

Book Reviews

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***The History of Camp Tracy: Japanese WWII POWs and the Future of Strategic Interrogation.* By Alexander D. Corbin. Fort Belvoir, VA: Ziedon Press, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-578-02979-5. Maps. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 189. \$15.95.**

The History of Camp Tracy, which received the Joint Chiefs of Staff History Office's Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz Archival Research Award, is an illuminating and educating read. The book is written by Alexander Corbin, an intelligence officer in the U.S. Army with military intelligence experience. Corbin combines his understanding of intelligence collection with an historical examination of the interrogation of Japanese POWs to produce a work that should appeal to intelligence professionals and people who wonder how we can prevent incidents like those at Abu Ghraib.

Corbin begins by exploring the dilemma the nation faces in detaining and interrogating terrorists with an Islamic fundamentalist bent. Not only do our values and religious beliefs greatly differ, but there also exists a language barrier and differences in physical appearances. Corbin persuasively argues that the threat posed by terrorists is actually an experience that the country has already faced, albeit in a different guise. Corbin relates that Japanese POWs in World War II were also viewed through lenses accentuating their differences in values, culture, appearance, and language.

Despite the strangeness associated with captured Japanese soldiers, the U.S. military was able to successfully collect intelligence from them. This contrasts from the military's recent experiences in Abu Ghraib where its failures have been widely publicized, and also the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Camp Delta. Corbin briefly examines the faults associated with these interrogation centers and then launches into a case study of Camp Tracy, the American World War II joint interrogation center where Japanese POWs were successfully interrogated.

Although Corbin persuasively demonstrates that Islamic jihadists are akin to Japanese soldiers, some of the historical parallels are not equivalent. American society has changed since World War II, and it could be debated whether Americans today would tolerate terrorists being imprisoned on U.S. soil, close to where they live. The author also states that there has yet to be proof that the intelligence gathered at Camp Tracy led directly to any intelligence breakthroughs. This is not to say that a lack of evidence presupposes that it does not exist, but it does weaken arguments

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which seek to accentuate the importance of Camp Tracy and the value of intelligence gathered at that location.

While not everything that has worked in the past can be transplanted today, Corbin impressively describes in great detail the tactics, techniques, and procedures employed by the interrogators at Camp Tracy. These techniques, such as pre-screening POWs, false ceilings, the use of stool pigeons, and applying intelligence already known to psychologically intimidate POWs, can be successfully incorporated into America's intelligence community. The interrogators at Camp Tracy, unlike many of America's human intelligence interrogators at Abu Ghraib, received an extensive education in Japanese language, culture, and interrogation training. These intelligence professionals continuously modified their techniques as they sought to improve their intelligence gathering. Most important, the interrogators at Camp Tracy never resorted to physical coercion or torture when interrogating Japanese POWs because of their education, expertise, and moral values.

Another major reason Camp Tracy succeeded was the total secrecy involved with the site. Not even people in the community of Byron Hot Springs and Tracy, which were very small towns, knew that Japanese POWs were being quartered there. It seems in this Twitter age we live in, that a facility such as Camp Tracy on American soil would eventually be exposed.

America's human intelligence collection could be greatly improved if the training, techniques, and culture which existed amongst the interrogators at Camp Tracy were replicated. *The History of Camp Tracy* succeeds in mining an historical vignette such as Camp Tracy to great depths, and then elucidating how this experience can benefit intelligence professionals. Corbin has ensured that America will not forget the lessons learned from Camp Tracy. Hopefully, these lessons will at least be partially implemented so that America can successfully collect intelligence while also disassociating itself from torture.

Timothy Hsia has interned at the Joint Chiefs History Office. He has also written essays for Small Wars Journal, Foreign Service Journal, and Army magazine.

***Spaces of Security and Insecurity: Geographies of the War on Terror.* Edited by Alan Ingram and Klaus Dodds. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-7546-7349-1. Pp 288. Plates. Figures. Index. \$114.95 (hardcover).**

This volume is part of a series on "Critical Geopolitics" edited by Klaus Dodds, an editor of the current volume, and Merje Kuus. The series seeks to examine the field of geopolitics, which the editors place as a sub-discipline of human geography. The approach of the series as a whole is highly multidisciplinary, encompassing popular culture as well as issues of security, international relations, and global power projection.

There are several main themes that wend their way through this book, such as the spatial vocabulary of international relations—words and concepts like "homeland," "international community," "failed state" and, of course, "terrorism." Another theme concerns the way ideas of security invoke particular kinds of politics; exceptional prerogatives and recourse to violence that would otherwise not be possible. At the same time, security is as much about the routine as well as the exceptional.

