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Newsweek

The New Espionage



CIA
Chief
Richard
Helms

THE NEW ESPIONAGE AMERICAN STYLE



Encrypted communications: The sign to headquarters in the Langley woods

One day in the fall of 1962, President John F. Kennedy summoned his top intelligence advisers to the White House for an urgent conference. Russian missiles had been discovered in Cuba, and in planning the U.S. response that was shortly to unfold as the Cuban missile crisis, it was essential to have the most accurate possible estimate of the Soviet capacity for nuclear war. The chiefs of military intelligence arrived from the Pentagon with elaborate tables showing the latest projections of Russian rocket power: if the U.S.S.R. had produced all the missiles it was capable of producing, they indicated, the American advantage in a showdown would be perilously slight. The man from the Central Intelligence Agency, on the other hand, brought a single piece of paper. This spare document revealed that the Soviet arsenal was in fact much weaker than had been feared—and thus John Kennedy discovered that he had the muscle to twist Nikita Khrushchev's arm in the confrontation that lay ahead.

The source of this crucial information was Oleg Penkovskiy, a colonel in Soviet military intelligence who had been passing vital Russian secrets to the West for sixteen months, only to be caught in November 1962 and executed six months later. He was a brave but not particularly admirable character, a vain neurotic who liked to dress up in British or American colonel's uniforms that Western intelligence gladly lent him during his occasional trips outside the Soviet Union; once, when he was in London, he even demanded—unsuccessfully—to be presented to the Queen. But he is a figure of the very front rank in the history of American intelligence—not only because he was the secret hero of the Cuban missile crisis, but also because he was very possibly one of the last of a vanishing species, the big-power super-spy.

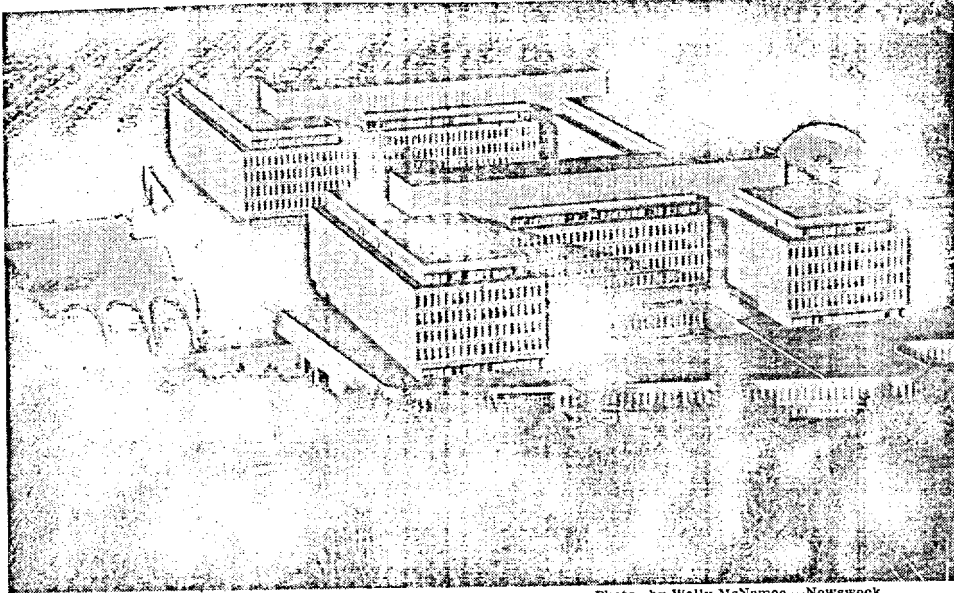
For the American intelligence game has changed radically since Oleg Penkovskiy's time—the secret agents have dwindled in numbers and their secrets have declined in importance, the cloaks have turned into computers and the daggers into satellites. Technology is the new order of the day: where men once risked the

new weapon or chart his order of battle, orbiting cameras and over-the-horizon radio scanners now deliver most of the desired information untouched by human hands. In the once glamorous ranks of the CIA, the patriotic adventurer has given way to the earnest academic. And bureaucracy has transformed what began as an amateurish happy few into a sprawling intelligence conglomerate encompassing more than a dozen government agencies, 200,000 employees and a budget of some \$6 billion a year.

Feats of Prediction

On the surface, it has been a remarkably successful transformation. The man who has presided over it, CIA director Richard Helms (page 30), enjoys one of the most exalted reputations in Washington. U.S. intelligence wins high marks, too, from the secret services of its allies: once they shook their heads over its bumbling at the Bay of Pigs, now they envy its technological wonders (page 38) and admire its feats of prediction—the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, for example, and Israel's quick victory in the six-day war. The Pentagon papers credited the CIA with the most hardheaded and accurate official assessments of the war in Vietnam, and even some of its left-wing detractors were obliged to admit that the spooks seemed to be doing something right. The old accusation of an "invisible government"—fueled by the revelations of CIA funding of the National Student Association—has begun to fade, and the agency reports that its college recruitments are back to normal.

But all is not well within the intelligence brotherhood. Criticism has sprung up from the unlikeliest of quarters—within the government itself. In Congress, the once-tame intelligence "watchdogs" have begun to growl with a certain menace. When such old Senate friends as Allen Ellender and John Stennis start talking about cutting intelligence budgets, when the House Armed Services Committee authorizes public hearings (scheduled for next year) on the CIA



Photos by Wally McNamee—Newsweek

for the first time, it is time for even as peerless a Washington pro as Helms to look to his defenses.

More serious still, the White House has expressed its displeasure with certain features of intelligence work. A fortnight ago, Mr. Nixon moved to bring its quality and costs more tightly under control. He invested Helms with new authority to oversee all the intelligence agencies, paring away budgetary fat and professional overlap wherever possible. With Helms elevated to super-spy-master, day-to-day operation of the CIA fell to his deputy, Lt. Gen. Robert E. Cushman Jr., 56, of the Marine Corps. And in the White House, Mr. Nixon solidified Henry Kissinger's power to evaluate intelligence reports and, in particular, to make them more responsive to the needs of the policymakers.

