

Admiral Turner's Address at Ohio State University

Columbus, Ohio - 13 April 1978

After I introduced the Peloponnesian Wars at the War College curriculum, one of the wives came up to me one day and said, Admiral why are you making my husband study those mexipolynesian wars? It is really stimulating to be back on a university campus, I'm grateful that you would have me here tonight.

As an intelligence officer, it makes me recall the long, warm, and normal relationship between the intelligence community of our country and the academic community. One has to recognize in recent years there has been some fraying of that relationship due to the public criticism of past intelligence activities. We've come to the point where I think we need to mend that relationship and I'm trying to do all I can to build it back to its proper and warm position.

It's very important to us in the intelligence community that we have good relations with academia. So much of what we do is not the over-played spy drama, but the plain old research and analysis, pulling together the pieces of the puzzle which you have gained by going out and collecting intelligence and information. In our business, just as in research on the campus you always need to be stimulated from the outside. You need to have somebody who comes and questions your assumptions and asks you why did you put this in and how did you logically get to that conclusion. So, we need very much the stimulus and contacts with the academic community.

I hope also, it's a two-way street. I hope that when academics are in contact with our analysts they too gain something, some insights

over the actual operations of the governmental process in our country and others, and contact with the world of current events, current developments as we see it from the governmental perspective. In addition, we very much need good relations with academic campuses because the life blood of the intelligence organizations of our country is the annual infusion of a few good, high-quality people from our campuses. We don't need too many, we need some of the best. I hope that in time, some of you will give consideration to joining one or another of our intelligence organizations. I would assure you that there is no more intellectually demanding profession in our country today than intelligence. It really is an exciting area of work. If you ever give consideration to it, I'm sure you will ask yourselves some of the questions that I did a year and a quarter ago when I was thrust into this profession. I asked, what do we do to ensure that we are collecting and analyzing intelligence that is going to be of value to our policy makers not right now, but two, five, or ten years from now rather than doing what was appropriate five or ten years ago. And I ask myself, how do we go about using intelligence today while respecting traditional American values and the rights of our citizens under the Constitution. I am happy to say that in the year and a quarter of looking on these questions and exploring them, I'm convinced that we are in the midst of an important transformation that has been going on for a year or two in our intelligence activities in this country; the transformation that is bringing about a new model, a uniquely American model of intelligence. This is reflected in four trends or changes in intelligence activities that I would like to describe to you this evening.

The first is a change in our product. Now when we first established a central intelligence activity back in 1947, the primary product, the thing we were concentrating most of our attention on was military information about the Soviet Union and perhaps about its satellite countries. With this kind of an audience, I do not need to emphasize how much our nation's interests and concerns have extended from that set of horizons 30 years ago. Today, our country has important relationships with most of the 150 countries in the world. Those relationships today are much more political and economic than they are military. As a result, we have had to re-orient much of our analysis and collection effort in the intelligence community, we've had to get new academic skills, we've had to broaden our horizons. It has been exciting, it has taken us into areas as diverse as anti-terrorism, anti-drug trafficking, world economic and energy prospects and international politics and all its facets. Now, don't let me overstate this to you. The number one priority in American intelligence remains, today, the military position of the Soviet Union--and it must. But we have simply had to expand from that and enter into these new areas in addition, which present great intellectual challenges to us.

The second new trend in intelligence today is the change in our production line. What I mean by this is that historically, the main element of the production line of intelligence has always been the human agent, the spy. Remember way back when Joshua sent two spies into Jericho before he captured it with his trumpets. Well, that has been the primary element of the intelligence production line, so to speak over many, many years. In the last decade and a half, however, we have had almost a revolution in intelligence collection. We now have sophisticated, technical collection systems that bring in vast quantities

of data. I'm sure it poses a problem for us that is very analogous to the problem researchers have in the academic world. Here too, you face a proliferation of data of information that is available to you and the challenge of how you go about digesting it, sorting it, storing it, deciding which pieces really fit into the puzzle. We have that same challenge in front of us today. Interestingly, the advent of the new technical systems and the proliferation of information they provide has led to a greater accent on the traditional production line, the human agent. Why? Because generally and broadly speaking what the technical systems tell you is such-and-such happened yesterday or today in some foreign country. When you give that information to a policy maker he looks at you and says, why? Why did that happen and what is going to happen tomorrow? Now the forte of the human intelligence operator is always to find out what people are thinking, doing, planning, and what their intentions are. So today, our production line has changed, but it has changed because we now have several pieces of machinery and we must bring them together in a well-oiled, well mannered system. This presents new challenges to us because we must manage better. We must be sure that this system, the technical system, fills a gap that that the information provides us. We try this technical system supplementing a given system and work it back and forth until we meet both our economic needs for the resources and efficiency in getting the very maximum out of it. It is a very demanding and stimulating challenge.

