

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

Newsweek Interview with
Director Stansfield Turner

January 30, 1979

DIRECTOR STANSFIELD TURNER: ...No, no, I can be categoric on that one.

Q: You'd be categoric on that?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Who was it? William Tecumseh Sherman? "If nominated, I will not run. If elected, I will not serve."

Q: That's right.

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, seriously now.

Q: Admiral, a year ago we were here. You suggested we should come back in twelve months' time to see how well you're doing, to check on your fulfillment of your objectives.

How well have you done? Has it been a good year for you and for the agency?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes. I feel much more comfortable, much more personally on top of things. I feel that the agency, as such, has made considerable progress in the past year.

Q: Can you be specific about the progress? What areas?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Do you want me to measure it against the objectives I gave you last year?

Q: Yes. Right.

ADMIRAL TURNER: A good place to start. The first one was to modernize our objectives. One of the most important things that we have done here is to recognize that it's not the intelligence people who should decide what is the priority of our efforts. We're here to serve consumers. Yet traditionally, they've never

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paid enough attention to the intelligence process to give us the right guidance. I'm very pleased that within this past year we have worked out a program whereby the National Security Council has set our priorities. It's worked well. It changed the way people going about their business here. It's going to take more years to see to it that we institutionalize that and it continues. But we've got real input from the Security Council people themselves.

That's....

Q: Excuse me. Was it a failing on the part of the National Security Council not to task you with the Iranian crisis in time?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, now, do you want to divert on to that, or do you want me to continue what I've accomplished in the past year?

Q: Okay, let's come back to that.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Because you've made an assumption in your question that I would question.

The second thing that I said to you last year was that I would modernize our methods of doing intelligence. With the support of the Congress last October, we made a big step in that direction. Because the most modernizing we need is to find ways to integrate our traditional and capable human intelligence with our burgeoning technical intelligence capability. This is a unique American problem because we, forgetting the KGB, are the only free intelligence organization in the world that have this full panoply of capabilities. So it's uniquely our problem. And with this Congress' help, we established a National Intelligence Tasking Center to do the integration, to insure that these means of collecting intelligence are complementary and work as a team. And that's just started. It's running well. It's going to take more time to prove that it will be successful over the long haul.

Third, I said we're going to modernize our personnel management. We've taken a lot of very important steps in that direction. The reason we've had to modernize is we're not entering a new generation in the Central Intelligence Agency. We ran the first thirty years on the initial input of a family of really capable people. That generation is leaving. We're not institutionalizing the promotion process. We had 27 promotion processes. We now have got one. Employees can now go to the bulletin board and find out what their prospects are for promotion. We're doing more to help manage people's careers so that the individual feels that we're interested in him and he gets -- we get the opportunity to bring the best out of him, let him use his talents to the best advantage.

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We're changing the recruiting process. It used to take us eight or nine months before we could tell an applicant whether he was acceptable. You can't compete in today's market under those conditions. You couldn't in the past. Last week we have recruiter doused with paint on the Ohio State University campus. That's because we're back out on the campuses. We pulled our horns in when we were criticized. We're proud to be in the CIA. And the nation is proud of us, basically. So we're going back out in the public recruiting arena. We're not going to hide our light under a bushel.

We have a task force in here now of eminent personnel experts working with us for three months to give us some recommendations to further institutionalize our management of personnel procedures. So I think the employees are feeling a greater sense of confidence in our interest in them and in our ability and willingness to help them in their careers.

Fourth, I said we're going to be more open. I won't go into this because you all know this more than I. Here's a bunch of clips from the last three weeks. The first five of them are all different subjects, all based on CIA studies we've released to you and the public. So you can judge whether we've achieved anything in the openness field or not.

And last, I said we were going to be under greater external control. We've had two and a half years now under the Senate Select Committee, a year and a half under the House Select Committee. And I just think it's working splendidly. And over this past year we've made real progress in our relationships with those committees. They're tough on us. They check on us when there're allegations in the press against us, when they uncover things they wonder about. They scrutinize our budget, dollar by dollar. It's tough. It takes a lot of time. But accountability is important to the American public. And accountability is important to me. It helps me manage this organization better because we're held accountable; we've got to justify what we want and what we do, make us think it through better.

I'm pleased with the process. I would suggest if you go to either of the chairmen of the those committees, you'll find that while we're not in a buddy-buddy relationship, that you won't find anybody up there who says we haven't cooperated with them just fully and that they're not pleased with the way we respond.

So, you know, things have smoothed out. We've made progress. There's always more to be done.

