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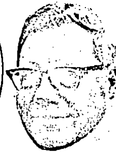
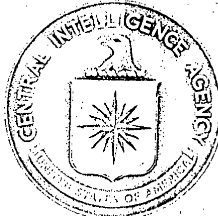
# H—L—S of the C.I.A.

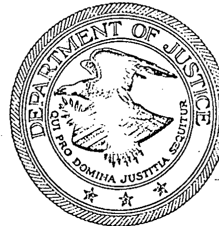
By BENJAMIN WELLES



Ray S. Cline, Director of the Bureau of Intelligence Research



Lieut. Gen. Robert E. Cushman Jr., Deputy Director of the C.I.A.



William C. Sullivan, Deputy Director of the F.B.I.

WASHINGTON.

"I CAN tell when he walks in the door what sort of a day it's been," says his wife, Cynthia. "Some days he has on what I call his 'Oriental look'—totally inscrutable. I know better than to ask what's happened. He'll talk when he's ready, not before, but even when he talks he's terribly discreet."

The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Richard Helms, apparently brings his problems home from the office like any other husband—at least to hear Cynthia Helms tell it. And these days Helms's job is definitely one of the most problem-ridden in Washington.

Successive budget cuts, balance of payments restrictions, bureaucratic rivalries and press disclosures that have hurt the C.I.A.'s public image have all reduced its operations considerably. President Nixon has recently ordered a fiscal and management investigation into the intelligence "community," a task which may take longer and prove more difficult than even Nixon suspects because of the capacity of the intelligence agencies to hide in the bureaucratic thickets. Both Nixon and his principal foreign affairs adviser, Henry Kissinger, are said to regard the community as a mixed blessing: intrinsically important to the United States but far too big and too prone to obscure differences of opinion—or, sometimes, no opinion—behind a screen of words.

Considered a cold-blooded necessity in the Cold War days, the agency now seems to many students, liberal intellectuals and Congressmen, to be undemocratic, conspiratorial, sinister. The revelations in recent years that have made the agency suspect include its activities in Southeast Asia, the Congo, Guatemala, the Bay of Pigs; the U-2 flights; its secret funding through "front" foundations of the National Student Association plus private cultural, women's and lawyers' groups, and, finally, two years ago, the Green Berets affair.

The 58-year-old Helms knows all this, better than most. As the first career intelligence officer to reach the top since the C.I.A. was created in 1947, his goal has been to professionalize the agency and restore it to respectability. In fact, one of his chief preoccupations has been to erase the image of the Director as a man who moves in lavish mystery, jetting secretively around the world to make policy with prime ministers, generals and kings, and brushing aside, on the pretext of "security," the public's vague fears and Congress's probing questions. If Helms rules an "invisible empire," as the C.I.A. has sometimes been called, he is a very visible emperor.

While he tries to keep his lunches free for work, for example, he occasionally shows up at a restaurant with a friend for lunch: a light beer, a cold plate, one eye always on the clock. He prefers the Occidental, a tourist-frequented restaurant near the White House where, if he happens to be seen, there is likely to be less gossip than if he were observed entering a private home.

He likes the company of attractive women—young or old—and they find him a charming dinner partner and a good dancer.

"He's interesting—and interested in what you're saying," said Lydia Katzenbach, wife of the former Democratic Attorney General. "He's well-read and he doesn't try to substitute flirting for conversation, that old Princeton '43 routine that some of the columnists around town use."

Some of his critics complain that he is too close to the press—even though most agree that he uses it, with rare finesse, for his own and his agency's ends. Some dislike the frequent mention of Helms and his handsome wife in the gossip columns and society pages of the nation's capital.

Yet, if he gives the appearance of insouciance—he is witty, gregarious, friendly—the reserve is there, like a high-voltage electric barrier, just beneath the surface. Helms is a mass of apparent contradictions: inwardly self-disciplined and outwardly relaxed, absorbed in the essential yet fascinated by the trivial. A former foreign correspondent, he observes much and can recall precisely what few American husbands ever note in the first place—what gown each woman wore to a dinner and whose shoulder strap was out of place. Nevertheless, no one is more conscious than Helms, who also has the broader role of Director of Central Intelligence, of the strict security laws that designate him the official responsible for setting and enforcing security standards throughout the intelligence community.

These responsibilities often create tense moments for him, as Helms acknowledges in a story he tells about himself: He had taken his wife to an alumni fund-raising evening at his alma mater, Williams College. After cocktails and dinner the alumni and their ladies crowded together on small wooden seats for speeches by John Sawyer, the Williams president, and other luminaries. Helms and his wife were seated in the midst of the attentive throng when, to their hor-

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BENJAMIN WELLES covers national security affairs as a correspondent in the Washington bureau of The Times.

