job. Nevertheless, he adapted well and writes of Laos that "no subsequent tour equaled it." (65) On a broader scale, with regard to Vietnam, he writes that he had doubts at the time, about the Pacification Program and the South Vietnamese ability to succeed in the war. (69)

During his Asian tours, Ahern professional capabilities expanded. First, he became a parachutist (in Thailand) and later, with Air America's impetus, acquired a pilot's license. In Vietnam, his private life changed when he met "Gisela Daschkey, a young German embassy employee," who later became his wife of 52 years and, after attaining US citizenship, a CIA officer. (77)

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a. Mark Bowden, *Prisoners of the Ayatollah: The Iran Hostage Crisis: The First Battle in America's War with Militant Islam* (Grove Press, 2006).

Returning to Headquarters in 1973, Ahern was offered an assignment as COS of a small station in Africa—becoming a COS in the operational culture of CIA was a prime objective for most officers. After consideration of his options at the time, he declined the honor and instead was assigned as a program officer in the JOTP, when he had had “no experience or training in personnel acquisition.” Once again, he writes, “To my considerable surprise, the job ... developed into a challenging and fruitful experience that kept me absorbed for the next two-and-a-half years.” (113) He worked on assessing the potential of candidates, including “finding the depth of an applicant’s interest in a career in intelligence,” a challenge that has yet to be definitively specified. (115)

On completion of the JOTP tour, the Aherns did go to Africa in 1975. It was here, working against Soviet targets, that he experienced firsthand that “identifying similar or at least compatible interests usually turns out to be a more rewarding approach to winning the cooperation of potential agents than proclaiming their duty to help us save their country—or the world—from what we perceive as an existential threat.” (3)

Returning to the States in 1977, Ahern entered the National War College, noting for the record, that he had never shared the indifference to intellectual endeavor that then dominated CIA. (123) Enriched by the experience, Ahern next found a home in the Directorate of Operations/Near East Division. After serving briefly as a branch chief, he was designated COS, Tehran. Of all his

comments on that experience, the most shocking was that: “I was never debriefed about the circumstances of captivity itself.” (154)

After a period of adjustment and a headquarters assignment, Ahern was sent to Western Europe (1985–88) and a year after returning, he retired to accept a contract with CIA’s History Staff. There he wrote, among other works, (see the book’s bibliography) six volumes on CIA’s various roles in the Second Indochina War.<sup>a</sup>

*Nothing If Not Eventful* concludes with some of Ahern’s observations about the evolution of the “company,” as it was sometimes called by his generation. For example, “I am aware that, at least as recently as 2018, there were pockets of discontent with the quality of Agency management, especially mid-management, and I am not claiming the arrival of some kind of managerial Nirvana. Nevertheless, my access to the record of and participants in recent major covert activity does permit a reasoned comparison of past and present-day operations. My volume on Iraq, which begins with the 2002 run-up to the invasion the following year, records a new (at least to me) CIA disposition to tell truth to power and to acknowledge that some goals may be unattainable at any acceptable price.” (173)

A fine memoir, a valuable contribution to the intelligence literature, and essential reading for those considering or at the beginning of a CIA career.

## **History**

***The FBI and the Mexican Revolutionists 1908–1914***, by Heribert von Feilitzsch and Charles H. Harris III (Henselstone Verlag, LLC 2023) 415 pages, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

In their early research into the history of the FBI, historians Heribert von Feilitzsch and Charles H. Harris II discovered that past authors had dated the origin of the bureau to be 1908 but gave little attention to its activities until 1924, when J. Edgar Hoover became director. To emphasize that they are studying the bureau before Hoover’s era, the authors adopted the designation fBI, since it was officially a federal agency called the Bureau of Investigation.

When Feilitzsch and Harris examined the archival record of 1908–24, they discovered little new about the bureau’s crime-fighting exploits, but they did find a great deal of unreported material about its intelligence and counterintelligence operations. Initially, these involved investigations related to enforcement of neutrality laws. The balance of the material covered the period 1914–17 before the United States entered WWI, the bureau’s WWI operations (1917–18), and the bureau’s postwar decline

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a. Declassified versions of these can be found on cia.gov’s FOIA Reading Room under Historical Collections.

