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Orig North Shore
Unitarian Church
CIA1.01 Turner, Adm.
(orig under ORG1)

ADDRESS BY ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER, USN

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

NORTH SHORE UNITARIAN CHURCH

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

13 NOVEMBER 1977

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I'm really very pleased to be back here on the North Shore of Chicago-land. I'm sure that all of you who live here appreciate the privileges you have. I look back on the privilege I had of being raised here; it has meant a lot to me ever since. I've lived in a lot of other places across this country and around the world, but I've never seen anywhere that I thought was better for raising a family or putting down roots.

Speaking of roots, my professional roots when I left here were with the United States Navy until just nine months ago when the President of the United States uprooted me and decided that I should become the nation's number one spook. When I came back to Washington from my overseas assignment nine months ago to undertake this new work, I found myself confronted with what appeared to be a beleaguered CIA, beleaguered by several years of criticism, investigation, adverse publicity. Yet as I began to know the organization, I came to feel very fortunate to come to it at this particular time in our nation's history. I felt it was a moment of opportunity, opportunity first because I have gotten to know the people there. I can say to you with great confidence that I doubt that anywhere else in the business world or in government will you find more dedicated, more capable public servants than in the Central Intelligence Agency and the other associated intelligence organizations in our country. They have an admirable record, and with this I am confident that we have the foundation on which to rebuild public confidence which is much deserved.

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The second way it is a moment of opportunity is because I believe that today, out of the crucible of this period of investigations and inquiry, we are forging a new model of intelligence, uniquely an American model of intelligence. The old, the traditional model of intelligence is one where the intelligence organizations maintained maximum secrecy and operated with a minimum of supervisory control. The new model that we are forging is uniquely tailored to the outlooks, the attitudes, and the standards of our country. On the one hand it is open, more open just like our society. On the other hand there is more supervision, more control, just like the checks and balances that characterize our entire governmental process. Now let me explain to you, if I may, a few of the cardinal features of this new American model of intelligence.

First - openness. We are today attempting to share more with you--the public of the United States--than perhaps ever before in the history of our intelligence operations. We are sharing something about the process of intelligence, how we go about doing our business. Now, clearly there are areas here we simply cannot share or they would evaporate and go away. But on the other hand there are lots of things about what we do that we would like people to know more about. To know more, for instance, about the fact that a very large percentage of our effort is not in spying. It's not in doing clandestine things. It's in doing what would be termed on any university campus, or in many major corporations, simply research. We have thousands of people whose task it is to take bits of information that we collect, sometimes openly, sometimes clandestinely, and piece them together to make them fit into a picture puzzle, to provide an evaluation, an estimate that will help the decisionmakers of our country come to better decisions on behalf of you and of me. This is a very ordinary but a very intellectually challenging assignment. It is not spooky.

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Today, in our policy of greater openness, we are trying to share more with you the results of this kind of analysis, this kind of estimating. Every time we do a major intelligence study today, we look back at it and see the label on the cover where it may say secret, top secret, or burn before reading. Whatever it may be, we go through it and we excise those portions which must remain classified to protect our national interests. Then we say to ourselves, is there enough left, is there enough substance here to be of interest and of value and importance to the American public. If there is, we publish it and make it available. You may have heard in March we issued a report on the world energy prospects for the next 10 years. In May we issued one on the world steel outlook, whether it is over-capacity, whether it is under-capacity. In July, on behalf of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, we issued one on the future prospects of the Soviet economy, a rather startling change on what had been predicted in the past.

Now, I will not overdo this. I don't want to let you think we are letting all the secrets out of the bag--I'm sure you wouldn't want us to. If we let out too much, we will lose our sources of information--they would dry up. If we let out too much we would deprive those decisionmakers of important advantages in having inside information on which to base their decisions. But there are, I believe, real advantages to us in opening up within the limits of necessary secrecy. Interestingly, I believe it is going to make it easier to protect our important secrets. Winston Churchill once said if everything is classified secret, nothing is secret. We have too much classified information today. But we also have too many people running around who feel they can take it onto themselves to decide what should be classified and what should be released. They have released information which has done great damage to our

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country, So I hope that by narrowing the purpose of classified information, by releasing as much as we possibly can without harming our national interests, we will protect and respect that which remains classified much more.

