

Israelis failed in their attempt to damage Egyptian-American relations.⁶ They too assumed then that incidents of this kind affect real or perceived national interests. The people in the community responsible for the affair had to pay the price. Ostrovsky, on the other hand, became a rich man.

By Way of Deception is an interesting book written well by a clever man. It should not, however, be treated as an accurate case-study of the Israeli Mossad.

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Endnotes

1. See, Steven Brams, *Superpower's Games: Applying Game Theory to Superpower Conflict* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 119-26.
2. Issar Harel, *Security and Democracy* (Tel Aviv: Edanim, 1989), p. 165.
3. Gideon Doron, "Israeli Intelligence: Tactics, Strategy and Prediction," *International Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 2, no. 3 (Fall, 1988), pp. 305-19.
4. Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman, *Every Spy and Prince* (Boston: Hampton and Mifflin, 1990).
5. Josef Argaman, *It Was Top Secret* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defence Publishing House, 1991).
6. See, Gideon Doron and Shapira Boaz, "Accountability and Secret Operations in Israel," *International Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 4, no. 3 (Fall 1990), pp. 371-82.

Blake, George. *No Other Choice. An Autobiography*. London: Cape, 1990.

Kuzichkin, Vladimir. *Inside the KGB. Myth and Reality*. London: Deutsch, 1990.

Intelligence defectors are now publishing their autobiographies with almost the same regularity as sportsmen and politicians, and the contents have a similar predictability. Yet they remain compulsive reading. The spy and the defector are archetypal twentieth-century figures; the Cold War was buttressed on both sides by images, real and imagined, of espionage and the enemy within. What was it that made people work for the other side? What explains the fascination of clandestinity and the revulsion felt for traitors? What was the real importance of human sources, among all the technical wizardry? No one really knows the answers; and we search this literature for clues.

These two books are good examples of the genre. Blake's career as a member of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), KGB agent, and es-

caper from Wormwood Scrubs is well-known. His account has a shaky start in his description of SIS's offices in Carlton Gardens ("This fine old stuccoed town house its heavy double green doors with brass knocker, its chandeliered marble entrance hall and monumental staircase with wrought-iron gilded banisters was to play an important part in my life.") which reminds one of Peter Wright's ghostwriter. But thereafter it is cool and restrained and commands respect. The outsider cannot tell how much is suppressed or distorted, but it has the ring of truth.

The effect, and no doubt the purpose, is to present Blake's extraordinary career as a conventional, low-key life story. There is a lot about his childhood in Holland, his education in Egypt, and his wartime escape to England through Spain. There is ample domestic detail about his mother, his two marriages and his children, and at the end of the book there are reflections on communism and rather banal accounts of his current life-style. He is charitable towards everyone; there are none of the waspish personal judgments that enlivened Philby's life story. There may even be a faint, deadpan sense of humor, as when he describes Wormwood Scrubs as a convenient air lock for the transition to life in the Soviet Union. It is almost as if Blake set out to write a parody of the old-style diplomatic memoir.

Thus it provides relatively little insight on intelligence. There is a little, but not much, about the SIS operations in which Blake was engaged, though he conveys something of the frenetic atmosphere of intelligence collection in Berlin in the mid-fifties. He says hardly anything about the KGB but makes it appear, hardly surprisingly, to have been efficient at its job. He confirms that he betrayed the "Berlin Tunnel" line-tap and other technical operations to the Russians, but otherwise is reticent about the information he passed over.

The interest is in Blake the man. Why did he do it? And having done it, why did he confess when interrogated by his SIS colleagues, condemning himself to his forty-two years' sentence? Typically he defuses the mystery. His was a simple ideological conversion to communism while one of the Western diplomatic internees in North Korea. It was sparked off by dislike of the South Korean regime, copies of Marx and Lenin supplied by the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang, and discussions of these texts with the eccentric left-wing ambassador with whom he was incarcerated. If the story is true, the Russians' supply of these books must rank as one of the triumphs of cultural diplomacy. The whole issue is disposed of in six or seven pages. He admits to subsequent qualms of conscience over his marriage and family, but none about working for the KGB. His confession was an outburst of pride, provoked by the suggestion that the Russians had tortured and blackmailed him while a prisoner. His escape was at his own instigation, as has been confirmed by the other participants. He recognizes the failure of Soviet communism, but believes that some other ideal society will eventually emerge. He has no regrets.

