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Torn cloaks

Washington's cloak and dagger brigade were keeping their daggers sheathed last week following President Carter's extensive revamp of the US intelligence network. But there was precious little enthusiasm in the spying world for the reforms, and the knives may yet come out with a vengeance once the dust has settled and the matter falls from the public gaze.

Carter's new measures put the nation's intelligence activities under the umbrella of the National Intelligence Tasking Centre, to be controlled by Admiral Stansfield Turner, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). According to the White House, the reorganisation is designed to "provide for strong direction by the president and the National Security Council, and to centralise the most critical national intelligence management functions under the director of central intelligence". Guidance and policy will still come from the National Security Council, which, under Henry Kissinger's control, tended to rubber stamp CIA activities.

The new scheme substantially increases the power of Turner, an old naval academy classmate of the president, who became CIA director only six months ago. He has not proved popular in all sections of the intelligence community, and his period of office has seen bitter feuding between the CIA and the other two organisations under Pentagon control, the Defence Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

Turner's unpopularity with his own CIA subordinates is thought to have led to a number of leaks about CIA experiments in mind control. These experiments, which were the subject of reports appearing in *The New York Times*, subsequently figured in the evidence given by Turner to a Senate committee. The agency's interest in mind manipulation began as far back as 1949, and grew out of a concern that the Soviet Union and China had developed the ability to control men's minds through drugs or "brainwashing". At first the CIA experiments formed a purely defensive programme designed to counter this presumed threat—later found to be highly exaggerated—but by the mid 1950s the experiments had taken on offensive aims.

The CIA appears to have ignored medical ethics, and through the years its behavioural control programme became increasingly bizarre, including work on substances to produce "controlled" headaches and amnesia—the latter so that interrogated agents would not remember that they had revealed anything. There was also the case of food additive which could produce feelings of confusion and anxiety.

Neurosurgery and electric shock treatment were investigated as a means of "programming" enemy agents and CIA men to carry out any mission, and tests were done

with "knockout" drugs on unwitting terminal cancer victims. In one case a leading bio-psychiatrist was approached about a plan to explore the brain's pain system. The researcher, who rejected the CIA overtures, was engaged at the time in private research on the implantation of "depth electrodes" in the brain.

In his Senate testimony Turner—who said that no such work was continuing today—revealed that a total of 149 experiments had taken place over a period of 13 years at 44 colleges or universities, 15 research foundations or drug companies, 12 hospitals or clinics and three prisons.

The goings-on at the CIA are not Carter's only concern in the security field. At the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) the search is still on for a successor to the legendary J. Edgar Hoover. Under his rule the FBI gained international fame but, since his death in 1972, Hoover's reputation has been coming apart at the seams as new revelations have been made about illegal break-ins and wiretapping. A series of replacements have been unable to restore the bureau's high standing, and morale has slumped. Carter appointed a blue-ribbon panel to present him with a list of possible directors, but no sooner were the five names made public than the weaknesses of each, from inexperience to the taking of free corporate trips, were cited, and Carter again enlarged his search. Judging by past attempts, the figure he seeks—combining saintliness and strength—will be hard to find. ■