(1919–24). There was too much to cover in a single book, and the authors decided to write a volume for each period. *The fBI and The Mexican Revolutionists 1908–1914* is the first.

In addition to discussing the origins of the bureau and its first directors, the authors review the bureau's actions against its first targets, Mann Act violations (unlawful transportation of women for immoral purposes). Then they turn to the actions of far-left domestic political groups and the numerous Mexican revolutionary factions and personalities vying for the presidency and violations of the law committed at the US southern border. The authors do mention cases of cooperation with the Mexicans, but those did not end well.

In handling these matters, the authors argue that despite chronic underfunding and the lack of professional skills among the agents, the bureau developed investigative

techniques that would become the foundation of its future intelligence capabilities, including the use of mail covers, dictaphones, “black bag” jobs, and above all, human agents. Not all operations went smoothly, especially when the bureau allowed Mexican agents to operate brazenly in the United States. Nevertheless, the experience acquired in legal and political matters—national and international—in addition to the bureaucratic conflicts with other agencies, such as the Secret Service, proved valuable. By the end of the period, the authors conclude, the fBI was an established, effective nationwide organization.

*The fBI and The Mexican Revolutionists* is thoroughly documented—mainly with primary sources—and provides the most comprehensive account of the bureau's earliest days yet available. A most valuable contribution to the literature of intelligence.

***Lockheed Blackbird: Beyond the Secret Missions—The Missing Chapters***, by Paul F. Crickmore (Osprey Publishing, 2023) 528 pages, appendices, photos, index.

While working at the London Air Traffic Control Centre, author Paul Crickmore first saw an SR-71 at the Farnborough Air Show in 1974. It had flown from New York to London in one hour, fifty-four minutes and fifty-six seconds, “a world record that stands to this day.” (10)

Crickmore later wrote articles about the aircraft and eventually, after interviewing many of those who worked in the SR-71 program, he wrote the first in-depth book about the plane. As additional information became available, especially after the SR-71 was decommissioned in January 1990, he wrote more detailed editions. In 2016 after publishing what he thought would be his last book on “the subject—*Lockheed Blackbird: Beyond the Secret Missions, Revised Edition*—the CIA declassified a blizzard of documents that included intelligence details that I was staggered to read.” (10) This necessitated the recent edition of *Lockheed Blackbird* which Crickmore writes is “most definitely my last book about these incredible aircraft programmes.” (11) For reasons not given, he mentions the title of some of his books in the text, but does not include them in the bibliography, and doesn't include a single source note! There are detailed appendices that assist in tracking aircraft characteristics and missions.

*Lady Blackbird* is an oversized, expensive, thoroughly illustrated tome that chronicles the development and evolution of the postwar strategic reconnaissance aircraft programs from the modified B-17 to the CIA originated U-2 and A-12 aircraft, and finally to the SR-71, the latter two designed by Kelly Johnson at the Skunk Works. It is strong on program designations—there are many—aircraft design issues, performance capabilities, bases deployed, and crew requirements but does not present mission results.

For example RAINBOW was a program that attempted to make an operational aircraft “stealthy,” at first the U-2, though nothing more is written about it. The OXCART program produced the A-12. Crickmore discusses its design phases and later testing at Area 51 before examining why it was eventually canceled and replaced by the BLACKBIRD SR-71. Among the reasons given, are the SR-71's many sensors and flexible targeting capability. His undocumented claim that the “quality of ‘the take’ throughout the 1970s and early 1980s was superior to that acquired by satellites,” won't be accepted by all. The long-running discussion of ending one of the two very expensive programs was discussed in detail in CIA Historian David Robarge's monograph, *Archangel: CIA's*

*Supersonic A-12 Reconnaissance Aircraft* (2012). The book contains images of Robarge; unfortunately the captions erroneously provide "Robert" as his given name.

*Lockheed Blackbird* supports Crickmore's conclusion that both the U-2 and the SR-71 have become icons like the Spitfire, the B-17, and the B-52. But with the poor

***Spy For No Country: The Story of Ted Hall the Teenage Atomic Spy Who May Have Saved the World***, by Dave Lindorff (Prometheus Books, 2023) 270 pages, endnotes, appendix, photos, index.