Now the third new trend is one that has a direct bearing on anyone in the academic arena. It is a policy of greater openness. Traditionally intelligence has always been performed under maximum secrecy and minimum disclosure. Today in my view, that can no longer be our policy. Today, the American public wants to know more about our

intelligence activities and, I believe, has a right to share more in what we are doing and what the results are. As a result, we are out speaking more, we are participating more in academic symposiums, we are answering the media questions more completely, and we are publishing more. What we do today is conduct a national intelligence estimate, an evaluation of some situation in the world. When we finish it has a label on the cover -- secret, top secret, or destroy before reading; we then ask ourselves what do we need take out of this that would give away the sources of information in it, because if we give that away those sources won't be much good very long--what do we need to take out of it because it is information which, if held uniquely by our policy makers, would be of great advantage to them. When we take those two types of information out, if there is enough left to be of substantive value to the American public to help improve the quality of American debate on important issues, we publish it in unclassified form. There were over two publications a week, all of last year. Topics like the world energy outlook, prospects for the Soviet economy, prospects of international terrorism, the oil situation in China, the world steel outlook and many, many others. Some of these I think are of great value to you on college campuses, university campuses, and I hope they are of value to the general American public.

Again, let me not overstate this case. We must, we must maintain a great deal of secrecy in the intelligence organizations of our country. There are things that we simply cannot do if they are not done in secrecy. But I believe that by espousing the policy greater openness we can better protect the classified information which must remain classified. You understand that when you have too much that is classified, nobody respects the classification labels. So, by narrowing the amount

of classified information, I hope to engender greater respect for that which must remain classified. I believe sincerely that we have come to a crossroad in this country where we must understand the importance and the necessity for some secrecy, even in our very open society. Because of the lack of respect for classified information, we have too many people today who believe they can take it upon themselves to release to the public information which the government believes should be held classified. I think this has great dangers in it. I must fully acknowledge that there have been instances when people have released information that was being improperly withheld and it has benefited our country. But if you carry that to its logical extreme, it means that every one of the 215 million of us would have the right to determine what the government may keep classified and what it should not. I think the time has about come when we must begin to place a modicum of trust again in our elected and our appointed public officials and not just assume that they will uphold things in order to protect themselves or cover up errors they have made. Now at the same time, I'm not just asking you to take us on our word, because the fourth trend in intelligence today is greater oversight.

Out of this crucible of three years of intense public criticism, we have forged an oversight procedure, or a set of oversight procedures which, I believe, gives the public good assurance we are not either doing things that we should be doing or withholding information that we should not withhold. Bear in mind that I have just decided the importance of retaining secrecy--clearly we cannot have full public oversight of all our activities; we cannot let the public into everything that we do. So what we have established instead is a process I have labeled surrogate public oversight. Now the first surrogate for the public is the President

of the United States and the Vice President. Today they regularly keep close track of what is going on in intelligence. They hear from me weekly and they give me explicit guidance. The second surrogate, which was established two years ago, is in the form of an Intelligence Oversight Board: three distinguished impartial gentlemen, a former senator, a former governor and a prominent lawyer. They report only to the President of the United States and their sole function is to check on the legality, and the propriety of the activities of the intelligence community. If they find things are wrong, you write to them, one of my employees writes to them; it doesn't go through me, I don't know about it; they investigate it and report to the President on whether they think something should be done. We also have oversight mechanisms in the Congress. In both the Senate and the House of Representatives there is a committee for oversight. These committees in turn, interrogate me, check on what we are doing, ask very probing questions and are kept quite well informed by us of what our intelligence activities are.

