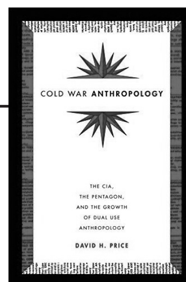
## NEW RELEASE BOOK REVIEW

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David H. Price, *Cold War Anthropology: The CIA, The Pentagon, and the Growth of Dual Use Anthropology*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. 488 pp.

The publication of *Cold War Anthropology* extends a remarkable series of works by David H. Price on academic anthropology's relationship with the US security state. In three prior books, Price has traced US anthropologists' role in intelligence during World War II (2008), their harassment and repression under anti-Communism (2004), and their more recent role as military advisors in the Global War on Terror (2011). In *Cold War Anthropology*, Price fills in the missing story by examining anthropologists' role in supporting and extending US power during the Cold War period, which he implicitly defines as lasting from the end of World War II through the early 1970s. These works are the product of unparalleled research, including a tireless application of the FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) process. Price's reputation as the leading authority on Cold War anthropology is entirely deserved.

*Cold War Anthropology* presents a massive amount of information on a vast ensemble of researchers, funding agencies, and acronym-laden projects that were either openly or covertly associated with US military or intelligence agencies. Having myself spent several years filing FOIA applications and researching CIA front organizations—albeit mostly concerning scientific fields other than anthropology—I have no doubt of Price's command of historical fact. The more pressing question is what readers are to do with this information. While Price consistently damns those scholars who knowingly and wittingly consorted with the CIA, his discussion of other sorts of funding arrangements is inconsistent, sometimes maddeningly so. At points, Price seems to offer grudging admiration to researchers who

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openly acknowledged their ties to such military agencies as the US Army; elsewhere, he castigates those who contributed to USAID's development projects as accomplices in US counterinsurgency efforts.

What *is* consistent is Price's charge that US anthropologists did not fully consider the ethical and political costs that greased the wheels of scientific funding during the Cold War. Price especially draws readers' attention to the problems inherent in "dual use research," by which he means investigations designed to answer disciplinary problems that might equally well contribute to national security. As Price puts it, "scientists' claims of neutrality often meant they had unexamined alignments with the predominating political forces, which went unnoted because they occurred without friction" (xx). These ties only drew attention in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as the extent of the profession's ties to the security state gradually became clear. Now that this generation of anthropologists is retiring, Price worries that anthropologists have lost their sense of moral outrage. The concern that contemporary anthropologists lack an understanding of "why these relationships endanger prospects of free inquiry" (363) perhaps explains the exhaustive range and scope of *Cold War Anthropology*, which must be considered a work of historical accounting as much as a work of historical analysis. If the end result is sometimes encyclopedic, that is intentional. The book is, as Price puts it, "an anthropological consideration of anthropology" (xi).

The two parts of *Cold War Anthropology* approach this work of documentation from different angles. Part I, "Cold War Political–Economic Disciplinary Formations," addresses the financial and institutional arrangements governing relationships between universities, the American Anthropological Association (AAA), the CIA, military agencies, and USAID. Part II, "Anthropologists' Articulations with the National Security State," explores the relationships—whether witting or not—between particular individuals or projects and US agencies. Because the book aims to be the definitive account of such relationships, Price is at pains to recount only incidents where he can provide some sort of concrete evidence linking his historical subjects to military or intelligence agencies. Such care is especially welcome because, as Price notes, "documented CIA atrocities [have become] indistinguishable in the public memory from absurd claims" (29). When Price can prove something, he does. When he can't, but has overwhelming circumstantial evidence to make a case, he tells readers where the paper trail stops. And, on the rare occasions where Price believes that

specific anthropologists or projects have been unjustly accused, he attempts to dispel unfounded rumors.