Q: If you had to give, in terms of the performance of the agency in this past year -- after all, we are the taxpayers in terms of the product that we're getting -- what kind of a letter grade, if you were teaching as a professor, would you have given

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the agency in this past year for its performance? You've discussed so far the objectives, etcetera. But in terms of actually what came out and what was desired?

ADMIRAL TURNER: The performance was better than the previous year, better in the collection of intelligence, the human intelligence. We had a number of just startling coups and events, I mean real marvelous acquisitions. Overall, it was targeted better. The technical side of our house -- I'm talking agency now, not the community.

Q: Not the community.

ADMIRAL TURNER: That was your question. The technical side continued its performance just as well as ever before. It responded to a number of crises in a superlative manner. The analytic side -- we'll come back any time you want to Iran -- has been more innovative and received more plaudits from the President, from the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense than it did in my first year, because I think we have been more directly responsive to what they need. We've tried to do the same continuing basic research -- big estimates, long-term forecasts. But we've also tried to say what does somebody need tomorrow in the way of an objective look at things.

So I think performance is up.

Q: Would you give it a high grade?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes. Yes. Now....

Q: A? B?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't want to give it a grade, because you understand that one way, and I understand it the other. I'm here to see that it keeps improving. Ask somebody else what the grade is. You know, I'm a pupil. It's hard to judge my own grades and objectives....

Q: Your own term papers.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Sure. But go down and ask Vance and Brown and President Carter and Brzezinski what they think. They're the school masters.

Q: What would you say the shortcomings were? I mean obviously there've been some shortcomings. Everything isn't perfect. But what have you come up short on?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I can't think of anything. I'll leave you to find the shortcomings. How's that? You don't have any trouble finding those.

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Q: Let's talk about Iran.

ADMIRAL TURNER: All right, let's talk about Iran.

Q: The President wrote you a note, along with Brzezinski and Vance, saying that he wanted to improve the quality of intelligence reporting. And that was....

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, he didn't. Political reporting.

Q: Political reporting. Okay. But it was directed to you, as well as to the Secretary of State and the head of NSC.

ADMIRAL TURNER: It was directed to -- okay, yes.

Q: What happened? What went wrong in Iran?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I'm sure with your perspective on life, you appreciate that the so-called failure in Iran is largely a creation of the U. S. media.

Q: How, sir?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Because the media has created the impression that we should have predicted that on 5 November there was going to be an eruption and demonstrations that would eventually lead to the departure of the Shah. I'd love to have been able to predict it that day, and we'll try harder. But we won't make it in that category very often, in that tough political reporting of upheavals and coups, assassinations, and so on.

Q: Not to disagree, I think -- I mean the press is in a weak position in the case of Iran, because the press was probably as much at fault in terms of its reporting on Iran over the years as we understand the agency to have been. And that's something that the press has to look at it in its own house. But it really wasn't a case of picking a date or picking a time. It was -- the CIA seems to have been doing the same thing that the press was, which was not focusing on a lot of things that some people said ought to be focused on, but somehow got lost in the swell of the Shah and what he was doing. And it was really the focus over the long term, not any particular day.

ADMIRAL TURNER: There, I agree with you now. I was coming to that. The press is focusing, though, today that we didn't predict this eruption. What was wrong was something that was wrong with our country's approach to Iran for four or five years. It was wrong in the CIA; it was wrong in the State Department; it was wrong in the American media; it was wrong in the military; it was wrong in the academic areas of the United States. We were not sensitive enough to the cumulative effect of the rate of change in this country. And if we had been more sensitive two,

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three, four years ago, American policy might have been different -- what we sold them, how we dealt with them, how we talked about them, how we advised them. But all we've been beat on the head for is stuff that we couldn't have, probably, predicted. And if we had, the policymakers wouldn't have been doing anything about it in the last few months of this thing.

Q: Well, what lesson have you learned personally, in running an agency like this, about how to try to avoid that kind of sharing of an astigmatism, a national astigmatism? How are you trying...

ADMIRAL TURNER: All right. Several lessons. One, I've been saying in my speeches long before came all these accusations -- and one of the most difficult challenges we have today is that the American intelligence community, and this agency in particular, were founded with a mission of reporting on Soviet military developments. And as the years have gone by, we've had to expand into economic, into politics, into narcotics, into grain production, into terrorism, into the psychology, the psychiatry of leaders around the world, into just a multitude of new disciplines and geographical areas of interest. This country is just more involved in more scenes today, and the military is no longer the predominant -- I'm sorry. That's the wrong word -- is no longer so predominant as in an intelligence requirement.

And yet, the military problem hasn't diminished one bit, and we can't easily chop off half of our effort on military intelligence and slide it into these others.

