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~~NEWS FOCUS: TAIL END~~ OF THE HARASSMENTS

BY CHARLES BARTLETT

WASHINGTON - THE PLAN TO REORGANIZE THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES IS AN ILLUSTRATION OF JIMMY CARTER'S PRACTICE OF KICKING UP THE DUST TO SEE WHERE IT BLOWS.

THE REFORM EFFORT IS THE TAIL END OF THE CIA HARASSMENTS LAUNCHED BY SEYMOUR HERSH OF THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE CHURCH COMMITTEE INVESTIGATION. THE PLAN ITSELF IS A CREATION OF YOUNG LAWYERS WHO HAD ROLES IN THE HARASSMENTS AND NOW FIND THEMSELVES ENSCONCED AS CONGRESSIONAL MONITORS OF ACTIVITIES IN WHICH THEY HAVE HAD NO DIRECT EXPERIENCE.

GUIDED BY THESE SELF-STYLED EXPERTS, THE SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN MOVING SLOWLY TOWARD ADVOCACY OF A CONSOLIDATED INTELLIGENCE SERVICE UNDER A CABINET-LEVEL DIRECTOR AND A POTENTIALLY MASSIVE BUREAUCRACY. PROPOSING THE KINDS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES THAT WILL NEVER MEET, THE PLAN IS TAILORED TO THE TASTE OF THE CIA'S CRITICS, NOT TO THE OVERRIDING AIM OF MAKING INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION MORE EFFICIENT.

MANY FIND IT STRANGE THAT CARTER, PLAYING A DEADLY SERIOUS GAME OF POKER WITH THE WORLD, IS WILLING TO RISK DISARRAY IN HIS INTELLIENCE AGENCIES WHEN THE PRINCIPAL CONSEQUENCE OF HIS REFORM WILL BE AN AWKWARD NEW BUREAUCRACY. HIS FIRST MOVE IN INTELLIGENCE, THE NOMINATION OF THEODORE SORENSEN AS CIA DIRECTOR, WAS ANGRILY REJECTED BY CONGRESS. HIS SECOND NOMINEE, ADM. STANSFIELD TURNER, IS ALREADY DEPLETING THE MORALE THAT WAS RESTORED TO THE CIA BY DIRECTOR GEORGE BUSH IN THE FINAL YEAR OF THE FORD ADMINISTRATION.

THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF TURNER'S IMPACT ON THE AGENCY LARGELY STEM FROM AN AGGRAVATION THAT WILL BE ENLARGED BY HIS ELEVATION TO COMMAND A SUPER-INTELLIENCE AGENCY. TURNING HIS BACK ON THE TRADITION OF CLOSE DEALINGS BETWEEN THE DIRECTOR AND HIS OPERATIONS OFFICERS, TURNER HAS MINIMIZED THOSE DEALINGS BY BUILDING BARRIERS OF FORMAL PROCEDURES. SITTING AS A CABINET OFFICER ON A NEW CUSHION OF BUREAUCRATS, HE WILL BECOME EVEN MORE REMOTE.