



VI. PROFESSIONAL READING

REVIEWS BY
PETER C. OLESON



An Inconvenient Apocalypse Environmental Collapse, Climate Crisis, and the Fate of Humanity

Wes Jackson & Robert Jensen

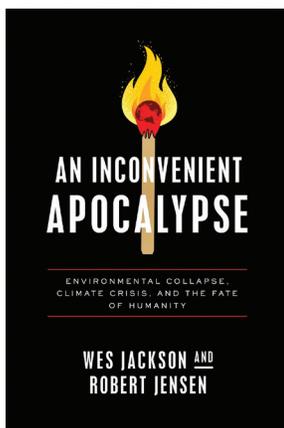
Notre Dame, Indiana; University of Notre Dame Press, 2022, 165 pages
with notes and index.

Global warming is headed in a calamitous direction. Even if humans can limit the increase in the Earth's temperature, other factors are pushing us to an apocalypse. So argue Wes Jackson and Robert Jensen, in their forthcoming book *An Inconvenient Apocalypse*. Jackson is a 1992 MacArthur Fellow with degrees in biology, botany, and genetics. Jensen is an emeritus professor at the University of Texas at Austin and holds a PhD in media law and ethics. Their book is disturbing to read; the questions they raise are uncomfortable to contemplate. Despite their professed optimism, a reader is more likely to become pessimistic about the future of the human race.

The authors trace the historical evolution of humans from their emergence to today, from homo sapien hunter-gatherers of 200,000 years ago, to homo hierarchicus, enabled by advances in agriculture that allowed the development of civilization, to homo colossus of an industrialized world that uses fossil fuels to consume at levels previously unimaginable, to homo technologicus that believes current ecologically exploitive practices can be sustained indefinitely by technological innovation.

Jackson and Jensen conclude "we face a struggle for an ecologically sustainable relationship between humans and the larger living world, the ecosphere."

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"The coming decades are likely to be marked by dramatic dislocations as a result of our social and ecological crises." It is unlikely that the "destructive forces unleashed by humans... will be stopped in time to avoid... apocalyptic consequences." In the past, such conditions have caused widespread social dislocations, deprivations, and conflict [3-5].

We face "multiple cascading crises" that interact in ways we often do not comprehend until much later when ecological damage has been done. The authors cite: global warming with its consequent sea level rise and climate changes; the decline of natural resources, especially fresh water; the mass extinction of species some of which we depend upon; "human population growth and demand, beyond the Earth's carrying capacity" or ability to regenerate; chemical pollution of the land and sea; "rising food insecurity and falling nutritional quality;" the threat of weapons of mass destruction; new pandemics; new, uncontrollable technologies; and "national and global failure to understand and act preventively on risks."

We have a crisis of consumption. "In aggregate terms, the human population has too much stuff."

"...[T]he ecological costs of the extraction, processing, and waste disposal required to produce all that stuff is at the core of our ecological crises" [5-6]. Climate change is the result of too many people consuming too much energy that is needed for the consumption of goods.

What is the consequence of continual economic growth?

The authors argue that we need steady state economics as the demand for endless economic growth is incompatible with a livable future. There is a difference between needs and wants. But when used to what we want in time they become needs. Luxuries become necessities. "It is not easy to simply give them up," they observe [135].

The underlying issue is overpopulation. "Earth's ecosystems can sustainably support far fewer than today's eight

billion-plus people, even if everyone were consuming far less energy and material than today" [48]. "What is the sustainable size of the human population?" [46]. The authors predict, in a Malthusian way, that the human population when scarcity of critical resources is irreversible will be reduced by starvation, predation,

and disease. They opine that the sustainable world population is less than one-third what it is now.

Belief in technological solutions, which the authors call “techno-optimism,” are in the long-term delusional. Technological innovations can help cope, but only in the short term. Advances, such as the Green Revolution has been in agriculture, have limits.

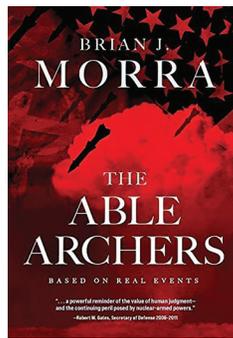
In the book they discuss social, philosophical and political questions that will arise from future economic systems, wealth distribution, and scarcities and material conditions.

