Cold War Anthropology

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PART II  ANTHROPOLOGISTS’ ARTICULATIONS WITH THE NATIONAL SECURITY STATE
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Most of the knowledge of the outside world that the CIA collects it collects by social-science research methods, that is, through reading newspapers, listening to radio broadcasts, and asking people questions. Social research including area studies, history, anthropology, sociology, political science, and statistics provides both important inputs and important knowledge of methods of analysis to the intelligence community. The CIA, as its name implies, should be the central social research organization to enable the federal government to understand the societies and cultures of the world.

ITHIEI DE SOLA POOL | 1967

SIX COLD WAR ANTHROPOLOGISTS AT THE CIA
Careers Confirmed and Suspected

To understand how some American anthropologists came to work for the CIA during the early Cold War, it is necessary to consider anthropologists’ wartime experience and to disentangle what the Cold War became from what it appeared to be to those living through its earliest days. From the present we can see distinct differences between America’s World War II fight against totalitarianism and Cold War America’s increasing support for neocolonialism, but for many who had served in military or intelligence capacities during the war, the nation’s shifts in postwar international political orientation was invisible.

For anthropologists who served in the Office of Strategic Services, Office of War Information, G2, or other wartime intelligence agencies, later being approached by the CIA for debriefings upon returning from fieldwork in foreign lands, or joining the agency, often seemed like a natural extension of wartime work. While anthropologists’ interactions with the CIA raise significant ethical questions today, the steps that led postwar anthropologists to these engagements raised few concerns at the time. During the earliest transitions from hot to cold war, news of these decisions by anthropologists and others to join the CIA often remained public.
One *New York Times* article from 1950 announcing recipients of grant awards from the Guggenheim Fund listed “Dr. Edward Wyllys Andrews 4th, division chief, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington. Early Maya archaeology in northern Yucatan” as the recipient of one of three anthropological/archaeological awards that year (NYT 1950: 15). In 1948, a “News of the Members” column in the *News Bulletin of the AAA* carried the following entry: “James Andrews left Cambridge late in December, 1947 to join the Central Intelligence Agency, Washington. For more than a year prior to that time he had been in charge of the Anthropometric Laboratory, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, in which 50,000 separatees are being somatotyped for the Quartermaster Corps under direction of E. A. Hooton” (*NBAAA* 1948 2[2]: 27).¹ This same issue of the *News Bulletin* announced that Eugene Worman was leaving the University of Chicago for the CIA (*NBAAA* 1948 2[2]: 30). In later years, anthropologists who moved in and out of the CIA did so quietly, without public announcements or fanfare. Some anthropologists moved between the agency and the academy; others moved between the agency and private consulting or research positions.

Several archaeologists and cultural anthropologists established careers within the CIA, offering valuable skill sets ranging from aptitudes for envisioning complex systems from sample data sets to analytical linguistic skills that were needed for translation or cryptographic work. Richard Hallock, an archaeologist trained at the University of Chicago, used skills he had developed in translating dead languages in his work on deciphering Soviet encrypted VENONA intercepts. During the 1950s, Waldo Dubberstein left a career in archaeology to work as a CIA intelligence analyst, though he later became embroiled in scandal for his associations with former CIA agent turned arms dealer Edwin P. Wilson, who was convicted in 1983 of arms smuggling, specifically, shipping twenty tons of plastic explosives to Libya (Ayres 1983).²

Archaeologist Richard Francis Strong Starr served in the Office of Naval Intelligence during the war; after the war, he became a research specialist on the Middle East at the State Department and the CIA (Saxon 1994). The CIA offered anthropologist Charlotte Gower job opportunities that were rare for women in the postwar years (Lepowsky 2000).³ William Sidney Stallings Jr. worked for years as a dendrochronologist at the Laboratory of Anthropology in Santa Fe, later joining the CIA’s Photographic Intelligence Division, where his group identified the Russian missiles at the heart of the Cuban missile crisis (Browman and Williams 2013: 425).

Sometimes, spousal CIA connections brought travel or research opportunities. Marjory Cline, a longtime research editor at the National Geographic Society,
was married to CIA employee Ray S. Cline and accompanied him on numerous assignments, including moves to England (1958) and Taipei, where he became the new CIA station chief. When Ray Cline took on the responsibility of running Chiang Ching-kuo as a major CIA asset, Marjorie Cline became Ching-kuo’s English tutor (Taylor 2000: 239). Ray Cline later became the deputy director of intelligence at the CIA (Quirk et al. 1986: i). During the Second World War, Derwood Lockard did intelligence work for ONI and OSS, and after the war he extended this work at the CIA. In 1954, he returned to the academy, working on Middle Eastern ethnography and archaeology (D. H. Price 2008a: 221; Browman and Williams 2013: 429). He worked on archaeological projects in Iran and Turkey and accompanied his wife, Barbara Lockard, on several Middle Eastern archaeological projects; in 1967, he became associate director of Harvard’s Center of Middle East Studies, where he worked until his retirement in the early 1970s (Browman and Williams 2013: 429).

Anthropological research was sometimes used in CIA training programs. In response to my FOIA request, the CIA released a declassified program from a 1963 midcareer training course that included sessions on current political and economic developments. One daylong presentation was made by an anthropologist (identity redacted) in a session titled “American Problems in Understanding Foreign Cultures,” described in the program bulletin as “an anthropological view of the newly developing countries with emphasis on their deep-seated cultural characteristics.” This anthropologist’s presentation lasted from 9:00 AM until 3:30 PM, followed by discussion and a reception. The supplemental readings accompanying this presentation consisted of Ruth Benedict’s essay “The Growth of Culture” (1956), Margaret Mead’s article “The Underdeveloped and the Overdeveloped” (1962), and George Murdock’s “How Culture Changes,” (1956) as well as Brookings Institution publications on development (Brookings Institution 1962), Dan Kurzman’s Subversion of the Innocents (1963), Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer’s book The Emerging Nations (1961), and Eugene Staley’s book The Future of Underdeveloped Countries (1961) (CIA 1963c).

