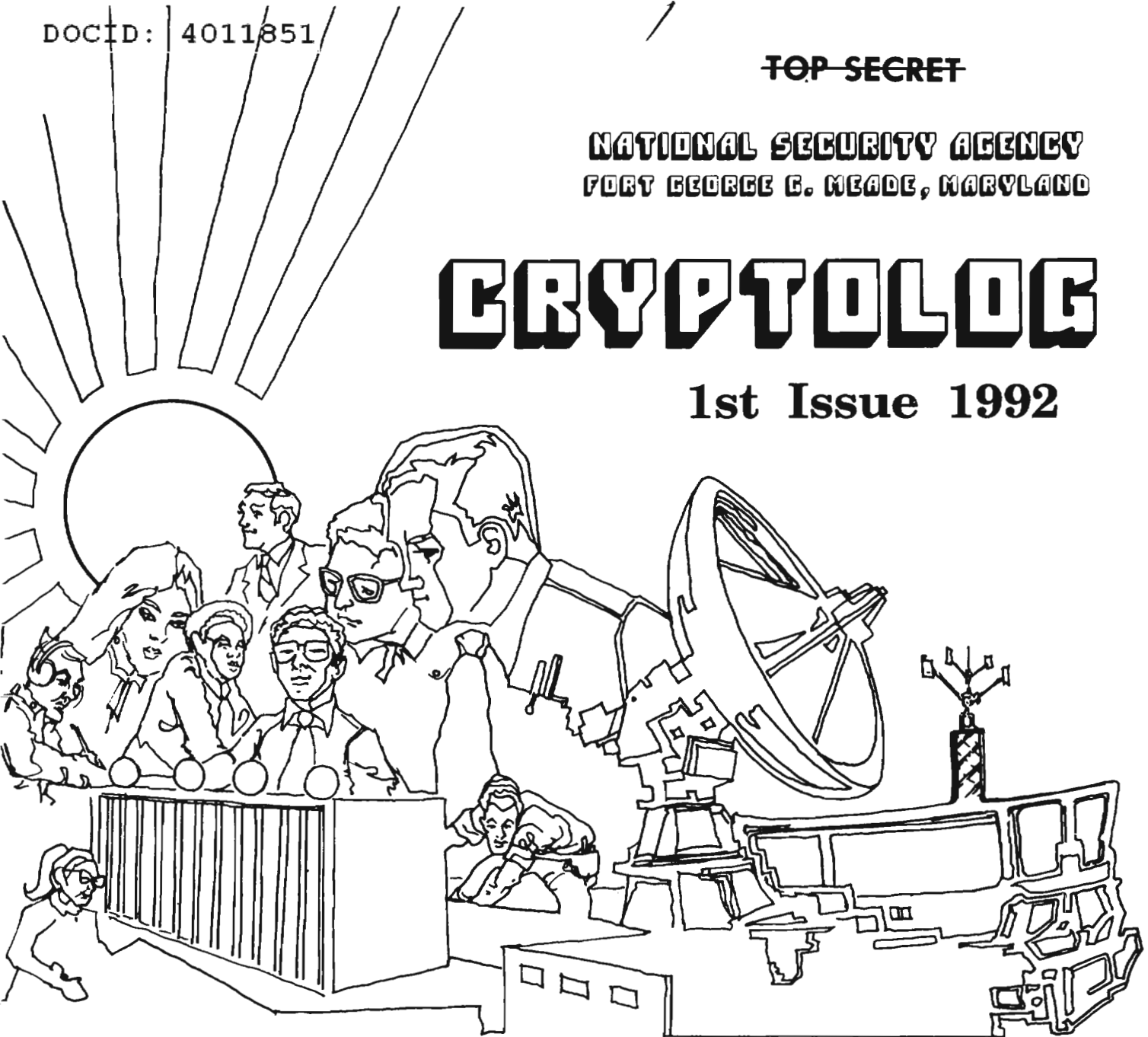


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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~***SIGINT in the Novels of John le Carré***

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(U) The nine espionage novels John le Carré has written since 1964 have been widely read and analyzed on many levels—authenticity, political slant, and even literary symbolism. This article will look at the ways in which SIGINT has been portrayed in those novels—how often, how accurately, and to what effect. It will also demonstrate that while le Carré has often found it handy to use SIGINT as a plot device, he does not hold SIGINT or the other technical intelligence disciplines in particularly high regard. Rather, he is a fervent partisan of HUMINT and a persistent critic of the technical disciplines and the people who practice them. A warning: the article will summarize some of the plots of these superb stories, so stop here if you intend to read them in the near future. (One ending is revealed here only because of the role played by SIGINT in the novel's outcome.)

