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Field Service Report

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Subject: Intelligence -- Key to "a free and independent country"

One of the unfortunate aftermaths of Watergate, stirred by the illegalities of a few CIA types and expanded to widespread criticism of the CIA itself, has been the public downgrading of the entire Intelligence community, and of the Intelligence function as a fundamental element of national security.

The argument, thus far, has been conspicuously one-sided. The media have had a field day. Intelligence officers, by nature, are reluctant to speak out publicly.

Thus the significance of the remarks of Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters, Deputy Director of the CIA, at a July 23 luncheon meeting of the American Security Council in Washington.

If you are not familiar with what he said on that occasion, don't be surprised. As AIM (Accuracy in Media, Inc.) states in its July newsletter:

"The Washington Star on the day following General Walters' talk carried three stories on the CIA, occupying 70 column inches of the paper (over half a page). The stories were headed: (1) 'Did CIA Cause Colonel's Death?' (2) 'CIA Panel Will Call Kissinger' (3) 'Nixon Tied to CIA Effort in Chile.' Not one word was said about General Walters' talk, even though the Star had a reporter present. The New York Times also ignored the story. The Washington Post devoted six inches to General Walters, burying the report in a story headed: 'Clifford Urges Limit to CIA Activities.' We were informed that both the AP and UPI carried stories on the Walters' talk on their wires, but no paper we examined used their stories.

"The only respectable report we found was in the conservative weekly, Human Events, which led its August 2 'Inside Washington' report with a 375-word story on the Walters talk."

General Walters has been with CIA for three and a half years. He has a distinguished record of service in the Army. Following are excerpts from his American Security Council address.

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Intelligence is information that is vital to the making of sound decisions by our government, information concerning foreign countries and their policies, armament and economics that must be properly analyzed and disseminated.

A lot of intelligence, if you don't get it out in time, is simply history. It is not intelligence unless you get it to whomever needs it right away. Why do we need it today?

Well, we need it today because, in my opinion, the United States is in a tougher power situation than it has been since Valley Forge. Not since Valley Forge has any foreign country had the ability to destroy or seriously cripple the United States. That capability exists today. . . .

We see, in all areas, a tremendous military effort being made to modernize and improve the Soviet forces beyond what seems to me to be necessary for either deterrence or defense. And so the inevitable question which faces the United States government is: What use will they make of this, of these capabilities? And this is a question for which the United States government must look to the intelligence community -- to the CIA and the other intelligence agencies -- for answers.

One of the problems we have today is that there is a great effort abroad to make you believe that intelligence is immoral, un-American, unworthy and everything else, that everybody should know all the secrets, and that the Founding Fathers would have frowned on all of this dirty stuff.

Let me tell you a few things about the Founding Fathers. George Washington wrote a letter to his chief of intelligence in New Jersey, Col. Elias Dayton, and said: "The need for procuring good intelligence is so obvious that it need not be emphasized. All that remains for me is to caution you that secrecy is essential in these matters, and for lack of it they generally fail no matter how favorable the outcome." . . .

George Washington operated three kidnap attempts on Benedict Arnold. You can guess what he'd have done with him if he'd got him.

For three years, prior to the outbreak of the Revolution, Benjamin Franklin, as Assistant Postmaster of the Colonies, was running a mail-intercept service on the British. . . .

President Truman, in 1956, said: "It matters not to the United States whether its secrets become known through publication in the media or through the activities of spies. The damage to the United States is the same in both cases." . . .

Right now we're engaged in a number of inquiries to determine whether any great nation can operate its secret intelligence

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service because we are a very unusual people. But if we do, it'll be just like going to the moon. We'll have been the only ones who ever succeeded in doing it.

I think these investigations can be helpful to us, providing they are conducted in a positive, constructive and responsible sense and are not operated as some sort of a political football. The security of the United States is too precious to be kicked around as a football.

We are quite prepared to accept any guidelines which the Congress may decide to put upon us, as we've lived with the guidelines they gave us in the past. But I would hope that when they institute these guidelines, they institute some mechanism to change them so that as perceptions of what is acceptable and unacceptable change, that will be introduced in some way into the guidelines. . . .

We are being called-up and investigated for things we did or are alleged to have done. What I fear is that in 1990 or 1985, CIA Director Colby's distant successor will be summoned and he will be investigated for what he failed to do. "You mean you weren't doing this? You mean you didn't do that? You mean you failed to do this?" . . .

Someone said to me the other day, "Don't you think that some of these things that were done against us were done as retaliation for what the United States did?"

If you take the vision of the United States as an aggressive, imperialist, hostile nation, perhaps you can rationalize this. But look at the United States, which has fought and won two great wars in this century, and not only took nothing from the vanquished, but helped them. No victor in history has ever done for the vanquished what we have done. . . .