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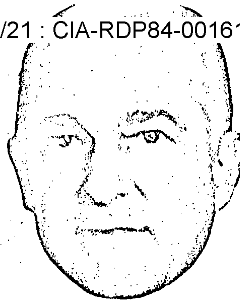
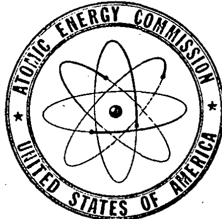
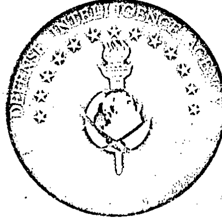
*The full name is Helms—Richard Helms—and he is the man at right. As head of an "invisible empire," he is not quite a public celebrity, yet he is known as a man-about-Washington trying to overcome his agency's sinister image. Below are shown some of the numerous Government intelligence directors over whom he presides.*



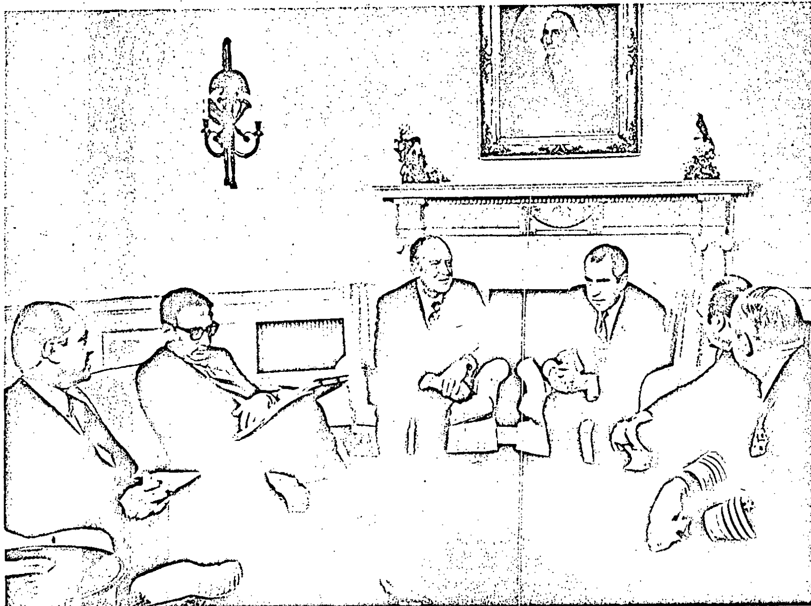


*Howard Brown, Assistant General Manager of the A.E.C.*



*Lieut. Gen. Donald V. Bennett, Director of the D.I.A.*

*Vice Adm. Noel Gaylor, Director of the N.S.A.*



*One of Helms's functions is briefing the President on developments abroad. Probably because of his agency's sensitive position, he tries to stick to plain facts without recommending policy; in that area, one source says, Helms "tends to hunker down." Here, he is seen, far left, at a meeting with Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State Rogers, Mr. Nixon, Secretary of Defense Laird, and Adm. Thomas Moorer, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.*



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ror, they heard President Sawyer begin to laud the next speaker:

"I am now going to call on a man who needs no introduction to any cf you," Sawyer began. "You have all followed his career with pride. Your president leans on him increasingly in these difficult days."

Helm's position makes it virtually impossible for him to speak in public—never extemporaneously—and he was looking for a way out when to his infinite relief he heard Sawyer conclude, ". . . I now introduce Larry Cattuzzi, our football coach."

HELMS wears three official hats. First, as Director of Central Intelligence (D.C.I.), he is the senior intelligence adviser to the President and Congress. Second, he is the President's representative (and chairman) on the United States Intelligence Board, a loose conglomeration of agencies handling high-grade intelligence and spending between them more than $4-billion yearly. And third, he is Director of the C.I.A.

In some ways, the C.I.A. is the tail that wags the intelligence dog. Under the National Security Act of 1947 which created it, the C.I.A. alone carries out services "common" to the other intelligence agencies. This is its charter for such "black tricks" as the National Security Council may order it to perform, from bugging a diplomat's bedroom to overthrowing a hostile government. Director Helms, in his triple role, assigns data collection priorities for the community and—in theory—screens all intelligence before it passes to the President.

The C.I.A. is only a member, indeed, a comparatively small member of the huge, sprawling, costly complex of agencies represented on the United States Intelligence Board, which includes the Defense Department's Intelligence Agency (D.I.A.); the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (I.N.R.); the Atomic Energy Commission (A.E.C.); the Federal Bureau cf Investigation (F.B.I.) and the National Security Agency (N.S.A.) which eavesdrops electronically on foreign government broadcast communications.

In addition, the Intelligence Board exercises a vaguely defined step-parental supervision over the National Reconnaissance Program, which runs the spy-in-the-sky satellites, and the National Photo Interpretation Center in Washington, which studies the reels of photographs that are tossed overboard periodically by the orbiting monsters and collected in mid-air by highly-trained Air Force crews.