(U) There are no SIGINT references at all in le Carré's breakthrough 1964 novel *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* nor in his third novel, *A Small Town in Germany* (1968). But SIGINT does play a key role in his second novel, *The Looking Glass War* (1965), which was much less successful both commercially and critically. In this book a decrepit intelligence department of the British Ministry of Defence undertakes to train an agent and infiltrate him into East Germany to check out tenuous reports of Soviet missile deployments there. The department hasn't run agents since WW II, but hopes that a success will put them back in business and increase their budget and influence. Out of touch with contemporary

trecraft and operating on a shoestring, they engage a WW II agent who became a garage owner after the war. One of the planners asks George Smiley if MI6 will loan them modern short duration signal agent comms gear for a "training exercise." When Smiley says that he cannot risk compromising new equipment and techniques, the MOD man says they'll have to use a WW II-era agent radio and asks Smiley how often a transmitting agent must change frequencies in order to foil direction-finding. Smiley says "every two or three minutes," but warns that there are several other factors—"luck, reception, amount of signal traffic, and density of population."

(U) After refresher courses in marksmanship, unarmed combat, German, missile technology, ciphers, and communications, the agent "Mayfly" crosses the border carrying an ancient and heavy HF radio in his suitcase. His first transmission is so slow and clumsy that the listening Vopos initially believe it's a child rather than an illegal agent. A U.S. SIGINT site in West Germany also intercepts Mayfly's report, and the Americans ask MI6 if it's one of their agents. The head of MI6 sends Smiley to the safehouse on the German border; Mayfly has killed a sentry, which has given the MOD cold feet, and now, caught in an unauthorized operation, they agree to close it down. When Mayfly makes his next transmission, only the East Germans and the Soviets are listening. He's easily located by D/F and captured (or killed). The British govern-

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ment disowns him and issues a plausible denial. In the final cynical twist, Smiley learns that MI6 knew all along that the MOD was running a real operation and allowed it to continue in the hope that it would fail and keep the Ministry out of the HUMINT business forever. Le Carré has since said that this book was heavily influenced by the Bay of Pigs disaster.

(U) In 1974 le Carré published *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, the first of a trilogy in which Smiley pursues the Soviet mastermind Karla, head of the KGB's Thirteenth Directorate. This is also the book which showcases le Carré's many colorful euphemisms for intelligence functions and personnel, some of which have been widely adopted by the American and British media to describe the intelligence business. In *Tinker, Tailor* he also locates British SIGINT organizationally for the first time and names its practitioners—"wranglers." It is apparently a division within MI6, comparable to the dirty-tricks people ("scalphunters"), the bug detectors ("ferrets"), the forgers ("shoemakers"), and the operations support people ("lamplighters").

(U) *Tinker, Tailor* is concerned primarily with Smiley's search for a high-level mole in MI6, recruited by the Soviet superspy Karla and run under his direction. A key element in the search is analysis of a failed operation in Czechoslovakia in which a British agent was shot and captured. When Smiley interviews the man who was duty officer during the operation, the man recalls having been informed by one of the wranglers that "all hell had broken loose on the Czech air: half of it was coded, but the other half was *en clair*. He kept getting garbled accounts of a shooting near Brno." Later Smiley reminisces about meeting Karla in 1955 in New Delhi. Karla had gone to California to activate a dormant agent network and to establish its radio communications with Moscow Centre. A coding mistake on the Moscow end allowed the British cryptanalysts to break the system. When Karla traveled to New Delhi to assess a potential Chinese agent, the Americans allowed him to leave, rolled up his agents, and had the Indians arrest him. Smiley visited him in his cell and suggested that he come to England and tell all; Moscow would blame him for the fiasco in

the U.S. and he faced a bleak future at home. But Karla spurned the British offer. The Indians then deported him to Moscow, where he outmaneuvered the boss who wanted his head, had him shot, and replaced him. After that, Smiley notes, Karla never again used clandestine radio communications, and never allowed his field agents to use them either.

