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## Double-Edged Secrets

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iron necessity. But it is not quite so. The moment necessity no longer regulates and disciplines there is need for imposed regimentation. On the other hand, a society living on the edge of subsistence cannot afford freedom. Thus the zone of individual freedom is midway between the extremes of scarcity and abundance. [*Harper's*, October 1978, p. 78]

One hopes that Heilbroner, in his next work, will define more exactly the boundaries of the area that exists somewhere between the boom and the crash.

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Holmes, W.J. *Double-Edged Secrets*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1979. 231pp.

The code name given to the World War II variant of today's COMINT (Communications Intelligence) was ULTRA. Deriving useful intelligence about Japanese fleet operations involved a painstaking, two-part process: first, the intercept of coded radio transmissions and second, the decryption of those messages from code into plain language—Japanese and then English. Secrecy shrouded the entire process. Documents containing ULTRA material were boldly marked with a warning that reveals the double edge of Holmes' fascinating memoir: "No action is to be taken on information herein reported, regardless of temporary advantage, if such action might have the effect of revealing the existence of the source to the enemy."

*Double-Edged Secrets* tells the story of U.S. communications intelligence operations in the Pacific during World War II and is written by one of a handful of dedicated men who operated a complex operational intelligence center in a Pearl Harbor base-

ment. Based principally on the recollections of its author, Capt. W.J. Holmes, the book will almost certainly be at odds with many of the official and unofficial accounts of those intelligence activities that are beginning to fill the shelves since recent archival declassification (the Naval War College Library is currently processing over 40 separate titles). However, Holmes' personal narrative captures uniquely the mood of the period and gives rare insight into the problems and personalities of the Pacific Fleet. The reader joins the author at FRUPAC (Fleet Radio Unit, Pacific) headquarters in the middle of an intriguing drama that unfolds in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor.

Communications intelligence was in its infancy and had only recently managed to outlive the famous moratorium of 1929 when President Hoover's Secretary of State, Henry Stimson had withdrawn support for the "Black Chamber" by declaring that gentlemen do not read each other's mail. After sketching a brief history of cryptanalysis in the years just before the war, Holmes plunges into the myriad problems of breaking Japanese operations code. However, there is much more to this fast-moving history than random additives and combinations and permutations of 5-digit groups. Thankfully, his recollection of failures is as good as that of the many victories produced by the dogged, learn-as-you-go work of the cryptanalysts. Their tasks were monumental and the infrequent rewards silently shared until new codes would send the small team back to start all over again. The great breakthroughs in decryption came from a mixture of extraordinarily long hours, odd coincidences, and a good measure of luck. These factors came together repeatedly in large part because of the exceptional personal chemistry, sensitivity, and dedication of the first unit. From the start it was

manned by nonconformists with seemingly unlimited analytic aptitude and mental capacity, handpicked because of their unusual talents in language, mathematics, and operations. By war's end, a stiff bureaucratic organization evolved to manage a larger but probably less effective and certainly less idiosyncratic group of analysts. Woven throughout the book is a colorful anecdotal history of the war: students at Roosevelt High School in Hawaii carrying their gas masks to the stage to receive diplomas at a June graduation following Pearl Harbor; the misleading and dangerous battle damage reports sent out by both sides; the U.S. Navy's problem with predetonation and the running depth of its torpedoes; assessing the strength of garrisoned troops on the basis of the privy density of an island; the decision to eliminate Admiral Yamamoto; and the tragic and ironic loss of U.S.S. *Indianapolis*.

Intelligence collection and analysis of radio intelligence was undoubtedly a crucial factor in the outcome of the war. Without ULTRA, many more lives would have been lost and the problem of the island warfare in the Pacific would have been greatly complicated. Histories and biographies of the war will not be changed as a result of this book, but I think those who read it will agree that there were many quiet, unsung heroes whose work in support of the fleet was as important as directing gunfire or leading troops ashore. The dilemma of having intelligence that cannot be used, of being in a position where the obvious need for secrecy "constipates the flow of information" at a time when it can mean life or death, is truly the telling message of the book: "Secrecy is a double-edged weapon, and it sometimes inflicts deeper wounds on its wielder than upon his opponents." This lesson should not be forgotten.

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Korb, Lawrence J. *The FY 1980-1984 Defense Program: Issues and Trends*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979. 53pp. and Pechman, Joseph A., ed. *Setting National Priorities: The 1980 Budget*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1979, 229pp.

A nation's military posture, the size and composition of its armed forces, is largely the consequence of decisions to commit financial resources to defense made in a series of annual national budgets. The federal budget for FY 1980 will determine the nature of U.S. military forces through the next decade. While much is written about the defense budget, two sources of description and analysis that have proven most useful in the past have been Lawrence J. Korb's annual monograph for American Enterprise Institute and the multiauthored chapter on the defense budget in the annual Brookings Institution analysis of the federal budget proposed by the President for the forthcoming fiscal year. Readers should find these two studies as full of helpful information and stimulating policy discussions this year as they have been in the past.

Korb's work is the richer in presenting the defense budget in its various possible formats and in giving comparisons over time in relation to the national economy and the national budget. There has been and will continue to be debate over the proposal of the Carter administration to limit the growth of the overall federal budget so that in the domestic area, with the inflation rate projected when the budget was published, domestic spending would not grow overall in real terms while defense was scheduled to have its outlays grow by 3 percent in real dollars as part of NATO's agreement to try to redress the relative strength of NATO and Soviet forces in Europe.

Korb provides an enlightening discussion of the debate about increasing