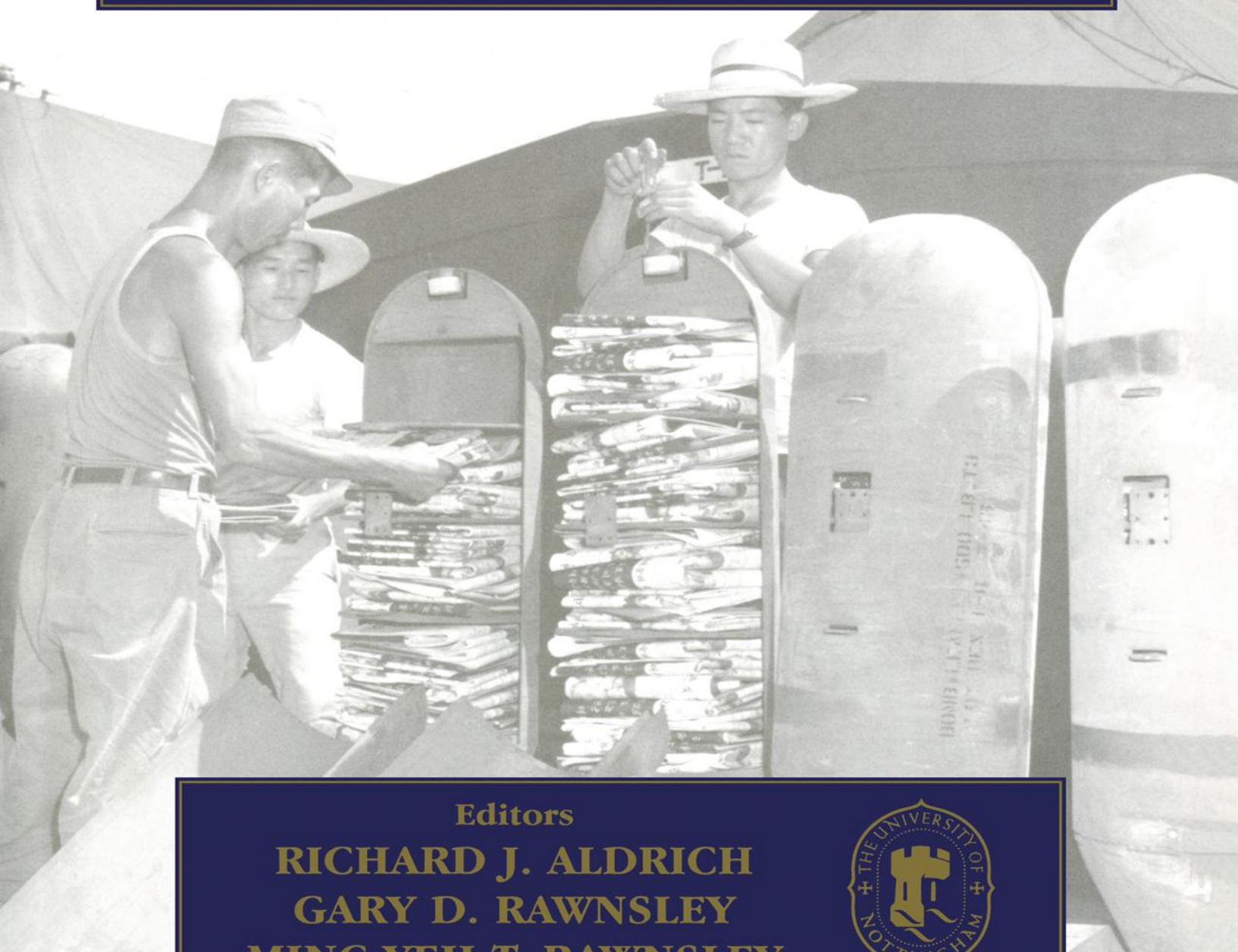


The Clandestine Cold War in Asia, 1945–65

Western Intelligence, Propaganda
and Special Operations



Editors

RICHARD J. ALDRICH

GARY D. RAWNSLEY

MING-YEH T. RAWNSLEY



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Jacket Illustration: US 5001b bomb cases being
Packed with propaganda leaflets during the Korean War.

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Foreword

During the war I served in the Special Operations Executive or 'SOE'. After a spell in the Baker Street headquarters building I worked to develop Operation *Massingham* with the French. Finally, between 1943 and 1945, I found myself in Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten's South East Asia Command as Deputy Director of an organisation called Force 136, the Far Eastern manifestation of SOE. This organisation undertook some remarkable clandestine work in areas such as Burma and Malaya, organising resistance and gathering intelligence behind enemy lines. At the end of war, the Director of Force 136, Colin Mackenzie, returned home quickly to report on events to the new Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin.

There was much to report on. Across Asia the Second World War had left a trail of destruction and turbulence in its wake. Herein lay the seeds of many post-war conflicts, indeed in Vietnam the fighting that would stretch on through three decades had already begun. I remained in South East Asia long enough to preside over the liquidation of Force 136. However, such was the pace of developing conflicts in South East Asia that some SOE officers stayed on to assist Mountbatten with his difficult post-war tasks in parts of Asia where the early Cold War was already beginning.

During the last half century much has been written about the clandestine war against Japan. Now, with the welcome declassification of new documents, the story of the early clandestine Cold War in Asia can begin to be told. The Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at the University of Nottingham has taken a lead in exploring these new materials. The fruits of that initiative are contained in this volume. It was to Nottingham that I returned following the war and when the University received its charter in 1948, I was invited to serve on the University Council and later as Pro-Chancellor. During my long and happy years of association I have watched the University develop strong links with many countries in Asia and acquire deep research expertise in the study of the region. It therefore gives me great pleasure to wish the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies every success with its future programmes.

