

BOOK REVIEW

Taking the spy out of spying.

BY MARK WILLIAMS

IF IT'S 007-STYLE grotesqueries you want—cigarette-size pistols, Central Intelligence Agency psychics engaged in “remote viewing” of Soviet installations, tuberculosis-contaminated wet suits for scuba-diving enthusiast Fidel Castro, and LSD-spiked liqueurs slipped to unsuspecting scientists who then leap suicidally from third-floor windows—Jeffrey Richelson's *The Wizards of Langley: Inside the CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology* has them for you.

But such clandestine operations are a minor feature in Mr. Richelson's dry, detailed history of the CIA's Cold War-era technological programs. *The Wizards of Langley* concentrates on the evolution of the agency's capabilities for electronic and signals intelligence (ELINT and SIGINT, in the defense world's acronym-speak). Thus, covered here are spy planes like the U-2, the A-12/Oxcart (which, when it was introduced in 1967, flew at more than 2,100 mph and a maximum altitude of 90,000 feet) and the A-12's successor, the SR-71 Blackbird. Here, similarly, are the space-based surveillance systems that by the early '70s were enabling the CIA, with its Landsat satellites and computers, to achieve such feats as assessing the Soviets' annual harvest yields.

Here, indeed, are so many hundreds of acronymized or code-named CIA programs for electronic intelligence gathering that one's mind dulls. The nearest Mr. Richelson gets to stock notions of spying is in reporting how a CIA team set itself up as a Canadian film company shooting a science fiction movie in Iran

THE WIZARDS OF LANGLEY: INSIDE THE CIA'S DIRECTORATE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

By Jeffrey Richelson

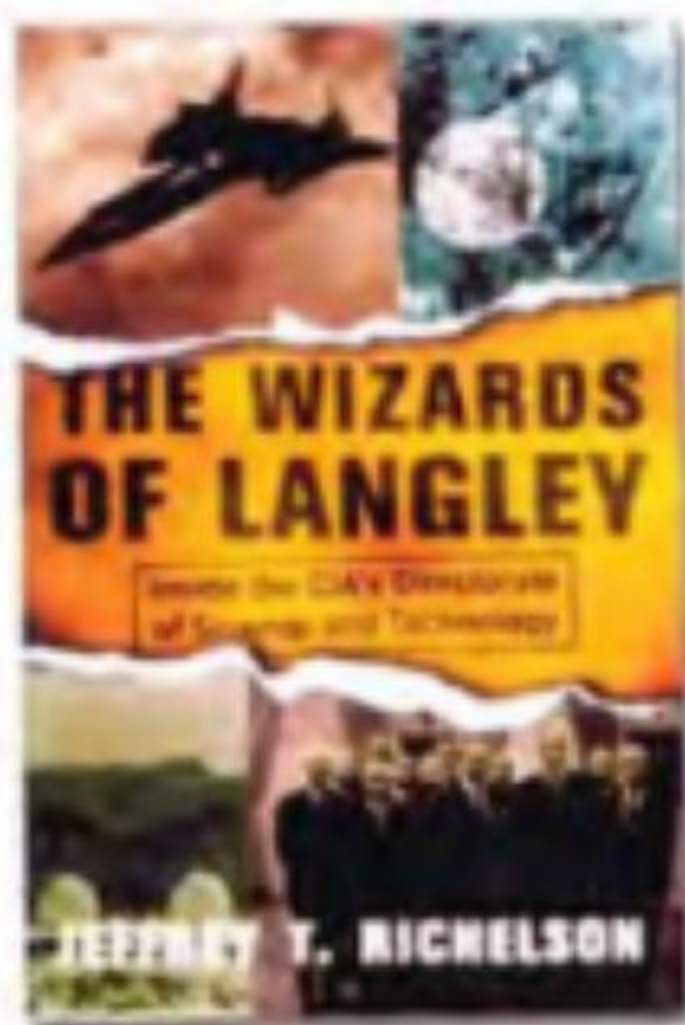
386 pages, Westview Press, \$26

and smuggled out six American diplomats who'd managed to escape detention after the Shah's fall in 1979.

All this concentration on electronic intelligence at the expense of human intelligence (HUMINT) isn't simply the author's, of course. Though *The Wizards of Langley* doesn't mention it, during the early '70s—following Watergate—the CIA was raked over the coals by no fewer than seven congressional committees. In 1977, the CIA director under President Jimmy Carter, Admiral Stansfield Turner, was finally allowed to reinstitute covert CIA operations abroad. But Adm. Turner's dislike of HUMINT's moral and logistical messiness shifted Langley's technocrats toward adopting more fully

a stance which they were happy to take anyhow.

Thus, in the '90s, the CIA's dependence on its familiar technologies grew. Now, after September 11, 2001, it seems the agency doesn't even possess Farsi or Pushtu speakers among its preppy white employees in Langley—let alone agents on the ground in Afghanistan. Like the rest of America's defense establishment, the CIA must face the fact that it cannot expect to keep fighting the last century's wars. ■



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