

## CIA on CIA

CPYRGHT am the head of the silent service and cannot  
advertise my wares." - Allen Dulles, 1957.

The American Society of Newspaper Editors was flattered that theirs was the forum chosen by Mr. Richard Helms, director of Central Intelligence and concurrently director of the Central Intelligence Agency, for his first public speech in 10 years. "The quality of foreign intelligence available to the United States in 1971," he told the editors in a self-serving assessment, "is better than it has ever been before." It would have been interesting had Mr. Helms attempted a correlation between value and volume. Benjamin Welles in *The New York Times Sunday Magazine* (April 18, 1971) breaks down the daily mountain of intelligence information as "50 percent from overt sources such as periodicals, 35 percent from electronics [satellites and radio], and the remaining 15 percent from agents." How important is the 15 percent?

Mr. Helms noted the "growing criticism" of CIA, but he avoided any discussion of its cause. The "intelligence" function of the agency is not what has provoked all the controversy. Criticism has centered not on "spying," but on CIA's political action abroad - the suborning of political leaders, labor union officials, scholars, students, journalists and anyone else who can be bought. CIA has been criticized for straying from information gathering onto the path of manipulation of foundations and such organizations as the National Student Association or Radio Free Europe or the AFL-CIO. Through liaison with foreign police and security services, the CIA tries to keep track of foreign "subversives," frequently defined as those who want to depose the government in power. Each report it manages to secure from its clandestine sources has a price in terms of closer alliance with one reactionary regime after another - as in Greece and numerous countries in Asia and Latin America. The complicity is no secret to the host government, or to the Communists, only to the American taxpayer.

Mr. Helms' point that "CIA is not and cannot be its own master" is the most difficult to accept, even from the honorable man that Mr. Helms unquestionably is. To be sure, there is a review system, but it is more shadow than substance. The President's foreign intelligence advisory board, which is supposed to analyze a \$4 billion Intelligence program, is characterized by inattention, fatigue and a charming lack of expertise. There is only the most cursory inspection and oversight of CIA by "elements of the Appropriations and Armed Services Committees," which from time to time raise their hands in benediction over any Intelligence presentation. The average congressional "watchdog" is long in the tooth, and prefers not to receive highly confidential information. He is confessing in advance lack of training in sound security

practices. Such small ad hoc bodies cannot possibly cope with the multi-agencies, their billions of dollars, and their hundreds of thousands of people; in sum, the "Intelligence community." The core question, as with the FBI, is an old one: who guards the guardians?

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