Staley, Millikan, Blackmer, and the Brookings Institution provided a baseline for Rostow-derived, CIA-backed modernization schemes. Murdock’s sunny cultural evolutionary model provided a simplistic “great man” view of culture change for CIA trainees who would soon be looking for interlocutors in the underdeveloped world. Mead’s article “The Underdeveloped and the Overdeveloped,” which had been published in Foreign Affairs, situated global inequality by downplaying determinants of global stratification, arguing that economic development could bring wealth to all, not simply exacerbate and continue
internal and global stratification. Mead’s article also argued that “riches are no longer somebody’s disproportionate, though legitimate, share of a scarce supply; poverty is no longer the consequence of someone else having a large proportion of the existing supply” (1962: 81; CIA 1963c).

**Anthropologists at CIA Desks**

Several anthropologists established careers at CIA desk jobs, working as analysts, or in other capacities within the agency’s bureaucracy. Most of these careers developed as extensions of wartime work.

The child of American missionaries, Eugene Clark Worman Jr. was born in and lived the first dozen years of his life in India. He studied anthropology as an undergraduate at Harvard, then did graduate research in Central Europe, India, and New Mexico. When the war interrupted his studies, he served at the U.S. Navy Division of Naval Intelligence tracking Japanese naval and merchant marine positions. At the war’s end he completed his dissertation, “The Problem of a Neolithic Culture in India” (1946), and undertook NRC-funded research connecting Indian prehistory with the prehistory of other areas in the Near East and Far East (NBAAA 1947 1[3]: 5).

Worman took a visiting professorship at Chicago, filling in for Robert Braidwood while he conducted an excavation in Iraq, and in the summer of 1948, Worman joined the CIA (NBAAA 1948 2[1]: 30). The CIA drew upon Worman’s academic and anthropological skills. Beyond his analyst duties, Eugene Worman also became the official historian of the CIA’s Office of Current Intelligence, writing the agency’s internal, five-volume unpublished, but completed in 1971, “History of the Office of Current Intelligence” (see Westerfield 200: 126–271n18). Worman remained active in the AAA while working at the CIA; in 1950–53, he served as the AAA’s representative to the American Association for the Advancement of Science and was appointed as the AAA’s delegate to the National Conference on Citizenship (NBAAA 1950 4[4]: 6; BAAA 1952 2[3]: 2; AA 1951 53[4]: 454; AA 1952 54[2]: 289; AA 1952 54[3]: 307).

Worman’s dual position, working within the CIA while acting as an official representing the AAA on national committees, did not raise concerns within the association. His CIA connections were known within the AAA (see Worman to Stout 11/7/51; NBAAA 1952 6[4]: 12–13). The 1951 report of the Anthropological Society of Washington noted that Eugene Worman (then a full-time CIA employee) organized a speaker series held at the U.S. National Museum (Gilbert 1951: 309). Worman hosted George Murdock, who described his fieldwork
in Truk; Ralph Soleki, speaking on “ancient man in Northern Alaska”; Duncan Emrich on folklore; Frank Setzer on aboriginal Australia; Cornelius Osgood presented a paper titled “Koreans and Their Culture”; Schuyler Cammann, who spoke on “Tiber, the Land and Its People”; and George Foster, who gave his “Ethnographic Impressions of Spain” (Gilbert 1951: 309).

James Madison Andrews IV worked as a Peabody Museum archaeologist before joining the ONI during the war. After a brief return to archaeology at the war’s end, he joined the CIA in 1948 and worked at the agency until retiring in 1957. At the CIA, Andrews directed the Office of Collection and Dissemination (OCD); as discussed in chapter 3, he was mentioned as one of the CIA’s anthropologists who could help facilitate communications between the agency and the AAA during the association’s membership roster project in 1951 (AAAP 6. WH to FJ 3/2/51; Darling 1990: 328; Montague 1992: 183). Andrews rose to the position of assistant director of the CIA, where he “was in charge of development of programs for automated information retrieval. He received the Intelligence Medal of Merit for his service” (AN Oct. 1988, 4; see also Browman and Williams 2013: 435).

As director at OCD, Andrews transformed the structural organization and functioning of the CIA. While directing OCD, he was at the forefront of recognizing the vital role that computers could play in organizing all variety of databases and records, serving as “an enthusiastic advocate of the use of business machines for the indexing, retrieval, and analysis of information” (Montague 1992: 182). Agency historian Ludwell Montague credited Andrews with fundamentally reshaping how the CIA undertook the collection and distribution of intelligence data, ending institutional practices wherein holders of intelligence had certain control of its uses. According to Montague, “Andrews sought to instill in OCD personnel the idea that OCD existed only to serve the other components of the CIA, and the departmental agencies as well, insofar as practicable. They must forget about pretensions to superior coordinating authority and do their utmost to service every demand or request that came to them, no matter what the source” (1992: 182). Andrews argued for building an independent OCD that would collect, catalog, and distribute intelligence data and academic sources from within the collection of documents he helped the agency amass. He convinced DCI Walter Bedell Smith to ignore a recommendation made by NSC 50 (a 1949 document also known as The McNarney Report, recommending significant restructuring of the CIA) and the Dulles Report to disband OCD and localize the collection and organization of intelligence data (Montague 1992: 181).
Anthropologists did not always garner respect from others within the CIA. In his memoir recalling his years at the agency, Dino Brugioni described DCI Smith’s distaste for Andrews. According to Brugioni, Smith mistakenly thought Andrews was an ornithologist and considered him too much of an academic, who wrote “with a flowery flourish.” Brugioni continued: “Smith sent back one of Andrews’ papers with an attached note: ‘This is the biggest pile of unadulterated crap I’ve ever read.’ He once remarked that he had hoped for an energetic go-getter in collection, but they had hired a ‘fucking birdwatcher’” (Brugioni 2010: 38).