Investigative journalist Dave Lindorff has written a book about the teenage Harvard physicist Ted Hal, who became a Soviet spy while assigned to the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos. It is not a new story, having been told many times in books Lindorff himself mentions. Why then has he told it again? The answer is implied by the title, which contradicts the basic theme of his own narrative. Invoking the "higher-power" argument, Lindorff contends that the 18-year old physicist spied for the Soviets with "the highest of motives: to help break a U.S. monopoly of the deadly weapons." (223)

According to Lindorff, Hall first contemplated helping the Soviets while being interviewed for the Manhattan Project, even "before he knew what the project was, he found himself thinking... about the need for the United States to share with the Soviets whatever secret weapons the country (and he himself) might be working to create." (29)

To help understand how Hall reached this judgment and how it affected the balance of his life, Lindorff reviews Hall's formative days in New York City, his membership in the Young Communist League, (6) how he became a 16-year old physics student at Harvard, and his selection for the Manhattan Project. Lindorff stresses that "there is no evidence that Ted Hall was a Communist as a Harvard student, much less a Party true believer, as some historians of the era have baselessly claimed." (2) He later admits that after the war, Hall and his wife joined the party in the United States and the UK. (183)

quality images the book has used to show the aircraft's performance, one imagines it won't be the last book on the topic. And if Crickmore returns to the subject, one would hope it would be published with a better index than it now has.

Lindorff tells how Hall, once on the job, enlisted the help of a Harvard class mate, Saville Sax, an outspoken communist, in contacting the Soviets in New York. (29) For more than a year, Hall gave the Soviets secrets of the plutonium bomb, and Sax acted as Hall's courier.

For reasons not given, Lindorff notes that Hall lost his atomic clearances toward the end of his Manhattan Project service. After that he started graduate work in Chicago, where he met his wife to be. In the late 1940s, the FBI contacted them and asked about their communist affiliations. It was clear the bureau knew a great deal about his wartime contacts with the Soviets and suspected they continued after the war, but they declined to make official charges when Hall declined to confess. Lindorff is correct in attributing FBI suspicions to the VENONA material—US decryptions of KGB cables some of which mentioned Hall—that at the time could not be made public. But, it must be emphasized, Lindorff's account of the VENONA program is one of the most inaccurate found in the literature and should be disregarded.<sup>a</sup> (70ff)

Eventually, FBI pressure became too great, and the Halls moved to the UK, where he worked for Cambridge University. Shortly before Hall's death in November 1999, Lindorff acknowledged that Hall publicly admitted his espionage for the Soviets and maintained to the end that doing so was for the greater good.

Lindorff does present new material about Hall's brother, who conducted secret work for the US Defense Department, and from Hall's wife, who claimed, inter alia,

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a. For reliable accounts of the VENONA project see, for example: John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *VENONA: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (Yale University Press, 1999) and Nigel West, *VENONA: The Greatest Secret of the Cold War* (HarperCollins, 2000), paperback edition.

that she had dissuaded Hall twice from turning himself in. (205)

But a *Spy For No Country* presents nothing that suggests Ted Hall “may have saved the world” and a great deal showing he was just a teenage traitor and Soviet agent.

***SPYING: From the Fall of Jericho to the Fall of the Wall: An Intelligence Primer Based on the Lecture Notes of Professor Arthur S. Hulnick***, edited by John D. Woodward, Jr. (Waynesburg University Press, 2023) 271 pages, photos, index.

The late Arthur Hulnick graduated from Princeton University in 1957, served in the US Air Force as an intelligence officer, and then joined CIA as an analyst. During his CIA career he also served in the Office of Public Affairs, briefed the attorney general, and wrote speeches for DCI William Webster. In 1989 he became CIA Officer in Residence at Boston University. After he retired from CIA, he joined the university's faculty in the Pardee School of Global Studies.

Professor Hulnick taught two courses on intelligence each semester at BU for more than 25 years. One was on George Washington's intelligence role. The other, “The Evolution of Strategic Intelligence,” forms the basis for this book, which was edited by Art's former BU colleague, John Woodward, himself a retired CIA officer and present teacher of the course. In his introduction, Woodward lists the BLUFs—Bottom Lines Up Front—that Art developed for the course. For those interested in the intelligence profession, these basic concepts are worth committing to memory. (xii–xiii)

In his foreword, BU professor Joe Wippl, also a retired CIA officer, lists the two informative books Art somehow found time to write: *Fixing The Spy Machine*, and *Keeping America Safe*.<sup>a</sup> Wippl notes Hulnick emphasized to his students that the keys to a successful intelligence career applied to other professions: ability, willingness to speak truth to power, and integrity.

