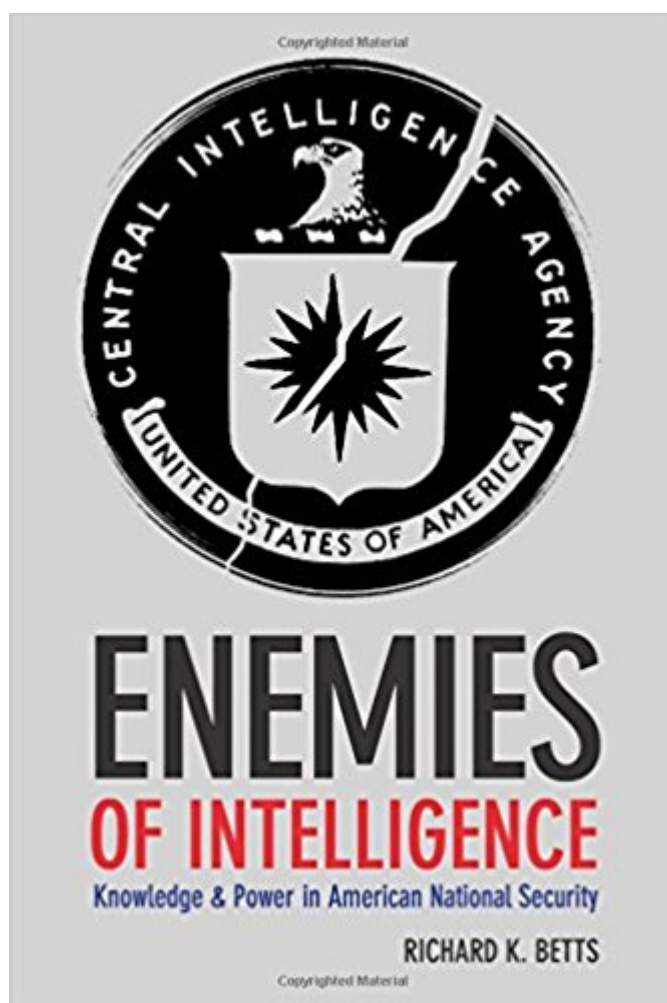


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Enemies Of Intelligence: Knowledge And Power In American National Security



Synopsis

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, and the false assessment of Saddam Hussein's weapons arsenal were terrible reminders that good information is essential to national security. These failures convinced the American public that their intelligence system was broken and prompted a radical reorganization of agencies and personnel, but as Richard K. Betts argues in this book, critics and politicians have severely underestimated the obstacles to true reform. One of the nation's foremost political scientists, Betts draws on three decades of work within the U.S. intelligence community to illuminate the paradoxes and problems that frustrate the intelligence process. Unlike America's efforts to improve its defenses against natural disasters, strengthening its strategic assessment capabilities means outwitting crafty enemies who operate beyond U.S. borders. It also requires looking within to the organizational and political dynamics of collecting information and determining its implications for policy. Combining academic research with personal experience, Betts outlines strategies for better intelligence gathering and assessment. He describes how fixing one malfunction can create another; in what ways expertise can be both a vital tool and a source of error and misjudgment; the pitfalls of always striving for accuracy in intelligence, which in some cases can render it worthless; the danger, though unavoidable, of "politicizing" intelligence; and the issue of secrecy—when it is excessive, when it is insufficient, and how limiting privacy can in fact protect civil liberties. Betts argues that when it comes to intelligence, citizens and politicians should focus less on consistent solutions and more on achieving a delicate balance between conflicting requirements. He also emphasizes the substantial success of the intelligence community, despite its well-publicized blunders, and highlights elements of the intelligence process that need preservation and protection. Many reformers are quick to respond to scandals and failures without detailed, historical knowledge of how the system works. Grounding his arguments in extensive theory and policy analysis, Betts takes a comprehensive and realistic look at how knowledge and power can work together to face the intelligence challenges of the twenty-first century.