(U) An interesting aspect of this story is the way the mole manipulates compartmentation procedures. In 1971 the Soviets begin giving the mole relatively high-grade intelligence, and he tells three other top MI6 executives (whose assistance he'll need) that it comes from a source—"Merlin"—who will deal only with him. This accomplishes two things. First, Merlin's success puts one of the three executives, an unsuspecting and pliable man, on the fast track to head MI6. It also gives the mole a reason to meet regularly with the KGB officer who is actually running him. Smiley realizes that Merlin is the key and that the mole must be one of the four top executives privy to the compartment. The rest of the novel follows Smiley as he tries to determine which of the four is the mole. In this sense this is a cautionary tale about excessive compartmentation.

(U) The next novel, *The Honourable Schoolboy* (1977), finds Smiley, after exposing the mole and uncovering the dry rot within the service, running MI6—"appointed the captain of a wrecked ship." Some believed that they had heard "the last beat of the secret English heart." One London rumor had it that it was the Dutch SIGINT service which was really responsible for identifying the British mole, by breaking a Moscow Centre code. Believing that every activity of the service was compromised, Smiley "scraps the lot," including the SIGINT service. He describes it as having been "working practically full time for Karla for the last five years." We also learn that SIGINT operations were run from a headquarters in Bath and paid for by Foreign Office funds.

(U) Smiley's task at the beginning of 1974 is to rebuild the service and to produce intelligence that will induce the now very leery CIA "cousins" to return the Anglo-American intelligence relationship to its former status. He is also obsessed

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with putting Karla out of business. He and his team—former colleagues sacked or discredited by the mole—begin by looking at an aborted investigation of a Moscow Centre money-laundering operation for paying agents, run out of Vientiane. The operation is now in Hong Kong, and an agent—the “Honourable Schoolboy” of the title—is sent there to run it down. Against the backdrop of the fall of South Vietnam, the Schoolboy goes all over Southeast Asia gathering information. Leaving Udorn, Thailand, after using the comms facility at the CIA station there, he passes the U.S. SIGINT facility and remembers having heard that 1,200 linguists work there.

(U) *Smiley's People* (1979) was the last of the Karla trilogy. It seems that Karla had a daughter, by a mistress he eventually sent to the Gulag when she became politically unreliable. The daughter is schizophrenic and confined to an asylum in Switzerland; Karla has been illegally using operational funds funnelled through his man in Paris for a ghost agent to pay the considerable expense involved. The man in Paris is told to use couriers whenever possible, since Karla “is against excessive use of radio.” Smiley notes that Karla’s earlier vow not to use clandestine radio was apparently “subject to review.” An Estonian emigre living in London, a former agent of Smiley’s, learns all this through a complicated chain of events, but is killed on Karla’s orders before he can tell Smiley; Smiley is again brought out of retirement to investigate the murder.

A DEPARTURE TO THE MIDDLE EAST

(U) *The Little Drummer Girl* (1983) was a departure from the earlier books in terms of both location and characters. Le Carré told an interviewer in 1983 that his original concept was for a novel about the Middle East set in London and Washington, but he couldn’t find a credible way to involve MI6 and Smiley and ended up making the Israelis the central characters and setting it in part in the Middle East. This novel deals with the efforts of a team of Israelis to capture or kill a Palestinian terrorist (“Khalil”) whose speciality is bomb attacks against Israelis in Europe. They grab and eventually kill Khalil’s younger brother Michel and recruit a British actress named

Charlie to pose as a sympathizer and Michel’s lover. While SIGINT plays no role in this novel, the Israeli communications gear is described in some detail. Most of the operation is supported by a mobile comms van equipped with both secure voice and enciphered printer. When forced to use clear voice, they use the callsigns and jargon of taxi companies and other legitimate users of mobile comms.

SIGINT TRAPS A "PERFECT SPY"

(U) SIGINT does play a significant role in *A Perfect Spy* (1986), which Le Carré has described as his first work not submitted to Her Majesty’s Government for prepublication review. It is the story of one Magnus Pym, MI6 station chief in Vienna in 1983. As the novel begins, Pym, haunted by the death of his con-man father, has disappeared. His wife and colleagues are baffled and fear that he’s defected. He has in fact gone to ground in a rooming house in a coastal town in the UK, where he is writing the story of his life for his teenage son. The novel’s chapters alternate between the story of Pym’s life up to his disappearance and MI6’s efforts to discover where he’s gone and why, and to keep the CIA from learning that there may have been another major British security disaster.