Each of the book's 25 chapters is an illustrated summary of Hulnick's lectures. While the work does not deal with tradecraft, it does mention CIA's most important cases. For instance, he discusses several of the so-called atom spies but does not tell how they were caught. Nevertheless, for an introductory course, it certainly stimulates student interest. The book is remarkably error free.

*Spying* can serve as a guide to syllabus preparation and as an introductory source for prospective intelligence officers. And it is a valuable contribution for those curious about the profession.

## ***Intelligence Abroad***

***From Red Terror to Terrorist State: Russia's Intelligence Services and Their Fight for World Domination from Felix Dzerzhinsky to Vladimir Putin 1917–2017?***, by Yuri Felshtinsky & Vladimir Popov. (Gibson Square, 2023) 382 pages, endnotes, index.

No Philby! No Rosenbergs! No Ames! No Vetrov! No Polyakov! No Tolkachev! In fact *From Red Terror to Terrorist State*, a history of the Russian intelligence services, does not mention these or any other espionage cases. It does name three spies: Oleg Lyalin, who defected, and the “disloyal” officer Alexander Litvinenko, who suffered the Trotsky solution, in his case by poisoning,

and Sergei Skripal, who survived a poisoning attempt. What then is the book about?

Co-authors historian Yuri Felshtinsky and former KGB general Vladimir Popov provide a surprising answer in the central argument of their book: From December 1917, when the first state security force was created and called the VChK, to the end of the Soviet Union, the security

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a. Arthur Hulnick, *Fixing The Spy Machine: Preparing American Intelligence for the Twenty-First Century* (Praeger, 1999) and *Keeping Us Safe: Secret Intelligence and Homeland Security* (Praeger Security International, 2004)



services battled the Communist Party for and eventually won control of state power. The story line describes the actions of the early leaders who controlled the VChK-KGB and tried to usurp Kremlin power for decades, sometimes succeeding in destroying party cadres. The party leadership, in turn, won victories over the VChK-KGB and shot or eliminated the top State Security leadership. (358) The changes at the top of party and security services are well known and it is the authors interpretation of their causes and results that is new.

Before presenting their chronological account of events, the authors review the various names of the Soviet/Russian security services mentioned, from the VChK, colloquially referred to as 'Cheka', (8) to the FSB. In what is probably the most complete listing to date, the frequent name changes—some initials remain the same but they stand for different organizations—aid reader comprehension since the authors use the applicable designation at the time in question; that is Cheka. OGPU, NKVD, MGB, etc. For reasons not given, only one organization is not mentioned, the *Komitet Informatsii* (KI) formed by Stalin in 1947, headed by Molotov, and disbanded in 1951.

***Targeted as a Spy: The Surveillance of an American Diplomat in Communist Romania***, by Ernest H. Latham, Jr. (Vita Histeria Publishing, 2023), 278 pages, photos. Reviewed by Graham Alexander.

One top secret Romanian Securitate report from 1987 referred to Ernest Latham as “an espionage specialist” while another called him “CIA Chief for all NATO troops in Europe.” In reality, Latham was a State Department officer tried and true, who served in 1983–87 as the cultural attaché in Bucharest. *Targeted As A Spy* is a curious work comprised mostly of excerpts from Latham's Securitate file with details on his shopping trips and political views. It is nonetheless a fascinating glimpse into security service work under an authoritarian regime. The book is a useful reminder for even seasoned intelligence operations officers that, when evaluating the counterintelligence risks in a given environment, deciphering the paranoid, often highly process oriented, methods of the home service is of paramount importance.

The book contains a brief foreword from Latham, who summarizes both his career and his experiences working in Bucharest, before it segues into often dry and

In making their case, the authors offer two surprises. The first is their assertion that the most important player in the eventual success of the security services was General Yevgeny Pitovranov. His career is impressive especially after a letter to Stalin secured his release from prison. (108–109)

The authors describe how Pitovranov, working with Yuri Andropov, head of the KGB, formed a special group beyond the view of the Kremlin that gradually usurped the Politburo's power and paved the way for Andropov to become general secretary of the Central Committee and the head of state. The long term goal had been achieved and remains a fact.

