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SUBJECT ^{L1} An Interview with Director Stansfield Turner

GEORGE HERMAN: Admiral Turner, the SALT talks on strategic arms limitation are reaching a crucial point. At the same time, we're approaching a trial of a former CIA official, or agent, or whatever you want to call him, employee in any case, who is reputed to have sold to the Soviet Union a manual on one of our major satellites which detects the movement of Soviet arms and ammunition. Is this likely to threaten the progress of the SALT talks now approaching their conclusion?

CIA DIRECTOR STANSFIELD TURNER: Any loss of important intelligence information is a serious problem for our country. But at the same time, the talks are in such a delicate stage today, with Secretary Vance this very day in Moscow, I think it would be inappropriate for me to talk about specific details which could be misinterpreted there, because none of us would want us, on this show, in any way to prejudice those talks.

Let me say to you, however, that we in the intelligence community are very much a part of developing the United States' SALT position. In short, we are asked regularly "If we propose this or we accept that, would you, the intelligence community, be able to verify it?" And we give very forthright and complete answers to our negotiators on that.

So I believe that our verification interests are taken into account most fully by the people doing the actual negotiations.

* * *

HERMAN: Admiral Turner, I'm not exactly sure that I understood all of your first answer about the question of giving the -- selling the Soviet Union details on an American spy

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satellite and how it will affect the SALT talks. But let me ask you in this form. Are you sanguine about the outcome of the SALT talks, that we will get a treaty in a reasonable time now?

DIRECTOR TURNER: I think there's a very good prospect of that. But one can't ever be confident in something as delicate as this, because both nations' vital interests are at stake.

NORMAN KEMPSTER: If we could look a little bit more at the question of selling the satellite, there's an indictment against a man who had been with the CIA for only about eight months. He had a relatively low level job.

How is it possible that someone whose loyalty and judgment have not been fully tested can come in contact with major secrets of this sort?

DIRECTOR TURNER: The stock in trade of the Central Intelligence Agency is highly classified information. On each of our desks, almost all the papers that pass by daily must be very highly classified. Yet I would certainly say to you that after an accusation such as has been made that somebody carried off a sensitive document, we have checked and reviewed and tightened our security procedures. At the same time, because we have so much classified information, we can tie ourselves in knots and not be able to get our work done if we over-control.

So we always are drawing a fine line between how much control we can practically exercise and how much we absolutely must in order to insure security.

FRED GRAHAM: Admiral, can I ask you about clasfified information on another level? And that has to do with the upcoming trial of former Acting FBI Director Pat Gray and two others. It's been in the press in the last week that the CIA and the other intelligence agencies have raised a problem of so-called third agency rule, information that was obtained, as I understand it, mostly from overseas. And now the judge has ordered that to be released to the defense and that the trial may have to be aborted because of that.

Is there any danger that the trial of Pat Gray will have to be aborted for that reason?

DIRECTOR TURNER: The CIA is not withholding information here. The stories in the press to this end are totally incorrect.

At the same time, let me assure you that I bear a responsibility anytime it is necessary to release classified information in the courts to advise the Attorney General, and perhaps the President, of what damage might occur to the national security interests if that information were released. You know, I am required by the law

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of our country to protect sensitive intelligence information. And therefore, I would not be doing my job if I didn't make the dangers to the country known about the release of classified information.

GRAHAM: But specifically here, isn't it true that the judge has ordered the release to the defense of certain documents and that you have said there was an agreement with foreign nations not to release?

DIRECTOR TURNER: We're not withholding anything from the FBI at this time.

HERMAN: Let me take you back for just a moment. I don't know whether you finished with that subject. But I was not finished with the trial of Mr. ~~Kampelles~~^{Kampelles} (?), or however he pronounces his name, on the sale, if there was a sale, of the manual on the spy satellite to the Soviet Union. Mr. ~~Kampelles~~^{Kampelles}, as best I recall, was a GS-7, which is a very low rank in the government. That's sort of the equivalent of a clerk, although he was a watch officer. My interpretation of your answer to the question was that this is something that happens, and you have to walk a tight rope between being too careful and not careful enough.

Are you saying that the CIA did nothing wrong in this case where Mr. ~~Kampelles~~ was able to get his hand on this highly classified -- not just classified, but, as I understand it, highly classified manual?

DIRECTOR TURNER: I'm saying that we have reviewed our security procedures and we have found some areas where we have since tightened up. One always finds something like this, I'm afraid. But I feel that the basic security procedures were satisfactory.

HERMAN: Were satisfactory at the time that he stole this?

DIRECTOR TURNER: Yes. I mean, I believe that his duties made it quite reasonable for him to have access to this document at that time.

