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'Command Post' for CIA

A S ONE ANSWER to the loud criticisms of United States intelligence agencies and their ineptness in the Cuban fiasco, the state department has organized a new "special operations command post," to be manned 24 hours a day.

This group—so new it has not yet been furnished with initials—will be composed of people from the state department, the military, the central intelligence agency, and perhaps the United States information agency. Its duties are so far a little vague. It is supposed to sift all intelligence reports; expedite the flow of intelligence from existing agencies to the President and the secretary of state, with recommendation for action; and "make sure that the President's orders are being carried out."

CONCEIVABLY, THE NEW "COMMAND POST" is the answer to the demonstrated weaknesses of existing intelligence agencies.

But the "command post" might be just one more manifestation of bureaucratitis: When trouble develops in officialdom, Washington's first and overwhelming impulse is to set up yet another organization to deal with it, instead of improving what it already has.

THERE IS A MORE SERIOUS cause for misgiving. Who, in the new "command post," will have the authority to make recommendations for action? Obviously, the boss of the "command post" will wield considerable power. He is Theodore C. Achilles, a career foreign service officer and former ambassador to Peru. His special assistant is Stephen E. Smith, 33 years old, President Kennedy's brother-in-law.

The new office may end all confusion and bumbling in the intelligence divisions of the government. But let's wait and watch the performance.