Harvard-trained archaeologist E. Wyllys Andrews IV, who had served the OSS in Africa and Europe, joined the CIA when it was first formed (Stirling 1973: 295). Andrews later claimed he stayed with the CIA for only a few years and returned to archaeology for the remainder of his career. One report of his CIA years described him as working for the “CIA for several years after the war, working in Africa and the Middle East, finally leaving the CIA in 1955 to accept a position at [the Middle American Research Institute] at Tulane” (Browman and Williams 2013: 410). Claims by scholars that they left CIA careers and returned to life outside the agency are often met with skepticism and are difficult to evaluate conclusively. There is a well-documented history of the CIA using former employees, especially those who travel to exotic locations or have contacts with persons of interest to the agency, for agency business (see Winks 1987; A. C. Mills 1991; Lawrence 1979). While the extent of Andrews’s connections with the CIA after he left the agency is unknown, one set of CIA records (released by FOIA researchers investigating the assassination of President John F. Kennedy) indicate that Professor Andrews was in contact with a CIA employee in Mexico City in 1962, years after he stated he ceased working for the agency (FOIA CIA 104–10419–10321). This released CIA record does not state the nature of this contact beyond describing Andrews as a “reputable American businessman in Mexico” who had been in contact with Richard C. Cain (the subject of the CIA’s inquiry). While the nature of this contact remains unclear, it demonstrates the agency’s practice of recontacting individuals with past CIA connections when agency needs arise at later dates, a practice that raises questions about the possibility of such contacts with anthropologists who were former CIA employees.

**CIA Anthropologists in the World at Large**

Frank Bessac served in the OSS in China during the Second World War. When the OSS was disbanded at the war’s end, Bessac moved to the War Department’s
Strategic Services Unit, later joining the Secret Intelligence Branch, where he was assigned duties as an intelligence officer in Shanghai (NARA FBI 9/11/46). Bessac maintained that he first joined the CIA in July 1947 after he was recruited by his old OSS handler, Marge Kennedy. As part of Bessac’s spycraft training, Kennedy provided him with a protocol phrase and reply to identify fellow CIA agents in the field. Kennedy and Bessac “agreed that in the fall of 1947 Frank would be a student in Peking’s Fujen University, and that would also be his cover. The Outfit [CIA] would pay his return to China and keep him on the payroll” (Laird 2002: 42).

Bessac later claimed he had misgivings about using his status as a student in China as his CIA cover, telling his superiors that “he simply did not enjoy looking at China through the lens of government employment” (Laird 2002: 52). He later claimed he resigned from the CIA in October 1947, but this assertion seems contradicted by many of his later actions in China.

In 1948, Bessac traveled in Inner Mongolia and worked for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and he continued to study in China with his Fulbright scholarship in the fall. Bessac’s travels to Inner Mongolia have obvious political interpretations given his admission of having already agreed to work as a paid CIA contractor and the American intelligence community’s interest in gathering up-to-date intelligence on Chinese Communists’ rapid advances. While Bessac later insisted that his travels and work in Inner Mongolia had nothing to do with the CIA, Sechin Jagchid, a Mongol with direct knowledge of U.S. intelligence activities in Inner Mongolia supporting Prince De during the late 1940s, dismissed Bessac’s claims, arguing that Bessac worked for a CIA agent named Raymond Meitz in Inner Mongolia in 1948–49 (see Jagchid 1999: 410).

In the fall of 1949, waves of Americans were evacuated from China as Mao’s soldiers seized control of rural and urban areas. Yet instead of joining his fellow expatriates’ exodus to ships leaving China’s eastern coastal cities, in September 1949, Bessac headed west to the interior. Bessac flew to Tihwa, where he was met by Vice Consul Douglas Mackiernan. Bessac claimed this meeting with Mackiernan was pure chance. Mackiernan brought Bessac to the Tihwa American consul compound, where over the course of a few days they hurriedly burned consul documents and destroyed vehicles, radios, and other U.S. equipment before the impending arrival of Chinese Communist troops.

Using State Department cover, the CIA sent agent Douglas Mackiernan to the outer reaches of western China with top secret equipment designed to monitor the Soviet Union’s eastern Kazakh region, searching for indications of the...
Soviets’ anticipated first nuclear bomb test. With this equipment, on August 29, 1949, Mackiernan detected the Soviet Union’s first successful detonation of a nuclear weapon in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan.

Using the CIA’s secret identification pass-phrase protocol that Bessac had learned in his 1947 CIA training, Mackiernan identified himself to Bessac as a CIA operative. Bessac’s response confirmed his CIA identity to Mackiernan, an act that complicated Bessac’s later claims that he was not then a CIA agent (Laird 2002: 109). Bessac’s 2006 account of how he joined the CIA, resigned from the CIA, traveled in China on a Fulbright scholarship, and then rejoined the agency only after meeting up with Mackiernan strains credulity and raises questions about whether this story was later concocted to smooth over the ethical and legal problems of a Fulbright scholar spying for the CIA abroad.

As Bessac later argued, when Mackiernan approached him with his secret CIA code phrase, if he “was recruiting me again as an agent for the CIA, asking me to take on a mission, he should have outlined the task, the conditions of employment, government employment, with payroll taxes and a pension, the whole bit” (Bessac and Bessac 2006: 51). Bessac claimed that upon his reply, “Doug just asked, ‘Do you want to join Osman Bator (the great Kazakh leader of Chinese Turkestan) with me? Maybe we can be of assistance to him.’ That was all, but enough for me” (51).

Because the CIA operated on a strict “need to know basis,” Bessac’s knowledge of the mission he undertook was limited, but he joined Mackiernan and Osman Bator and a group of White Russians and Mongols, packing gold, machine guns and an assortment of other light arms, ammunition, hand grenades, a shortwave radio, and Geiger counters on an overland trip to Tibet. Bessac loosely understood the group’s mission to be supportive of Tibetan nationalism in the face of what appeared to be an impending Chinese occupation. Mackiernan sewed a small fortune in gold wafers into his clothing and other hiding places, to be used to finance their mission as they traveled.

In January 1950, the Chinese press denounced Mackiernan as an American spy. The group avoided capture by Chinese forces during their eleven-month, fifteen-hundred-mile trek across the Kara Desert toward Shegarkhung Lung, and then to Lhasa, Tibet. They entered Tibet in April 1950, and during an encounter with Tibetan border scouts Mackiernan was shot and killed, and another member of their party, Vasili Zvansov, was seriously wounded. This left Bessac cut off from the outside world, with limited mission knowledge and no understanding of the CIA’s encoded radio contact protocols. These Tibetan forces
captured Bessac and took him prisoner, but he was treated as an honored guest after the Department of State contacted the Tibetan government.