Outwardly, these maneuvers might appear to be a mild bureaucratic rebuke to the intelligence community; their real punch was delivered in a supersecret Presidential "decision memorandum" spelling out Mr. Nixon's dissatisfactions and desires in meticulous detail. His major complaints are faulty intelligence, runaway budgets and a disparity between a glut of facts and a poverty of analysis.

Though the President holds Helms and his agency in generally high regard, he has been irritated by a series of intelligence community failures. The SALT talks had to be delayed for months while the White House tried to sort out discrepancies between the various agencies on how well the U.S. could detect possible Soviet violations of any arms control agreement. Estimates of the Viet Cong supplies that used to flow through the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville were off by several orders of magnitude, and there was a complete failure to predict the ferocity of North Vietnamese resistance to the ill-starred campaign in Laos early this year. The elaborate commando raid on an empty North Vietnamese prison camp at Son Tay still rankles, and the White House is angry at the intelligence community for not catching sooner

the Russian-built surface-to-air missiles that suddenly sprouted in the Middle East cease-fire zone in 1970.

Some of these gripes may conceal mistakes more properly laid at the Administration's own door. Intelligence officers insist, for example, that they gave clear warning that Egypt would use the cease-fire to strengthen its forward defenses, but that the policymakers chose to ignore them. In any case, Mr. Nixon seems intent upon removing all possible bugs from the intelligence system as it faces what is likely its most critical test of recent years: solving the mystery of the apparent Soviet missile build-up.

Secret of the Silos

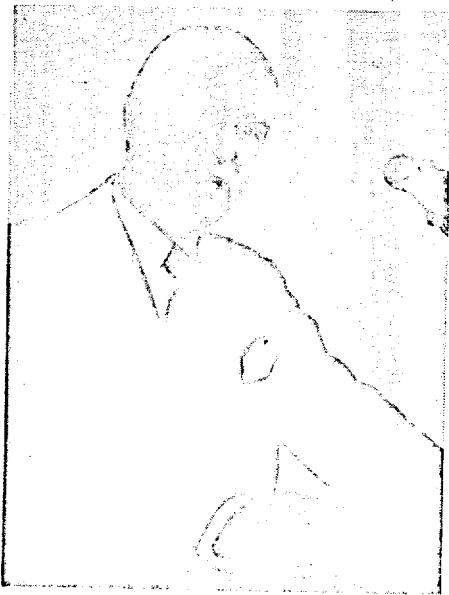
For about a year, the Russians have been digging new silos at their missile sites, some of them bigger than any holes they have ever dug before. What is going to fill them—an improved version of the giant SS-9, accurate enough to knock out the U.S.'s underground Minutemen, or perhaps some entirely new missile with capacities as yet unknown? And what intent lies behind these developments—are the Soviets possibly striving for a "first-strike capability" that would break the current nuclear standoff between the two superpowers? Upon the answers to these questions hinge several key U.S. decisions—in the SALT talks, in the Middle East, in defense budgeting. "We are at a moment of transition, a very critical moment," says a top Pentagon planner. "Either the Soviets slow down, or we must speed up."

The technological boom in intelligence gathering has produced a cascade of raw data without any accompanying improvement in methods of analysis. In the intelligence trade, where according to ancient tradition, an apparently insignificant fact may offer the key to some vital revelation, there seems to be an irresistible urge to collect all the information possible—and the age of the satellite, the computer and the hypersensitive radio have multiplied the amount of data. The facts into a mighty ocean of data. The

glut has surpassed the human capacity to absorb—"they had rooms filled with data that weren't analyzed because there was no analyst on the payroll to do it," reports one Administration aide who recently investigated the intelligence agencies.

What's more, the mere availability of an interesting fact creates an overwhelming temptation to report it, even when it can be of no possible use. The secrets that intelligence uncovers often seem to serve the interests of human curiosity rather than national security. Some Presidents are delighted by these idle revelations—John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson used to love poring over raw intelligence reports—but not, apparently, Richard Nixon.

Every morning not long after dawn, a black Plymouth from the CIA rolls through the southwest gate of the White House bearing a stiff, gray, legal-size folder marked President's Daily Briefing.



Wally McNamee—Newsweek

Helms: Farewell to the glory days

It is a compendium of the most secret reports on world developments of the past 24 hours, and only three other copies are delivered: one to the Secretary of State, one to the Secretary of Defense and one to the Attorney General. Henry Kissinger carries the President's copy into the Oval Office about 9:30—but ordinarily the President doesn't even bother to read it, he simply asks Kissinger to summarize the highlights. Mr. Nixon does tuck it away with a batch of memos for his evening reading, and he may—or may not—read it later. Only rarely does Kissinger succumb to the temptation of giving the President a tidbit of raw intelligence: one item that he did deliver was the news from Hanoi that the North Vietnamese had loosed a band of roving barbers on search-and-shear missions among the city's long-haired youngsters.

Mr. Nixon is simply not interested in secrets for their own sake. All too often, the White House complains, intelligence reports fail to supply the analytical

THE COOL PRO WHO RUNS THE CIA

In his pinstripe business suit with pocket handkerchief flourishing just so, Richard McGarrah Helms at 58 epitomizes the American meritocracy. He could be an urbane corporation counsel on Wall Street, but in fact he oversees the world's most massive intelligence complex, and the new directive from President Nixon, charging the director of the Central Intelligence Agency with face-lifting the entire American spy effort, only enhances Helms's awesome authority.

No other intelligence chief in the world is so patently visible. Even NATO allies do not admit owning a man like Helms, although his counterparts exist. "Europeans accept that government should operate in a covert way," suggests a British diplomat, "but answerability is the whole point of your system. So I suppose a Richard Helms must have an official and open existence."