So you have bureaucratic problems, a restructuring and getting in new disciplines and new people. You have resource problems, of allocating within constricting budgets. Our budget has not gone up in real terms for many years. You have -- okay, that's lesson number one: that we've got to reallocate assets, or something.

The lesson is there is always a pressure in any government apparatus to take care of today. And what you need for something like this is people who are really doing fundamental research about the religious trends, about the cultural impact of money, and so on, in a country like that. And I'm proud to say, again, before this Iranian thing became an issue, that Bob Bowie (?), who has headed our analytic section here, has really been stressing to his people the need for a combination of fundamental research and responsiveness to the day-to-day issue. And it's not easy, particularly when there's been a culture of emphasis on the day-to-day over the years. And I don't blame anybody. That's just a natural habitat.

In the military, I've watched people set up long-range planning groups, and you have to recreate one every three or four years because the last one gets shoved into today's problem.

Q: The explanations you've been given have been sort of bureaucratic. That is the way any system functions that way. But what about have you learned any lessons in the politics of this weakness, which, admittedly, long precedes you here? Not only the dictates of having to serve a specific intelligence need by tomorrow, but the general shaping of a line of thought that can interfere with the most objective analysis. Because there was a political element in this, it seems. I mean there was in the media's coverage, and it would seem that there was in the government's approach, as you said.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Doris, I'd like to offer these good friends from Newsweek some coffee, tea, or iced tea, or whatever, because I'm kind of thirsty, too....

Q: That's the thing that seems to be most worrisome to people.

ADMIRAL TURNER: There's a problem of how you deal with your friends. And I put it this way: When you have a very close ally, the thought of prying into his private political affairs is something you don't consider, because he'll tell you what's going on.

On the opposite extreme, you have the Communist Bloc, that won't tell you anything honestly, and you'll pry all you can, and the country'll be proud for that, even if you make mistakes once in a while.

In between, you have a vast range of relationships with other people and other countries that you endanger to different degrees. And you have to gauge each society on its own: Will they understand if you are trucking with the opposition that you're not doing it to help the opposition undermine them, but to maybe help them, the ruling people, understand the opposition that they've got, which their own subordinates are afraid to tell them about. What are the risks of your being caught delving around like this.

But it goes back even deeper, David. The country, in its educational institutions, has become so preoccupied, in my opinion, with education to get a job, that we're not turning out the people to do this kind of thing.

Let's stick with Iran. How easy is it to find somebody who's trained in economics -- and one of the things we missed on the horizon of Iran was the impact of the economic change. Right? How do we find people today coming out of universities trained in economics and Farsi? What induces a young college student to study Farsi after he's got his M.A. in economics? And that's the kind of person I need.

But the National Defense Education Act has gone by the board. The centers of regional study that were created under that act around the universities are all withering. We, as a country, have not sustained this.

Q: I was going to say, well, the Shah has certainly put a hell of a lot of money into American educational institutions just to do that, to produce Americans who could speak Farsi and knew economics and could help Iran. I mean there's...

ADMIRAL TURNER: Okay. That's an unusual example, although it still is a problem there. But, you know, we've not -- we're very focused on Iran right now, and it's terribly important to us. But there are a hundred-plus other countries out there that are in various degrees of instability. And my problem is now to find the resources and do this long-term thinking on the next ten that are going to erupt out of a hundred candidates, because they can't do it on a hundred, probably.

Q: Admiral, while were on the subject of relationship to other countries in between the Communist and the allies. I was out here at that lovely lunch you gave a while back. I asked about our relationship to foreign intelligence services, who, after all, through the course of the years have provided a great deal of our knowledge in our assets.

Has that situation changed, gotten better or gotten worse, as our -- as this institution here has come under fire in its relationships with the Congress? Are you in better position today than you were a year ago vis-a-vis the French or the British or the Israeli services? Will you get as much information, or are you being closed off from information?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think we're a little better off, but I wouldn't make it a major improvement. But I feel a warmer trend.

Now, I have to try to divorce my personal relationships with those -- although that's important to that. I mean I have better relationships just because I've had another year of working with them. Some of them have changed, but not all of them. And one of them, one of the key ones with liaison with was here. We had dinner at my house a couple of nights ago. You know, it's getting to be a very warm relationship. And in that particular instance, we have really improved. But I made an effort. I went to the fellow's country and I proposed specific things, and he's responded and we are working much better.

But the sense of disquiet...[cassette turned]....

There've been very few leaks out of the Congress, which

was their major worry. The leaks have been Agee's and Snepp's and -- Stockwell, rather than Snepp.

Q: John Marks.

ADMIRAL TURNER: John Marks...