BRIGADIER SIR JOHN ANSTEY
Southwell, Nottinghamshire
March 2000

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Many people have assisted with this preliminary investigation into the clandestine aspects of the early Cold War in Asia. This began with a conference in the early summer of 1999 organised by the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at the University of Nottingham. The Institute provided an excellent framework for that event and many people from far and wide were generous with their time and effort in making it a success. Catherine Baxter, Ian Brown, Susie Carruthers, Eva-Lotta Hedman, Ralph Smith and Anthony Stockwell were very encouraging and supportive. Anthony Short was particularly helpful and served as a model chairman and adviser. The Department of History at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, kindly offered to join us as partners for the conference, providing an invaluable London base for the second day of the proceedings and helping us to interact with practitioners. The presence of individuals with personal experiences and their willingness to share their thoughts generously made this a memorable occasion for us all.

Transcripts of documents from the Public Record Office and the India Office Library and Record appear by permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The permissions of the Trustees of the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives and the Broadlands Archives at the Hartley Library, University of Southampton are also gratefully acknowledged.

Abbreviations

A-2	US Air Force Intelligence
AFO	Anti-Fascist Organisations [Burmese]
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AFHQ	Allied Forces Headquarters
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League [Burmese]
AFSA	Armed Forces Security Agency [American]
AFSS	Air Force Security Service [American]
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam [South Vietnamese]
ASA	Army Security Agency [American]
ASAPAC	Army Security Agency, Pacific [American]
ATIS	Allied Translation and Interrogation Service
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BDCC/ME	British Defence Coordinating Committee, Middle East
BDCC/FE	British Defence Coordinating Committee, Far East
BIA	Burma Independence Army [Burmese]
BMH	British Military Hospital
BNA	Burmese National Army [Burmese]
BRIAM	British Advisory Mission (to Vietnam)
C	Chief of the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)
CAO	Civil Affairs Office (Filipino)
CAS (B)	Civil Affairs Staff (Burma)
CCE	Chief Controller Europe, SIS [British]
CCME	Chief Controller Mediterranean, SIS [British]
CEA	Controller Eastern Area, SIS [British]
CEP	Captured Enemy Personnel
CFE	Controller Far East, SIS [British]
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency [American]
CIC	Counter Intelligence Corps [American]
CID	Criminal Investigation Department, Malaya
CIG	Central Intelligence Group [American]
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CINFE	Commander in Chief Far East [American]
CME	Controller Middle East, SIS [British]

CNA	Controller Northern Area, SIS [British]
CRPO	Combined Research and Planning Organisation, SIS
Comint	Communications intelligence
COS	Chiefs of Staff [British]
CW	Controller Western Area, SIS [British]
CX	Prefix for a report originating with SIS
DF	Direction Finding
DI	Directorate of Intelligence, CIA [American]
DMI	Director of Military Intelligence [British]
DOI	Director of Intelligence, Malaya
DPs	Directors of Production, SIS [British]
DRS	Document Research Section [American]
EDCOR	Economic Development Corps [Filipino]
EUSAK	Eighth US Army Korea [American]
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation [American]
FEAF	Far Eastern Air Forces [American]
FEC	Far Eastern Command [American]
FEC	Far Eastern Controller, SIS [British]
FECOM	Far Eastern Command [American]
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
Force 136	SOE in the Far East [British]
FPDP	Five Powers Defence Pact
FRU/FEC	Field Research Unit, Far East Command [CIA]
FRUS	<i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i>
G-2	Military Intelligence [American]
GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters [British]
GVN	Government of Vietnam
HFDF	High Frequency Direction Finding
HID	Higher Intelligence Department [S. Korean]
Humint	Human Intelligence
INSCOM	Intelligence and Security Command [American]
ISLD	SIS in the wartime Middle East and Far East [British]
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff [American]
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
JIC/FE	Joint Intelligence Committee, Far East [British]
JIC/ME	Joint Intelligence Committee, Middle East [British]
JSIC	Joint Special Intelligence Committee FECOM
JSOB	Joint Special Operations Branch [American]
JSM	Joint Services Mission, Washington [British]
JUSMAG	Joint US Military Advisory Group [American]
KLO	Korean Labor Organisation

KLO	Korean Liaison Organization [American]
KMAG	Korean Military Advisory Group
KMT	Kuomintang, Chinese nationalist party
KRB	Korean Research Bureau
MACL	MacArthur Memorial Library, Norfolk, Virginia
MCA	Malayan Chinese Association
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MEC	Middle Eastern Controller, SIS [British]
MI5	Security Service [British]
MI6	Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) [British]
MLO	Military Liaison Officer, Malaya
MNLA	Malayan National Liberation Army
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army
MSS	Malayan Security Service
MTUC	Malayan Trade Union Congress
NKAF	North Korean Air Force
NKPA	North Korean People's Army
NSA	National Security Agency [American]
NSC	National Security Council [American]
NSG	Naval Security Group [American]
ONI	Office of Naval Intelligence [American]
OPC	Office of Policy Coordination [American]
OPDC	Overseas Policy and Defence Committee [British]
OSI	Office of Special Operations of the CIA
OSS	Office of Strategic Services [American]
OTP	One time pad cipher system
P Section	SIS Production Section
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party
POMEF	Political Adviser to Middle East Forces
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew Gardens, Surrey
RKG	Royal Khmer Government [Cambodian]
R1-8	SIS Requirements Directorate Sections
ROC	Republic of China (Taiwan)
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROKA	Republic of Korea Army
RSM	Radio Squadron Mobile
SACSEA	Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia
SAS	Special Air Service [British]
SB	Special Branch
SCAP	Supreme Commander Allied Powers [MacArthur]
SD	State Department

SEAC	South East Asia Command
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
SEP	Surrendered Enemy Personnel
SIDASP	Service of Documentation and Social and Political Action (Laos)
SIFE	Security Intelligence Far East (MI5/SIS V) [British]
Sigint	Signals intelligence
SIME	Security Intelligence Middle East (MI5/SIS V) [British]
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) [British]
SIS	Special Intelligence Section [American]
SKLP	South Korean Labor Party
SOE	Special Operations Executive [British]
SSO	Special Security Office, FECOM
SSU	Strategic Services Unit [post-war OSS]
SWPA	South West Pacific Area
UMNO-MCA	United Malays National Organisation-Malayan Chinese Association
USAFIK	US Army Forces in Korea
USCIB	US Communications Intelligence Board
USIS	US Information Service
USNA	National Archives, Washington DC
WO	War Office [British]
W/T	Wireless Telegraphy
Y	Wireless interception, usually of a low-level variety