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Customer Reviews

[An] insightful book. (Gregory F. Treverton The American Interest)Betts' book provides a much-needed antidote. (Paul R. Pillar Foreign Affairs)

Combining study with experience, Richard K. Betts draws on three decades of work within the U.S. intelligence community to illuminate the paradoxes and problems that frustrate the intelligence process. Unlike America's efforts to improve its defenses against natural disasters, strengthening its strategic assessment capabilities means outwitting crafty enemies who operate beyond U.S. borders. It also requires looking within to the organizational and political dynamics of collecting information and determining its implications for policy. Betts outlines key strategies for better intelligence gathering and assessment. He describes how fixing one malfunction can create another; in what ways expertise can be both a vital tool and a source of error and misjudgment; the pitfalls of always striving for accuracy in intelligence, which in some cases can render it worthless; the danger, though unavoidable, of "politicizing" intelligence; and the issue of secrecy when it is excessive, when it is insufficient, and how limiting privacy can in fact protect civil liberties. Grounding his arguments in extensive theory and policy analysis, Betts takes a comprehensive and realistic look at the convergence of knowledge and power in facing the intelligence challenges of the twenty-first century.

Good book for my Intel class

I ordered this book as I will be using this for one of my classes in the Intelligence Field Studies. At this time, I have not read it but am looking forward to my next class in which I will be reading it. The book arrived in very good condition and in good order.

EDIT: 's new review system will not load images. If and when...see Comment for URLs to the

images on the Web. Retired Reader is as usual being kind. I agree that the book is useful as a sense of what the insiders want us to think, but it is at best a superficial summary (easily read) that has so many errors (of perception) and omissions (of fact) as to hardly be worthy of the read. I quickly realized the general shallowness, but out of respect for the author stopped reading and instead went and read every single footnote, every single index entry, and indeed confirmed that this is a mix of old work, draws only on "members of the club" work, and fills in the gaps with Op-Eds and newspaper stories written by people who generally have no clue. Then I read the whole book. Anyone who cites Deborah Burger's pabulum about "revolution in intelligence affairs" is kissing the institution's ass (pun intended); and anyone who considers the Sims-Gerber book to be transformative (as opposed to useful if you want the status quo), is simply out of touch with reality, with the possibilities, and with the complex pathologies that plague both the intelligence community (see my five images) and our politicians, every one of them, but most especially Dick Cheney and Nancy Pelosi, impeachable for breach of trust. For additional background, see my IJCI commentary on "Intelligence Affairs: Evolution, Revolution, or Reactionary Collapse?" This is in fact what annoyed me most about this book--it glosses over the high crimes and misdemeanors of the White House but also of the Cabinet, as well as the blatant errors and omissions of virtually every senior intelligence officer. The USS Liberty and USS Pueblo were outrageous acts of war that could have been defended against and also justified retaliation, but instead both Administrations covered up, as they covered up on 9/11 and the Kennedy Assassination. In the case of George Tenet, he screwed up three big things: the clandestine service; the hunt for Bin Laden; and his ignorance in refusing to follow the recommendations made by Boyd Sutton in "The Challenge of Global Coverage," calling for 1.5B a year against the 95% of the world that we ignore at our peril. This book gets three stars instead of the two I planned originally because the author is an original, has demonstrated he knows what the higher standard is, and I will simply assume that at this time in his life he too busy to read broadly. He could start with my reviews, which are free. There are so many books over-looked by the author here that I just shake my head. I link to a few below. I expected the author to be dismissive of open sources of information, and to ignore my own work despite the fact that he has been a speaker at one of my conferences and knows full well the contents of my varied books. What I was not expecting was what I consider to be an abject superficial apologia, almost a hearts and flowers farewell to the John McLaughlin's of the past. I was also not expecting the quickly evident lack of familiarity (or lack of time to properly integrate if known) with the wealth of information from many authors on both policy and intelligence failures, and the facts thereof. Nowhere in this book, for example, does the author properly credit Charlie Allen with sending 35 line crossers into Iraq to