Q: ...on television tonight.

ADMIRAL TURNER: You know, let me just digress.

Q: Okay.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I couldn't believe it. I picked up a paper yesterday, and on the second page there's a big headline about the CIA had [unintelligible]. So last night I picked up Marks's book. First of all, it doesn't say that. But secondly, what it said -- I'm only mentioned in the book three times, and once is in a footnote. It was on page 212 out of about 250. And what Marks is trying to say is -- if he has found me wrong, which he hasn't, he's claiming because I said 1963 and it's 1967.

You know, I'm sorry, fellows, but that doesn't impress me. And I'm not wrong anyway. But -- or, he says I talked about drug experimentation and not behavioral control. I tried to obfuscate it, that it was behavioral control. I'm not sure I even know the difference, particularly. But beyond that, it seems to me drug experimentation can be for behavioral control. And never did it cross my mind I was trying to differentiate between those two when I testified.

In short, people are really stretching to find where we have tried deliberately to mislead. And it's just sort of frustrating, because I took the initiative on this one. As soon as we found these things, I went to Congress, I went to the public, I said, "Look, we've found this stuff. It's been mislaid. Here's, the best I know of, everything's here." More stuff has come out since then. Now I'm chastised because they think that criticizes...

Q: The question is not -- I mean I think we got that same reaction when we saw that story yesterday, that it's really sort of a fine point. The only question is whether you, on the basis of the stuff that has come out subsequently, have been at all shaken in whether you know precisely what's in the files and precisely what's going on.

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, I...

Q: Nothing that has come out so far...

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ADMIRAL TURNER: Nothing that's come out -- you know, every time there's a new box found, I ask, "Does this contain something of significance that's different?" And I have not found anything that qualifies to where I would do as I did when I found that first set: I would want to go back to the President and then back to the Congress and say to my oversight committees, "Look, we goofed."

There's no point in my trying to hide it if it's there, in my opinion. It'll come out.

Q: Do your friends in foreign intelligence services understand the political controls to which you are subject. In other words, all these stories coming out now wouldn't come out in other countries. In other words, you wouldn't have an intelligence service under assault because of mind control. Do they understand this, or will this make them wary of sharing? I'm saying that they feel that the agency is subject to too many controls.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I think they are increasingly understanding it because it's increasingly becoming a fact of life for them.

You've read and know more about the stories on the British Official Secrets Act and how poorly it did in courts recently in England. The Germans recently send a congressional, a Bundestag delegation over here to ask how they should set up their oversight committee, which they have now established. The Italians have moved intelligence out from under the military into the Cabinet office. That is, it's still military intelligence, but there's now civilian intelligence under the Prime Minister, rather than...

Q: Let me interrupt you. Does that worry you now about sharing with the Italians?

ADMIRAL TURNER: [Laughter]

Q: A government that shares some of its political responsibilities with the Communist Party.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, clearly, it has to be something, any time that you look ahead and say what is likely to be the reliability, just as they look at us. As you know, I think I know the Italian scene fairly well, at least as of two years ago, and I've tried to keep abreast of it here. I haven't any immediate concerns [clattering dishes] at this point. They've been very conscious of that problem.

Q: I'm told that one of the rockiest areas of liaison is with the Scandinavian countries, and I'm also told that it's

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a direct result not of leaks from Agee and Stockwell, etcetera, but as a result of the book that Bill Colby wrote, which was approved, etcetera, etcetera, by this agency. Is that true?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, no, no. Please. I'm just not going to accept some of these statements. We have not censored anything from anybody and we have no authority to censor...

Q: Cleared. Cleared by this agency.

Q: Reviewd.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Reviewed. Not even cleared. I can't take anything out of...

MAN: We review it only for classified information. Now, that doesn't mean...

ADMIRAL TURNER: That doesn't mean we endorse...

MAN: That doesn't mean it's approved.

Q: No. I understand that.

MAN: Okay.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, but that's not what you're saying, David. And we don't want that to appear in your article, because those are very loose words, and we don't censor anything.

Q: Okay, we'll use your words: Review them for security.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Okay. Good.

Q: Bill Colby's book was reviewed by the Central Intelligence Agency for security.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Right.

Q: It appeared and caused a big uproar in Scandinavia.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Not a big one, but it disturbed them.

Q: Disturbed them. Is it true that that has had some effects on our liaison with those services?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Not to my perception. You know, I've talked to them about it, and they were not pleased with some of the discussion in the book. But it was not things that were classified, from our point of view, that we could justify asking him to delete.

Q: Well, which...

ADMIRAL TURNER: The Scandinavians are very fine people, and I'm sure they're survive this.

