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Allen Dulles Hunted Spies in World War

From a report by Jack Wilson in the Des Moines Register

If Senator Joseph McCarthy formally takes on the Central Intelligence Agency and Allen W. Dulles, its boss, in a public Red hunt, the results are pretty certain to be highly interesting.

Dulles said he had invited McCarthy to name some CIA Reds as long ago as last October, but nothing came of it.

Among observers around Washington who know both parties, the betting is inclined to favor Dulles in event of a showdown. Dulles was hunting spies, and spying himself, when McCarthy was a schoolboy, and he's not a man to get flustered at the drop of a subpoena.

Originally, he intended to be a diplomat, like his brother John Foster, whose office in the State Department is not far up the street. Allen was in the State Department's foreign service in Geneva during World War I, and Geneva being the stamping grounds for most of the spies in Central Europe at the time, he drifted into the business himself.

He had no training in espionage—and for that matter, he hasn't had any since. CIA operates its own school for sleuths, and Dulles is proud of its work.

"I'd like to take time off and go through the course myself," he said a few days ago, "but I don't suppose I'll ever be able to. I learned by the case method: Each case was a new problem, and we figured it out as we went along. I'd watch others work, and try to profit from their mistakes."

"There are, of course, a good many technical phases to this work, but the most important single element is being able to judge the people you're dealing with. You never know, when someone approaches you with information or a plan, whether it's a trap."

"You simply have to be able to judge character and decide for yourself whether a man is good or bad, whether you can trust him or not."

"I won't claim that I've never made a mistake in judging people. Nobody can be 100 per cent right, but if you're right 80 per cent of the time you're doing pretty well. You have to take risks in this business, and your judgments of people are the biggest risks you take."

As he talked, Dulles was sitting, in his office, behind a fiat, bare desk backed by an American flag and the official CIA banner. A table behind the desk held three telephones, including the white one that means a direct line to the White House.

Aside from the white telephone and the flag, there was nothing in the room to indicate that Dulles wasn't what he looked like, a sedate Latin teacher prepared to chide you mildly for getting careless with your ablatives.

Almost nobody, outside of a few members of congress and a very few very high government officials, knows the extent of Dulles' organization. Guesses as to the number of CIA operatives snooping around the world for information run from 3,000 to 10,000. Estimates of the annual cost of Dulles' devious activities vary from \$10 million to nearly \$1 billion.

The amount never shows in the budget or the appropriation bills presented to Congress: It is hidden, here and there, among appropriations for other activities.

For a long time the CIA group was simply a collection of anonymous buildings stuck off in an odd corner of the low-rent district. When Dulles became director, he ordered a sign with the name of the agency for the front gate.

During World War II the group of buildings was headquarters for Gen. William Donovan's Office of Strategic Services (OSS). When OSS was set up, Dulles was going about his business as a lawyer in the firm of Sullivan and Cromwell in New York.

Donovan, likewise a New York lawyer, promptly drafted him into OSS and sent him off to Switzerland to run the spy machine there.

Aside from his World War I experience, Dulles had been doing business with a lot of firms that had connections in Germany, and he knew his ground.

He had plenty of opportunity to test his ability to judge the men he had to deal with, and he turned out right a significant number of times.

He was right, for instance, when he decided that a German, whom he later identified only as "George Wood," was really delivering straight information.

"Wood" walked into Dulles' office in Berne with a handful of highly informative letters that had come to him as assistant to Joachim von Ribbentrop, Germany's foreign minister.

There was, of course, the possibility that the letters might be an attempt to plant false information with the Americans.

The British intelligence people, to whom "Wood" had first taken them, had decided that was what they were, and had laughed "Wood" out of their office.

Dulles studied the letter and the man, and decided both were genuine. "Wood" turned out to be the best single source of inside information the OSS ever had in Germany.

One of Dulles' big projects which flopped through no fault of his, was the attempt by high German officers to assassinate Adolf Hitler late in the war. Through one source and another Dulles became acquainted with Hans Gisevius,

(OVER)



'Spy' Catcher Dulles

the German vicecounsel in Zurich.

It turned out that Gisevius' job was to get Dulles' help with a plot headed by anti-Hitler army officers to plant a bomb under the Fuehrer's chair and seize control of Germany.

Dulles' part was to get the United States to agree to negotiate with the new government.

Washington, in spite of Dulles' sales campaign, showed little interest in the plot, taking the position that he was being put upon by a passel of crackpots. The German officers went ahead anyway, and actually smuggled a live bomb into one of Hitler's conferences.

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The scheme failed because the briefcase containing the bomb got shoved out of position, and the explosion merely

wounded Hitler, although some of his top aides were killed.

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 Gisevius managed to hide in Berlin for several weeks until Dulles could smuggle forged credentials to him to help him over the border into Switzerland.

Dulles' biggest coup probably was the dickering that led to the surrender of 600,000 German soldiers in northern Italy. Through the Swiss, Dulles learned that Gen. Carl Wolff, chief of the Nazi Gestapo in Italy, and Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, who commanded the German army in Italy, wanted to negotiate with him and surrender in spite of Hitler's orders. That was early in 1945, five months before the end of the war.

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 Two roadblocks developed. One was that Kesselring was ordered back to Germany and replaced by a more determined general before the talks reached the final stage. The other was that Russia learned about the dealings and Josef Stalin protested bitterly to President Roosevelt and to Prime Minister Winston Churchill that the Americans were seeking peace without consulting Russia.

Stalin was assured that all the talks thus far had been simply attempts to arrange a meeting, and that Russia would certainly be invited to sit in on the conversations if she wanted to.

Nevertheless, it was late in April before the talks were continued, and May 2 when the German armies in Italy laid down their arms.

Dulles went back into his law practice after the war, following a hitch as head of the OSS mission in Germany. One result of that assignment was that he brought back a strong argument in favor of building up a de-militarized but prosperous Germany, in contrast to the goat-pasture proposal advocated by Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau.