

62-6571

7 September 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Speech by Prof. Harry A. Ransom of Vanderbilt University
at the Meeting of the American Political Science Association

On 6 September 1962, the American Political Science Association presented a panel discussion entitled "The Right and the Left Hand of Government." This was one of several panels in connection with the Association's annual meeting which was being held in Washington. The panel was chaired by Mr. Field Haviland of the Brookings Institute. A paper entitled American Secret Intelligence: Problems of Policy, Organization and Control was presented by Prof. Harry Howe Ransom of Vanderbilt University. It will be recalled that while he was associated in 1958 with the Defense Policy Seminar at Harvard University's Graduate School of Public Administration, Prof. Ransom published his book entitled Central Intelligence and National Security.

The second formal paper presented to the panel was entitled "The Analysis of Cold Warfare" by Prof. Andrew M. Scott of the University of North Carolina. A copy of Prof. Scott's paper is attached.

In introducing Prof. Ransom, Prof. Haviland stated that Ransom had had considerable experience in the field of intelligence as a practical consultant and as a scholar. In his remarks, Ransom stated that he had never been a consultant to intelligence agencies, taken a pay check from them, or had access to classified information, a denial which is also included in footnote 7 to the Ransom text. In view of these statements, it is difficult to understand why the Washington Post indicates that Ransom served in Military Intelligence from 1946 to 1956 (7 September 1962, page B5). At his presentation to the panel, Ransom, in effect, presented a condensed version of his prepared speech, the full text of which is attached herewith. He opened on a jovial note by stating that if there were any CIA men in the audience they might want to leave, because he would be discussing secret information. He then went on to say that it was presumptuous for him to discuss CIA, as he had never been in the building. He then went on to quote the inscription that he had been told was on the entrance wall and followed this up with a quotation (page 1 of text) which he designated as coming from "a CIA public relations brochure." The point he tried to make was that if 'ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," it follows that as CIA refuses to give out any information to the public, the public cannot be free, because

-1-

NEGATIVE RECORD FILE

Record

it is not permitted to know the truth. He then went on to make the point that, nevertheless, students of government should make an analysis of the intelligence function and quoted what he describes as "Ransom's Law" which states that it is all right to talk about intelligence as long as you don't know anything about it.

The thrust of the Ransom text is that the existence of a large secret organization creates problems, particularly as a potential force of invisible government (pages 1, 3). On the other hand, he states that "America cannot do without an intelligence apparatus" (page 3).

In Ransom's text, he stresses heavily the possible role of intelligence in formulating policy, stating that "An agency charged with supplying secret information about the state of affairs . . . obviously can be a source of great influence in the policy process. . . . Yet the rapidly changing, increasingly complex nature of world politics seems to be leading to more and more Intelligence influence in national decisions. . . ." (Page 5 of text.) In this connection he then cited the situation in Laos, stating that the "tragicomic opera that ensued can be laid in part to poor information, supplied by the CIA, which produced faulty policies in Washington for nearly a decade." (Text, page 6.)

In his discussion of CIA's Congressional relations, Ransom makes the point that Congress voluntarily walled itself off from information on CIA by the authorities it wrote into the CIA statutes and "that the Executive has not usurped monopolistic control of CIA. Rather Congress voluntarily delegated extraordinary control to the Presidency. . . . Congress handed to the President a kind of blank check authority regarding secret intelligence." (Text, pages 10-15.) Ransom also discussed the various boards and commissions which have looked into CIA. He dates the Dulles Survey in 1951 rather than in 1948, citing it as "the springboard" for Dulles' entry into the CIA. The President's Board of Consultants he described in his talk as rather like a "polite alumni visiting committee." Thus, Ransom concludes that the public's interest in CIA is represented by the President and the National Security Council, the President's Board, our Congressional subcommittees, and the special investigating groups. He then asked the question in his talk whether this was adequate oversight and concluded that there should be a more independent check, preferably by a joint Congressional Committee on Intelligence. He subsequently remarked in his talk that Congress might well overhaul its own structure and establish a joint committee on national security, of which Intelligence might be a sub-committee.

One point which Ransom made in his talk was the necessity of separating the information services from espionage, although not necessarily putting them in different departments. He referred to this point more than once but always on a very confused basis.

One point which Ransom emphasized strongly in his talk was that CIA's leadership must not succumb to the temptation to mount the public rostrum. He noted a great improvement in this connection in the new regime. He then listed the awards which Mr. Dulles had received in 1961 and stated that he should have refused them all. The DCI, he felt, must not become a political figure and Mr. Dulles was out of his element in making public speeches.

Prof. Scott's paper and his condensed presentation of it at the panel were both highly theoretical, and subsequent panel discussions hinged largely on two factors. First, the absence of an adequate definition of "cold war," which was defined in these discussions as an area between war and peace, and second, Prof. Scott's contention that the cold war is a post World War II development. This latter point was hit not only by the panelists but by participants from the audience who cited all sorts of early historical incidents of cold war type activities. Prof. Scott took the position that, of course, there had been these earlier historical events, but that the point he was making was that they had never been of the size and scope and scale of what was necessary at the present time, where even a small country could perhaps bring havoc on a larger country through cold war activities.

Following the presentation of the two main papers, the three "Discussants" were introduced to make remarks and to participate in replying to questions from the floor. The first of these was Walter Millis, formerly Chief Editorial Writer of the New York Herald Tribune and now associated in California with the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, which is headed by Robert M. Hutchins, formerly president of the University of Chicago. He severely blasted various elements of Prof. Scott's speech and deplored Winston Churchill's creation of the phrase "the cold war," (Did he not mean the iron curtain?), which he claims did a great disservice in that it militarized almost everything in the field of international relations ever since. When it came to a discussion of Prof. Ransom's paper and intelligence, Millis was surprisingly mild. He first questioned whether it was really useful to discuss the gigantic intelligence organization in terms of cold war, as he felt that CIA would be in existence whether or not there had been a cold war. He pointed out that, while some people felt that CIA was in existence because of cold war problems and the actions of the Soviet Union, actually the establishment of CIA had sprung

out of shortcomings shown by World War II before the cold war had crystallized. (In support of this point, he strongly recommended a book entitled Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision by Roberta Wohlstetter, which he stated gave the best analysis of the role of intelligence. Millis went on to state that there are obvious perils and difficulties in establishing democratic controls over an intelligence organization but that he was not competent to pass on the remedy suggested by Prof. Ransom. He was doubtful that you could separate the various intelligence collection and estimating functions into separate organizations because, in his opinion, intelligence must have an operational capability and be able to act on the basis of clandestine information. He, therefore, tended to fall back on the principle that you must back up the chief of such an intelligence organization and that if you didn't you should fire him. He also disclaimed competence to comment on Ransom's proposal for a joint Congressional committee or on the possibility of strengthening the State Department, which could then exercise some greater measure of control over intelligence. However, he felt personally that people tended to over-value intelligence and that perhaps it didn't need quite as much secrecy as it was given.

The second Discussant was Prof. Paul Blackstock of the University of South Carolina who was formerly a member of the staff of the Office of the Chief of Special Warfare of the Department of the Army. Prof. Blackstock stated that he wished to talk on covert operations on the basis of material previously cleared both at DIA and CIA and he very much left the impression that he had "been in it." He stated that, in this field, the problem of documentation for the political scientist was very difficult and that, as far as covert operations were concerned, nothing serious had as yet been published. Prof. Blackstock pointed out that there was a built-in possibility in an intelligence organization of policy sabotage and that there was no effective counter to this. He cited two examples - Laos and Cuba. He felt that only when a covert organization got an independent military and logistical support function was there a real danger and that this was not likely to happen in America, particularly after Cuba. On the other hand, he cited with disapproval what he felt to be the built-in orientation of the foreign service officer who was not "combat minded" but was much too prone to negotiate or seek solutions. By "combat minded" he was thinking in terms of mental toughness to face up to problems. He then cited the fact that the British, for 400 years, had had its covert operations integrated into the Foreign Office but that this still raised problems of independence, and that these problems became very tough when an independent agency gets operational functions.