The second surprise offered by the authors is that “the true theorist and father of perestroika [restructuring] was KGB Chief and then General Secretary of the CPSU, Yuri Andropov. (118ff) The authors are not totally convincing in their rationale, but they give Gorbachev the major credit.

*From Red Terror to Terrorist State* offers a unique insiders; view of the Soviet/Russian security state and makes an important contribution to intelligence history.

sometimes tedious documents excerpted from his lengthy Securitate dossier. Latham acknowledges his awareness at the time that Securitate officials were monitoring his movements and often pressuring the locals to refrain from contact with him. Some surveillance reports suggest the seasoned diplomat was even teasing his pursuers by, for example, ambling aimlessly through provincial areas or moving to areas such as balconies or near machinery where audio collection against him was not feasible. A strange symbiosis is evident whereby Latham's pursuers developed a grudging but genuine respect for their target as his genuine affinity for Romanian language, culture, and history becomes clear. Numerous informers are tasked with contacting and collecting against Latham, but at no point does Securitate seek information to confirm Latham's intelligence affiliation, knowledge of tradecraft, or interest in development of clandestine sources. Were Securitate officials identifying Latham as a CIA officer because of paranoia or perhaps as a way of justifying

pursuit? Securitate files are full of bureaucratic jargon and minutiae but silent on such central questions.

This silence behind Securitate's motivations is what stops this valuable book from being more accessible and perhaps even a classic of a genre. Latham seems aware that he neglected to undertake the necessary legwork to make *Targeted as a Spy* a more rounded piece of intelligence non-fiction. He states in the opening chapter, for example, that the size of his Securitate file discouraged him from tackling it as part of a book project, a task he ultimately delegated to Romanian historian Vadim Guzun. This is a pity since Latham had an excellent opportunity, one taken by Timothy Garton Ash in *The File: A Personal History* (Random House, 1997), to discuss his findings

with the Securitate sources and officers tasked with monitoring his movements. Meetings with these individuals would have lightened the often leaden prose of Securitate surveillance reports and, most crucially, provided invaluable insight into the often complicated and fascinating motivations that compel cooperation from a grudging populace. Latham might have created a separate volume simply from asking his Romanian friends: What compels those living under authoritarian regimes to promote the longevity of those same regimes through individual acts of acquiescence to their unsavory methods?

*The reviewer:* Graham Alexander is the pen name of a CIA operations officer.

### ***Targeted As a Spy***—Reviewed by Hayden Peake

After his retirement in 1993, foreign service officer Ernest Latham requested a file kept on him during his tour in Bucharest during 1983–85 by the Ceaușescu government's security service, the Securitate. It would, he reasoned, provide an uncensored view of what was reported about him. After considerable time, he received some 3000 pages in five volumes. It was more than he could handle alone so he enlisted the help of a Romanian diplomat and historian, Dr. Vadim Guzun. After his review of the material, Guzun suggested writing a book about it. The result, *Targeted As a Spy*, is not an ordinary book.

The major difference, when compared to other books, is that Latham wrote only the 65-page introduction, which is an account of his life in the Foreign Service. He explains how he came to serve as cultural attaché in Bucharest and his "feelings about the files at that time and since." He notes that his Securitate file contained surveillance reports, photos, wiretap records, and accounts of telephoned harassments.

The remaining 175 pages contain translations of 55 documents from Latham's file, translated and edited by Dr. Guzun. The selections are Latham's. He explains the choices, saying that, with one exception, he picked the documents so as not to give the appearance that the chosen files favored Latham in any way. The exception, is the final document, #55, which contains one of many false assertions that Latham, the cultural attaché, was in fact "C.I.A. chief for all N.A.T.O. troops in Europe and his appointment to Romania was a sort of vacation for him." To Latham that was an illustration of poor fact-checking, among other deficiencies. (259)

It has long been known that security services keep files on foreign diplomats and intelligence officers. *Targeted As a Spy* is the first account that includes some of the documents themselves. It is a valuable contribution for scholars, who will now be curious about the more than 2000 documents not included.