Let me point out now that I have described oversight procedures in the Congress in the Legislative Branch, several oversight procedures in the Executive Branch; it would take a log of collusion from a lot of people to prevent these mechanisms from working in some way to protect the rights of our citizens. Today, if someone wants to whistle-blow because they think I'm withholding things to protect myself, I would only suggest that if they would blow the whistle to these established oversight procedures first, and see if they did not get satisfaction that would both protect the interests of the country and meet their needs. They always have the recourse of blowing it to the public if they want, if the procedures do not work. I have yet to find a so-called whistle-blower who took advantage of these procedures. Now, let me point out

at the same time that there are still risks in all of this. We have established this oversight, but out of it, because more people have to be involved in the process - have to understand these new procedures, comes the risk of leaks. The more people who know something, the more likely it is to leak out. Secondly, out of this necessity for informing more people may come from us inside the organization a sense of timidity, an unwillingness to take risky actions that are in the best interests of our country. So we must be careful as we proceed that we don't have so much oversight that we have too many leaks or intelligence by timidity. We are not there yet, but I believe we are working out the right balance between oversight and these risks, but it's going to take several years to establish if that's the case. We are on the track, however.

Last January, President Carter, recognizing these four and other trends in our intelligence activities, recognizing the emerging new model of intelligence, directed a reorganization of our intelligence community to make it conform to this, to make it more efficient. He gave to the Director of Central Intelligence, which is my job, to coordinate all of the intelligence activities of our country as opposed to my job of running the Central Intelligence Agency--I have two separate jobs. He gave to the Director of Central Intelligence authority over all the budgets of the national intelligence effort; authority to task or to tell all the collection agencies of the government what intelligence to collect; and the authority to coordinate the analytic agencies of the intelligence community. Let me say one word of caution on this latter point. While I can require these intelligence agencies to help analyze a national problem, I cannot direct them how to do their analysis or what conclusions to come to; because we want very much to have separate

centers of independent analysis, competing analysis, so that different views come forward--competing ideas and divergent opinions. Finally, the President set over the whole structure a committee of the National Security Council which is to give all of us our direction, our sense of priority, because I do not establish the priority for collecting and analyzing intelligence, I'm not a consumer. On this committee are the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council Advisor to the President and other key policy makers who now get together regularly and say, Turner you are off the track here, we don't need that, we need more of this over here. That's very helpful to us, if it involves enough policy makers in this process. I'm confident that out of these new trends, out of this new set of orders from the President we are building a stronger and stronger intelligence capability and that we are today the best intelligence organization in the world. I am confident that at the same time we are building the necessary level of oversight procedures to ensure that we are doing our work in accordance with what the American people want and the protection of their rights and interests. I can assure all of you here tonight that I am dedicated to keeping us number one in the world in intelligence, but in doing so in a way that will only strengthen our wonderful democratic institutions in this country.

Thank you for having me with you.

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Q: Inaudible.

A: The question is, does the President understand the serious military threat that we are faced with as a result of the buildup of Soviet forces of various types and what is he going to do about it? Well, my job is to ensure that the President is aware of that threat; aware of the facts of the case and what is being done. It's up to him to evaluate what risk this is to our country, of course, because he has the overall picture. I can assure you that he is very well informed of what the Soviet military position is. This President, in particular, has a fantastic grasp of facts, a fantastic memory. Sometimes he'll get the facts one week, and two weeks later I hear them recited back verbatim, because he really is very interested in all these matters. I believe that he is well aware of the threat, I believe he appreciates the dangers that are inherent in it and that he is maintaining and will maintain an adequate combination of military and diplomatic positions to counter it. Those are all opinions at the end, but the real answer to your question is yes, I do believe we are keeping him well posted on it and recently, just the day before yesterday, I met with him and discussed one of the facets of this situation you have described in some detail. I meet with him weekly to do this kind of thing--not always on military issues, but when the occasion demands, it is.

Q: I don't have a lot of high-paid public relations people and I may not come across quite so slick. But I would like to talk to you and ask you a question about the CIA's continuing role in destabilization of countries which are not "commiserate with the United States." Specifically, it came out the CIA was working with ITT and Chile. What are you doing now, what are you doing to make up, what have you done in Guatemala? How can you stand there with the bloody history of all this pressure on your hands and tell us this. How can you sit there and laugh?

