

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

WASHINGTON POST & TIMES HERALD
15 July 1955

Why CIA Should NOT Locate in Langley:

July 14, 1955

Mr. Allen Dulles
Director, Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dulles:

On April 7, 1955, it was publicly announced that the Central Intelligence Agency had given up any plan to construct a new headquarters in Langley, Virginia. It now appears that without any public explanation or notice CIA has reversed its position and has again been considering the Langley site. We fear that because of the secret way in which selection of a site has been handled, neither CIA nor the public may be aware of some of the serious considerations against locating CIA in Langley.

High Cost. The Langley site for a CIA building would cost taxpayers an estimated \$13,000,000 more than other sites being considered—\$8,500,000 in Federal funds for a highway, \$2,500,000 in State funds for road improvements, \$2,000,000 in County funds for utilities. In addition, according to a CIA estimate, choice of the Langley site would put off for at least three years the date when CIA could move into its new headquarters—and, as you have testified, Mr. Dulles, each year's delay costs the taxpayers \$2,900,000 in CIA's present scattered locations.

Damage to the Area. Langley is a unique rural-residential area of one-family homes, country places and farms. There are no apartment buildings. The only commercial developments in 10 miles along the road to Great Falls are two filling stations. A CIA building for an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 persons would destroy the unique character of the area. It has been estimated that the building would bring an additional 20,000 to 35,000 persons into the area, including the necessary service workers. This would mean commercial construction, mass housing and other drastic changes in a rural-residential section.

Strain on Facilities. The huge population increase induced by CIA location in Langley would be imposed on a community already coping with inadequate water, sewerage and roads. Providing water and sewerage facilities for a CIA building itself will do nothing to service the huge new population. The water table is already falling in the area; accelerated development will dry up existing wells. Again, providing a super-highway to Langley might lessen the problems of the building itself, but it would aggravate the existing congestion on other roads throughout the area. Virginia participation in improving the road from Chain Bridge to Langley would make less likely the necessary state help for other area roads. And whatever is done to the roads, Chain Bridge will remain a bottleneck.

In the words of one of the planners who has studied the proposal, Mr. Max S. Wehrly: "The particular site (Langley) proposed for this installation lies in one of the sections of Northern Virginia least able to accommodate it in terms of existing or foreseeable access, utilities and services, or its disruptive effect upon the present character and desirable future development of the area."

Loss of a Park. The proposed site at Langley is the only substantial piece of U. S. Government property on the Virginia shore above Chain Bridge. The property has meadows, forests and a mile and a half of river front overlooking the magnificent Potomac gorge. Congress has authorized the National Capital Planning Commission to take over all or most of this land for park purposes. (46 Stat. 432.) There is no reason to select this unique site and thus destroy potential park land, badly needed in Northern Virginia.

Local Opposition. The McLean Citizens Association, drawing its members from the entire area, voted to oppose location of a CIA building in Langley. Of several sites now being considered by CIA, Langley is the only one in which the local citizens association has objected.

We urge you to locate the new CIA headquarters on one of the other available sites—sites much more suitable for a large office building, and sites where CIA will be welcomed.

Sincerely yours,

Benjamin Lee Bird
G. Bowdoin Craighill, Jr.
Roger Fisher

Anthony Lewis
Samuel E. Neel
Walter T. Ridder

Why CIA SHOULD locate in Alexandria:

July 14, 1955

Mr. Allen Dulles
Director, Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dulles:

The City of Alexandria has invited the Central Intelligence Agency to locate its new headquarters on the Winkler tract, near Shirley Highway and Seminary Road in Alexandria. We want to take this opportunity to bring to your attention, and the public's, some of the advantages of this site.

Economy. A modern expressway, the Shirley Highway, runs from Washington directly by the proposed site. CIA employees, 69 per cent of whom now live in the District or in Maryland, would be traveling against the main rush-hour traffic on the Shirley Highway. Water, sewer and power facilities are also already available at the site. The only cost to the taxpayers, aside from the building itself, would be approximately \$400,000 for land and for improvement of exits from the highway. This is less than one twenty-fifth of the money that would have to be spent at Langley for roads and utilities.

Wise Land Use. The National Capital Planning Commission carefully considered CIA's site problems early this year and on April 8, 1955, voted a resolution on the question. The resolution said that if CIA wanted to locate in Virginia, it should choose: "A locality where there is already established a nucleus for an urban environment which an establishment of such size would stimulate, and where public facilities and services are already available or can readily be extended, such as in the southern part of Fairfax County, in Springfield, or in the newly annexed portions of Alexandria." The Winkler tract exactly meets these requirements.

Local Welcome. The City of Alexandria is ready and willing to assist CIA in locating here, and to welcome you and your staff as good friends and neighbors.

We hope you will give our most sincere invitation careful consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Leroy S. Bendheim, Mayor