KEMPSTER: How long was the manual missing before you discovered it was gone?

DIRECTOR TURNER: I'm unable to respond to a question like that, as I'm sure you well appreciate. The case of Mr. ~~Kampelles~~^{Kampelles} is coming up for trial in the courts on the 31st of this month. And for me to discuss details which are appropriate to that trial here would possibly prejudice the case in the courts.

KEMPSTER: Well, I think it not only goes to the case. It also goes to the security procedures of the CIA which we're talking about. Is it possible that such a manual could be missing for some time without you knowing about it?

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DIRECTOR TURNER: Yes, it is possible for some time. There are certain prescribed procedures for when documents have to be inventoried. And this document was within those procedures.

GRAHAM: There's been some speculation recently that there might be a hidden foreign agent within our intelligence community and that the CIA has made some efforts to determine if that's true.

Is there a hidden agent there and are you trying to find out if that's true?

DIRECTOR TURNER: I have no knowledge or indication that there is a mole, a secret agent inside the Central Intelligence Agency. But for me to sit here and tell you that I was utterly confident that there was none would be foolish. I must be constantly on guard to check and to find out and to question whether there is some penetration of our important agency. We know of none at this time. But we're constantly looking; we're constantly being vigilant. That's the only way to prevent it.

GRAHAM: Well, can I ask you about this? There as a published story lately that in the course of that, you passed out some misinformation among very high levels within our intelligence community and later detected that it popped in a hostile country.

DIRECTOR TURNER: That story is one of the best cases of misinformation I know of. That's totally false.

HERMAN: In the course of Mr. Kampelles' trial -- this is sort of a legal question, I think, rather than a CIA question, and perhaps you can address it.

DIRECTOR TURNER: You're making it difficult, but go ahead.

HERMAN: Well, my question is really sort of basic to this kind of case. If he's hideously guilty, how can the prosecution prove it without submitting some of the secret documents that are presumably under CIA control? If he's blissfully innocent, how can he prove it without access to some of the documents under your control? Aren't we sort of in a bind here in this kind of case?

DIRECTOR TURNER: Absolutely. This is a problem we've discussed already as to making a judgment in each court case as to what classified information can be released. When does the interest of prosecution of a possible offender of our laws warrant releasing material that may damage our national interests? And in each case that judgment has to be made separately. And it is not my judgment to be made; it's the Attorney General, or possibly the President.

HERMAN: Has the court or any officer of the court in

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this case called you or the CIA, or asked for in the discovery procedure, or anywhere else, any of the documents involved?

DIRECTOR TURNER: You're leading me back exactly to where I said I could not go....

HERMAN: Excuse me.

DIRECTOR TURNER: ...in discussing a particular case before the courts.

KEMPSTER: Do you have any suggestions for the way that the government can deal with cases of people who are accused of real crimes and who seek documents that you can declassify, and therefore get the cases dismissed?

DIRECTOR TURNER: No, I don't see any real relief to that. I really don't. I think that's part of our judicial process in this country. And in each case we have to weigh the values and the risks. And we're doing that regularly. And I think it generally comes out very well.

HERMAN: Let met get you out of the courts here.

DIRECTOR TURNER: Fine.

[Laughter.]

HERMAN: There's a good deal of news coming into this country from Iran, which is one of our major oil suppliers. A good deal of trouble has been happening, and a good deal of conflict. The question, I suppose the first question to ask is whether the CIA detects any Soviet influence behind these, any Soviet movement to move in and take advantage of these, anything of that sort?

DIRECTOR TURNER: Well, I think the position the Shah of Iran is in today is a very difficult one. He's been trying genuinely to liberalize, to modernize his country over quite a period of time now. In recent months he's met considerable resistance from the conservative, right-wing elements of his own country. As a result, however, the left wing's small nucleus of communists has tried to take advantage of this and to use the disturbances from the right for their own particular advantage. I'm sure there's some Soviet influence behind it, in one degree or another. But I think it's an opportunism taking advantage of a genuine dissent within the country at the direction the Shah is going.

But I'm....

HERMAN: Specifically, do you see any Soviet, new Soviet money, new Soviet agents moving in to expand and use this bridge-head?

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DIRECTOR TURNER: No, I haven't seen that. And I'm pleased that the Shah is continuing with his liberalization efforts. And as you know, the big event will be next June when he's promised -- and he's sticking to his promise of free elections for his Parliament. It's a very important moment for him and for us.

GRAHAM: Admiral Turner, ever since the story came out a couple of weeks ago about the Soviet defector Shevchenko living a life of wine, women and song, partly as a CIA source: have you had an upsurge of offers of defection from the Soviet Union and from other places?