Introduction: The Clandestine Cold War in Asia, 1945–65

RICHARD J. ALDRICH, GARY D. RAWNSLEY
and MING-YEH T. RAWNSLEY

Asia represented the ‘hottest’ theatre in a global Cold War that lasted for half a century. Across this vast region there were usually several undeclared wars and numerous civil wars in progress, all with their clandestine elements. Among the five occasions when the US National Security Council seriously considered the use of nuclear weapons in this period, four of these instances were triggered by events in Asia.¹ The volatility of this conflict owed something to its additional complexities, for intertwining with obvious Cold War frictions were the pressures of nationalism and anti-colonialism, the politics of neutralism and non-alignment, together with the deep tensions of Sino-Soviet rivalry.

The Cold War in Asia was undoubtedly ‘hotter’ than its European counterpart, but it can also be distinguished in other ways. Our current knowledge about the European Cold War is more complete. The collapse of authoritarian regimes in East Germany and the Soviet Union, with the consequent opening of archives, has not been replicated everywhere in Asia and this has implications for what we know now. Although there have been substantial releases of new documentation from Beijing and from other Asian centres, the scope and scale of these releases has been more constrained. This is particularly true of the clandestine aspects of the Cold War. In Germany, individuals may consult their own former Stasi files, while in Russia, former KGB officers publish their memoirs with impunity. Remarkably, the former head of Soviet signals intelligence has recently offered detailed commentary on the role of his service and its achievements during the Cold War. By contrast our knowledge of the role and place of Communist Chinese and other Asian Communist secret services in the Cold War remains in its infancy.²

William Colby, Director of the CIA during the 1970s and a veteran of the clandestine Cold War in Asia, observed in his memoirs that: ‘The great

challenges to secret intelligence gathering were ... in Berlin, Vienna and Hong Kong.' Again the contrast between Europe and Asia is instructive. In Europe, we have witnessed the appearance of studies such as *Battleground Berlin*, in which senior CIA and KGB officers have come together to write a collaborative history of their mutually antithetical activities in that city, employing not only memory and interview, but reams of American and Russian declassified documents. We are unlikely to see the appearance of a similar volume dealing with Hong Kong or any other Asian city.

Equally, the history of the U-2 aerial reconnaissance programme over the Soviet Union, including the shoot-down of the Gary Powers aircraft in 1960, is now familiar to many. Yet the sight of photographs of the wreckage of four U-2 aircraft downed by the Chinese and eventually laid out in a neat row in a public park in Beijing in 1966 rarely fails to evoke surprise.³ In short, the diet of material for the Cold War in Asia has been comparatively thin and many of its clandestine aspects are likely to remain poorly understood for some time to come.⁴

Notwithstanding the persistent problems relating to information in Asia, the moment for the reconsideration of some of these areas seems fortuitous. 'Glasnost' is increasingly a global phenomenon, triggering accelerated programmes of document release in Europe, the United States and Asia. Within this broader process of global declassification we might consider the decision of the authorities in United States to process rapidly documentation that were more than 25 years old, and even to move the declassification of some types of material out of the hands of the agencies that generated the documents. The latter was surely a landmark decision. Equally we might consider the sudden appearance of hitherto elusive Communist figures, such as Chin Peng, leader of the Malayan Communist Party, and their generous collaboration with scholars.⁵

These accelerated 'releases' have offered a fleeting opportunity to researchers and historians. The possibility of consulting intelligence materials, and other types of sensitive records, that are less than 50 years old has allowed a greater combination of archival work and interview work. Some of the documentation in areas such as intelligence, propaganda and special operations is often particularly arcane and therefore commentary and explanation by participants can be of special value. Sometimes the declassification of documents has prompted security-minded witnesses to speak on subjects which they would otherwise have been reluctant to address. Sadly, these witnesses will not be with us forever. The essays that constitute this volume represent a limited attempt to seize this opportunity. They arise from a conference organised to review work arising out of recent documentary releases on Asia and which was deliberately designed to draw together academics and former practitioners in fruitful discussion.

A prominent theme in this volume is that of intelligence. It is clear that Western intelligence services in Asia certainly shared a common state of dilapidation during the early Cold War. Damaged by the pressures of demobilisation, disrupted by decolonisation and further buffeted by summary ejection from one of its principal established areas of activity – mainland China – it was in a poor state by 1949. This was further exacerbated by the low status of Asian intelligence targets generally. Both London and Washington were primarily focused on Moscow and rated the likelihood of a Soviet incursion into Asia to be very low. Europe and the Middle East were considered to be the ‘flashpoints’ in the late 1940s.

Even the limited intelligence apparatus that was available in Asia showed a marked reluctance to examine Asian targets and the resources available were often focused on the Soviets in Asia. The examples are legion. At the end of the war, British signals intercept staff at Hong Kong found themselves shifting over to collecting Soviet traffic. When George Blake was sent to Seoul to open the first SIS station in Korea, he was told that his priority was to gather material on Soviet Asia, rather than China or North Korea, and his American opposite numbers were similarly Soviet-focused. Accordingly, both the Malayan Emergency in 1948 and the Korean War in 1950 took policy-makers by surprise.⁶

The rush to improve intelligence in Asia after 1950 did not produce immediate results and the construction of agent networks in particular is a matter for those with patient disposition. Human intelligence operations, whether launched into China, Soviet Asia or North Korea were especially dangerous. Local populations were sufficiently terrified to denounce any suspicious persons entering their area, even they happened to be from that particular locality, and the result in Korea and mainland China was a suicidal rate of failure. Poor survival rates were themselves a contributory factor and gradually prompted the authorities to surrender only indifferent human material for agent training. One officer engaged in running air-dropped agent penetrations of North Korea recalled the moment when he began his work. One morning the ‘fifteen specially selected Koreans’ he had been promised arrived at his facility for training. He could scarcely believe his eyes. Pathetic and malnourished, they were mostly shy rustic youths in their teens, some as young as 15. A week was enough for them to master the use of basic firearms, but they ‘had only the haziest idea of the parachute drill’. Accompanying his ‘agents’ as far as their dropping zones over North Korea, this officer was overcome with a sense of black depression:

