

The "Dirty Tricks" Gap

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In the climactic year of Watergate it is not hard to make a strong case against secret intelligence operations. The costs and risks of maintaining an intelligence underworld sealed from public scrutiny and free from legislative accountability have become obvious. The "misuse" of the CIA, one of the counts in the Article of Impeachment adopted by the Judiciary Committee, can be repeated whenever an insecure president feels tempted to use this classic instrument of dictatorial rule against some domestic "enemy". Although the CIA in the Watergate Affair demonstrated some resistance to improper involvement, there are no institutional safeguards to prevent wigs and burglar tools once again being supplied to "the wrong people".

Former Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach and others have persuasively argued that maintaining extensive clandestine operations endangers American democracy and for that reason they should be ended. It is important to note that the danger is no less when the CIA and other intelligence agencies act "properly", i.e. when they perform the missions they are supposed to perform. The CIA clandestine services represent a special sort of secret army. The very existence of a large secret war-fighting capability undermines American democracy because under our system of government it is the people's elected representatives who are supposed to decide when and where we are to go to war. The maintenance of a large bureaucracy whose very purpose is deception breeds suspicion and cynicism about government in general. Systematic lying to the public, an institutionalized habit in such bureaucracies, has

Approved For Release 2004/11/01 : CIA-RDP88-01315R000200030003-0
eroded confidence in government to an unprecedented extent. Ironically,
the widespread use of the political lie in the name of national security
has helped undermine a crucial foundation stone of national security--
public confidence. In the last days of the Nixon Administration only
about 25 per cent of the American people had confidence in either the
President or the Congress. (Whether the public appreciation of Mr. Ford
for not being Mr. Nixon is going to last is by no means clear.)

The stock in trade of the intelligence underworld is deceit. Its
purpose is to create contrived realities, to make things appear different
from what they are, for the purpose of manipulation and subversion. More
than 200 agents, according to a recent New York Times article, pose as
businessmen abroad. The CIA has admitted that it has had more than 30
journalists on its payroll since World War II. "Proprietary" corporations--
Air America and other agency fronts, fake foundations, student organizations,
church organizations, etc., are all part of the false bottom world that has
ended up confusing the American people as much as it has confounded foreign
governments. It is a cliché to talk about our "interdependent world". Yet
we have pretended to ourselves that we can support murder, arson, larceny,
and deceit abroad and still continue to enjoy democracy at home. Indeed, the
official myth has been that unless the United States prosecutes the "backalley
war", as Dean Rusk calls it, with all the brutality of which we are capable,
we will lose democracy in America. The Watergate Effect suggests that the
United States is not immune from social processes which have corrupted past
empires. What the state does abroad eventually has an impact on domestic
society. It is not possible to maintain a bureaucracy of hired killers,

thieves, and soon feeling the effects at home. No system of law and order can survive in a schizophrenic environment in which government is invited to subsidize assassination and crop contamination abroad and at the same time is expected to "turn square corners" with its own citizens. That contradiction can perhaps be maintained for short periods of warfare, although we have seen how each war the U.S. has fought has taken its toll on civil liberties, but it cannot be maintained under a state of permanent warfare. In the "backalley war" there are no truces and no peace treaties.

The secrecy that shrouds covert operations distorts the foreign policy-making process in a number of specific ways. First, covert operations are typically discussed by a small group with special clearances. (As a general rule those able to get the clearances already have a vested interest in the operation.) Second, covert operations encourage adventurism because they create the impression, often a false one, that they can be disavowed if they fail. Third, covert operations often close options rather than open them. (One of the reasons President Kennedy decided to go ahead with the Bay of Pigs operation was Allen Dulles's warning that the Cuban refugees recruited for it would expose it if they did not get the chance to carry their flag to Havana. Similarly, to protect the existence of secret bases in such places as Pakistan and Ethiopia the U.S. has had to make special concessions to those countries it would not otherwise have made. Fourth, the lack of control over covert operations leads to minor diplomatic disasters such as the recent incident in Thailand when a CIA agent faked a letter from a guerrilla leader to the Bangkok government for the purpose of discrediting his movement. (The Thai government was not amused and the CIA station chief was recalled.)

