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INTERVIEW WITH TOM ROSS

JIM CONWAY: 'The World of Cloak and Dagger, the Espionage Establishment.' This is the title of a new book by David Weiss and Thomas B. Ross, who is also the author, as you know, of the Invisible Government.

Tom Ross is a native New Yorker, a Yale graduate, a veteran newspaperman who since 1958 has been a member of the Washington Bureau of the Chicago Sun-Times. And I'm intrigued about how you got all the information you've packed in this book Tom. For example, the identity of one of the most powerful men in England. The legendary head of, is it, MI-6 or MI-6?

TOM ROSS: MI-6.

CONWAY: MI-6. How KG-B purchased a dairy farm and touched off a sex and security scandal. How do you get all this information?

ROSS: Well, it's not unlike ordinary reporting. It's an awful lot of long arduous hours and of leg work. It's also the acquiring of contacts with people who are in the espionage business.

CONWAY: Um hum.

ROSS: And we have developed over a number of years a great number of contacts within various intelligence establishments. Not only in this country but in other countries around the world. Some people have developed a confidence that we will handle material that's sensitive in a manner that will not be injurious to security yet will be revealing to people giving a feeling for great hidden industry which rarely comes to public view.

CONWAY: Tom, do we have too many intelligence agencies? We have ONI, Naval Intelligence, we have an Army Intelligence. We have a Department of Defense Intelligence. We have CIA. Oh, do we have CIA. But, isn't there a great deal of overlapping?

ROSS: Well, there is a great deal of overlapping. But, actually, a decreasing amount. The CIA was set up specifically to end the multiplicity in ~~Overlapping~~ intelligence services. It really grew

out of Pearl Harbor when there was a great deal of intelligence information which should have been read to indicate an eminent attack.

CONWAY: Um hum.

RPSS: But, it was lying around in undigested form. It never got the attention of the proper people. The CIA was created to coordinate and centralize this process. And it has to a large degree although I think you're quite right. We still have an awful lot of overlap and duplication.

CONWAY: That would take a shifting of gears in the American mentality to be a good intelligence person. The British seem to be suited to this either by temperament or a sense of history. But, the Americans, generally, we're like to feel is a good whole-some type of person. He doesn't believe in utilizing, let's say, sex or killing to achieve a necessary end.

ROSS; Well, I think your judgement is sound. We had a great deal of difficulty developing a professional espionage and intelligence corp.

CONWAY: Um hum.

ROSS: However, as of now, there's no one in the world that does any better at it than the United States.

CONWAY: Really?

ROSS: Yes.

CONWAY: That's encouraging.

ROSS: Particularly in forms forms of technical intelligence which is increasingly becoming the key to intelligence. That is long range evesdropping, the use of earth satellites to photograph equipment. In terms of technology, no one can match us.

In terms of , certain of the old forms of spying--

FRAN: Yes.

ROSS: Murder,

CONWAY: Mayhem. The Russians are pretty adept there.

FRAN: What do we know about the Soviet Intelligence? What do we know really?

ROSS: Well, frankly, we don't --Our own intelligence knows a great deal. The public knows relatively little which is one of the reasons why we wrote this book. We have a very substantial section in this book revealing, I believe, for the first time, the

extent of the Soviet Intelligence, how they operate in this country, how much money they spend, how many agents they have, the type of techniques they use. How they infiltrate people into this country under assumed names, under passports Americans use and their social security numbers, this sort of thing. They are a very clever, clever outfit.

CONWAY: Many members of the diplomatic establishment, the Soviet diplomatic establishment are also espionage agents, aren't they?

ROSS: That's right. The Soviets as well as the other countries including the United States uses what is known as embassy cover.

CONWAY: Um hum.

ROSS: Diplomatic cover. It's estimated by the FBI that perhaps two thirds of the Soviet diplomats in this country are in fact spys. They are operating at the UN, out of the Washington Embassy or in other diplomatic situations technically as political officers or economic officers. But, in fact, they are basically men either of the KG-B, which is the Russian political intelligence or the GR-U, which is the Russian military intelligence.

CONWAY: Well, shortly after the war Tom, and this leads up to a question about the regular military. A friend of mine was, at that time a colonel and was involved in counter-espionage activities. And this was when the news of communist infiltration hit the newspapers. That they had infiltrated into our government. And I was talking this situation with this man, who at that time was on at active duty and he said well so and so is a Soviet agent and so and so is a Soviet agent. And he said well Fitz, why don't you just hire a bunch of limosines and kill them. And he was honestly shocked at this.

He said, well that would be unconstitutional. (LAUGHTER) And I said to him, well this is just a continuation of war. But, he was honestly shocked and this is a West Point graduate who didn't realize that we were at war.

ROSS: There is perhaps a--another demension to the problem. There's a certain etiquette of spying. You don't kill their agents and they don't kill your agents. (LAUGHTER) Particularly if they're overt.

CONWAY: Yeah.

ROSS: I mean if it's a member of the Embassy in Washington, then he technically or ostensibly is his secretary although he may be the head of the KG-B in the United States. You don't mess with him because we have a CIA stationed in Moscow who is also known by them and they don't mess with him.

CONWAY: Yeah.

ROSS: There are certain tacit agreements and certain things are allowed. One of the things that we go into in the book is the extraordinary change that has taken place in terms of spys. Sort of a revolution in spys in that governments now admit that they have spys, which they didn't do until very recently

They trade spys just as you trade ball players. You glorify spys. You name streets after them. There's a street in the Soviet Union that's named after a great spy of theirs in Japan during the war.

(VOICES OVERLAPPING)

CONWAY: 782-4527 if you have questions of this fascinating man who has written a remarkable book, 'The Espionage Establishment,' Thomas B. Ross. And phone in your questions we're going to be right back after this message.

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CONWAY: ...The author of a fascinating book, 'The Espionage Establishment,' Mr. Thomas B. Ross, a native New Yorker and a veteran newsman and he's been a member of the Washington Bureau of the Sun-Times since 1958 Tom right?

ROSS: Right. And a fascinating man

FRAN: Mr. Ross, a north side lady asks was mata hari really a spy and are there many lady spys these days?

ROSS: Mata Hari was a spy and I think there are probably more lady spys today than ever. And there are an extraordinary number of ladys who are involved in the analytical work of intelligence probably half of the proton analysts at the CIA are women. And they're ver good at it because they tend to have a greater sense of detail and concentration. Men think in the great, sweeping generalities.

GUEST: What about the lace-pants brigade that happended in connecticut that called the bookies there ...because the bookies never thought that they would be flowed by two Soviet ladies pushing their carriages.(ALGHTER)

FRAN: She also asks is sex used a lot in spying?

ROSS: I can't vouch for it myself but I would assume.(LAUGHTER)