Jackson and Jensen are repeating the concerns and warnings of scientists who have assessed the future of the world with increasing pessimism for the past several decades. They conclude: “The ecosystem does not care that we exist. We are, in ecospheric terms, just another species in a long list of species that usually end up going extinct at some point” [119].

They note politician’s inability to ask hard questions, much less take remedial action to prevent human created calamities.

An Inconvenient Apocalypse reminds this reviewer of the National Intelligence Council’s long-term forecasts. The insurance industry is already examining the issues raised by the authors. “A fifth of countries worldwide [are] at risk from ecosystem collapse as biodiversity declines,” noted Swiss Re, the re-insurance firm, in 2020 [72]. In his 2019 annual threat assessment to the Congress, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats cited “global environmental and ecological degradation” as a major factor undermining world economies. The situation is not getting better.

There is an underlying optimistic tone in *An Inconvenient Apocalypse*. One missing topic, however, is discussion of the likelihood of conflicts emerging from the multiple crises they describe. If history is any teacher, conflicts over resources will occur. Nonetheless, this is a sobering examination of current trends in human behavior and likely existential consequences.



The Able Archers

Brian J. Morra

Koehler Books, Virginia Beach, VA, 2022. 270 pages with appendixes.

While I rarely review fiction, this book is well worth reading.

Brian Morra, a former Air Force intelligence officer and aerospace executive, has succeeded in crafting a spell-binding tale based on true events. Unknown to most, except very senior defense, intelligence and policy officials, the NATO Able Archer nuclear command and control exercise in November 1983 nearly resulted in nuclear conflict with the Soviet Union. It was the closest the two adversaries came to nuclear war since the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962.

1983 was a period of heightened tensions between Washington and Moscow.

Yuri Andropov had succeeded Leonid Brezhnev as the leader of the USSR. Formerly the chairman of the KGB, Andropov was paranoid about a NATO first strike attack on Russia and the Warsaw Pact. Moscow had deployed SS-20 ballistic missiles in the Warsaw Pact capable of striking all European capitals of NATO countries. Andropov’s paranoia drove him to initiate Operation RYaN (meaning “nuclear missile attack”) to find intelligence supporting his fears. RYaN became the top priority for the Soviet intelligence services. The NATO response of deploying in Europe the quick-reaction Pershing II ballistic missile and the long-range Ground-Launched Cruise Missile (GLCM), both nuclear capable, fed his paranoia.

The tense situation was exacerbated in March 1983 when President Reagan gave his “evil empire” speech and announced the American Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), often called the “Star Wars” project. This was seen in Moscow as a threat to neuter its strategic rocket forces. In April, during the US Navy’s FLEETEX 83 exercise in the Northwest Pacific, Navy fighter aircraft penetrated the USSR’s air defense zones and overflew the Kamchatka peninsula. This raised tensions within the Soviet air defense forces, which reacted on 1 September in shooting down another aircraft penetrating Soviet airspace—Korean Airlines flight 007. The search and rescue efforts by the Soviets and Americans and Japanese put armed fighters on both sides in close proximity and threatened the start of a shooting conflict. Soviet forces remained at a heightened state of alert during the succeeding weeks as the international incident of KAL 007 became

politically heated, especially between Washington and Moscow. In the background, Moscow saw the American invasion of Grenada in late October as indicative of US aggressive intentions.

With this course of event in the minds of the Soviet leadership the initiation of the November Able Archer NATO exercise seemed to confirm its worst fears.

Morra takes these events and spins a tale around a US Air Force captain who is on the intelligence staff of US Forces in Japan and later at US Air Forces Europe and is expert on the Russians. The author also creates a counterpart, who is a Soviet military intelligence (GRU) officer embedded with the air defense forces. Other critical individuals are included in the novel.

One interesting aspect of Morra's storytelling is the inclusion of a true incident in September 1983 when Soviet missile warning sensors mistakenly warned of multiple US ICBM launches, which were false alarms. Only the cool head of a Soviet officer averted a potentially devastating response to the false warnings.

