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Titel **Review of**

**Klaus EICHNER and Ernst LANGROCK:
Der Drahtzieher. Vernon Walters.
Ein Geheimdienstgeneral des Kalten Krieges,
[The Wire-Puller. Vernon Walters. A Secret Service General of the Cold War]
Band 17 der Ed. Zeitgeschichte des Kai Homilius Verlags,
Berlin 2005, ISBN 3-89706-877-X.**

Ort, Datum/Jahr Berlin, 04.05.2005

GKND-Dok.nr. RZ-2005-05-04

In September 1999 the Central Intelligence Agency had arranged a conference in Berlin. To introduce its edition "On the Front Lines of the Cold War"¹ the CIA had chosen a remarkable location, the former Field Station Berlin on top of the Teufelsberg. Among those who had come to Berlin was Vernon Anthony Walters, a highly respected officer of the US intelligence community. The conference's organizers' "Biographical Notes on Presenters" described him as "a senior US government troubleshooter, carrying out sensitive diplomatic missions in many parts of the world".

Ten years ago, US President George W. H. Bush had appointed Walters as ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany. When Lieutenant General Walters arrived in Bonn in April 1989, Colonel Klaus Eichner already had a voluminous dossier on him. While Walters had served on the western front line of the cold war, Eichner served on the eastern side. Since 1957 he was an officer of East Germany's Ministry of State Security (MfS) working first in its counter-intelligence department and since 1974 in the foreign intelligence branch HV A. In 1987 Eichner had been appointed as head of the information and analysing section of the HV A-unit that was responsible for penetration and monitoring operations against western intelligence services.

Together with Ernst Langrock, a chemical scientist who had worked in "peaceful" (so the book's cover) nuclear research in East Germany and the Soviet Union, Eichner has now published this biography about Vernon Walters. Since more than a decade Eichner has written and edited numerous publications regarding the US espionage apparatus and its operations against the East, especially the GDR, among them the fact-full book "Headquarters Germany".²

¹ Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], Center for the Study of Intelligence [CSI], History Staff: On the Front Lines of the Cold War. Documents on the Intelligence War in Berlin, 1946 to 1961, ed. by Donald P. Steury, Washington, D. C., 1999.

² Eichner, Klaus und Andreas Dobbert: Headquarters Germany. Die USA-Geheimdienste in Deutschland, Berlin 1997; Idem: Echelon-Mythos oder Realitaet, in: Geheim no. 4/2000, pp. 5-10; Idem and Schramm, Gotthold (Ed.): Kundschafter im Westen. Spitzenquellen der DDR-Aufklaerung erinnern sich, Berlin 2003. Eichner is also an engaged member of the *Insiderkomitee for the Promotion of the Critical Dealing with the History of the [GDR's] Ministry of State Security*, see www.mfs-insider.de.

Though Walters was one of the key figures of America's intelligence community for more than half a century only little is known about him - even though Namebase lists more than 100 entries.³ The "Who's who in CIA", published in East-Berlin in 1968,⁴ has no entry regarding Walters who at that time had been army attaché in Rome, Rio de Janeiro and Paris with an intermezzo in Vietnam in 1967.

Twenty years later, Walters had been Deputy Director of Central Intelligence between 1972 and 1976 and carried out those "sensitive diplomatic missions" for the Reagan administration. O'Toole's "Encyclopedia of American Intelligence" lacks an entry on Walters, too.⁵ One will look for Walters in Piekalkiewicz's standard work (1988) without any result.⁶ Also Polmar's and Allen's encyclopedia (1997) does not contain a special entry about Walters.⁷ At least they mention him in their list of DCIs though they could have presented more details since the CIA published biographical fact sheets on DCIs and DDCIs regularly.⁸ The "Encyclopedia of Secret Services in the 20th Century" by Roewer, Schaefer, and Uhl published in 2003 finally imparts nine lines of such basic biographical information.⁹

Walters' own books reveal a lot about the methods of secret diplomacy but very little about his intelligence career (p. 115).¹⁰ "Der Drahtzieher" emphasizes critically that such memoirs are typical of intelligence officers: on the one hand carefully avoiding details while on the other getting lost in general words.