Q: Which books caused more of an uproar, Stockwell and Snepp, or Colby?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Agee.

Q: Agee. Well, let's -- Agee seems to me to be an entirely different...

ADMIRAL TURNER: Okay.

Q: ...breed. I mean...

ADMIRAL TURNER: Stockwell has caused the most -- most lack of confidence in us of any single activity since I've been here. Those people in other countries just don't understand why we can't keep classified information out of the public domain.

Nobody in the Scandinavians claims that Colby's was classified. They don't appreciate it. But to have a man named Stockwell go out and put classified material, and we don't take action against him, we don't put him jail, that they don't understand. And they don't think we will inhibit the next Stockwell if we don't do something to that Stockwell.

Q: Well, you're going to do something to Stockwell as soon as you get an appeals ruling on Agee, aren't you?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'm not allowed to comment on that...

Q: Snepp.

ADMIRAL TURNER: ...but we're waiting for the ruling on Snepp to see where the law stands on these things, yes.

Q: How do you cope with the American legal process, with rights of discovery and all the evidence you have to -- you know, this seems to be the dilemma against which all these cases seem to found -- I mean...

ADMIRAL TURNER: We coped with it splendidly with Snepp.

Q: ...service in the world that has to worry about it.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Because we didn't accuse him of releasing classified information, and therefore we did not have to uncover...

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Q: I know you can't comment, but the Stockwell thing. You just said that this was -- classified information was released, and...

MAN: He's admitted that himself.

Q: All right. Well, what does the United States of America do in circumstances like that to protect its information?

ADMIRAL TURNER: There...

Q: Classified information.

ADMIRAL TURNER: There's nothing that I know of that permits us to do anything against that kind of release of information on the grounds just that it was classified. Stockwell does have a secrecy agreement with us, just as Snepp. So there is another issue there, which if the Snepp case holds means you don't have to prove classified information in order to uphold your contract.

But the laws of this country, unless Stockwell deliberately gave that material to a foreign power, don't permit us to prosecute him for the classified aspect of it.

Q: When I left the Air Force in 1954, I signed a document -- I had been top secret document control officer -- that I will never knowingly, willingly disclose this thing. Now, doesn't that apply? How do use that? I mean was that just a meaningless piece of paper? I assume we all sign that when we leave.

MAN: Well, that's the contract.

Q: That's the contract.

[Confusion of voices]

Q: As I understand it, Stockwell refused to sign his on leaving.

ADMIRAL TURNER: But he signed one when he came in, so -- we asked him to sign another one, which is a way of reminding people that they have, and this really is the reason for signing it. It's not any more legal than the earlier one. So we have an agreement with Stockwell on that.

I think you could prosecute, under your thing, under a contract. But I'm not sure -- well, I don't know. The legal nuances here are such -- but, you know, the Espionage Act says it's got to be espionage. In short, if you really want to help the Russians get some information, the best thing to do is to

steal it and publish it in the newspapers, instead of giving it to them via clandestine means. You can't get in as much trouble if you -- as long...

MAN: That way, you can movie rights.

Q: And you might make some money.

ADMIRAL TURNER: ...people don't want an exclusive, why...

Q: Continuing on this subject of liaison. We've been told that another problem is changes in American policy, particularly in the Middle East -- or perceived changes in American policy, particularly in the Middle East and Southern Africa, have hurt our liaison.

Now, specifically, the Israelis perceive a tilt toward the Arabs, therefore are less inclined to pass us some of their information. And the perceived shift away from the whites in Southern Africa toward the blacks has made some of the security services more reluctant to cooperate.

Is that -- is there any truth to that?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't see it in those particular instances that you're citing. But, obviously, the state of relationship between our country and any other has to govern intelligence, political, economic exchanges. So it's almost a truism to say that it could happen.

Q: And you're saying that it is happening, but not in the instances that I've cited.

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's correct.

Q: Is it a problem? I mean is it something that is deviling you more now than at any other time that you're aware of?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, you know, I've got a short perspective here, David. I've only been here two years. So...

Q: Do you sense a swing in the pendulum of the public perception of the CIA? I mean we rarely have stories about abuses now. And when we do have them, they're usually buried. I mean I think that Marks story was probably the biggest play that that kind of abuse story has gotten in a long time. The big stories now are things like Paisley and Kampiles, the quality of intelligence on Iran. I mean people are now seem to be more concerned about (A) the security of the agency and (B), the question of whether it's really doing its job. Is that something you...

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ADMIRAL TURNER: A marked change in the last year, since you were last here, I think. And I must say, I'm willing to take some credit for that, with our openness policy. I think we've tried to generate a sense of confidence in the American public, generate a confidence I think we deserve. But we try not to just say, "No comment." Herb answers things now.