## **Fiction**

***Moscow X: A Novel*** by David McCloskey (W.W. Norton and Company, 2023) 464 pages, afterword. Reviewed by Graham Alexander

Former CIA analyst David McCloskey has followed his debut novel *Damascus Station* (2021) with a sophomore work, *Moscow X*, a worthy and arguably superior sequel. Building on his years of experience inside the agency, McCloskey depicts CIA operations more vividly even

than many non-fiction writers lacking his insider knowledge. Deft writing and a compelling story pull the reader inexorably across its pages all the way to the closing scenes. The discerning critic will occasionally quibble with plot threads and resolution, but *Moscow X* is proof

that McCloskey is a promising writer whom one hopes will continue his work in the espionage genre. The big screen and a growing audience likely beckon.

Moscow X walks the highwire credibly, bending but not breaking the bounds of credulity. The CIA is remarkably nimble, for example, in providing sensitive equipment and authorization for recruitment of an extraordinarily high-risk asset whom it recognizes has drawn irrevocable lines about the kind of information she will provide. A case officer completely omits details of a hostile approach inside Russia in both official cables and during debriefings with her management and suffers no negative repercussions as a result. Readers will also wonder if McCloskey's CIA protagonists understand the irony in planning an operation that deliberately causes the death of several Russians while condemning Moscow's lack of scruples.

McCloskey admits in the afterword that *Moscow X* was the product of rigorous editing and rewriting. Mostly these revisions improve the final product. One main character revels in an anti-Russian rant in opening chapter that could have been culled straight from the pages of *The Atlantic*, but the book wisely uses this to reflect how many CIA officers inside "Russia House" may feel toward the Kremlin. Other perspectives emerge among the main protagonists, some of them Russian, to balance this perspective. The contradictions and motivations of the characters speak for themselves without becoming weighted down by two-dimensional, boilerplate monologues. At the

conclusion, readers are left largely satisfied when the most odious personalities receive their just dues and one meets Vladimir Putin for a memorable, albeit cryptic, conversation. Possibly because of numerous edits, however, some aspects of this section feel rushed. Several hanging plot threads stay unmentioned and are left either for a sequel or the reader's imagination. None of these minor demerits slows *Moscow X*'s increasing momentum and the reader's desire to race toward its literally fiery finale.

McCloskey is adept at throwing in key details that would resonate with insiders. One lead character laments how her failures may condemn her to a retirement drowning her sorrows in Reston Town Center. CIA vaults look like "cubicle farms" with humorous pictures of President Putin pinned near the entrances. One operation is almost scuttled because the key sequence for a clandestine communications laptop was written incorrectly. McCloskey uses these vignettes as building blocks for a narrative in which each of the main protagonists wrestles with danger and real doubt in their victory. Some are more successful than others but even the ultimate victors pay a heavy price. The realistic ambiguity invites questions about morality of dirty tricks and intelligence collection outside the scope of the book but are no less interesting for it. That they represent the novel's most authentic aspect of all is the best evidence that, with *Moscow X*, McCloskey has crafted an impressive and enduring piece of spy fiction.

***The Peacock and the Sparrow*, by I. S. Berry (Atria Books, 2023—Kindle Edition)**

"If you do not have something to believe in, you have nothing," CIA case officer Shane Collins's asset tells him midway through *The Peacock and the Sparrow*, pseudonymous, former CIA officer I. S. Berry's debut novel. Collins certainly is a man who, other than a serious drinking problem, doesn't have much—he's divorced with a son who won't speak to him, his professional life is on the skids, and he's exhausted from years of espionage and bureaucratic games. It's a grim portrait of a man at the end of a career that he has come to believe was a waste of time. Still, he wants to redeem himself with one last op.

But this is more than just another novel about a burned-out spook on a final mission. Setting her tale in Bahrain in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, Berry writes with an

elegant style that gives a fine sense of place and atmosphere, and her characters (except for the too-young station chief, ambitious to the point of parody) are subtly drawn, with the strengths and weaknesses of real humans. Collins, in particular, is a surprisingly sympathetic figure, trying to do the right thing as he is pulled in different directions. The last few pages are on the implausible side but, until then, the depth of the characters, along with the twists and turns of intrigue, will keep you turning the pages.

Berry is a talented writer with a sharp eye for the dark side of the espionage world. Here's hoping she has many more novels in her. — Reviewed by John Ehrman.