Therefore, the book by Eichner and Langrock arouses interest to all who want to know more about the man who had entered US military service in 1941, served as "troubleshooter" in military intelligence posts all around the world, who was appointed tenth DDCI by Richard Nixon in 1972 serving as the number two of the CIA under Richard Helms, James Schlesinger and William Colby until 1976, who was assigned various secret missions by presidents Reagan and Bush, sen., and who had been connected to almost every hot spot of the Cold War from World War 2 to the collapse of the Eastern Bloc.

This is the part of Walters' life Eichner and Langrock concentrate on. They wrote a career description more than biography. Their book does not attempt to approach the person Vernon Walters. This may be in favour of the book since the authors do not try to hide their personal opinion about Walters which is quite negative. Throughout the book they refer to him as "one of the worst figures of the intelligence guild" (p. 13), "Polit-Rambo" (p 105), "the most active government terrorist of the United States" (p. 183) and alike. These insults are unnecessary and do not contribute to the book's claim of objectivity.

Of course, we read that Walters had a remarkable linguistic proficiency: he spoke German, French, Italian, Russian, Chinese and other languages. But Eichner and Langrock do not assess this qualification with Walters' missions. They could have known that Walters himself had reflected this.¹¹

³ www.namebase.org.

⁴ Mader, Julius: Who's Who in CIA, East-Berlin 1968.

⁵ O'Toole, George J. A.: The Encyclopedia of American Intelligence and Espionage. From the Revolutionary War to the Present, New York/Oxford 1988.

⁶ Piekalkiewicz, Janusz: Weltgeschichte der Spionage, Munich 1988.

⁷ Polmar, Norman und Thomas B. Allen: Spy Book. The Encyclopedia of Espionage, New York 1997.

⁸ CIA, History Staff: Directors and Deputy Directors of Central Intelligence, Washington, D. C. 1992, e. g. For additional information see Appelbaum, Henry R.: In memoriam. Vernon Walters - Renaissance Man, CIA, CSI, www.cia.gov/csi/studies/vol46no1/article01.html [19.04.2005].

⁹ Roewer, Helmut/Schaefer, Stefan and Uhl, Matthias: Lexikon der Geheimdienste im 20. Jahrhundert, Munich 2003.

¹⁰ E. g. Walters, Vernon A.: Silent Missions, New York 1978; Reflection on Gorbachev's policies and East-South relations, Coral Gables 1988; In vertraulicher Mission, Esslingen 1990; Die Vereinigung war voraussehbar, Munich 1994; Mighty and the meek, London 2001.

¹¹ See Walters' foreword to Mueller, Kurt E.: Language competence: implications for national security, New York 1986.

So “Der Drahtzieher” sketches Walters’ sometimes proofed but mostly only supposed involvement in US intelligence operations and diplomatic missions. It is obvious that the authors have encountered the problem of obtaining reliable documents. Probably from the start assuming such would not be accessible Eichner and Langrock used the knowledge of the former HV A colonel as well as well-known facts about US intelligence activities to infer Walters’ participation.

Using this method of deduction the authors mostly list CIA activities and proceed from the assumption that Walters must have been involved because he had either been in that region, met certain people or was in some other position where he actually should have acted as *Drahtzieher*.

Eichner’s and Langrock’s general assumption of Walters as the *wire-puller* behind the scenes is appropriate. And it’s true that first-hand sources are difficult to obtain. At least they should have tried or reported their attempts. Instead the authors leave it to intelligence files that might become available sometime (p. 89). But did they actually request any documents from US intelligence services or the German authority holding the MfS legacy?¹² This administration is responsible for more than 180 km of files East Germany’s state security has left. Probably Eichner would have found some of his reports on Walters or CIA activities. Or they could have let us know that neither the CIA, DIA nor the BStU revealed such documents.

