



Into Tibet : The CIA's First Atomic Spy and His Secret Expedition to Lhasa

Thomas Laird

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Into Tibet is the incredible story of a 1949-1950 American undercover expedition led by America's first atomic agent, Douglas S. Mackiernan -- a covert attempt to arm the Tibetans and to recognize Tibet's independence in the months before China invaded. It recounts a harrowing and unprecedented two-thousand-mile trek on foot and camel across China and the deserts of inner Asia. For the first time, Thomas Laird reveals how Mackiernan helped establish a covert intelligence pipeline from China to India; how he gathered atomic intelligence for the United States; how his partner Frank Bessac urged the Tibetan government to request covert U.S. military aid and then carried the signed request out of Lhasa; and, finally, how Dean Rusk and the CIA responded. Laird reveals how the clash between the State Department and the CIA, as well as unguided actions by field agents, hastened the Chinese invasion of Tibet. Commenting on American motivations during this operation for the first time, the Dalai Lama says bluntly, "The courage was not there." U.S. government actions were ultimately a kiss of death for Tibet and Mackiernan -- the first CIA agent ever killed during a covert operation. A gripping narrative of survival, courage, and intrigue among the nomads, princes, and warring armies of inner Asia, Into Tibet rewrites the accepted history behind the Chinese invasion of Tibet. "Laird does an exemplary job of investigating, reporting, and shaping the events and personalities that compose the tragic story." -- Bob Shacochis, author of The Immaculate Invasion

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