

Title: History of CIA Covert Action

Speaker: David Robarge, Ph.D.

Date: 21 March 2022

Time: 1200-1315

Where: Conolly Conference Room, C-138

POC: Matthew Towner, Ph.D.

Synopsis

CIA began conducting covert action (CA) soon after its creation in 1947, and since then, every President has used CA as an important foreign policy instrument. Over the years, CIA has built a mixed record of success and failure with its covert operations and has often found itself embroiled in political controversy because of them. CA is the only one of the Agency's core missions that involves helping implement foreign policy, and so the operations' prospects for success depend heavily on the soundness of those policies and the resources and authorities given to the Agency. A number of best practices can be drawn from CIA's historical CA programs that if followed can increase the likelihood that future covert operations will achieve their objectives.

Bio

David Robarge received his Ph.D. in American history from Columbia University. After teaching at Columbia and working on the staff of banker David Rockefeller, he joined the CIA in 1989 and worked as a political and leadership analyst on the Middle East. Dr. Robarge came to the CIA's history staff in 1996 and was appointed Chief Historian in 2005. Along with classified and unclassified monographs, he has written a recently declassified biography of DCI John McCone, and unclassified monographs on CIA's A-12 supersonic reconnaissance aircraft as well as intelligence in the American Revolution, including a biography of Chief Justice John Marshall. His current projects are an internal history of the President's Daily Brief and a study of George Marshall's uses of intelligence. Dr. Robarge has taught at George Mason University and currently teaches at Georgetown University.