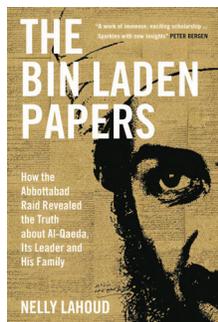
Morra's tale is well written. He depicts how a crisis atmosphere can affect involved individuals and the importance of keeping a cool head. His description of senior-level decision-making by the Soviet leadership and NATO is instructive. Readers of *The Able Archers* will gain a better understanding of the near-devastating crisis through this novel than through any non-fictional report or official history. Be prepared to stay up at night once you start this novel. It's very hard to put down.



The Bin Laden Papers: How the Abbottabad Raid Revealed the Truth about Al-Qaeda, Its Leaders and His Family

Nelly Lahoud

New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022. 362 pages with Notes, Appendixes, Dramatis Personae, Glossary of Arabic Terms, Bibliography, and Index.



At 0100 on 1 May 2011 Seal Team Six raided Usama Bin Laden's hideaway in Abbottabad, Pakistan. The commando raid, that was deep inside an ostensible ally's territory, was planned for 30 minutes. But the Seals discovered computers, disks, thumb drives, notebooks, and other papers and requested more time to exploit the al-Qaeda lead-

er's house. Going against his "gut," Admiral William McRaven, the raid's commander, gave permission to gather what the Seals could. In an additional 18 minutes the Seals stuffed what they could into bags. In 2017 CIA declassified "nearly 470,000 additional files," including approximately 6,000 pages in Arabic of internal al-Qaeda communications "never intended for public consumption" [2].

It is those 6,000 pages of private letters, drafts, notes, and diaries that are the basis for *The Bin Laden Papers*. This book is not a recounting of the raid. It is an insightful analysis of the internal workings of al-Qaeda as revealed in the communications between Bin Laden, his most senior deputies, other jihadi group leaders, and his extended family members. The author, Nelly Lahoud, PhD (Australian National University), was a senior associate at the Combating Terrorism Center at the US Military Academy at West Point and a Rockefeller Fellow in Islamic studies at the Library of Congress. She is expert on the ideology of al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups and is fluent in French and Arabic.

Operation Enduring Freedom, that began less than a month after 9/11, caught al-Qaeda and the Taliban by surprise. Neither Bin Laden nor other jihadis expected a full-scale war, anticipating only limited air strikes from the US [26]. "Al-Qaeda was crippled within a couple of months... and it never recovered its operational arm during [Bin Laden's] lifetime" [287]. Al-Qaeda's "terrorism was halted following the fall of the Taliban in December 2001" [6]. Bin Laden and his senior deputies went into hiding after the battle at Tora Bora. (The Taliban's leader, Mullah Omar, in December ordered all Arabs to leave Afghanistan [39].) This frustrated Bin Laden's ambition to make al-Qaeda a major international player. "In his 1996 'Declaration of Jihad'... [Bin Laden] presented himself as the champion of Muslim causes across the globe..." including Palestine, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Burma, Kashmir, Ogaden, and elsewhere [20]. He envisioned being the leader of the umma, the "global community of Muslims" [22].

Bin Laden took, and urged his deputies and others to take, stringent security measures. This made communication between them difficult. Understanding the SIGINT capabilities of the US and fearing both CIA and Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) HUMINT, Bin Laden forsook the use of cell, satellite, or telephone communications for many years and relied on trusted couriers carrying thumb drives that were encrypted. In the months and years following his ouster from Afghanistan, he described

al-Qaeda as an “afflicted” organization. “Pakistan’s campaign against al-Qaeda was unrelenting...” curtailing al-Qaeda’s ability to operate in the country [43]. Al-Qaeda was focused on survival; international terrorism was not possible [287]. “For nearly three years after the fall of the Taliban, [Bin Laden] did not have operational command over al-Qaeda” [54].

While in hiding and isolated Bin Laden was concerned with protecting al-Qaeda’s brand [57]. He lost control of former subordinates, and other jihadis from throughout the Muslim world continued operations on their own.

“Al-Qaeda struggled with the unintended consequences of the activities of the jihadi groups it inspired” [7].