The intelligence community's size and spending are, of course, secrets, but competent authorities say the C.I.A. employs about 15,000 Americans, plus several thousand foreign agents, and spends slightly less than $600-million yearly. By contrast, according to Robert F. Froehlke, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Administration, the Defense Intelligence Agency spends $2.9-billion yearly. Its code-cracking N.S.A. at Fort Meade near Baltimore spends more than $1-billion of this and employs 110,000 persons. The satellite program, in which the C.I.A. has a voice but not control, is said to spend at least $500-million a year.

In his role as Director of Central Intelligence, Helms must be constantly prepared to give the President, on short notice, the latest information on what's really happening in such matters as Soviet-Chinese tensions, Soviet naval activities in the Caribbean and arms shipments to the militant Arab states, Arab moves against Israel, Chile's

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**SERIAL STORY**—*Beginning on this page (and continuing on the following pages), the adventures of a fictional intelligence agent whose name just happens to be derived from the C.I.A. phone number. And now read on . . .*

The is no New





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development under its new Marxist Government, the latest Russian advances in weaponry, and so on.

As chairman of the United States Intelligence Board, Helms rides herd on an unruly team. His authority over the other agencies represented on the board, apart from his own C.I.A., has never been clearly defined by Congress or by successive Presidents, and so his effectiveness depends chiefly on his own competence, patience and tact. Almost every Thursday he takes his place at the head of the table at the weekly board meetings and acts as the President's arbiter between conflicting claims often based on bureaucratic rivalries. (At these meetings the C.I.A. is represented by Helms's deputy, Lieut. Gen. Robert E. Cushman Jr. of the Marine Corps.)

Helms operates somewhat like a managing editor of a major newspaper or television network, reviewing the overall picture, spotting gaps in the coverage, identifying priorities, assigning tasks and weighing the views of his associates.

The C.I.A., for example, may have picked up word of suspicious troop movements in the Middle East. Helms might ask the N.S.A. to listen in to radio communications in the area; possibly he will call on the F.B.I. to "bug" certain Washington embassies for information or will request that the Pentagon assign U-2's to provide photographs of the troop zones involved. It will be Helms's task to coordinate the work of the various agencies to provide fast, accurate data. Sometimes it works; sometimes not.

In April and May, 1967, for instance, the C.I.A. and the D.I.A. reported the possibility of an Arab-Israel conflict and both predicted an Israeli victory in seven days—only one day off.

On the other hand, the ceasefire plan between Israel and its Arab opponents, proposed by Secretary of State William P. Rogers on June 19 and suddenly accepted both by Israel and the United Arab Republic a few days before it took effect Aug. 7, brought about an intelligence breakdown. Rogers, who pays scant attention to intelligence and wanted political credit for the "victory," did not solicit C.I.A. help. He and his deputy for Middle Eastern affairs, Joseph Sisco, virtually ignored, almost until the very hour the ceasefire was to begin, the pleas of their own State Department intelligence men for U-2's to provide "base-line photography" that could spot possible violations of the truce.

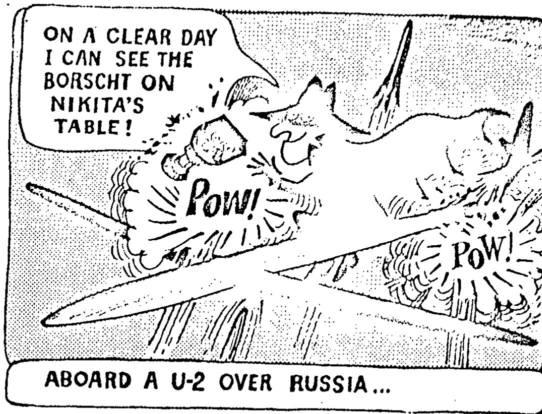
Days were spent prevailing on President Makarios of Cyprus and the British to allow the U-2's to fly round-trips over the Suez Canal from British bases in Cyprus; and more days were wasted soothing Israeli fears about such missions. When the flights were finally agreed to, bad weather delayed them further. Ultimately, U-2's and satellites began providing proof that the U.S.S.R. and U.A.R. were violating the ceasefire terms by moving more SAM-2 and SAM-3 missile sites into the stand-still zone. But the intelligence was consistently ignored for political reasons: Rogers and Sisco were less concerned with violations than with getting a ceasefire under way and maintaining it.

In fact, it was not until a month later—early in September — when Mr. Rogers returned from the summer White House at San Clemente to Washington and was persuaded to spend three hours visiting the vast National Photo Interpretation Center, that he became an enthusiast for photographic intelligence. For days and weeks after he would regale visitors with his astonishment over the miraculous accuracy of pictures taken 15 miles above the earth.

THE Central Intelligence Agency itself has two major tasks: to collect intelligence, openly or covertly, and to evaluate it for the President.

The agency's Plans Directorate (DD-P) collects clandestinely and also carries out certain "covert" functions, such as organizing, training and arming anti-Communist guerrillas in Laos. The Intelligence Directorate (DD-I) collects open intelligence (it monitors foreign broadcasts and interviews American businessmen returning from abroad), but its main task is to *evaluate* everything from all sources—overt and covert.

