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New era for CIA encourages support

THE SPEECH itself was evidence of the new image being developed by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Adm. Stansfield Turner, head of the CIA and director of Central Intelligence, discussed CIA operations candidly before 650 listeners at a meeting this week of the San Diego Kiwanis Club and the Chamber of Commerce.

Turner's appearance here was part of a frank bid for public support to counter the negative criticism that has plagued the intelligence gathering community over the past few years. He outlined the system of checks and balances set up to monitor CIA activities pending congressional approval of new charters for the agencies which deal in secrets.

The president and vice president, two congressional oversight committees and a three-man Intelligence Oversight Board guard against the sort of abuses that were revealed during the Watergate probe. Under an order issued by President Carter in January government officials were made responsible for avoiding constitutional violations.

But even in the new era of openness, spies are necessary and secrecy must be protected if the nation is to function effectively in world politics.

Turner believes "living in a fishbowl" may have its advantages, because the public will be able to balance achievement against recurring condemnation.

The candor and the close scrutiny of the intelligence community jeopardize the espionage role with the increased potential for "leaks."

By allowing a little light to shine on CIA activities, however, Turner and his colleagues encourage public understanding of the continuing need for cloak-and-dagger operations.

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