(U) Pym was induced into the intelligence business after WW II by the MI6 Station Chief in Bern; Pym was studying at a university there and met the man, Jack Brotherhood, at the local Anglican church. Brotherhood uses Pym for various low-level tasks, such as collecting the names of leftists at the university and translating stolen documents. Pym tells Brotherhood about Axel, an illegal German refugee whom he has befriended at his rooming house, and Brotherhood informs the Swiss counterintelligence service in order to accumulate “barter material.” They arrest Axel and deport him.

(U) After graduating from Oxford in modern languages and taking a commission in Army intelligence, Pym encounters Axel again in Austria. Axel is described to Pym as a Czech Army officer who wishes to defect, but it’s a ruse. Axel proposes that he become Pym’s agent and gives

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him a great deal of classified information to establish his bona fides. Soon Axel tells Pym that their relationship has become known and that Axel can protect himself only by making it look as if Pym is Axel's agent. To pull this off he will need legitimate classified information from Pym. Pym never seriously considers not doing it; he has vowed not to betray Axel a second time, and there is also the problem that his own reputation rests on what Axel is feeding him. (We learn later that the material Axel is providing looks good but is of little actual value.)

(U) Upon demobilization in 1953 Pym enters MI6 and is sent abroad again—to Czechoslovakia, of course. He is soon caught and pitched by Axel again. This time, Axel says, they'll make each other into intelligence superstars, by "making straight for the biggest diamonds, the biggest banks." But what Pym will get from Axel over the years will be largely disinformation, supplied by nets of agents fully controlled (knowingly or otherwise) by the Czechs and other Eastern European counterintelligence services. Piling success upon success, Pym goes to Stockholm, back to London, to Berlin, and then to Washington as Deputy Chief of Station, followed everywhere by Axel. But the Americans begin to become suspicious; the Eastern European networks produce good material only when Pym (and Axel) are actually there. Pym is summoned to London for an investigation, but MI6 does only a cursory check and sends him back to Washington with a clean bill of health.

(U) The CIA keeps pushing, however, and sends a team to London to present new evidence of Pym's treason. This is after Pym has disappeared, but the British have concealed his absence from their American colleagues. Artelli, the SIGINT analyst in the American team, is described as "a distraught mathematician" from "Signals Intelligence." The new evidence is traffic analysis of clandestine communications from the Czech Embassy in Washington and from other Czech facilities in the U.S., particularly the consulate in San Francisco in 1981 and 1982. The significant point is that the transmissions stopped every time Pym left Washington, and the assumption is that they're meant for Pym and aren't broadcast when he's away. Artelli adds that the communications

techniques are old-fashioned and give off a "sense of long habituation, one human being to another." Although the communications are unreadable, the cryptanalysts know that the keys are derived from some kind of text. Artelli also reveals that there are strange things going on with Czech clandestine radio in the last few days—the equivalent of blind calls to someone.

(U) The Czechs, like the British, are trying to find Pym, although the CIA doesn't make the connection because they don't know that Pym is missing. Then another team member brings up more new evidence—the travels of a Czech intelligence officer named Hans Albrecht Petz, AKA Alexander Hampel, AKA Jerzy Zaworski. Petz is Axel, of course, and his travels in Europe and the U.S. coincide perfectly with Pym's. The British still refuse to believe it, arguing that the Czechs have mounted an elaborate deception to discredit someone who's been particularly effective against them. Their ambiguity about where Pym is and what he's doing convinces the Americans that he's flown the coop. Brotherhood, still in MI6, finally comes to believe Pym's treachery, and learns from Pym's wife that Pym takes a battered copy of a 17th-century German book entitled *Simplicissimus* everywhere he goes. The book (actually *Der Abenteuerliche Simplicissimus Teutschroughly*, *The Adventures of a Simple German*) was given to Pym by Axel when they first met in Bern, and it's a somewhat heavy symbol. The author, *Johann Jakob Christoffel Grimmelshausen*, fought on both sides during the Thirty Years War, and used many pseudonyms which were anagrams of his name. Brotherhood tells the British SIGINT service to run the Czech clandestine traffic against the book, and it works.