Price has made excellent use of the FOIA process, but many of his research findings have been hiding in plain sight for over 40 years. While many details of the US Army's relationships with academic researchers were classified, the CIA preferred to structure its relationships with academics through covert funding structures—fronts—that allowed grant recipients to openly acknowledge their patrons. In 1967, many of these covers were blown, most famously by the alternative magazine *Ramparts* (Richardson 2009). In the mid-1970s, the US Senate's Church Committee issued a series of reports detailing the wide range of covert CIA activities, from assassinations to spying on US citizens to—most relevant here—using fake foundations to sponsor academic studies and conferences. The sixth and final volume of the Church Committee's report discussed covert funding agencies at length. Its list of more than 50 nominally private organizations through which the CIA channeled funds includes such familiar names as the National Council of Churches, Praeger Publishers, the Dodge Foundation, and the Asia Foundation (Church 1976:263–265).

From a historian's point of view, a blown cover is a beautiful thing. Since the entire point of a cover is to allow "open" transactions with "clean" organizations, grantees acknowledge their involvement with such groups in annual reports and tax filings. Some recipients understand the ruse; some don't. Diplomatic historians have made great use of this trick in rewriting the history of the Cold War, using open references to what are now known cover organizations to trace the CIA's footprints in everything from European music festivals to support for the publication of *Dr. Zhivago* (Saunders 1999, Wilford 2008, Finn and Couvée 2014, Iber 2015). Scientists, social scientists, and historians of science are less well-versed in this approach, to the point that—in my experience—many practitioners remain unaware of links to intelligence agencies that first appeared as front page news nearly 50 years ago. The information is readily available, *if* you know what you're looking for.

Forcing anthropologists (and the historians who study them) to engage with these relationships is perhaps the greatest of *Cold War Anthropology*'s many contributions. It is not paranoid, or a conspiracy theory, to suggest that a solid fraction of anthropologists who conducted ethnographic research in areas of interest to the postwar US (especially Southeast and Central Asia) received support—wittingly or unwittingly—from US military

or intelligence agencies. To drive home the point, Price quotes a military historian who claims that "as many as five thousand academics" worked with the CIA "on at least a part-time basis" by the 1970s (10). Price names names, providing lists of scholars who participated in the CIA's Princeton Consultants group (11); worked on the Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology project in Occupied Japan (47–48); received grants from the Human Ecology Fund, a known CIA front (200–202); and worked on anthropological projects for the US Army's Special Operations Research Office (254). Additional tables collate previously published information on CIA fronts, CIA pass-through organizations, and CIA-funded projects (168–172). Any good-faith reading of this book necessitates acknowledging the pervasive nature of these ties in postwar US anthropology. Moreover, more links are likely to be revealed as US military and intelligence agencies continue to declassify their Cold War-era records.

Price's discussion of anthropologists' relationships with non-military agencies is simultaneously less thorough and more ambivalent. During the 1960s and into the 1970s, USAID became entangled with several clandestine and paramilitary operations, especially in Laos and Vietnam. Price describes these repugnant activities in detail, drawing primarily on 1970s-era Congressional reports. For the most part, however, as Price himself acknowledges, the vast majority of anthropologists who worked with USAID participated in routine development work, in the kinds of projects that most US participants regarded as "altruistic means of assisting poorer nations" (124). Whether or not most participants at the time saw them as "altruistic" is debatable, but Price is correct to situate Cold War international aid programs within broader schemes to extend US influence across the globe. To the extent that these international aid programs helped to stabilize foreign regimes, Price considers them counterinsurgency actions (see, e.g., 114), and he calls out postwar American anthropologists—as a group—for failing to acknowledge the politics of development.

This is a potentially pungent critique that asks anthropologists to consider the role of US civilian agencies, as distinct from US military agencies, in establishing contemporary global inequality. Price approaches the precipice, at times charging anthropologists with participating in a "patronage of hope" that embroiled receiving nations in long-term debt (127). And yet, at the end, he draws back from the edge, focusing the bulk of his discussion of USAID on programs that in some way facilitated physical violence. "The humanitarian face of USAID was an effective public distraction from

the other roles USAID played in supporting CIA efforts," he writes (124). US anthropologists were slow to recognize "the ways that modernization theory, USAID, and other development projects directly and indirectly connected with the CIA and Cold War politics" (135). In Price's telling, the problem with anthropological research conducted on behalf of USAID was the ease with which it could be converted to military ends—its dual use nature—rather than its stated goal of facilitating development along the particular trajectory that the US preferred.