Abu Musa al-Zarqawi, the leader of the most powerful jihadi group in Iraq, the Islamic State of Iraq – ISI, reached out to join

al-Qaeda in 2003 or 2004 and was named “the leader of al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia” [295]. He was killed in 2006. His successor, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, declared himself Commander of the Faithful, evolved ISI into today’s ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Levant) and pursued widespread terrorism with which Bin Laden disagreed. ISIS and al-Qaeda became adversary jihadi groups. (Al-Baghdadi was killed in 2010.)

Other groups reached out to Bin Laden to achieve the al-Qaeda imprimatur, which was viewed as an important recruiting and morale tool. But all were more concerned with their local struggle than the worldwide (and particularly anti-US) struggle espoused by Bin Laden. These groups included al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Maghreb — AQIM (Algeria/Libya/Mali/Mauritania), al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula — AQAP (Yemen), al-Shabab (Somalia), and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). TTP attempted to strike in the US in 2010 with an unsuccessful bomb attempt in Times Square. (After Ayman al-Zawahiri succeeded Bin Laden as al-Qaeda’s leader and the Taliban took over Afghanistan, the affiliated TTP has turned its terror on Pakistan, indicating that the al-Qaeda brand remains active.) Bin Laden thought that other affiliated jihadi groups had lost sight of the worldwide objective and were only focused locally. This was a “liability to [global] jihad” [124].

By 2004 Bin Laden has reemerged through communications, although still hiding physically, appoint-

ing new al-Qaeda leaders to replace the many who had been killed. Many were hiding in Pakistan’s North Waziristan district, one of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) adjacent to the Afghan border. Largely populated by tribes opposed to the central government, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf surreptitiously agreed to CIA drone surveillance and strikes in the district that killed many al-Qaeda leaders and members. After reading part of Bob Woodward’s book, *Obama’s Wars*, that described the drone campaign, Bin Laden gave up on operations from

North Waziristan believing that the FATA was “highly exposed” [116].

Bin Laden never trusted many of the Taliban leaders, especially after 2007 when he believed a Taliban faction had joined with the US to kill one of al-Qaeda’s senior

military leaders [94]. He feared their links to Pakistan’s ISI, which he viewed as an ally of the CIA. Pakistan had arrested many of the al-Qaeda brothers who fled Afghanistan. So did Iran, which imprisoned for years members of al-Qaeda, including Bin Laden’s second wife, Khairiah, and son, Hamza. According to *The Bin Laden Papers* “...the United States was the ‘current enemy,’ Iran was the ‘postponed enemy’” [45].

One chapter in Lahoud’s book is entitled “Some ‘Brothers’ are More Brotherly than Others.” She addresses in detail the rise of ISIS in Iraq and the friction with al-Qaeda. She also addresses Bin Laden’s hands-off management style in which he tasks operational subordinates with a goal and leaves the detailed planning and decision-making to them. Undoubtedly, this was mandated in part by his isolation in hiding. He failed to end the infighting among jihadis. He was also opposed to, but unable to stop, the indiscriminate attacks in Iraq that killed many Shias. (Note that al-Qaeda was a Sunni entity.)

While in hiding Bin Laden continued to develop plans for “international operations,” i.e., terrorist attacks. He got his inspiration for the 9/11 attacks from the intentional crash of Egypt Air flight 990 off Long Island on 31 October 1999. The pilot’s motive apparently was revenge against his employer. Bin Laden opined the pilot should have crashed the plane into a financial center in New York City and not at sea [17]. The 9/11 attack was a copycat.

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Bin Laden's papers reveal that he consulted with other principals about his plans. This includes with the Taliban (including a "supportive Mullah Omar") preceding "international attacks al-Qaeda orchestrated from Afghanistan" (e.g., the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1996 Khobar Towers attack in Saudi Arabia, the August 1998 bombings of east African US embassies, the October 2000 attack on the USS *Cole* in Yemen, the September 11 attacks in the US, and others) [22-3]. The author concludes that Bin Laden and Mullah Omar had a quid pro quo – the Taliban would allow al-Qaeda attacks on the US in exchange for al-Qaeda eliminating the Taliban's most prominent opponent, Ahmed Shah Masoud, the leader of the Northern Alliance, who al-Qaeda assassinated two days before the 9/11 attacks [32]. Bin Laden's focus was always on the US, which he viewed as the modern Zionist-Crusader against the Muslim world.

