

14 February 1986

Remarks on C.I.A.'s Policy

Special to The New York Times

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Feb. 13 — Following are excerpts from the text of a speech by Robert M. Gates, the Central Intelligence Agency's deputy director for intelligence, prepared for delivery tonight at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government:

Recent events here have again sparked broad discussion of both the propriety and wisdom of university scholars cooperating in any way with American intelligence. On Dec. 3 of last year The Boston Globe stated, "The scholar who works for a government intelligence agency ceases to be an independent spirit, a true scholar." These are strong words. In my view they are absolutely wrong. My remarks tonight center on two simple propositions:

First, preserving the liberty of this nation is fundamental to and prerequisite for the preservation of academic freedom; the university community cannot prosper and protect freedom of inquiry oblivious to the fortunes of the nation. Second, in defending the nation and our liberties, the Federal Government needs to have recourse to the best minds in the country, including those in the academic community. Tensions inevitably accompany the relationship between defense, intelligence and academe, but mutual need and benefit require reconciliation or elimination of such tensions.

Cordiality of the 1950's

Relations between the scholarly community and the C.I.A. were cordial throughout the 1950's. Faculty or students rarely questioned the nation's need for the agency and its activities. These halcyon days were soon to change. There was some criticism on campuses over C.I.A.'s involvement in the Bay of Pigs expedition in 1961. But the real deterioration in relations between C.I.A. and academe paralleled the wrenching divisions in the country over the Vietnam War. The decline in C.I.A.-academia ties accelerated with the disclosure in "Ramparts" magazine that C.I.A. had been funding the foreign activities of the National Student Association for a number of years.

Sensational allegations of wrongdoing by C.I.A. became more frequent in the media in the early 1970's, culminating in the establishment of the Rockefeller Commission and subsequently both the Church Committee in the Senate and the Pike Committee in the House of Representatives.

The agency's relations with the academic world have improved in recent years for a variety of reasons, including developments abroad and recognition in the academic community that C.I.A., together with the Departments of State and Defense, has been an important and useful supporter of area and regional studies and foreign language studies in the United States.

There is, however, one constant in the history of this relationship and in its future as well: our need for your help, and the opportunity you have to contribute to a better informed policymaking process by cooperating with us.

We have again looked at our rules and policies as a result of the controversy here at Harvard, and this too has produced some modifications. For example, the Directorate of Intelligence now explicitly tells any organization or individual organizing a conference on our behalf that the participants in the conference should be informed in advance of our sponsoring role. Quite frankly, because we organize the overwhelming majority of our conferences ourselves, this had not arisen before.

We also have looked again at the question of whether our funding of research that is subsequently used in a publication by a scholar should be openly acknowledged. There are several good reasons that argue against such an approach, including the possibility of difficulty with a foreign government by virtue of acknowledged C.I.A. interest in its internal affairs; the possibility that acknowledged C.I.A. interest in a specific subject could affect the situation itself; and, finally, concern that readers might assume the scholar's conclusions were, in fact, C.I.A.'s.

'At Least Some Change'

We re-examined this issue with considerable care. There are certain circumstances under which disclosure of our funding of research may be required, and we of course comply. Beyond this, we have decided that our interest in maintaining the cooperation of this country's scholars and allaying misunderstandings and suspicions that have grown out of our earlier approach warrant at least some change in our policy.

Accordingly, C.I.A. will henceforth permit acknowledgment of our funding of research that is later independently published by a scholar unless (1) The scholar requests privacy or (2) we determine that formal, public association of C.I.A. with a specific topic or subject would prove damaging to the United States. Any acknowledgment of C.I.A. funding would be accompanied by a statement to the effect that the views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of C.I.A. or of the U.S. Government.

Consultation and cooperation with C.I.A. on the problems this nation faces abroad do not threaten academic freedom.