The third member of the "Discussants" group was Prof. George S. Pettee, the author of a 1946 book The Future of American Secret Intelligence. Prof. Pettee was formerly a member of the staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Army-supported Office of Research Operations at Johns Hopkins University and is now with the Research Analysis Corporation, also supported by the military. Addressing himself to those speakers who had urged the need for greater public information in the intelligence field, Pettee pointed out that he could not advocate diplomacy in a goldfish bowl or support those who advocate that nothing should be secret from the press. ("How many people," he asked, "knew that the Washington Post would buy the Washington Times Herald the day before the sale?") He also cited the old slogan that Macy's doesn't tell Gimbel's and that individuals and corporations had a certain right of privacy on the one hand, and that you must have a certain amount of secrecy in intelligence on the other. He felt that people had a tendency to think only in black and white and thus to polarize secrecy on one hand and the people's right to know on the other. But, Pettee pointed out, this was only a way of thinking and not because it was the way things actually were.

He stated that the problem of control of secrecy in the Government was twenty years old and that it had been wrestled with by such experts as the late Senator Brian McMahon in connection with atomic energy. He said many, including himself, had been concerned in 1945-6 about salvaging a central intelligence organization before demobilization reduced it to zero. He thought that outsiders who are deprived of information are over-conscious about it, including those who write books about intelligence. He also felt that there were more checks on intelligence than people sometimes felt, citing the Congressional committees who are privy to our information and who, in effect, can take responsibility on behalf of the electorate. Furthermore, he said that there are many scholars who have one foot in the secret world and the other foot in the scholarly world, including consultants and members of organizations such as RAND and RAC. Insofar as a joint Congressional committee on intelligence is concerned, he felt that it was an idea worthy of exploration, if only to get some final determination of acceptance or rejection of the idea and lay it to rest.

The questions from the floor dealt almost exclusively with the questions raised by Prof. Scott's paper. The two questions dealing largely with intelligence were both asked by foreigners. One was an Asiatic (either from Manila or Southeast Asia) who was difficult to understand because of his accent. This gentleman urged more accurate ways of securing information, felt that there were many defects in a large intelligence organization

(mentioning something about corruption in a bureaucracy and servant taking over the master) and that CIA appeared to be using too many Central Europeans in its anti-Soviet work and too many anti-Castroites for estimates on Cuba, which resulted in built-in biases making accurate intelligence estimates impossible. The second foreigner identified himself as a former Israeli intelligence officer who asked why everybody insisted on scrutinizing everything and stated that secret operations must be secret. Prof. Ransom then agreed on the need for secrecy but questioned whether we had adequate control mechanisms so that we could go forward in secrecy.

In summation, I came away with the feeling that this had all been a battle of adjectives - "secret" bureaucracy, "invisible" government, "gigantic" size of the intelligence organization. The main thesis insofar as intelligence was concerned in these presentations was the desire of the political scientist to know what was going on in a "gigantic" organization which admittedly had to operate in secret but which needed some control, the nature of which the political scientist was unable to determine.

[Redacted signature box]

Walter Pforzheimer

STAT

2013 05 09 15:35

AMERICAN SECRET INTELLIGENCE:
PROBLEMS OF POLICY, ORGANIZATION AND CONTROL

Harry Howe Ransom
Vanderbilt University

Prepared for delivery at the 1962 Annual Meeting of The
American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C.
Mayflower Hotel September 6, 1962

The Cold War role of the United States produces hazards for the American democratic system. Numerous paradoxes stem from conflicts between security and liberty. The Central Intelligence Agency offers a particular paradox. To illustrate, note an interesting contrast. At the entrance to CIA's new headquarters building near Washington is the Biblical inscription: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."¹ Were he permitted through the entrance so decorated, a seriously inquiring citizen would, however, soon discover the agency's operating principles:

. . . the Central Intelligence Agency does not confirm or deny published reports, whether good or bad; never alibis; never explains its organization; never identifies its personnel (except for a few in the top echelons); and will not discuss its budget, its methods of operations, or its sources of information.²

So that you, as far as CIA's managers are concerned, cannot in fact know "the truth" about a very large, expensive, and increasingly important government agency, the directorship of which has been described as "second in importance only to the President."³ It follows from CIA's favorite Biblical saying, then, that neither can you be free. Such an inference prompts our concern here.

The existence of a large, secret bureaucracy, sometimes pivotally important in making and implementing national policies and strategies raises special problems. At the level of democratic ideals, the problem is the existence of a potential source of invisible government. This is not a problem unique to secret intelligence in the American system; it is but one aspect of the conduct of foreign affairs in a democracy. Yet in degree it is one of the most serious. The problem raised at the level of representatives of the people - Executive and Legislative - is primarily how to control discreetly a dimly seen instrument, so hot that if not handled with great skill it can burn its user rather than its adversary. The problem for the scholar is access to verifiable information for objective analysis.

The secrecy officially proclaimed by the CIA and affiliated intelligence agencies, and required by the statutes establishing them, quite obviously has not been absolutely

- 2 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

maintained. America's open society, particularly the separation of governmental powers, the pluralism of the administrative bureaucracy, and a free press, have made complete secrecy impossible. Journalists and scholars have been able to produce a considerable amount of literature, much of it speculative.⁴ The volume has increased as a result of a series of misfortunes or misadventures in recent years, particularly the U-2 incident, the defection to Moscow of two National Security Agency employees, and the abortive attempt to invade Cuba. To an unprecedented degree these events removed, temporarily at least, the cloak of secrecy. Even with these bizarre disclosures, however, our view remains a partial one; the "truth" remains elusive. One simply cannot apply to this subject the usual rigorous standards of data gathering and documentation. Concededly, the subject may not be "researchable" by these standards. The purpose here is to analyze, within these limitations, some of the problems and dilemmas presented by the existence of a secret intelligence apparatus in a democratic society.

Some say this is not a subject fit for public discussion. Senator Henry M. Jackson has stated that "details with respect to intelligence should not be discussed on the floor of the Senate" because it "may be unwittingly giving aid and comfort to the enemy. . . ."⁵ President Kennedy, in a message to Congress in 1961, said intelligence "is not a matter on which public discussion is useful."⁶ Admittedly, government leaders or officials with legitimately secret information should not discuss it publicly. Students of government must, however, analyze any source of power within government to the extent that such analysis can proceed outside of the boundaries of classified information.⁷ Disclosures in recent years make it clear that the large secret intelligence apparatus now maintained by the government can have a profound impact on the quality and effectiveness of America's role in international affairs. Certainly the existence of such an apparatus creates problems of policy, organization and control. These problems arise largely because CIA's three major functions - the collection of information, the analysis, interpretation and production of this mass of data into "intelligence," and clandestine political operations overseas - are all secretly performed.

I

In gathering information, Intelligence⁸ must have the objectivity and detachment from policy that will assure the most forthright possible reporting on world affairs. But this detachment should not be such that Intelligence either develops its own policy preferences or loses contact with the informational needs of the policy makers. In its informing function its duty is to report the objective facts without regard to whether they spell good or bad news for existing policy pre-

- 3 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

ferences, but with appropriate regard for the meaningful policy alternatives. In its operational (political warfare or overseas counter-intelligence) missions Intelligence must serve always as an instrument of foreign policy, and never be allowed to make its own foreign policy.

Knowledge, however, conveys power. Secret knowledge can become secret power. A secret intelligence apparatus, claiming superior knowledge from undisclosed sources, and operating - because of legitimate secrecy claims - outside the normal checkreins of the American governmental system is a potential source of invisible government. - Invisible power can be wielded either in the policy making process or in clandestine operations in other countries.

The American democratic system, on the other hand, is inspired by the ideal of visible, identifiable power, subject constitutionally to the checks and balances of popular government. In pursuit of this ideal Congressional representatives of both parties are obliged to oversee and ultimately legitimize the executive power of government. Congress should act both as the public's eye and the public's purse. But without adequate information, the people's representatives would resemble rich blindmen at the mercy of persuasive suppliants. Congress cannot perform effectively its important role with regard to any governmental function, the scope and operations of which are mostly invisible.