Never before had I taken unprepared men into battle and now I was about to do something far worse. I was sending untrained men into the

most frightening and lonely of battles ... the cold night air rushed in through the open jump door. The tense queue of men waited to jump. Red light, green light, and the first man stumbled out into the night, then the next, then the next. The fourth hesitated and was pushed by those behind, and so the procession of fear went on until the fuselage was empty but for myself.⁷

Agent operations launched from Japan and Taiwan were equally unsuccessful. Eventually, in the early 1960s the head of the CIA station in Taipei, Ray Cline, pressed for the re-deployment of U-2 aircraft, which had ceased their increasingly hazardous flight over the Soviet Union, to Taiwan. His argument was that the rate of human agent attrition required a radical change in tactics. American U-2 pilots had already over-flown the Chinese coast from Japan during the Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1958, but now the CIA helped to launch a U-2 programme run by the ROC Air Force with pilots from Taiwan. The result was a comprehensive picture of Chinese missile development.

At the same time signals interception capability was continually expanded. Yet these new sources were not immune to countermeasures. Much Chinese communications traffic still went by landline and could not be intercepted, while the U-2s launched from Taiwan were becoming vulnerable by the mid-1960s. Satellites were the way ahead and in 1964 it was satellite photography that allowed the prediction of the first Chinese nuclear test.⁸

As with the Soviet Union, Western intelligence co-operation in Asia was encouraged by the nature of Communist China as a hard target. The close nature of Western co-operation in intelligence collection is often attributed to familiar patterns of co-operation established during World War II and indeed, in some cases, World War I. The legacy of close wartime personal associations – for example British and American intelligence officers working shoulder to shoulder in Eisenhower's SHAEF Command – was clearly important. But in Asia World War II, with its strongly imperial complexion, had left a legacy of tensions as well as friendships for many secret services and propaganda agencies employed by the British, Americans, French and Dutch.⁹ Cold War pressures, particularly after 1949 helped to overcome these problems. The key factor driving co-operation was the extreme difficulty of collecting any intelligence from inside areas such as Soviet Asia, Communist China and North Korea where agents enjoyed a short life. In these conditions of famine, any allied contribution to the overall picture was considered valuable.

Although co-operation in the area of collection and sharing of raw data was considerable, the more complex area of intelligence analysis and

interpretation was marked by distrust. While great volumes of agent reports, decrypts and finished analyses were exchanged, nevertheless the whole process of interpretation was characterised by justified suspicions that intelligence might be used to manipulate policy. Attempts to produce agreed 'Allied' reports often failed or resulted in compromise papers. These suspicions were exacerbated by deep disagreements over policy towards mainland China. On the one hand Washington suspected Britain and its Commonwealth allies as purveyors of material that would always suggest that Beijing's mentality was relatively defensive, while on the other hand Taiwan's secret services were anxious to impart a view of Beijing as extremely aggressive.

In Washington suspicions were heightened by clear examples of efforts to 'plant' material on the CIA by Taipei. One experienced CIA officer, who had served in many Asian locations, recalls how a Chinese agent recruited in Vietnam, with a supposed network of sub-agents working in southern China, eventually proved to be a officer in the Taiwanese intelligence service who was merely feeding him material that emanated from Taipei.¹⁰ Within the vast United States national intelligence system there were also divisions and rivalries. National Intelligence Estimates were often ignored by policy-makers in favour of their own departmental studies that imbued the outlook of that particular section of the administration.¹¹

Despite these uncertainties, intelligence in Asia was no less critical than it had been during World War II. Limited, but large-scale, military conflicts such as Korea, and later Vietnam, re-introduced many operational issues confronted during 1937–45. These ranged from the role of theatre commanders to the urgent demands for real-time intelligence on the battlefield.

As Matthew Aid makes clear in his extraordinary exposition on American human and signals intelligence and Korea, the extent to which the lessons of the previous conflict would, or would not, be successfully applied was crucially determined at the theatre level. Calamitous failures in the area of signals intelligence during the Korean War were central to Truman's decision to create the National Security Agency in 1952.

In a different context, Philip Davies explores the parallel complexities involved in the relationship between centre and region for the British SIS. Again, the problems of centre and region had impressed themselves between 1941 and 1945, but still remained live issues a decade later.¹²

What was the broader significance of the strategic intelligence effort in Asia? For the United States, faced with a continual state of war, near war, or proxy war, with mainland China until 1972, the premium was always upon military intelligence against the background of conflicts which often seemed to threaten to develop into a wider Asian war. For her allies, these

conflicts provided both opportunities and dangers.

As Gary Rawnsley and Johannes R. Lombardo demonstrate, areas around the perimeter of China, especially Taiwan and Hong Kong, served as crucially important watchtowers looking into Communist China. The value of these centres was enhanced for the United States by the lack of even an American embassy in Beijing.

For the smaller powers, British, South Korean and also Taiwan's contributions to the Western 'pool' of intelligence in Asia were thereby enhanced and helped to offset the imbalance of these alliance relationships. Notwithstanding this, there are indications that 'minor' intelligence powers did not always receive their full credit. As Matthew Aid underlines, the linguistic contribution of signals intelligence personnel drawn from Japan, South Korea and from Taiwan, was critical to some of the achievements later in the Korean War and this debt remains largely unacknowledged.

In the areas of propaganda and special operations, the clandestine Cold War in Asia exhibited a distinctly local appearance. Whether we choose to focus on the bizarre sight of Chinese shelling each other with leaflets in the offshore islands crises of 1954 and 1958, or of Britons fighting on both sides of a conflict between Karen tribesmen and the central Burmese government, the Cold War in the Asian theatre seemed confined to the region in reach and intensity, and often had a uniquely local texture.