Sharing with the public has other advantages. I hope that it has the advantage of giving us a better informed electorate. What is more important to the foundation of democracy in this country? If we, by our releasing information for which you the taxpayers have paid, can contribute to improving the quality of national debate on important issues, I hope we will be providing all of you a service. And in providing that servide we derive a benefit, we derive the benefit of staying in closer touch with the American public. This is important to us, important because we don't want misunderstandings. Much of the criticism of the past was misunderstandings and we don't want those to occur again. But also, everyone of us in authority in the intelligence world of our country today clearly recognizes that we must operate our intelligence mechanism in ways that are acceptable to the ethical and moral standards of our country.

So, put youself in our shoes. It's not easy to devise what those standards are, what we are expected to live up to, because what the country would accept in intelligence operations or other governmental activities twenty years ago perhaps it may not accept today. What was condoned then may be condemned today. We have some difficulty finding just what those standards are today and predicting how they will look in retrospect five, ten and twenty years from now. We have particular difficulty in our business because we cannot go launch trial balloons. We can't take some proposed secret operation and test it out on a million or so Americans and expect it to remain secret. We either do it in a

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secret way or we just don't do it at all. That places on all of us in the Intelligence Community a particular burden, the burden to make difficult judgments as to what things we should and what things we should not do.

Now the new American model that I'm speaking of establishes controls for how these judgments are made. Let me discuss three of those types of controls.

First I would say is self-control, or self-regulation. For instance, today and for some months we have been attempting to write a specific code of ethics for the Intelligence Community. It hasn't been easy. It hasn't been easy to write something that is specific enough to give genuine guidance to our people, yet not so specific as to be totally inhibiting and prevent effectiveness. But the process of attempting to write a code of ethics has been salutary for us, it has forced us to think more about the ethical issues, it has forced us to wrestle with these issues to recognize that, just as in business, just as in other walks of government, the ethical issues are seldom all black or all white. But we ask ourselves what standards we should set as to the lengths we will go to obtain information for the decision-makers of our country. We aren't really facing black and white, clear-cut easy decisions. It would be easy for us to simply establish a standard that says, don't ever do anything that would embarrass the United States of America were it disclosed. Or a standard that says, don't ever treat people of another country differently than you would treat Americans, or a standard that says, treat other countries as openly and as fairly as we believe in our society that people in other countries should be treated.

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But we have to remember that we are blessed because we live in an open society. In an open society an outsider can come in and he can get a good feel, a good grasp of what's going on, what our basic purposes are, the directions we are going, and what the thinking of the people is. He comes; he reads; he looks; he talks to the people; he walks down the street; and he makes a good appraisal of what the United States is watching.

Unfortunately, as we well know, there are closed societies in the world today, closed societies where you don't go and walk down the street and talk to the people, and read newspapers which are not very informative. Yet, we have genuine need of knowing what's going on in many of those closed societies. Would you want us today, your government, to be out there negotiating a new strategic arms limitation agreement with the Soviet Union, if I could not assure you that I thought we had some chance of feeling the pulse of the Soviet Union's political, economic and military intentions, some chance of understanding whether they are adhering to the terms we will establish with them at the next SALT agreement?

And the problem is not limited to military things. Today we are in a world of growing economic interdependence. What happens in the economy of the Soviet Union or the United States has ripple effects across the world horizons. Yet, even here closed societies of the Communist Bloc are not very informative about their economic undertakings. And each one of us here, in this room, is exposed to dangers to our economy, to our pocketbooks, to our taxes, as a result of actions of these other countries that are unexpected and unanticipated. So again I believe we must have some intelligence capabilities for anticipating those events, for getting a feel for the directions they are going in their economy. But this is not easy, it's not clear-cut as to how much of that information is of real value, to what extremes, to what limits we should go in obtaining it. So we have arrived at more controls than the self-control I have just described.

