

A LOOK AT THE INTELLIGENCE ESTABLISHMENT

Paul W. Blackstock

leaders in Oakland let the reins slip into the hands of that underworld of criminals and police informers that threaten any ghetto movement. Walking targets for every police pogrom, proclaimed the most dangerous men in America by the National Policeman who stands watch over the storehouse of the American Myth, the Panthers struggled valiantly in the net. But the most cherished tenet in their creed—their rejection of black racism—had led them into this trap. For they could never have become so vulnerable to the wrath of the white fathers without the help of the white sons.

The black community today is not greatly disturbed by the demise of the Panthers. They concluded some time ago that they made a mistake in making coalitions with "white radicals." The problem quite simply is that the revolutions in the black and white communities necessarily move in opposite directions. Black people are still validly concerned with "making it," while white people are concerned with ceasing to "make it" at the expense of other people. These are not necessarily contradictory, but they do entail very different programs. Whenever the white radical incorporates the black movement into his own program, invariably the black movement is derailed from its own authentic purposes. Unsatisfactory as black cultural nationalism may be in the long run, I must conclude that, in the short run, it serves a valid purpose for the black community. It partially insulates them from the white program so that black people can discover what their own program is all about.

White people really do not have to worry about black separatism. Nothing is more ideologically self-serving than the argument that, since black people will no longer "work" with white people, the cause of social justice has come to an end. Black people in America have every intention of making it right here in the existing system, simply because there is no other one available. They have not rejected "working with white people." They work with white people every day. But they need to pick the allies that really serve their needs, and those allies will prove quite surprising to many of the ideologues of the white Left. When the Black Liberation Army of Washington, D.C., a group which arrayed itself in the para-military garb of the Panthers, but, unlike the Panthers, chose to build from their own base in the black ghetto, recently announced a coalition with a white group, it was not with the Weathermen from Global Village, but with the Girl Scouts from Silver Spring. Together they planned to link the ghetto and suburbia in an educational program against drug addiction.

Under a new title, *The Intelligence Establishment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), Professor Harry Howe Ransom of Vanderbilt University has thoroughly revised and up-dated his original work, *Central Intelligence and National Security*, which first appeared in 1958. The result is a highly readable, well-informed survey of the intelligence community (including a new chapter on the British intelligence system), plus penetrating essays on the nature of intelligence, its relationship to national policy and decision-making, surveillance by Congress, and the related problems of administration and executive control. Throughout the book, but especially in the final chapter, "The CIA Problem—Some Conclusions," Professor Ransom critically examines the role of C.I.A. as an instrument of American intervention abroad in the form of "underground political action and psychological warfare overseas."

Professor Ransom has set himself a limited goal—"to describe objectively contemporary intelligence insofar as this can be done from non-secret sources"—and has succeeded admirably. *The Intelligence Establishment* is thus an indispensable guide and reference work not only for the policy-makers and planners who must make the decisions on which national security depends, but also for the layman or man on the street whose ultimate fate in a thermo-nuclear age hinges directly on the intelligence estimates underlying such decisions. Although, as he states in his preface, Mr. Ransom has never been "an active member of the professional intelligence guild," he shares with its members a keen appreciation of the need for the best possible intelligence base for decision-making. For example, in an introductory chapter on "Intelligence in the Space Age," he writes:

The broad strategic doctrine of the United States must be geared to the best attainable intelligence forecasts. United States success in fulfilling commitments and attaining foreign policy objectives will depend heavily upon the

Paul Blackstock, an intelligence and research specialist, is a member of the Department of International Studies at the University of South Carolina.

quality of such intelligence, for the accuracy of the pictures drawn for decision makers of the future face of world politics has a profound impact upon the adequacy of planning.

The successful use of any of the major instruments of national policy also depends heavily upon the quality of the intelligence estimate. In the use of diplomacy, military power, economic pressure, propaganda, psychological warfare, or covert political action—or any combination of these—accurate intelligence is a key to success, particularly in a period of complex international tensions.