Geography is the effort of humans to seek or impose order—geometries or power—on the world and its various topographies, or simply find meaning in them. In so doing one tries to establish rules by which those orders function, rules which are constantly re-imagined and contested. This paradox lies at the heart of the War on Terror and the changing landscapes of security.

Questions of national sovereignty and the rights of one nation to intervene in the affairs of another make up some of the most controversial aspects of the larger debate, and the essays in this book make an excellent primer on this topic. The authors take a realistic view in the sense that while the rules of international relations demand adherence to concepts like territorial integrity, national self-determination, and rights of self-defense, cornerstones of international relations, these are also routinely violated on both small and large scales. The build-up to the war in Iraq is examined from several perspectives as a case study to such exceptions. For the most part they follow the debate to explain or define the "failed state" that is often used to justify intervention—and as the authors freely admit, for the purposes of enabling self-serving agendas of those who would intervene. The question of the extent to which the build-up to the Iraq War was based on intentional deception on the part of both the Bush and Blair administrations is examined.

Most of the essays that make up *Spaces of Security and Insecurity* were originally presented as sessions at the annual conference of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers in London. These sessions, which took place in September of 2007, sought to evaluate the ways in which geographers had contributed to the analysis of the U.S.-led War on Terror, as well as the larger picture of contemporary landscapes of security. The papers contained in this volume cover a wide range of geographies, both physical and metaphorical; Afghanistan, the European Union, Iraq, New Zealand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and the United States. The article on Sri Lanka, while informative and worth reading, is nonetheless dated due to the conclusive end of the civil war there, which was declared ended by the Sri Lankan government in May of 2009.

In each of these cases, one finds stimulating and well-researched examples of ways in which one party or another's dominant vision of security in the War on Terror has woven into (or collided with) a variety of geographies, and thus become subject to scrutiny and criticism. It is clear that for some parties the War on Terror is incidental to the opportunities it creates, namely to facilitate moves towards a preferred state of affairs. For instance, in the "Introduction" by Ingram and Dodds, they point out that for certain radical Christian Evangelical groups the War on Terror is viewed not as a path towards security, but a plan to kill non-believers. Taking up this theme in a later chapter, Jason Dittmer ("Maranatha! Premillennial Dispensationalism and the Counter-Intuitive Geopolitics of Security") shows how the apocalyptic leitmotif of global destruction, or at least coming years of "Tribulation," are viewed with enthusiasm by some members of that community, and how this is driven both by belief and by external circumstances of economic security as well as the clash of values between their own traditional beliefs and the modern world.

Another interesting article is by Nick Megoran concerning "Colonizing Commemoration: Sacred Space and the War on Terror" in which the author examines the use of religious ritual, particularly that of commemoration and memorial, as a means of defining the War on Terror, as well as how the War on Terror has intruded into religious discourse. It is a fascinating study on a seldom-seen aspect of modern geopolitics and the sociological use and abuse of the grieving process.

For this reviewer, the title of Megoran's article was evocative of older paradigms, specifically the concept of "sacred space" described in studies of both ancient and modern comparative religion and championed during the previous century by a number of scholars, of whom Mircea Eliade was perhaps the most prolific and articulate spokesman. This idea, briefly stated, is that the traditional, myth-based nation was a heirocentric state

in which its moral, political, divine, and even cosmic integrity were defined and maintained by the presence of sacred areas such as temples, shrines, and other holy sites to which the social literally owed its existence. Parallels with modern notions of boundaries and national sovereignty are not hard to find.

To conclude, although there are some articles which may appear to have been rendered outdated due to the onrush of world events, this is not a book that should be ignored. *Spaces of Security and Insecurity* constitutes one of the better discussions of the many issues surrounding the task facing any nation that wishes to co-exist with eccentric or troublesome neighbors, especially in a world where globalization makes virtually all nations neighbors, whether they like it or not.

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***The Human Factor: Inside the CIA's Dysfunctional Intelligence Culture.* By Ishmael Jones. New York: Encounter Books, 2008. Appendices. Notes. Bibliography. 383 pp. \$27.95. ISBN: 1-59403-223-8.**

The Human Factor is not the ordinary 'kiss and tell' memoir and is unlike the flood of books assigning blame or credit to the Intelligence Community for the intelligence failures of 9/11, the second Iraq War, the rise of radical Islamism, and the spread of nuclear technology to rogue states such as Iran. It also is not a deeply analytical study of how these failures occurred or how they could be prevented in the future. This volume is less of an academic study of the Clandestine Service than an extended self-reported psychological study of how at least some of America's best, brightest, and bravest have been systematically demoralized and driven quietly from public service.