Yet beneath this facade lay a complexity of wider interests and involvement; the battle may have been regional, but the undercurrents of the war were no doubt global. These ostensibly local conflicts were quickly subsumed into the wider Cold War collision between East and West, between free-market liberal democracy and Communism. By accenting such divisions, it became much easier to package complex local political contests in readily digestible terms, and thus helped justify extensive involvement by non-regional actors. Indeed countries such as South Korea and Taiwan undoubtedly felt more secure, and indeed at liberty to engage in a degree of Cold War fighting, because of their place within a global pattern of alliance.

As in Europe, the Asian Cold War was characterised by the application of three opaque functional strategies – intelligence, propaganda, and special operations – that paralleled the transparency of diplomatic and conventional military activities. These three functional themes are complementary rather than separate, and form a symbiotic relationship. Chapters by Rawnsley and Lombardo as well as all the essays on the Malayan Emergency in this volume underline that intelligence is essential for effective propaganda. We learn from the contributions on Malaya by Kumar Ramakrishna and Karl Hack that publicity can often work with 'special operations' to generate a degree of popular support they might otherwise lack.

By 1960 propaganda, special operations and intelligence were moving out of the shadows and onto a centre stage, beginning to occupy the prominent place that they would assume during the Confrontation with Indonesia and the American phase of the war in Vietnam. As Michael McClintock has noted: 'This hidden dimension became the chosen instrument for permanent military action below the threshold of full-scale war or open intervention – another kind of war, that was waged continuously behind the false peace of the post-WWII era.'¹³

One of the most sustained areas of linkage between the essays in this volume is their concern with British and American interventions in the region. This suggests the deep post-colonial involvement of the Western powers in the area, and also their shared anxiety to prevent the spread of Communism through the region. Thus colonial problems quickly assumed a Cold War character, and the British and Americans decided to solve the problems they faced by employing a generic Cold War approach. For both Britain and the United States, propaganda and special operations seemed to offer answers to awkward power problems in the Third World. For the British these instruments were often employed in the context of military weakness and awkward imperial retreats, achieving by means of the 'hidden hand' what could not be achieved by the fancy footwork of informal imperialism, negotiated concession and the endless search for that elusive person, the 'moderate nationalist'. While for the United States they helped to address the equally awkward problem of the muscle-bound superpower confronted with a range of elusive problems in the Third World that an ever larger nuclear arsenal could not address.

Special operations are not always what they appear to be. This is strikingly apparent from the chapters by Mona Bitar and Lotta Hedman. Bitar's research on the CIA's operations during what she terms the Year of Coups in Cambodia and South Vietnam is a telling illustration of the problems of secret service activity amid troublesome allies. Prince Norodom Sihanouk has long-maintained that CIA planned to unseat him, in the same manner that the CIA and SIS had tried to apply pressure to Sukarno and other non-aligned leaders during the 1950s.¹⁴

In fact the reality was quite the reverse. CIA station chiefs in Saigon and Bangkok were doing everything in their power to restrain both Thailand and Vietnam in their own local animosities with Cambodia, a legacy of older regional rivalries that stretched back over centuries. These ancestral battles over control of the Annamite chain were, for the participants in mainland South East Asia, more important than the global Cold War struggle.

Despite Sihanouk's protestations of CIA activity against him, it was instead his opponent, Ngo Dinh Diem who fell in a coup that enjoyed at least CIA approval in 1963. The coup in South Vietnam resolved little and

in March 1964, Robert McNamara told President Lyndon Johnson that since Diem's murder a year earlier, the situation had 'unquestionably been growing worse'.¹⁵ While Viet Cong control and influence held steady, and was even increasing in some parts of South Vietnam, the new regime found its grip on the situation slackening. Casualties from among the ranks of the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) steadily mounted, while attacks against American personnel, still acting ostensibly in an 'advisory' capacity, were likewise rising. The stage was set for the unplanned escalation of American commitment to Vietnam.

In his address to the nation in August 1964, Johnson drew parallels between Vietnam and the Cold War crises of Greece, Turkey, Berlin, Cuba and Lebanon. The Cold War historian Martin Walker has suggested that this revealed 'how thoroughly the US was misreading the political dynamics in South East Asia'.¹⁶ Clearly this is a serious indictment either of the way America's intelligence community misunderstood Vietnam, failed (perhaps deliberately) to pass on its intelligence to key policy-makers, or the way the White House and Pentagon decided to ignore intelligence because its conclusions and recommendations contradicted American policy.

Eva-Lotta Hedman's discussion of one of the most famous American Cold War warriors, Major General Edward G. Lansdale is an instructive insight into the place of myth in the Cold War. It also highlights an important theme that runs throughout this volume, that so-called clandestine activities were often surprisingly high-profile, whether they were guerrilla raids against China, trumpeted in the Free China Press, or Lansdale's search for starring roles in both the Philippines and Vietnam. Hedman focuses on Lansdale's relationship with Ramon Magasaysay, 'a rising star in Philippine politics and a protégé of US advisers'.¹⁷ In his 1972 memoirs, Lansdale provided a clear enunciation of his mission:

My orders were plain. The United States government wanted me to give all help feasible to the Philippine government in stopping the attempt by the Communist-led Huks to overthrow that government by force. My help was to consist mainly of advice where needed and desired. It was up to me to figure out how best to do this.¹⁸

Hedman shuns a pedestrian narrative approach to Lansdale's activities in the Philippines, and focuses instead on how he has become part of the mythology of the clandestine Cold War. Lansdale was one of President Kennedy's principal advisers, a charismatic figure that lived up to the President's romantic vision of a prominent counter-insurgent and psychological warrior. Although disliked by many in the administration – he had his critics in the Defence and State Departments and while Vice-President Johnson was certainly not a fan – most of his eccentric and

individualistic methods survived. They offer striking parallels with the 1980s when Ronald Reagan promised in his election campaign to unleash the CIA and went on to revive an American penchant for glamorous unconventional warfare.

