

Some Cracks in the Wall

U.S. Intelligence In Timely Review

Reviewed by Curtis Carroll Davis

A lieutenant colonel in the Military Intelligence Reserve, Mr. Davis was in the OSS in wartime, in the CIA in peace.
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY.
By Harry Howe Ransom. Harvard. \$4.75.

IF THIS BOOK needed demonstrations of its timeliness, they came in news dispatches for Oct. 16 and 17 when, in Bonn, a West German naval officer was arrested on charges of spying for the Russians, and in Washington, the Army alleged that its Redstone Arsenal staff was being "raided" by the new Space Administration. In other words, there are cracks in our wall and some discord behind it.

Ransom's "detailed descriptive analysis of the contemporary intelligence community" is an assessment of the intelligence-gathering agencies of this Government and of their inter-relationships. He numbers the principal producers as at least 12, the secondary as at least 10, the apex of all being the Central Intelligence Agency. Though occasionally redundant, Ransom is always clear, and his style exhibits a merciful minimum of those chloroform clauses that too often contaminate governmental English. He is fair, he is informed, he is very much up to date.

Using only open sources, the author—a political scientist with the defense program at Harvard University—first describes the nature of intelligence, gives a very brief sketch of its history in America, then moves on to separate considerations of our major agencies in "this shadowy sphere of government."

MOST of his space goes to the Army's G-2, the Office of Naval Intelligence, the Department of State, and especially CIA, which he calculates employs about 9000 people and spends "several hundred millions of dollars annually."

His concluding chapters discuss "the intelligence end product," the national estimate, and the relationship of the intelligence process to the fields of congressional surveillance, security and national policy-making.

OF THE TOTAL, Ransom credits clandestine operations with 20 per cent, concludes that "spies themselves are perhaps a shade more reliable than in medieval days."

He makes note of certain weaknesses in the military agencies, discusses those of CIA at greater length and analyzes the danger to democracy in all such bodies. Though chary of recommendations, he makes a few.

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