A sure way to court national disaster is to remain in the dark today about the present status, the capability, or the probable intentions of foreign nations, particularly potential enemies, and of allies and neutrals as well. To avert disaster, a massive American intelligence bureaucracy works around the globe to supply the federal government with the abundance of information required. At least twelve major departments and agencies of the government today are engaged directly in the intelligence process, with some ten additional units also engaged in some form of intelligence work. At the apex of this structure is the controversial Central Intelligence Agency, overseeing the coordinating of what is known inside government as the intelligence community; from outside it is best termed the intelligence establishment.

Ransom's appreciation of the need for intelligence cannot be faulted by professionals in the business. On the other hand, as a scholar seeking to write objectively about the intelligence function and community from the outside, Mr. Ransom has a certain advantage over former government aides who have written *around* the subject in their memoirs. He can call a spade a spade, and does so. As a result, *The Intelligence Establishment* is vastly superior to and far more informative than such works as Lyman Kirkpatrick's *The Real CIA* or *The Craft of Intelligence* by the late Allen Dulles, the former head of C.I.A. (Much of Dulles' work is an admixture of institutional advertising and a defense of the agency's "Cold War Mission." In an excellent selected bibliography, Ransom also notes that it exhibits a "tendency toward a CIA recruiter's handbook.")

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Most recent writing about the intelligence community tends to gravitate to the two extremes of self-serving apologetics or sensational journalistic exposés which portray the Central Intelligence Agency as a sinister "invisible government." Under these circumstances, the scholarly objectivity of Ransom's approach to "the CIA problem" is refreshing. At the end of his introductory chapter he sets forth the assumptions on which his analysis is based as follows:

This study is not pro- or anti-CIA. If there is a bias, it is in favor of the notion that national decision makers should have the best attainable information prior to decisions. There are certain assumptions which underlie this study:

First, the intelligence and covert political action functions will continue to expand both in scope of activity and in importance in decision making.

Second, technology not only will expand enormously the potential capabilities of intelligence systems, as it has already done, but will make decision makers increasingly the potential prisoners of these systems.

Third, knowledge can be power; secret knowledge is potentially secret political power; and secret political power is a threat to democratic government. If a secret instrument of governmental policy exists, it is likely to be used, its size continually expanded and its techniques refined.

Fourth, to neglect to examine and discuss these developments, even in the face of great obstacles in the way of obtaining all the facts, would add to the dangers that threaten the viability of democratic values.

It would be difficult to draw up a better check-list of reasons why *The Intelligence Establishment* should be widely read.

Ever since the Bay of Pigs fiasco in the spring of 1961, the Central Intelligence Agency has had a bad press, mainly because its covert operations division has been used as an instrument of secret political intervention in the internal affairs of other nations. When such operations escalate beyond the covert threshold and can no longer be "plausibly denied," the reputation of the Agency and the credibility of the U.S. Government is inevitably damaged. This pattern of events has repeated itself many times in Southeast Asia and other theatres of political-military warfare. Recently, for example, the presence of C.I.A. "advisers" in Laos was at first officially denied. Later, it was belatedly admitted that Agency officers were commanding special units of Meo tribesmen in actual military operations. Earlier in the decade (1967) it was revealed that the C.I.A. had penetrated and was secretly subsidizing the National Student Association, various university research programs, and the so-called "free labor union" movement abroad. The traumatic shock of these revelations was such that President Johnson ordered the secret subsidy program ended except "where overriding national security interests so require."

But not only the C.I.A. has come under fire. Various domestic counterintelligence units within the Department of Defense have been heavily criticized for the unwarranted extension of their normal security functions to internal political surveillance of such distinguished private citizens as Adlai Stevenson, III, the U.S. Senator from Illinois. The charges were made before Senator Sam J. Ervin's Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights. They were at first denied, but the incident was sufficiently disturbing that the White House felt obliged to issue a highly publicized statement that President Nixon "totally, completely and unequivocally objected to

military spying on civilian political figures and would not tolerate it during his Administration." Later, Assistant Secretary of Defense Robert F. Froehke testified before the Committee that various military counterintelligence units had indeed kept political card index files on 25 million American citizens and extensive dossiers on thousands of others. Again, as in the case of the C.I.A. political operations noted above, the pattern of official denial followed by public admission seriously damages the credibility of the Government and the image of the Intelligence Community (of which military counterintelligence units are only a low-level subdivision responsible for the security of military installations).

