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Report to Massachusetts

The CIA

From the Office of U. S. Senator Leverett Saltonstall (R. Mass.)

Once again our top foreign intelligence agency, the CIA, has hit newspaper headlines. This time the Central Intelligence Agency is charged with infiltrating our college campuses to use a highly respected university as a cover for cloak and dagger operations in a foreign country. Under their regular policy, the Agency has not commented on the incident.

I believe this policy is necessary for our national security, but as one of the Members of Congress who is responsible for reviewing CIA activities, I felt that the facts as I know them in this particular incident could be made public. In remarks before the Senate last week, I pointed out that since 1954, at the direction of President Eisenhower, the U. S. has been concerned with helping to improve the internal security capabilities of foreign police forces in a number of countries threatened with communist subversion. The National Security Council directed all government agencies, including CIA, to assist in this effort. Because of the urgent need in Vietnam, our AID agency contracted with Michigan State University to carry out such a program there. It was in this connection that CIA officers with specific University agreement participated in the MSU program in Vietnam. The men loaned by CIA to the University worked at training Vietnamese police, not in clandestine activities.

This incident is typical of many of the charges which are leveled at CIA from time to time. We Americans like to know what's going on, but sometimes in the interest of our own security all the facts cannot be made public. Remember, in a free country when we tell our own citizens we are also informing our enemies, for they read our newspapers too.

I think it might be useful at this time to review briefly how the CIA works, what its function is, and to whom it is responsible. Since the case of

George Washington, the United States has been involved in intelligence gathering activities. This is an essential function of our government both for national security and in developing our foreign policy. Not until 1946, however, was the foreign intelligence function organized on a government-wide basis. In 1947, Congress enacted the National Security Act which, among other things, established the National Security Council as the top national security advisory group to the President and created the Central Intelligence Agency to coordinate and develop our intelligence system under the direction of the Council. I acted as Chairman of the Congressional conference committee which hammered out the final version of this important law.

In 1949, the Central Intelligence Agency Act set forth the duties, responsibilities and authorities for the Agency. I also worked on this bill and believe that in Congress clearly recognized the unique requirements of this very sensitive work. The 1949 Act, for example, exempts the CIA from disclosure requirements applicable to other Federal agencies, set up a different expenditure procedure from that used on regular Federal appropriations, and established a separate administrative and personnel authority, to name a few.

Under these laws, the Director of Central Intelligence serves as the principal adviser to the President and National Security Council on all matters of intelligence relating to national security. He coordinates all our foreign intelligence activities through the U. S. Intelligence Board, of which he is chairman. In addition to the CIA, this Board includes the top intelligence people from the Departments of State and Defense, the Atomic Energy Commission and the FBI. I would emphasize that CIA's responsibilities are clearly restricted to foreign intelligence security problems which are covered by the FBI. The Board de-

velops many types of intelligence estimates and reports, both general and specialized, including a daily summary for the President and his top foreign policy and defense advisers.

It is a popular misconception that the majority of CIA's employees are agents of the James Bond variety who are engaged in various types of clandestine and subversive activities. Actually, most Agency employees are engaged in the business of collecting, processing, and evaluating information. The Agency is foremost in our government in their use of mechanized data-processing facilities. But while mechanization has literally made this huge task possible, ultimately we must rely on those persons who exercise a judgment factor, those who make up our intelligence estimates based on the information available to them. This work, while relatively unglamorous, is extremely interesting and challenging. Yet these people must serve in almost total anonymity. They cannot discuss their work, even with their own families. You can imagine what a strain this could be.

The Agency, of course, does get involved in some cloak and dagger activity. This is necessarily part of an effective intelligence operation. But the covert aspects should not be overemphasized because the heart of the Agency's effort is the processing of information for the President and his principal advisers.

The public usually hears about CIA when we have an "incident" abroad or when one of our policies or programs supposedly blows up. You hear cries that our intelligence people have failed. Certainly we have made some mistakes and our system is not perfect. But we should remember that the CIA cannot advertise its successful accomplishments.

Mr. Allen Dulles, a former and CIA director, in his book, "The Craft of Intelligence," points to

a few of our successes. He explains what was required for us to know about Soviet military and missile plans and developments over the last decade and states that our "intelligence collected on Soviet missiles has been excellent as to the nature and quality of the potential threat. Our intelligence was also both good and timely as to Soviet production of high-thrust engines and the work on Sputnik." This was most important to our own defense and space plans. Of more recent interest, our intelligence system provided a most amazingly accurate estimate on when the Chinese would attempt their first nuclear test.

It is sometimes forgotten that we were able, through CIA aerial reconnaissance photos, to immediately identify Soviet installation in Cuba of missiles capable of reaching the U. S. Earlier ground reports had failed to reveal the exact nature of this work. This detailed information enabled President Kennedy to confront the Russians and force the withdrawal of the missiles. Of course neither I nor the Agency can discuss some of their current activities, but the public record does show instances where our effective intelligence prepared us for important international events.

Allegations and charges that the CIA operates without restraint, without control or direction either from the President or from Congress are of course not true. Neither does the Agency "make" foreign policy as is sometimes charged. CIA is directly responsible to the National Security Council, and no Agency action is undertaken without NSC approval or direction. The CIA and other intelligence forces are also under the watchful eye of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board which is responsible for advising our Chief Executive on their objectives and conduct; and, of course, ultimate responsibility for the CIA rests with the President of the United States.

Congress, which created this Agency, also has special subcommittees of both the House and Senate Armed Services and Appropriations Committees which review CIA activities. I have been privileged to serve on these Senate subcommittees for many years now, and thus I believe that I can speak on this matter from greater knowledge and experience than most people. We review CIA policy and programs, and their budget and expenditure of funds. I can assure you that every Director of the CIA has always been most frank with us, most willing to answer any question, and most helpful in keeping us abreast of the Agency's activities and problems.

I have known and greatly respected all of our CIA directors. Allen Dulles, with whom I had a close personal, as well as official, relationship, often came both to my office and home to keep me fully informed and to discuss critical matters in foreign affairs or defense. After Mr. Dulles came John McCone and now Admiral William Raborn, whom I first knew when he was working on our Polaris missile system. As the Directors of CIA, all of these men have contributed outstanding service to our country.

Admiral Raborn says that he believes the key to his present job is to "assure that we have the system—both today and in the future—which will best serve our country in insuring that full, accurate, and timely knowledge on all foreign matters of interest and concern is in the hands of the President and those upon whose judgment our foreign policy is formulated and carried out." This certainly is the mission for which Congress established the CIA, and

I personally believe that we can be confident that those anonymous people in our intelligence community are doing an excellent job for all of us.

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