

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Phone: (703) 351-7676

PUBLIC AFFAIRS ADVISORY GROUP

FACT SHEET

The Public Affairs Advisory Group (PAAG) was established on 15 August 1978 to:

- provide for an Agency-wide exchange of information and ideas related to the Public Affairs role; and
- to assist in organizing and maintaining a Speakers Bureau.

Background:

The Public Affairs Office is in daily contact with offices throughout the Agency obtaining appropriate responses to queries from the media and the public. The office also responds to numerous queries from employees on a wide range of questions concerning the media. Contacts with employees frequently reveal areas of misunderstanding and sometimes misinterpretation of public affairs. Sometimes (but not often enough) employees make suggestions and generate ideas that are used to good advantage.

With the establishment of PAAG, the opportunity for a regular exchange of ideas will enhance the consistency, articulation, and informed judgements that shape the Agency's public affairs.

The public attention which CIA has received in recent years has caused a rush of requests for Agency speakers to address a wide variety of audiences. Many requests represent important opportunities to tell the story of U.S. foreign intelligence, to describe the role of the DCI in government, and to generally put the Agency's best foot forward. Lack of organization and resources cause us to turn down many more speaking requests than we are able to accept.

The Speakers Bureau could provide assistance, briefing aids, travel information, background material, and current policy statements to Agency speakers. A well-informed and well-supplied speakers bureau would greatly enhance the way CIA comes across to the public, and in the long run, build a better understanding of the Agency.

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HISTORY OF CIA PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Born in 1947 of a war-proven need for intelligence coordination, the Central Intelligence Agency was accepted implicitly in its early years as essential for national security. Few questioned its activities, let alone its existence, in a nation preoccupied with its own post-war emergence as the premier world power.

But as peacetime normalcy returned and Agency activities expanded, the American press and public turned their attentions inward, and the CIA fell under increasing public scrutiny. In its first four years CIA had no individual officer formally designated to deal with public queries, but in spring of 1951, current Director of Central Intelligence General Walter B. Smith appointed Colonel Chester B. Hansen—a former public relations aide to General Omar Bradley—as the Agency's first “spokesman.”

Hansen, called back to Air Force duty after less than two years in this capacity, was followed by a succession of press officers whose official titles changed as their duties grew broader. CIA moved into the public affairs area with no little trepidation. The sensitive nature of the Agency's business made exchanges with the press necessarily limited, and often as much time was spent deflecting media queries with the standard “no comment,” as answering them.

Hard as it tried, however, the Agency could not avoid the spotlight. Indeed, the public affairs function at CIA developed largely in response to a need for crisis handling—a kind of *ad hoc* evolution by “flap.” Colonel Hansen dealt with a 1952 uproar over alleged Communist penetration of the CIA. Colonel Stanley J. Grogan inherited Hansen's troubles with Senator Joseph McCarthy, who continued to press the charge that the CIA was infiltrated by Communists. Grogan also found himself dealing with public and congressional criticism for CIA activities in Iran (1953) and Guatemala (1954), along with the U-2/Gary Powers incident (1961) and the ill-fated Bay of Pigs landing (1962).

Grogan was succeeded by Paul M. Chretien, who encountered a new series of “flaps” over exposure of CIA operations in Vietnam at the time of the 1963 coup and Diem assassination, former President Truman's public repudiation of CIA covert action, and acknowledgement by MIT's Center of International Studies that it was originally subsidized by CIA in 1953.

Chretien's successor, Navy Commander George F. Moran, fielded inquiries about accusations in 1966 from Singapore's Prime Minister that the Agency had attempted to bribe his intelligence authorities six years earlier, and prepared to cooperate with a Senate investigation of the Agency, called for by Senator Eugene McCarthy. Moran's successor, Joseph C. Goodwin, handled charges from *Ramparts* magazine that the Agency had infiltrated and financed the National Students Association. Angus Thuermer, who replaced Goodwin in 1971, had his own hands full with the 1972 ITT-Chile story and the Watergate break-ins, as well as the Rockefeller, Church and Pike committee reports. Andrew Falkiewicz, Thuermer's successor, also had his share of crises in a very short term.

CIA press officers sometimes did have the more enjoyable task of handling inquiries on CIA successes, notably CIA's role in the Cuban missile crisis of September-November 1962 and the Agency's accurate reporting on the six-day war between Israel and the Arabs in 1967. But for the most part, as President Kennedy told CIA employees in 1961, "Your successes are unheralded—your failures are trumpeted." CIA press officers frequently were forced to adopt a defensive posture in dealing with the press and the public.

