

APPROVED FOR RELEASE 1994
CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
18 SEPT 95 -

TITLE: Communication To The Editors

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VOLUME: 2 ISSUE: Summer YEAR: 1958

STUDIES IN INTELLIGENCE



A collection of articles on the historical, operational, doctrinal, and theoretical aspects of intelligence.

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COMMUNICATION TO THE EDITORS

Dear Sirs:

I should like to comment critically on Lewis R. Long's article, "Concepts for a Philosophy of Air Intelligence," that appeared in *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 31-50. Air intelligence is a subject with which I can claim some familiarity. In World War II, I served as Chief of the Target Intelligence Division in a combat Air Force headquarters, as commanding officer of an OSS-type organization that provided intelligence to air units for close support of ground forces, and as Chief of the Intelligence Division of Theater G-2 Section.

Colonel Long advocates a greatly expanded mission for air intelligence, one that far exceeds the requirements of the air commander because it includes areas where the air commander has no assigned decision-making or operational competence. The article builds up its case from the proposition (p. 40) that "air intelligence must encompass all aspects of power in foreign nations." By "encompass," the author means that the Air Force command must, in effect, have its own estimates of "all aspects of power in foreign nations (political, economic and psychological as well as military)," prepared by its own experts on the basis of information collected through its own operations (including covert operations), and that the Air Force should act offensively through political, economic and psychological warfare, both in cold and hot war situations, presumably deriving its inspiration for these activities from its own estimates. He also postulates as a proper function of air intelligence (p. 49) informing the American public "on a planned basis" about Soviet activities.

No one can argue that the air commander should be uninformed about "aspects of power in foreign nations," and all will agree that he must know everything possible about that part of the total enemy situation directly concerned with his assigned operational mission. However, the assigned mission does not impinge directly on all aspects of the enemy situation, but only on a discrete sector thereof. That his own people do not overtly and covertly collect and process intelligence on the aspects lying outside his assigned operational responsibilities

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does not mean that the commander has to remain ignorant of the larger picture. He can draw on the intelligence community, where he is represented, for this information, and he need not duplicate existing facilities.

Colonel Long's contention that the air arm should engage in political, economic and psychological warfare in hot and cold war situations is hard to take seriously. One could equally well argue that Treasury and Commerce, having operational responsibilities relating to the economies of Communist countries, should have their own air photo recon organization for Communist country overflights to get the information on industrial establishments that they need to meet their responsibilities. For the air arm to engage in these three activities would mean duplicating facilities already in existence and in use, and it would mean going far beyond the assigned Air Force mission, assuming roles already allocated and assigned to other agencies of the government.

Colonel Long supports his claim for greatly expanded responsibilities for air intelligence by an appeal to Clausewitz' statement that war is an extension of policy by other means, and by the argument that the Marxists have shown how "the line of demarcation between politics and military action is extremely nebulous." He says that the Air Force "will have to carry the brunt of any initial contacts with the enemy," and "seek out and destroy all aspects of warmaking potential and will to fight." Even were these truisms, it would not logically follow that air intelligence should be what he would have it. Indeed the only logical justification for his position would have to come from a demonstration that the Air Force is the paramount element in the executive branch of the Government, with all other elements, including the office of the Chief Executive, subordinate to it. In this situation the air command would need an intelligence service such as that described.

In conclusion, air intelligence is a very difficult business to do well. I suspect that Colonel Long himself knows that there has always been more to it than the concentration on (p. 41) "strengths and weaknesses of foreign air forces" which he postulates as the alternative to his expanded role. Even at its highest stage of development in WW II—witness, for example, the incredibly bad intelligence preparation for the XXth Bomber Command strikes on Yawata and Anshan—there was

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always room for great improvement. I submit that air intelligence has enough to do to support the air commander in his assigned responsibilities without seeking to encompass the responsibilities of other organizations.

Yours truly,
R. A. RANDOM

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