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James H. Critchfield, *Partners at the Creation: The Men Behind Postwar Germany's Defense and Intelligence Establishments*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2003. X, 243pp. ISBN 1-59114-136-2. Illustrations, appendix, bibliography, index.

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In recent months, the book under review has received two highly negative reviews by other historians. In the July 2004 issue of *The Journal of Military History*, David Kahn, one of the deans of American intelligence history, wrote that the book was an insignificant memoir that adds nothing of any value to “the history of the establishment of post-World War II intelligence” (p. 1011). Similarly, in the July/August 2004 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, historian Timothy Naftali of the University of Virginia’s Miller Center of Public Affairs, took James Critchfield to task for arguing in his book that the CIA’s support of Reinhard Gehlen’s intelligence organization in occupied Germany in the early Cold War years was on balance a benefit both to the United States and to the West German state that emerged in May 1949. In fact, Naftali asserted, the CIA’s arrangement with the Gehlen organization was a Faustian bargain that “plunged the United States into moral and political corruption” (p. 131) and moreover proved of little value, since Gehlen’s operation “was thoroughly penetrated by the Soviets, and its ability to collect useful intelligence for NATO questionable” (p. 132).

This reviewer sides with neither of these views. Although James Critchfield’s book does not provide the reader with details on the order of battle intelligence that Reinhard Gehlen’s organization provided the CIA in the early Cold War period regarding

what became known as the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, it does not thereby become simply an insignificant memoir. By the same token, while an intelligence agency should carefully weigh the morality of supporting an operation such as Gehlen's that recruited some former members of the SD (Sicherheitsdienst), the Third Reich's security service, and even some members of the wartime SS (Schutzstaffel), a decision to provide such support is not inherently flawed. Naftali's assertion aside, the Gehlen organization was neither "thoroughly penetrated" by the KGB nor was its ability to provide useful intelligence to the CIA and NATO "questionable."

The real value of this book does not lie in its specific information on the nature of Gehlen's intelligence organization. It is, after all, a memoir by an American officer who served as the head of the CIA's Pullach Operations Base—the compound near Munich where Gehlen's group was headquartered after 1947—and who oversaw the CIA's financial support of Gehlen's operation, beginning in 1949. The book's real value lies instead in things like the author's personal recollections of the men who served as Gehlen's principal staff officers, men such as Heinz Herre, Gerhard Wessel, and Eberhard Blum. Even more valuable from a historical perspective is James Critchfield's interesting account of how several senior former German General Staff officers, including Adolf Heusinger, Hans Speidel, and Hermann Foertsch, worked with West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to create a German defense ministry and an armed forces (the Bundeswehr) to serve under NATO command.

As a final comment, it should be pointed out that this memoir makes it evident that because he served as a CIA officer in a specialized assignment in West Germany, Critchfield was not fully aware of some of the larger aspects of U.S. intelligence gathering in the country during the first decade of the Cold War. This is particularly the case with regard to the U.S. Navy's intelligence effort in Germany. James Critchfield makes a brief mention of Navy Captain Arthur H. "Speedy" [sic – "Speed"] Graubart, largely in connection with Navy Commander Val Rychly, whom Critchfield had gotten to know (p. 103). Critchfield clearly was unaware, however, that Graubart, who had been an Assistant Naval Attaché in Berlin prior to the United States' entry into World War II (not

the Naval Attaché, as Critchfield has it), was the U.S. Navy's senior intelligence officer in Germany from mid-1946 to 1951 and that Rychly was working as a member of his staff. Interestingly, although there is no mention of it in Critchfield's book, Graubart spent his final active duty years operating under cover as the CIA's chief of station in Bonn (as this author found out when interviewing him several years ago).¹

¹ A recent book that briefly discusses Captain Graubart's role in establishing the "Naval Historical Team, Bremerhaven" in 1948 is Douglas C. Peifer, *The Three German Navies: Dissolution, Transition, and New Beginnings, 1945–1960* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002).



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