

**Jeffreys-Jones, Rhodri. Cloak and Dollar: A History of American Secret Intelligence. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.**

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[See table of contents](#)

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## Book Reviews

**Jeffreys-Jones, Rhodri. *Cloak and Dollar: A History of American Secret Intelligence*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.**

In the twenty-first century, the United States of America maintains the world's largest intelligence community. No other country has intelligence institutions that compare to its might and awesome powers. Some may argue its reach is ubiquitous at the international level. However, we must ask ourselves: how did the American intelligence community come into being, and how has it survived for so long? Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones (University of Edinburgh), who is a prolific academic writer on numerous subjects relating to American intelligence and national security, provides an explanation to these questions in his latest book entitled, *Cloak and Dollar: A History of American Secret Intelligence*.

At first view, the title of this book may cause people to think that it is about intelligence and economic espionage. In fact, *Cloak and Dollar* is a critical, yet supportive historical view of the American intelligence community. The central theme of this book is based on a problem Jeffreys-Jones defines as the confidence man, or what is known as hyperbole/exaggeration. Confidence man can be seen as a syndrome that has allowed intelligence agencies to receive both greater collection powers and funding over the years. Simultaneously, Jeffreys-Jones uses the idea of confidence man as an explanation of how American intelligence agencies are rewarded for their failures. It is believed that the "lack of openness encourages exaggeration," which leads to the continuation of confidence man. (p. 98) Furthermore, he links this issue with the intrigue and peril of creating and managing intelligence agencies. For Jeffreys-Jones, the confidence man syndrome is a "chronic disease," not a "fatal condition." (p. 10)

The book is divided into 14 chapters and consists of 357 pages (including notes and index). Each chapter deals with the various intelligence agencies created by the American government, and major historical events that affected the country and intelligence agencies. *Cloak and Dollar* covers approximately 225 years of American history, beginning with George Washington and ending with the tragic events of 11 September 2001.

Jeffreys-Jones' use of historical analysis shines a light on key historical events. He explains that Allan Pinkerton's warning of a possible assassination plot against President Abraham Lincoln, "guaranteed him fame and fortune" for the future. (p. 30) In fact, Pinkerton provided intelligence reports that contained worse case scenario thinking, and exaggerated information "as much as threefold." (p. 24) Chapter five deals with the U-1, the first agency created during peacetime and operated for a short period (1915-27). Unlike other intelligence agencies U-1 was never penetrated by enemy infiltration. However, the demise of U-1 is the possible result of its failure in "public relations and hyperbole" (confidence man) unlike the Pinkerton Agency, and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) who were very successful at it. (p. 77)

Other chapters focus on such issues as Pearl Harbor (1941), the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Security Agency (NSA), National Security Council (NSC) report 68, Bay of Pigs, Cuban Missile Crisis, and the 1975 Church Commission. This list is only a small fraction of issues Jeffreys-Jones discusses in *Cloak and Dollar*.

The last chapter is devoted to issues that have arisen during the 1990s. Jeffreys-Jones reminds us that in the post-Cold War era there were many calls to abolish the CIA, and place its components inside the State Department. (p. 259) At the same time, outbreak of intelligence "turf wars" began between the FBI and CIA over foreign intelligence operations. (p. 261) In 1997, Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), George Tenet confirmed for the first time the intelligence community's budget as \$26.6 billion. (p. 275) The chapter ends with the events of 11 September 2001. Jeffreys-Jones argues change is at hand "the situation was custom-made for the intelligence confidence man and his political allies. Once again, the cries were heard: give them more money; unleash the CIA." (288)

What are the shortcomings of the *Cloak and Dollar*? The book fails to discuss several major recent events that have caused changes in both domestic and foreign intelligence operations, including the 1993 attempt at destroying the World Trade Organization; the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing; the 1998 American embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya; and the 1998 Tomahawk missile attack in Sudan, where the CIA failed to provide accurate intelligence to the military. Jeffreys-Jones analysis of these events and their linkages to confidence men would have further enhanced the last chapter. These omissions are understandable since such discussion would have increased the size of the book over 500 pages.

In conclusion, despite the shortcomings, *Cloak and Dollar* is an asset for any academic course on intelligence and national security. What differentiates this book from other is its central theme of "confidence man," and relating it to the development of American intelligence agencies. In the end, *Cloak and Dollar* not only enhances intelligence and national security studies, but also opens up a new area of research involving the confidence man syndrome.

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