

EXCERPTS OF RECENT LOS ANGELES TIMES
EDITORIAL OPINION ON INTELLIGENCE ISSUES

The LOS ANGELES TIMES has adopted a number of positions on intelligence issues that are at variance with our views and you can expect questions in these pertinent areas. Following is a selection of excerpts from the newspaper's editorials during the past year:

1. DCI's Performance and Finances --

"The indications are in fact that Casey has been doing a good job at the Central Intelligence Agency. Not least, he has done a lot to restore morale in an agency beset in recent years by scandal, questionable management and the loss of some of its most experienced professionals. But appearance as well as performance counts, and now fresh questions have been raised about whether Casey is doing what he should be doing to avoid the appearance of financial conflicts of interest as he goes about his intelligence work.

"Casey, as it happens, is one of the few top government officials with access to secret international economic developments who has not placed his stock holdings in a blind trust. No law requires that he do so, though in two previous government jobs Casey did separate himself from the management of his stock portfolio. Moreover, Casey's two predecessors as director of Central Intelligence put their stocks into blind trusts, and for good reason. The CIA gathers and analyzes mountains of information, much of which could

affect the business activities of American concerns. Avoiding any suspicion of conflict of interest because of access to this information is clearly important.

"Casey and his wife own stock in 27 corporations with major overseas operations, including oil and strategic minerals. Surely, the prudent and proper course would be for Casey to place these holdings in a blind trust as other high officials, including President Reagan, have wisely done." (6 December 1981)

"Casey's immediate predecessors at the CIA, George Bush and Stansfield Turner, voluntarily placed their investments in blind trusts to avoid any suspicions of conflicts of interest. Casey does not want to do that. Instead, he has now agreed to a rather curious 'screening arrangement,' under which senior CIA officials will be kept advised of his stock transactions. If these officials think that they see a potential conflict between Casey's official duties and his private financial interests, they may exclude Casey from making a decision on an official matter. Casey, meanwhile, would retain full freedom to buy and sell stocks as he chose.

"This is a cumbersome arrangement, and a troubling one. It suggests that the nation's top intelligence official could, at times, be isolated from the decision-making process that is part of his legal responsibility in order to protect him from a possible interest conflict.

"It would clearly be far better if Casey were able to perform his job fully without reference to his personal financial affairs. That could be done if he would do what his predecessors did, and what he himself did in two earlier important government jobs: Place his investments in a blind trust." (12 July 1982)

2. FOIA --

"The most sensitive area is national security. The law's critics, chief among them CIA Director William Casey, contend that it endangers intelligence activities. He said recently, 'I question very seriously whether a secret intelligence agency and a Freedom of Information Act can coexist for very long.' He added that 'they are incompatible' because the law 'gives foreign intelligence agencies, and anyone else, a legal license to poke into our files.'

"That was a curious assertion. The act exempts from disclosure documents related to national security.

"Casey is correct when he complains that the Freedom of Information Act puts the United States in a unique position among nations. It does. It is designed to require government to conform in fact as well as theory to the principle of open government." (3 October 1982)

3. Identities Legislation --

"In considering any law that hampers the ability of the press to expose official derelictions, the history of abuses of power by the intelligence agencies should not be forgotten, but apparently it has been.

"We are now confronted with an act that, whatever the good intentions of its sponsors, goes too far. Its reach should have been limited to present and former government officials who breach their trust." (15 June 1982)

4. E/O 12333 --

"The new directive, which Reagan said will help the nation 'confront the increasing challenge of espionage and terrorism' is both reassuring and disquieting. . . .

"One troublesome aspect of the order is that it brings the CIA sharply into domestic intelligence and blurs the line between the agency and the FBI. The line between the operations of the two agencies may be thin at times, but we think it would have been wiser to depend on the FBI for intelligence at home while restricting the CIA to operations abroad, with both cooperating as necessary. . . .

"The House and Senate oversight panels and the new White House board [IOB] might profitably review the intelligence hearings in the 1970s. They revealed that a default of their oversight responsibilities by congressional panels made possible extensive abuses of power by intelligence agencies.

"Yet congressional review, no matter how efficiently performed, is no substitute for a congressional charter governing the shadowy area of intelligence. It is a difficult task, but one that Congress must confront and accomplish." (13 December 1981)

"The Reagan Administration pulled back from more drastic ideas in issuing new guidelines for the CIA late last year but the agency did obtain formal permission to engage in some activities within the United States. Still, the Reagan order was careful not to return the agency to the days when it operated almost as a law unto itself with wide-ranging powers.

"But the Administration is not through with the agency, and officials are studying the possibility of further changes. The Administration should move with caution in this area, just as it has in the past.

"Its decision last year, for example, to avoid the more drastic proposals for 'unleashing' the CIA did reflect sound judgment."
(27 April 1982)

5. E/O 12356 [Classification] --

"In a democracy, tension will always exist between the public's right to information about government and the government's need for secrecy on information affecting national security. The executive order that was signed Friday by President Reagan comes down heavily on the side of secrecy. . . .

"The government has vital secrets to protect, and they must be protected, but the new order, which imposes excessive restrictions on information, also represents a danger to national security by creating an aura of suspicion about the government." (6 April 1982)

6. Access to Scientific Information --

"Adm. Bobby R. Inman, the deputy director of Central intelligence, has urged scientists to cooperate voluntarily with the government's approach. Failure to do so, Inman has warned, could lead to far more onerous restrictions on published scientific research than might otherwise be the case. Inman has suggested that scientists might have to submit certain papers to the government for pre-publication screening in an effort to satisfy national-security concerns. What he is talking about is giving the government the power of censorship over unclassified material. That censorship would be limited in application, perhaps, but would be censorship nonetheless, and would run head on into both guarantees of free speech and the necessity for scientists, in their own interests and in the national interest, to communicate freely with each other. . . .

"Science thrives when scientific communications are unimpaired. It would be self-defeating if the American government's concern about what the Russians might learn served to inhibit the free interchange of ideas in U.S. science and technology. It would be self-destructive if our open society became semi-closed in the name of protecting freedom." (7 February 1982)

7. Use of Journalists --

"Former President Jimmy Carter has revealed in his memoirs that during the Iranian hostage crisis 'our agents . . . moved freely in and out of Tehran under the guise of business or media missions.' His disclosure raises two separate aspects of the same problem, which is the independent status of news reporters.

"It is bad policy either for the government to disguise its secret agents as journalists or to employ legitimate journalists as agents. Both practices undermine the credibility of the press. . . .

"The duty of a journalist is clear. A reporter should be independent of the CIA or any other government agency. One who accepts a secret assignment undermines his own credibility and not only compromises his own news organization but brings all other correspondents under suspicion.

"Even if no correspondent accepts a secret assignment, the CIA rule that permits the agency to attempt to recruit them clouds their independent position. And, of course, so does the policy of disguising secret agents as journalists." (15 October 1982)

You may expect to be asked questions on the following subjects, which are divided into topical issues and matters related to your administration as DCI.

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