



Dirty Tricks or Trump Cards: U.S. Covert Action and Counterintelligence (Brassey's Intelligence & National Security Library.)

By Roy Godson

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American intelligence is again under intense scrutiny and its future role and organization uncertain. The past 20 years have yielded a wealth of information about spying. But when it comes to two key elements of intelligence, counterintelligence and covert action, our knowledge remains sketchy. Both are viewed with suspicion and distaste in the United States and other democratic societies. Are they "dirty tricks" as portrayed by fiction writers and polemicists? Or, as this book argues, "trump cards" that when well-played provide a winning edge? This book traces the evolution of covert action and counterintelligence through the last 50 years of US history: the successes and failures; the products and the processes; and the organizations. As the United States struggles to deal with rogue states, terrorists, drug barons, increasingly sophisticated financial criminals and a proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the need for effective counterintelligence and covert action becomes more pressing than ever.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Godson's impressive study, notable for its clarity, defines both counterintelligence and covert action, arguing that both are necessary. Counterintelligence, he writes, includes the identification, neutralization and exploitation of the intelligence activities of others (thus protecting state secrets from adversaries); covert action encompasses efforts to influence events in other parts of the world without revealing or acknowledging involvement. Godson outlines ``ideal'' counterintelligence and covert action, describes how both have been practiced by the U.S. and suggests possible ways to employ each more effectively in the national interest. Godson, a professor of government at Georgetown University and consultant to the National Security Council, has written a textbook accessible to the general reader.

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Review

"...if you want to understand how the whole thing works at Washington level, and to have an idea of what George W. Bush is hearing from his adviser, then reading this will prove quicker and cheaper than setting up your spy network."

—*Daily Telegraph*

"Roy Godson provides much-needed balance, context, and insights for understanding the clandestine arts. As the United States debates the future of its intelligence capability, this provocative, interesting, and well-written book, which explains the significance of covert operations and what it takes to do them well, should be permitted to have a significant impact on the debate."

—Richard Helms, Former Director of Central Intelligence

"An independent analysis of key elements of intelligence, unbiased and unprejudiced—in contrast to the books of many 'insiders.' Godson illuminates the interdependence of the different but potent threats we will face in the 21st century: symbiotic relationships among transnational organized crime, security services, politicians, and terrorists, and the potential use of weapons of mass destruction and mass disruption. He demonstrates how the effective use of the clandestine arts—covert action and counterintelligence—can provide a winning edge. A wake-up call for everyone involved in global security."

—Volker Foertsch, Former Director, Germany's Clandestine Intelligence Service

"As a pioneer in intelligence studies and one of today's most influential scholars, Roy Godson has produced an outstanding analysis. Drawing on his extensive knowledge of history and contemporary intelligence practices in the United States and abroad, he sets forth principles to guide effective post-Cold War policy."

—Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr, Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of International Security, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

About the Author

Roy Godson is professor of government at Georgetown University and president of the National Strategy Information Center in Washington, DC. His most recent books include *Strategic Denial and Deception* (Transaction, 2002).

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