

“Without the CIA”

Richard H. Brightson's letter to the editor, "Without the CIA," of Dec. 23, says that the CIA puts together "strangely diverse pieces of information into a fascinating mosaic that appears to make sense, particularly to individuals without an immediate and intimate working knowledge of the subject matter." Yet it would seem to me that all intelligence work is, of necessity, composed of such "diverse pieces of information."

Furthermore, it appears that one is left to ponder the problem of upon which ivory tower Mr. Brightson has decided to perch in order to judge just who has the "immediate and intimate working knowledge" that CIA defenders obviously lack.

Mr. Brightson's conclusion, that of "dismantling of CIA and its replacement by more legitimate information-gathering operations," is a good example of the use of empty words. How do you dismantle the CIA? With what do you replace it? What does "legitimate" mean anyway? How can you be sure you will arrive at something quite different from the present CIA? Perhaps the very nature of intelligence work demands an organization like the CIA.

In reality, there is nothing new to Mr. Brightson's arguments. Just as he would substitute a "more legitimate" intelligence organization for the (obviously "less legitimate") CIA, so would he merely substitute the theory of the "establishment conspiracy" for the more well-known "Communist conspiracy." It is all a matter of semantics, not of substance.

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