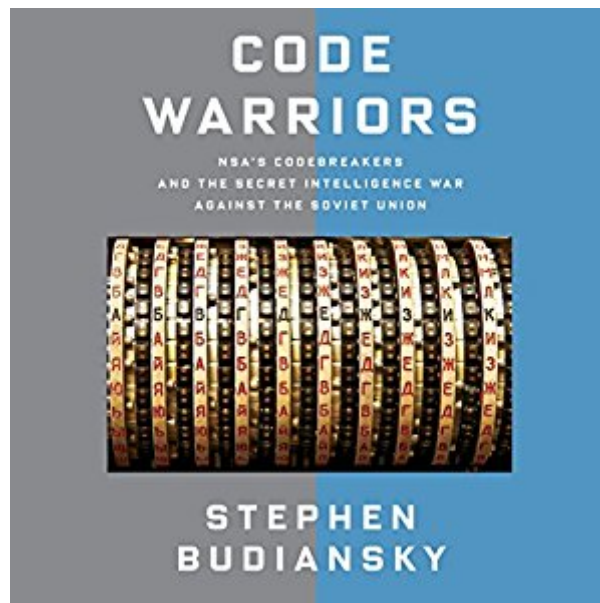




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Code Warriors: NSA's Codebreakers And The Secret Intelligence War Against The Soviet Union



Synopsis

A sweeping, in-depth history of NSA, whose famous "cult of silence" has left the agency shrouded in mystery for decades. The National Security Agency was born out of the legendary codebreaking programs of World War II that cracked the famed Enigma machine and other German and Japanese codes, thereby turning the tide of Allied victory. In the postwar years, as the United States developed a new enemy in the Soviet Union, our intelligence community found itself targeting not soldiers on the battlefield, but suspected spies, foreign leaders, and even American citizens. Throughout the second half of the 20th century, NSA played a vital, often fraught and controversial role in the major events of the Cold War, from the Korean War to the Cuban Missile Crisis to Vietnam and beyond. In *Code Warriors*, Stephen Budiansky - a longtime expert in cryptology - tells the fascinating story of how NSA came to be, from its roots in World War II through the fall of the Berlin Wall. Along the way, he guides us through the fascinating challenges faced by cryptanalysts, and how they broke some of the most complicated codes of the 20th century. With access to new documents, Budiansky shows where the agency succeeded and failed during the Cold War, but his account also offers crucial perspective for assessing NSA today in the wake of the Edward Snowden revelations. Budiansky shows how NSA's obsession with recording every bit of data and decoding every signal is far from a new development; throughout its history the depth and breadth of the agency's reach has resulted in both remarkable successes and destructive failures. Featuring a series of appendixes that explain the technical details of Soviet codes and how they were broken, this is a rich and riveting history of the underbelly of the Cold War, and an essential and timely read for all who seek to understand the origins of the modern NSA.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Secrets! It is a curse that nations need secrets to achieve their national goals. This book explores SIGINT (signal intelligence) in the United States from World War II to the NSA in the Vietnam War... it is limited to what is current state because that information has not been declassified yet. My mother was a Code Breaker at Arlington Hall during World War II largely because she spoke Slavic languages fluently. It became an obsession with her: she could never let it go after World War II and it greatly influenced my and my siblings childhood. If you know the story of Thomas Nash, you know the story of my mother's life. So I took particular interest in this book because the hype for the book said that it would explore Arlington Hall: it failed in my estimation in this hype BUT it was successful in describing the growth of SIGINT from WWII to the Vietnam War. Cracking codes is not an easy business as I learned from my mother. Intelligence gathering violates the basic principles of democratic nation's and certainly those of the United States. Yet, without this information, we risk major loss of lives, resources and perhaps the nation itself. As this book more than adequately describes, it is a nasty business. It corrupts the people involved and leads to disputes in what should be collected, how it should be collected, how it should be processed and how the results should be disseminated to people responsible for operations. It invites parochialism and the hiding of failure. Information is power and every bureaucracy wants to have its intelligence. Worst yet, it invites the distribution of intelligence that fits what political leaders want to hear. And yet, there is hope. There is hope that intelligence can save the nation, that intelligence can prevent the loss of lives and that intelligence can save us. A good book, very readable and worthwhile to consider for thinking about!

Excellent coverage of analytic techniques in 20th century through the 1950's. Due to security restrictions increasingly sparse afterwards. The book is one of the few that acknowledges the contributions of the tens of thousands of enlisted military linguists and analysts that kept close track of Warsaw pact and asian orders of battle during the cold war. Mostly missing of course is western history on encryption methods of the US and it's allies.

This is an excellent and detailed chronology of communications intelligence gathering from ww2 to current times. However, like many subject focused books it helps if you have a keen interest in the subject. I worked in this area from late 50s to early 60s, so from my perspective it was fascinating

and filled a lot of voids.

It's a little tedious, I was expecting more on the technical aspects. This is all about bureaucracy and infighting.

Just an excellent read on the history of the NSA and domestic codebreaking over the last 70 years or so, well written and entertaining considering its subject matter..... if you like this book, you may want to look at The Code Breakers by David Kahn. It's an older book, so not up-to-the-minute on code technology.....but it is a much more longer and more exhaustive history of codes from their very beginnings. A good deal drier to read unless you have a high interest in codes and codebreaking. .

I'm only 1/4 of the way through this engaging story that largely picks up at the end of WW2 code breaking and goes to the Snowden period and the creation of the NSA from Army and Navy competing intelligence.

I enjoyed this book...If you were in the Army Security Agency, Air Force Security Service or Naval Security Group you will too. If you ever had any doubt that our work was meaningful, you won't after you finish this book!

I don't know much about this topic, so to me all the info was interesting. However, my dad, who was in the army in the late 50s, thought Budiansky did a terrific job of explaining things--including the sad truth about how poorly the agencies worked with one another and how many times they lost opportunities to do better intelligence work. For readers who want hard facts about coding and military intelligence, this is a satisfying read.

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