The agency, not only obtains, analyzes and reports on mountains of information from published sources (there are 20,000 journals published yearly in the world just on the life sciences) but also from State and Defense Department attachés, from such "technical" collectors as the spy satellites and, finally, from agents. The daily input is derived 50 per cent from overt sources such as periodicals, 35 per cent from electronics



and the remaining 15 per cent from agents.

A Senate veteran with an intimate knowledge of military affairs remarked not long ago, "On a clear day we get as much from a satellite as we get from an agent in a year."

To handle this flow of information, the agency has enough analysts on its staff to form a medium-sized university. At least half of them have advanced degrees and a third a doctorate. Their combined specialties cover 281 major fields. Piecing together the bits of information from a bewildering range of sources into the nation's daily intelligence picture is a break with the classic practice of relying primarily on agents' reports. The U.S.S.R., Red China, Britain, France, West Germany and other veterans in the intelligence business still lean toward the agent, but the United States has been relying more on the researcher and the evaluator ever since World War II.

"There was a time, if you wanted information on the Turkish railway system, you'd set out to bribe a Turkish railway official," says Sherman Kent, a Yale professor of history who was recruited by the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.) during World War II. "Now you'd probably find a 10-volume tome in the Library of Congress. The information's there. The secret is knowing where to find it."

Using such research techniques, the C.I.A. helped convince President Kennedy that the Russians could not be hiding missiles in Cuban caves after the October, 1962, crisis. Ray Cline, then head of the Intelligence Directorate, discovered that one of his officers had located a voluminous file on Cuban caves compiled well before the crisis. When Kennedy and McGeorge Bundy continued to worry that the Russians might be cheating, Cline drove to the White House, dumped on the President's desk a huge file with photographs, and convinced Kennedy that there was not a subterranean cavity that the C.I.A. did not know about.

COVERT action is generally political and means, in effect, helping friends of the United States abroad. "Sometimes it's subsidizing friendly politicians or parties, or running newspapers, or running cover businesses — in other words doing covertly what the State or Defense Departments can't do publicly," explains one authority.

Both covert action and espionage sometimes involve no greater risk than passing funds surreptitiously to a foreign cabinet minister. At other times they involve such commonplaces of the spy's reper-



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toire as eavesdropping, now made more efficient by modern gadgetry which permits, for instance, the "bugging" of windowpane vibrations so that speech in a locked room can be overheard; or even of typewriters, from a distance, so that in all important United States embassies abroad there must now be special rooms in which secretaries type top-secret material.

Yet only the agent, especially a key agent in a foreign government, can fill in the gaps. Only he knows what to look for. The C.I.A.'s information on Soviet and Chinese military installations gathered by spy satellites and studied daily by photo-interpreters is immense, high officials say. But while our policymakers must know the Soviet Union's strength, they would rather know its intentions. This, in intelligence jargon, is "humint"—human intelligence—and for this the agent remains invaluable.

Among its many tasks, Helms's Plans Directorate also runs "disinformation"—strategic deception intended to keep the K.G.B. (Soviet secret police) off balance. One of the more successful, if little-known, spying adventures of this sort came after Nikita Khrushchev's celebrated "secret" speech of Feb. 24, 1956, to the 20th Communist Party Congress in Moscow.

Stalin's death three years before had left world communism leaderless. Finally emerging as the top man after a power struggle, Khrushchev sprang on a surprised party the epochal "de-Stalinization" speech that was to rend the movement and promote the Sino-Soviet split. Stalin's disciple now publicly rejected the Soviet past, demeaned the national hero, challenged secret-police rule and forecast a purge of Stalinists.

Within weeks dissension and confusion spread throughout Communist parties across the world. Some approved; some condemned; some straddled.

In Washington, meanwhile, Allen Dulles was offering up to $100,000 to anyone who would turn over a copy of the document, and three months later, for a considerably lower sum, agents directed by Helms, who was then deputy chief of "C.S.," Clandestine Services, obtained one from East European sources. Some C.I.A. officials wanted to keep their prize secret and to exploit, by classic diplomacy, the growing rift in the Communist world uncovered by the speech. Others argued for publishing this self-indictment of the Soviet system, and Dulles finally agreed.

Four days later, the "secret speech" was leaked in full to The New York Times as a C.I.A.-State Department policy decision. But even as the editors studied and restudied the text, Helms's experts, timing their plans to the anticipated date of publication, prepared their own, partly fabricated version. The speech, as delivered by Khrushchev, had contained nothing on Soviet foreign policy. Helms's men, rapidly assembling Kremlin views on foreign countries acquired through a variety of secret sources, including authentic damning statements made by Soviet leaders about rulers and governments in the nonaligned world, made a total of 32 inserts.