Ishmael Jones is a *nom de plume* for a clandestine case officer in the most secret part of the Central Intelligence Agency, the non-official cover operatives, known as NOCs. These officers operate overseas without diplomatic immunity, often in the most dangerous assignments. If caught they are disavowed by the Agency, although they are often traded for foreign spies arrested in the United States. Without diplomatic immunity, NOCs lack the protection of international conventions covering treatment of diplomats caught "spying" and can be tortured, imprisoned, or even executed. It would be an understatement to say that this is an inherently stressful job. Divorce, alcoholism, infidelity, and confusion about self-identity are standard hazards of the job. As one former colleague of mine told me after his cover was blown and he had to seek other employment, "your entire life is a lie. You use your family, your assets/agents, your friends and your colleagues all to persuade the citizen of another country to betray his homeland. His life is in your hands, but the *persona* that you reveal to him is a lie and you are supposed to remember which side you are working for."

Jones' book was not authorized for publication by the CIA. He admits that he cannot fathom why. This makes it all the more intriguing. Who is Ishmael Jones and is anything in the book verifiable? Except for some extensive quotations from the public record—much of it well trod ground—the answer is no. This limits the utility the book might have had as an accurate guide to what really are the problems faced by the Clandestine Service and how they might be remedied.

Instead, we are left with what appears to be yet another anonymous book of gripes by an unhappy ex-employee. Yet the vividness of the narrative of

Jones' career bears a whiff of truth when we compare it to other sourced and CIA authorized accounts that are every bit as scathing of the intelligence community's shortcomings. Many of his stories demonstrate a wry sense of humor in difficult circumstances and are quite amusing. As one wag said, 'even if these stories aren't true, they ought to be.' What we do know from the public literature is that the Agency has been the source of enormous wasteful spending, poor accounting, sloppy security practices, and heavy handed self-serving management. Jones gives us a rare bottom up view of these problems, in contrast to the more top down academic critiques produced by college and university professors.

The biggest failure of the book is that Jones, writing at the end of his career, comes across as embittered, arrogant, self-serving, vengeful, and potentially violent. In a word, he is the perfect target for recruitment by a foreign intelligence service. This is a shameful situation for an individual who was (supposedly) a Marine officer, a genuine patriot who put his country's interest above that of himself and his family. He proudly makes the point that he was scrupulously honest with government money, when many of his colleagues were enriching themselves. Even if many of the details of the book are fanciful or have names changed to protect the innocent, and, by the way, to comply with the law, Jones' story is a mandate for corrective action. For this we are indebted to him for baring his soul publicly.

Unfortunately, Jones' self-professed aversion to virtually any kind of management, which he lambastes on almost every page, makes his proposals of correction of Agency management practices of limited value. He admits that he never personally served in any senior management post. Therefore it is not surprising that he fails to connect the pressures that senior management faces to the operational frustration he and others are forced to endure. His lack of experience in the maelstrom of the Washington interagency process leaves him insensitive to the conflicts among intelligence agencies and between the Intelligence Community and the Executive and Legislative branches. This is undoubtedly the product of being at the bottom of the food chain. Nonetheless, Jones gives totally unjustifiable short shrift to the value of technical means of collection, such as space based assets, signals analysis, military collection, and the rest of the collection apparatus of the U.S. Government. This leads him to commit factual errors in his book, such as his inaccurate allegations about the state of knowledge of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs—matters well documented in the press critiques and the post 9/11 Congressional investigations.

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Jones is right when he states that heavy handed management led to intelligence failures, but that is true of almost every failure of large institutions. His suggestions for flattening management have already been implemented in the wake of criticism of the CIA restructuring in the wake of 9/11, although not as thoroughly as many would prefer. His notion of shifting all domestic based intelligence to the FBI demonstrates his lack of understanding of how dysfunctional the FBI is as an intelligence agency when it comes to foreign threats. The 9/11 disaster was ample proof of that, as is the continuing bleed of vital technology information to Chinese intelligence operatives and agents in the United States. His suggestion to shift foreign intelligence to the military is undercut by the example of Pearl Harbor.

In conclusion, Jones has written an entertaining and instructive volume which has a definite place in the study of the intelligence process. Like every other study of what is inherently a secret business, it must be taken with several grains of salt. It is a pity what happened to Jones. He, and we, deserve better. The numbers of stars in the foyer of the CIA headquarters testify to the ultimate sacrifice of many brave and competent CIA personnel from every branch of the Agency. Unlike the dead, we fail to honor the 'walking wounded' who should not also have suffered in vain.

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