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The second type of control is law and regulation. Congress has passed a number of laws that affect intelligence operations. There is, for instance, a law on wiretapping of United States citizens' communications. On the one hand, this spring the Administration went to the Congress with their revision to the wiretapping law in an effort to find an even better balance in protecting the rights of privacy of American citizens. On the other hand, leaving open some opportunity for the government to obtain information that may be critical to it. When needed the President issues very specific regulations. For instance, there is one in writing today which governs all of us in the Intelligence Community. It says, thou shall not plan or commit assassinations. For the next session of Congress we have worked with the Congressional leaders on a program that will lead to what we will call charters for intelligence. All of our intelligence operations in the CIA, in the Defense Department, elsewhere in the government will have a specific charter which will lay out certain do's and don't's that will govern these operations.

And then we have the third form of control under the American model of intelligence which I call oversight. Back at the beginning I mentioned the difficulty we have with really giving good public oversight and watching trial balloons about secret operations. What has been evolving as a substitute for full public oversight, the kind that pervades our political process and which we would like to have but simply cannot from a practical standpoint, is what I call a surrogate process of public oversight. One of the surrogates is the President of the United States and another is the Vice President. They have, since January 20th, taken a very keen interest in our intelligence process and operations. Another surrogate is a committee called the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence which has been in

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existence for just a year and a half. Senator Adlai Stevenson of our state is a member of that committee and I particularly enjoy working with him. Just yesterday morning he called me with a particular suggestion of real value to me. This committee is a sounding board for us. We go to them with our problems and get feedback as to what they feel the American people want. It's a check on us. They inquire, they hear things, they read things, they call us up and say come over and tell us what's happening and why this is going on. It's a very valuable line of communication between the intelligence world and the United States representatives of the people on Capitol Hill. I'm very pleased that in August the House of Representatives elected to establish a corresponding oversight committee. I'm equally pleased that your own Representative, Robert McClory, is a member of that. I particularly enjoy working with him as well. We look forward to having that same point of contact, the same sounding board in the lower chamber.

Still another oversight surrogate that we have is something called the Intelligence Oversight Board. This consists of three distinguished citizens; ex-Governor Scranton, ex-Senator Gore and Mr. Tom Farmer of Washington, D.C. They are appointed by the President for the sole task of looking into the legality and propriety of the way we are operating the Intelligence Community. You, any of my employees, anyone who wants to, may write to the Intelligence Oversight Board and say that fellow Turner is really messing things up. They don't have to go through me if they work for me, they can go right to this Board if they think there's any illegality, anything being done improperly. The Board them makes its own investigation, they call me in the ask me what in the world is going on, but they do it independently and report only to the President of the United States, and he decides if some action should be taken as a result.

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Another form of control is exercised over what we call covert action. Let me describe very briefly what I mean by this terminology. Covert action is not really intelligence. It is actions taken intended to influence opinions or events in foreign countries without anybody knowing whose point of view it is. This is where CIA has gotten into the most adverse publicity, because it happens that the CIA has been charged by the President over many years as the only agency in the government that will conduct covert action. It's outside the intelligence business, and there are not that many cases. It's on a very, very low scale today. But today as contrasted with the past, covert action, an effort to influence events elsewhere in the world, that is going to be undertaken must be cleared by the National Security Council. The President must place his signature indicating that he wants this done, and I must then go and notify the appropriate committees of the Congress. This is oversight.

Now there are some people that say that all of this oversight may be overkill. Let me be candid with you--there are risks in this process. There is the risk of timidity. There is the risk that as you conduct more and more oversight over this intelligence operation, you will take less and less risks, maybe too few risks for the long-term benefit of our country. It is easy when you sit around the table with a member of a committee and say, gee, that's too much risk, let's not do that. It is more difficult to stand up and be counted, to say, yes, the long-term needs of the country require that you obtain that information. We take that risk.

There is a second risk and that's of security leaks. As you proliferate the number of people who have access to information about our intelligence in order to conduct the oversight process, we run the risk of somebody inadvertently saying something that he shouldn't say.

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I believe it will be two or three years before we settle the balance between these risks of timidity and security leaks and the proper amount of oversight.

In conclusion, I want you to know that I feel very confident today that we will find a satisfactory balance in these next two or three years as we shake down this process, as we mature to this new American model of intelligence. I believe we will and have developed ways of maintaining that necessary level of secrecy, while at the same time conducting your intelligence operations only in ways that will strengthen our open and free society.

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