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James Hevia. *The Imperial Security State: British Colonial Knowledge and Empire-Building in Asia.* Critical Perspectives on Empire Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 312 pp. $99.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-521-89608-5.

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Military Intelligence, a Counterpart to Diplomacy

James Hevia, in his book *The Imperial Security State*, effectively argues that military intelligence complemented diplomacy in the external security regime of expanding European imperial states. While concentrating on the British Empire's Indian frontier with Afghanistan during the 1880-1940 period, Hevia extends his thoughtful and well-informed analysis from the Peace of Westphalia (1648), through the "reordering of the military-diplomatic apparatus" in the nineteenth century by Prussia, Russia, France, and Japan, up to U.S. engagements in Asia (p. 17). He insightfully demonstrates how European (especially British) officers–for their own tactical and strategic military purposes–measured, surveyed, and classified Asian lands and peoples. Hevia asserts that these Europeans thus "produced the very object of intervention: Asia itself" (p. 16).

To provide a context for his central topic of British imperialism in Asia, Hevia describes how, over the late nineteenth century, many European diplomatic corps and foreign affairs ministries developed archives of information and continuity of experience that enabled them to manage relations among European governments. Diplomats negotiated alliances that sought to advance their own nation's interests, including by sustaining a balance of power among European states. Further, military establishments wanted to assess accurately where and when to attack or defend at times of imbalances of power among them. For diplomats and war ministries to plan and act effectively, they relied on military intelligence officers to provide precise and comprehensive information about the military capacities of their own and other nations. Further, most European states generated extensive information about their own armies and military resources, often disseminated quite openly; military officers also attended the maneuvers of other armies, reporting to their superiors about the tactical and technical advances they observed. In addition, European governments regularly posted military attachés to their embassies in other European countries which openly or covertly collected an array of militarily valuable information.

Until the late nineteenth century, Britain lagged behind Germany and some other European continental powers in the military revolution of professionalization and industrialization of the war machine. The Prussian model of the General Staff as the core of coordination for all aspects of the army, including military intelligence, was only gradually imitated by Britain. For much longer, British cultural privileging within its officer corps of aristocratic status and selfless (and often amateur) heroism had devalued technical education and centralized information control. But Hevia shows how the British military intelligence branch slowly emerged from the gradual professionalization of technically trained military engineers. To achieve authority in the British military establishment, these intelligence officers had to fashion a new "imperial masculinity ... grounded on mental dexterity and predictable, regulated, self-disciplined performance" (p. 50). Consequently, the British military intelligence branch reflected these same values of systematic organization and application of knowledge through precise surveys of topography, production of route maps, and the compilation of statistical surveys. Hevia then shows how British military intelligence bureaus attempted to apply these European developments in Asia.

Most Asian governments, with the notable exception of Japan after the Meiji reformation, did not systematically collect information about their own topography or military assets, let alone those of their neighbors. Nor did they demarcate their boundaries in maps or on the ground. Hence, the British and other European colonial powers felt they had to collect and compile such information for themselves in order to negotiate treaties, plan in-

vasions, and secure their own borders. The British therefore dispatched military officers to both acquire knowledge and to negotiate politically. This produced "a kind of overlapping of military and diplomatic duties on the frontiers of empire, a blending or crossing of boundaries that might be contrasted with the seemingly clear division of labor that operated within the military-diplomatic apparatuses in Europe" (p. 123).

Further, Europeans asserted that their military intelligence services' professionalism and advanced technology were more authoritative than the ad hoc and personal knowledge possessed and valued by Asians about their own homelands. The British therefore surveyed and physically delineated precise borders, particularly between Afghanistan and British-ruled India, where none had previously existed. Colonial powers then tried to use armies to enforce these borders. In so doing, Hevia argues consistently throughout his book, Europeans were constructing Asia by making it "legible" by Europeans and by imposing those constructions on Asians (p. 111).

