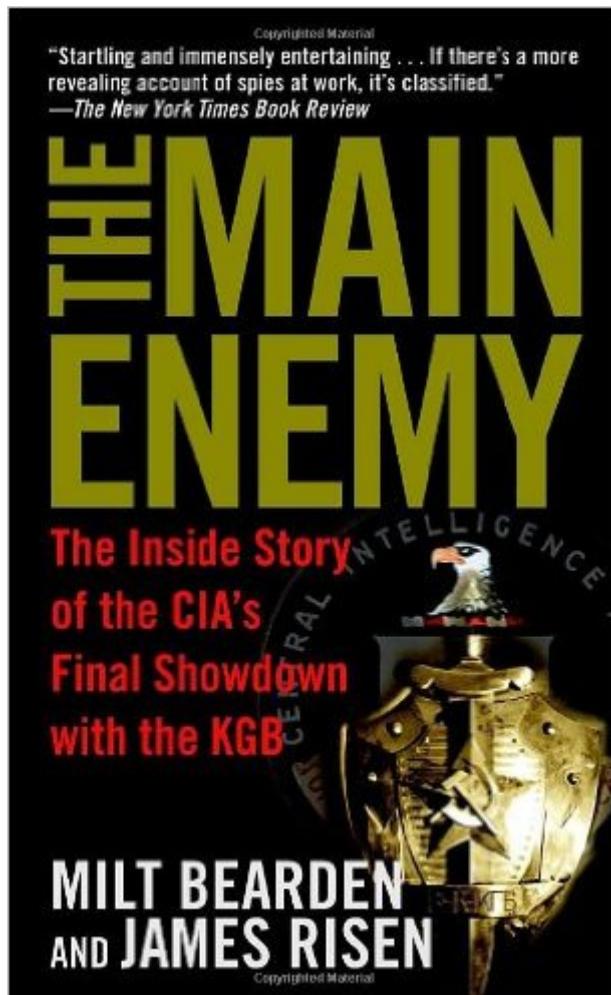


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The Main Enemy: The Inside Story Of The CIA's Final Showdown With The KGB



Synopsis

A landmark collaboration between a thirty-year veteran of the CIA and a Pulitzer Prizeâ “winning journalist, The Main Enemy is the dramatic inside story of the CIA-KGB spy wars, told through the actions of the men who fought them. Based on hundreds of interviews with operatives from both sides, The Main Enemy puts us inside the heads of CIA officers as they dodge surveillance and walk into violent ambushes in Moscow. This is the story of the generation of spies who came of age in the shadow of the Cuban missile crisis and rose through the ranks to run the CIA and KGB in the last days of the Cold War. The clandestine operations they masterminded took them from the sewers of Moscow to the back streets of Baghdad, from Cairo and Havana to Prague and Berlin, but the action centers on Washington, starting in the infamous "Year of the Spy"--when, one by one, the CIAâ ™s agents in Moscow began to be killed, up through to the very last man. Behind the scenes with the CIA's covert operations in Afghanistan, Milt Bearden led America to victory in the secret war against the Soviets, and for the first time he reveals here what he did and whom America backed, and why. Bearden was called back to Washington after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan and was made chief of the Soviet/East European Divisionâ "just in time to witness the fall of the Berlin Wall, the revolutions that swept across Eastern Europe, and the implosion of the Soviet Union. Laced with startling revelations--about fail-safe top-secret back channels between the CIA and KGB, double and triple agents, covert operations in Berlin and Prague, and the fateful autumn of 1989--The Main Enemy is history at its action-packed best. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

This book is a fine read, and to my surprise, the contributions from The New York Times are quite worthwhile. In essence the primary author, Milton Beardon, wrote the core of the book, on his experiences with the Soviet Division in the Directorate of Operations at the CIA, and in Afghanistan and Pakistan driving the Soviets in Afghanistan, and then journalist James Risen filled in the gaps with really excellent vignettes from the other side. The two authors together make a fine team, and they have very capably exploited a number of former KGB and GRU officers whose recollections round out the story. This is not, by any means, a complete story. At the end of this review I recommend five other books that add considerable detail to a confrontation that spanned the globe for a half-century. Yet, while it barely scratches the surface, this book is both historical and essential in understanding two facts: 1) Afghanistan was the beginning of the end for USSR and 2) CIA made it happen, once invigorated by President Ronald Reagan and DCI William Casey. It may not be immediately apparent to the casual reader, but that is the most important story being told in this book: how the collapse of the Soviet effort in Afghanistan ultimately led to the collapse of Soviet authority in East Germany, in the other satellite states, and eventually to the unification of Germany and the survival of Russia as a great state but no longer an evil empire. There are two other stories in this book, and both are priceless. The first is a tale of counterintelligence failure across the board within both the CIA and the FBI.

by Richard Sale, UPI Terrorism Correspondent
The U.S.-Soviet war of spies was essentially a war about "denied areas" -- breaching those inner circles of government secrecy whose existence is essential to national security and military supremacy. For both sides, this meant recruiting defectors in place -- agents with access to denied areas and who were spotted, conditioned, recruited and trained to betray their countries' vital information. (Sometimes they volunteered.) Since governments do not act on a single piece of information, an agent's production must be sustained over a significant period of time, and it should go without saying that the value of the information is so great that the recruiters will hazard almost any risk to get it. This brutal war of brains is the subject of a new classic of intelligence literature by Milt Bearden, a true CIA legend, and James Risen, a first-rate reporter on intelligence for the New York Times. Called, "The Main Enemy," the book opens in 1985, when the FBI and the CIA had suffered a series of disastrous losses among the Russians they had recruited. It is with intense disquiet that the reader comes to realize that top U.S. assets are one by one coming under the dominion of a dark power. Within a space of 15 months, like night lights in a distant village winking out, two dozen priceless Soviet

spies working for America are recalled to Moscow, interrogated, and many shot in the back of the head in a KGB prison including a 65-year-old Russian grandfather Gen. Dmitri Polyakov or "TOPHAT," of the agency's and FBI's most irreplaceable and beloved sources.

This is the story gathered through hundreds of interviews with both US and USSR players of the battle between the CIA and KGB in the closing days of the Cold War, 1985 through the collapse of the Soviet Union. Part I, Year of the Spy tells of the efforts to "turn" KGB agents, Government officials and high-ranking military and subsequent contacts by their American controllers. We're told of the constant surveillance of embassy officials, the training of new agents, tricks for eluding tails. Surprising to me was the involvement of spouses who often accompanied the agents on "runs" or otherwise aided the agents. In training there would be surprise arrests that would seem real to the agents, they would include a roughing up by FBI agents. The test for the agent was to hold back his CIA connection. Starting in 1985 a string of our moles were arrested by the KGB. Despite ridicule of James Jesus Angleton whose paranoia about moles inside the CIA was legend, it appeared now that his paranoia was well-placed. The luring of moles, their exchanges of money and information at drop points are covered from both sides. For example meticulous planning has gone into a "run," i.e., CIA meeting with a KGB agent to exchange money, needs, information. The story is told by the US agent arriving at the drop site, having shaken his KGB tail; the same story is then told by KGB officials who are setting him up and the capture of the spy (a scientist in this case). Almost at the same time, June '85, Aldrich Ames was meeting in DC with his Russian handler, delivering to him the name of every spy he knew. He did this because John Walker, US Navy man, had been arrested in May as a Russian spy.

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