By 2010 Bin Laden decided to develop a new strategy for al-Qaeda to achieve a "balance of terror" with the US. This he planned to announce on the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. Noting the West's and US's dependence on oil, he began to plan an operation to "sink a large number of oil tankers" [135]. The plot, which was tasked to subordinates in March 2010, was focused worldwide—the Persian Gulf, Oman, Yemen, Somalia, Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Ghana, and Venezuela—and to happen near simultaneously [135-41]. However, the Arab Spring, which took al-Qaeda by surprise, forced a politically-inspired postponement. Five days after he sent subsequent orders to his operational team on 26 April 2011 Seal Team Six killed Bin Laden.

Bin Laden was a caring family man. He had four wives: Najwa, a Syrian, left Afghanistan before 9/11. She ended up living in Damascus. Khadijah, number 2, along with her son Hamza and many of Bin Laden's children with Najwa, was incarcerated by the Iranians for many years. Some escaped detention in 2008 and publicized Iran's actions, which Teheran wanted to keep secret. (The last of the captives were released in 2013 [248].) Sihan, the third wife, was with Bin Laden in Abbottabad and along with their 13-year-old daughter helped him with his correspondence and public statements. Her son, Khalid, was also killed in

the Seal's operation. Amal, his fourth wife, was also in the Abbottabad compound, as were many of his children. Lahoud concludes that Bin Laden and some of his family moved into the Abbottabad hideaway in 2005 [89].

Bin Laden's security in Abbottabad relied on two trusted local brothers, Abu Khaled and Abu Muhammad. No Bin Laden left the compound; the brothers or their spouses did the shopping. But after many years the brothers were exhausted and opposed having

Lahoud describes the cautious approach taken for the sending and receipt of correspondence. Encrypted thumb drives in a sealed envelope were delivered to an intermediary, who, without knowing the contents or the eventual recipient, passed it to another courier. Lahoud recreates how the courier scheme was patiently analyzed and exploited.

Khadijah and her children, released from Iran and living in Waziristan, come to Abbottabad. In the chapter "The Real Courier" Lahoud describes the cautious approach taken for the sending and receipt of correspondence. Encrypted thumb drives in a sealed envelope were delivered to an intermediary, who, without knowing the contents or the eventual recipient, passed

it to another courier. Lahoud recreates how the courier scheme was patiently analyzed and exploited.

Having read and analyzed Bin Laden's most personal and revealing papers, Lahoud summarizes many of the important observations she had. Clearly, Bin Laden had "unwavering commitment to the political cause for which he sacrificed his personal fortune..." [6] and eventually his life. Bin Laden's post-9/11 goal was to create under his command an *umma* (a global community of Muslims) [286]. He did not sway from this. He sought to create a balance of terror versus the US, forcing the US to withdraw from Muslim lands.

Lahoud concludes that the "obsession with the al-Qaeda brand distracted the counterterrorism community" [287]. Many terrorist events ascribed to al-Qaeda, in fact, were the actions of other jihadi groups not under al-Qaeda's command, although allegiance may have been professed (e.g., the March 2004 Madrid train bombing, the 7 July 2005 London Tube bombing, the Christmas 2009 Northwest Airlines flight 253 "underwear bomber," and others). "...[D]espite the group's operational impotence, al-Qaeda continued to be perceived, falsely it turned out, as a Leviathan in the jihadi landscape" [93], despite the fractured jihadi world.

Bin Laden was not worldly. He was not well read beyond Islamic history. He did not understand the US,

nor did he have a deep understanding of international relations, according to Lahoud’s analysis. He was a good conceptualizer of operational plots, although al-Qaeda was powerless to implement them. His worldwide goals “required much imagination” and bordered on “delirium” [285]. He was focused on Islamic law and its constraints, that led him to oppose many jihadi attacks, especially against other Muslims even if they were not aligned with Sunni teachings.

