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978-0-521-06619-8 - Intelligence and the War against Japan: Britain, America and the Politics of Secret Service

Richard J. Aldrich

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Intelligence and the War against Japan offers the first comprehensive scholarly history of the development of the British secret service and its relations with its American intelligence counterparts during the war against Japan. Richard J. Aldrich makes extensive use of recently declassified files in order to examine the politics of secret service during the Far Eastern War, analysing the development of organisations such as Bletchley Park, the Special Operations Executive and the Office of Strategic Services in Asia. He argues that, from the Battle of Midway in June 1942, the Allies focused increasingly on each other's future ambitions, rather than the common enemy. Central to this theme are Churchill, Roosevelt and their rivalry over the future of empire in Asia. Richard J. Aldrich's cogent, fluent analysis of the role of intelligence in Far Eastern developments is the most thorough and penetrating account of this latterday 'Great Game' yet produced.

RICHARD J. ALDRICH is a senior lecturer in the School of Politics at the University of Nottingham and is Director of the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies. He was previously a Fulbright Fellow at Georgetown University, Washington. Co-editor of the journal *Intelligence and National Security*, he has produced several books, including *The Key to the South: Britain, the United States and Thailand during the Approach of the Pacific War* (Oxford, 1993).

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*Britain, America and the Politics
of Secret Service*

Richard J. Aldrich



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For Libby
(when even a badger is asleep)

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Preface

When V-J Day occurred on 2 September 1945 it marked the unexpected end to a long and bitter struggle against the forces of Imperial Japan. In Allied countries across the world, crowds celebrated in their millions. In London this appeared to be Britain's 'finest hour'. The wartime objectives that Roosevelt and Churchill had framed even before Pearl Harbor, during their famous mid-Atlantic meeting of August 1941, at last seemed to have been attained. The Axis powers had now surrendered unconditionally, with all the good things that most believed would surely flow from this momentous achievement.

But at the highest levels of Government, matters appeared very different. Gazing down upon the crowds celebrating V-J Day from his office in Whitehall, Sir Alexander Cadogan, one of Britain's most senior officials, recorded bitterly: 'London not at its best, with scores of thousands of morons wandering about and doing not much more than obstruct the traffic.' He hoped for a downpour to damp their celebratory fervour. Cadogan had justifiable reason to be downcast for he had just read a paper on Britain's financial outlook. 'It is certainly grim reading! . . . there are terrible times ahead'. Britain was now exhausted and bankrupt as a result of her exertions.¹

In Whitehall, Westminster and also in Washington, politicians and policy-makers had been privately thinking about the end of the war from its very beginning. How would the post-war world be ordered, and what would be the place of the European colonial empires within it? Would the real cost of American assistance against the Axis be the subordination – indeed the eventual dissolution – of empire, as some in the British Cabinet had predicted as early as 1939? In June 1942, the Battle of Midway turned the tide in the Pacific and the sporadic bombing of Tokyo began soon afterwards. The defeat of Japan, though still far distant, was nevertheless only a matter of time and thus attention increasingly turned to the issue of who would control the resources of the vast Asia-Pacific region after V-J Day. 'Secret service' – a term employed herein to denote all forms of clandestine activity – had a central and hitherto little understood role to play in these long-range issues.

This book examines the politics of secret service during the Far Eastern

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War, focusing upon Churchill, Roosevelt and their discordant visions of the future of post-war Asia. It also examines the development of British secret service and its institutional relations with its American intelligence counterparts during the Far Eastern War. In the context of the European War, secret service has helped to explain the strategic victory over the Axis. But in the Far Eastern War, where the conflict was truncated by the atomic bomb, the role of secret service was more evenly balanced between the military and the political. Here it is equally significant in offering a 'hidden hand' explanation of the bitter rivalry between London and Washington, as well as Paris and Chungking, over the nature of the post-war settlement. Secret service was an essential catalyst in what proved to be the most acrimonious inter-Allied disputes of the Second World War.

Secret services quickly became key players in the struggle between Churchill and Roosevelt over post-war Asia. Their initial task was to report on the rival plans and ambitions of Allied governments, headquarters and civil affairs staffs. By 1944 this had translated into a barely disguised 'Great Game' to achieve the upper hand in clandestine pre-occupational activities across South East Asia. At times the war against Japan appeared relegated to a sideshow. Senior British and American secret service officers in Asia, many of whom had past commercial associations with the region, needed little encouragement. Informed by an over-optimistic view of how clandestine struggle might influence the future, they sometimes indulged in injudicious activities.

Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten and his South East Asia Command became the storm centre. Tasked by Churchill with recovering British colonies and rebuilding imperial prestige in Asia, Mountbatten's new headquarters at Kandy in Ceylon hosted at least twelve Allied secret services, each attempting to make their mark. Despite Mountbatten's own boyish enthusiasm for secret service, and his considerable efforts to create effective 'umpire' mechanisms, relations deteriorated. In January 1945, the American 14th Air Force suggested that they might have shot down two British Liberator aircraft carrying intelligence operatives into French Indochina, in circumstances that still remain unclear.

Events on the ground were merely symptoms of wider pathologies. In both Britain and the United States no-one had resolved the issue of secret service control. Viewed as key instruments of national purpose, in a manner that distinguished them from armed forces, London and Washington refused to submit them to proper local control by theatre commanders. Yet secret service was the Second World War's growth industry, with new clandestine departments created almost on a monthly basis. Being neither strictly political, economic or military in nature, they occupied a 'grey area', characterised by perennial disputation over ministerial authority. The longer-term outcomes

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were also significant, shaping attitudes towards secret service in subsequent decades.

It should be stressed that this is not intended as a study of the detailed impact of intelligence upon Allied strategy and military operations. Some key documentation for that larger subject remains closed to public inspection and when these materials are eventually released, the task awaiting the required team of historians will be very substantial. More emphasis is given to British than American organisations partly because of the relative absence of American secret service in this region before 1942. Widespread American secret service activities after 1942 have been more fully investigated by others, underlining the commendably early development of the study of intelligence history in the United States.

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Abbreviations

A-2	US Air Force Intelligence
ABDA	American–British–Dutch–Australian Command
AFO	Anti-Fascist Organisations [Burmese]
AFHQ	Allied Forces Headquarters
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League [Burmese]
AGAS	Air–Ground Aid Section [American]
AGFRTS	Air and Ground Forces Resource and Technical Staff [American]
AIR	Air Ministry [British]
AJUF	Anti-Japanese United Front
ALFPMO	Allied Land Forces Para-Military Operations [British]
ALFSEA	Allied Land Forces South East Asia
BAAG	British Army Aid Group, China
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BEW	Board of Economic Warfare [American]
BIA	Burma Independence Army [Burmese]
BIS	Bureau of Investigation and Statistics
BJ	British-Japanese intercepts (colloquially ‘Black Jumbos’)
BJSM	British Joint Services Mission (Washington)
BNA	Burmese National Army [Burmese]
BP	Bletchley Park
BPF	Burma Patriotic Front
BRUSA	Britain–USA
BSC	British Security Co-ordination, New York [British]
C	Chief of the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)
CAS (B)	Civil Affairs Service (Burma)
CBI	China–Burma–India Theater
CD	Chief of the Special Operations Executive
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency [American]
CIBHK	Combined Intelligence Bureau, Hong Kong [British]
CIBM	Combined Intelligence Bureau, Malaya
C. in C.	Commander in Chief

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xx Abbreviations

CIC	Counter Intelligence Corps [American]
CICB	Counter-Intelligence Combined Board
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff [British]
CLI	Corps Léger d'Intervention [French]
CO	Colonial Office [British]
COI	Co-ordinator of Information (predecessor of OSS)
COIS	Commanding Officer Intelligence Staff, Singapore
COS	Chiefs of Staff [British]
COSSEA	Chiefs of Staff to South East Asia
CPA	Chiefs Political Adviser
CSDIC	Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre [India]
CT	China Theatre
CX	Prefix for a report originating with SIS
D/F	Direction finding
DGER	Direction générale des études et recherches [French]
DIB	Director of the Intelligence Bureau [India]
DMI	Director of Military Intelligence [British]
DMO	Directorate of Military Operations [British]
DNI	Director of Naval Intelligence [British]
D of I	Director of Intelligence
DSO	Defence Security Officer
ENIGMA	German rotor cryptograph
ESD 44	Economic Survey Detachment/Group 44
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation [American]
FDR	Franklin D. Roosevelt
FE	Far East
FEB	Far Eastern Bureau, the PWE mission in India [British]
FECB	Far Eastern Combined Bureau, Singapore [British]
FESS	Far Eastern Security Service, Singapore [British]
FETO	Far Eastern Theater of Operations
FO	Foreign Office [British]
Force 136	SOE in the Far East [British]
G-2	Military Intelligence [American]
GBT	Gordon–Bernard–Tan network in Indochina
GC&CS	Government Code and Cipher School (later GCHQ) [British]
GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters [British]
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GOI	Government of India
GSOI	General Staff Officer Intelligence
HF/DF	High frequency/Direction finding