Professor Ransom does not attempt to provide simple answers to the kinds of problems which beset the Intelligence Community. There are none. However, he does provide a framework and depth of field against which proposed solutions can be judged. He is deeply concerned with adequate control of covert operations, which have been over-sold and over-used in the last decade. He concludes that "... a secret operation, if justified, should only be planned and authorized by the highest authority, and then only if the chances of maintaining secrecy

are strong enough to justify the risks of disclosure. If not, some other instrument of policy should be chosen or no action taken. There are, of course, no formulas for easy decision-making." Like Lyman Kirkpatrick, a former Deputy Director of C.I.A., Ransom recommends that "covert political operations should only be undertaken to prevent a direct threat to national security and as an alternative to overt military action." He also recommends that "the President and State Department should exert effective policy control over secret foreign operations at all times. Put another way, the President and National Security Council must effectuate their authority to know what the intelligence establishment is doing and to control it."

Although the President and his staff advisors may have difficulty controlling the intelligence establishment, by studying Professor Ransom's book they can get an objective look at how it is organized and the often politically explosive implications of what it is doing. Such an overview is an indispensable antidote to the self-serving briefings or "snow jobs" with which the intelligence agencies themselves seek to indoctrinate each new Administration.

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THE MITRIONE CASE

Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir: The recent letter which you published by Mr. Ernest Lefever (June, 1970) demonstrates that the man has Christian instincts but he apparently restrains them when it comes to criticizing U.S. programs.

"In terms of moral condemnation, there should be no split-level morality which condemns the occasional, limited, and unauthorized sins of our friends and overlooks or excuses the officially sponsored and massive brutality of our enemies," Mr. Lefever states.

"Our friends," meaning those whose policies are in accord with U.S. self-interest, are only guilty of "occasional," "limited" and "unauthorized" sins. But "our enemies" are guilty of sins which are "officially sponsored" and practice "massive brutality."

In his next sentence Lefever says that "all governments" should be "judged by one ethic" even though it is obvious that he holds a double standard for "friends" and "enemies." It is not surprising that someone whose thinking is so preconditioned would have completely misunderstood the intent of Father Colonnese's interview.

Father Colonnese did not accuse Dan Mitrione of practicing or teaching torture. He said that there is sufficient reason to request a thorough investigation of the Office of Public Safety's role and activities in Latin America. The evidence is admittedly circumstantial and not legally binding. But it was not our intention to prove guilt: only

to state that sufficient evidence exists to warrant a thorough investigation by an impartial source.

Mr. Lefever's biased good-and-bad-guys concept of international social justice apparently rejects the need to scrutinize U.S. programs and policies. He claims that if we wanted to find out the truth, "a simple phone call to the State Department would have yielded all the facts." He then quotes a denial by the A.I.D. director in Rio and recommends that the matter be dropped. What naiveté.

Mr. Lefever then reports that U.S. policy advisory assistance has been withdrawn from some countries "where police power has been abused." Well, Mr. Lefever, it's been abused to criminal proportions in Brazil and there are filing cabinets full of atrocity testimony from Brazilian torture victims to document those barbaric practices.

This office has been supplying Brazilian torture data to Senator Frank Church and Senator William Proxmire who are investigating U.S. assistance to Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America. During Senator Proxmire's hearings yesterday (July 13th) it was announced that the State Department will discontinue the A.I.D. public safety assistance program to Brazil.

The official reason given was that Brazil's police will be sufficiently well trained by the end of fiscal 1972 and will not require additional U.S. assistance. The