

STAT **DOUGLAS MacKINNON****U.S. must restore its intelligence and 'covert action' ability**

When American servicemen go into action, they expect casualties. Their greatest hope, however, is that their losses will be kept to a minimum because of accurate intelligence reports from the area.

Such was not the case in Grenada. The number of dead from the conflict was much higher than expected. The reason was self-evident: poor intelligence reports from the area in and around Grenada. The Cuban fighting force was badly underestimated. The result was tragic.

Many members of the American military openly blamed President Jimmy Carter and his cutback of covert action as the direct cause of these deaths.

Covert action. Those two words alone bring to mind images of men in trenchcoats, and beautiful, long-legged women meeting in a smoke-filled bar in some mythical country in the Far East.

While that is the stuff that movies and novels are made of, it is not, by a long shot, what covert action is all about.

Specialty assignments

When discussing the area of covert action, you are discussing a specialty relegated mainly to the

The CIA has had an enormous public relations problem in this country for the last decade. The reasons for this are many and varied. Suffice it to say that the CIA did not shy away from its complicity in this matter and has worked hard to rectify it.

But problems remain, many having to do with the area of covert action. After the turmoil of Vietnam and Watergate, there was somewhat of a moratorium placed on many types of covert action. Before going any further, we should note that the CIA defines covert action as "any clandestine operation or activity designed to influence foreign governments, organizations, persons or events in support of United States foreign policy."

That alone covers a wide spectrum of possibilities, from planting pro-American editorials in foreign newspapers to staging coups, and everything in-between.

The problem is that this type of activity does not always mesh with the democratic ideals we have grown to abide by over the years.

Because of that, in the mid-1970s, hundreds of CIA operatives discharged from the agency. Congress required that it be informed of every single covert action. It is a well-known fact that

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if you inform Congress of a covert action, you may as well take out a full-page ad in every paper in the country detailing what you plan to do.

Consequently, the CIA became somewhat of a paper tiger. It was not being allowed to do the job it was created for: protecting the United States from forces without.

Cause and effect

Because of this clampdown on CIA activities, you had a clearcut example of cause and effect. Or, to put it another way, Newton's third law was demonstrated to the Carter administration in short order: "For every action, there is equal and opposite reaction."

That means that where the United States pulled in, the Soviet Union quickly pushed as hard as it could, most notably in Afghanistan

and, to a lesser extent, the Middle East and Central America.

All of a sudden, members of Congress and the media were wondering what became of the CIA. Why weren't they "Johnny on the spot" to prevent those Soviet bullies from kicking sand into the faces of us good guys in the United States?

The answer, to a large extent, was no further away than their bathroom mirror. There was an overreaction to CIA shortcomings in the late '60s and early '70s and we were to pay for it in the late '70s and early '80s.

In any nation with global responsibilities, such as the United States, covert action is a necessary tool of foreign policy.

For covert action to be considered a success, it must, to all intents and purposes, be unheard

of, a total secret.

That is where the Soviet Union has what might be considered an advantage over the United States. For the simple reason that keeping secrets requires the acquiescence, if not the connivance, of the press. In a closed society such as the Soviet Union, the press can and is easily controlled. In an open society such as ours, control of the press is impossible unless it agrees beforehand, as in the case of D-Day in World War II or the Bay of Pigs disaster under the Kennedy administration.

In both cases, the press was aware of the events beforehand and out of loyalty to the nation decided not to run what it knew.

Now, in the post-Watergate era, some members of the media will divulge any source, name and name to be the next Woodward and Bernstein.

Crying-wolf

The government has only itself to blame for much of this. It stamped "Top Secret" on so many useless documents over the last decade that it alienated many members of the press who would have given it the benefit of the doubt.

As we have come to learn, many of those papers were stamped "Top Secret" to cover someone's backside.

It cannot be stressed enough how important covert actions are to this country. Like it or not, we live in a world that does not look favorably upon the United States. We have quite a few hostile nations to contend with, not the least of which is the Soviet Union.

Many Americans (members of Congress and the media included) live in a type of fantasy world where they fully expect to reap the benefits of living in this republic but have no desire to know the details of how the country is protected or the sacrifices many other Americans make to see that we remain a free nation.

That's fine. Let them live in their ivory towers. Just don't let them presume to dictate what should or should not be allowed to take place overseas because it may offend their sensibilities.

The CIA is already at a disadvantage in competing with the machinations of closed societies. Covert actions, for better or worse, are always going to be part of our foreign policy. The CIA has been designated to handle such matters. We must let them.

While no democratic government can be allowed to operate at odds with the ideals it is supposed to espouse and protect, if it does not operate in a covert manner when needed then it shall soon have no more ideals to espouse and protect.

1983(?)

DOUGLAS MacKINNON

Kennedy-Hart bill would totally reverse the Monroe Doctrine

Dec. 2, 1883. It is not a date that rings a bell in the minds of most Americans.

If, however, you are a member of Congress and are misleading the American people on the geopolitical situation in Central America, that particular date had better mean a great deal to you.

On that day President Monroe issued the Monroe Doctrine, the unilateral statement that says the United States will regard as an unfriendly act any attempt on the part of European powers to extend

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their systems or control in the Western Hemisphere.