The real text was printed in The Times on June 5, 1956, and the C.I.A. leaked its fuller version simultaneously, exactly as if it had been photographed surreptitiously by a Minox "spy" camera and then enlarged. It was distributed at strategic spots around the world and for months foreign ministries puzzled over which was the true version.

"Eventually most governments decided that The New York Times version was that which Moscow had 'sanitized' for foreign Communist parties," recalled one source. "They decided that the other [the C.I.A.] version with its damaging references was the real thing. The Kremlin took a long time living this down."

DESPITE the global scope of his job, Helms spends almost all his time in Washington, either in his C.I.A. headquarters at Langley, Va., or before the Congress, to which he is often summoned to brief committees, or in the President's "Situation Room," the global communications center in the basement of the White House.

Helms's first exposure to Congress was a near-disaster. On taking office, June 30, 1966, he found on his desk and incautiously signed a pile of letters, prepared by an aide, which thanked various well-wishers for their congratulations. In one letter Helms thanked the editor of The St. Louis Globe-Democrat for an editorial entitled "Brickbats for Fulbright" that had rejoiced because the Senate had just overwhelmingly defeated Fulbright's first demand to be admitted to the senatorial watchdog committee on the C.I.A. then headed by Richard Russell of Georgia. The vote, said the editorial, was a "comeuppance for the crafty Arkansan." Its adoption would have meant ". . . the end of the C.I.A. if the agency were subject to the claws of the militant doves on Fulbright's committee." The C.I.A. letter expressed Helms's "pleasure" that the Globe Democrat had [printed] the news "impartially without regard to party politics." The letter was mailed, and his pleasure was short-lived.

Before long Senator Eugene McCarthy, a leading critic of the C.I.A., was reading the letter to an astonished Senate. Helms's missive, declared McCarthy, was "entirely out of place" and smacked of "involvement in domestic politics." Helms, he said, owed the Senate an apology.

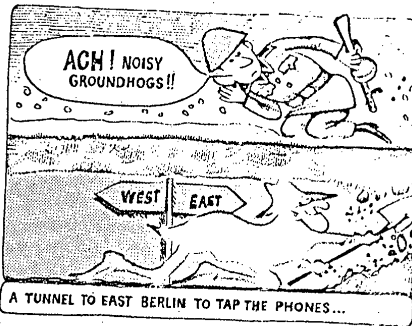
Promptly, the Senate club began drawing together. Senate Majority leader Mike Mansfield declared acidly that he was "more than a little surprised" by Helms's act. Senator John Stennis, an influential C.I.A. sponsor, called the letter "very unfortunate."

Lyndon Johnson, chagrined by his protégé's blunder, told Helms to consult with Attorney General Nicholas de B. Katzenbach, whose own tact in Congress had done much to help pass important civil rights legislation. Katzenbach recommended that Helms admit his *gaffe* and apologize for it. Helms promptly telephoned Massachusetts Senator Leverett Saltonstall, another C.I.A. patron, and offered to apologize to the Senate either in person or in writing. When Saltonstall told the Senate that Helms had admitted the blunder, the air began clearing. An admission of error and apology from a Director of Central Intelligence was unprecedented in the Senate's memory.

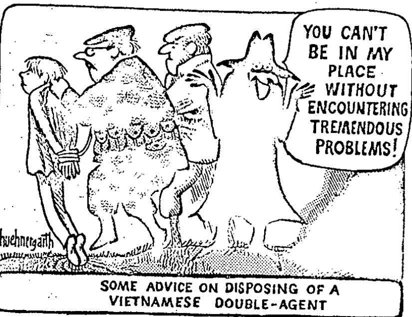
Over the past four years Helms has worked hard to improve the C.I.A.'s standing with Congress and most informed observers would agree that he has made headway. He is a good witness who tells the "watchdog" committees in Congress everything they want to know and alerts them to coming events.

"There are constant rumors that Nixon is about to can Helms and put a Republican in his place," said an experienced Senate staff official not long ago, "but I discount these. Helms is great with Congress. He admits when he doesn't know something. He never lies. He tells them 90 per cent of what he knows is going on—and he somehow lets them guess the remaining 10 per cent."

And Fulbright, whose belief in the need for a C.I.A. is at best lukewarm, told the Senate last November, after Helms testified with Defense Secretary Laird on the A.B.M.-MIRV controversy: "[He] has given the committee . . . the best available information. That is what inspired in us trust and confidence in the integrity, honesty and judgment of Mr. Helms."



A TUNNEL TO EAST BERLIN TO TAP THE PHONES...



SOME ADVICE ON DISPOSING OF A VIETNAMESE DOUBLE-AGENT

TALL, slender, his hair still dark and only beginning to recede at the temples, Richard Helms gives the impression of a man totally under control and at ease. The open, mobile face is often creased by a broad grin, for Helms has an irreverent, irrepressible sense of humor. He is a smoker who carries battered cigarette packs from which he flicks cigarettes directly into his mouth and often, when talking, will crumple a matchbook in his long fingers.