In more than five years as CIA director, Richard Helms has emerged as a bureaucrat of cool competence. It is not surprising that Helms should appear so serene while much of official Washington throbs with self-conscious activity. He joined the CIA at its birth and grew along with it, the first director to rise through the ranks. He has been privy to almost every CIA triumph and fiasco since 1947, and those 24 years have taught him survival, not just overseas but back in Washington, too. "To succeed in this town," he once told a friend, "you have to walk with a very quiet tread."

Candor, within the obvious limits of his job, has become a Helms trademark. He maintains a cozy liaison with traditionally suspicious Congressional committees. Says a Senate staffer: "Committee members find him the most forthright of all the administrators who come before us. He is certainly more frank in his field than Mel Laird is when he comes to talk about the Defense Department."

Helms's professional detachment was taxed during the Johnson days when Walt Rostow massaged intelligence reports submitted to the President by underlining in yellow crayon whatever buttressed his own persuasion. But Helms sidestepped any confrontation. He was so self-effacing that an LBJ lieutenant recalls: "I thought he had the personality of a dead mackerel. But he certainly had the respect of the President."

At White House lunches under LBJ, Helms assiduously avoided venturing into policy decisions. "If he had the facts," says a participant, "he presented them quietly and quickly without any great fanfare or interjection of his personal opinions. If he didn't have the facts, he would admit, 'I don't know about that, Mr. President, but I'll try to find out the answers as soon as possible.'"

Under Helms, the CIA delivered. Partly as a consequence, he is among the few

holdovers from the Johnson era in a top Washington post today. His cutback of escalating CIA technology expenses in 1968, with a resulting budget reduction, ingratiated him with President Nixon.

If the spymaster's more dramatic exploits remain shrouded, Helms has dropped clues aplenty to his personality. The son of an expatriate aluminum executive, young Dick was educated at posh schools in Switzerland and Germany, but it was at Williams College that he began to show the kind of sober purposefulness that has marked his career. By the time he graduated in 1935, Helms had edited the yearbook and the newspaper, served as junior and then senior class president and earned his Phi Beta Kappa key. Awed classmates voted him "most respected" and "most likely to succeed."

Through a friend's father, Helms hustled a job in the Berlin bureau of United Press (now UPI) and as a 23-year-old cub correspondent scooped up an exclusive interview with Adolf Hitler. After two years, Helms returned home to the business side of the now-defunct Indianapolis Times, working up to national advertising manager. While there, he married Julia Bretzman Shields, a high-strung sculptress divorced from the Barbasol shaving czar, Frank B. Shields.

Into the Spy Establishment

With the war, Helms completed Navy Reserve training at Harvard and, in 1943, volunteered for the Office of Strategic Services. He wound up at war's end working for Allen Dulles in Berlin. After the OSS was dismantled, Helms followed Dulles into the embryonic Central Intelligence Agency. Helms quickly tuned in to the politics of the cold war. (When a Russia-bound Williams classmate wrote him inquiring about Communism in 1959, Helms whipped off a 43-page typed analysis of Communist aggression, which he entitled "Conversation with a Doubting Thomas.")

For fifteen years, Helms disappeared into the CIA's "plans" section, the euphemism for the group handling covert activities. In 1962, he took over the section. He was bypassed for director in favor of outsiders, but in mid-1966, after a stint as deputy director, was finally appointed by Johnson to run the CIA.

But as Helms's public fortunes rose, his home life deteriorated. In June 1967, after 28 years of an increasingly unhappy marriage, Helms left his wife. They were divorced in September 1968. Three months later, he married a former neighbor, Cynthia Ratcliff McKelvie, the mother of four children and herself newly divorced from a prominent surgeon.

Though he earns \$42,500 a year, the Helmses live frugally in a \$220-a-month high-rise apartment in Chevy Chase, Md. English-born Cynthia, a handsome

redhead, works part-time for the Smithsonian Institution's radio station. She is also a dedicated ecologist who helped found Concern, Inc., a Washington conservation group that focuses on recycling. Cynthia Helms has even converted her husband. Now everything they buy must come in biodegradable containers.

Helms knows how to leave his problems at the office and he can sleep soundly at night. "I know when Dick has had a bad day just because he looks that way when he comes home," Cynthia Helms told NEWSWEEK's Elizabeth Peer, "but I also know he's not going to tell me about it." Before dinner, he drinks a single Scotch. On Fridays, he abandons himself to a dry Martini with a lemon twist; Cynthia trots out beforehand to buy the weekly lemon. Once a week they take in a movie. Helms also enjoys reading spy novels sent by his son, a New York attorney. Weekends, the Helmses commute to Wit's End, Cynthia's shore cottage in Lewes, Del.

Security precautions are elaborate but imperceptible. A CIA specialist periodically combs the Chevy Chase apartment for "bugs." The phone number is unlisted, though it appears in the Washington social register. Helms also has a direct line to CIA headquarters. A third phone, to the White House, was taken out during an LBJ economy drive.

Helms is second only to Henry Kissinger as a prize catch on the Washington social circuit—partly because it's chic to have a master spy to dinner and partly because he is such an attentive companion for the ladies. Washington dinner parties invariably degenerate into shop talk, and Helms is in no position to chime in. So he finesses the situation. "He has that nice quality of letting a woman talk, too," says Mrs. Jack Valenti, wife of the former LBJ aide. Helms used to carry a pocket-size beeper so



Wally McNamara—Newsweek

Wife Cynthia: A lemon every Friday

the agency could always summon him, but "the damned thing kept going off during the middle of dinner parties." So CIA technicians have devised one that now vibrates discreetly instead.