A: A perfectly reasonable question. Can you all hear in the back? This young lady wants to know how I can stand here with the history of CIA(interruption)....CIA has been disturbing to the stability in a number of countries....(interruption)....try my best to answer this. What the young lady is talking about is the thing that has caused us the greatest adverse publicity, the greatest problem. This is not intelligence, it's political action. Political action is trying not only to find out what goes on in another country, but to influence those events. Really, what happens....(interruption).... If you bear with me, I'll get to that and I'll answer any question you want, and when I come to the end you can re-interrogate me, all right? May I continue? I told you that we were concentrating on Soviet military intelligence. Now what happened was that the Soviets used their military force outside the Soviet Union. What they did was they tried to subvert and intimidate. As they did that, the United States started to respond and part of that response, back in the 1950s and 60s, was to direct political influence activities abroad, attempting to counter....(interruption).... It happens they decided upon the Central Intelligence Agency. Over many years, the Central Intelligence Agency conducted these activities, some of which have been properly

described here tonight, some of which have been improperly described in recent years. We have now established a series of controls on the political action element of the Central Intelligence Agency. Specifically, if we are to do any influencing of events, as opposed to collecting intelligence, I must be given an order, signed by the President of the United States after he has been advised by the National Security Council. I must then advise appropriate committees of the Congress of the United States. If I undertake, as Director of CIA, political action to destabilize any country today, I am against the law if I have not gone through these procedures that have the President's approval and notified Congress. Ladies and gentlemen, I assure you I am no more anxious to go to jail than are any of you. I am a law-abiding citizen and we are not conducting any political action today that has not been duly authorized by these procedures. We are not conducting any extensive political action with any of them. You could go back to the Bay of Pigs, you could go back to Chile, and you can go back to Guatemala. I'm neither here to defend nor to wear a hair-shirt with respect to those previous activities. In many cases you are judging from today's standards and today's morality, events of many years ago. Nobody raised much of a voice in this country when the Bay of Pigs was executed, except the fact that it was done poorly. But in retrospect of 15 years we are willing to condemn it. We wouldn't do that kind of thing today. But, I'm here not to atone for the sins of the past or apologize, I'm here to tell you what we're doing to support you and this country today and how we are going to do it in the future....(interruption).... I'm not giving you my version that we are not doing illegal things, I'm telling you that if we are doing something illegal the chances are so high that one of my own employees would report this to one of the oversight panels that we could not get away with it, and I'm not going to object.

Q: What power do these boards have? They say, OK, you're doing it wrong, you've done something illegal, I'll tell the President and then he will slap you on the wrist. Can they put you in jail? Who's going to go to jail, who decides who's going to go to jail, who decides when they are going to go to jail?

A: What did the Attorney General announce on Monday this week? He announced the prosecution of the people in the FBI whom he thinks have broken the law. The President has no option, he has to turn it over to the Attorney General to prosecute or he is going to be subject to the law. Ladies and gentlemen, these are matters of jail or not jail. These are not matters of games that we are playing....(interruption).... You have stretched things very much here, by not taking my admitting that the CIA did some things that were ill advised, that were improper, that were against the laws of this country. You have not established the facts that the laws of this country were broken by these people.

Q: Would it be correct to say then that there are intelligence gathering undertakings that are not now being undertaken due to questionable people around, although they would have a direct bearing on national security? In other words is there a danger that it is going to go too far the other way?

A: Of course there is a danger that it could go too far the other way, and I mentioned that we could have intelligence by timidity. I don't think we are in that position today, but admittedly, if you think things are going to be loose, you're not going to do them. We have found the Congress to be very trustworthy and I think we can continue with what is necessary for our country, but it will take, in my opinion, several years for us to have that assurance.

Q: Inaudible.

A: Do I fear losing a competitiveness with the Soviets because sometimes they have been ahead of us and because I have reduced the size of the Central Intelligence Agency by 820 people. The answer is no. I made the reduction because I sincerely believe the Central Intelligence Agency would be more efficient and capable without them. The people were removed from the Headquarters overhead and not from the operating elements out in the field. So, what we have is less supervision, less direction, less overhead. That's what we've done. It has been long recognized as necessary. It has also been done to provide greater incentives to people like yourselves to come in and join us, because we now have....(interruption)....

Q: Inaudible.

A: Will I comment on the story on an alleged 1965 implantation of a nuclear device in the Himalayan mountains by CIA. One of the most trying things about being in the intelligence profession, is your inability to defend yourself in many instances against false accusations. If, when you didn't do something, you say that you didn't do it, and then you're asked if you did something that you did do and which must be kept secret and you can't deny it, you obviously identify the one that you did. In this case I have to follow the standard procedure, which is, we do not comment on actual or alleged past or present intelligence actions.

Q: Inaudible.

A: KGB activities in the United States today. Those activities are expanding. They are taking advantage of the increased opportunities which they have today to come visit our country in trade delegations, as tourists and all sorts of other activities. They have mounted for many years a tremendous human intelligence effort in terms of the quantity and expense that they will go to. It is a serious problem for us and one to which we must be continually alert.