Bin Laden’s papers demonstrate the effectiveness of CIA’s drone operations in Afghanistan and especially the FATA region of Pakistan. Al-Qaeda lost many of its leaders to drone strikes. It proved extremely difficult for al-Qaeda to operate under the watchful eyes of US drones, often enabled by human agents who designated potential targets.

The Bin Laden Papers is an important book, especially for anyone who was involved in counterterrorism operations during the last two decades. Clearly the general understanding of al-Qaeda was poor: it was portrayed as far more than it actually was. Bin Laden’s personal papers reveal how impotent it was after Operation Enduring Freedom. The book is challenging to read as it is a complex subject, but is very enlightening. Lahoud aids the reader with a glossary of Arabic terms and an extensive Dramatis Personae that gives the history of significant individuals as well as their aliases and relationships. *The Bin Laden Papers* is an important contribution to modern history.



Russian Intelligence: A Case-based Study of Russian Services and Missions Past and Present

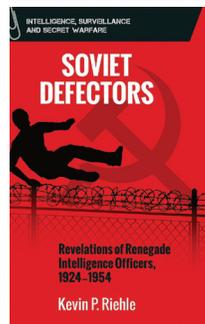
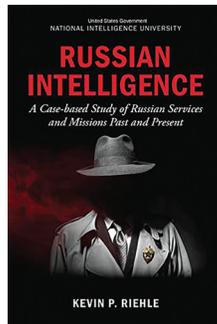
Kevin P. Riehle
Bethesda, MD; National Intelligence University Press, Spring 2022 (no copyright), 368 pages with index, bibliography and notes.

Soviet Defectors: Revelations of Renegade Intelligence Officers, 1924-1954

Kevin P. Riehle
Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020. 337 pages with index, bibliography, and notes.

As the author details in *Russian Intelligence* the organization, history, evolution, types of operations,

“Russian intelligence services have a long history of telling the boss just what he wants to hear. Russian and Soviet leaders have seldom been tolerant of an intelligence service giving them information that contradicts their firmly held political views...”



and the many cases revealed by defectors or public exposure, for anyone trying to understand Russian intelligence Riehle’s treatise is a good starting place.

Riehle is a former counterintelligence analyst and faculty member at the National Intelligence University. He addresses the who, the why, and the how of Russian intelligence, starting with the first years of the Bolsheviks to recent times. Russian intelligence today draws heavily from its historical foundations, including what it adopted from the Tsar’s secret police, the Okhrana. Its principal focus has always been on preserving the state against all enemies, imagined or real, internal or external. A tenet of belief is that all internal dissent is instigated by external enemies.

The book describes the many organizational evolutions over history of the various Russian intelligence services: NKVD – Peoples’ Commissariat for Internal Affairs; KGB – Committee for State Security, FSB – Federal Security Service, FPS – the Federal Border Guard Service;, SVR – Foreign Intelligence Service, FSO – Federal Protective Service; the new National Guard, and others. The book includes detailed charts for each and an evolutionary chart that shows which agency was absorbed by another. [59] The author describes the major elements within each service (e.g., the SVR’s Line X for S&T intelligence; the FSB’s Military Counterintelligence Service) and describes throughout the rivalries that have at times consumed the various organizations.

Intelligence collection and analysis, done for political, economic, and military purposes is not the principal focus of Russian intelligence services. From an American perspective Russian intelligence analysis is often perverted.

“Russian intelligence services have a long history of telling the boss just what he wants to hear. Russian and Soviet leaders have seldom been tolerant of an intelligence service giving them information that contradicts their firmly held political views... The intelligence that percolates to the Russian president today does not necessarily reflect reality...” [130]

The FSB, clearly the most powerful of the various Russian secret services, is focused on issues of counterterrorism and internal dissent. Dissent is often categorized as “terrorism,” allowing for harsh treatment of those arrested.

Riehle addresses many of the Soviet and Russian “active measures” (or covert actions in US parlance) and now known as “measures of support.” Originally a military concept including denial and deception, such measures in recent years have targeted elections in Western countries. This has included extensive use of disinformation, which is defined as “the deliberate manipulation of information” [191] While historically active measures were used to support revolutionary movements, today the techniques are used more for disruption campaigns in Western countries and are not necessarily tied to “communist” or “socialist” movements.