The Philippines model of counter-insurgency left an indelible mark on American approaches to dealing with Asian communists, especially in Vietnam, which illuminated the contrasting British and American approaches. Lansdale's more devolved methods were criticised by British commentators on counter-insurgency, such as Sir Robert Thompson. Thompson had directed counter-insurgency operations in Malaya, and later headed the British Advisory Mission in Vietnam. Lansdale rejected the Malayan model, recalled in this volume by Karl Hack and by the valuable personal reminiscences of Brian Stewart, insisting that it was too colonial and more concerned with establishing order than defending democracy.

In doing so Lansdale was unconsciously echoing the familiar critique of other American practitioners who had developed close relationships with Asian proteges, for example Commander Milton 'Mary' Miles of Navy Group China and his partner Tai Li, who both loathed the mentality of the 'old China hand'.¹⁹ The differences were not ones of approach but of context, since British-managed counter-insurgencies were always able to hold out the attraction of eventual strife-free road to independence, in contrast to the option of struggle. The United States often found herself offering security support in more problematic post-colonial context in which no such assurances were possible.

The Thompson Mission or British Advisory Mission (BRIAM) was described rather mundanely by one Foreign Office brief as a 'small group of civilian officers with Malayan experience' whose duties were to 'advise on administrative and police matters'.²⁰ The diplomatic aspects of BRIAM are now fairly well-established by scholars, but equally, significant sections of the records of this organisation remain closed to public inspection. This is hardly surprising given that BRIAM was required to have relations with the internal security organisation run by Diem's singularly unpleasant brother Nhu, at whose hands many political opponents of the regime met their end.²¹

BRIAM's failure to dissuade the authorities in South Vietnam from indulging in large-scale a programme of political liquidation is almost certainly one of the subjects still shielded from public inspection. Indeed, as Tony Shaw has pointed out in the context of Korea, propaganda organisations, such as Britain's Information Research Department, often found themselves dealing with the controversial aftermath of domestic security activity in Asia.²²

The British intelligence community in Malaya certainly adopted a distinctly colonial approach to the insurgency. Yet as Brian Stewart

underlines part of its responsibility was to bring the colonial government in Kuala Lumpur closer to the Chinese people and it was remarkably successful in that. In presenting the more human face of colonial government, the British were able to pacify the Chinese Communists and sow the seeds of disunity that would lead to their eventual collapse in 1958. As well as bringing out the more avuncular style of much British security activity in the colonies, we are also reminded of the holistic nature of this approach. Although Chinese Affairs in Malaya was especially concerned with intelligence, all aspects of the British administration were, to some extent, part of the intelligence machine, moreover, intelligence was especially important in informing propaganda. Information bred success and success, once well publicised, bred information.

The Chinese were likewise a central concern for the American intelligence community. The contributions to this volume by Lombardo and Rawnsley reveal, for the first time, the full extent of American-supported operations in Hong Kong and Taiwan directed towards the mainland of China. The Americans, still reeling from their 'loss' of China in 1949 were determined, once the Korean War broke out, to prevent Beijing from making further inroads into the region. While the CIA launched extensive secret operations in Taiwan in 1951, the vast American consulate in Hong Kong – the largest 'consulate' in the world – was a major conduit for intelligence about the mainland. Much to the consternation of the British authorities there who thought American activities were far too provocative, operatives were busy funding the Kuomintang and other anti-Communist organisations.

Many of their operations – intelligence gathering, propaganda and guerrilla raids against the Fukien coast of China – were launched from Taiwan's offshore islands, Kinmen and Matsu. It came as little surprise then, to America's intelligence community that in 1954 and 1958, the Communists should take offence at these 'provocative' actions, and respond by shelling the islands. Yet while the KMT under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek remained adamant that the mainland could be liberated by his forces with US assistance, the Americans were less convinced; intelligence reports suggested that sufficient resistance to the Communists had not developed, and that American opinion would not support a war for the islands.

Besides, the shelling of the islands were designed more to test the US commitment to Taiwan and as a protest against American involvement in the Middle East, than an attempt to expand Chinese influence across the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan's propaganda machinery published accounts of its special operations against the mainland, though Rawnsley suggests this was designed more to service Taiwan's diplomatic manoeuvres in the United States than intimidate the Communist authorities in Beijing.

Propaganda, more than intelligence, was central to the final destruction

of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), considered in detail here by Ramakrishna. While the government was enjoying far more military successes against the MCP by 1954, one can only acquire a full understanding of the surrender of the remaining hardcore terrorists in 1958 that brought the Emergency in Malaya to an end by examining the government's policy on surrendered enemy personnel or 'SEPs' between 1949 and 1958, which Sir Robert Thompson noted was the 'main base' of psychological warfare.²³ The surrender policy was part of a wider propaganda and psychological warfare offensive that combined traditional counterinsurgency tactics with a sophisticated amnesty programme that was liberal, credible and honourable in its treatment of the MCP. 'The whole idea', writes Ramakrishna, was to address the terrorists in 'a most palatable language'.

By contrast Hack takes a different approach and argues that we will fully understand the defeat of the MCP in Malaya only when we focus less on hearts and minds, and appreciate the role of population control, spearheaded by Lt-General Sir Harold Briggs, Sir Gerald Templer's predecessor as Director of Operations. Both propaganda and intelligence, he argues, should be viewed as 'important, but subordinate' ingredients of an approach that emphasised population control. While Hack concurs with Ramakrishna that policy towards the insurgents became more tolerant and 'palatable', he seeks to emphasise that political concessions were an important and effective part of the counter-insurgency as early as 1951. Hack argues that the turning point in the Emergency was not as late as 1958, but perhaps as early as 1951, gaining further momentum when Templer was appointed both High Commissioner and Director of Operations. In this way, the intelligence, propaganda, and counter-insurgency were not only combined with political approaches to the problems in Malaya, thus providing the essential consistency between means and ends, but it also meant that operations were centralised.