Q: Could you give us an idea of what this administration's bottom line global policy is and in particular in Africa?

A: What is our bottom line global policy, particularly in Africa? I have to make a point here, that one of the most difficult things for intelligence is that we in the intelligence profession stay clear of policy making. Why? Because if you ever believe that I happen to support an activist policy, let's call it, in Africa or a non-activist policy or a hard line on strategic negotiations or a soft line, then you will be concerned that I am subverting intelligence to that purpose. The one thing we must have, the reason we established the Central Intelligence Agency, is that is the

only intelligence element in the government not supportive of policy makers. I'm not a policy maker, so I simply provide intelligence support. I cannot comment on policy like that without contravening my profession.

Q: Inaudible.

A: My current views on human intelligence collection? I thought I outlined those in my talk by saying that the human intelligence collection element has become increasingly important with the advent of the new technical systems because they do not tell you people's intentions and that's what human intelligence does for you. I have no intention of reducing our human intelligence capability and do not believe I have. In fact, I believe I've strengthened it.

Q: Inaudible.

A: What was my charter when the President called me and asked me to take this job; what did he expect out of me; what was he looking for; what direction and instructions did he give me? I can't honestly tell you why he picked me. I had known him at the Naval Academy and afterwards somewhat because we were classmates there, but not extremely well, but he had known what I had done in the Navy. Presumably, I would think that he wanted someone he had confidence in as far as his integrity was concerned and someone whom he thought was a good manager, because it's a big operation. His charter to me was, "take charge Stan, of the community, and not just the CIA - I want to bring this community together." Before I even got there he had put out the directive I described to you of last January, reorganizing the community and strengthening my hand somewhat. Those are the things he told me to do. He did not tell me to cut these people. The newspapers reported the Vice President told me, or a fellow named David Aaron told me, and I can only tell you that's nonsense. When I was ready to do it, I informed the President and the Vice President at the same time and said this is my intention - to give them the opportunity to tell me no. They did not, and I started off and did what I thought was best.

Q: Who do you think is going to succeed Brezhnev after he leaves? How will his successor's military policy change?

A: I believe we feel that one of the prospects to succeed Brezhnev is Yerlenko or somebody like this who will immediately succeed; or possibly, in some kind of a corporate group like a triumvirate as when Stalin died, you remember. Over a period of time this will sort itself out until some younger man comes along and becomes the Brezhnev of the future. The people at the top right now, Brezhnev's top assistants, are all about the same age bracket. I think it is going to have to go through a transition period. We have predicted in one of the studies I mentioned to you, a forecast of the Soviet economy. They're in for some serious economic problems in the next five or six years. The demographic situation is such that they have a lesser increase in their work force; their capitol inputs to their economy are becoming much more expensive and particularly their oil which we think will peak in three or four more years and drop off. So we believe in three or four years they are going to have to face some

difficult economic choices if they are going to keep their economy moving and modernizing. They won't be able to earn the foreign exchange that they need, they won't be able to find the manpower unless they reduce the military. That may be just the time they face the problem you've raised. It may be very difficult for a transitional leadership during this period to take the difficult economic decisions that have to be made. These could have very important impacts around the world. For instance, one way to overcome their energy problem is to sell less oil to the Eastern European satellites. That may leave them hanging out.

Q: Can you predict when the Soviet Union will put a man on the moon?

A: We don't see any inclination of the Soviets to put a man on the moon.(remainder of answer inaudible due to background noise)....

Q: Inaudible.

A: I think you have to say yes. I think you have to say that human rights has become an important intelligence topic today. It is easily recorded by the developments we see around the world in human rights-- responses to the President's initiatives--what countries are either being repressive or what progress has been made.

Q: Inaudible.

A: The Freedom of Information Act is a good Act, but it's being abused.(interruption).... There are also deletions where we can, when we believe national security interests would be harmed if there were these releases of information. You could take us to court and prove that that really shouldn't have been withheld. There have been 32 cases and we have been sustained in every one of them. We are not divulging information that really doesn't matter. It does hurt the intelligence activities of our country to have to fulfill or answer these requests, because many other people feel that they don't want to participate with us any longer if they are likely to have their names disclosed of their activities disclosed through this Freedom of Information process. It is worthwhile for our country, but it is being abused.

Q: Inaudible.

A: You've asked me a whole series of policy questions which I really can't tackle.