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## The Codebreakers' War: The Ultra-Magic Deals and the Most Secret Special Relationship, 1940-1946

William G. Bittle

Bradley F. Smith

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Litsa near Murmansk to assist in the assault on Narvik, Norway. Less immoral perhaps but deserving of Weinberg's acrid remarks are the later self-righteous lecturers to the world on international morality: the Swedes. Geography obviously gave them plenty of reason to fear Hitler, but they went well out of their way to cooperate with him even after the tide of war had turned and the cause for fear had diminished.

Thus *A World at Arms* offers refreshingly forthright judgments on every major aspect of World War II strategy and policy. Moreover, while even so large a book cannot deal in detail with most of the campaigns, Weinberg has crammed an impressive quantity of information and his customary candid opinions into the sections on military operations, including the United States Navy's war in both the Atlantic and Pacific.

Russell F. Weigley  
Distinguished University Professor  
Temple University

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Smith, Bradley F. *The Codebreakers' War: The Ultra-Magic Deals and the Most Secret Special Relationship, 1940-1946*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1993. 229pp. \$24.95

Bradley F. Smith's *The Codebreakers' War* chronicles the developing cooperation between the United States and Great Britain aimed at sharing secret wartime cryptanalytic information. Smith sets the scene for that cooperation by establishing the Anglo-American diplomatic background and introducing the intelligence organizations of both nations. Here, of course, the U.S. was notably deficient. Its intelligence capability was severely underdeveloped, suffered from significant interservice rivalries, and had a troublingly cavalier attitude toward security—all characteristics calculated to retard the development of an intelligence partnership. The product of

thorough research in collections and archives, and heavily although often confusingly footnoted, Smith's work fills in many of the blanks in the bureaucratic "courtship" of the two countries that resulted in an agreement of unprecedented proportion in the realm of secret communications.

Proceeding in fits and starts, the nations started down the path to a comprehensive agreement as early as August 1940. Much of the early British inducement toward cooperation stemmed from their overestimation of U.S. accomplishments, while American interest was piqued by the very real technical advances that the British were able to demonstrate. Smith goes to great lengths to point out the laissez-faire attitude taken by the Roosevelt administration toward intelligence matters and repeatedly castigates both Army and Navy cryptanalytic organizations

for shortsightedness and lack of cooperation. It was harder, it seems, to get the services together than the countries. "[T]here was deep resistance within Op-20-G [in charge of the Navy cryptanalysis effort] to the sharing of cryptanalytic information with any foreign government" and the department "was almost as cautious about sharing . . . information with the U.S. Army."

An arrangement was in place as early as December 1940 but broke down when the U.S. became convinced that Bletchley Park officials were less than forthcoming. Smith's prowess as a popular historian of World War II is evident as he traces the development of a lasting deal in juxtaposition with events in the theaters of war that provided impetus to an effective agreement. True cooperation began with the U-boat war in the North Atlantic. This cooperation grew to culmination in 1943 with the BRUSA (Britain-USA) agreement—"the written constitution upon which arose the Anglo-American cryptanalytic partnership that flourished during the final two-and-a-half years of World War II and, in modified forms, has continued until the present."

It is the chapter on BRUSA which is the heart of the book. As he did for *The Shadow Warriors: OSS and the Origins of the CIA*, Smith has combed exhaustively and methodically the available sources, some through the Freedom of Information Act. However, with the exception of this section, for which he has utilized a recently declassified National Security Agency history of the period, there is little that is new and much that remains speculative or unproven. The book also disappoints on

the issue of Arlington Hall, about which far less is known than Bletchley Park, a shortcoming Smith readily acknowledges.

Postwar cooperation, the author maintains, was fueled as much by the inability of the partners to free themselves from each other's embrace (having shared their most intimate secrets, each could exploit the other far too easily) as it was by the Cold War. As Smith speculates on the basis of some credible evidence, the USSR had become a combined intelligence target even before the end of the war. While admitting the lack of open documentation establishing a continuing agreement between Washington and London, and providing little substantial evidence and much conjecture, Smith is surely on safe ground as to the existence of such an arrangement and the reasons therefor. Indeed, there is an interesting timeliness and irony. Britain, which entered these wartime agreements as the senior partner, now faces severe budget cuts aimed at its electronic monitoring headquarters at Cheltenham, which it fears (see *The Times* [London], 26 March 1995) may end the intelligence "special relationship." They will simply have nothing to bring to the table.

WILLIAM G. BITTLE

Dean and

Associate Professor of History

Kent State University, Stark Campus

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Runyan, Timothy J. and Copes, Jan M., eds. *To Die Gallantly: The Battle of the Atlantic*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1994. 347pp. \$55