

Republican. In this thorough analysis of the politics of black Republicans, Rigueur provides a powerful addition to wider scholarship on black political behavior.

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Iran-Contra: Reagan's Scandal and the Unchecked Abuse of Presidential Power by Malcolm Byrne. Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2014. 464 pp. \$34.95.

Three decades after the Ronald Reagan administration's greatest foreign policy disaster, observers of Iran-Contra continue to be surprised at how little attention the scandal has received. This inattention can be explained, if not justified. After revelations that legally dubious intelligence operations had collided to provoke a constitutional crisis, censure of those involved was surprisingly light. Few on Capitol Hill were interested in the prospect of another presidential impeachment, and geopolitical developments such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the crackdown at Tiananmen Square, and the first Gulf War commanded the attention of policymakers and the public alike. Still, with the benefits of hindsight and document declassification, it is surprising that relatively little has been written to resurrect debate about Iran-Contra.

Malcolm Byrne is the right person to provoke that discussion. As deputy director of research at the National Security Archive at George Washington University and director of the Iran Documentation Project there, Byrne has followed the scandal since it broke. Now drawing on previously inaccessible documents, including the personal notes of Caspar Weinberger, Charles Hill, and George H. W. Bush, he paints a compelling picture of a scandal with Reagan at its center. The president may have been inattentive to the details of certain foreign affairs, Byrne argues, but he cared deeply about issues that he believed mattered. These included fighting communism, supporting freedom fighters (as he termed them), and rescuing American hostages. Although he may not have provided direction for how to realize the objectives he sought, Reagan was the driving force behind the decisions that led to the scandal.

The book's organization reflects the history of the affair. It begins with alternating chapters about distinct covert action campaigns in Central America and the Middle East. In Nicaragua, the administration sought to finance and otherwise support *contra-revolucionarios*, individuals fighting an elected government that Washington viewed as a communist threat. Meanwhile, it worked first with Israel and then alone to sell arms to Iran in exchange for assistance in the release of American hostages in Lebanon. Halfway through

the book, and chronologically in late 1985, the operations converge when profits from arms sales to Iran are diverted to fund rebels in Nicaragua. Congress had banned such support, but the administration went around Congress.

The principal strengths of the book are both substantive and stylistic. The research is exceedingly thorough, yet Byrne is able to narrate the intricacies of covert actions and legal processes in a digestible way. In that sense, his book may come to replace Theodore Draper's *A Very Thin Line: The Iran-Contra Affairs* (1991) as the standard volume on the scandal. Whereas the latter was relatively inaccessible to nonspecialists, the present work will be of interest to academics, policymakers, and members of the general public.

This is not to say that the book is beyond critique. At times, Byrne slips into editorial, and by the end of the book, the reader senses that certain key conclusions are implied rather than explicitly stated. Byrne never argues that Reagan should have been impeached, for example, or even that such proceedings should have been held, but the reader walks away with that distinct impression. Such an argument might be defensible, but it would need to be explicit. The book is also short on discussion of the long-term implications of the affair, with just a few pages on those topics in the conclusion.

Despite these quibbles, if Byrne sought to write an account of Iran-Contra that was as thorough as it was readable, he has succeeded. Of the books on this topic, this stands among the best and will likely remain in that group for the foreseeable future.

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Democracy Declassified: The Secrecy Dilemma in National Security by Michael P. Colaresi. New York, Oxford University Press, 2014. 400 pp. \$29.95.

If democracies are to conduct effective foreign policies, they must be able to simultaneously keep secrets and secure public consent. U.S. foreign policy successes from Operation Overlord during World War II to the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011 relied on secrecy. At the same time, argues Michael P. Colaresi, they were possible because the U.S. government had broad public support. These examples notwithstanding, it is not easy for democracies to achieve this balance. Indeed, they confront a dilemma: secrecy is vital for foreign policy effectiveness, but it is also an impediment to generating widespread and enthusiastic consent because publics cannot be sure governments are acting in their best interests.