As Morton Halperin and Jeremy Stone have pointed out, the secrecy

necessary to maintain an intelligence underworld distorts our constitutional processes in a number of ways. Congress loses its ability to monitor foreign policy when important operations such as the raids on North Vietnam in 1964 are concealed from it and it is asked to make crucial decisions, such as the fateful Gulf of Tonkin resolution, on the basis of a highly misleading picture of reality. Similarly, it loses the power of control over the Treasury when concealed and unaccounted funds can be used at the discretion of the Executive. Protecting foreign statesmen from embarrassment about their involvement with the Agency or concealing some of the Agency's own indiscretions become grounds for misleading or muzzling the press. "National security" is the holy oil that converts felonious acts into patriotic exploits. It is "a universal truth" as James Madison once wrote Thomas Jefferson, "that the loss of liberty at home is to be charged to provisions against danger, real or pretended, from abroad."

The fundamental reason why the secret war bureaucracy threatens the rule of law is that by all democratic norms it is inherently a criminal enterprise. Perjury, subornation, torture, property destruction, assassination, fraud, impersonation and a variety of other acts for which ordinary citizens go to jail become the dictates of duty. The reason that the activities of the intelligence underground are shrouded in secrecy is that they violate some accepted principle of constitutional or international law. If there were no international consensus against staging coups, contaminating crops, assassinating leaders, bribing parliaments, and suborning politicians, there would be no need for the elaborate shield of deception behind which these activities take place. If the fears that Madison voiced two hundred years

ago were not still valid, the CIA would not have had to construct an elaborate cover story. Governments resort to clandestine operations precisely because they wish to act in contravention of established legal principles and specific promises they have made to the outside world and to their own people.

The dangers which a large extra-legal enterprise pose for the establishment of an international legal order or for domestic constitutional order in the U.S. are obvious. Even the highest officials of the "intelligence community" will admit publicly that there are "risks". It is conventional to call for "strict controls" and "better accountability", but there is a fundamental contradiction between the perceived need for a free-wheeling, super-secret world-wide intelligence apparatus and effective political control. The handful of Senators and Congressmen who are permitted even a peek into the secret life of the U.S. Government are, by some mysterious process of selection, wholly sympathetic with what Marchetti and Marks call the "clandestine mentality" and the peculiar code of the intelligence underworld. To read the account of the closed hearings on the nomination of Richard Helms to be ambassador to Iran (subsequently published because of Watergate) is to realize that Congressional watchdogs are blind and toothless.

The inescapable fact is that effective control over an apparatus of the size and character of the U.S. intelligence community is impossible. The choice is between "trusting" that those in charge are "honorable men", as Richard Helms urged in 1971, or dismantling the covert intelligence arm of the United States. There is an overwhelming necessity, in my view for the second choice.

But getting rid of the intelligence underworld which has begun to contaminate our society would require some fundamental political choices. To be sure, there are instances of intelligence operatives embarking on what English judges used to call "frolics of their own", improvising unauthorized mischief, sometimes to the dismay of their superiors in Washington. Indeed an inherent problem of the intelligence underworld is that it is to a great extent uncontrollable. A criminal enterprise, such as the "dirty tricks" department does not respond to ordinary political controls because it is made up of people who have been trained to respect no law but the command of the superior. E. Howard Hunt characterized the breakin at Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office as "an entry operation conducted under the auspices of competent authority." The habit of mind prevailing in the intelligence underworld includes what Richard Bissell calls the "higher loyalty", a definition of national security developed and communicated in secret by higher ranking bureaucrats hermetically sealed from public scrutiny. But despite the code of obedience, agents in the field have both the power and the motivation to trap their superiors by giving them a distorted picture of reality, wittingly or unwittingly. The spectacular intelligence failures--Bay of Pigs, Pueblo--are examples of this phenomenon. The law that operates in more benign bureaucracies also operates here: Bureaucrats tend to keep doing what they have been doing, on an expanding scale, if possible. Thus extraordinary efforts from the top are necessary to turn off operations once they are begun. The deeper the cover, the more impervious to political control.

But the most covert intelligence activities are carried out in direct support of clearly defined U.S. foreign policy objectives. Indeed, some of those objectives require the maintenance of an intelligence underworld of the character that has emerged.

"unnecessary" until we determine the kind of foreign policy we want to pursue as a nation. With all of its spectacular failures and the pretentious banality in which the world of spies, buggers, code-snatchers, crop contaminants, covert philanthropists, and secret political manipulators live, the intelligence underworld is a necessary institution for managing a modern empire. If we cannot find security in the world without trying to run it, then the "dirty tricks" department must remain a fixture of our national life.