Bessac, who remained in Tibet from April to July 1950, was one of only a few Westerners to visit Tibet before the Chinese occupation. He had an audience with the Dalai Lama and held closed-door discussions with Tibetan officials. The Tibetans were desperate for U.S. military support in the face of an impending Chinese invasion. Bessac stressed that he was not an American governmental representative, but he also told his hosts that he would convey their concerns to U.S. officials after returning home (Laird 2002: 224).

Bessac’s account of his trek in Life magazine stressed the high adventure of the journey, with no mention of the political dimensions of the mission or of Mackiernan being a CIA agent. Bessac wrote that he was in western Asia “to study Mongolian anthropology,” claiming that he headed to Inner Mongolia from Chengtu after recovering from eye surgery because this was the region he considered “least likely to be bothered by the Communists” (Bessac 1950: 131). His account provided scintillating details of going days without water, the ravages of an all-meat diet, ongoing sickness, monotonously trudging onward in the freezing cold, Mackiernan’s killing, and Bessac’s audience with the Dalai Lama.

In 2006, the CIA publicly recognized Douglas Mackiernan as the first CIA agent killed in the line of duty. The agency revealed Mackiernan’s name in its “Book of Honor,” which listed, usually without publicly providing names, CIA agents killed while serving the agency (Dujmovic 2008: 7).

After returning to the United States, Bessac studied anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, later earning his doctorate at the University of Wisconsin, briefly teaching in Texas and Kansas before becoming a professor of anthropology at the University of Montana, where he remained from 1970 to 1989. Throughout his life, Bessac insisted he had not traveled to China using a Fulbright scholarship as cover for CIA activities.

There are credibility problems with Bessac’s claim that he resigned from the CIA in October 1947, so soon after he joined. For instance, Bessac’s insistence that he had not traveled to China using a Fulbright scholarship as cover for CIA activities contradicts the fact that the CIA later paid him for his entire service in China and Tibet, and, more significantly, that he responded to his CIA recognition code and agreed to undertake a risky CIA mission.12

Former CIA agent Frank Latrash rejected Bessac’s claim that he had not been a CIA agent while studying under a Fulbright fellowship. As described by
Thomas Laird, the CIA told Latrash in 1950 “that Frank Bessac was a contract CIA agent using Fulbright cover. He claims that this is the very reason why Bessac is so insistent that he was not a CIA agent — it was, and is illegal for the CIA to use a Fulbright scholarship as cover for any agent” (2002: 103).

**Louis Dupree**

Louis Dupree began World War II in the Merchant Marine, later joining the army’s Eleventh Airborne Division fighting in the Philippines. During the decade following the war, he studied archaeology at Harvard, earning his bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees. He first traveled to Afghanistan with an archaeological expedition in 1949, and over the next decades he traveled and at times lived in Afghanistan, conducting cultural and archaeological research. Dupree conducted archaeological excavations in Afghanistan throughout the 1950s, and his years of excavations and publications earned him the reputation of a central figure in Afghanistan anthropology.

Dupree maintained military ties after the war, teaching at Air University and writing numerous publications for Air University’s Force’s Arctic, Desert, Tropic Information Center, and organized the Society for Applied Anthropology’s 1958 session on “Anthropology in the Armed Services” (see chapter 3). During the decades after the war, he became the American anthropologist who spent the greatest amount of time in Afghanistan. His luxurious home in Kabul was a regular stop for Western visitors, and his daily regime of five o’clock cocktails for all comers made him a central collector of expatriate gossip and political rumors. Dupree’s report “Anthropology in Afghanistan” (1976) for the American Universities Field Staff (AUFS) described the previous decades of anthropological work in Afghanistan, and his ethnographic map served as the source for numerous reprinted governmental and military maps for years to come (L. Dupree 1976: 5).

Dupree published numerous scholarly reports and skillfully cultivated media coverage of his archaeological discoveries. His primary research affiliation was with the AUFS, a research consortium that combined the resources of scholars from eleven universities, established with funds from the Crane Foundation, with headquarters in Hanover, New Hampshire, and a field office in Kabul. CIA documents establish that one of the ways AUFS interfaced with the CIA was to hold “private round table meetings[s] on political developments,” with select invitations issued to CIA personnel (FOIA CIA-RDP80B01676R004000060031-0, 9/15/58). With the support of the AUFS, Dupree maintained a home in Kabul from the 1950s until 1978. Dupree also maintained affiliations with the Archae-
Anthropologist M. Jamil Hanifi has described his first meeting with Dupree, after Hanifi left his native Afghanistan and arrived at Michigan State University to begin graduate work in political science in 1961. Dupree was a guest speaker in a class taught by Wesley Fischel in which Hanifi was enrolled (MJH to DHP 11/5/05). Hanifi found it strange that when they first met, Dupree grilled him for information on Afghanistan’s intelligence services, pointedly asking whether Hanifi planned to later work for the intelligence service. Hanifi’s studies were sponsored by the Afghan Ministry of Finance, and he told Dupree that he had no intention of working for the intelligence service. Dupree then asked Hanifi to recommend a translator for him to use in Kabul, which he did. According to Hanifi, he “has vivid memories of Dupree going around the country photographing Afghan defense installations and facilities” (MJH to DHP 11/4/050).

Anthropologist John Allison (2012) later described how Dupree, while a visiting professor of anthropology at Indiana University, recruited Allison, with promises of well-funded fieldwork opportunities, to begin fieldwork in Afghanistan. As an anthropology graduate student, Allison traveled with Dupree in 1969 through Kandahar and Herat to Maimana, where they conducted archaeological excavations of a cave site. Allison and his wife traveled by Land Rover into remote regions of Afghanistan with Louis and Nancy Dupree, members of the Kabul Museum and American archaeologists, and others claiming archaeological expertise. According to Allison, “One had an interest in ceramics, another seemed not especially interested in talking about his work; I don’t recall their names. They didn’t seem to participate in the excavation much, and were often gone off in their Land Rovers” (2012).