The extent to which Price defines the problem as one of military and intelligence agencies run amok is striking. In the book's preface, for instance, Price notes that his own "political and ethical orientations align with [his] academic critiques of the CIA and the Pentagon as organizations threatening rather than protecting democratic movements at home and abroad" (xx). To be clear: Since its inception, the CIA has done some terrible things. But so has the rest of the US government, of which the CIA is only one small part. As a reader, I wished that Price articulated what, exactly, he found so unsettling about the CIA's efforts to collect intelligence on the identities of foreign anthropologists, when it was the job of the CIA, as assigned by elected US officials through their passage of the National Security Act of 1947, to collect intelligence (Hogan 1998). Would acknowledging that the idea to gather such information didn't come from the CIA, but instead from the National Security Council (National Security Council Intelligence Directive 8, 1996), change Price's interpretation? One suspects that the real problem here, for Price, is the use of covert methods. In this particular case, the CIA collected information from AAA via subsidized foreign memberships paid by the Asia Foundation, a CIA front. Had the CIA openly acknowledged its interest, the AAA could have discussed the implications before deciding how to respond to the request. But, once again, the CIA's use of covert measures was authorized by the National Security Council and approved by the US President (National Security Council Directive 10/2, 1996). Does the threat to democracy come from the CIA, or from the democratically elected officials and their appointed advisors who granted the agency such leeway in the first place?

My point here is not to defend the CIA's use of deception or its extralegal activities. It's rather to highlight how Price has defined the problem of dual use anthropology in a way that overstates the possibility of separating military and intelligence concerns from broader definitions of state violence during the Cold War. Over the past five years, a growing number

of historians of science (broadly construed) have pushed back against a literature that traditionally defined "Cold War science" as science specifically designed for military purposes (e.g., Wolfe 2013). Other scholars have questioned how much influence military and intelligence agencies actually had over the work they subsidized (Wilford 2008, Engerman 2012). Yet others have begun to consider the limits of individual researchers' refusal to engage in classified research or even potentially dual use projects in light of the persistence of the militarized security state (Rohde 2013, Bridger 2015). Price, in contrast, hews to a more individualized mode of analysis that ascribes guilt or innocence in the Cold War project to foreknowledge or reasonable prediction of military use.

As a book written by an anthropologist, for anthropologists, *Cold War Anthropology* remains aloof from these broader conversations about science and scientists' relationship to US power, both within and beyond American borders. By focusing on the dangers that connections with military and intelligence agencies posed to research subjects and researchers alike, Price implicitly suggests a few ways that anthropology's relationship with the national security state differed from, say, that of physics, mathematics, or even sociology. Reports of executions made possible by anthropologists' field notes (32) or archeologists murdered because they were assumed to be spies (225) are chilling. The book's conclusion similarly addresses the disciplinary consequences of these connections, namely, how contemporary anthropologists should engage with work created through "funds mixing academic pleasures with the business of empire" (359). Price urges researchers to develop "metanarratives of power relations" (365) that place anthropological knowledge in the context of militarized projects. He urges anthropologists to develop and abide by codes of ethics and dual use research protocols.

*Cold War Anthropology* restarts a conversation that should have never stopped. Anthropologists unaware of their discipline's history will no doubt find its lists of CIA and military projects eye-opening. Veterans of campaigns to rid the discipline of ties to the military and intelligence agencies will appreciate its recounting of battles lost and won within the AAA. Historians of science, too, have much to learn from the book's methodology, especially its use of FOIA applications and tracings of blown CIA fronts. Price's account will hardly be the final work on the topic of US anthropologists' relationship to the Cold War, but it is a start, and for that, we should be grateful. ■

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