Obviously, America cannot do without an intelligence apparatus. World-wide responsibilities and commitments of the United States require a system for keeping the complex details of world affairs under constant surveillance, sometimes by espionage or other techniques of the clandestine "black arts." These are of course ancient instruments of power and policy in international affairs.⁹ In addition to an enormous and growing need for information, America's new world position also requires an instrument for counter-intelligence and secret political action overseas, although its proper use must remain a troublesome question.

National policy decisions will be based increasingly upon predictions of foreign political, economic and military trends and developments next week, month and year, and five to ten or more years hence. This fact offers both a challenge to Intelligence and an opportunity for it to exercise major influence in decision making. The need to make the most economical use of finite resources in implementing long-range national and foreign policy objectives also places heavy reliance on intelligence estimates. As a result, the intelligence system is called upon to answer a vast range of questions. What is the future of the NATO alliance? What course will Sino-Soviet relations take? What will be the course of the

- 4 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

new nationalisms in various regions of the globe? What will be the probable consequences of various possible foreign policy actions? The answers to these can be obtained, if at all, only by a massive research effort and sometimes only by illegal methods. The wide-spectrum of information required to supply answers explains, in addition to any bureaucracy's tendency to amoebic growth, the rapid increase in the size and cost of Intelligence since World War II, so that certainly its annual budget and perhaps the number of its employees exceed those of the Department of State.

Accurate intelligence information, rapidly transmitted, is also an absolute requirement for an effective strategy of deterrence to which this country has committed itself. Strategic striking forces must have accurate data on potential enemy targets. "Essential elements of information" as indicators of a potential enemy's military position must constantly be available to thwart either an enemy's possible surprise knockout blow or his attempts to use claimed striking power for diplomatic blackmail. With hundreds of mega-death inter-continental missiles positioned for attack, Intelligence assumes a terrifying role of informational responsibility.

Much essential military and political information is held in tight security by national governments, particularly those behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains. Comparable information is freely available to the Communists for the asking, from America's relatively open society and from our allies.¹⁰ This creates a serious strategic imbalance. It can be argued that the espionage requirements of the United States are greater than those of the Soviet Union.

II

A policy maker must contend with three major questions in reaching a major decision: First, What are the policy objectives or goals being sought? What are the risks or probable costs in seeking them, in terms of alternative values which might have to be sacrificed? In other words, if a certain value is placed on military security as an objective, must, in some calculable degree, other policy objectives be sacrificed, such as self-determination and economic development? Second, what are the pressures and forces likely to shape world affairs whatever course of action is adopted? Put another way, what are the calculable facts and the most probable trends in world affairs? Third, how may one assess the potentialities and limitations of the alternative instruments by which the environment may be influenced in the most favored direction? In other words, with national objectives and world trends in mind, how can we best go about attaining our ends?

Traditionally, the intelligence services are concerned

- 5 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

only with the second of these and not with national values, ends or means. Yet they are all inextricably entwined. Max Millikan, who served as an assistant director of the CIA in the early 1950s, illustrated the problem when he said, discussing predictions of Russian developments:

A study of what is happening in Soviet society will be useful to the policy maker only if it is written in the light both of what he would like to have happen there and of the instruments he can use to affect what happens. Equally, he cannot even state his goals or enumerate his instruments with clarity except in terms of an implicit or explicit theory of Soviet evolution.¹¹

An agency charged with supplying secret information about the state of affairs in, say, the Soviet Union, obviously can be a source of great influence in the policy process. For example, to assume that the U.S.S.R. is "mellowing" in its objectives calls for one American foreign policy; quite another if one assumes that she intends to conquer the world soon, either by surprise attack or otherwise.

There are, to be sure, checks on the growing influence of secret intelligence. These checks exist in the American governmental system, in which long-range policies or major shifts in existing policy are determined normally only after an elaborate consensus-building effort. An intelligence estimate, no matter what its assumed degree of accuracy, cannot alone determine major policy outcomes. Yet the rapidly changing, increasingly complex nature of world politics seems to be leading to more and more intelligence influence in national decisions. The senior intelligence professionals in the inter-departmental policy planning units, though in theory they "advise" and do not "recommend," already have come to have great influence. And since intelligence professionals are usually more permanent members of the advisory and policy planning units than are representatives from the State Department or the armed services, who are constantly "rotated" through such assignments, their prestige and influence increase all the more.

The Laos affair is a good example of the potential power of suppliers of "blue-chip" information to government policy makers. Early in January 1961 the United States government publicly disclosed "hard evidence" of Soviet Russian and North Viet Nam participation in what the State Department in Washington announced as "Communist military operations against the Royal Lao Government and Lao people."¹² The State Department issued a detailed chronology of the "illegal Soviet and North Viet Nameese airlift into Laos," even listing the registration numbers of the aircraft, which, it said, were also used by Russia in the Congo in the previous year.

- 6 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

This announcement came at a time when most United States' allies in the Southeast Asian defense compact (SEATO) were making known their doubts that such evidence existed. In fact, the Associated Press reported from Bangkok two days later that "many United States diplomats in Asia [which included men in Laos and neighboring Thailand] doubt the charges of their own government that substantial numbers of outside Communist forces have intervened in Laos. . . . One Western diplomat said it appears United States diplomats and intelligence agents are dispatching conflicting reports to Washington and the CIA reports have gained credence in the United States capital." 1)

Whatever were the true facts, it is clear that information can be decisive in determining United States reaction to events. This reaction, in turn, has its impact on the situation. In the Laos case this has been demonstrated since 1954, when Laos was created out of a fragmented Indo-China, leaving behind in the tiny Laotian kingdom unreconciled pro-Communist Pathet Lao rebel forces. The tragi-comic opera that ensued can be laid in part to poor information, supplied by the CIA, which produced faulty policies in Washington for nearly a decade. Specifically, in one episode, a decision was made to support Gen. Phoumi Nosovan, apparently on the principal ground that he was anti-Communist. But as it turned out he was politically unpopular in Laos, and his army nearly worthless. This policy had to be abruptly changed. Inadequate or misguided policies, in turn, aggravated the situation in which the United States, because of basic misunderstanding of the true alternatives, was again backing the wrong regime. The cost to the American taxpayer ran into the hundreds of millions of dollars. The chief beneficiaries appear to have been the Communists, who appeared to be closer in touch with the realities. Responsibility all along for policy objectives was the President's and the State Department's. Yet policies could be no better than the information on which they were based; their implementation no better than the undercover political instrument for this purpose - the CIA.

A second example of the importance of intelligence is the decision made by President Kennedy in 1962 to resume nuclear testing in the atmosphere. The decision hinged, finally, on evidence of Soviet progress in nuclear and weapons technology. Since this secret information could not be precisely known, it was the task of Intelligence to make an "estimate." Quite obviously the nature of this estimate was pivotal in the decision to resume tests.

The ultimate power and the ultimate restraint of democratic government is an informed electorate. While it would make no sense to publish information about legitimately secret intelligence or overseas covert operations, the principle must be maintained that the citizen, or at least his representa-

- 7 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

tives, needs to be as completely informed as possible. A corollary requirement is that the citizen must know something of the source and the process by which intelligence is produced. There ought to be a minimum of public confidence in the professional competence of the intelligence services, and an assurance that the intelligence system is under the firm, constant and purposeful control of responsible political authority. This confidence was badly shattered in recent years.

III

The product generated by the vast machinery of a loosely-confederated "intelligence community"¹⁴ is distributed according to a governmental "need to know" concept. With a few exceptions neither the intelligence product nor the system's organization, functions and costs are matters of authenticated public record. Herein lies a problem for democratic government. The rationale for secrecy is that intelligence activities are particularly sensitive in three major respects: First, sources of certain types of data would immediately "dry up" if disclosed. Second, espionage and other illegal forms of information-gathering should not be officially acknowledged as a governmental function. In the intelligence tradition, governments always strive to be in a position to "plausibly disavow" espionage. Avowal by top United States officials, in May 1960, of U-2 espionage flights over Russia sharply violated this precedent. Third, secrecy must also envelop underground political actions, which since 1947, also have been within the jurisdiction of the CIA, although such activities, strictly speaking, are not a positive intelligence function but rather a "strategic service."