A man claiming to be the team’s ceramics expert—who “liked to show off his martial arts skills”—got drunk one night and admitted “he was actually there to do ground-proofing and local village investigations around the area to see if it was a possible emergency landing place for a U-2, if necessary” (JA to DHP 11/12/07). Allison combined archaeological excavations with small ethno-graphic surveys and photographic inventories under the direction of Dupree. He later conducted ethnographic linguistic field research among the Ashkun in the Hindu Kush, all with advice, introductions, and a field assistant (Mohammad Alam Nuristani, a Kabul University anthropology graduate student) provided by Dupree (Allison 2012).

Nuristani provided invaluable assistance, helping Allison gain access to people in this remote area; his solid knowledge of English, Dari, Pashto, and
dialects of Kalasha gave Allison the sort of access that would have otherwise been impossible for an American outsider. Allison found that

as a native speaker of the closely related Waigul people, Mohammad Alam gave us trusted access to the family homes, to the different special places, to work and to participate in gatherings and feasts. . . . Alam gave me sensitive and patient guidance in some of my understandings of the meanings of Ashkun concepts. He grasped the nature of ethnography and the cognitive nature of culture. He was from a leading family in Waigul, but his acceptance in the urban society of Kabul depended upon his intelligence and upon this charm that led those with power and influence to support his ambitions. His family had little power in Kabul. (2012)

With Nuristani’s assistance, Allison collected a significant body of ethnographic data. In June 1970, Dupree convinced Allison that he and his wife needed to leave Afghanistan because of growing threats to Americans. Allison wanted to stay and complete the last six months of his planned eighteen-month study. He recalls that when he was finally persuaded to leave, he

left a full box of 7 inch reels of tapes with Dupree, who assured me he would get them to me safely. They included a lot of info on the demography of the Alingar River basin area of Nuristan, the eastern edge of the Hindu Kush, where no one had ever done research before, and only one other had passed through that area of the Titin Valley, Schyler Jones, in 1964, simply hiked through and over the top to Waigal Valley. The tapes were never seen again. Dupree claimed he had them sent by diplomatic pouch. He might have done that, but [he] did not send them to me at Indiana University. Since, I have often wondered if that diplomatic pouch went to the CIA in DC. (JA to DHP 11/12/07)

Without his field notes and tapes, Allison was unable to complete his dissertation research.16 Because international shipping from Afghanistan in the early 1970s was a precarious method for sending materials, Dupree told Allison he would ship his field notes using the secure U.S. embassy pouch. Dupree claimed he had no knowledge of why Allison never received these invaluable field notes (Allison 2012).

Allison later recalled that Dupree amassed a large collection of documents that would have great value to American military and intelligence agencies:

Dupree and his co-operative colleagues used their access to Kabul government documents and files for US advantage; even when it was explicit that they were
not to make use of such sensitive data as air photos and maps developed from them, they stole copies of the entire set of air photos and topographic maps for all of Afghanistan. . . . He was part of the US Mission in Afghanistan long before the US was aware of Afghanistan. Charlie Wilson’s War came and went late during Dupree’s watch; and I think not without his participation. His ethics and morals were related to that foundation in the military Mission. Among his friends, he was always ethical and a Good Man, within that cultural world view and its priorities. . . . He was not an evil man if judged by his own value system, or a bad anthropologist in the sense of producing valuable works. His Afghanistan is still the standing authority in US/NATO on the history, archaeology and cultures of the Afghanistan that existed until 1978. (Allison 2012)

Allison did not learn of Dupree’s reported CIA connections until reading Dupree’s obituary some years after his death. This revelation helped Allison connect the dots between Dupree’s life as an adventurer establishing connections throughout Afghanistan’s backcountry, and the expatriates’ and Afghan establishment’s salons and parties.17

Dupree’s years in Afghanistan suddenly ended on November 25, 1978, when he was apprehended and interrogated for five days by Afghan security under general accusations that his work with the AIFS was linked to American intelligence agencies. Dupree was questioned about his relationship to Nuristani, and the information he provided appears to have led to Nuristani’s death (see Allison 2012; L. Dupree 1980a: 12). His interrogators asked a series of questions about Nuristani’s time studying in the United States and about other Afghans Dupree had encountered at Indiana University over the years. Dupree provided many names to his interrogators — names of past students, landlords, and others he had known over the years. Dupree later recounted:

A new interrogator put a sheet of questions in front of me. I was about to write “I don’t remember,” but reading the questions stopped me cold. “Suppose someone accused you of being a CIA agent, what would you say?” Answer: “Bullshit!” Question: “How would you justify your answer?” “Quite simple. I don’t work for the CIA.” The interrogator said, “Come now, you’ve got to give more reasons than that.” I said: “Why? Look, if you’re going to accuse me of being a CIA agent, don’t go through the routine. Just go ahead and accuse me, and go out into the streets and pick up three witnesses. Pay them 50 afghanis apiece and have them swear I hired them to work for the CIA. They can say, yes, we gave them secret information. I mean, why bother with all this crap? I mean, if you’re really going to accuse me of being CIA, why waste your time and mine. Let’s both get some sleep.
Instead, he came back with: “Suppose you were confronted with someone who said you worked for the CIA? What would you say?” “Bullshit!” I wrote again, this time adding a short essay on the foreign community “covered wagon” in Kabul. (1980a: 12–13)

Dupree claimed that his activities naturally led many to suspect he had CIA connections, but he dismissed these suspicions as “folklore” among the expatriate community. He wrote that the “collective wisdom” was that he and his wife, Nancy, were with the CIA, and that this “folklore is passed on from one generation to the next. Nancy and I can’t defend ourselves. We simply have to live with the folklore” (L. Dupree 1980a: 13). Dupree acknowledged that in light of the forms of research he undertook in Afghanistan, “at times the whole program sounds suspicious even to me” (12).

After a few days of Dupree’s detention and interrogation, Muhammad Alam Nuristani was brought before him. Nuristani had obviously been tortured. Dupree wrote that it looked “as though his hair had been burned. His face was totally misshapen, and his upper lip almost reached his chin” (1980a: 13). He had identified Dupree as a CIA agent. Dupree wrote that Nuristani must have had no other choice given the torture to which he had been subjected. When interrogated before Dupree, he screamed, “Everybody knows Dupree is CIA. Everybody knows!” Yet, according to Dupree, Nuristani admitted that Dupree had never tried to recruit him for the CIA, and that he never undertook any clandestine work for Dupree or the CIA (13). Obviously, people will admit to anything when they are tortured, so Nuristani’s identification of Dupree as a CIA agent is meaningless.

Dupree was released after six days and expelled from Afghanistan on November 30, 1978. Although he was unable to return to Afghanistan, he continued to work for the AUFS (which he had worked with since 1959) until 1983. Dupree maintained a presence in Pakistan, establishing contacts and networks with members of the Mujahideen, the Islamic fundamentalist group armed, trained, and financed by the CIA, in their war against Soviet forces occupying Afghanistan. He remained interested in Afghanistan politics and sat on the Heritage Foundation–funded Committee for a Free Afghanistan. After his 1978 expulsion from Afghanistan under accusations of being a CIA agent, his alignment with Department of State and CIA political positions became increasingly apparent. His obituary in the New York Times listed his consultant work for Austria, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and the United States, including work with the State Department, the NSC, the CIA, USAID, and the UN (Narvaez 1989).
Dupree denied being a CIA operative in Afghanistan. Yet the accounts of John Allison and M. Jamil Hanifi, Dupree’s connections with the Afghan Student Association, his role in leading an archaeological expedition with individuals claiming to be intelligence personnel using the expedition as a pretext for intelligence gathering, and public claims (in his obituary and by a member of Congress) that he was a consultant for the CIA lend credence to claims he was a CIA asset, though the extent of his CIA activities remains unclear.

After the coming to power of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in the spring of 1978, the CIA increased its presence in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan—Washington’s Secret War, Phillip Bonosky described Louis Dupree as “the CIA man in Kabul whose activities there among the counterrevolutionaries made him persona non grata to the Afghan government, and he was forced to leave in 1978, but only as far as Peshawar where he resumed his work directing counterrevolutionary forces in an attempt to bring a happy ending to his book, Afghanistan, otherwise so woefully unended” (2001: 184). Bonosky identified Dupree as one of the U.S. governmental sources who was planting false stories claiming that the Soviets were using nerve gas in rural Afghanistan (217). In eulogizing Dupree after his death in 1989, Senator Gordon J. Humphrey (R-NH) noted Dupree’s service as a CIA consultant (U.S. Senate 1989: S4649).

Donald Wilber, Our Man in Iran

In 1930, while an undergraduate at Princeton, Donald Wilber was hired as an artist to draw archaeological architectural features as part of a University of Chicago expedition to Egypt. After working on these Egyptian excavations for three seasons, in 1934 he drove from Egypt to Iran, where he did further architectural surveys and archaeological excavations. Wilber’s archaeological travels provided him with the skills, experience, and linguistic training that later served him well as a CIA operative. When he first traveled to Egypt, he was so fearful of locals that he wanted the protection of a pistol, but by the time he left, he “had learned not to feel uneasy or out of place in a foreign land, not to feel superior to others, however humble, because of chances of birth and background” (Wilber 1986: 23).

Wilber’s graduate study in Princeton focused on historic and prehistoric architecture. After the United States entered the Second World War, Wilber was assigned by the Office of Coordinator of Information (OCI) to undertake intelligence work, first at OCI and later at the OSS. Wilber observed in his memoir that “there were very few Americans who knew [the Middle East] at all well:
missionaries, archaeologists, research scholars, oil men, and a scattering of businessmen, such as tobacco buyers in Turkey. So, the net gathered many of us, including missionaries whose possible scruples about serving other than the Lord gave way before patriotism” (1986: 101).

Wilber ran OSS operations in Iran, using cover provided by the Iran-American Relations Society and his position as the assistant to the director of the Asia Institute (Wilber 1986: 102). His chief wartime activities involved monitoring the German and Soviet presence in the region. Mixing archaeological discovery and espionage, during one of his OSS missions monitoring Soviet troop movements in Azerbaijan, he surveyed Mongol tombs, where in one village “his excitement at the discovery was tinged by fears that the village was also home to a nest of German agents” (Wilford 2013: 38). At the OSS’s request he remained in Iran at the war’s end to track Soviet activities in the region.

After the war, some of his OSS contacts talked Wilber into joining the Central Intelligence Group, and he joined the CIA at its inception, spending the next twenty-two years in the agency until his mandatory retirement in 1969 (Wilber 1986: 148–71, 151). Wilber’s academic specialty was the early Islamic architecture of Iran. During his years with the CIA, he authored academic publications on Iranian political developments, archaeology, and architecture for academic and popular consumption, while producing an impressive number of internal CIA reports and working on covert operations in Iran. Wilber’s Iran: Past and Present was a popular text that underwent nine revisions and has remained in print for decades (Wilber 2014). Though Donald Wilber at times made dubious boastful claims about his importance and adventures, substantial documentation exists to establish his role in a number of important CIA operations.19

Wilber described how, while he was working covertly for the CIA, he made “thirteen trips to Iran, one trip around the world, and others that took me to Afghanistan, Greece, Cyprus, Lebanon, Egypt, England, Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Turkey, France, Italy and Ghana” (1986: 149–50).20 As a CIA operative, his specialties were “political action and psychological warfare,” and while in the CIA he served as an active member of the board of directors of the Iran Foundation of New York City (150, 186). Wilber had various job titles, including “Consultant and Expert, Intermittent; Consultant, Intermittent; Consultant, Covert; Consultant, Semi-Covert; and again Consultant Intermittent” and Area Operations Officer (149). He worked closely with CIA operatives Kermit Roosevelt and Miles Copeland in the early 1950s (Copeland 1989; Wilford 2013: 160–74, 228).