You're out here, I notice, regularly for briefings. I think they're more available to you now than they were two years ago. Am I right?

MAN: Uh-huh.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I hope that's helping. I mean that when the American public can understand it, when they see...

Q: Just as a digression. Last week, we were tasked by New York for the Chinese economy. And lo and behold, I tear open [unintelligible] Herb had two specials, and there was this whole thing on the Chinese economy. It was just, you know...

[Confusion of voices]

Q: ...been reading a Telex.

Q: So thank you, Herb.

[Laughter]

ADMIRAL TURNER: All right. Well, give us -- give us a plug, will you?

Have you got our Chinese Atlas?

Q: Yeah.

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's an old...

Q: The Chinese Atlas, I cut it out to see -- I took it with me to China in '72.

Q: You talk about successes, and mention something. You talk about starting coups, a phrase you used before. Have these been of simply coups, or have they been of specific value in the pursuit of the United States goals in the world?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, very much specific value. I shouldn't have used the word coup, because I don't want people to confuse it with overturning of governments. They had nothing to do with overturning of governments. But they were providing

valuable information to our policymakers. And, you know, it's the cross we bear, Mel. Our so-called failures are widely discussed. Our successes go unheralded.

Q: Well, let us ask you about something specific that seemed to us, when David and I were talking last night, to be sort of an opposite case from Iran, a case where the United States has moved swiftly, seems to have had a sound basis of intelligence to make its policy, and that's Nicaragua. From the very beginning, when on one half of the front page there was a sort of a holding on to the status quo in Iran, the country seemed to be moving very quickly to know who -- where it could move, how safe things were.

What was the -- was there any difference in the CIA's input in Nicaragua? Was there, would you say, a better base of intelligence? And why was that so?

ADMIRAL TURNER: We happen to have a very capable, perceptible team of analysts on Central America, small, stretched thin. But everybody in the community recognized that, when Nicaragua bubbled up, they had done their homework. So they had the foundation and they just provided superb support.

Q: We understand from some of the reporting we've gotten that the feeling that the agency is more deeply, not -- entrenched isn't the word -- but has its fingers into various aspects of the situation there to a far greater degree than it did in Iran. That is, not only intelligence analysts at Langley, but operatives out in the field, in all aspects of the political situation.

Q: More people speak Spanish than Farsi.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I don't -- [unintelligible] very hard to weigh. But maybe it's background, that there's been this, ever since the Marines, continuing interest in Central America, or something, that's built up a better reservoir of expertise there.

I just -- it's a good question, David. I'm not sure I know how to answer it.

Q: I guess what I'm saying is, would you -- can you tell us that the agency's capabilities on the ground there were also better, as was the analysis back here at home?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, I don't think the capabilities on the ground were any better, no.

Q: We've read in a couple of places the statement, I think attributed to you, that there have been a small number of

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covert operations run during your tenure. Is that correct? How many would you say? How many?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No comment.

Q: Is it a small number?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes.

Q: Well, I think the number that has been used is a dozen. Some -- one of the pieces talked with some of the oversight people, and the number that seemed to come up was about a dozen. Is that in the ballpark?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No comment.

Q: You were quoted as saying there was only one covert operation that had not been run that you had rather wished had been run, but you permitted yourself to be outvoted, I assume, around this table, or one similar to it. I think you told that to the person from The Star.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I mentioned that to somebody, yes.

Q: Yeah.

ADMIRAL TURNER: That is, I was stressing that there are not more covert operations not because we're not allowed to do them, but because we can't find the applicability of covert action to our countries needs at this time, perhaps as much as in the '50s or early '60s. And I illustrated that by simply saying I was only disappointed once that something didn't go forward.

And the reason they don't go forward, usually, is the concern as to whether you can keep them secret.

Q: Do you still believe -- and I asked you this before -- in the Ryan Act, that you can live with it?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'd like to see the number of committees narrowed down, and hope that the charter legislation would do that. I'm very strong on the charter legislation. I think it's important that we try to do our best to get that enacted in this Congress.

I have never, since I arrived here, had any sense that this place was out of control or trying not to respond to what the Director and his superiors wanted. On the other hand, we are all very conscious of the past limited number of abuses here, in the Executive Branch, in the Congress.

My concept of having charters is to insure that the agency is protected five and ten years from now from being pushed by anybody, as it has been in the past, into doing things it shouldn't, because the sense of awareness of the past has faded. If you see what I mean.

