

and no complicated and objectionable incarnation; plenty of babies; also good hors d'oeuvres. A fine bargain, in fact.

Unless, of course, what Huysmans's monks chanted was true. Unless the Word, in flagrant defiance of both materialist possibility and perennialist propriety, was made flesh. **P**

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## INTELLIGENCE IN AN OPEN SOCIETY

Review by David R. Shedd

### *JUST WAR AND THE ETHICS OF ESPIONAGE*

by DARRELL COLE — Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015, 155 pages

Espionage dates back at least to the start of recorded history of the human race. As the title of Darrell Cole's book suggests, boundaries on what constitutes acceptable and non-acceptable behavior in the use of espionage techniques is something that merits the kind of in-depth, serious, and Christian analysis that Mr. Cole provides. In his exceptionally well-written and argued case, the author links a nation's proper use of espionage as state craft to the long established just war theory framework which traces its origins back to St. Augustine (354-430 AD).

In essence, just war theory recognizes and makes the case on moral grounds that peace, order, and justice will at times only be preserved by engaging in armed conflict. Mr. Cole makes a strong and convincing case that espionage is a justified practice by a nation using the same just war theory applicable to the use of a country's military.

Whether you are a current or former intelligence professional or, for that matter, an ordinary citizen concerned with how the state uses intelligence as an element of national defense,

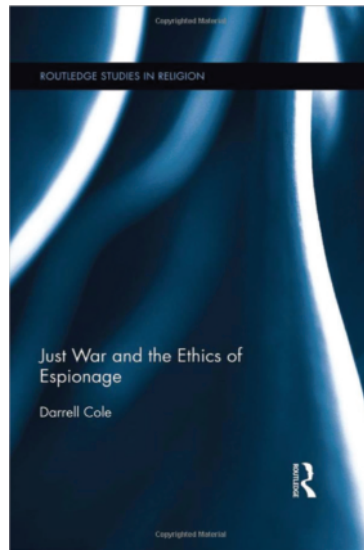
this book will be difficult to put down once you open it. *Just War and the Ethics of Espionage* takes you deep into the labyrinth of ethical challenges in what the author argues is a necessary activity that prevents escalatory conflicts and protects the citizenry of a nation. Mr. Cole would be the first to warn, however, that as statecraft is in the hands of fallible human beings, the bar is justifiably high in establishing the rules of engagement for the personnel that undertake espionage in defense of the nation.

Mr. Cole's book should be mandatory reading for all those in pursuit of a career in intelligence work. He not only makes a strong justification for spying as a contributor to maintaining justice and peace but also warns that in the absence of checks and balances in a free society, espionage leads to abuses. His book is replete with historical examples of espionage ranging from the intricate, brave, and honorable work done by American intelligence professionals in the lead up to and the conduct of the operation against Osama bin Laden to the application of covert action recorded throughout annals of U.S. history. But this

is no hagiography, the analysis of the examples provided by Mr. Cole is not always kind to those who undertook those acts of espionage when evaluated through the grid of the just war theory framework.

The principal reason for the need for espionage, like the use of force, is because of the presence of evil in the world. Mr. Cole does an exquisite job of drawing parallels using principles related to just war tradition founded in the great thinkers and those living out their Christian values and those same principles exercised in application to espionage. The well presented and defended case for applying just war principles to modern day covert action as statecraft is nothing short of brilliant. Mr. Cole argues that just as the case for making decisions concerning the use of force in wartime hinge on considerations of proportionality and discrimination, so are those considerations centrally applicable in the determination to undertake covert action. Such justifications make constituent aspects of espionage, such as deception, morally acceptable when practiced in the pursuit of higher good and undertaken by a nation fighting evil.

The book is written in a manner that is easy to digest yet one would commit a grave mistake to believe it is a light bedtime read. Mr. Cole has an uncanny ability to plumb the depths of difficult moral questions when it comes to espionage. Nonetheless, he studiously finds a way to bridge what appears to be an irreconcilable moral dilemma for a Christian to reconcile a career based on lying, deception and even complicity in the death of an adversary with fidelity to the fundamentals of Christian ethics.



By definition, the very characteristics that make for a successful career in espionage seem to run counter to Biblical moral principles. How does one justify lying and deception when as a Christian one is taught that such actions are sin? Is torture ever justifiable? Should assassination be condoned as statecraft? What comes alive in Mr. Cole's 155 pages is not only a wrestling match in one's mind over extraordinarily difficult questions, but his profound insights in how to reconcile the moral dilemmas without gleefully dismissing the moral quandaries. If not everything is neatly resolved by the end of the book, the reader is given much to think about in attempting to find a way to make it across what might have seemed a profound and unbridgeable moral chasm.

At no time does Mr. Cole minimize the challenges in threading the needle in the conduct of intelligence. He warns that the job of the intelligence professional is fraught with temptations for extreme abuses due to often operating in the shadows. Any person involved in espionage must be a person above reproach and of the highest integrity or abuse is sure to follow. Wisdom, dis-

cernment, and self-control are but a few of the characteristics of Mr. Cole's ideal spy.

Throughout, what Mr. Cole does in his book so well is to go considerably beyond a technical discussion of intelligence tradecraft in what is increasingly a morally agnostic world with little regard for God's definition of truth and righteousness and delves into prickly issues of right and wrong. In taking us into both the vocational and ethical weeds of the profession, the book proves incredibly relevant to both practioners and laypersons alike—so much so that I immediately introduced it to my college course focused on intelligence and national security at Patrick Henry College.

A worthwhile bridge, Mr. Cole's book is essential reading for anyone wanting to reflect wisely on the practice of espionage without glibly ignoring the moral complexity inherent in the profession nor presuming that the Christian ethical tradition has nothing to say to it. Crossing this bridge is vital for those of moral conviction determined to avoid morally unacceptable choices in defense of justice, peace, and order. As a part of the arsenal of a nation in which democracy thrives, espionage, it turns out, can be ethical. **P**

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