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Will CIA Change Under New Boss?

THE President's selection of John A. McCone to succeed Allen W. Dulles as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, will, from all accounts, raise few questions concerning the efficient future operation of this vital government information and espionage agency. Mr. McCone, one time undersecretary of the Air Force and later chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, is known as a driving, precise administrator who never leaves doubt as to who is in charge. The questions that naturally arise have to do with what changes to expect in the role and functions of the CIA.

Under the widely experienced and knowledgeable Mr. Dulles, who is retiring at 68, effective in November, the CIA has developed from a relatively minor cloak-and-dagger outfit into one of the largest and most influential agencies of the federal government. But the CIA has come under sharp criticism during the past two years, largely because of the U-2 incident and the abortive invasion of Cuba in which this agency is said to have played a large hand. In both these affairs, Mr. Dulles offered to resign but neither President Eisenhower nor President Kennedy would allow him to do this. He is now retiring apparently of his own volition.

The retiring chief of the CIA has a long record of dedicated service to his country. He has served under eight Presidents, and is believed to be the nation's greatest authority on the use of intelligence in relation to national security. But his methods and style of operation have been questioned, and State Department sources have charged in private that under Mr. Dulles the CIA set up its own diplomatic service and tried to make foreign policy. President Eisenhower's advisory committee on intelligence activities recommended certain changes in the operation of the CIA, but Mr. Dulles refused to accept them and they were not pushed. Efforts of Senator Mansfield to have a Congressional committee set up to keep watch over CIA activities were also stymied, apparently by the political skill of the agency's chief.

While Mr. Dulles retires with deserved bouquets of praise for his long, distinguished service, his going doubtless marks the beginning of some changes in the orientation and direction of the CIA. Mr. McCone, a dynamic business executive and as government official, appears to have the political skill to accept such changes effectively.

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