The CIA sent Wilber to Afghanistan in 1951 using a cover story that he was a “writer on the Middle East.” Details of Wilber’s mission remain an agency
secret, but his assignment appears to have involved monitoring or countering Soviet activities in Afghanistan (see Wilber 1986: 172). Wilber traveled throughout Afghanistan, filling a notebook with reports on the conditions of roads and other infrastructure, noting the presence of military and police, and recording general political attitudes, attitudes toward Soviet philosophy, economic activities, and the presence and activities of expatriates (172–86). Wilber’s methods were at least partly opaque, his dual use cover giving his movements a plausible explanation as he spent his days making “the rounds of various offices picking up books, notes on subjects I had requested, and information from just talking and talking” (177).

Back home, Wilber split his time between Princeton and Washington, DC, where he spent three days a week working with Miles Copeland in Kermit Roosevelt’s CIA group (Wilber 1986: 192). Wilber wrote that in 1957 he “became the founder and director of the Middle East Research Associations, having persuaded some five of the most highly regarded scholars of the Middle East to join. Of course I obtained prior [CIA] approval. We got a few small jobs but were too far ahead of the times, ahead of the demand for consultants that climaxed in the 1970s” (193; Wilford 2013: 228).

In the late 1950s, Wilber was one of the CIA’s leading experts on the Islamic world, writing the CIA reports “Islam in Iran,” “Islam in Pakistan,” and “Islam in Afghanistan”; he later described these reports as “more exhaustive than any published material” and said “they were to serve as guidelines for working with Muslim groups” (Wilber 1986: 195). Wilber was the architect of Operation Ajax, a CIA coup that Kermit Roosevelt implemented in 1953 against Iranian president Mossadegh; the operation installed Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who reprivatized petroleum resources and represented American interests in the region. In 1954, Donald Wilber filed an internal CIA report that was a first-person account of the CIA’s overthrow of Mossadegh. Almost half a century later, the New York Times declassified the report under FOIA and published it (NYT 2000). Wilber later described his role “preparing propaganda material in Persian, directed against Mossadegh.” It included cartoons, small wall posters, short articles. Given high priority, it poured off the Agency’s press and was rushed by air to Tehran” (Wilber 1986: 188–89).

Wilber was extremely productive, writing, as he recalled, “at least 90,000 words a year for the CIA and about as many for my own purposes” (1986: 195). In the early 1960s, Wilber had CIA assignments in India and Ceylon (196). In 1963, he began working on Africa and wrote a CIA draft titled “Guide to Subversion in Africa,” which he described as “breaking the types of subversion into
separate categories.” Although this guide was never finished, it was used within the CIA as a resource for planning the agency’s African psychological warfare campaigns (202).

**Careers Traversing Academy and Agency**

Many questions remain unanswered about anthropologists and other academics leaving positions at the CIA to establish careers on university campuses. Most academics who leave positions at the CIA and establish university careers maintain they have severed all ties with the agency (see, e.g., Siskiyou 2011), though the secrecy surrounding intelligence work inevitably raises doubts or suspicions about such claims. Declassified reports published in the CIA’s journal, *Studies in Intelligence*, clarify that the long history of CIA reliance on university professors for recruiting, contract work, and ongoing reports makes such contacts with former employees an ongoing design feature of university-agency symbiosis (Cook 1983).

Archaeologist Michael D. Coe’s memoir, *Final Report: An Archaeologist Excavates His Past* (2006), describes his transitions from the academy to years at the CIA and his later return to academia. Coe became interested in archaeology as a Harvard undergraduate visiting Mayan ruins in Yucatán on a family vacation (Coe 2006: 54). At Harvard, Alfred Kidder, Douglas Oliver, and Alfred Tozzer introduced Coe to anthropology, and in 1949 he began excavating in British Honduras with British Mayanist Eric Thompson (54–57). In 1950, as Coe was preparing for his first year of graduate study in anthropology at Harvard, America entered the Korean War. After Coe was rejected by the navy for medical reasons, Clyde Kluckhohn approached him and recruited him into the CIA, where he became a case officer (64).

At CIA training school he learned spycraft and intelligence skills. Despite the strict use of pseudonyms for all agent-students, Coe recognized a fellow CIA operative as a former classmate from Fay School, the elite boarding school he had attended in his youth (Coe 2006: 73). The CIA trained Coe in its practices and culture. In seclusion he learned how to “recruit agents, how to test them for reliability, how to elicit information without the subject knowing, and how to detect lying. There was amazingly good instruction in modern history, and particularly the history of Marxism-Leninism, and its philosophical roots in the French Revolution and in the philosophy of Hegel. We were never told the names of our teachers, but I’m positive they came to us from the best campuses in the land (much later, when I had just joined the Yale faculty, I would rec-
COLD WAR ANTHROPOLOGISTS AT THE CIA

recognize one or two of these instructors in the Sterling Library elevator!” (74). Coe and his fellow students were taught the skills of tailing people, casing locations, passing messages, clandestine communications, and using dead drops and learned the details of security systems.

Coe was assigned to the CIA’s Far Eastern Section, initially undertaking research assignments, by way of training, at the Library of Congress. He was a case officer in a CIA operations group working with General Claire Chennault and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, covertly offering support to guerrillas fighting Mao’s Communist forces in China. The CIA used an import-export business with offices in Taipei and Pittsburgh, known as Western Enterprises, Inc., as a front for these operations. Coe was assigned to intelligence analysis, rather than operations, though he ran a series of covert agents on the Chinese mainland.

In January 1952, the CIA sent Coe to Taipei, where he helped train Chinese nationalists; he was soon sent to Kinmen, then Paich’üan, strategic islands off the coast of the Chinese mainland (Coe 2006: 75). On Paich’üan he used an interpreter and CIA networks to establish links with the local nationalist intelligence organization. His primary contact was a lieutenant who, according to Coe, passed along “reports gathered by the mainland agent network of the Ministry of Defense, and I would analyze these and transmit anything new nightly to Taipei. On one wall of our quarters I had stapled up all of the 1:250,000 sheets of the northern Fuchien coast made in the U.S. Army Map Service, with grease pencil notations on the Chicom order of battle, continuously updated” (84).