Inevitably and perhaps logically, the Executive Branch monopolizes the control of information on all these activities, and within the Executive, the intelligence community has its own inner-circle monopoly on information. This inner-circle can dole out intelligence reports or information on clandestine activities to groups or individuals having, in the opinion of leaders of the intelligence establishment, a need to know. Although intelligence reports and estimates go regularly and routinely to important decision-making units, their flow is tightly controlled. Information on some sources and some activities, it may be assumed, is never communicated beyond a small inner circle. Some very high-ranking government officials, it turns out, did not know of the U-2 flights.

Often it is argued that many aspects of Intelligence must be accepted on faith. In 1954, Allen W. Dulles declared: "In intelligence you have to take certain things on faith. You have to look to the man who is directing the organization and the result he achieves. If you haven't got someone who can be trusted, or who doesn't get results, you'd better throw him out and get someone else."¹⁵

But this seriously contradicts one of the working hypotheses of democratic government: that you do not necessarily accept the management of important foreign-military affairs on "faith." By what criteria can one judge such invisible "results" as the role of CIA in ousting Premier Mossadegh in Iran in 1953, its role in the coup d'etat in Guatemala in 1954, in the Hungarian uprisings in 1956, in Laos, in Berlin, and in numerous other clandestine activities, some of which apparently were failures? On these specific events, speculation is the only recourse available to the outsider. Indeed, when asked about CIA's role in the ill-fated invasion of Cuba in 1961, the new Director of Central Intelligence in 1962 told Senators he could not answer because "I do not have the facts."¹⁶

This situation confronts the American system of democratic government with a two-sided problem: How can there be public control over functions that require secrecy; and how can the effective operation of a two-party system of government be assured when control of the Executive Branch gives the party in power a potentially exclusive access to essential information in the field of foreign-military policy?

Prior to the ill-fated flight of a CIA U-2 reconnaissance plane on May 1, 1960, most citizens could name only one American spy: Nathan Hale. Now all Americans know the name of Francis Gary Powers, convicted as a peace-time spy by a Russian tribunal but unlikely to join Nathan Hale on the hero pedestal because of the unusual circumstances of his exposure and trial in Moscow. Clearly the cases of Hale and Powers are separate and distinct. Hale was a war-time spy, apprehended while carrying out an ancient mission in warfare. Poorly trained as a spy, but well trained as a technician, Powers was carrying out a cold-war mission. He became a pawn in international politics. He was not executed by his captors, even though he was engaged in illegal activity of a nature most serious to the Soviet Union; he was in fact released early in 1962 in exchange for a Russian spy held by the United States. A Board of Inquiry, which reviewed his case, concluded that Powers "lived up to the terms of his employment and instructions in connection with his mission and in his obligations as an American. . . ."¹⁷ Again, the outsider had to accept this verdict on faith. But if Powers' performance had been inadequate due to poor training by CIA, one could never be sure that the CIA was not protecting Powers in order to protect itself.

American secret operations - both information gathering and political action - have long been well known to the Kremlin and to sophisticates in world affairs. But such activities on a large scale in peacetime are unfamiliar in the American tradition. President Eisenhower expressed a popular sentiment when he described espionage as "distasteful." But he also called it a "vital necessity." Taken literally the President was saying that the nation's life depends upon the distasteful,

- 9 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

this is so, few functions of American government are of such critical importance.

No longer a secret, thanks to the accidents of recent years, are the facts that: espionage activities and clandestine political action overseas on a large scale and by every possible means have been an expanding American governmental function since 1947; under the cover of weather research and in the ostensible employment of a large private aircraft corporation, American Central Intelligence Agency operatives spied on the Soviet Union with long-range aerial cameras and other devices between 1956 and 1960; and in a large and complex organization comparable in estimated size and cost to the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency for some years has been operating or supervising a massive network for electronic eavesdropping on adversaries and allies as well.

But these established facts represent only the top of the iceberg.¹⁸ Authenticated details regarding American secret intelligence activities must inevitably be conjectural. It is difficult to cite "solid" sources as evidence even for conjecture. One must therefore speak in vague terms of "undercover political action" and alleged CIA aid to various foreign rebellions. And one must resort to citing anonymous sources, such as the following comment from a retired foreign service officer of the Department of State:

. . . every senior officer of the Foreign Service has heard something of CIA's subversive efforts in foreign countries and probably most of them have some authentic information about CIA operations of this nature in some particular case. Unfortunately most of these activities seem to have been blundering affairs and most, if not all of them, seem to have resulted to the disadvantage of the United States and sometimes in terrible failure.¹⁹

It is often asserted that CIA has its own foreign policy. Little evidence can be brought forth to prove this. The more likely situation is that CIA has moved on its own in the face of a policy vacuum. Standard operating procedure is for the Ambassadors on the spot to be fully cognizant and in control of clandestine operations. It is hoped that this principle is forcefully applied and will always be. Any other procedure would be unacceptable. "Civilian control" is as important here as with the use of the military instrument for policy aims.

Yet certain specific questions need to be raised regarding the control and management of secret operations in a democratic system: Who sets the policies for such activities? Should Congress play a role in approving policies and specific programs? Is existing Presidential and Department of State

- 10 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

authority adequate for authorizing, controlling and auditing these highly sensitive and dangerous governmental functions?

IV

The Central Intelligence Agency's operations, like those of the National Security Agency, are financed by annual Congressional appropriations. Most members of the national legislature, however, until the sensational disclosures of recent years, knew little about the nature and functions of either agency, particularly in the realm of espionage and secret operations. They know even less about the amount of money annually expended.

Congress as a whole has voluntarily walled itself off from detailed information by statutes requiring secrecy at the discretion of CIA's Director. In establishing the CIA in 1947, Congress prescribed its organization and functions in general terms, giving the broadest possible definition to "intelligence," a term, in current usage, covering a number of distinctly different functions. Wide discretion was left to the National Security Council, for which the agency was to work, and to the CIA Director. Congress made the Director responsible for "protecting intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure."

In the CIA Act of 1949 Congress went even further, exempting the CIA from existing statutes requiring publication or disclosure of "the organization, functions, names, official titles, salaries or numbers of personnel employed by the agency."²⁰ The Director of the Budget was proscribed from making the usual reports to Congress. The standard procedures regarding the expenditure of public funds were waived, and the Director's personal voucher alone is sufficient for expenditures for purposes of a "confidential, extraordinary or emergency nature." The Bureau of the Budget has since established special review procedures for CIA, and some 45 per cent of CIA funds are said to be audited in a regular, albeit classified, manner by the General Accounting Office. The unvouchered funds expended at the discretion of the CIA Director, running to tens of millions of dollars annually, are said to be audited also, but by an even more secret process.

In 1956 Congress considered a concerted and responsible move to change the existing system for surveillance by establishing a Joint Committee on Foreign Intelligence. Earlier and less responsible moves had been made in Congress, led by the late Senator Joseph McCarthy, to investigate the CIA on charges of "Communist infiltration, inefficiency, and waste." The more responsible move was led by Senator Mike Mansfield. With 34 co-sponsors, Mansfield introduced a bill to establish a Joint Com-

- 11 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

mittee. This bill went as far as a floor debate and vote in 1956. But it was defeated by a 59 to 27 vote, consequent to combined opposition of the Executive Branch and senior Senate leaders who felt they knew all they needed to know about intelligence operations. Rather than risk public revelation of CIA's operations, a leading Senator declared, ". . . it would be better to abolish the Central Intelligence Agency and, by so doing, to save the money appropriated and the lives of American citizens."²¹ Since that date, each Congressional session has seen the reintroduction of proposals for a Joint Committee. But through 1962, all died in committee. On May 12, 1960, for example, the House Rules Committee unanimously voted to shelve 17 resolutions which would establish a Congressional committee to oversee central intelligence. In 1961 the same committee devoted more serious attention to the issue by appointing a subcommittee to consider whether there should be a special Congressional investigation of CIA following the Cuban misadventure in April 1961.²² No formal investigation followed.

The discovery that the CIA was sponsoring aerial reconnaissance flights deep within the borders of the Soviet Union in the 1956-1960 period was as much a shock to almost all Congressmen as it was to the man in the street. But CIA leaders could cite Congressional statutes as authority for withholding such information.