Both studies contribute to a fuller understanding of British activities in Malaya that contributed to the end of the emergency. They not only suggest different ways of interpreting a growing body of complex evidence, they also confirm that this area is likely to remain the subject of lively scholarly debate for a long time to come. Few would dissent from the view that the inability to identify a unicausal explanation for the defeat of the MCP lends support to the idea that, on the ground, is not only difficult, but also unwise, to completely separate intelligence, propaganda and special operations. The problem is combining them in a sophisticated system that provides for an accelerating cycle of victory, the key to success in counter-insurgency operations.

American scholars have observed that propaganda operations in Vietnam often lacked such sophistication. Propaganda there failed to

understand and adapt to the local society, the cornerstone of victory in Malaya, and was inefficient in organising indigenous propaganda machinery that would guarantee that such problems would not arise.²⁴ Consider, for example, the level of expertise within the remnants of the Chinese Affairs Department within the British Colonial Office that contributed towards the propaganda victory over the Malayan Communist movement. The differences between the two conflicts are striking:

In war, especially civil war, conventional propaganda and psychological warfare are only effective when victories are won on the field and morale-building political and economic reforms achieved behind the lines: There is no US government agency truly qualified and staffed to conduct psychological operations in a war the size of Vietnam. ... Propaganda cannot make bad policy palatable.²⁵

Taken together, the contributions by Rawnsley, Bitar and Ramakrishna suggest that effective and credible propaganda is dependent on reliable intelligence, which in turn requires competent interpretation. The information gathered by intelligence activities may be accurate, but if its interpretation is wrong, misguided, or simply ignored all together, then the impact of propaganda strategies, special operations and relevant policies will be minimised.

Second, we begin to understand the importance of identifying resources and motivations. The reasons why particular powers became involved in regional conflicts are untangled by all of the essays in this volume. This then provides a more comprehensive insight into the relationships between policy and intelligence. Only when intelligence gathering and interpretations of the collected information are adequate will government machineries be able to detect the true motivations that lay behind some of the more puzzling episodes in Cold War history. This enables policy-makers to design satisfactory responses.

The issue of interests is at the core of David Easter's chapter on British policy towards Indonesian rebel movements during the 'Confrontation'. Unable to engage in overt military activities against Indonesia, the British favoured providing covert assistance to rebel groups that would carry out subversive operations against Indonesia. The few individuals involved in discussions arrived at a consensus that while such activity would not overthrow the Indonesian government, they would 'intensify existing political and economic strains within the country'. Thus Easter documents evidence that suggests Indonesians were trained by the British in various aspects of subversion, including weapons handling, psychological warfare and incitement.

This contribution reminds us that while Cold War historians are familiar

with many of the high points of Cold War special operations, the coups and attempted coups, many instances of the clandestine application pressure short of overthrow remain unexamined, even unidentified.

All the analyses in this volume underline the problems of control in the area of clandestine activity. This final theme resonates particularly with Richard Aldrich's discussion of a renegade operation by SOE elements in Burma. In 1948 and 1949 ex-SOE operatives trained and armed Karen guerrilla units to fight the Burmese government, while a British Military Mission supported the government forces. Once MI5 had probed the affair, foreknowledge of the planned coup itself became an embarrassment and a problem. At various points London clearly considered switching sides and backing the SOE renegades if the fortunes of the central government seemed to be moving towards a terminal decline.

This privateer SOE operation in Burma has striking parallels with British operations in the Yemen in the 1960s, and even some operations in Africa in the 1990s.²⁶ However, privateer operations remain yet another aspects of Cold War history that is relatively neglected. In that respect this volume represents the opening words of new chapters of Cold War history. Much of this remains either unexplored or else still hidden from us.

NOTES

1. These were Korea, Dien Bien Phu, and twice during the Taiwan Straits crises.
2. David Kahn, 'Soviet Comint in the Cold war', *Cryptologia* 22/1 (1998) pp.1-34; David Childs and Richard Popperwell, *The Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police* (London: Macmillan 1996).
3. William Colby, *Honorable Men* (London: Hutchinson 1978) p.103, see also Richard E. Johnson, interview transcript, 30 Jan. 1991, Foreign Affairs Oral History Program, 7. D.E. Murphy, S.A. Kondrashev, and G. Bailey, *Battleground Berlin: CIA vs KGB in the Cold War* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP 1997). One of these photographs from Beijing is reproduced in B.R. Rich and L. Janos, *Skunk Works* (Boston: Little Brown 1994).
4. The exception of course is Vietnam and Laos (but not Cambodia) on which much has been written. See for example, Timothy N. Castle, *At War in the Shadow of Vietnam: U.S. Military Aid to the Royal Lao Government, 1955-1975* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 1993); Sedgwick Tourison, *Secret Army Secret War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Inst. Press 1995); Roger Warner, *Backfire: The CIA's Secret War in Laos and Its Link to the War in Vietnam* (NY: Simon & Schuster 1995).
5. Anna Nelson, 'Opening the Door to Intelligence History: The Example of the Kennedy Assassination Records Review Board', paper to the 5th Annual Meeting of the International Intelligence History Study Group, Akademie für Politische Bildung, Tutzing, 20 June 1999.
6. George Blake, *No Other Choice* (London: Cape 1990) pp.120-4.
7. Ellery Anderson, *Banner Over Pusan* (London: Evans 1960) pp.34-5, 90-2, 160, 176-7, 199-201. Aspects of Anderson's account are challenged by Evanhoe, *Dark Moon: Eighth Army Special Operations in the Korean War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Inst. Press 1995) pp.103-34.