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IB	Intelligence Bureau [India]
IBT	India–Burma Theater
ICP	Indian Communist Party
IIS	Institute for International Studies
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
IMFTE	International Military Tribunal for the Far East
INA	Indian National Army
IPI	Indian Political Intelligence
ISLD	SIS/MI6 in the Middle East and the Far East [British]
ISUM	Intelligence Summary
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff [American]
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
JICPOA	Joint Intelligence Committee Pacific Ocean Area
JIFs	Japanese Inspired Fifth-Columnists
JN-25	Japanese Naval Operational Code
JPS	Joint Planning Staff [British]
JSM	Joint Services Mission, Washington [British]
KMT	Koumintang, Chinese nationalist party
Magic	Decrypts of Japanese diplomatic material
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MEW	Ministry of Economic Warfare [British]
MI1c	Military section of SIS
MI2c	London military intelligence section dealing with Asia
MI5	Security Service [British]
MI6	Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) [British]
MI8	Army Y interception
MI9	Escape and Evasion [British]
MID	Military Intelligence Division [American]
MI(R)	Military Intelligence, Research
MIS	Military Intelligence Service [American]
MO	Morale Operations Branch, OSS [American]
MOI	Ministry of Information [British]
MPAJA	Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army
MU	Maritime Unit Branch, OSS [American]
NEI	Netherlands East Indies
NKVD	People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs, predecessor of KGB [Soviet]
NID	Naval Intelligence Division [British]
NSA	National Security Agency
O of B	Order of Battle
ONI	Office of Naval Intelligence [American]
Op-20-G	American naval codebreaking organisation

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xxii Abbreviations

ORI	Office of Research and Intelligence (post war R&A)
OSS	Office of Strategic Services [American]
OTP	One-time pad cipher system
OWI	Office of War Information [American]
PHPS	Post Hostilities Planning Staff [British]
POA	Pacific Ocean Area
‘Purple’	American name for the Japanese Type B cryptograph
PWE	Political Warfare Executive [British]
R&A	Research and Analysis Branch, OSS [American]
RII	Resources Investigation Institute
RSS	Radio Security Service
SA	Service d’action [French]
SAC	Supreme Allied Commander
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Command Europe
SACO	Sino-American Cooperative Organisation
SACSEA	Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia
SAS	Special Air Service [British]
SCIU	Special Counter Intelligence Unit
SD	State Department
SEAC	South East Asia Command
SEATIC	South East Asia Translation and Interrogation Centre, SEAC
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SI	Secret Intelligence Branch, OSS [American]
SIFE	Security Intelligence Far East (MI5/SIS V) [British]
sigint	Signals intelligence
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) [British]
SLFEO	Service Liaison Français d’Extrême Orient [French]
SO	Special Operations Branch, OSS (American)
SO1	SOE Propaganda [British]
SO2	SOE Special Operations [British]
SOE	Special Operations Executive [British]
SoS	Secretary of State
SR	Service de renseignements [French]
SRH	Special Research History [American]
SSU	Strategic Services Unit [post-war OSS]
SWPA	South West Pacific Area
Ultra	British classification for signals intelligence
WEC	Wireless Experimental Centre, India [British]
WO	War Office [British]
W/T	Wireless Telegraphy

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X-2	Counter-intelligence Branch, OSS [American]
Y	Wireless interception, usually of a low-level variety

ADDITIONAL ABBREVIATIONS USED IN REFERENCES

BDEE	Ashton and Stockwell, <i>British Documents on the End of Empire</i>
BE	Bank of England
BL	British Library
BLPES	British Library of Political and Economic Science
BRO	Brotherton Library, University of Leeds
BUL	Birmingham University Library
CCC	Churchill College, Cambridge
CMH	Center for Military History, US Army War College
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DAFP	<i>Documents on Australian Foreign Policy</i>
DP	Donovan Papers
FDRL	Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York
FRC	Federal Record Centre, Suitland, Maryland
FRUS	<i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i>
HIWRP	Hoover Institute on War Revolution and Peace, Stanford
HSTL	Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri
INS	<i>Intelligence and National Security</i>
IOLR	India Office Library and Records, Blackfriars, London
IWM	Imperial War Museum
JRL	John Rylands Library, University of Manchester
LC	Library of Congress
LHCMA	Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, Kings College, London
LL	Special Collections, Lauinger Library, Georgetown University
MML	MacArthur Memorial Library, Norfolk, Virginia
NA	National Archives, Washington DC
NAM	National Army Museum, London
NY	New York
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew Gardens, Surrey
PWTM	<i>Principal War Telegrams and Memoranda</i>
RG	US Record Group
PSF	President's Secretaries Files
SFI	H. Tinker (ed.), <i>The Struggle for Independence</i>
SUL	Southampton University Library

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<i>TOP</i>	N. Mansergh (ed.), <i>The Transfer of Power</i>
UP	University Press
USNA	US National Archives