Senator Willis Robertson, Democrat of Virginia, on May 9, 1960, said:

I had been hearing testimony presented before the Committee on Appropriations by the Central Intelligence Agency for 13 years. Never during that time were we told what the money was to be used for. It was a deep, dark secret. . . . I asked a number of members of our Defense Appropriations Subcommittee if they knew that the Central Intelligence Agency owned and operated planes, and they said they did not. . . . it embarrassed me not to know that the CIA had planes. . . .²³

This was not, however, a dark secret to every Congressman. A few were privy to some details. One such privileged member spoke up on the other side of Capitol Hill the next day. Representative Clarence Cannon, a Congressman since 1923, as chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations told his House colleagues that, although members were unaware of it at the time, they had earlier appropriated money for the U-2 program and other unspecified espionage missions. The ill-fated U-2 mission of May 1, was, Cannon said, "one of a series and part of an established program with which the subcommittee in charge of the appropriation was familiar, and of which it had been fully apprised during this and the previous session."²⁴

- 12 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

To justify the fact that some senior appropriations committee members as well as the more junior Congressmen had been hoodwinked into approving camouflaged appropriations for secret intelligence operations, Representative Cannon cited "absolute and unavoidable military necessity, fundamental national defense." He explained that the privileged subcommittee that knew of and approved the U-2 flights for the most part included the same legislators who were privy to the secrets of the atom bomb in World War II. The U-2 flights were, he said, CIA's response to the insistent Congressional demands that the nation be forewarned of enemy attack. Presumably they were also in response to the Strategic Air Command's demands for better target information in order to bolster "deterrence." Tight secrecy about such matters was required, Cannon implied, because "some incautious member of a congressional committee or its staff" might disclose highly sensitive information.

Cannon's House appropriations subcommittee is not the only House group concerned with intelligence. A special House Armed Services subcommittee was activated in 1958 by Committee Chairman Carl Vinson, amidst Capitol Hill discontent with intelligence performances. This committee is composed of four members of the majority party, three from the minority, and reviews central intelligence activities, according to its spokesman, "to the fullest extent it deems necessary."²⁵

A similar group exists in the Senate. The Senate Armed Services Committee has, since 1955, maintained a formal subcommittee on Central Intelligence, composed of five of its highest ranking members of both parties, all of whom also are senior members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations. This subcommittee receives "information on the magnitude of the CIA appropriation and the purposes for which this money is spent." Its chairman, Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia, said in 1960 that the CIA was "very cooperative," and that he "knew in advance of the U-2 aircraft and its capability."²⁶ The group, like the others concerned with central intelligence, holds its meetings in secret; no record of subcommittee actions has ever been released.

From the information available about the actual extent of Congressional surveillance, it appears that the House has been more active than the Senate. The Senate group has apparently not been aggressive in seeking complete details about CIA operations. For one thing, most senior Senators have little time to devote to a largely watchdog function. For another, they are reluctant to ask questions that would penetrate the darkness in which intelligence units normally operate. As Senator Leverett Saltonstall put it in 1956, ". . . it is not a question of reluctance on the part of CIA officials to speak to us. Instead it is a question of our reluctance, if you will, to seek information and knowledge on subjects which I personal-

- 13 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

ly, as a Member of Congress and as a citizen, would rather not have. . . ."27

Reluctant or not, it is clear that Congress had nothing, as of 1962, in the way of a standing committee, well staffed like, say, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, to oversee routinely foreign intelligence activities. Allen Dulles, as CIA Director, once said about investigations: "Any investigation, whether by a Congressional Committee or any other body, which results in a disclosure of our secret activities and operations or uncovers our personnel would help a potential enemy just as if the enemy were able to infiltrate their agents right into our shop."²⁸ Thus the amount of information revealed to any Congressional groups is largely at the discretion of the Director of Central Intelligence whose authority comes from Congress itself, which has voluntarily relinquished some of its right to know.

This was well illustrated in the investigation of the U-2 incident conducted by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. The Committee probed as deeply as possible into events surrounding the U-2 affair and received testimony from the highest ranking officials in the CIA, the State and Defense Departments. Yet on a crucial point for Senatorial, and public, evaluation of the government's performance, absolute silence was maintained by Executive Department officials. The question: "Was the information sought by the May 1 flight of sufficient importance to justify the hazards involved?" The Director of CIA refused to tell the Senators, even in executive session, although it was the committee's view that such information was "crucial to reaching an informed judgment."²⁹

Even after Russia's return of U-2 pilot Powers, his public testimony and CIA's official report, many important questions have remained unanswered regarding this flight, CIA's management of the program, the pilot's training, and the purpose of such activities.³⁰

If Congress has been relatively inactive in performing the watchdog function, other ad hoc groups have sporadically served this purpose. Between 1947 and 1961 central intelligence was subjected to five separate special studies and investigations. Two of these were by task forces of the Hoover Commission, in 1948 and again in 1955.

The CIA was in its early stages of organization and development when the first Hoover Commission made its report early in 1949. The Hoover task force called for vigorous efforts "to improve the internal structure of the Central Intelligence Agency and the quality of its product. . . ."31

Another special survey was conducted by a three-man

- 14 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

group headed by Allen W. Dulles, reporting to the President and National Security Council in 1951. The report of this group was never made public, even in summary form. Presumably it centered upon the shaky intelligence performance during the Korean War period. It also provided the springboard for Allen Dulles' entry into the CIA in 1951 as Deputy Director.

Still another survey of CIA organization and performance was made in 1954 by a four-man group headed by Lt.-Gen. James H. Doolittle. This study came at a time when the agency was under the heavy threat of a Senate investigation by Senator Joseph McCarthy and was designed in part to head off what promised to be an unrestrained fishing expedition into CIA's affairs. The Doolittle group made a private report to the President in October 1954. General Doolittle simultaneously issued a brief public statement that CIA was doing a "creditable job" but that unspecified organizational improvements were needed. The New York Times editorialized that such a verdict had to be accepted "pretty much on faith."³²

A detailed survey of the central intelligence system was made in 1955 by a Hoover Commission task force headed by General Mark W. Clark. This study resulted in two reports. One, dealing with organizational aspects, was published. The other, dealing with secret operations, was top secret. The Clark Task Force made special note of the CIA's freedom from the public surveillance normal to our governmental system. Believing this potentially dangerous, it recommended the establishment of Executive and Congressional watchdogs. The Executive group would be a Presidential board of distinguished private citizens. The Congressional group would be a "Joint Congressional Committee on Foreign Intelligence, similar to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy."

The Congressional Joint Committee idea was not adopted because of Presidential opposition to it and a similar coolness among senior legislators. But the first recommendation was adopted with the creation in February 1956 of the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities. This Board was the Presidential answer to those who felt uneasy about CIA's freedom from outside surveillance. Its specified duties were to "conduct an objective review of the foreign intelligence activities of the Government and of the performance of the functions of the Central Intelligence Agency . . . and report its finding to the President semiannually or at more frequent intervals. . . ." ³³ The Board's jurisdiction covered not only CIA but also all other governmental intelligence agencies. The Director of Central Intelligence was required to reveal to Board members any information demanded, and Board members were sworn to secrecy.

After the Cuban fiasco President Kennedy reconstituted this Board, changing its name to the President's Foreign In-

- 15 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

telligence Advisory Board. On May 2, 1961, James R. Killian was reappointed chairman,³⁴ a post he once held under Eisenhower.