'Let the Wordsmiths Handle That'

Helms logs a ten-hour workday, with a half-day Saturday. Sometimes he rises early to play tennis, wearing long white flannels even in muggy summer. Then a black Chrysler takes him to the CIA campus across the Potomac in Langley, Va., where he rides a private elevator to his cream-colored office. After perusing the overnight reports, Helms meets his top aides for 9 a.m. coffee in the conference room. He dislikes long meetings and can dismiss a subject with an impatient: "Let's let the wordsmiths handle that." The agency structure is still informal enough that a vital field report can reach Helms's desk minutes after it arrives, but Helms insists that all regular memos be tight, literate and neat. Before he leaves at 6:30 p.m., he reads over the intelligence summary to be given the President the next day.

In reorganizing the intelligence network, Helms will have less time for agency routine, though he has been able to assume important new responsibilities without having to surrender many old prerogatives. Henry Kissinger still stands between him and President Nixon, but a White House aide notes: "Henry respects Helms as much as he respects anyone around here." Indeed, Richard Helms may yet be able to parlay his position into the sort of lifetime tenure enjoyed by J. Edgar Hoover at the FBI.

"Richard Helms has to be the real pro in government today," says one top intelligence specialist. "He's not the big operator like Allen Dulles and whether he's the manager that John McCone was we're going to find out. His brief has always been cool, careful professionalism." At a time when the United States seeks a lower profile abroad, Helms's calibrated touch may be exactly what the

bridges that a policymaker needs to cross the gap from information to decision. The word has been passed to collect fewer facts and assess them more fully. And the new Kissinger review panels are designed not, as some critics suggested last week, to screen out views contrary to Administration policy but to draw in more information in a form that is useful.

Overruns and Overlaps

Technology has also infected the intelligence agencies, as it has the Pentagon, with cost overruns. "The overruns on these satellites," says a horrified White House staffer, "make the C-5A transport plane look like a piker." Modern spying does not come cheap, the Administration is quite prepared to admit, but neither does it require the extravagant overlaps between different intelligence agencies or the excesses of trivia amassed in the name of thoroughness. Hence Helms's reinforced powers as intelligence super-chief, with authority to oversee other agencies' budgets and to reorder their priorities.

Neither Richard Helms nor Richard Nixon wants to weld the intelligence gatherers into a single streamlined mechanism. The President, according to one of his aides, "has given careful thought to what degree diversity in the intelligence community is an essential luxury of a democratic society." If there were only a single agency and if on some crucial point its information were wrong, this staffer warns, "by God, it would be all over. Having some diverse views coming to the White House as they do now means one intelligence service is effectively acting as a check on another." So the revamped order of battle of the intelligence community (chart, page 32) will probably endure for some time. Its main intelligence-gathering components:

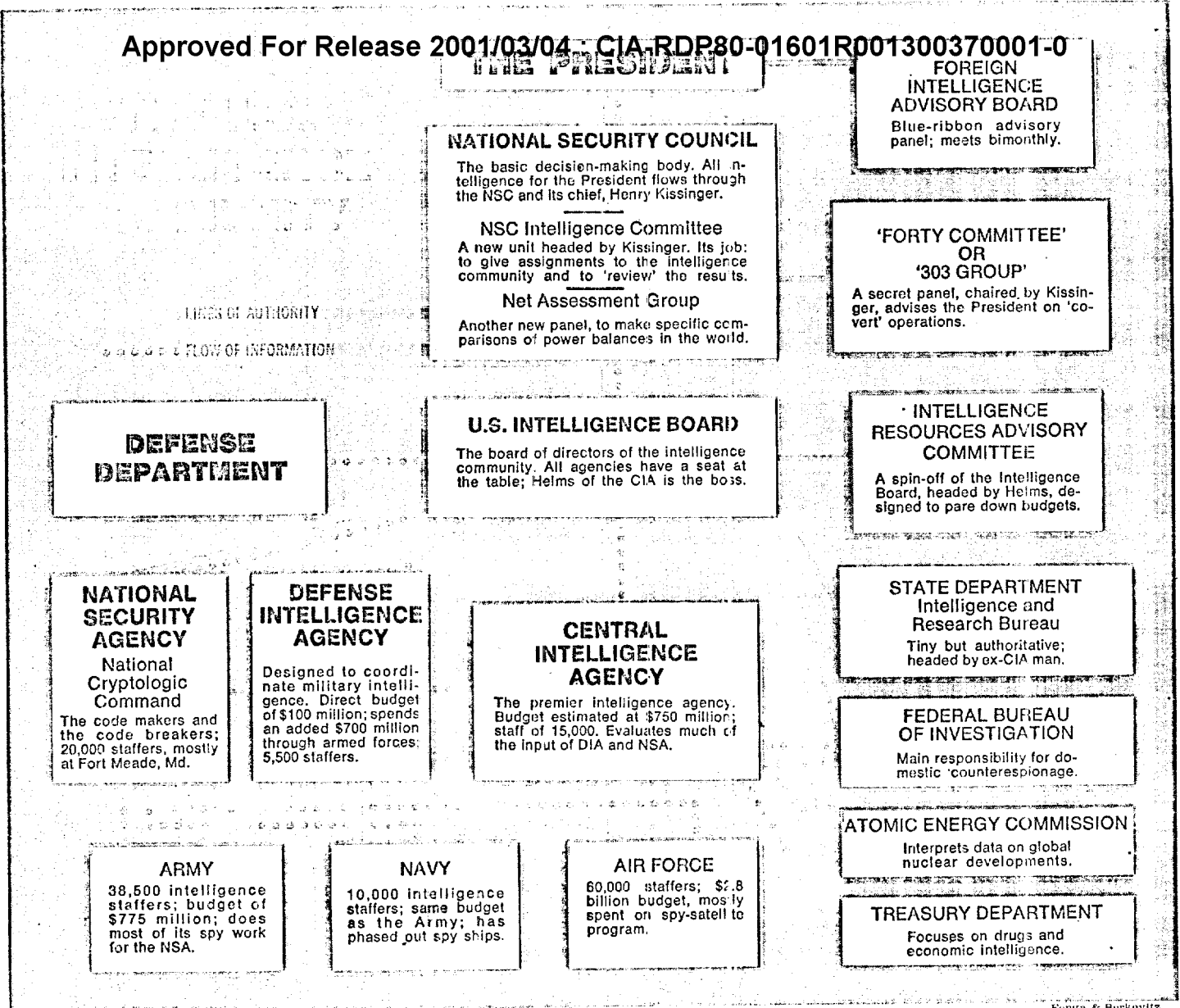
NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY: These are the code breakers. They sponge up the secret communications of foreign governments (both friendly and otherwise), feed them into what is probably the most elaborate computer system anywhere in the world and reportedly boast remarkable success in cracking the most complicated modern ciphers. They also devise the encrypting systems used by the U.S. Government. The American world lead in computer technology gives the U.S. a sizable edge over the Soviets in this critical area, but it is shrinking. NSA's staff of linguists, analysts and mathematical wizards, is based behind a dense security curtain at Fort Meade, Md., but it also directs a network of electronic surveillance throughout the world.

DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY: Defense Secretary Robert McNamara devised this outfit in 1961 to try to consolidate the various service intelligence units. Unfortunately, says one former top intelligence official, it was "a brainchild that died at birth." The three service units still exist separately, and DIA has long been a "honey pot" on loan and without much power of its own. Accord-



Bernard Gotfryd—Newsweek

Helms at play: Flannels rear-round



ing to one former Air Force man, the worst features of the American intelligence system are here on most glaring display: it is, he says, "like some giant vacuum cleaner picking up millions of pieces of lint that we store in our computers." Recently, DIA has trimmed itself down and toned itself up a bit, but there is more to be done. Just this month, a new post—Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence—was created for precisely that purpose.

ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE: These are the big spenders. Some \$5 billion of the \$6 billion annual intelligence budget pours out of military coffers, but this is because the services manage most of the vast hardware involved; the Air Force, with the reconnaissance satellite program, carries the main load. If major budget cuts are to be made, they will fall most heavily here: Senator Ellender, for example, has demanded that \$500 million be trimmed forthwith.

STATE DEPARTMENT INTELLIGENCE

AND RESEARCH DIVISION: No spies need apply here; INR's main sources are Foreign Service officers in U.S. embassies abroad. It scores high on analysis, but CIA's technological tricks give the agency a huge advantage that has recently left INR farther and farther behind in the competition for the President's ear. A former top CIA man, Ray Cline, was made head of INR; and its star may rise again.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION: All counterspying against foreign agents within the U.S. is conducted by the FBI. Besides the obvious defensive benefits, counterespionage can yield important clues to the limits of an enemy's knowledge by spotting the targets of his spying within your own borders. "In one case a few years ago," recalls a counterintelligence agent, "we traced a pattern of Russian efforts to obtain data here that gave us an absolute picture of their level of development in long-range submarines." Unfortunately, during the declining years of J. Edgar Hoover's reign,

the quality of FBI counterspying has deteriorated sharply, and working relations between the bureau and the CIA have grown distant and strained.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY: This, of course, is the hub of the American intelligence universe. Its director is chief not only of his own agency but also—even before Mr. Nixon's latest directive reinforced his powers—of the entire U.S. information-gathering enterprise. Its employees compose what is very likely, with the possible exception of the Mafia, the most closed corporation in American society. The road to their sprawling headquarters in the woods of Langley, Va., is marked with a modest sign announcing Fairbank Highway Research Station (a Transportation Department agency that does indeed maintain an outpost nearby). They work together, play together and sometimes live together; they go to the same doctors and, if need be, to the same psychiatrists; their talents and triumphs are rarely sung outside the agency's walls and of-

ten not even within their eyes when they quit, their friends can never quite be sure that they are not simply establishing a deeper cover. The CIA is not a profession; it is a way of life.

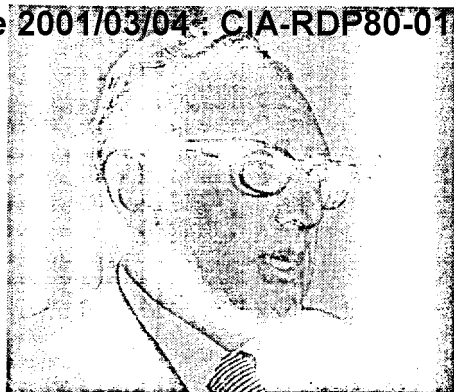
It is a changing one, however. In the cold-war days—from the CIA's founding in 1947 until, say, the mid-1960s—its emphasis was on covert operations, on spying and, as they came to be nicknamed, "dirty tricks." The mainstay of the agency then was the officer overseas. He bribed the local journalists to plant stories favorable to the United States ("I guess I've bought as much newspaper space as the A&P," chortles a former CIA man), or quietly helped bankroll a political movement that might be of use some day (the headquarters that Charles de Gaulle maintained in Paris until his return to power in 1958 was partially funded by the CIA). The CIA man checked on private lives or credit ratings to see who might be blackmailed or bribed into working as agents. (The agents who volunteered, such as Penkovskiy, were almost always the best—"when you buy a spy," points out a veteran, "you're really renting him until someone comes along who offers him more money.")

Pursuit of a Red Face

The old-time agent kept an eye on the Russian opposition, with occasionally amusing results. "I remember only too well," recalls a British secret agent, "one occasion when I was on post in Berlin and we were given the word that a 'face' [Soviet double agent] was coming in. My brief was to follow him, to pick him up at a certain house near the border. This I did, and I stayed with this chap for days. Thought I was really on to something. He appeared to have access to U.S. military HQ in Berlin and freedom of the embassy in Bonn. My people were getting terribly excited about the whole thing. We eventually discovered that the chap I was following was CIA, and he was following me, sending in reports about my access to the British Embassy and so on. Never located the face, either."

Occasionally there was derring-do of a more momentous nature—some of it well-known by now. There was the 1953 coup in Iran that returned the Shah to power and thus kept rich oil fields from the Russians, the Guatemala uprising in 1954 that overthrew a leftist government, the 1955-56 Berlin tunnel through which U.S. operatives tapped the telephones from East Berlin to Poland and Moscow—Helms had a hand in planning and executing this affair.

