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Book Reviews

Hulnick, Arthur S..

Keeping Us Safe: Secret Intelligence and Homeland Security.

London: Praeger, 2004. 264pp.

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With the recent terrorist attacks in London, the issue of homeland security is once again at the forefront of political agendas on both sides of the Atlantic. The United States of America, of course, has been addressing the matter since 11 September 2001 through a variety of commissions, reforms and legislation, including [the Patriot Act](#). The partial restructuring of the American intelligence community with the creation of the Directorate of National Intelligence and the Department of Homeland Security suggests the need for a systematic and academic look at the nature and merit of these changes. Unfortunately, Arthur S. Hulnick's *Keeping Us Safe* is not that book. Hulnick, an associate professor of international relations at Boston University, is not simply presenting the perspective of a detached outsider on the role of intelligence within homeland security. He is a former member of the [Central Intelligence Agency \(CIA\)](#) and, as a legal requirement, the manuscript had to be vetted by the CIA before it could be published. Not surprisingly, the CIA required no changes since this book is a generalized account of the topic, primarily drawn from secondary sources, which offers few insights.

This is a conservative book. It is not conservative in the way the term is now used in "[inside the Beltway](#)" political discourse in the United States. Instead, it is conservative because of Hulnick's consistent desire to engage only the micro questions surrounding the practice of intelligence while consistently defending the system as a whole. He makes it clear in the book's preface that he does not find common cause with those who criticize the apparently thin-skinned intelligence community:

Unfortunately, the Independent Commission [the 9/11 Commission] let it be known—even before its final report was released—that it would assign blame for what went wrong on 9/11, but this could be very destructive. Those who take the brunt of the criticism cannot be expected to resume their tasks with increased vigor and enthusiasm. (xiii)

In that sense this study lacks imagination. There is little attempt to broach broader aspects surrounding the use of intelligence by states in general or by American administrations in particular. Instead, Hulnick consistently defends American state agencies against their critics, while underplaying their missteps, such as the cases of "blowback" generated by actions of the CIA. Thus, for example, he discusses the ouster of [Manuel Noriega from Panama without mentioning he was at one time in the pay of the CIA](#). Nor does he find space to mention the

extent of [the decades of criminality as practiced by the Federal Bureau of Investigation under J. Edgar Hoover](#).

Some of his other interpretations are questionable. He writes that Jimmy Carter politicized the position of Director of Central Intelligence when his new administration failed to retain [George H.W. Bush as DCI](#). Hulnick's point ignores the fact that it was the appointment of Bush, a senior member of the Republican Party, by Gerald Ford that represented the first major step toward the politicization of the position of the head of the CIA. Equally, he underplays the more important example of the [politicization of intelligence implicit in the Team A-Team B "competitive analysis"](#) exercise that occurred in the 1970s. Its linkage to the politicisation of intelligence surrounding the invasion of Iraq, with the involvement of Paul Wolfowitz in both exercises, is ignored.

One of the book's other major weaknesses is that, despite having only been published in 2004, it is already dated. In his introduction Hulnick recognizes this danger but opted to publish it anyway. Reading it now and not finding any mention of the [Abu Ghraib prison scandal](#) or the subsequent revelations of abuses and questionable interrogation techniques employed by American soldiers makes it difficult to read Hulnick's brief description of the topic. A similar point applies to his discussion about whether the creation of a director of National Intelligence would be a useful reform to the structure of the American intelligence system, a now largely irrelevant debate [since the current Bush administration has done just that](#).

Equally problematic is the source material being used by Hulnick. There is little evidence of wider research beyond work by journalists, including some, such as [Steve Emerson](#), with questionable track records. The nature of that source material suggests a book written quickly to cash in on a topic sexed up by current events. This is not to suggest that Hulnick's book completely lacks merit. It does offer a useful and generally dispassionate overview of the American intelligence community as it pertains to homeland security. Unfortunately, that approach only emphasizes how much more imaginative and substantive this study could have been.