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The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945–1989

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unqualified endorsement. If you read only one book on the global war on terrorism, do not make it this one. If, however, you read several books on the subject or your job involves long-term planning for the war on terror, this work is certainly worth a look, as it will make you aware of many of the mind sets and biases that shape government rhetoric and conventional commentary on terrorism and national security.

ROBERT HARRIS
Burke, Virginia



Cull, Nicholas J. *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945–1989*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008. 533pp. \$125

Public diplomacy today is a topic of global conversation. Books on the “new public diplomacy” of state and nonstate actors appear with increasing frequency. Memoirs by practitioners and monographs on cultural diplomacy and international broadcasting abound. Until now, however, there has been no in-depth scholarly treatment of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the government organization primarily responsible for America’s international information, broadcasting, and educational and cultural exchange activities during the Cold War.

Nicholas Cull, a historian who teaches public diplomacy at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication, provides this much-needed scholarship, with a well written account grounded in twelve years of archival research and more than a hundred interviews with practitioners. Beginning with the

development of information and cultural programs during World War II, Cull’s narrative, organized in chapters on presidential administrations and USIA directors, deals principally with the decades between USIA’s creation in 1953 and the end of the Cold War in 1989. He concludes with a brief epilogue on USIA’s final decade, years that saw consolidation of U.S. international broadcasting services under the independent Broadcasting Board of Governors and the transfer of USIA’s information, exchange, and foreign-opinion-research programs to the Department of State in 1999.

Cull assesses with remarkable evenhandedness the priorities, decisions, and organizational struggles of political leaders and USIA’s practitioners. There is no ideological tilt in his examination of sharply contested approaches to winning the Cold War struggle for “hearts and minds.” The book is not a lament for USIA’s demise or a call for its restoration. Cull brings a scholar’s discipline, a wealth of empirical evidence, and arm’s-length perspective to his analysis. Nevertheless, Cull does have strong opinions. He renders critical judgments on USIA’s successes and failures. In so doing, he frequently prefers to show rather than tell.

On foreign-policy issues and USIA’s domestic political context, Cull’s account is strong on the McCarthy era, the Soviet launch of Sputnik, the civil rights movement, and the Vietnam War. He provides insights into USIA’s marginal role as an adviser to the president, State Department, and National Security Council on implications of foreign public opinion in policy formulation and communication. He deals at length with tensions between USIA and

the Voice of America over missions, “firewalls,” journalism norms, and organizational independence.

Yet the book has limitations. He problematically conflates the generic and constituent elements of public diplomacy—listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting—in the book’s framework of underlying themes. He gives (as he recognizes) disproportionate attention to Washington, USIA’s directors, and broadcast media.

The author ends with a brief look at lessons for the future, such as the need to include public diplomacy in foreign-policy planning and for the United States to listen as well as speak. These are valuable insights. But new forces are shaping twenty-first-century diplomacy. Networks challenge hierarchies. Attention—not information—is the scarce resource. Globalism, nonstate actors, a mix of secular and religious “big ideas,” digital technologies, and new media are transforming the old order. Cull is sensitive to these forces and to the ways in which they are changing diplomacy. Perhaps one day he will write another book that completes his history of USIA and explores the evolution of public diplomacy in a world that is vastly different from the Cold War. In the meantime, Cull’s masterful history will be the gold standard in scholarship on USIA.

BRUCE GREGORY
George Washington University



Macrakis, Kristie. *Seduced by Secrets: Inside the Stasi's Spy-Tech World*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008. 370pp. \$28

Michigan State University professor Kristie Macrakis provides an interesting, if somewhat disjointed, look into one part of the former East German Ministry for State Security, the department commonly known as the “Stasi.” In its time, the Stasi was one of the most effective intelligence and security organizations on the planet. The book under review provides a look into a key aspect of Stasi operations. Its author, Kristie Macrakis, has written several books on modern Germany and conveys a deep understanding of German thought and attitudes, but her lack of knowledge on intelligence matters unfortunately limits her understanding of her chosen topic. However, the professional who is willing to dig past the discrepancies will find value.

The book is divided into two parts, “High-Tech” and “Spy-Tech.” The latter section focuses on “spy technology” and will fascinate the dilettante and inform the professional. It is in this section that Macrakis appears more comfortable and writes with greater confidence and insight. If your favorite James Bond character is Q, you will love this section. Secret writing, spy cameras, and other surveillance gadgets abound.

Unfortunately, the first section is not as well written as the second. It provides valuable information for intelligence and policy professionals, focusing on the Stasi’s quest to steal high-technology information and hardware from the West, primarily West Germany. Macrakis describes economic espionage as a major role for the Stasi’s foreign-intelligence arm, backed by an extensive organization within the ministry and throughout the East German state. However, an inadequate understanding