And many exploits have remained obscure. There was, for example, the heretofore untold story of successful intrigue in the Congo. Early in 1961, Antoine Gizenga sprung from the motley ranks of Congolese politics to make his bid for dominance of the infant republic. He had attended the Prague Institute for African Affairs, had spent six weeks in Russia



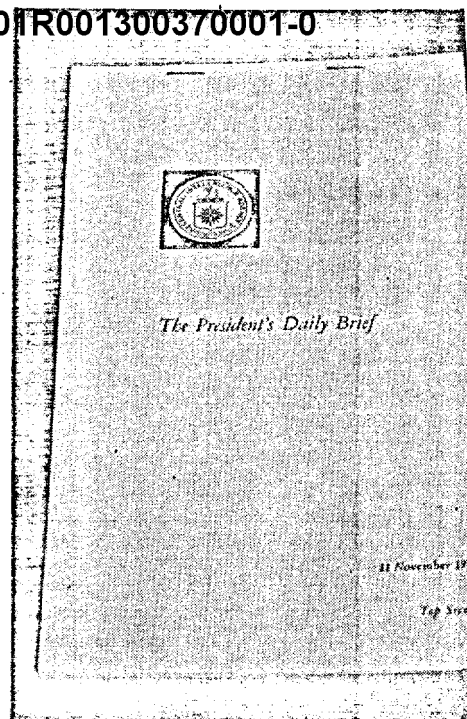
The medium and the message: Henry Kissinger and the top-secret PDB

and was clearly, as Washington saw it, Moscow's new man in the Congo. Gizenga broke away from the United Nations-backed Congolese Government and set up a regime of his own in Oriental Province, arming 6,000 troops with smuggled Russian guns and paying them, thanks to Soviet financing, at the princely rate (for Africa) of \$180 a month. The word was sent out from the White House authorizing covert operations to stop him.

It was clear to the CIA that Gizenga's Russian support—both the money and the weapons—was arriving via the Sudan, and a message arrived from friendly European agents that a Czech ship was bound for Port of Sudan with a cargo of guns disguised as Red Cross packages for refugee relief in the Congo. A direct appeal to the port authorities to inspect the crates would never work, the CIA's man in Khartoum realized; the Sudanese would have to be faced with public exposure of the contraband. Appropriate arrangements were made on the wharves before the Czech ship docked. "If my memory serves me right," a former CIA man says, "it was the second crane load. The clumsy winch operator let the crates drop and the dockside was suddenly covered with new Soviet Kalashnikov rifles."

That left the money. By late in 1961, Gizenga's troops had grown restive: they had not been paid since the first Soviet subsidy arrived months before. Gizenga appealed to Moscow, and KGB operatives obligingly delivered \$1 million in U.S. currency to Gizenga's delegation in Cairo. From an agent who had penetrated Gizenga's Cairo office, the CIA learned that a third of the money was to be delivered by a courier who would take a commercial flight to Khartoum, wait in the transit lounge to avoid the baggage search at customs, and then proceed by another plane to Juba, a town on the Congolese border. Plans were laid accordingly.

When the Congolese courier arrived in Khartoum and settled into the transit lounge, his suitcase between his knees, he was startled to hear himself being paged and ordered to proceed immediately to the customs area. After a mo-



ment of flustered indecision, he took the bag over to a corner and left it unobtrusively near some lockers before leaving for customs. At that point, a CIA man sauntered out of the men's room, picked up the suitcase, and headed out the back door where two cars were waiting with motors running. Not long afterward, Gizenga's government fell; it was said that his troops suffered from shortages of arms and were upset because they hadn't been paid.

Rule of the Knights Templar

These were the glory days, albeit overcast now and then by disasters such as the Bay of Pigs. A rousing sense of mission invigorated the agency then, the camaraderie of unheralded warriors on a lonely battlement of the free world. Few would have expressed it quite that way—spies are an urbane lot on the whole—but that was the spirit of the fraternity, and it called forth a special breed. Mostly Eastern and Ivy League, often well-born and moderately rich, they were moved by a high sense of patriotism and a powerful undercurrent of noblesse oblige. Many of them were veterans of the elite Office of Strategic Services under the colorful "Wild Bill" Donovan during World War II, and they carried forward its high esprit. Men such as Allen Dulles, Kermit Roosevelt, Frank Wisner, Richard Eissell, Tracy Barnes, Robert Amory and Desmond Fitzgerald—the "Knights Templar," one former colleague calls them—ruled the agency in the cold-war days and set its adventurous tone.

But this created problems. The bright young men attracted into the agency tended to assume that the road to advancement lay strewn with "dirty tricks." Trained to bribe, recruit and suborn, that is precisely what they did when they were sent into the field, even when the

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THE BEEP, BLINK AND THRUM OF SPY GADGETRY

On a mountain top outside Taipei, a U.S. Air Force Chinese-language specialist tunes his radio receiver in on mainland China's air-defense network and starts a tape. Across the continent, a supersonic aircraft called the SR-71 (for strategic reconnaissance) streaks along the Soviet border, its "side-looking" radar recording electronic "pictures" of a missile installation 50 miles inland. Somewhere over the Arctic, a giant "Big Bird" reconnaissance satellite ejects a film pack containing close-up photos of still another installation; the film is snatched in midair by a rendezvousing plane and whisked back to a U.S. air base for analysis. Around the world—and above it—whole battalions of super-sophisticated devices, beeping and blinking and thrumming round the clock, provide the electronic eyes and ears of U.S. intelligence.

The nation's arcane arsenal of gadgetry includes the massive \$1 billion code-breaking and data-storage complex that the National Security Agency operates from its Fort Meade, Md., headquarters—one of the largest conglomerations of computers in the world. But the bulk of the costly hardware is arrayed on the frontiers of the Communist world where the American intelligence-gathering process actually takes place.