To listen to Sens. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and Gary Hart, D-Colo., or Rep. Edward Markey, D-Mass., you would think they had never heard of the Monroe Doctrine.

Or that if they had, they a) don't consider the Soviet Union a threat to the Western Hemisphere, or b) don't consider Central America

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part of the Western Hemisphere.

Nothing else would explain the bill Kennedy and Hart are trying to pass in the Senate or that Markey is trying to pass in the House. It is a bill whose foundation is built on the ignorance of these three men.

The bill would prohibit President Reagan from sending troops into "the territory, airspace or waters of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras or Nicaragua for training exercises or any other purpose," unless Congress has authorized their presence in the form of a joint resolution.

Suits Andropov

Yuri Andropov could not have written the bill any better to suit himself and his nation's needs in this part of the world. The Soviet Union would only benefit from such a law.

To shackle the president's hands even more tightly would weaken us in the eyes of our allies and enemies.

Kennedy feels that members of Congress will be pressured to support the bill when they talk with constituents. Says Kennedy, "The American people are ahead of Congress on this issue."

Wrong! If Kennedy feels that the American people are ahead of Congress on this issue, it is because men like him, Hart and Markey have misled them.

They would allow the Soviet Union and Cuba to operate in Central America with impunity.

Markey has made by far the most ridiculous statement on this bill to date. He said, "The bill is a Tonkin Gulf resolution in reverse,"

referring to the legislation that President Johnson used to justify escalation of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Markey desperately needs a geography lesson. Central America is not Vietnam. It is not half a world away. It is in our own backyard. The entire situation threatens one of our best allies and neighbors, Mexico.

Playing a game

To the Soviet Union, involvement in Central America is a game to be played on the highest of planes. The game has no rules. The Soviets simply push until the United States pushes back. If there is no one to push back, they take what their war machine has rolled over.

Much of the U.S.-Soviet relationship established over the years is predicated upon such "games." They indicate to the Soviets just

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how much to push and what they can and can't get away with.

It is imperative that the president remain relatively unencumbered when dealing with situations such as these.

Kennedy, Hart and Markey would soon make the president nothing more than a figurehead, a puppet whose control would rest with Congress.

If that is their intention, I suggest they read the Constitution. That is not how this nation was set up to be governed, as I'm sure they are well aware.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1985 / PAGE 3D

DOUGLAS MACKINNON

The recent earthquake that tragically struck Mexico has once again turned the world's attention to that strife-torn nation.

It is imperative, however, that the U.S. government turn its attention to Mexico for another reason. Actions and reactions are taking place in that country which will have direct and possibly severe consequences for our own nation.

Asked before a Senate select committee on foreign affairs what it felt would be the single-largest threat facing the United States in the coming years, the Central Intelligence Agency did not give the obvious answer.

It did not name the ever-present danger of a potential nuclear war. It did not name either the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China. It did not name Libya or, for that matter, any nation in the Mideast.

What it did name as a potential threat to the well-being of the United States was one of our best allies and neighbors: Mexico.

Surprised? Who would not be? Mexico and Canada are just about the last countries to enter one's mind when considering what nations constitute a threat to the United States.

The possible threat from Mexico would not be military, but rather a threat by the average Mexican citizen caused by the abject poverty that permeates the country.

Mexico is a nation of 72 million, and its population is growing so fast that it staggers the imagination. The poverty is something you would associate with a backward country in Africa, not with the world's fourth-largest oil producer.

How poor are the Mexican people? Twenty-five percent of all Mexicans go without meat. Fifty percent cannot afford milk. In Mexico City, a metropolis of 17 million, (making it the world's most populous city), half the city's work force is unemployed. Of those who work, half make less than \$50 a month. The air pollution is so horrendous that on many days visibility is reduced to less than two city blocks.

Even with all that going against it, Mexico City grows in population by 1,000 a day. The rural poor are so desperate for work that they will go anywhere to find it. Even Mexico City.

What alarms many is that the gap between the rich and poor is so wide

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Mexico's unresolved problems

and so intense that it may lead to a revolution between the two social classes.

The potential threat to the United States that the CIA referred to manifests itself in a number of ways.

The obvious threat is a mass migration of tired and hungry Mexicans to the United States in search of employment and escape from the harsh reality of poverty.

It is somewhat of a *Catch-22* situation for the United States. As we crack down on illegal migration from Mexico, we fan the very fires we seek to extinguish.

While illegal migration is a vent for the steam building inside the Mexican borders, it remains a solution unacceptable to the government of the United States, for the obvious reasons.

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A possibly greater threat to the United States lies in the axiom: "As goes Mexico, so goes Central America." We need a strong Mexican government to counteract the chaos in Central America.

The United States hopes that Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado can use the country's vast oil supplies to offset an economy that is dropping out of sight.

The government of Mexico needs help. It needs help from its friend and neighbor, the United States. The more we assist Mexico in stabilizing its economy, the more we help ourselves.

One thing, though, is certain. Mexico is in trouble. Well-known Mexican writer Irma Salinas Rocha asks: "The poor are much poorer now than they were during the revolution of 1910. Is this progress?"

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