One doubts whether this can be the complete story. Yet it carries more credibility than the earlier claims by Western writers that Blake was a triple

agent in a British operation that went wrong, and was sprung from prison by the KGB. Phillip Knightley, who put out these interpretations some years ago, contributes a foreword in which he concludes that Blake's account here is frank and fair. Simple explanations are often correct. But if what is given here is a true bill then it gives us little help in spotting potential defectors. Blake had a foreign background and emerges with a rather Calvinist, whole-hogging temperament. But it is difficult to say that these are better indicators of potential treachery than his rule of never drinking more than half a bottle of wine a day.

Kuzichkin's career is less well-known, and his book is at the same time more informative and less thought-provoking. He was a bright lad recruited by the KGB as a graduate student and deployed in Tehran as an agent-runner and recruiter. He claims to have had no love for the Soviet system, but this did not prevent him from being an energetic and ambitious case officer. According to his own account his defection was sparked off simply by losing a cache of secret documents, hidden on the instructions of his local superior and removed by a jealous colleague. His planned escape from Iran over the Turkish border thus seems a simple act of self-preservation.

The interest of the book thus lies not in the author's motivation but in his account of the KGB and its tradecraft. There is little personal detail, but ample — almost excessive — accounts of KGB training, agent-running in Tehran through the period of the Shah's fall, and the atmosphere and personalities of the KGB and the Tehran Embassy. Kuzichkin's general thesis is of the KGB's bureaucratic impotence, in an atmosphere in which survival was more important than achievement. Results were fabricated; the general atmosphere was of court politics. No doubt this was true to some extent, though one always has to allow for a defector's prejudices.

The book casts a useful light on the modalities of Soviet espionage. It illustrates just how much time intelligence officers spend driving around, getting to know the cities in which they operate and establishing means of shaking off surveillance; they have a good potential second career as taxi drivers. Kuzichkin also brings out the large part played in Tehran by radio support. Short-range radio was used for signals from agents; the KGB's local monitoring of SAVAK's surveillance net was an integral part of their countersurveillance techniques and their operational planning; interception from the Embassy of police networks was a primary source of tactical intelligence during the tumultuous period of Khomeini's accession to power. Espionage and counterespionage had their own radio war; though it should not be assumed that the features described here would apply elsewhere.

Both these personal accounts leave the big questions unanswered. There have always been spies, but institutionalized espionage, counterespionage and defection are twentieth-century innovations. Their growth was linked predominantly with communism and the Cold War, though one should not overlook their importance in the Arab-Israeli conflict and all its ramifications. One of the oddities of the Gorbachev era has been that at least up to August 1991 the KGB's espionage activities apparently continued under their

own momentum; has this aspect of the Cold War now ended? We have an increasingly open world, and increasingly powerful technical intelligence sources. Is it time to re-assess the role of human ones?

The obstacles to change should not be underrated. Even discounting the vested interests of espionage agencies, spies can still do some things that the modern technical sources cannot, for example the penetration of terrorist and other clandestine organizations. Moreover, espionage supports the technical sources, for example in the link between espionage and code-breaking, or in the world of bugging and eavesdropping and other close-access technical operations. The idea that intelligence can be divided into “dirty” espionage and “clean” technical collection is an over-simplification.

Yet both these books bring out in their different ways the threatening nature of espionage, and its peculiar effects on international relationships. It is linked with and reinforces special fears, fortress mentalities, and conspiratorial world-views. One of the less publicized Western intelligence successes in the Cold War was in containing Soviet espionage and successfully counter-attacking the KGB and GRU; but this very success tended to perpetuate the embattled and distorted inputs that these organizations made to Soviet policymaking. Some espionage will still be needed to meet security requirements in a new world order, but it must be kept in its place. One of the challenges that has not yet been addressed in the future of international security is somehow to promote a concept of “reasonable sufficiency” in espionage, replacing the Cold War armaments race in penetration and counter-penetration that is portrayed in these two accounts.

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