(U) Now everyone is looking for Pym—his wife, the British, the CIA, and Axel, who fears he is suicidal and wants him to defect to Czechoslovakia. The CIA Station Chief in Vienna, an old friend of Pym's from Washington now obsessed with nailing him, has enlisted his own wife to help watch Pym's wife there, and she sees Axel contacting his wife in a church. She immediately calls her husband at the U.S. Embassy in London on an open phone and tells him with a clumsy prearranged code. The British,

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who have tapped the embassy phones, intercept the call. But Pym's wife evades both the Americans and the British, makes it back to England, and tells Brotherhood that Axel has unknowingly let her know where Pym probably is. The book reaches its climax as all the interested parties rush to reach Pym first.

A COMMUNICATIONS DECEPTION

(U) SIGINT plays a small but important role in le Carré's 1989 novel *The Russia House*. It is his Glasnost novel and his most political book to date. The central character is one Bartholomew "Barley" Blair, an alcoholic British publisher and saxophone player. A dissident Soviet scientist who met Barley briefly at a party tries to have a manuscript delivered to him via a Moscow book fair; it eventually ends up at MI6. According to the manuscript, Soviet military technologies—particularly missiles—simply don't work. The Soviet military research establishment has not only produced weapons that don't work, they've faked the test results to conceal the failures from their own government. The scientist, one Yakov Savelyev, wants the manuscript published in the West, believing it will lead to large-scale disarmament on both sides. The British and the Americans have another idea, of course. Their biographic research reveals that Savelyev—now code-named "Bluebird"—is responsible for, among other things, telemetry encryption. Part of what he has provided is the original telemetry—before it was faked and before it was encrypted. They want to use Barley to determine whether the material is genuine and then have Barley run Bluebird as an agent in place. Against all his instincts, Barley agrees to do so.

(U) After three weeks of training Barley goes back to meet Savelyev in Leningrad, takes more material from him, and promises him he will get the manuscript published. Barley then travels to the U.S. for a combination debriefing and interrogation by the CIA, now the senior partner in the operation. A senior CIA official warns Barley and the British that the American military-industrial complex doesn't welcome the Bluebird manuscript and will work hard to discredit it.

(U) Barley returns to Moscow with a shopping list of questions for Savelyev, and the CIA smuggles in a truck full of "surveillance" gear to monitor developments. The British officer who has been functioning as Barley's case officer (identified only as "Ned") begins to get cold feet, aware that the Anglo-American shopping list tells the Soviets everything we don't know about their strategic weapons programs—and, by inference, everything we do know. The rest of the team ignores his concerns, convinced that everything is on track. But Ned is right—Savelyev has been caught and turned. Meanwhile, the Soviets practice a bit of deception to ensure that they'll get the shopping list. A Soviet military entity in Leningrad sends a message to Moscow authorizing Savelyev to take a recreational weekend there after he delivers a lecture; it is intercepted by a U.S. SIGINT facility "in Finland" and decrypted. The Americans and the British buy it, although Ned suspects it was planted. He points out that it was enciphered by an ancient Soviet machine and that there are no other messages intercepted like it. Barley delivers the shopping list and then disappears, a good juncture at which to end this plot summary.

GEORGE SMILEY'S VALEDICTORY

(U) *The Secret Pilgrim* (1991) features the first appearance of George Smiley since *Smiley's People*. Ned of *Russia House* was made the scapegoat for the Bluebird fiasco and exiled to run the MI6 agent training school. He invites Smiley, his mentor and father figure, to talk at the graduation dinner of a class of agents, and Smiley agrees to do it. Every anecdote Smiley tells reminds Ned of an operation of his own, and the book is basically a collection of Ned's vignettes from three decades of espionage. There are no references to SIGINT as such, but in the stories both the British and the Soviets continue to rely heavily on clandestine radio through the 1980s.

(U) What can we say about le Carré's apparent knowledge of SIGINT from this review of the novels? To use the Watergate question, what did he know and when did he know it? He seems to have a good grasp of clandestine radio techniques and counter-clandestine SIGINT capabilities. If there is a tradecraft moral, it is that "agents

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shouldn't use radio." "Mayfly" in *Looking Glass War*, *Karla*, and *Pym* are tripped up by successful counter-clandestine SIGINT operations. Le Carré does not display much awareness of broader SIGINT applications, such as on political, economic, and military topics. This is consistent with what is known about his intelligence career—he was a case officer in the 1950's and 1960's and would probably not have had regular access to mainstream SIGINT reporting. There is also the matter of censorship by the British government; le Carré claims that he submitted every novel prior to *Perfect Spy* for pre-publication review. It is unlikely that official reviewers would have allowed any accurate information about British or American SIGINT activities to be published. In this regard it is interesting to note that no le Carré novel has ever referred to "NSA" or "GCHQ"; this could not possibly have been because he didn't know about those organizations.