Concurrently, President Kennedy also summoned former Army Chief of Staff General Maxwell D. Taylor to make a special study of the Cuban failure and also of the question of America's capabilities for para-military operations and guerilla warfare. General Taylor was assisted in this study by Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Chief of Naval Operations Arleigh Burke, and CIA Director Allen Dulles. The aftermath was a delayed but major shake-up in the top leadership of CIA. Within a year after the Cuban affair, the Director and Deputy Director had retired and were replaced by John A. McCone, former shipbuilder, Air Force official and Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, as Director; and Maj. Gen. Marshall S. Carter, a career Army officer, as Deputy Director. Functional deputy directors, for "plans" (secret operations) and "intelligence production" were also replaced within the year. While personnel changes in the upper echelons became visible, major organizational changes as of this writing, have not been disclosed.³⁵

One point to note about surveillance is that the Executive has not usurped monopolistic control of CIA. Rather Congress voluntarily delegated extraordinary control to the Presidency. For Congress, by statute, gave to the President and National Security Council wide and undefined discretionary authority to determine specific intelligence policy and programs. Just a few specific statutory restraints were placed on the agency: that it have no policy or internal security functions; that it not foreclose or usurp the foreign intelligence work of existing departments and agencies; and that its access to FBI files be available only upon written request from the CIA Director to the FBI Director. Beyond these restrictions, Congress handed to the President a kind of blank check authority regarding secret intelligence.

V

Who determines specific policies and operating programs for the Central Intelligence Agency? Because CIA is but a central unit among various overlapping, duplicating and inevitably competing intelligence agencies, who arbitrates the jurisdictional disputes in such a bureaucratic confederation? The working constitution of the intelligence system is a set of National Security Council Intelligence Directives, stemming from Congressional statutes of 1947 and 1949. While such directives bear the imprimatur of the NSC, this may be little more than "rubber stamp" approval of working rules and jurisdictional assignments made under the leadership of the Director of Central Intelligence among the various cooperating (or competing) units of the intelligence community. These directives

- 16 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

codified in 1959, set forth the operational and organizational principles of the CIA and assign functions among the various other intelligence units of government. From these basic NSC directives, Director of Central Intelligence directives are formulated to guide the operations of the agency and to coordinate government-wide foreign intelligence activity, hoping to prevent duplication or gaps in essential information.

The "public interest," then, is represented by the President, a handful of senior legislators on Capitol Hill, and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. The latter group is not statutory and serves, on a very part-time basis, at Presidential discretion. The question remains: Is this system for surveillance adequate, given the scope and importance of the intelligence function and the potentially explosive nature of some types of operations which have come under the rubric of "intelligence?"

Before dealing with this question, it may be useful to ask: Who authorized and controlled such programs as the U-2 espionage flights of 1956-1960 over the Soviet Union? The available record suggests the shocking fact that neither the President, the Secretary of State, nor the Secretary of Defense knew on May 1, 1960, that our U-2 pilot was in the air over the Soviet Union. The U-2 reconnaissance project was operated by the CIA, using the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, the Air Weather Service of the Air Force, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration as "cover." But top policy direction for U-2 flights came from an ad hoc group of representatives of the Departments of Defense and State, and the White House. The Director of CIA periodically, after obtaining the "concurrence" of the Departments of State and Defense, recommended a series of alternative aerial espionage programs to the President. Thus the President, it seems, had "general knowledge" of the U-2 program, and had approved the May 1 flight as one among "several" in a continuing program of high-altitude espionage flights. It is not clear that the State or Defense Departments were consulted on this specific flight.³⁶ At any rate, it was clearly a Presidential responsibility.

After the flight and the subsequent collapse of the Paris summit conference, President Eisenhower told the nation: "I take full responsibility for approving all the various programs undertaken by our government to secure and evaluate military intelligence."³⁷ Regarding the timing of the May 1 flight on the eve of the summit conference, the President further said, "The decision was that the program should not be halted." The record is unclear as to whether deliberate and specific decisions were made not to discontinue Powers' U-2 flight prior to the Paris conference. "I had no thought of it having any possible bearing upon the summit meeting or my forthcoming trip to Moscow," Eisenhower said later.³⁸

- 17 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

Secretary of State Herter later testified that a pre-summit meeting moratorium was not discussed with anyone in the State Department. It would appear that in this instance the CIA followed its usual practice of obtaining concurrence of the White House, State and Defense Departments for a general espionage program and taking the specific timing on itself, subject to Presidential intervention. Reflecting on the matter some months later, President Eisenhower said that he would have cancelled the flight if he had it to do over again.³⁹

Leaders in the Executive branch are likely to calculate more carefully the risks for such programs if they are always conscious of a Congressional committee looking over their shoulders. But strong arguments can be made for or against the proposal commonly suggested as a Joint Congressional Committee on Central Intelligence for additional extra-Executive supervision of the CIA.

Standard arguments against the proposal are: The existing system for surveillance is adequate in that the public is represented by a small group of its most senior and experienced Congressional members, and the public will is represented by the fact that the entire intelligence system functions, in theory at least, under the responsible Presidential leadership. Establishment of a Congressional committee with a large and permanent staff would not only risk disclosure of the most sensitive of all government operations, but would be an annoyance to the intelligence leadership because of inevitable "second-guessing" by the Committee and its staff, some of whom might be disgruntled former intelligence employees. Furthermore, the State Department, Pentagon, Atomic Energy Commission, Federal Bureau of Investigation and other intelligence units are already under the purview of various Congressional committees, which would be extremely reluctant to give up their jurisdiction.

Intelligence work is a peculiarly staff function without any direct political responsibility for policy-making, which brings details of its activities under the heading of "executive privilege." Any change in this status, so goes the argument, would do violence to the Constitutional concept of Presidential power and responsibility, particularly the President's special discretionary powers in foreign affairs. The basic American precept of consent of the governed need not be stretched to claim that the people have a right to know all details about the formation and implementing of foreign policy. There are areas of legitimate secrecy, in which certain functions must be delegated to responsible leadership. Greater disclosure of intelligence activities to Congress would further complicate the already difficult problem of inter-allied intelligence cooperation. Most allied intelligence organizations would become even more reticent to disclose secret informa-

- 18 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

tion to United States representatives if they saw the possibility of an American Congressman peering over their shoulder.

So run the principal arguments against lessening the nearly exclusive Executive control over central intelligence policy and operations. Such views represent the problem as has been viewed from the perspective of the Executive Department, particularly the Central Intelligence Agency when Allen Dulles was its head.

From another perspective contrary views are found. The principal arguments here are: The government's intelligence system is of increasing importance and potential influence in the governmental system and is thus too important to be left unsupervised by any group outside the Executive branch. Existing Executive and Congressional surveillance is sporadic, ad hoc or inadequately comprehensive. Congress probes in depth only under exceptional circumstances, like the U-2 incident, the defection to Russia of intelligence employees, or the Cuban invasion failure. Congressional surveillance is fractured into half-a-dozen committees. This situation both inhibits an overall view and promotes needless, time-consuming work within the Executive departments. The prestige of the central intelligence system is low on Capitol Hill and among large segments of the relevant bureaucracy. Public confidence, too, has been decreased by a series of apparent failures. There is a lack of understanding of the limits and potentialities of intelligence reports and estimates. A permanent, well-staffed Joint Committee might serve as promoter and defender of the central intelligence system while simultaneously guarding the public interest. Such a committee might be composed of chairmen and highest ranking minority party members of the House and Senate Committee on Appropriations, Armed Services, Government Operations, and the Senate Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs Committees. Intelligence personnel might be better protected from the perennial witch hunters. The American system, furthermore, is based upon a provident unwillingness to accept governmental activities on "faith" without the proper institutional devices and criteria for judging whether faith is warranted. A system with countervailing power - such as the separation of powers - has strength by keeping under some control the worst features of bureaucratic behavior, namely, the urge to autonomy and secrecy, for the sake of administrative convenience, and the urge to overstaffing and "empire building."

With all of these and additional arguments which have been made, the essential question boils down to this: Are there adequate checks upon the great potential power of the central intelligence system? Criteria for adequacy must be based upon consideration of both democratic government and efficient operation of the system. The view here is that the efficiency

- 19 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

of the system might benefit rather than suffer from additional external surveillance, because of the inherent value within a government bureaucracy of the feeling of external responsibility and the fear of being embarrassed or called to account. Closer surveillance certainly would be more in keeping with the notion of consent of the governed.

Perhaps 80 to 90 percent of the activities of the Intelligence Community could be scrutinized by a Joint Congressional Committee to the same degree that existing committees oversee the defense establishment, foreign affairs, and atomic energy policies and programs. These governmental fields contain highly sensitive elements from a security viewpoint. The record of Congress in keeping secrets given to its various committees in "executive" (secret) session is good. Probably more secrets have deliberately "leaked" from the Executive Branch than from Congress.