His language reflects the current Government jargon. Once when asked whether the late Ho Chi Minh was responding to secret American peace approaches, for example, he laughed and replied casually, "Ho's got our telephone number. When Ho tickles our feet, we'll know it." He once suggested to an inquiring repor a half-dozen potential sourc for an article. "After those he said, "you'll find you're n sucking any oil."

In such ways, Helms con veys precisely what he wan to convey and no more. With his own staff he is a stickler for tight writing, correct spelling and punctuation — and punctuality. His precision and concentrative powers have surprised technical advisers called on to brief him on complex details of missilery or nuclear science. Helms has no scientific background — "he can't put a washer on a faucet," his wife once joked—but he absorbs detail.

The efficient *sang-froid* is balanced, however, by a human concern for the hundreds and thousands of Americans in the C.I.A. whose lives are closely controlled—and often hidden—by their chosen career. He watches closely for signs of strain among his subordinates. For instance, he tries to see every returning C.I.A. station chief, from the largest to the smallest capitals, and studies them closely. "When people live, copulate, die, you can't be in his place without encountering tremen-



THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

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dous human problems," said a friend. "You've got to have an open door for persons in tragedy. Dick can detect changes in people; he doesn't just sit on his hands."

SOME who have known Helms well consider him a deeply democratic man who is constantly concerned lest his agency's clandestine operations overstep the boundaries of morality. He has said that murder and torture, for instance, cannot be condoned, not only because they are immoral but because they are impractical and unnecessary.

That is what he told newsmen when the C.I.A. was accused of having a hand in the murder of a Vietnamese double-agent by the Green Berets in 1969. Helms said that his men had advised the Berets to turn the man over to South Vietnamese police for disposition.

Former Green Beret Robert F. Marasco claimed recently that he had killed the suspect after "a vaguely worded execution order" was passed to his superiors in Saigon by a "C.I.A. operative." Marasco said his anger over the Calley conviction moved him to make the disclosure, but C.I.A. sources had another interpretation. They noted that it coincided—perhaps on purpose—with the publication of a novel about the sensational case entitled "Court-Martial" and written by Henry Rothblatt, one of the defense lawyers, and Robin Moore, author of "The Green Berets."

Helms, when told of Marasco's confession, reiterated that the C.I.A. had no authority to order the killings and, moreover, cannot give the Army orders "even in Vietnam."

Unhappily for Helms, the story of the Green Beret episode first leaked out as a result of one of his infrequent luncheons with newsmen. His explanation of the C.I.A.'s role was supposed to be "deep background"—not for publication — but reporters who were not there, and did not feel bound by the rules, broke the story. "Goddamit!" Helms exploded to his luncheon host over the telephone. "I can handle security in my own agency, but I expect you people to handle it at your end. This is the last time I'll ever meet with newsmen again."

Helms has, of course, met with newsmen since; and he will continue to do so. He is too skillful, too wise a bureaucrat to think that the C.I.A. can, or should, operate in a total news blackout.

RICHARD McGARRAH HELMS was born at St. David's, Pa., into a world of considerable privilege. His ma-ternal grandfather, Gates Mc-Garrah, was a leading interna-tional banker and his fath[er], Herman Helms, was an Al[coa] executive who moved his fa[m]ily to Europe in the mid-twen-ties. Helms spent a formati[ve] year at the fashionable [Le] Rosey School in Switzerla[nd] learning French and Germ[an] and how to move amo[ng] young nobility and the scio[ns] of international wealth, a[nd] also studied in Germany.

Upon the Helms famil[y's] return to the United State[s] he entered Williams, gradua[t]ing in 1935 with an outstan[d]ing record. He was Phi Bet[a] Kappa, president of his clas[s], "most likely to succeed," ed[i]tor of the class newspape[r] and — prophetically — "clas[s] politician."

Armed with a liberal art[s] degree and two foreign lan-guages, Helms found a jo[b] as a cub reporter in Europ[e] with the former United Press. Hitler was rapidly rising i[n] Germany and Helms soon wo[n] the commendation of his su-periors by obtaining an ex-clusive interview with the *Führer*. This period made a big impression on Helms, for he has never lost his preoccupation with the potential for good or evil in the German character.

Even as Helms was beginning to gather momentum as a foreign correspondent, however, personal and financial problems forced his return to the United States and he wound up as national advertising manager for The Indianapolis Times. At the same time he married Julia Bretzman Shields, a young horsewoman, sculptor and heiress to the Barbasol shaving fortune. A son, Dennis, now a lawyer in New York, was born of this marriage, which ended in divorce.

(Two years ago, after a long, painful separation from his first wife, Helms married Cynthia McKelvie, an attractive English redhead who was formerly the wife of a prominent Washington surgeon. The present Mrs. Helms has four children of her own—two boys and two girls, all of either college or post-college age, with whom Helms gets along well.)