Coe’s most reliable spy was a woman in her thirties who lived near an airfield where Soviet MIGs landed. Pretending to fish at night, she secretly traveled out to Paich’üan to report to Coe (Coe 2006: 85). In 1953, the CIA reassigned Coe to Taipei, where he studied Mandarin, carried out CIA intelligence duties, and was put in charge of running the agency’s training camp at the “T-Area” along the T’an-shui River (90).

Coe had a negative assessment of the impact of the CIA’s anticommunist operations in China; he found “the infrequent raids against the Chinese mainland had been little more than minor annoyances to Mao, but they did bring one plus to the United States: they tied down along the southern Chinese coast several hundred thousand Communist troops that otherwise would have gone to Korea to fight the United Nations Forces. The true line that was drawn at the 38th parallel might then have been far to the south; perhaps all of the peninsula would have ended up in the hands of ‘Great Leader’ Kim Il-sung” (Coe 2006: 92).

Coe left the CIA in early 1954, returning to the United States to pursue his doctorate at Harvard (Coe 2006: 92). His memoir’s discussion of his CIA years
ends with his reflection that this time in China “made me”; he notes that if one mentions “‘CIA’ to the average academic, . . . he or she would recoil in horror, yet the three years I spent with the Agency were wonderful ones, and I have no regrets whatsoever” (93). The remainder of his memoir barely mentions the CIA, and Coe’s compartmentalization and silence leave readers to assume he had no further contact with the agency after he returned to Harvard to study archaeology. During the next half century, while based at Harvard and Yale, Coe regularly conducted archaeological research in Mesoamerica (192–97).

**CIA Connections Primary, Secondary, Hypothetical**

During the years I spent researching this book, I collected far more reports of claimed links between anthropologists and the CIA than I have been able to verify, and a wealth of speculative information on such links has not been included here. In some instances I reasonably ruled out claimed anthropological links with the CIA; in other instances such claimed links remain open possibilities. Significant questions remain concerning possible links between specific anthropologists and the CIA that I have not included in this chapter because the information I gathered did not conclusively establish such connections. Yet even without a larger collection, we have enough documented examples of various types of CIA articulations with anthropology to consider how these interactions worked during the Cold War.

Questions about anthropologists’ direct and indirect involvements with the CIA have persisted in the discipline for decades. In an essay examining the political and familial background of Richard Critchfield, Timothy Mitchell raised questions about an ethnographer’s (in this case a self-trained pseudo-ethnographer) family links to the CIA. Mitchell identified Critchfield’s older brother James Critchfield as “the first director of CIA clandestine operation in the Near East in 1959” (2002: 148). Mitchell acknowledged that it cannot be assumed that both Critchfield brothers were directly involved with the CIA, but Mitchell established social connections, including links to Robert McNamara and others who were prominent in military intelligence circles, indicating some overlap between the brothers’ worlds (149). Mitchell showed how Richard Critchfield’s writing mirrored the CIA’s Cold War narrative lens; for example, Critchfield’s choice of villages, always portrayed as out-of-the-way places, followed the changing focus of U.S. imperial concerns, some of them at the time quite secretive. He
was in India and Nepal in 1959–62, the years coinciding with probably the largest 
cia operation of the time: a secret program based in Nepal to train and arm 
Tibetan refugees to fight the Chinese occupation in Tibet. Critchfield’s visits to 
Nepal were spaced between spells teaching journalism at the university in Nagpur, the birthplace and headquarters of the rising Hindu fascist movement. By the 
mid-1960s, an account of the cia program in Nepal reports, “cia officer James 
Critchfield described the guerrillas’ achievements inside Tibet as ‘minimal.’” (149)

Mitchell conceded the difficulties in determining whether or not Richard Critch- 
field was a cia operative, but he noted that “the importance of Critchfield’s con- 
nections with America’s ‘national security’ regime, whether direct or indirect, lies 
elsewhere, in unraveling the political genealogy of such expertise on the Middle 
East, and on the question of ‘the peasant’ in particular” (151). Mitchell described 
the cia’s infiltration of academic enterprises during the 1960s and theorized 
that such clandestine efforts to redirect scholarship may have influenced writ- 
ings on Middle Eastern culture such as those of Critchfield or Henry Habib 
Ayrout, whose U.S. publication of The Egyptian Peasant (1963), Mitchell notes, 
coincided “with a renewed American interest in Egyptian affairs,” and shaped 
elements of Critchfield’s narrative (151; see 47–52).

While Critchfield’s familial links to cia operations in the Middle East pre- 
sent unusual connections, much of the Cold War’s anthropological fieldwork 
occurred in regions of interest to the American national security apparatus, 
with ethnographers independently collecting information from local peoples 
whose views were underreported yet often the core of national movements. 
Most of our documented knowledge linking academics with the cia appears as 
outlines rather than comprehensive, detailed portraits. The secrecy shrouding 
most of these relationships is intentional, and while it is important that scholars 
do not go beyond what can be documented, it is equally important to not ig- 
nore what can be known about them. Some sources establish ongoing interac- 
tions between academics with agency ties, with scholars with onetime agency 
ties being recurrently contacted for information or facilitating the recruitment 
of students; yet such activities cannot be automatically assumed (see A. C. Mills 
1991; D. H. Price 2011e; Cook 1983). These documented interactions raise ques- 
tions about how common or widespread such ongoing contacts with the cia 
have been.

We are often left only with questions, shadows and other residuals of these 
relationships; yet anthropology, perhaps more than other disciplines, is used 
to dealing with such traces of the phenomena we study, with archaeologists
grasping spent residues of cultures lost in time and ethnographers straining to understand the ephemeral features of culture. Still, many questions remain, some of them as fundamental as what it means that the AAA representative (Worman) to the National Conference on Citizenship was known to be a full-time CIA employee. Other questions pertaining to these relationships hinge on grappling with the disciplinary meanings to be made from what can be established about ongoing efforts by the CIA and military agencies to secretly finance specific forms of anthropological research.