An arguable objection to Joint Congressional Committee is, of course, that they usurp Executive functions. American bicameralism was designed in part to prevent this by dispersing power on Capitol Hill, vitiating Presidential power. Where there are separate Senate-House committees, this problem is alleviated, for it gives the Executive some leverage in the interplay between House and Senate. It can be argued that the large staff of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy has made administrative life difficult within the AEC by taking over some of its executive functions, particularly by attempts to participate unduly in personnel, budgetary and policy-making functions. The new Director of Central Intelligence in 1962 was a former AEC chairman, with long experience working with a Congressional Joint Committee. Reportedly he had no objection to the establishment of a properly constituted Congressional Committee on Central Intelligence.⁴⁰ Such a committee seems to be the best approach to some of the problems raised by the existence of a large secret intelligence apparatus. Or, if Congress moved to a more radical internal reorganization and established a Joint Committee on National Security, such a committee might designate one of its subcommittees as the Congressional "watchdog" over the Intelligence Community. Whatever the innovation, Congress should not allow life to become too comfortable for the Executive bureaucracies.

Democratic government involves taking risks on the kind of individuals who turn up as leaders within the system. This includes the legislature as well as the executive. Certainly some risks, mentioned above, are involved in regularizing Congressional surveillance over Intelligence. Additional general risks include unwarranted harassment of intelligence employees and uneven or inadequate appropriations support for intelligence activities. Self-restraint and acceptance of a heavy responsibility would be required of these legislators.

- 20 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

assignment on a joint surveillance committee.

In her search for democracy America produced a governmental system that fragments and diffuses power. To recommend giving Congress a more institutionalized role in overseeing central intelligence is not, in effect, to recommend more diffusion of power but less. A Joint Congressional Committee on Central Intelligence would be a center of countervailing power. It should help to focus responsibility and authority.

The troublesome question must also be raised as to whether meaningful debate, particularly in national elections, can occur when sometimes crucial information is in the control of the party in power. This presents a dilemma deriving from the traditional requirement of secrecy for intelligence estimates as opposed to the information required for the proper functioning of a two-party system.

President Truman established the precedent that presidential and vice-presidential nominees of both major political parties receive foreign intelligence briefings from the Central Intelligence Agency during the 1952 election campaign. His purpose was to assure foreign policy continuity, regardless of the candidate elected. Since such information is highly classified, however, it may be used for background purposes only and this limits debate on decisive issues. Aware of this, General Eisenhower, in accepting Truman's offer, did so with the understanding that, excepting security information, it would "in no other way limit my freedom to discuss or analyze foreign programs as my judgment dictates."⁴¹ Interesting questions were raised by the 1960 Presidential election campaign in which the Democratic candidates for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency were given special intelligence "briefings" by the CIA.⁴² Did this mean that John F. Kennedy as a presidential candidate was entitled to information unavailable to him as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee? Or did Lyndon Johnson receive, as a candidate, information to which he was not entitled as Senate majority leader and, incidentally, a member of the Senate Armed Services subcommittee on the Central Intelligence Agency? Presumably so. Justification for this may be in part a matter of convenience for the candidate, but the practice may also be in recognition of the fact that Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates are entitled to special information unavailable to others - including the principal legislative leaders.⁴³

VI

The foregoing analysis suggests, in conclusion, some guidelines which may be useful towards assuring that the intelligence services are both as efficient as possible and under control by responsible authority. Operational intelligence

- 21 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

activities, whether espionage or political action, must first of all never be more or less than instruments of national policy, like the military instrument. And like military force, intelligence activities should not be overrated as instruments of policy. Some missions are better left to diplomats. An intelligence service never should be allowed to have its own foreign policy. In their informational function, intelligence services must have their objectivity preserved. At the same time, Intelligence must serve policy in a staff role rather than attempt to persuade, openly or subtly, decision makers on particular courses of action which Intelligence may favor. But to insist that a dividing line exists between the policy making and the intelligence roles is not to suggest that the policy maker and the intelligence professional should work in compartments isolated from each other. Mutual understanding and a close working relationship is imperative.

While the control of Intelligence must remain primarily the President's responsibility, Congress must assume a more active and clearly defined role of surveillance over Intelligence. And the Department of State, particularly, must always participate aggressively in weighing gain from success against cost of failure in every proposed major secret operation. A strengthened Department of State is a prerequisite to a national capability to put Intelligence in its proper place.

The CIA is misnamed. More than an intelligence service, it has become a multi-purpose organization, engaged in a number of disparate "strategic services." The informational mission of the intelligence system should be organized separately from the clandestine operational political mission. For when operational planners are permitted also to supply the ultimate decision maker with the information required to justify a plan's feasibility great risks abound. Here the self-fulfilling prophecy is perhaps the most common danger. Planners and operational commanders are notoriously prone to view their proposed operational plan as an end in itself. As experiences in the Korean War, Laos, and Cuba demonstrate, selection of only those bits of "intelligence" justifying a given plan's practicability courts disaster. This problem can be met, in part at least, by a proper organizational arrangement which separates the information gathering mission from the planning and conduct of political operations, permitting more independent, objective evaluations.

Another problem involves secrecy. Democratic government cannot work without a free and responsible press. Yet certain strategic services by definition require the utmost secrecy. The degree of secrecy for such activities attained by totalitarian regimes, or even by parliamentary democracies, cannot be attained by the United States. But it should be possible to impose a higher degree of legitimate secrecy in two ways. First,

- 22 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

the leadership of the intelligence community must resist the many temptations to mount the public speech-making rostrum. Wisdom suggests that they cultivate a passion for anonymity.⁴⁴ Second, a restoration of confidence in the professional quality of the intelligence system and in the fact of its unquestioned subordination to responsible political authority will automatically produce greater self-restraint on the part of Congress and the press.

Perhaps the most fundamental problem, reflected from the apparent bungling in recent times of supposedly secret operations, has been the lack of a clearly defined national purpose and a national consensus on American foreign policy objectives. A clarified national purpose is the most commonly recommended nostrum for the nation's ailments in foreign affairs. Intelligence has borne the brunt of criticism for many policy and operational failures. The blame ought to be shared with the Presidency, State Department and Congress. Even the best of intelligence services cannot be expected to perform effectively in either its informing or operational missions without purposeful policy guidance. Many of the problems of the intelligence system would be self-solving, given a positive consensus on foreign policy aims other than the natural concern for self-survival. In this regard the Communists have an advantage in conducting clandestine political action, for a democracy cannot enforce an ideological dogma. However, dogma places totalitarian regimes at a disadvantage - witness Nazi Germany and now Soviet Russia - because intelligence reports processed through an ideological filter are likely to be inaccurate and misleading.

America's Cold War dilemma stems from the difficulties of reconciling a unified, common purpose with democracy's diffusive requirements of a two-party political system, separation of government powers, a free press, and liberties for the individual. No greater challenge confronts the United States than how to fight effectively a protracted Cold War without sacrificing the principles the nation is defending: national security, liberty and self-government at home, and the ideals of human dignity, popular welfare, freedom and justice abroad. Some argue that we must refrain from clandestine illegal operations overseas, adhering instead to high moral principles of conduct. While diplomacy is preferable, and usually more reliable and effective than subversion, the United States cannot realistically follow a rule of abstinence from espionage or an absolute principle of non-intervention in other nations' internal affairs. Cold War is by definition a stage in international politics that is neither war nor peace. In this situation, and short of a reign of international law based upon the consent of the governed, the United States may sometimes have to engage in clandestine

- 23 -

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

activities to protect the national interest. The nation cannot accept the claim, in every situation, that the existing government or regime in every foreign country is the legitimate one. The national interest and the common defense may require intervention, even though this may confront us with legal and moral problems. The United States rarely faces comfortable alternative choices in support of foreign regimes. Often we must accept the lesser evil because circumstances fail to provide an ideal option.

America cannot unilaterally resign from the Cold War without unacceptable risk to all nations sharing democratic ideals. Neither can we cynically adopt an "ends justify means" rule for action. Intervention or espionage should occur only when no alternative exists, and should be undertaken with a precision and purpose that have been lacking in the past.