Espionage is the main tool of many of the elements of Russian intelligence services. While political information is important, economic and scientific information is a main goal. “[O]ver half of Soviet defense industry projects in 1979 were based on Western-acquired science and technology,” according to the files smuggled out by KGB archivist Vasily Mitrokhin. [138] Today Riehle explains the Russians employ many methods to continue to steal Western technologies.

The author details many of the means used by Russian intelligence. He explains how HUMINT works, its focus, its recruitment of agents and double agents, agent provocateurs, and who is a high priority target; the extensive illegals program run out of the SVR’s Directorate S; and technical collection programs, which experienced significant setbacks with the dissolution of the USSR. He identifies Russian intelligence satellite programs and today’s extensive cyber activities.

Riehle describes Russian military intelligence, the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU), now downgraded in title to Main Directorate of the General Staff (GU). He identifies its sabotage mission of wartime strategic targets and its use of Spetnaz troops and the supposedly private Wagner Group. He identifies some of the more sensational assassinations and explains the differences between those that are internal to Russia and those that are external (many focused on defectors, who are considered to be traitors).

Riehle speculates about the future of Russian intelligence in his final chapter.

Besides being a comprehensive examination of Russian intelligence, the inclusion of many specific case histories is one of the strengths of the book.

Riehle has produced a fundamental text on Russian intelligence. Besides an important reference for the classroom, it should be of interest to anyone with interest in the history, current state, and future of Russian intelligence.



Riehle also wrote a fascinating book on Soviet defectors from the early years of the Soviet Union until 1954—*Soviet Defectors: Revelations of Renegade Intelligence Officers, 1924-1954*.

“Defectors are a phenomenon that governments both fear and seek. They repudiate the system from which they came, and, if they held a position of trust, they reveal to the receiving side information about the inner workings of their former country. For the losing side, this can be catastrophic, while for the receiving side it can be a unique and valuable source of information.” [1]

By studying the debriefings and books written by former Soviet intelligence officers, who had better access to state information than most, Riehle explored whether understanding them would give insight into the national security thinking inside a closed political system. Not all of these debriefings were from US or British sources; there were many interesting ones collected from Gestapo files.

Over 500 individuals defected worldwide from the Soviet Union in the period of the book – 1924 to 1954. The author divided defections into five distinct periods: early (1924-30); during the prewar purges (the Yezhovshchina, 1937–1940); World War II (1941–46); the early Cold War (1947–1951); and during the post-Stalin Purges (1953–54). The book details the personal histories of many of the defectors and what

the West learned from them. Some were staff officers, some were NKVD border agents or internal security personnel, others were “illegals.”

Defector motivations changed in each period depending on circumstances, whether they be purges, policy changes, war, or personal problems with a boss or a woman. Riehle points out that defection is a final decision – there is no turning back. Many who returned to the Soviet Union met an unwelcome fate.

Riehle also explains the evolution of the Soviet’s (and now Russian) concept of the “main enemy.” Having a discernible enemy is critical to maintain popular support, justify repressive actions, and hold onto power. In the period preceding World War II, Britain was the main enemy. After Barbarossa, when Nazi Germany invaded the USSR, Germany earned that moniker. Immediately after the war it returned to the British in conjunction with the US. As the British Empire dwindled, the term was applied thereafter to the US.

Soviet Defectors is meticulously researched and documented. It presents a level of detail not included in other books, and for that reason is worth reading.

Kevin P. Riehle, PhD, is a retired associate professor at the National Intelligence University. He spent 28 years as a counterintelligence analyst. He has published extensively on the topic of spies and counterintelligence focused on the history of Russian and Warsaw Pact intelligence services.

Peter C. Oleson is senior editor of *Intelligencer* and Editor of *The Guide to the Study of Intelligence*. He is a former associate professor of intelligence studies, University of Maryland University College. He has taught about intelligence extensively on the faculties of CIA University and the National Defense Intelligence College. Prior to his time teaching, he was assistant director of DIA, involved in policy, resource, and acquisition matters. He served as senior intelligence policy advisor to Under SecDef for Policy. Was one of eight charter members of Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service. After leaving government he worked in industry developing defense and intelligence systems.