



MI6: Inside the Covert World of Her Majesty's Secret Intelligence Service

By Stephen Dorril

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MI6, Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, is one of the great information-gathering organizations of the world, internationally renowned as the employer of the mythical but emblematic James Bond. Yet it has remained one of the nation's most elusive organizations. Its head, Richard Dearlove, is virtually unknown -- a contemporary photograph has never appeared in the press -- and even its true budget is not made public. There is no legal "right to know" what is undertaken abroad in the name of Britain's security, what it costs or how it is run. In the past, any dissident reports of its operations were effectively quashed. To write about MI6 risks harassment and prosecution, as former members and current commentators know to their cost, and the organization has remained veiled from scrutiny. Its inside story has never been told. Until now. Stephen Dorril, a meticulous observer and chronicler of the security services, provides a full fifty-year history for the first time, offering the most complete portrait ever of MI6's motives and character and, crucially, what it has done and where it has been most influential. At the beginning of the Cold War, Britain was a global power literally dividing up the world. By 1992, influence abroad had been lost in the Middle East, most of Africa and large swathes of Asia. Even in Europe, Britain seemed exiled and isolated. What had MI6 been doing? MI6's postwar activities were mired in prewar attitudes and practices, at home in the exclusive clubs of Pall Mall but poorly suited to a retreating post-imperial power. Britain's management of the Cold War was in the itching hands of a mixture of frustrated former members of the wartime Special Operations Executive, desperate for active military engagements, anxious reactionaries and a few socialist devotees for whom communism was the future and spying the career of choice. This is the first operational history of MI6, the first look at the organization in action. With a level of detail unparalleled in the annals of British intelligence, Dorril chronicles the fascinating history from 1949 to the current day. Replete with tales of its most spectacular failures, stirring successes, unsavory plots and bizarre missions, the real-life cloak-and-dagger world is exposed. From the grisly truth about Operation Stalin, which exploited the Russian dictator's paranoia and led to the execution of thousands, to the tunnel MI6 dug beneath the Berlin wall to the recruitment methods, training programs and space-age gadgetry of the modern spy, this definitive history has it all. MI6 is a vital, essential arm of the British

state. It is Britain's player at the chessboard of international intelligence-gathering and a key partner to America's superpower status. Dorri's is a searching story of the characters and situations in which the games have been played, from the back streets of Aden to the Brandenburg Gate, the mountains of Albania to the shores of the Black Sea. This is a discreet and riveting history of half a century of international political intriguing, spying and thuggery -- all in the name of intelligence.

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