World War II altered the pattern of Helms's life. As a naval reserve officer, he was called to duty with the Eastern Sea Frontier headquarters in New York where he was put to work plotting the position of German submarines in the Western Atlantic. Eager for more dynamic work, he soon switched to the newly created O.S.S. in Washington

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and there, in the planning division, he became absorbed with espionage as a career.

At the war's end he found himself in Berlin as part of the remarkable team of that remarkable man, Allen Dulles, the father of modern American espionage. Working for Dulles, who became Director of Central Intelligence in 1953, taught Helms a great deal. Dulles's contagious zest for life and interest in people of all kinds—at all hours—impressed Helms. Yet an anecdote about Dulles that is mentioned in the training course for all new C.I.A. agents concerns an occasion when he *did not* have time to see someone. As a young intelligence attaché in Switzerland during World War I, he passed up a tennis game with an importunate and unknown visitor who turned out to be the revolutionary Lenin. Thus, he perhaps lost a chance to influence the course of the Russian Revolution.

BY the nineteen-fifties, Helms was a deputy to the head of Clandestine Services, Frank Wisner. In this capacity he supervised an ingenious scheme in the divided city of Berlin that marked him as a man on his way up.

On a snowy morning in late April, 1955, an alert Russian guard in the Soviet-controlled Eastern sector of Berlin might have noticed a curious dark streak running through the snow about 500 yards between Rudow, a suburb of West Berlin, and Alt-Glienicke, a suburb of East Berlin.

Light snow had fallen during the night and closer inspection might have revealed that the snow had melted in a line as straight as an arrow. But neither Soviet nor East German patrols happened that morning to notice the phenomenon.

Twenty-four feet underground, teams of United States and British engineer troops were completing a tunnel: the purpose of their mission was to tap the main Soviet telephone trunk lines connecting Moscow with the East German Government offices, the Karlshorst headquarters of the K.G.B. and the Russian Army Command. At the tunnel's mouth in Rudow, Helms and his colleagues had built a warehouse in which to pile the shoveled dirt; they informed Soviet authorities that it would eventually house "radar" installations to help guide civilian air traffic into the United States sector. Since the weather had turned suddenly cold, blowers were introduced into the tunnel to keep the hard-digging troops comfortable. The difference in temperature melted the snow directly over the tunnel, but soon thawing weather had obliterated the telltale streak and saved the project from detection.

For the next 11 months and 11 days, the C.I.A. eavesdropped on Moscow's conversations with its proconsuls in East Germany and Poland. Finally, as the C.I.A. tells it, an East Berlin workman looking for a routine fault struck his pick accidentally into the Allied tap, and the game was over. The Soviet press erupted in outraged indignation and for months Russian and East German authorities ran guided tours to expose this example of Allied "perfidy."

Both Wisner and Helms had deliberately cut their visits in Berlin to the minimum so as not to attract Soviet curiosity. But Helms had been the project chief in Washington, personally supervising the tunnel operation from start to finish.

Along with such smashing successes, Helms has had a few setbacks in his career. Dulles passed him over for promotion to head of the Plans Directorate in favor of Richard M. Bissell Jr., a brilliant former Yale economist who had attracted attention as deputy chief of the Marshall Plan in Paris. Both Bissell and Dulles, the men most responsible for the Bay of Pigs, were retired by President Kennedy. His new Director of Central Intelligence, John McCone, spotted Helms and in 1962 promoted him to DD-P. In 1965 when McCone resigned he recommended that Helms succeed him, but Lyndon Johnson selected Admiral William Raborn Jr. Even this proved a boon. "It would have been a disaster had Dick succeeded McCone in 1965," said a colleague. "Raborn made him look great by comparison."

Appointed Raborn's successor by Johnson in 1966, Helms served a tough apprenticeship under a mercurial, secretive and often domineering boss. Then, after the 1968 election, President-elect Nixon named a secret task force, headed by Franklin A. Lindsay of Itek Corporation, to investigate the C.I.A. and recommend changes. Lindsay's task force recommended, among other things, leaving Helms as Director of Central Intelligence for another year. Now that two years have passed one can reasonably assume that Nixon values his services.

HELMS'S predecessors came to the D.C.I.'s job from outside the C.I.A. and with national reputations, personal fortunes, political influence, or all three. In contrast, he lives on his salary ($42,500 a year) and before being named D.C.I. was unknown to the public and only slightly though favorably known to leaders of Congress. The easy, friendly manner, the quick smile—too quick, some think — that greets important Senators, Congressmen and officials, and the Government jargon that conceals what he wants to conceal, are perhaps concessions to his vulnerable position.

He can be stubborn, though, when he believes the national interest is involved. In 1967, for instance, he began to question euphoric Air Force claims about the efficacy of its bombing of North Vietnam. He also grew increasingly dubious about glowing reports of the success of the pacification program in the South.

In time Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara also began to weigh Helms's reservations against the claims of the Air Force; and McNamara's own conversion—a shift which deeply angered Lyndon Johnson and helped pave the way to McNamara's ouster—is said to have stemmed in large part from Helms's analyses.

