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Identifying "lessons learned" is not new -- the military has been doing it for decades. However, members of the worldwide intelligence community have been slow to extract wider lessons gathered from the past and apply them to contemporary challenges. Learning from the Secret Past is a collection of ten carefully selected cases from post-World War II British intelligence history. Some of the cases include the Malayan Emergency, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Northern Ireland, and the lead up to the Iraq War. Each case, accompanied by authentic documents, illuminates important lessons that today's intelligence officers and policymakers -- in Britain and elsewhere -- should heed.

Written by former and current intelligence officers, high-ranking government officials, and scholars, the case studies in this book detail intelligence successes and failures, discuss effective structuring of the intelligence community, examine the effective use of intelligence in counterinsurgency, explore the ethical dilemmas and practical gains of interrogation, and highlight the value of human intelligence and the dangers of the politicization of intelligence. The lessons learned from this book stress the value of past experience and point the way toward running effective intelligence agencies in a democratic society.

Scholars and professionals worldwide who specialize in intelligence, defense and security studies, and international relations will find this book to be extremely valuable.