confirm what we already knew from the defecting son-in-law: keep the cook-books, destroyed the stocks, bluffing for regional sake. Although acceptable in an academic book of this kind, the author's lack of understanding of the magnitude of the budget (it is \$60 to 70 billion, not the loose lips \$44 billion that Mary Graham gave us) and his lack of understanding of how what we do now fails to address the ten high level threats to humanity that LtGen Dr. Brent Scowcroft, USAF (Ret) helped identify, fails to help us create the needed four forces after next including the White Hat Peace from the Sea and Peace from Above, relegates this book to the curiosity pile. I was particularly annoyed by the disingenuous glibness in speaking of the value of an intelligence reserve, when the author knows full well that because of security blinders the secret puppies talk to just 14 of the 1400 Muslim experts in America; and either his obliviousness or naiveté in suggesting that dissent and multiple advocacy channels are worth anything when our young analysts are near idiots (the World Bank official I spoke to says their assumptions about Sudan and elsewhere are so ignorant as to be frightening); have no processing power, not even the analytic desktop that Diane Webb designed in 1985-1986, at which time I discovered we had no fewer than twenty "compartmented" projects to build the same all source fusion station, only each was a sweetheart deal with a different vendor; or access to the 96% of the information that the secret world does not have access to and will never have access to unless we first create a Multinational Information Sharing Activity outside the wire and able to share without restraint. The book whimpers to an end. For a free and broader grasp of reality and pathology, see my reviews of other books on intelligence (especially the ones the author neglects to integrate), and sign up for the free weekly report, GLOBAL CHALLENGES: The Week in Review. See Earth Intelligence Network. I won't even touch the lack of serious coverage of education, commercial intelligence, policy-maker ignorance, and all the other small but important details left out of this book. This book comes nowhere near the reality that you cannot create and maintain smart spies in the context of a dumb nation. This is what we get from a community that spends \$60B a year creating a President's Daily Brief (\$1.2B/week), largely ineffective at all else. Below are the tip of the iceberg. On Intelligence: Spies and Secrecy in an Open World The New Craft of Intelligence: Personal, Public, & Political--Citizen's Action Handbook for Fighting Terrorism, Genocide, Disease, Toxic Bombs, & Corruption Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA Who the Hell Are We Fighting?: The Story of Sam Adams and the Vietnam Intelligence Wars Denial and Deception: An Insider's View of the CIA See No Evil: The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA's War on Terrorism Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers Wedge: From Pearl Harbor to 9/11--How the Secret War between the FBI and CIA Has Endangered National Security Deep Cover: The Inside Story of How DEA Infighting, Incompetence and Subterfuge Lost

Us the Biggest Battle of the Drug War See my many lists for broader recommendations.

This book seeks to balance the deluge of criticism that has been directed towards the U.S. Intelligence System (especially CIA) with a more sympathetic view of how the U.S. intelligence process works. Its author, Richard K. Betts is a recognized scholar specializing in national security issues who has held a variety of positions on the fringes of the U.S. Intelligence Community. This scarcely makes Betts an expert on intelligence processes, although he seems to accurately reflect the views of the senior executives who occupy the highest levels of that Community. For this reason this is a valuable book. Betts identifies three categories of intelligence which he characterizes as: attack warning; operational evaluation; and defense planning. These are essentially military intelligence subjects and apparently he never considered the value to policy makers of economic, political, or technical intelligence. He also conflates warning with prediction even after reading Cynthia Grabo's book on Warning Intelligence. As he should know but does not, it is virtually impossible to predict the occurrence of discrete events, but entirely possible to provide warnings and risk assessments of potential threats. He also clearly has no real understanding of subject matter expertise (also known as target knowledge) as key to sound analysis. Betts attempts to defend a number of CIA's alleged failures. For example, there is his defense of the CIA WMD NIE that was published prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom. According to Betts, CIA analyst determined that ambiguous aluminum tubes were to be used as centrifuges and other principal intelligence agencies agreed with this conclusion. This is debatable, but more importantly he offers no evidence that any effort was made to determine if Iraq had acquired or was attempting to acquire the other components required to build centrifuges. As it turned out there are many uses for aluminum tubes. Then there is the issue of Iraqi biological weapon production. Betts informs the reader that in addition to the infamous and bogus German asset "Curveball", CIA had access to three other corroborating sources although two of these were also bogus. More to the point again CIA evidently made no effort to find independent verification of this claim. Its analysts could have asked outside experts about the technical details of the reports they had and they could have looked for supporting evidence such as Iraqi attempts to acquire containment technology or approaches to pharmaceutical firms for large amounts of antidotes (if you are going to use biological agents on the battlefield you had better be sure your own troops won't be stricken). Such omissions are inexcusable. It is a sobering experience reading Bett's discussions of reform and analysis as applied to the U.S. Intelligence System. He clearly seeks to portray major reform as both unnecessary and dangerous. Further, his understanding of intelligence analysis and production is that of someone far

removed from the actual processes. The fact that this probably represents the thinking of the senior managers of that system as well is disturbing indeed.

The author raises some interesting points about how intelligence is produced and analyzed, but his political bias (Left) forces him to adjust facts to make events fit his theory. Possibly worthwhile for those in the business, but not of much interest to the general reader.

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