Q: Admiral, you've stressed for us the progress you've made in the past year. We've talked about some successes that the agency has had that you cannot talk about. Why is it, then, that there are so many reports, both in the press and out of the press, of kind of a personal antipathy toward you expressed by certain people in the White House and certain people on the Hill, stories of other people who are suggested for your job, etcetera? What -- have you made a number of enemies that you wish you hadn't?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think you're the one who can judge that better than I. I don't suppose you know who in Newsweek doesn't like you or...

Q: I'll kill 'em. I'll get rid of 'em.

ADMIRAL TURNER: ...as well as the two Davids do. So I don't know how to comment on that one, Mel.

Q: Do you feel you have enemies?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No. I don't have a personal ethos or a personal ethic of feeling animosity towards others or feeling that I should be an enemy to anyone else.

Q: Do you feel...

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't think that's my concept of a Christian attitude towards life.

I am a controversial person. I don't think that means you have enemies. One has differences of opinion, differences of approach. And I've said before that when you are taking an organization like this through a major change, both the generational change I referred to earlier and the change of accountability that I referred to earlier -- and what people don't appreciate, inside this agency as well as out, is the extent of change when you become accountable, from being virtually unaccountable. It really makes a major difference in the way you do your business.

And, David, in all bureaucracies -- and I suspect even in one as small as Newsweek, comparatively speaking, there's resistance to change, there's resistance to doing things differently.

I don't have any choice about doing things differently out here. It isn't just S. Turner. I'm making some of my own imprint. But I'm top of that, I've got to respond to the Congress, to the President, to the country. And they want intelligence run differently than it was run in the '50s. That doesn't sit easily.

So, yes, there's some controversy. But I don't feel I have cause to be enemies with anybody.

Q: Do you feel undercut by the publication of the memo about Iran from the President? I mean has that given you...

ADMIRAL TURNER: It's part of the whole problem, which is, I've said repeatedly in public, the greatest problem we have today, and that's keeping our secrets. That was a secret memorandum. And the fact that, obviously, somebody in the press was either read it or saw it, because they quote part of it, anyway, is disturbing. It's disturbing to the country, not to me personally, not to the agency. It's just symptomatic of a problem we have of retaining other people's confidence, being able to have a good debate within the Executive Branch.

And we're closing now, so that, you know, a half a dozen people know some of the things that are going on, because you can't share it with your staff. And that hurts.

Q: Do you speak freely at meetings all over, or do you watch yourself because of the problems of leakage? When you're outside of the agency, when you're in other branches of the government, do you feel that you have to watch what you say because of the problem of it might wind up...

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'm charged by the law to protect our sources, our human sources, and our methods, our technical methods, of collecting intelligence. There's nothing I say in this office or anywhere else that I don't have to take that into account.

Q: I'm not talking about security, I'm just talking about points of view, that you may say something in the course of a normal discussion that somehow will be used against you: "Well, this is what S. Turner thought about X country. Isn't that silly?" I mean people -- that's an old bureaucratic technique in Washington.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well...

Q: Do you watch yourself...

ADMIRAL TURNER: No. My history in the government is not one of being a wallflower. In this job in particular, my whole responsibility is to try to bring objectivity into the

analysis of the foreign policy problems that are facing the country. And I find that frequently means I'm the bearer of bad news. And if I don't bear the bad news, I just won't be doing my job.

And so, no, it's just beyond my concept that I will withhold that kind of information.

Now, when it comes to commenting on what direction the policymakers are going, I have strong differences sometimes and strong support at other times. I mean that's just normal. But that I'd restrain on. I'm not involved in that. So I sit there and grit my teeth sometimes.

Q: Let me look at your teeth and see how much gritting you have to do.

Q: Let me ask you for an objective view on exactly the charter legislation. You've told us your reasons for supporting it. But there is a feeling around the Hill that perhaps its time has passed. It ran into a fair bit of difficulty in its first version. There's supposed to be a new version coming out, I think at the end of February or March. And maybe you can tell us whether it's on track and whether that next draft will be on time.

But do you think, objectively, that it will pass, or that in the end Congress is moving back and the people are moving back to sort of, "Oh, well, they're in better shape now. Let them take care of it. It's really too complicated to try to..."?

ADMIRAL TURNER: It is very complicated.

Q: Do you think it will ever pass? Will there be a charter?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes. Yes, I do. It's very complicated. It is on track.

The fact -- what you're reflecting, Dave, is that the pendulum, as David mentioned,...

Q: Yes.

ADMIRAL TURNER: ...has swung. So there are different views now on how far we should go. But I think that's healthy, because had the pendulum tried to go too far towards restrictions on us, we wouldn't have got any charter legislation, either.