Targets: The Air Force's SR-71 is the chief spy plane in the arsenal—a 2,000-mph, extremely high-altitude successor to the U-2. The U.S. long ago stopped intelligence flights over China and the Soviet Union. But the SR-71 still cruises the borders of both nations, loaded with cameras and side-looking radar that can pinpoint intelligence targets (often selected by the CIA) many miles inland.

Nowadays, however, most of the peeping is done by Air Force satellites stuffed with an astonishing assortment of gadgets. They are equipped with black-and-white, color and TV cameras, of course. But in addition, these eyes-in-the-sky carry sight "sensing" devices, including infra-red cameras for night photography, radar to peer through cloud cover, radiation counters to detect nuclear explosions, heat sensors to record rocket launches, and even an experimental infra-red sensor and microwave radar to detect a submerged nuclear submarine by the slightly warmer water it leaves in the wake of its reactors.

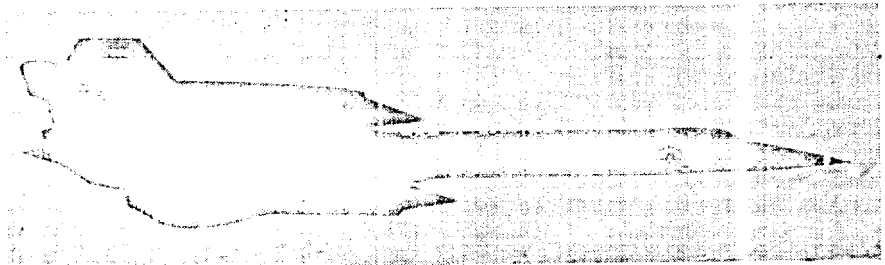
The new mainstays of the U.S.'s skyborne early-warning system are multipurpose Project 647 surveillance satellites. Working in pairs, these "constellations," as they are called, sweep across all of European Russia and the Asian land mass in "dwelling"

orbits 22,000 miles high. On board is still more equipment for sniffing out nuclear blasts and rocket firings—as well as long-range TV cameras to flash instant pictures back to intelligence centers on earth if a blast or a launching goes off.

'Bird': The most recent addition to U.S. reconnaissance snooping is a 10-ton satellite called "Big Bird," first launched at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California last June. Streaking through its orbit, Big Bird scans broad land areas with one wide-angle camera, radios what it sees back to ground stations, and, on order, turns a giant "narrow angle" second camera on targets of special interest for close-up pictures—a multiple function that used to require at least two less sophisticated satellites. One of Big Bird's first orders: to find and fix the dozen or so medium-range ballistic missile sites believed to be deployed throughout China. And it probably did: cam-

names officers radioed to their troops.

The major portion of America's radio intercept intelligence probably derives from a super sensitive, global network of ground stations like the one the Air Force maintains at Onna Point, Okinawa, 16 miles north of Kadena Air Base. Here, inside a windowless concrete compound on a craggy coastal promontory, Chinese-language specialists, Morse code "ditty catchers" and tactical analysts man banks of radio consoles round the clock. Their job, and that of more than 50,000 Army, Navy and Air Force specialists like them at listening posts scattered from Wiesbaden, Germany, to the tip of the Aleutians, is the tedious, detailed and never-ending surveillance of the armed forces of potential enemies—their strength, whereabouts and disposition. One measure of how well they do their job is the fact that language specialists have been known to identify an ene-



The high-spying SR-71: In an arcane arsenal, super-eyes and -ears

eras in satellites 100 miles high can clearly photograph objects on the ground the size of small cars (though tales of pictures of anything smaller are most likely science fiction).

For communications interception—which some experts say accounts for 90 per cent of the nation's raw intelligence—radio and radar gear take the place of cameras in satellites. These orbiting ears (called "ferrets") are capable of picking up every form of electronic communication except those sent on land telephone lines and line-of-sight microwave transmissions. They can read radar pulses from ground stations and in-flight missiles as well. They are joined in the skies by so-called "Black Air Force" aircraft—usually lumbering old C-121 Super Constellations that can tarry in one area for as long as six or eight hours and carry far heavier, and fancier, equipment than the swift SR-71.

The Navy has mothballed all its Pueblo-type intelligence ships. But one experimental Navy Super Connie dubbed "The Blue Buzzard" was employed in Vietnam as an airborne relay station that could cut in on, and countermand, orders that North Viet-

my unit commander by nothing more than a regional accent in his voice.

But as good as the techniques of collection are, there are problems of interpretation. Says one senior intelligence officer: "You can't tell strategic or political intent from a photograph. And you can't tell what the enemy may have on his drawing boards."

The astonishing escalation of ingenious gadgetry over the last decade has caused still another problem—information overkill. A special Presidential team reviewing the intelligence community discovered that 95 per cent of the estimated \$6 billion spent annually was going into intelligence collection, only 5 per cent into analysis—and Washington's intelligence headquarters were being inundated with mountains of perishable, unsifted information. The report was one of the key elements leading to the President's decision to reorganize the intelligence community. "They were trying to monitor everything all over the world," explains Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John Stennis. "We simply don't need to keep sight of every blade of grass and every grain of sand."

potential fruits of such labor were meager and the damage to American prestige very great if they were exposed. Particularly as the cold war waned and as technology took over the most critical tasks, the best thing that most agents abroad could do was nothing at all, but this was not what bright young adventurers had in mind, and so they began to quit or not to apply in the first place.

Thus a critical shift of both personnel and function took place within the agency during the latter 1960s. In part it was a natural evolution, in part encouraged by the new director, Dick Helms. The focus of attention and prestige within CIA switched from DDP (for Deputy Director—Plans, the covert operations) to DDI (Deputy Director—Intelligence, the information-sifting unit). The prime recruits were no longer bright young Social Register types but state university Ph.D.'s. A current CIA recruitment manual is pitched to, among others, biologists, foresters, aerodynamicists, artists, cartographers, geologists, geodesists, mathematicians and astronomers. "Our people," Helms (who himself was once head of DDP) boasted in a rare public address this year, "have academic degrees in 298 major fields of specialization." A former intelligence man marvels that "when you ask the agency even the most obscure question, they always trot out some little old lady who has made that subject her life study."