DIRECTOR TURNER: I'm not free to discuss that, Fred. But I do want to make clear that the Central Intelligence Agency in no way, directly, indirectly, provided funds for the purpose of providing female companionship for Ambassador Shevchenko. But I want to recognize that the CIA is the agency of our government responsible for handling defectors, for helping them in the transition to a normal self-supporting life in our country. We've been doing that for the Ambassador, and it's worked out very well. He's a fine man.

KEMPSTER: How does the CIA decide which defector it's going to put on some sort of a subsidy or stipend, particularly in this case when the man apparently had substantial means of his own?

DIRECTOR TURNER: We look at the good old American principle of free enterprise. We reward people for their deeds, not in accordance with their needs, as is the communist slogan. The value to the country of what he's doing with us and for us is our measure of remuneration.

KEMPSTER: Well, can we conclude then that he brought rather substantial information with him when he defected?

DIRECTOR TURNER: You know that he is the highest level defector from the Soviet Union to our country. You know how difficult it is just to understand a country like the Soviet Union where the borders are closed, the communications are controlled. And therefore helping to understand and interpret that type of a difficult society is a very valuable asset to us.

GRAHAM: Sir, you spoke of misinformation a minute ago, and I think there's some more misinformation that has been published that you may help straighten out for us.

It has been published that the FBI has been investigating the death of John Paisley, the former CIA official.

DIRECTOR TURNER: That's totally incorrect. I talked to the Director of the FBI as recently as yesterday on that. And he has assured me for the umpteenth time that they are not involved

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in the Paisley investigation.

GRAHAM: Now does that mean that you are satisfied, the FBI is satisfied that he was a suicide and was not murdered?

DIRECTOR TURNER: I'm standing on the fine statement by the Maryland State Police yesterday that they see no evidence of foul play here. It's their job to investigate this, not ours.

GRAHAM: Sir, briefly taking you back into the area of the courts, at the Justice Department, as I understand it, Attorney General Bell has a new policy, although it hasn't been openly announced, and that is that he will prosecute any foreigner caught, as he calls it, being a spy in this country, if the person is not covered by diplomatic immunity. Now as I understand it, the rules of the game in the intelligence world had always been you usually just kick the people out of the country.

Has Attorney General Bell changed the rules of the game? And is this likely to bring retaliation against some of your agents in other countries?

DIRECTOR TURNER: What you call the rules of the game were the facts of the game previously, because in most cases, people we have caught spying in this country have had diplomatic passports. Those who do not -- and in this case it was just a flagrant violation of the privilege of being in our country as employees of the United Nations that these two Soviets were spying against our country. We had no recourse. They had violated the laws of our country. They don't have special exemption from those laws, as do diplomats, and so they were prosecuted. This is not the first time we have done this. There was a man named Ivanov a number of years ago who was similarly prosecuted, because he, too, did not have diplomatic status.

GRAHAM: He was exchanged. Do you think these two may be exchanged?

DIRECTOR TURNER: That's a policy matter outside of my sphere.

KEMPSTER: Do you think it's possible that the Soviets may attempt to pick up someone, an American, to prosecute in retaliation for this, either one of your people or somebody just picked up off the street?

DIRECTOR TURNER: We certainly hope not. But we certainly believe that their efforts to take action against an American businessman, Mr. Crawford of the International Harvester Company in Moscow some months ago, was a flagrant and direct retaliation for this perfectly legal action that our country took in this instance.

HERMAN: Admiral, I'd like to ask you a little bit about

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the CIA's role in estimating the energy resources of the world. I refer you to the CIA report which President Carter quoted when he was discussing the energy situation, which he found very disturbing. Some of those figures have gyrated rather wildly. The figures, for example, on Saudi Arabian oil capabilities went up and down by several million barrels a day over the course of a couple of months.

Where do you stand now on the world's oil production? And were these figures gyrating so wildly because you lacked good information, or because you were tailoring them to something? What was going on then?

DIRECTOR TURNER: Well, the figures did not really gyrate. We....

HERMAN: Well, I could read you the various numbers that you published.

DIRECTOR TURNER: No. The press misunderstood a lot of that, and it was partly our fault for not making it more clear. What we have done is point out that there are two different ways of estimating what a country will produce. One is, what is their physical capacity to produce? And the second is what will they likely produce, because they have their own interests: how much money do they need; how much oil do they want to consume in this period of time as opposed to holding it for the future. And that was a difference in the predictions in estimating what they would or could produce.

But our basic view today remains that somewhere in the 1980s, somewhere probably in the early 1980s, the world, as a whole, is going to be able to get out of the ground less oil than it will want to have in order to consume on the surface of the ground.

HERMAN: Do you still believe the Soviet Union will be importing massive amounts of oil in the first years of the '80s?

