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## Betrayal: The Story of Aldrich Ames, on American Spy

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superiors in Moscow what he believed was factual and reliable information, along with advice upon which he hoped they would base Soviet foreign policy. Such sensitivity often earns disparagement rather than acclaim among one's own people (everyone knows about "going native").

A primary goal of Dobrynin in this book is to shed light on his role in the grand policies of, and the internal diplomacy conducted between, the United States and the Soviet Union, from the Kennedy administration to that of Ronald Reagan. Dobrynin writes well and manages to cover a great deal of history and experience without boring the reader. Those who remember analyzing the order of precedence atop Lenin's tomb in Moscow to advise the U.S. government of critical Soviet government power shifts will revel in the wealth of information that Dobrynin provides.

He believes his greatest diplomatic achievement (possibly for history as well) was his successful efforts at opening a diplomatic back-channel for the Soviets and Americans during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. In fact, he claims the honor of helping to resolve the crisis. Both President John Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy at first believed Dobrynin to be a bold-faced liar. Within days, however, he was able to win some measure of trust and worked through Robert Kennedy to form the compromise between the United States and the Soviets. It makes interesting reading from the Soviet point of view.

An amusing part of the book is Dobrynin's terse characterizations of

the Americans with whom he dealt. He found Robert Kennedy quick-tempered and often rude and difficult to deal with, especially in foreign affairs. The former American ambassador to the Soviet Union, Llewellyn Thompson, was a pleasant person, a competent professional who spoke Russian well. However, most interesting are Dobrynin's relationships with Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon. Dobrynin is at his best detailing how he worked so hard to convince both sides (American and Soviet) to accept difficult bargaining positions on real issues.

Although this is an important book, written by a key player in the Cold War, naturally the warning *caveat emptor* applies. Yet it offers insights into not only Soviet political power struggles but America's, as well. If a criterion for the worth of a book is the time spent reading it versus what you learn from it, then this book is well worth the effort. Dobrynin has certainly been a "good fellow" to provide us with such a rich diet.

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Weiner, Tim; Johnston, David; and Lewis, Neil A. *Betrayal: The Story of Aldrich Ames, an American Spy*. Random House, 1995. 297pp. \$25

The strange story of Aldrich "Rick" Ames, the CIA operations officer who spied for the Russians, continues to attract analysis and attempted explanations. This book is the latest in a series of such offerings, representing the efforts of three Washington-based *New York Times* journalists. Their work is a competent piece

of journalism, providing the reader a balanced understanding of Rick Ames the man, as well as Rick Ames the turncoat, and of the organizational culture in which he worked.

Unlike most earlier works on this subject, the most noteworthy thing about this book is its lack of bias. The authors claim to have no institutional connections with either the CIA or the FBI and stress that their information has been derived from legitimate research augmented by selected personal interviews. The result is that the book points out mistakes and questions judgments without concern for agency or bureau approval.

The authors point out, for example, that the series of "blown" spy operations in the mid-1980s that resulted in the imprisonment or death of dozens of Soviet "sources" working for the CIA was not considered a priority for internal investigation. The initial indifference shown by the CIA to the real meaning of these losses was subsequently compounded by the tortoise-like approach of the FBI investigation; even after Ames was considered a prime suspect, it took almost two years to arrest him. While the authors blame no one, the reader is left with the impression that neither the CIA nor FBI aggressively pursued this investigation.

Why? Part of the answer may be found in the organizational culture of each institution. The authors discuss this in the aptly titled chapter, "Bordeaux and Budweiser." They write, "FBI agents said that many CIA officers treated them with polite condescension, were ignorant of the justice system, and were unschooled in the

realities of criminal investigation. To their CIA counterparts, FBI agents were blind to the intricacies of intelligence, where people stole secrets and refined them into subtly shaded reports for the nation's leaders. Each saw the other in stereotypes. The CIA was Bordeaux; the FBI was Budweiser. The Agency was college professors; the FBI was cops."

In addition to mutual distrust, the authors allude to different views held by the agencies on counterintelligence and investigative priorities. The CIA's mission is to understand and contain the damage done by a spy. The FBI's mission is to develop an airtight legal case for a successful prosecution. These differing perspectives usually lead to conflicting approaches toward counterintelligence investigations, as demonstrated in the Ames case.

When examining any case of espionage, it is important to consider its context. This is particularly important with any Russian operation, because the Russians have proven themselves capable of espionage operations that are complex, intricate, and often interlinked. For example, the authors discuss the likelihood (as seen in retrospect) that many of the mid-1980 compromises attributed either to corrupt Marine security guards at the Soviet embassy or to physical and technical penetration of embassy communications, were actually caused by Ames. The implication would be, if the insight is valid, that the Russians were able to manipulate our perception of where the compromises were coming from to protect their source in the CIA. This would appear to be a demonstration of a sophistication

in espionage that far outmatches the disjointed U.S. efforts to combat it.

In their final chapters, the authors discuss the consequences of this case for the FBI and the CIA. They make much of the Intelligence Authorization Act of 1995, which requires that the CIA inform the FBI immediately if it suspects any loss of classified information, and that it cooperate fully in any subsequent investigation. As the authors put it, the Ames case "wrote the epitaph for a dying world of secrecy and deception."

While this conclusion betrays either a need to end their book on a positive note or a real naivete regarding the way intelligence works, the authors have put their journalistic expertise to good use, providing a good overview of the Ames case. It will be of value to anyone interested in national security. It is useful for the background it supplies as well as for the questions left unanswered.

A postscript to this review is warranted by recent congressional hearings

in which the CIA has admitted to knowing that Russian double-agents were feeding to the United States disinformation based, in part, on what Ames was telling them. What is surprising is not that the Russians were trying to deceive us but that senior CIA officials concealed the fact. Was it done to protect the agency from embarrassing probes by the FBI, or was it simply part of a larger individual or institutional political agenda? An intelligence agency that cannot police itself is one thing; one that willingly deceives its consumers is quite another.

The CIA's motto is "The Truth Shall Make You Free." Our policy makers should be asking themselves, whose truth?

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