8. Ray Cline, *Chiang Ching-kuo Remembered* (Washington DC: US Global Strategy Council 1989) pp.83–92. See also Gregory W. Pedlow and Donald E. Welzenbach, *The CIA and the U-2 Program, 1954–1974* (Washington DC: CIA 1998) pp.211–33.
9. Richard J. Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War Against Japan: Britain, America and the Politics of Secret Service* (Cambridge: CUP 2000) pp.201–46.
10. Ralph McGehee, *Deadly Deceits: My 25 Years in the CIA* (NY: Sheridan Square 1983) pp.50–1. See also Peer de Silva, *Sub Rosa: The CIA and the Use of Intelligence* (NY: Times Books 1978).
11. Patrick Mescall, 'The Triumph of Parochialism and Bureaucracy: Robert S. McNamara and the Birth of the Defence Intelligence Agency', in Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones and Andrew Lownie (eds.) *North American Spies: New Revisionist Essays* (Edinburgh UP 1991).
12. Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush* (London: HarperCollins 1995) pp.196–7.
13. Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counter-Insurgency, Counter-Terrorism, 1940–1990* (NY: Pantheon 1992) p.xv.
14. On the American aspects see A.R. Kahin and G. Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia* (London: I.B. Tauris 1995). On the British aspects see Matthew Jones, "'Maximum Disavowable Aid': Britain, the United States and the Indonesian Rebellion, 1957-8', *English Historical Review* 114/459 (1999) pp.1182–216. American encouragement of the clandestine war in Tibet looks more and more like an effort to push India away from non-alignment than against China, see S. Mahmud Ali, *Cold War in the High Himalayas* (London: Curzon 1999).
15. Michael R. Beschloss, *Kennedy v. Khrushchev: The Crisis Years, 1960–1963* (London: Faber 1991) p.693.
16. Martin Walker, *The Cold War* (London: Fourth Estate 1993) p.196.
17. McClintock (note 13) p.106.
18. Edward Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars: An American's Missions to Southeast Asia* (NY: Harper & Row 1972) p.2. The author inevitably paints a somewhat quixotic portrait of himself, fuelled no doubt by the lavish praise heaped on him by President Kennedy.
19. See McClintock (note 13) p.270; Yu Maochun, *OSS in China: Prelude to the Cold War in Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP 1997) pp.88–9.
20. FO Brief for Lord Privy Seal's visit to Australia, 24 Jan. 1962, PRO, FO371/166726/DV1015/2/G.
21. Anthony Short, *The Origins of the Vietnam War* (London: Longmans 1994) p.00.
22. Ian Beckett, 'Robert Thompson and the British Advisory Mission to South Vietnam' *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 8/3 (Winter 1997) pp.41–63; Tony Shaw, 'The Information Research Department and the Korean War', *Journal of Contemporary History* 34/2 (1999) pp.263–81.
23. Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto & Windus 1966) p.90.
24. S.C. Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflict in a New Era: Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press 1993).
25. Thomas Sorenson, *The Word War: The Story of American Propaganda* (NY: Harper & Row 1968) pp.291–2.
26. We are indebted to conference participants for drawing our attention to some of these parallels.

PART I

CHINA AND THE CHINESE PERIMETER

US Humint and Comint in the Korean War: From the Approach of War to the Chinese Intervention

MATTHEW M. AID

In May 1945, four months before the end of World War II, William F. Friedman, the 'father of American cryptology', wrote a Top Secret memorandum which stated, in part, 'Events in the past few years have also demonstrated that war in the future, if it comes, will come with devastating suddenness – unless the signal intelligence service is sufficiently competent to give adequate warning of impending disaster, for only by signal intelligence conducted in peacetime will we be in a position to know of the secret thoughts, actions, and machinations of a predatory and ruthless enemy.'¹ However, Friedman's prescient admonition was ignored or obscured by partisan internecine fighting within the US intelligence community following the end of World War II. Five years later, on 25 June 1950, the United States paid the consequences in a then obscure country in the Far East called South Korea.

American historians, perhaps correctly, have argued that the North Korean invasion of South Korea on 25 June 1950 ranks along with the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 as one of the worst American intelligence disasters in the twentieth century.

On the surface, the similarities between Pearl Harbor and Korea are striking. The North Koreans struck across the 38th Parallel on a Sunday morning; US foreign policy-makers in Washington were admittedly caught entirely by surprise by the attack; and there was a significant amount of intelligence data which should have indicated to American intelligence analysts that war in Korea was imminent. Yet somehow, this information was misinterpreted or never made its way to the people who needed it the most.

An examination of recently declassified documents shows that a myriad of factors contributed to the Korean intelligence disaster. The most important factor was the decrepit state of the American intelligence

community in the Far East at the time of the North Korean invasion; as well as inexcusably poor intelligence collection, processing, analysis and reporting practices and procedures, both in the Far East and in Washington DC.

The commander of American forces in the Far East, General of the Army Douglas A. MacArthur, and his intelligence chief, Major General Charles A. Willoughby, have borne the brunt of criticism in the past for America's failure to anticipate the North Korean attack. An examination of recently declassified documents suggests that Generals MacArthur and Willoughby indeed bear much of the onus for the Korean intelligence disaster. However, these documents also implicate other military and civilian intelligence officials within the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the Central Intelligence Agency in the Korean fiasco. In particular the role of communications intelligence or 'Comint' forms a crucial, but as yet, poorly understood dimension of this subject.

A DISASTER WAITING TO HAPPEN

The American intelligence situation in the Far East in June 1950 can only be characterized as a state of all-pervasive chaos. Five American military and civilian intelligence agencies, as well as a host of smaller intelligence collection units, were active in the Far East. Each of these various agencies operated independently of one another with little cooperation or coordination of effort, and the relationship among these units could hardly be described as harmonious. At the top of the intelligence 'food chain' in the Far East was General Douglas MacArthur, whose Far East Command (FECOM) headquarters in Tokyo was responsible for monitoring military and political developments throughout the Far East.

MacArthur's intelligence chief was 58-year-old Major General Charles Andre Willoughby. General Willoughby is one of the most colorful and controversial officers in the history of American intelligence. Tall and stoutly built, former colleagues described him as the epitome of the cold and haughty Prussian staff officer, who spoke with a heavy German accent despite the fact that he had left Germany 40 years before the beginning of the Korean War. One former member of Willoughby's staff in Tokyo described him as 'our Junker general', others in Tokyo referred to Willoughby as 'Sir Charles' or 'The Count' because of his studied regal comportment. Moody and prone to bouts of rage, Willoughby was feared and loathed by many who worked directly for him, as well as by many officers on General MacArthur's staff. Willoughby also inspired considerable loyalty from many who knew him. There is no doubt that Willoughby possessed considerable intellect. He spoke several foreign