

ARTICLE APPEARED
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15 February 1980Letters to the editor

'A real shocker'

Your political editor, Jack W. Germond, notes "a sharp break with traditional political practice" arising out of President Carter's use of Director of Central Intelligence Stansfield Turner and Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher as "props" in television ads run in support of the president's re-election campaign in New England (*The Star*, Feb. 6).

While Mr. Germond states that neither Christopher nor Turner made any partisan statements in this television commercial — which was intended to convey difficult presidential decisions in foreign affairs — he then goes on to state that "the unwritten rule in politics has been that both the State Department and the CIA . . . are kept entirely free of involvement in partisan politics."

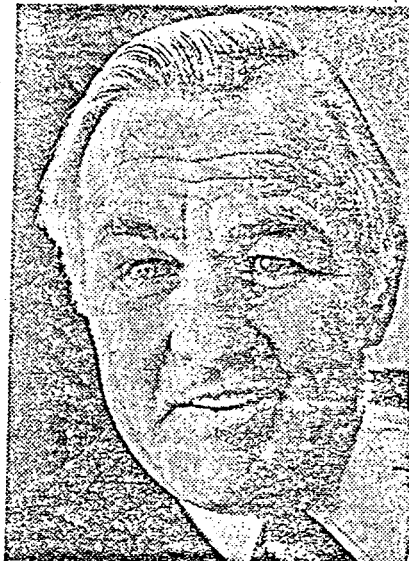
To us, as former officials of the CIA, this report of the use of the CIA's director as a prop in a television political commercial is a real shocker — what your editorial on Feb. 9 rightly calls "distinctly out of bounds."

Such use of the director has never occurred before. The CIA, since its establishment in 1947, has made every attempt to keep out of partisan political campaigns, other than to brief the presidential nominees on world affairs at the direction of the incumbent president, whether a Republican or a Democrat.

Now, for the CIA to find its director in political television commercials must be a harrowing experience for all those who are laboring in the intelligence vineyards at Langley, thinking of themselves, as your editorial suggests, as "servants of the republic rather than members of a supporting cast for political advertising."

Let us take this matter one step further: Commencing with the election of 1948 (the first presidential election after the establishment of the CIA), it has been CIA practice that the director not submit his resignation following either the re-election of the president or a change of administration.

Some of us were involved in advising CIA directors on this matter over the years, and we emphasized the



STANSFIELD TURNER
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concept that the director, although he serves at the pleasure of the president, does not occupy a political position, and therefore it would be inappropriate for him to submit such a resignation as is traditionally done by members of the cabinet and other senior political appointees.

Thus, there was an established tradition that the position of director of central intelligence is non-political and should not be involved in any way in partisan politics. Now to find that the present director has been a part of a partisan campaign by his inclusion, with or without his knowledge, in a political television commercial is to us absolutely abhorrent.

It is demeaning to the American people, who have every reason to expect that the CIA's director is not enmeshed in partisan political activity. It is fervently to be hoped that this incredible occurrence will not be repeated.

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