

**Aid, Matthew M., and Cees Wiebes, eds. *Secrets of Signals Intelligence During the Cold War and Beyond*. Portland, OR: International Specialized Book Services, 2001.**

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**Aid, Matthew M., and Cees Wiebes, eds. *Secrets of Signals Intelligence During the Cold War and Beyond*. Portland, OR: International Specialized Book Services, 2001.**

Conspiracies and accusations are just that until they are confirmed. Correspondingly, those same conspiracies and accusations can only be confirmed with factual evidence. *Secrets of Signals Intelligence during the Cold War and Beyond* thoroughly identifies, develops, and confirms many suspicions of signals intelligence operations, uses, methods, and regularity throughout the Cold War. The text itself is a compilation of individual academic works presented at an international conference held in Amsterdam in November 1999. As a result, each chapter is a fact-filled chronology of various national signals intelligence efforts of countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, United States, and in Scandinavia to name a few.

The introduction makes a very earnest and successful effort to identify what signals intelligence is, how it evolved, and how it is used. If any advocates of HUMINT take the time to peruse the introduction, they will find it difficult to justify their trade as Aid and Wiebes, present many disturbing historical facts outlining appalling Allied losses during efforts to insert agents into enemy territory. (p. 5) A solid argument is made in favor of signals intelligence over human intelligence gathering.

Several themes evolve throughout the compilation, including the nature of the close relationship between the United States and United Kingdom. An interesting component in this analysis is the examination of the circumstances on how this relationship came to be. Aside from the obvious relationship forged by the Allied war cause, certain disagreements in the Allied camp forced spontaneous divergences, sporadically undermining overall joint efforts. As an example, a particularly large rift developed between the US and UK over the UK decision to sell jet engine technology to the Soviet Union. (p. 108)

The chapter on Canada's CSE (Communications Security Establishment) is quite informative as it outlines how the CSE has evolved to provide intercepted material for other purposes, such as trade negotiations, beyond traditional Cold War defence and security policy. What may be of particular interest to readers here is the exemplification of the forward looking nature of the CSE to a post- Cold War role. The chapter dealing with the American NSA (National Security Agency) is quite different in its approach as it presents a historical approach to NSA successes and failures throughout the Cold War. Special attention should be paid to key events which indicated a failure of the NSA's collection program. Particular reference is given to the beginning of the Korean War (p. 39), U-2 overflights (p. 40), the Cuban Missile Crisis (p. 42), and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. (p. 47) However, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is seen as a success in the eyes of the NSA, which provided the White House with a dismal three day advance warning. Nonetheless, the NSA chapter provides the reader with an excellent, fact-based chronology of NSA thinking and direction during the Cold War.

Most readers are already aware that obtaining signals intelligence from the Soviet Union during the Cold War was a difficult endeavor. The fact that Eastern Europe acted as a massive land buffer between the West and the Soviet Union, placed the Scandinavian countries in a very favorable light in the eyes of the NSA. Due to the geography of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and the Scandinavian countries and the fact that signals intelligence is highly dependent on proximity to the transmission, a natural role evolved for the Nordic Countries. As such, the chapter dealing with Scandinavian SIGINT is a unique combination of geography, intelligence evolution, and Cold War tension, which is eloquently explained through an examination of technology, monetary compensation, and Cold War relations.

Aid and Wiebes manage to condense the entire work into one central thesis in their conclusions: what were the important contributions made to the security of the United States, Canada, and various nations of Western Europe by SIGINT? While there is no single, all encompassing answer, the individual contributions are portrayed as a necessary instrument of foreign policy and Cold War diplomatic chess.

On the whole, the book successfully answers the questions it raises. Due to the clandestine nature of intelligence, compilations that examine the operations of several countries are often difficult to research and write. What is perhaps somewhat misleading is the overall focus on Western intelligence services. There is no inclusion of Soviet SIGINT efforts, successes, or failures. In fact, the only reference to Soviet or Eastern European countries is as Western targets. A comparison between Western and Eastern SIGINT theory and practice would have greatly added to the success of this writing. In any event, as a text on Western signals intelligence creation, evolution, use, and continued practice, the book is an exceptional accomplishment.

**Miles Markovic** completed his Master of Arts degree in political science at the University of Guelph in 2002. His graduate thesis examined the benefits and necessity of providing senior decision makers with timely and accurate intelligence on which to base their foreign policy decisions.