Q: So that despite whatever swing there is, you personally are going to be trying to make sure that there is a

charter passed. You're not going to...

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's correct. It's going to be finding the middle ground here. But I believe we can find that ground that will satisfy people if they will understand one principle, and that is that what we have created in a unique fashion -- never before in the history of intelligence is this external oversight process.

You won't be able, in the charter legislation, to legislatively control every activity of the intelligence community. So, what you will do is you will control it to the extent it's reasonable to do so, provide guidelines to what is expected of us and what is not expected of us, and then provide oversight to check on it.

My famous example that comes right down to you is my own regulation right now, which may or may not be part of the law, that I don't have paid contractual relationships with members of the American media. But there's a clause at the bottom that says I, Stan Turner, may make an exception to that. And some of your contemporaries have objected to that, said, "It's no rule at all. Turner can do anything he wants." I can't do anything I want. I have two committees up there that can call me up this afternoon and say, "How many exceptions have you made to that rule?" You know. And if I'm just making a farce of the thing, then they will pass a law.

But I don't want to be so constricted that if David Martin's the only guy who can be an intermediary between me and an imminent terrorist operation that's going to blow up an American airliner in some foreign country, that I can't work with David.

Q: Have you made any exceptions?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No.

Have I? I don't remember any.

Q: In the time remaining, one of the areas we haven't covered, and I think [unintelligible] development in this past year since our last interview, has been the question of your internal security within the agency. The Kampiles case raised a number of questions.

How have you gone about assuring yourself that the Kampiles thing has not gone deeper?

ADMIRAL TURNER: We've done a very thorough counter-intelligence investigation. We've got a polygraph from Kampiles before and after his conviction. So we have pretty good

evidence of what he did. You know, and people can fool the polygraph. We have not uncovered anything whatsoever that is an aberration in this picture. When we finally pieced it all together, as to where he started, where he went, how he transferred it to the Soviets, why he came back and told us about it, and so on, it all pieces together. I guess you could say not every piece is in the puzzle, but there's no piece that is jagged and doesn't fit in.

That doesn't mean we're utterly confident. We sit here and constantly be vigilant. Because if we're not, we're complacent.

But around Kampiles, I find no evidence whatsoever of a mole. But I'm still always going to say that -- I won't say there's no mole in the agency. Because if I did, I would show a complacency that would be...

Q: How shaken were you when you first got the news of the Kampiles case?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I was very disturbed that we had a disloyal employee like this, that important information had got out. And it, unfortunately, reinforced views that I had that we were -- we needed to tighten our security. We had been doing so over a period of time. [Cassette changed] I was disappointed that I had to move more dramatically and more rapidly.

But with the amount of classified material in this building, you know, today, still, I've got to say to you a Kampiles could stick something in his pocket that was as small as this was and walk out of here.

The way you have to stop that is a security consciousness that just got to be built through the whole organization, and we're obviously working on that, you know, to...

Q: Have you made any changes in the counterintelligence [unintelligible]?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No. Before this, I have put a new chief of counterintelligence in who was absolutely the best man I could find. I hurt myself taking him off of another equally important job, almost. And we have strengthened counterintelligence by more contacts, more formal relationships with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and my close personal relationship with the Director.

We have moved in a lot of ways in counterintelligence. I wouldn't say they all -- or, that any of them particularly stem from this. This was all in train even before that.

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I wish we had more time.

Q: You mentioned talking to the Director of the FBI. When is there going to be an Amherst coup in this country? I mean if you and Webster are now plotting a takeover, who is the third member of this Amherst group that's going to come in?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, he's the one who's pulling both of our switches, and I can't reveal...

Q: I see. But he tells us it's you.

[Laughter]

Q: Admiral, can we ask you one more question...

ADMIRAL TURNER: ...Amherst men in the agency here, too.

[Confusion of voices]

Q: I don't think there are any Amherst men playing football right now.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, yes, there is. Jean Fugett.

Q: Oh, that's right. That's right.

ADMIRAL TURNER: And there's another one somewhere else, on another team. But Jean's right here in Washington.

Nice to see you, Mel. It was a very enjoyable...

Q: Can we ask you one last question before we depart?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I doubt it. I've really got -- I've got a very important man out here.

Q: Can I just try it for 30 seconds?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes.

Q: We brought you about a year ago this allegation about James Angleton. W you about it.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't really remember that. What is it, that he's the mole?

Q: Have you done anything about that?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I have no comment.

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Q: That's a good answer.

Q: You don't want to say anything else?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Not a thing. Thank you very much.

Q: [Unintelligible]

ADMIRAL TURNER: Not a word. That's a subject I'm
not going to talk about.