Highlighting the growing professionalism and technical expertise of European intelligence officers, Hevia critiques the concept of the "Great Game," popularized in the Victorian fiction of Rudyard Kipling and G. A. Henty as being played out in central Asia. Rather than entrepreneurial or spontaneous adventures by amateur European spies, the business of intelligence gathering between eastward expanding imperial Russia and northwestward expanding imperial Britain required disciplining of the procedures, and even the bodies, of its practitioners. Hevia largely follows Michel Foucault's theories about governmentality and how Europeans sought to discipline people, including disciplining their bodies. Thus, Europeans created a rigorous and highly technical science of mapping and delineating lands: "Disciplining the Space of Asia" (the title of chapter 5). Likewise, Europeans compiled military reports and handbooks, filled with statistics of military significance and evaluative ethnographies of Asian peoples: "Regulating the Facts of Asia" (the title of chapter 6). When these British military intelligence officers employed Asians, they enforced rigor on Asian bodies, teaching them to take precisely measured paces over long distances to measure space, to align scientific instruments unerringly to calculate topography, and to note all geographic and ethnographic features exactly through uniformly structured reports.

These European presuppositions about the precision and comprehensiveness of their own information sciences, however, occasionally led to discrepancies and disasters in actual practice in the field. Hevia devotes most of his book to considering the Afghan-Indian frontier, where Britons repeatedly suffered major setbacks, frustrations, and casualties because they did not know the territory as well as the indigenous people did. Afghans ignored or challenged British-defined borders and massacred British colonial armies (mostly composed of Indian soldiers) as they passed through territories that the British failed in practice to know and discipline. Thus, many British stereotypes about barbarous Afghans and other Muslims, which Hevia studies both at the popular and the professional military intelligence levels, evidently reflected British efforts to compensate for the incompleteness of their putative mastery of Asian lands and peoples.

In addition, the different branches of British military intelligence often disagreed significantly in their assessments of available data and clashed over their consequent policy recommendations, often due to their clashing interests. One major center was the Intelligence Branch in Simla, the Indian imperial summer capital. From there, the Indian army staff gathered information and allocated forces not just along India's borders but also in China. The other major center was in London where the War Office had its own intelligence bureaus that often came to different conclusions and policies, based on their empirewide perspective, their own entrenched personnel and policies, and their divergent reading of the same British-constructed information about Asia.

In addition to studying the practices and uses of British military intelligence agents and information, Hevia also substantially considers British intervention in northern China at the turn of the twentieth century; before, during, and after the Boxer Uprising. He thus shows how Britons incorporated China "into a security regime that few, if any, Chinese people were aware of" (p. 151). Hevia links this book with his excellent earlier study of English cultural assertions in China, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth Century China* (2003).

Hevia concentrates on military intelligence in the external security regime of colonial India. He only briefly mentions that "intelligence officers had to be prepared to work with the internal security regime in India" as well (p. 183). For that topic, he directs readers to the path-breaking work of Christopher A. Bayly, especially *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (1996).

Throughout *The Imperial Security State*, Hevia thoughtfully considers the British formation and organization of its archives of military intelligence. Using

English-language sources and archives in London, Hevia studies European institutions, perspectives, and accomplishments. He critiques many of their presuppositions and misperceptions. However, his sources largely preclude him from engaging with alternative views held by Asians, except as (mis)represented in the European sources he critiques. Thus, he occasionally imagines actual Asian understandings of these European actions. For example, Hevia describes "local [religious] shrines in Afghanistan that are marked by piles of stones" and then speculates: "It seems possible, therefore, that when [British] survey teams began assembling piles of stone to make a boundary pillar, they were unwittingly mimicking an indigenous practice. One can imagine local people considering the surveyors' pillars to be mocking their beliefs or attempting to disrupt the sacred geography of the region by introducing false shrines" (p. 214). In addition, he does not much discuss the forms of knowledge and archives that were created by Asian states. For example, the Mughal state also produced extensive archives of land surveys and measured route maps, extending into nearby central Asia. But Hevia's overall points hold about the scientific claims of British intelligence officers, the hitherto unmatched volume and breadth of military information they accumulated in their archives, and the unprecedented widespread and rapid dissemination of their complied reports to the officers in the field.

Clearly written, well researched, and persuasively argued, Hevia's latest book will engage a range of readers. Scholars of diplomatic history will find especially valuable Hevia's insights into the growth and development of military intelligence as the other major component of the developing European security regimes in Europe and in Asia. Historians of Asia will also gain much from his research, linking as it does south, central, and eastern Asia into the British imperial network of intelligence gathering and control. His final chapter shows continuities from British to American imperial interventions, as experts and intelligence officers from both nations attempted to control Asian lands and peoples through creating and compiling information about them.

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