(U) People involved in any of the intelligence disciplines have an ambivalent attitude towards having their craft described in fiction. On the one hand, we sneer at the more lurid and fanciful fictional descriptions of our profession; on the other hand, we are appalled and often want legal action taken against writers who get it right. So in this sense, as SIGINT professionals we should be happy that le Carré's references to our business are few and mostly uninformative.

HUMINT vs TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE

(U) But le Carré has another agenda which is more interesting. He is not only a strong partisan of HUMINT as an intelligence discipline, but he actively disparages the other more technical means of collection and analysis. He is to intelligence as the 19th Century Luddites were to the industrial revolution—a rabid foe of technology. This is manifested in several ways in the novels which may not be readily apparent from these brief plot summaries. For one thing, he portrays intelligence technologies as peculiarly—and offensively—American. Some of the most despicable characters in his books are British officials who make deals with the CIA to share the fruits of American intelligence money and technology. His heroes are HUMINT practi-

tioners who detest depending on Americans and scorn nearly all uses of technology. Alleline, the mole's pawn in *Tinker, Tailor* adored Americans, while MI6's Director, Smiley's beloved father figure, detested them and all their works. The mastermind in *Little Drummer Girl* was described as out of tune with Mossad's polygraphs "and their ever-growing faith in American-style power plays, applied psychology, and crisis management." The noble Jack Brotherhood in *Perfect Spy* objected to MI6's pandering to American "methods and example." Conversely, the people in his novels who are good at technology are often unpleasant characters. One particularly nasty MI6 officer in *Russia House* was described in this way: "Clive was a technology man, not at ease with live sources, a suburban espiocrat of the modern school. If he liked anything at all in life apart from his own advancement and his silver Mercedes, then it was hardware and powerful Americans, in that order." For Clive, human nature was "one vast unsavory nightmare." In *Secret Pilgrim* Ned, in praising the successes of an MI6 officer against the Khmer Rouge, notes that espionage technology "can't break the codes of an army without radios." Ned also reflects with nostalgia on a time before MI6's registry was computerized, when it "could still find what it was looking for, or know for sure that it was lost."

(U) Le Carré has developed this theme even more explicitly outside of his fiction. In a 1986 interview he attributed what he called the "flagrant failures" of Western intelligence to an "obsession with high-tech espionage." In a 1989 interview he said that "the shift of professional confidence from human assets to electronic ones is a direct consequence of U.S. domination of Western intelligence." He went on to say that when human agents are well recruited and well targeted, "they are affordable and often far more reliable than the inductive fantasies which result from the reading of signals and codes and photographs."

(U) There are several possible explanations for le Carré's animus against the technical intelligence disciplines and their practitioners. One is that it's a manifestation of an obvious anti-American bias, although he adamantly denies that he's anti-

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American and cites as evidence the number of obnoxious and incompetent Brits who appear in his novels. This means, he says, that he's even-handed. Although the reader will have to make his or her own judgment, it seems to this writer that criticism of American power and policies is a consistent theme in both his fiction and his public statements. It makes for a fairly simple equation—le Carré scorns SIGINT and imagery because they are dominated by the U.S.; they exemplify American technological arrogance.

(U) Another explanation may be that he has never really been exposed to SIGINT and imagery and doesn't understand their value or their complexity. A senior CIA HUMINT officer who came to NSA in another capacity as a retired annuitant told this writer that for his entire CIA career he thought that all NSA employees were like the State Department communicators he encountered in embassies—skilled communications technicians. This person was astounded to learn what we actually do in terms of signals processing, cryptanalysis, language work, and analysis. There are also people who disdain technology because they don't understand it and secretly fear it; it wouldn't be surprising if an early 1950's graduate of Oxford in modern languages harbored such attitudes. The answer may well be a mix of all three.

