

CONSTANTINE BROWN

CIA Is Caught in the Middle

Politicians Blame Agency When U. S. Is Caught Unaware; Yet Few Heed It

During the last 10 years, whenever we were caught with our diplomatic pants down, the politicians blamed the Central Intelligence Agency for inefficiency. It is natural that the lawmakers should expect much from an agency which costs the taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars yearly.

The CIA does not answer completely the purposes for which it was created in 1946. It is topheavy and frequently more interested in international cloak and dagger intrigues than in actual intelligence.

But after this is said, it must also be admitted that if those in charge of policy-making paid more attention to its reports, we would not have been caught off base in a number of occasions.

For instance, the CIA had warned President Truman and his subordinates of the impending North Korea attack on South Korea.

Beginning with the month of November, 1949, it kept the White House and the National Security Council posted about the buildup of the North Korea forces. These reports continued until the minute the North Korean puppets launched their "surprise" attack on South Korea.

In May, the CIA provided the important information that the populations of the villages north of the 38th parallel had been evacuated and houses destroyed to enable a freer movement for the 98 Red tanks and a clearer range for their artillery. Yet on June 1, 1950, President Truman stated that

at no time since the end of the war was the peace of the world more secure.

This reporter had learned accidentally of the real state of affairs and on June 6 this column contained the warning that a Communist attack against South Korea must be expected not later than July 1.

After the tragedy occurred and President Truman acted energetically by ordering Gen. MacArthur to provide assistance to our ROK allies, the politicians started a post mortem examination as to why we had been caught by surprise.

Secretaries Dean Acheson and Louis Johnson were keenly interested in why the administration had not been forewarned about the Communist attack.

Both Secretaries suggested to the Senators that the CIA had fallen flat on its face and that they had better get their information from the then director, Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter.

The Senators summoned him that very afternoon. President Truman asked his CIA chief whether he wanted an executive order not to appear. The admiral refused. He produced before that committee, in executive session, all the documents and reports he had given his superiors since November, 1949.

They bore out his estimate that the Communists were preparing "something nasty."

For the second time in eight years we have been caught napping, this time in the Middle East.

Like his predecessor, President Eisenhower ordered American forces to Lebanon after consulting leaders of Congress. But a scapegoat had to be found to explain why we had been surprised once more. The CIA, whose responsibility is to keep incessant vigilance, is being blamed again.

It is true that it did not know that a group of pro-Nasser officers had planned to kill King Faisal and all the pro-Western leaders in Iraq.

But the CIA did know that something very serious was brewing in the Middle East. On Saturday morning, July 12, there was an important meeting at Secretary Dulles' residence. It included, besides some State Department officials, Mr. Allen Dulles. There, according to reliable reports, the CIA chief informed his listeners that a pro-Nasser group had decided to murder King Hussein of Jordan and that the assassination would take place "forthwith."

Mr. Dulles erred only about the place. But that should not be surprising. The Turks who have the best intelligence in the Middle East, knew nothing about the impending coup. On the day when King Faisal was murdered Turkey's President Bayar, Prime Minister Menderes and a guard of honor waited for several hours at the Istanbul airport for the Iraqi leaders to arrive for a preliminary Baghdad Pact conference. The tough Iraqi prime minister, Nuri Said, obviously knew nothing despite his excellent security police—or else he and the King would have managed to escape the assassin.