DIRECTOR TURNER: We believe that the Soviets will become net importers, the Soviet bloc as a whole, not just the Soviet Union, but taking into account their Eastern European satellites.

HERMAN: I'm a little puzzled about the numbers once again. I hadn't intended to read them. But I guess it's the only way to get around it.

In the bi-weekly reports on oil supplies, in November, CIA estimated the productive capacity of Saudi fields at 11 1/2 million barrels a day; in December, 10 1/2; in January, 8 1/2; in February, back to 10 1/2. Now that sounds like a little more than misinterpretation between the two ways of improving....

DIRECTOR TURNER: The 8 1/2 figure was actual production.

The others were capacity. The newspaper....

HERMAN: Well, even the capacity figures gyrated fairly well, from 11 1/2 on down.

DIRECTOR TURNER: No, no. Our estimates of their capacity have remained steady. I think you're reading a paper that has misinterpreted the facts. That's all.

GRAHAM: Admiral, on another subject, Harvard University has adopted guidelines which prohibit its professors from undertaking covert activities for the CIA, and which prohibit them from recruiting foreign students on the campus to be agents of the CIA. And as I understand it, you have said that despite that, the CIA is going to continue to try and operate that way on the Harvard campus.

DIRECTOR TURNER: Well, I'm certainly not bound by the regulations of every college in this country. But I would like to say this. I think it's very dangerous for our country when a particular segment of our society, in this case the intelligence community, is singled out for discriminatory action. If Harvard or any other university wants to pass rules like that which apply across the board to recruiting on their campus by American industry, by foreign governments or....

GRAHAM: Surely it's not the same, is it, CIA covert operations on their campus and corporations recruiting on the campus? Surely there's a difference.

DIRECTOR TURNER: You think that corporations recruit openly? We recruit as openly on campus as do private corporations.

GRAHAM: But they're talking about covert recruitment of students by....

HERMAN: And faculty.

GRAHAM: Yes.

HERMAN: And recruitment of faculty by the CIA.

GRAHAM: Don't you think you should abide by Harvard's rules?

DIRECTOR TURNER: If I were required to abide by the rules of every corporation, every academic institution in this country, it would become impossible to do the required job for our country.

HERMAN: So the answer is no.

DIRECTOR TURNER: The answer is no, absolutely no.

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GRAHAM: You're insisting on the right to subvert their rules?

DIRECTOR TURNER: I'm not subverting their rules. I am carrying out the legal responsibilities of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Harvard does not have a legal authority over us.

KEMPSTER: Admiral Turner, in years past, the Central Intelligence Agency has carried out activities to subvert the rules and the governments of foreign countries. Is the agency still doing this? And is the agency able to do this under the intelligence reforms that have been passed in the last couple of years?

DIRECTOR TURNER: There are very strict rules for what you are talking about, which we call covert political action; not collecting intelligence, but attempting to influence events abroad. And they are definitely controlled by a process established by the laws of this country. And we must get the approval of the President of the United States, and we must notify the committees of Congress if there's any such covert political action going on.

And I'd like to say that that's part of a really important development in the intelligence of our country today, and that's good oversight by the Congress. And in the last year and a half, thanks to the cooperation of the committees of Congress in this regard, the oversight mechanisms, the check for the public on what we are doing in intelligence, have become very strong, very valid, very helpful to us in the long run. I'm very pleased at this development in our intelligence capability for this country.

KEMPSTER: Have you had to pass up any covert political action that you think would be necessary for the national defense as a result of this oversight?

DIRECTOR TURNER: Yes, we have. It's very proper that we should when the oversight indicates that that's not in accordance with the desires of the country.

HERMAN: Let me just ask you one question on the other side of that coin. There have been reports that you were forced, you felt, to delay or not act on requests for help from the government of Italy when Prime Minister Aldo Moro was kidnaped, that you felt you could not help the West Germans when the Lufthansa plane was hijacked and taken to Somalia because of these laws. Are those reports correct?

DIRECTOR TURNER: Totally incorrect. There was nothing we were able to do and wanted to do that we were not capable of doing.

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HERMAN: Well, wanted is a little different. Were you asked to do some things....

DIRECTOR TURNER: Nothing we were asked to do that we did not respond to.

GRAHAM: Sir, quickly, former Director Richard Helms is a registered agent of the Iranian government, and William Colby, former Director, I think represents Japanese Airlines. Do any of these by former CIA Directors -- does any of this bother you?

HERMAN: You have time for a yes or no.

GRAHAM: Is there a problem? Is there a problem there?

DIRECTOR TURNER: That's too complex a question for a yes or no.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to be with you today.

HERMAN: Thank you for being our guest today. And we'll have a word about next week's guest in a moment.