
Book Review

Back channels—the oldest profession?

by Janine Benton

The Strategies of Zeus

by Gary Hart

William Morrow & Company, New York, 1987
\$18.95 hardbound, 359 pages.

The FBI's recent decision to investigate potentially illegal back channel negotiations by arms negotiator Paul Nitze has made a poorly written novel by off-again-on-again Democratic presidential candidate Gary Hart into a matter of renewed interest. If FBI Director William Sessions is interested in getting to the bottom of Nitze's potentially national security-threatening activities, he might find Hart's *The Strategies of Zeus* a good roadmap.

On Jan. 1, 1988 Europe explodes in violence. . . "[F]ive young people, all in their teens, die in rioting in Bonn. The organizers of the anti-nuclear demonstration either do not know how to control the participants or do not care to. As tens of thousands of marchers plunge past the government's buildings, roving bands of chain-swinging, leather-clad youths split off to smash windows or intimidate shoppers. Hostages are pulled from shops and forced to join the protest. If they refuse, they are often clubbed and beaten. Mounted police who try to rescue the victims are themselves pulled from the horses, stripped, and forced to join the marchers." Thus, Gary Hart ushers in 1988 in his latest book.

Scenario novels litter the landscape of the publishing world, and most are boring and unoriginal. Hart's is no exception. However, Hart was, until not too long ago, considered the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination for President in 1988. He has been a U.S. senator and a leading member of the Senate Armed Services Committee with access to the nation's top security secrets. His scenarios should be the well-informed projections of his own insider's knowledge.

As a U.S. senator, he sat through many highly classified defense and CIA briefings, but Hart chose to write a book full of lies about a warmongering pro-SDI United States, and

its poor victim, the Soviet Union. Even so, it may well be the case that Hart revealed insider knowledge on the way U.S. policy is negotiated in Geneva.

Hart spins a story of a U.S. arms negotiator from a western state who has an affair with a beautiful Soviet translator in Geneva. They both represent factions of their governments and they demand (using their personal relationship as a conduit for these demands) that the United States abandon the Strategic Defense Initiative completely: no research, no testing, no deployment. The United States must also accept a clarification of the ABM Treaty completely outlawing space-based ballistic missile defenses in exchange for the Soviets dismantling their new large radar at Krasnoyarsk and freezing the deployment of the new generation of ground-to-air interceptor missiles.

They succeed. The SDI is killed. The Soviet moderates rejoice that they will never have to develop their own SDI (and that all of Europe, from London to Milan, having been ravaged by the "peaceniks," is neutralized). Dozens are dead and virtually no government is left intact.

Casting aside the prerequisite romantic and sexual encounters that abound in the book, there is one glaring theme and wish from Mr. Hart: Destroy the SDI, and do it by back channel negotiations between U.S. and Soviet arms negotiators—namely, "state sanctioned espionage."

Hart's "life imitating art" affair with Donna Rice removed him from the political scene temporarily. His book, however, is due out in paperback shortly, with a major publicity drive behind it, coinciding with the revival of his presidential campaign in December.

Books Received

Marie Curie: A Life, by Françoise Giroud, translated by Lydia Davis. Holmes and Meier Publishing, Inc., N.Y., 1986. \$34.50 hardbound, 291 pages.

The Fringes of Power: 10 Downing Street Diaries 1939-1955, by John Colville. W.W. Norton, N.Y., 1986. \$12.95 paperbound, 796 pages.

Skullduggery, by Peter Marks. Carrol and Graf Publishers, Inc., N.Y., 1987. \$17.95 hardbound, 284 pages.

The Iran Contra Connection: Secret Teams and Covert Operations in the Reagan Era, by Jonathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott, and Jane Hunter. South End Press, Boston, Mass. \$11 paperbound, 315 pages.

Freedom: A Novel of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War, by William Safire. Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1987. \$24.95 hardbound, 1,125 pages.