America has brought to intelligence, in my opinion, two great things: It's brought the application of American technology and scientific know-how to the collection of intelligence. And it's brought analysis of that intelligence to a degree that has not been known in previous intelligence services. . . .

We had great talks 15-20 years ago about a missile gap. We can't have that talk anymore. Thanks to intelligence, we know what the situation is.

One thing that engenders hostility and eccentric, erratic action is fear of the unknown. I can't go into details, but I can tell you that we in the CIA have several times brought together people from different countries that looked as if they were near conflict, and we have been, in some part, instrumental in solving that.

Or sometimes, someone has said to us, "Oh, so-and-so is going
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And we said, "No they aren't. We know they aren't because they haven't got the means to do it." . . .

Intelligence, believe me, is a force for peace as well as for war. It is a force to guard us against surprise, and to dissipate misunderstandings or fear of the unknown. . . .

Our people in the CIA are under a torrent of accusation, mud and innuendo, yet continue to do a superb job producing what I believe to be the finest intelligence put before any government in the world.

I never cease to be startled at the competence, integrity, continuity, and most of all, dedication of the people in the CIA. They're Americans just like everybody else in this room; they want to live in an American society according to rules the American people establish. But they must know what the American people are willing to accept as rules and want us to do.

I would like to say one word about our director, Mr. Colby: I rarely find myself in agreement with the Chinese Communists, but they have a song that says, "Sailing depends upon the helmsman," and we have a superb one. . . .

People sometimes forget that people in intelligence have rights, too. They have the right to the same presumption of innocence as any other American citizen. The accusation comes, and the rebuttal never catches up. The news about Mr. Butterfield being a CIA infiltrator of the White House covered a seven-column headline. The news he wasn't: one column. . . .

The Congress set up the CIA in 1947 with the full knowledge that it was going to engage in espionage. And they left the charge deliberately vague: "And do other such things as the National Security Council may direct."

We can live with any kind of oversight the Congress decides upon. We have never had a leak out of our oversight committees. We tell them anything they want to know.

I feel less confident that we will get any clear guidelines as to what we can and can't do. That's going to be extremely difficult to get. . . .

This whole question of intelligence, as I said, is a very serious matter. The survival of the United States as a free and democratic society may well depend upon it. We have been spending enormous amounts of time rummaging through the garbage pails of the '50s and '60s. The question of whether we're going to continue as a free and democratic nation is going to be decided in the late '70s and '80s. And I just hope that sometime we begin to spend appropriate time on that period, which is going to determine how we and our children live in the future.

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Many people would want us to operate our intelligence service not just by standards acceptable to the American people, but with a degree of purity that we can be sure will not be reciprocated. If you're fighting someone with brass knuckles, and you're required to fight according to the Marquis of Queensbury rules, you're going to have quite a difficult time, to put it mildly.

Every day when I go to work, I find a memory of something that is not our American choice, and that is the fact that we must fight on the silent intelligence battlefield. As I go into the building, I see the stars carved in the wall of the CIA which symbolize the people, the members of that Agency, who have fallen in the service of the United States -- un-honored, unknown by most -- but who died that you and I might continue to live free. . . .

I would like to read a couple of sentences from a Chinese writer who wrote 500 years before Christ. He wrote a book called The Art of War, describing how you undo your enemies. He said:

"The most consummate art is to subdue your enemies without having to fight them on the battlefield. The direct method of war is necessary only on the battlefield, but it is only the indirect methods that lead to true victory and its consolidation.

"Denigrate everything that is good in your opponent's country. Involve their leaders in criminal operations. Undermine them by every means and then expose them to the public scorn of their fellow citizens. Use the most execrable and vile individuals. Cause trouble by every means at hand within their government. Spread discord and quarrels amongst the citizens of the opposing country. Agitate the young against the old. Destroy by all means the weapons supply and discipline of your opponent. Cover with ridicule their old traditions and heritage. Be generous in your offers and rewards to purchase information or accomplices. Put secret agents everywhere. Never stint on money or promises, and thus you will reap a rich reward."

This is the new form of war with which we have to contend. It is not the old thing of divisions marching across the field. It is the silent battlefield of which I speak.

We will do our best. We will conform to whatever standards are imposed upon us by the American people. And throughout the past, the United States intelligence community has tried to do what they could to keep the United States a free and independent country. This is sometimes difficult, because we Americans have a tendency to disband our intelligence after wars. . . .

People have asked me whether I thought the Agency will survive this. I have no doubt. If the United States is to remain a free and independent country, it must have good intelligence. There is no alternative for us as a people.

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