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## Helms at Camp David

# It's Time to Look At the CIA

By Stephen S. Rosenfeld

MR. HELMS, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, was publicly summoned to Camp David this week to participate in what the White House terms its "major" reassessment of the American foreign policy structure. If his summons indicates that the United States' large secret intelligence establishment is to undergo the same Executive scrutiny being accorded the agencies which operate more in the public eye, then this is welcome and important news.

Before saying more, I should perhaps state that I am not one of those journalists with a close discreet working relationship with the CIA; for purposes of this article I requested an on-the-record interview with Helms or his chosen representative and did not receive one.

It would seem self-evident, however, that as the United States moves from an era of confrontation to an era of negotiation, from a time when Russia and Communism were widely perceived as terribly menacing to a time when both the country and the ideology are increasingly regarded as adequately neighborly, then the role of the CIA has got to be reviewed.

Now, obviously a great nation must have a professional intelligence service. The imperatives of defense, not to say elementary prudence, demand it. A case can even be made that a certain kind of technological intelligence is more essential in a period of incipient detente—in order to supply policy makers and their publics with the assurance they need in order to enter into new agreements with old adversaries.

THE SALT-I agreement apparently is unique in granting explicitly each side's right to lob intelligence satellites over the other's territory to count missiles, tests and so on. Presumably satellites would be similarly useful in verifying and in nourishing public confidence in any shifts made as a result of the forthcoming European force reduction talks. In all cease-fire situations, Mideast, Indochina or what-have-you, intelligence can be vital.

In at least two areas, however, intelligence needs review: for "dirty tricks" and for its secrecy.

The act of 1947 setting up the CIA specified that, in addition to intelligence duties, it was to perform "such other functions" as the National Security Council might direct. A "plans division" was set up in 1951. Most CIA directors, including Helms, have come up through Plans. The group seems to have been active, and conspicuously so, through the 1950s, toppling uncooperative governments, harassing wayward Communists, etc. The whole atmosphere was permissive: it was a President who ate up the James Bond books who let the Plans Division organize Cuban exiles (and a few Americans) to invade at the Bay of Pigs.

It is now murmured around town that the deputy director for Plans, an old Helms man, operates on a much tighter leash (doing no more, it is said, than the Republicans are alleged to have done to the Democrats); that the old problems of policy control and separation of intelligence from operations are in hand; that the small and weak countries which once were the CIA's playgrounds are no longer so vulnerable to its deeds.

At the same time, one hears that the President's old anti-Communist juices have not altogether stopped fermenting and that he receives and is responsive to reports that the Russians still play some pretty rotten tricks and, by golly, we ought to show them they can't do that to us and get away with it.

WHATEVER THE TRUTH, I would submit that the time is ripe for the Congress to review the dirty-tricks mandate it gave to the CIA a quarter-century ago as the cold war was beginning to dominate the American outlook on the world. It is inconsistent, at the least, that the State Department should now be zeroing in on measures to combat "international terrorism" while the CIA retains a capacity to practice certain forms of it. Cuba's continuing lack of love for the CIA, restated in its bid for hijacking talks last week, underscores the point.

Secrecy is something else. No one who accepts the need for intelligence would argue that the whole process and products should be made public. But no one concerned with the health of democracy can accept that condition with equanimity. The general sense of being at war with communism since World War II has produced a far more secretive government than we would want or tolerate in other times. With that sense of being at war danger fading, the rationale or spur for secrecy diminishes accordingly. There is further the claim that the secrecy surrounding the CIA may have undermined the larger job of conducting a wise policy, i.e., one well discussed and debated.

This is the principal basis on which Senator Cooper earlier this year proposed that the relevant act be amended to give the foreign relations and defense committees of both houses access to the information and analysis obtained by the CIA—exactly as the Atomic Energy Commission has given such secret material for decades to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. Predictably, the President objected. The Foreign Relations Committee approved the proposed amendment; the Armed Services Committee, otherwise preoccupied, did not act on it. Cooper is retiring but Senator Symington, who has his own sense of the need to assert the Congress' foreign policy responsibilities and his own record of concern for improving congressional oversight of the CIA, may be prepared to receive the torch. He's No. 2 on Armed Services, too.

The CIA is out of the news these days. It usually gets into the news only when it fouls up. But a lot more about its place in the new bureaucratic and international scheme of things ought to be known. Whether the CIA's activities are all essential and whether they are all organized efficiently are questions which a responsible Congress should not want to leave to a Chief Executive huddling privately out in the woods at Camp David.

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