



Review: [Untitled]

Reviewed Work(s):

The Second Oldest Profession: Spies and Spying in the Twentieth Century by Philip Knightley
David J. Garrow

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Service apologists to rebut this impressive piece of scholarship.

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The Second Oldest Profession: Spies and Spying in the Twentieth Century. By Phillip Knightley. (New York: Norton, 1987. xi + 436 pp. \$19.95.)

Australian journalist Phillip Knightley, co-author of a valuable book on Soviet spy Kim Philby (*The Philby Conspiracy*, 1968) and author of an acerbic study of war correspondents (*The First Casualty*, 1975) has written an unimpressive and often unconvincing volume on foreign intelligence agencies. Emphasizing the post-1940 period and the intelligence activities of Great Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union, and the United States, Knightley seeks to give thematic coherence to his book by repeatedly articulating the belief that intelligence agencies are wasteful self-promoters who actually accomplish little for the national governments whose interests they supposedly serve.

Knightley begins by noting that intelligence agencies have been "one of the twentieth century's biggest growth industries" and claims that they "have become wellsprings of power in our society, secret clubs for the elite and privileged." More important, Knightley seeks to argue that intelligence agencies have consistently displayed a bureaucratic desire to create or exaggerate largely imaginary foreign threats because of a simple organizational desire to justify and to expand their own budgetary and political roles.

Knightley articulates this perspective most strongly when discussing the founding and early growth of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). "My view is that the Soviet threat was deliberately exaggerated by an agency intent on becoming an empire; that there was a conspiracy to further the growth and influence of the CIA; that President Truman, Congress and the American people were manipulated into authorizing and funding this expansion."

Oftentimes Knightley's style of argument

calls to mind the tale about a marginal notation glimpsed on a Huey Long speech text: "Weak point, shout louder." While this weakness is manifest in Knightley's repetitive and analytically unsophisticated references to intelligence agencies' bureaucratic expansionism, it is a far more glaring problem when Knightley tries to argue that such agencies have achieved very few successes and a huge crop of failures. There can be little argument with the lengthy list of flops and fiascos, but Knightley backs himself into an impossible corner when he strains to argue that even the most heralded intelligence achievements of the twentieth century were merely minor events whose historical significance has been greatly overblown by intelligence community propagandists. Two major stories from World War II—the Office of Strategic Services and the Ultra code-breaking feat—are among the targets against which Knightley unsuccessfully attempts blunderbuss frontal assaults.

The book's shortcomings have less to do with the merits of any single case (though Knightley's accounts of presidential knowledge of U-2 overflights and the Bay of Pigs invasion are not dependable) than with his single-minded style of argumentation and analysis. He hopes the reader will clearly answer "no" to the question he poses at the book's conclusion: "Is there justification for expensive, virtually uncontrollable, intelligence agencies in peacetime?" Unfortunately *The Second Oldest Profession* provides no convincing case for defending such a position.

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The Impact of Illness on World Leaders. By Bert Edward Park. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986. xxiii + 373 pp. \$24.95.)

Bert Edward Park, a practicing neurologist with some graduate study in history, has written a study of the impact of illness on the political behavior of eight world leaders: Woodrow Wilson, Paul von Hindenburg, Ramsay MacDonald, Josef Pilsudski, Adolf