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An Overmodest CIA

EXTENSION OF REMARKS
OF

HON. JOHN E. MOSS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 1966

Mr. MOSS. Mr. Speaker, the following article from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, which also appeared in the Sacramento Bee under date of July 7, 1966, is one which deserves the thoughtful consideration and reflection of every responsible member of the Federal Government:

[From the Sacramento Bee, July 7, 1966]

AN OVERMODEST CIA

Only in the most narrow and technical sense can it be considered accurate to say that the CIA has never made policy and never tried to influence a presidential decision. Those were the modest assurances which the agency's new director, Richard M. Helms, gave senators when the Armed Services Committee recommended approval of his nomination. They can scarcely be squared with the record of CIA operations in Iran, in Guatemala, in the Bay of Pigs invasion and in South Viet Nam.

Perhaps it is technically precise to say that the CIA does not make policy, but creates situations. This was certainly the case in the Bay of Pigs invasion, which from start to finish was a CIA enterprise, originated, as Arthur M. Schlesinger reports in "A Thousand Days", by CIA Director Allen Dulles and his assistant Richard M. Bissell Jr. By presenting a newly installed President with the situation of an exile force ready to invade Cuba with American training and support, the CIA created the circumstances under which the policy decision it wanted—the President's approval—was virtually assured.

This may not be making policy in the strict sense, but it is so close to it that the difference is not important.

Similarly in South Viet Nam it was the CIA that undertook to install Ngo Dinh Diem as head of a military anti-Communist government offering a military lodgment to the United States on the Asian mainland and thus undermining the neutralist basis of the 1954 Geneva settlement. Out of that situation grew on policy decision after another adding up to deep American involvement in an Asian land war.

It is true that at every stage of these and other CIA operations the agency obtained nominal approval from the National Security Council and the President. So the responsibility of its ventures has been widely shared. Yet it is a familiar fact of bureaucratic life that the agency which originates projects, controls the information about them and directs the day-to-day operations has an overwhelming influence upon the basic policy underlying them.

It is for this reason that the CIA ought to be kept under strict and severe control. That means, first of all, control by the President. We do not see how such control can be exercised unless very rigid restrictions are applied to the initiation of any clandestine operation (as distinct from the gathering of information) at the very beginning. It is not the American mission to go around the world setting up governments and knocking them down, and no governmental agency should enjoy carte blanche to engage in this business without strict supervision by the very highest responsible officials. That kind of supervision, applied with a heavy dose of skepticism as to the long-run effectiveness

of cloak-and-dagger work, should cut the CIA's "dirty tricks" division to a minimum.

Effective control also means congressional knowledge of what is going on. We see no good reason why members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee should not be added to the "watchdog" group now nominally responsible for keeping the CIA under review. That the agency's work vitally affects foreign policy is obvious, and the Senators who are responsible for reviewing our international relations should know what the CIA is doing all the time, early as well as late.

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