His views on Vietnam also brought him into increasing conflict with Walt W. Rostow, whom Johnson had chosen to succeed Bundy as his chief foreign affairs adviser. Rostow's passionate belief in the use of force to halt spreading Communism in Southeast Asia was exceeded only by Secretary of State Rusk's. He kept in intimate touch with a C.I.A. task force on Vietnam, headed by George Carver, from whose reports he would extract items likely to confirm President Johnson's confidence in his own policies. These items were passed not only to the President but also to friendly columnists.

One day Helms read in a nationally syndicated column that the C.I.A.—and, by implication, its Director—were "appeasement-minded." Characteristically, he said nothing to the President but quietly visited Rostow in his White House basement office; what happened is known only to the principals, but the press leaks alleging C.I.A. "defeatism" ceased.

PRESIDENT NIXON, who has known Helms for some 20 years, is said to respect him, although he treats him in the same arm's-length, bloodless way that he treats most subordinates. Helms can exercise his statutory right to see the President on urgent business but, being experienced and



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wise in these matters, he reports normally to Kissinger, through whose brain all intelligence for the President is screened. Whatever may be the consensus of the six-agency intelligence community, it is Kissinger's interpretation, say members of the White House staff, that Nixon listens to. Some shrug this off as understandable; others find it potentially dangerous.

Kissinger is a former Army counterintelligence operative who served in Germany during World War II, as well as a recognized authority on Soviet policy, Western Europe, nuclear strategy and disarmament. Thus he understands intelligence and consumes large amounts of it daily, though much of it bores him. He often condemns as bland, and sends back for revision, the magisterially researched National Intelligence Estimates, which are prepared by pooling the input of the entire intelligence community on such topics as Soviet missile development.

At the same time Kissinger, whose intellectual respect for the foreign policy views of the Secretaries of State and Defense is reportedly limited, gets along well with Helms. Both he and the President appreciate Helms's "succinct lucidity," which Rostow once cited as the reason he first came favorably to Lyndon Johnson's attention. Currently, Helms's close ties with Attorney General John Mitchell —they share a high regard for each other—have helped keep the C. I. A.'s primacy among the intelligence-gatherers intact.

Nixon went out of his way last May 8 to emphasize Helms's role as one of his chief advisers before a national television audience. Asked during a news conference whether the Secretary of State or Dr. Kissinger had opposed his incursion into Cambodia, the President replied, "Every one of my advisers—the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Dr. Kissinger, Director Helms—raised questions about the decision." However, Nixon carefully skirted disclosing whether or not his advisers, including Helms, had supported or opposed his strike into Cambodia last year, purportedly to capture the Communists' secret headquarters for the war in South Vietnam.

It is significant that he made no similar reference to Helms in his public comment following the abortive Sontay raid into North Vietnam on Nov. 21. Government sources who talked to Helms soon after the Sontay bungle say he was "informed" by Laird not long before the operation but not "consulted." Asked what Helms's reaction had been, one source responded with a chuckle, "He looked the other way."

In any event, Nixon's citing of Helms as a close adviser in May only partially explains the true relationship. Rogers, Laird and Kissinger are "policy" advisers; Helms is not. Helms is a nonvoting "adviser" to the National Security Council and, through it, to the President, its chief. He carefully avoids recommending policy.

He virtually always leads off N.S.C. meetings at the request of the President (or of Kissinger, if the President is absent) with an intelligence briefing. Laying out the intelligence picture in each of the world's hot spots, he predicts the reactions of the U.S.S.R., China, North Vietnam and other "hostiles." He raises questions but there he stops and, as one source notes, "tends to hunker down."

HIS reluctance to offer policy advice is not always appreciated by policymakers faced with tough decisions who, as one source recently put it, "like to glob around intelligence as a comforting hand in the enveloping gloom." Still, he points to the necessity of having an impartial agency winnow the millions of words flowing into Washington daily and evaluate them objectively for the President.

In the U.S.S.R., he has observed, there is no such system. Each intelligence agency reports to its own political patron: the K.G.B. to the Communist party chief, Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Armed Forces Intelligence (G.R.U.) to Defense Minister Andrei A. Grechko, and so forth. Nowhere in the Soviet Union, Helms has told Congress, is there "a bunch of guys with no ax to grind and beholden to no one sitting down in a back room and deciding what the raw intelligence means."

Yet there are those who suggest that the President himself may feel that Helms's objectivity does not always fit into the Nixon political program. Some shrewd observers suspect that Nixon appointed his former aide, General Cushman, as Helms's deputy to keep an eye on the intelligence community. A few go so far as to say Cushman was put there to keep Helms aligned to the Administration's support for the A.B.M. system and to prevent him from telling Congress, for instance, that no available intelligence from the U.S.S.R. would justify spending $40-billion or more on the system, despite pressures from the industrial-defense complex for lucrative contracts. ■



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