THE MORAL COST OF HUMINT

(U) What is striking about le Carré's relentless public championing of HUMINT is his refusal to acknowledge its human and moral costs. The relative morality of intelligence activities is a complex question. The current U.S. official position is that some acts are so odious that they cannot be justified even when they would advance the national interest; an example is the apparent prohibition on assassinating foreign officials. (The purist may argue that assassinations, like covert actions, have nothing to do with intelligence, but past involvement in assassination attempts has blurred the distinction.) Acts less grave than assassinations that would otherwise be considered immoral and/or illegal are deemed acceptable if done in the national interest. There are dissenters on both sides of the political spectrum, of

course. For some on the left, such acts can never be justified by invoking the national interest. For some on the right, there are no acts which cannot be justified if the threat to the national interest is sufficiently grave. (This is similar to the theological debate about a "just war.") A middle ground might be that there should be some proportionality between the gravity of the activity and the expected benefits—one should probably not blackmail an official of a foreign government to acquire the annual projection for rutabaga production. One way to measure the relative morality of various intelligence activities might be to assess their potential for harming individual human beings. The technical intelligence disciplines have little or no impact on human beings; HUMINT, by definition, involves the exploitation of people and carries a high risk of harming them.

(U) Le Carré's failure to address the human costs of HUMINT is striking precisely because his novels are intensely concerned with questions of personal morality. As William Buckley noted in a 1983 review, "The Little Drummer Girl' is about spies as *Madame Bovary* is about adultery or *Crime and Punishment* is about crime." There is endless agonizing in these novels about the moral dilemma of the case officer, whose task it is to obtain information by corrupting or seducing vulnerable human beings. Smiley speaks in *Honourable Schoolboy* about having to be "inhuman in defence of our humanity, harsh in defence of compassion, single-minded in defence of our disparity." The Schoolboy himself recalls Smiley speaking at the MI6 training school about being grateful that intelligence service provided the opportunity to repay one's country, but the Schoolboy notes that "the paying is actually done by the other poor sods."

(U) There is a strong sense in le Carré's novels of what has come to be called by conservative American commentators the concept of moral equivalence—that if those who act on behalf of the West and the USSR both commit immoral acts, there is no real moral difference between the two. As George Will put it, "In [le Carré's] espionage novels the 'ambiguity' consists primarily of the idea that means as much as ends reveal where, if anywhere, justice lies in political conflict." So a

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case can be made that it's inconsistent and perhaps even hypocritical for a man so concerned with moral questions to uncritically promote the intelligence discipline most likely to harm individual human beings.

WHY THESE NOVELS MATTER

(C) Since le Carré's writings and public pronouncements (whether because of ignorance, discretion, or censorship) don't appear to pose any threat to SIGINT sources and methods, does it matter to us what he writes? It matters because it adds to a public mystique about HUMINT that has a real (although intangible) impact on the way the Intelligence Community is perceived both by the public and by the rest of the government. Many former intelligence officials and other commentators have relentlessly pushed the idea that "American intelligence" was crippled when then-DCI Stansfield Turner cut 820 CIA Operations Directorate billets (none overseas) in the 1977 "Halloween Massacre." Although the CIA and the rest of the Community continued to perform well after this event, some have gone so far as to suggest that some major U.S. foreign policy mistakes in the late seventies and early eighties were due to this modest reduction of HUMINT assets. In a more recent example, the Congressional committees responsible for the intelligence budget added money for CIA HUMINT operations for both FY91 and FY92, while reducing the rest of the National Foreign Intelligence Program. In a perfect world decision makers should be so well informed that they couldn't possibly be influenced by an Ian Fleming, a John le Carré, or a Tom Clancy, but in this imperfect world it sometimes happens.

(C) It is hard to develop an appropriate awareness in the right places of the actual and potential contributions of the SIGINT system without putting ourselves out of business. It was one of the primary reasons for the establishment of J8, the Office of Corporate Representation, and it would make a good subject for a separate article in this publication. In the final analysis, we're obviously better off that a writer as widely read as le Carré doesn't write accurately about SIGINT. But it is galling to know that his books and public

comments make marginally more difficult the task of ensuring that resources are allocated within the Intelligence Community on the basis of real contributions instead of on the basis of myth and mystique. It is also ironic that the CIA would benefit from all this in even a small way, since le Carré has made his distaste for that organization so obvious.

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