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Special Duty: A History of the Japanese Intelligence Community

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uses them to tell the story of how the members of the State Department's Foreign Service worked hand in hand with the military in efforts to combat terrorism and build a lasting peace.

While a plethora of books has explored the U.S. military leaders of the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, Richter frames the wars through a different prism as he depicts the unflagging efforts of the members of the diplomatic corps to implement American foreign policy in the Middle East and to use that foreign policy to bring peace and stability to the region. Rather than seeing these diplomats as political actors trying to subvert the administration's policy, Richter portrays them as tireless workers who sometimes are given impossible jobs but still execute them, even in the harshest of circumstances.

To tell the story of America's diplomatic efforts in the Middle East as part of the global war on terror, Richter examines the efforts of all members of the Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, whom Richter describes as "proud, loyal to each other, and a bit insular" (p. 9). Richter focuses on Ryan Crocker, the six-time ambassador who represented both the Bush and Obama administrations in the region; Robert Ford, who worked as a one-man government in Iraq, and later as ambassador in lawless Syria; Anne Patterson, ambassador to Pakistan; and J. Christopher Stevens, the ambassador to Libya who dealt with the violence of the land and was later killed in a terrorist attack. While Richter tells the stories of all four, Crocker and Stevens receive more attention for their successes, and for Stevens's courage to conduct his diplomacy person to person, no matter the personal risk (pp. 216–17).

To assist the reader in understanding the complex web of persons and time, the author provides both a cast of characters and a time line of events—very useful to the reader, who otherwise could get lost in the details.

The Ambassadors celebrates those in the Foreign Service, who are ignored at the best of times and attacked at the worst of times. While many books, movies, and television shows celebrate the members of the military who have been fighting in the Middle East since September 11, this book offers another view of the conflict, seen here through the eyes of the nonpartisan members of the Foreign Service who also risk their lives to further the nation's policy and bring peace. As Ambassador Ryan Crocker stated to students at Stanford University, "Do you really want to spend your career in Brussels, Paris, or Berlin? Or do you want to be out where the action is?" (p. 285). While these members of the diplomatic corps are not adrenaline junkies looking for the excitement of a post in a war zone, Richter shows us how they want to be where they can make a difference in the safety of the nation—no matter the personal risk. This book should be read by those who feel that we can operate with a weakened State Department and those who work with our diplomats overseas, as well as those who are thinking about a career in diplomacy.

EDWARD SALO



Special Duty: A History of the Japanese Intelligence Community, by Richard J. Samuels. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2019. 355 pages. \$32.95.

Former U.S. Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates once said that

“the most difficult task that falls to us in intelligence is to see the world as it is, not as we—or others—would wish it to be.” In essence, he was describing one of the great conundrums of the intelligence world: how to find, identify, and illuminate facts within the darkness, without tainting those facts via influence or misperception from our own cultural milieu.

Arguably, in the case of Japan, culture and tradition have played an oversized role in the history of the country’s intelligence trajectory. As a result, according to Richard Samuels, “intelligence failure has nowhere been more plentiful or storied than in Japan” (p. xvii). Thus, the need for *Special Duty*—to explain Japan’s strategic intelligence system relative to those of other modern powers, and to do so within the context of the nation’s complex cultural and historical setting.

Samuels is well positioned to explain what sets Japan’s intelligence history apart from that of other states. He is the Ford International Professor of Political Science and director of the Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a longtime Asia—and more specifically Japan—specialist. Over the course of *Special Duty*’s 350-plus pages, Samuels explores Japan’s strategic intelligence system and its history, focusing on structure, reform, and oversight issues. To accomplish this, he reviews Japanese intelligence from the late nineteenth century to the present, via public records and open-source material.

Samuels contends that three drivers marked the speed of the community’s reform over time: strategic change, technological development, and failure. But to highlight what sets the nature of intelligence in Japan apart from that of

other systems, Samuels examines six elements of the intelligence function: “collection, analysis, communication, protection, covert action, and oversight.”

Special Duty’s chapter 7 provides a clear, organized summary of Samuels’s argument, as well as a survey of the ebb and flow of Japan’s intelligence community from the Meiji period to the fluid and increasingly worrisome environment that is today’s western Pacific. The discussion of Japanese intelligence within this new environment of superpower rivalry and the distinct nature of the Trump administration’s engagement with the region quickly reveals the issues that face not only Japan but Japan’s long and close “unequal relationship” with its victorious adversary from the Second World War.

Among the many examples of military and intelligence-system failures that Samuels highlights is a phenomenon that seems never to be absent from national bureaucracies: information “silos,” or “stovepiping and jurisdictional competition.” A glaring example provided is the Imperial Japanese Navy’s failure to inform the Japanese public and army fully about the disaster it suffered at Midway in 1942, which clearly would impact strategic planning and interservice trust as the war continued. Samuels relates that one Japanese general noted that “the extreme sectionalism within the military, driven by a competition to claim credit for battlefield achievements, prevented the service branches from sharing realistic assessments of operational developments” (p. 70).

Another long-lasting and negative trend in much of Japan’s intelligence history concerns oversight—or the lack thereof; as Samuels notes, “formal intelligence oversight never

existed in authoritarian Japan.” This clearly had a deleterious effect on the services’ ability to protect state secrets and maximize resources via interservice operational deconfliction, and thereby to provide quality, focused intelligence to the nation’s decision makers.

Special Duty is recommended for the serious academic or intelligence practitioner, as it is not a light romp through the stirring escapades and game-changing events of global espionage and counterintelligence. Rather, it is a thoughtful book by a true academic who works to explain the complexities of the modern world of intelligence, within the even more complex world of Japanese culture and history. Besides providing the reader a look into the world of intelligence, Samuels offers the student of contemporary history and strategic intrigue a glimpse into the bureaucratic realities within which today’s intelligence services must operate—making their seldom-known “wins” even more impressive, and their usually very public failures all the more understandable.

ANDREW G. WILSON



Victory without Peace: The United States Navy in European Waters, 1919–1924, by William N. Still Jr. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2018. 392 pages. \$68.

This title is the third volume in the author’s well-known series covering the U.S. Navy’s operations in European waters from the end of the American Civil War until the Navy closed the European station in 1929. The volume under review covers the uncertain period immediately after the First World War, when stability in Europe was by

no means certain and rival powers still were jockeying for positions of influence in areas that long had been in dispute. In particular, the demise of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, together with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, had released long-suppressed tensions that were threatening the peace process in a number of regions. Still vividly describes the stress this created for the great powers, which, after years of awful conflict, were understandably intent on a rapid demobilization and a return to “normalcy.” Instead, navies of the former Allies found themselves embroiled in a wide range of missions short of conflict—missions that required specialized skills, and for which they were, for the most part, poorly prepared.

Still is an accomplished historian whose research is always of the highest standard, and this volume continues that tradition. The work is split thematically, and to some extent geographically, into ten chapters, each of which covers a given mission. The first three chapters look at the role that naval officers played in the Paris peace negotiations, demobilization, and the uniquely naval challenge that the removal of the North Sea Mine Barrage presented. Seven further chapters follow, each focusing on a specific mission within a particular trouble spot.

Organizationally, this may be as good a way as any to present the material. However, the combination of Still’s focusing on the personal contributions of only a few key individuals whose responsibilities necessarily transcended many of the individual chapters with the fact that these events all were happening concurrently creates some challenges. For example, the Chief of Naval Operations and the notable naval