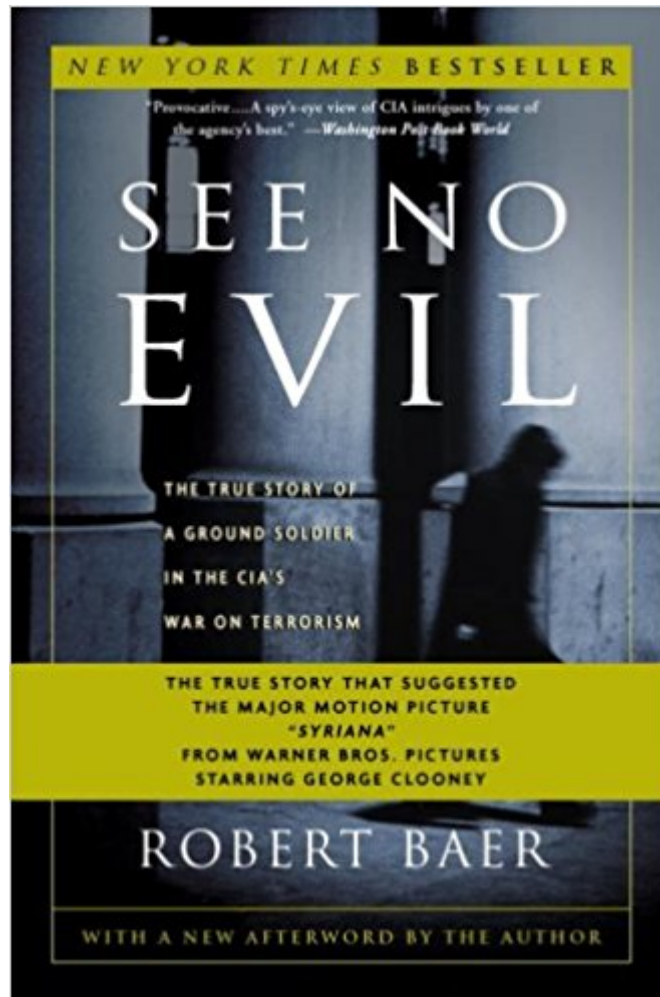


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See No Evil: The True Story Of A Ground Soldier In The CIA's War On Terrorism



Synopsis

In his explosive New York Times bestseller, top CIA operative Robert Baer paints a chilling picture of how terrorism works on the inside and provides startling evidence of how Washington politics sabotaged the CIA's efforts to root out the world's deadliest terrorists, allowing for the rise of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda and the continued entrenchment of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. A veteran case officer in the CIA's Directorate of Operations in the Middle East, Baer witnessed the rise of terrorism first hand and the CIA's inadequate response to it, leading to the attacks of September 11, 2001. This riveting book is both an indictment of an agency that lost its way and an unprecedented look at the roots of modern terrorism, and includes a new afterword in which Baer speaks out about the American war on terrorism and its profound implications throughout the Middle East.

Robert Baer was considered perhaps the best on-the-ground field officer in the Middle East.

—Seymour M. Hersh, *The New Yorker*

From The Preface

This book is a memoir of one foot soldier's career in the other cold war, the one against terrorist networks. It's a story about places most Americans will never travel to, about people many Americans would prefer to think we don't need to do business with. This memoir, I hope, will show the reader how spying is supposed to work, where the CIA lost its way, and how we can bring it back again. But I hope this book will accomplish one more purpose as well: I hope it will show why I am angry about what happened to the CIA. And I want to show why every American and everyone who cares about the preservation of this country should be angry and alarmed, too. The CIA was systematically destroyed by political correctness, by petty Beltway wars, by careerism, and much more. At a time when terrorist threats were compounding globally, the agency that should have been monitoring them was being scrubbed clean instead. Americans were making too much money to bother. Life was good. The White House and the National Security Council became cathedrals of commerce where the interests of big business outweighed the interests of protecting American citizens at home and abroad. Defanged and dispirited, the CIA went along for the ride. And then on September 11, 2001, the reckoning for such vast carelessness was presented for all the world to see.

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Customer Reviews

As a former clandestine case officer, leaving the Agency in 1988 after unsuccessfully chasing terrorists for a few years, I knew we were in bad shape but I did not realize just how bad until I read this book. The author, working mostly in the Near East (NE) Division of the Directorate of Operations, and then in the Counter-Terrorism Center when it was just starting out, has an extremely important story to tell and every American needs to pay attention. Why? Because his account of how we have no assets useful against terrorism is in contradiction to what the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) told the President and his top advisors at Camp David on Saturday 15 September. According to the Washington Post of 31 January 2002, page A13, on the 15th the DCI laid out an ambitious "Worldwide Attack Matrix" and told the President that the United States had a "large asset base" from its years of working the terrorism target. One of these two men one is closer to the truth than the other. In my judgement, I believe Baer has three-quarters of the weight on his side. This discrepancy warrants investigation, for no President can be successful if he does not have accurate information about our actual capabilities. There are four other stories within this excellent book, all dealing with infirm bureaucracies. At one level, the author's accounting of how the Directorate of Operations has declined under the last three leaders (as the author describes them: a recalled retiree, an analyst, and a "political" (pal)) is both clearly based on ground truth, and extremely troubling.

'See No Evil' documents Robert Baer's career as a CIA field officer, but it also does much more. It shows us how intelligence in this country has drastically changed since the Cold War and the tragic consequences we as a nation are paying for those changes. At the beginning of his career, Baer describes himself as an extremely unlikely candidate for the CIA. He relates experiences of his training and facts from many events that we just think we know about. Baer's story makes for very interesting and exciting reading as he describes the thrills and dangers of his first several years as a

field officer. It was an incredibly tough and dangerous job, but a necessary one, as the author adequately demonstrates. Excitement quickly turns to anger for both the author and the reader. As the Cold War ends, the reader will learn how the CIA took a dramatic turn, seeking to gain intelligence from satellite surveillance rather than from agents in the field. Why not? The technology is available and fewer lives will be lost. Sounded like a good idea at the time, but not to Baer. You'll read about how terrorists in the Middle East and in other parts of the world were quickly ignored after the Cold War in favor of special interests in Washington. You'll also see how close we really were to putting an end to Saddam Hussein forever. You'll read about many other events that will surprise you, shock you, and make you mad as hell. 'See No Evil' made me experience all those feelings and more. How could the CIA have fallen to such a level as Baer describes in this book? What a terrible price we as a nation have paid and continue to pay for our lack of top-notch intelligence. I'll admit that twenty years ago I pretty much ignored all the fighting and disputes going on in the Middle East.

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