Exit the Tennis Players

DDP still exists, of course, but the watchword for operatives in the field is now, as one wag puts it, "Don't do something—just stand there." As for the type of person attracted into this side of the shop, a former agency man speaks wryly of the "change from tennis players to bowlers." Many of the dirtier tricks in Vietnam—notably the "Phoenix" program that used torture and assassination to try to root out the Viet Cong infrastructure—were assigned to temporary "contract" agents: retired Army officers, Special Forces spinoffs or former Stateside policemen. Since 1969, however, the agency has cut back on these activities.

CIA insiders say it has given up the coup business entirely, though there are many who are convinced that it had a hand in the Greek colonel's take-over in 1967 and the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk in Cambodia last year (at least to the extent of not blowing the whistle on plots of which it was aware). A few years ago, Gen. Joseph Mobutu of the Congo tried to interest Langley in a putsch against the Marxist regime in Brazzaville across his western border, but the agency was not interested.

This is not because it has lost the capacity for such enterprises. It has, after all, been not so secretly training, equipping and virtually leading a 95,000-man army in a reasonably successful war in Laos for nearly a decade. It is currently employing a Washington firm as a cover to train frogmen to spy dive into a lake

and blow up a huge dam. And it has concocted a delightful little ruse to spread disaffection against the exiled Sihanouk among the Cambodian peasantry that once revered him. A gifted sound engineer using sophisticated electronics has fashioned an excellent counterfeit of the Prince's voice—breathless, high-pitched and full of giggles. This is beamed from a clandestine radio station in Laos with messages artfully designed to offend any good Khmer: in one of them, "Sihanouk" exhorts young women in "liberated areas" to aid the cause by sleeping with the valiant Viet Cong.

But this sort of escapade is far less frequent these days, and some top agency hands gladly accept the charge that the



Cushman: Minding the shop

CIA has turned into a group of gray bureaucrats. Things may have been more exciting during the Dulles years, there may have been an élan in those days that has faded now, but it was this élan that helped produce the Bay of Pigs. The agency may have become less colorful, according to this view, but this simply marks its passage from exuberant adolescence to responsible maturity.

However staid a bureaucracy the CIA may have become, there are still some very peculiar features of going to work there. First of all, one of the prerequisites for employment is a lie-detector test. "The lie detector is the big hurdle," recalls a former spy. "Guys are really scared of that, scared of what it will show. I remember a friend of mine had stolen some money when he was running his fraternity's soft-drink concession. He was so worried it would show up that he told them. They said, 'Oh, that's OK. Glad you told us.' He's still with the agency." The agency is not particularly prudish about its staff, unlike the FBI or the KGB. "It doesn't mind the flawed genius," a onetime employee says. "It will overlook an individual's aberrations—as long as it receives complete loyalty."

"the farm," a secret training base on the East Coast where they are schooled in various techniques of the spy game: codes, drops, agent handling, weaponry, demolition and hand-to-hand combat. But the vast majority of recruits are bound for DDI, and a life centering in the huge CIA compound in Langley.

The agency encourages clamishness. "There's one street in McLean [a suburb next to Langley] where the entire block is filled with CIA types," one spy says. More important, security precautions dictate a certain motherliness. "From the day you start your career," a veteran says, "you're encouraged to go to the agency for help, to tell them everything." If a CIA employee gets into trouble—drunk driving, for example—he is told to call the agency's security office immediately. If his house is robbed, he's to notify security before the police. If he gets into financial problems, the agency has a benevolent fund to help him out. It buys him theater tickets, advises his children on where to go to college, selects security-cleared physicians and psychiatrists (and requires a fellow CIA man to be on hand during any treatment requiring an anesthetic that might induce loose talk), offers him guidance on stock-market investments, provides an indoor gym, athletic teams and even nature walks.

No Room at the Top

There is a certain insulation about it all—and, some critics say, about its work as well. With the rapid expansion of recent years, layers of bureaucracy have begun to clog the channels along which raw intelligence flows upward. And there is very little new blood coming in at the middle levels or the top; the agency has a logjam of twenty-year men.

Agency people are also sometimes accused of one of the oldest of spies' failings—refusing to believe anything unless it has been discovered clandestinely. Some voices within the government are now calling for a radical shift toward candor in almost all intelligence work. They argue that the great bulk of the information that CIA and the rest of the spy network gleans ought to be made public to anyone who is interested. At the same time, virtually all covert paramilitary operations—the dirty tricks—should be abandoned entirely.

In effect, this is a new and expanded version of President Eisenhower's old "open skies" plan. It rests upon the proposition that dirty tricks generally do more harm than good to the nation's interests, and that intelligence does most for the cause of peace when its fruits are displayed for all to see. Most American strategists have long since accepted the notion that the world is made safer and more stable when each of the superpowers knows a fair amount about what the other is up to—the U.S. makes no real effort to conceal the full range of its military power from the Russians. Why not, ask the advocates of open skies,

carry this philosophy of disclosure one step further?

It is almost surely too soon for that; perhaps it would never be practicable. The world still has its ugly secrets, and it is probably best for everyone's peace of mind that most of them are kept in private. But the very fact that the question is being put is a sign of the wrenching adjustments that American intelligence has had to make in its long metamorphosis from the days of Wild Bill Donovan and the Knights Templar. Today, the fearsome weaponry of the two superpowers has grown so sophisticated that virtually no intelligence coup, no matter how extraordinary, could alter the balance of potential destruction on both sides. The gaudy era of the adventurer has passed in the American spy business; the bureaucratic age of Richard C. Helms and his gray specialists has settled in.