STAT

Approved For Release 2004/09/28 : CIA-RDP88-01314R000300380004-8

The Director
Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

OLC 78-3494/a

06 DEC 1978

Letters to the Editor
c/o The New York Times
229 W. 43rd Street
New York, New York 10036

To the Editor:

Representative Samuel S. Stratton in his letter to the New York Times of 30 November 1978 ("America's Spy Gap") expresses his concern that our intelligence collection efforts are now almost exclusively technical, and that we have cut off classic, person-to-person human intelligence collection operations. I can assure you that this is not the case, and that CIA's recent reorganization and reductions in the Operations Directorate in no way downgrade the continuing and vital importance of what Mr. Stratton rightly calls "that ancient art."

When I reported to Congress and to the Agency on the need and rationale for reductions in the Operations Directorate I said: "We need the capabilities of this Directorate as much today as ever. Although new technical means of collection permit us to extend our collection efforts, they only complement, they do not supersede human collectors. Only human collectors can gain access to motives, to intentions, to thoughts and plans. They will always be vital to our country's security." I said then that there would be no meaningful reduction in overseas strength or activities, and that my aims were to ensure operational efficiency and full utilization of talent. At the time it was almost universally perceived within the Agency that to further these aims, and to provide for the continuing hiring and training of new operational personnel, an overstaffed Operations Directorate had to be pared down and streamlined.

I share Congressman Stratton's concern that the United States has the best and most effective intelligence information possible. To ensure this we must attract and retain the best possible intelligence officers, support them in their professional tasks, and see that they have the understanding and appreciation of their employers, the American people. Human intelligence collection is an inexact science, and relies heavily on the courage and ingenuity of our operations officers. Give them a climate of public opinion which is supportive within rules which are sensible and not unduly restrictive, and they will continue to provide the irreplaceable element of human intelligence in our collection program.

Yours sincerely,

/S/

STANSFIELD TURNER

Distribution
Orig - adse
1 - DCI
1 - DDCI
1 - ER
1 - PA
1 - OLC Subject
1 - OLC Chrono
OLC:BLH:sf (1 Dec 78)

Approved For Release 2004/09/28 : CIA-RDP88-01314R000300380004-8