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

FOOTNOTES

(NOTE: Preparation of this paper was aided by a Summer Grant from the Institute of Research in the Social Sciences, Vanderbilt University.)

1. CIA's attachment to such a saying also reflects intelligence professionals' belief in the existence of an objective "truth" in world affairs. If "all the facts" are gathered, they seem to assume, then the problems of policy makers are virtually self-solving. They share this myth with many policy makers.
2. From mimeographed pamphlet, "The Central Intelligence Agency," issued on request by CIA, Spring 1961, p. 7. Existence of the pamphlet itself seems inconsistent with the secrecy declared therein.
3. Sen. Richard B. Russell, chairman, Committee on Armed Services, in that committee's Hearing, "Nomination of McCone...", January 18, 1962, p. 30.
4. Relevant scholarly works include: George S. Pettee, The Future of American Secret Intelligence, Washington, 1946; Sherman Kent, Strategic Intelligence, Princeton, 1949; Roger Hilsman, Strategic Intelligence and National Decisions, Glencoe, 1956; Washington Platt, Strategic Intelligence Production, New York, 1957; Harry Howe Ransom, Central Intelligence and National Security, Cambridge, Mass., 1958; William M. McGovern, Strategic Intelligence and the Shape of Tomorrow, Chicago, 1961; Roberta M. Wohlstetter, Pearl Harbor, Stanford, 1962. Important journalistic accounts are: Andrew Tully, CIA, The Inside Story, New York, 1962; Sanche de Gramont, The Secret War, New York, 1962; Tad Szulc and Karl E. Meyer, The Cuban Invasion, New York, 1962; David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, The U-2 Affair, New York, 1962; and William L. White, The Little Toy Dog, New York, 1962. The list of periodical sources, mostly journalistic, is longer.
5. Congressional Record, January 29, 1962, p. 927.
6. May 25, 1961.
7. This writer has never been a member of the central intelligence system; never privy to classified material on central intelligence.
8. Intelligence with a capital "I" will be used here to denote the system; lower case "intelligence" will denote the informational "product."
9. A leading candidate for designation as America's first spy is an Indian brave named Amocis, sent by Emperor Powhatan

to mingle with the whites and observe their activities in order to keep the emperor informed. See Captain John Smith, A True Relation . . ., as cited by C.C. Davis, "Speak to Me Softly," Columbia University Forum, Spring, 1961, p. 26. Hans Morgenthau reminds us also that the first appropriation act adopted by the first Congress of the United States in 1789 contained a contingent fund for the "bribery" of foreign statesmen in pursuit of American national interest.

10. An F.B.I. report states that one Russian defector estimated that the Soviet Military Attache's office in the United States is able to obtain legally 95 per cent of the material useful for its intelligence objectives through government agencies or commercial publishing houses. See "Expose of Soviet Espionage," May 1960, Senate Doc. No. 114, 86th Congress, 2d Session, July 2, 1960, p. 7.

11. "The Relation of Knowledge to Action," in Daniel Lerner, editor, The Human Meaning of the Social Sciences, New York, Meridian, 1959, p. 177.

12. Baltimore Sun, January 4, 1961; The New York Times, same date.

13. Baltimore Sun, January 6, 1961.

14. What is known in Washington as the intelligence community comprises representatives of those government agencies represented on the U.S. Intelligence Board, of which the Director of Central Intelligence is chairman: the heads of Intelligence in the Army, Navy and Air Force, State Department, Atomic Energy Commission; and representatives of the Secretary of Defense (his Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency), the National Security Agency, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. For further organizational details, see Ransom, Central Intelligence and National Security, Chs. IV and V.

15. Interview, U.S. News and World Report, March 19, 1954.

16. Hearing, "Nomination of McCone. . .," p. 61.

17. Text of official report, The New York Times, March 7, 1962.

18. For muckraking speculation in detail, see Fred J. Cook, "The CIA," The Nation (special issue), June 24, 1961; also Tully, CIA, The Inside Story and de Gramont, The Secret War.

19. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Study of U.S. Foreign Policy, "Summary of Views of Retired Foreign Service Officers," June 15, 1959, p. 54.

Footnotes - 111

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

20. Public Law 110, 81st Congress, 1st Session, June 20, 1949, 63 Stat 208.
21. Senator Richard B. Russell, Congressional Record, April 11, 1956, p. 5412. For a fuller discussion, see Ransom, Central Intelligence and National Security, Ch. VII.
22. Washington Star, June 6, 1961.
23. Congressional Record, May 9, 1960, p. 9078.
24. Congressional Record, May 10, 1960, p. 9146.
25. Letter to author from Chief Counsel, House Committee on Armed Services, October 7, 1960.
26. Letter to author, November 3, 1960.
27. Senator Leverett Saltonstall in Congressional Record, April 9, 1956, p. 5292.
28. Interview in U.S. News and World Report, March 19, 1954, p. 67.
29. 86th Congress, 2d Session, Senate Report No. 1761, June 28, 1960, p. 22.
30. For a competent journalistic account of the incident, see David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, The U-2 Affair, New York, Random House, 1962.
31. Hoover Commission, Task Force Report, "National Security Organization," Appendix G, January 1949, p. 16.
32. New York Times, October 24, 1954, Sec. IV, p. 2.
33. Executive Order 19656, February 6, 1956.
34. New members added included Robert D. Murphy, veteran State Department official; Professor William L. Langer of Harvard, former O.S.S., State Department and CIA official; Clark Clifford, a White House adviser to Presidents Truman and Kennedy; and Frank Pace, of broad industrial and government experience.
35. While there was much speculation, after Cuba, about re-constituting CIA as an exclusively information-gathering agency, assigning clandestine political and para-military missions elsewhere, such radical surgery apparently has not been performed as of August, 1962.

Footnotes - iv

Ransom
Secret Intelligence

36. Most of these details are found in "Events Incident to the Summit Congerence," Hearings, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, May 27- June 2, 1960. See also Senate Report No. 1761 on same, June 28, 1960. See also Wise and Ross, op. cit.
37. Address to the nation, May 25, 1960.
38. Quoted in Sherman Adams, Firsthand Report, New York, Harper, 1961, p. 456.
39. Merriman Smith, A President's Odyssey, New York, 1960.
40. Arthur Krook, "A Proved Breed of Watchdog Is Available," The New York Times, May 24, 1962.
41. The New York Times, August 15, 1952.
42. A controversy later arose as to the extent of Senator Kennedy's briefing by the Director of Central Intelligence, specifically as to whether the Senator, as a Presidential candidate, had been apprised of plans for an invasion of Cuba. Former Vice-President Nixon has asserted in his memoirs that Kennedy was so apprised and had improperly used the information, putting Nixon at a disadvantage in the 1960 campaign debates over Cuban policy. A Kennedy Administration spokesman denied that Kennedy had been so informed and this was corroborated by Allen Dulles, at the time CIA Director.
43. In discussing a Joint Committee on Foreign Intelligence in 1962, Senator Eugene McCarthy suggested there were always sufficient presidential aspirants in the Senate to constitute such a committee. The Senator, in opposing the nomination of John McCone as Director of Central Intelligence, provoked a useful debate on the Senate floor. See Congressional Record, January 29, 1962, pp. 925-946; and January 31, 1962, pp. 1159-1171.
44. In 1960-61, Allen Dulles, evidencing his role as a public figure, received the following awards: St. George Association, Golden Rule Award; Veterans of Foreign Wars, Bernard Baruch Gold Medal; All-American Conference to Combat Communism, Vigilant Patriot Award for 1960; New York Employing Printers Association, Franklin Award; and American Committee for the Independence of Armenia, Freedom Award.

IP

4 September

1962

TO

[Redacted]

for DC STAT
ER

ROOM NO.

7D 5617

BUILDING

Hq.

REMARKS:

For the Director.

Noted
Jones

[Redacted]

STAT

FROM:

Stanley J. Grogan, Asst. to the DCI

ROOM NO.

1F 08

BUILDING

Hq.

EXTENSION

[Redacted]

STAT