Instead Eichner and Langrock have intensively relied on Walters’ publications and some scientific literature about the Cold War. Often they have copied quite long quotations which is not really necessary. Summaries would have been more useful. But especially when they refer to quotations from Walters’ books the authors tried to assess his words to the contemporary context. Their comments allow new aspects of Walters’ points of view regarding the US policy makers and their self-understanding of global politics. To assist this aim Eichner and Langrock have reproduced some documents of the National Security Council, the Joint Strategic Planning Committee and the Political Planning Staff of the late 1940s. Though these papers were not obtained as original documents via the Freedom of Information Act, the National Archive and Records Administration, or the National Security Archive but taken from a reliable publication¹³ they contribute very much the informative objective of the book.

It ought to be noted that Eichner took great efforts to translate them and to draw up lists of important documents of the National Security Council from 1947 to 1956 (pp. 141-4) and of US military plans as to nuclear warfare against the Soviet Union (pp. 149-52). They are helpful for further research projects.

These documents also reveal the political mainstream that dominated Walters’ career and personal conviction. It becomes obvious what had qualified him for all the special assignments he had been entrusted with by intelligence and political leaders up to several US presidents. Though “Der Drahtzieher” lacks continuously detailed biographical information its authors successfully described Walters’ missions as Ronald Reagan’s special envoy in North Africa, Central America and to the Vatican of John Paul II (Poland). The book makes clear that the focus of all these activities of Walters and the US intelligence community was the containment, roll-back and over-coming of the community of socialist nations. More than once we read Walters’ words on his intelligence-diplomatic missions: “It is one of mine chief tasks to give the extreme unction” (p. 19, fn. 2).

¹² Bundesbeauftragte fuer die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik [Federal Commissioner for the Records of the National Security Service of the Former GDR, www.bstu.de.

¹³ All but one were taken from Etzold, Thomas H. and Gaddis, John L. (Ed.): *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950*, New York 1978.

When examining Walters Eichner and Langrock analyze less than commenting. Often they quote from Walters' books to comment on first of all (e. g. p. 119-21). While these comments may reveal something about Walters' biography and little about his personality they make obvious which problem is actually preying on the authors' minds. They regret the decline of socialism, its nations and alliances, and looked for an outstanding representative from the once opposite side of their front line (e. g., pp. 178-9).

Certainly, Vernon A. Walters Lieutenant General of the United States Army, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence and once even acting DCI, special envoy and Ambassador-at-Large was one of them. He had been an important US wire-puller behind the scenes of international politics. But as Eichner's and Langrock's book imparts, too, Walters had only pulled wires on behalf of his superiors.

In this book we meet some of these US key officials who now hold quite important positions within the administration of President George W. Bush. There is Condoleezza Rice: the current Secretary of State had been in the NSC when Walters was ambassador to the United Nations and to West Germany. There is Donald Rumsfeld: when Walters was DDCI, Bush's Secretary of Defense represented the USA at the NATO and was chief of staff of President Ford's White House. And there is John Negroponte: more than twenty years ago Bush's recently appointed Director of Intelligence co-operated with Walters in the Special Operations Group of the CIA: this body had co-ordinated US intelligence operations against Nicaragua.

Finally, the book contains a selection of obituaries published in the course of Walters' death in 2002 (pp. 240-50). Eichner and Langrock called them "life's judgements". Unfortunately some lack appropriate references as to their origin. But they contribute to "Der Drahtzieher" as a book that takes its readers through a tour d'horizon of US intelligence operations against socialist targets during the Cold War with Walters being a key-figure on the US side of the front line. It is an interesting basis as well as a completion to all who attempt to research further on Vernon Anthony Walters (1917-2002).

So far this book is available in German only.