In the 1970's there has been growing perception that CIA has a critical public affairs function extending beyond the traditional handling of media queries provoked by controversy. As public interest in the Agency has increased, the number of personnel required to handle that interest has grown accordingly, and their tasks and responsibilities have changed. Admiral Stansfield Turner, in setting up a special office designated the Public Affairs Office in 1977, with Herbert E. Hetu as its head, made the Agency's first formal acknowledgement that CIA's public affairs function had assumed identifiable significance and proportion.

Thus, CIA Public Affairs today has expanded in many areas: media responses, arrangements for public appearances by the Director of Central Intelligence, pamphlets and brochures, background briefings for the media, chairing of the Publication Review Board for manuscripts to be published outside the Agency by employees or former employees, handling of public inquiries, and providing advice to Agency departments on matters involving the public.

The Public Affairs Office still has the responsibility, as does every CIA component, of protecting intelligence sources and methods, and of maintaining secrecy where secrecy is necessary. But no longer is the office encouraged to say as little as possible about the Agency. The once traditional two-man office charged with answering media queries with a "no comment" has become an expanded office intent on informing the public as extensively as possible about CIA, within the bounds of necessary security.

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHRONOLOGY

- 22 January 1946 Central Intelligence Group (CIG) was established by Presidential Directive and first Director of Central Intelligence was appointed. No one formally designated to deal with public queries.
- 18 September 1947 The National Security Act of 1947 replaced the CIG with the Central Intelligence Agency. No one yet designated to deal with public.
- 14 May 1951 The first "CIA Spokeman," *Col. Chester B. Hansen* (a former public relations aide to General Omar Bradley) was appointed by the then DCI, General Walter Bedell Smith. Hansen was charged with dealing with the press and drafting DCI presentations to Congress.
- 29 September 1952 General Smith, testifying at a court hearing, stated that there were Communists in the CIA and that these "adroit and adept" persons probably had sneaked into all other security groups. The statement precipitated a rare press conference held the next day to clarify and modify the statement.
- 7 October 1952 *Col. Stanley Grogan*, an Army public affairs specialist, took over as CIA spokesman and his office was designated the Office of the Assistant to the Director of Central Intelligence. Serving in the position for 10 years, he dealt with the McCarthy hearings, Agency operations in Iran and Guatemala, the U-2 incident, the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crisis.
- 10 November 1963 After suffering a heart attack, Grogan was replaced by *Paul M. Chretien*. During his tenure, the first book critical of the Agency—*The Invisible Government* by David Wise and Thomas Ross—was published. Also Chretien retained Col. Grogan on a consultative basis and added *John A. Mellin* to the office.

- 28 April 1965 The new DCI, Vice Admiral William F. Raborn, named *Cdr. George F. Moran* to replace Chretien. Moran acted primarily as the personal aide to Admiral Raborn and the maintenance of press contacts and the day-to-day operation of the office was left to Mellin and Grogan.
- 29 August 1966 *Joseph A. Goodwin*, an intelligence officer in the Directorate of Plans (DDP) and a former Associated Press editor and war correspondent, was named by then Director Richard Helms to replace Moran as the Assistant to the Director. During his period in office, the *Ramparts* magazine charges concerning CIA infiltration of the National Students Association were published. The reporting on the six-day war between Israel and the Arabs won plaudits during Goodwin's tenure.
- 1 November 1971 *Angus Thuermer*, a former Associated Press correspondent and veteran intelligence officer, was appointed Assistant to the Director. The ITT-Chile story broke in March 1972 and the Watergate break-in followed in June. In addition, the *New York Times* stories alleging CIA conduct of "massive illegal domestic intelligence operation during the Nixon administration. . . ." appeared and the Glomar Explorer revelation followed.
- 13 June 1976 Shortly after George Bush replaced William E. Colby as DCI, he appointed *Andrew T. Falkiewicz*, a career USIA officer, as Assistant to the Director.
- 28 March 1977 Admiral Stansfield Turner, in his first appointment after becoming Director of Central Intelligence, named *Herbert E. Hetu* to head a new Public Affairs Office with a mandate to inform the American public about the role of the intelligence process.
- 24 July 1977 CBS 60 Minutes aired "Report on the CIA" marking the first of several times cameras were to be allowed into the Headquarters building.
- 24 January 1978 Executive Order 12036 reshaped the United States intelligence structure and charged the DCI to "act, in appropriate consultation with the departments and agencies, as the Intelligence Community's principal spokesperson to the Congress, the news media and the public. . . ."
- 15 April 1978 Public Affairs acquired status of independent office.