Let me be more specific. To manage political and social change around the world and to oppose national revolutions, as the recently exposed "destabilization" campaign in Chile, is a "responsibility" that requires covert action. As long as the U.S. maintains its extravagant policy of trying to make the world safe for established political and economic power, there will always be men like Colby, Bissell and Hunt ready to lie, steal, and kill in that higher cause. Indeed there are many reasons why the CIA now seems a more important political instrument than ever, including the improved techniques for "low profile" interventions, the growing desire to control resource-producing Third World countries, the increasing difficulties in mounting conventional military operations abroad. If we do not wish to use the state to legitimize criminal activity at home and abroad, then we must stop trying to set the conditions for the internal development of other nations.

It is important to distinguish covert action and covert intelligence gathering. In 1968 Richard Bissell, former Deputy Director of CIA in charge of clandestine services defined covert action in these terms:

(1) political advice and counsel; (2) subsidies to an individual; (3) financial and technical assistance to political parties; (4) support of private organizations, including labor unions, business firms, cooperatives, etc.; (5) covert propaganda; (6) "private" training of individuals and exchange of persons; (7) economic operations; and (8) paramilitary [or] political action operations designed to overthrow or support a regime.

Covert action, in simple terms, is secret warfare. Clandestine intelligence collection, by contrast, is not designed to influence political affairs in other countries, but it does as we shall see, have that effect. Both covert action and covert intelligence collection are primarily directed against those societies least able to hurt us because these also happen to be the societies least able to protect themselves from penetration. The Soviet Union makes such a large investment in counterespionage that, except for an occasional defector like Penkovsky, most of the information about their intentions has to be pieced together from open sources. Powerful countries, the only plausible security threats, can develop sophisticated codes that are, as cryptologist David Kahn puts it, "unbreakable in practice." In 1970 Admiral Gayler of the National Security Agency admitted privately, according to Marchetti and Marks, "that a good part of the NSA's successes came from breaks" into embassies and other places where code books can be stolen. Thus it is possible to break the codes of poor Third World countries such as Chile. "One surreptitious entry can do the job successfully at no dollar cost," the authors of the 1970 Huston Plan reported to President Nixon. But such cheap petty thievery produces information the U.S. government does not need or should not have.

The reason the underdeveloped world "presents greater opportunities for covert intelligence collection," as Richard Bissell explained to a Council on Foreign Relations study group in January, 1968, is that governments "are much less highly oriented; there is less security consciousness; and there is apt to be more actual or potential diffusion of power among parties, localities,

Approved For Release 2004/11/01 : CIA-RDP88-01315R000200030003-0
organizations, and individuals outside the central governments." Thus, the same internal suspicions, rivalries, and bribery that keep poor nations from effectively organizing themselves to overcome mass poverty make them attractive targets of the intelligence underworld. Real and exaggerated fears of being infiltrated help to keep such societies in a continual state of political disorganization. As Bissell points out, the less totalitarian the society, the easier it is to find out and to influence what goes on there. Salvador Allende's tolerance of forces opposing him made it easy for the CIA and other intelligence agencies to work with them to hasten his downfall. The CIA "destabilization" campaign, which, according to recent revelations of William Colby's secret testimony, was strongly pushed by Henry Kissinger, would not have worked had the regime been more repressive. That lesson "is one of the uglier legacies of the "dirty tricks" department.

The deliberate disorientation of societies by means of bribery, assassination, black propaganda, subornation, and other methods helps keep them poor and dependent. Those societies most vulnerable to penetration are, generally speaking, the ones that most need effective organization to develop their own priorities. When they are manipulated for U.S. foreign policy purposes rather than their own development purposes, their capacity even to begin to deal with the overwhelming problems of mass poverty is undermined. Unfortunately, U.S. foreign policy purposes in most areas of the Third World have been defined in such a way as to conflict directly with local development needs. The crushing problems of Asia, Africa and Latin America--mass poverty, unemployment, and growing inequality--require structural changes in those societies--a polite term for overthrowing local elites that run them as personal holding companies or throwing out foreign business interests that are often equally exploitative. Consistently, the CIA's continuing secret war has been in support of local and foreign interests threatened by structural change, the

maintenance of a repressive "stability" that stifles hope for the majority of the population. The capability of the U.S. to support reactionary regimes, and its clear intent to do so wherever possible, has been a powerful political factor in preserving a highly inequitable and ultimately explosive status quo.

The "successes" of the CIA have for the most part not been scored against the countries with the capacity to destroy the United States. (Some exceptions include the cultivation of famous defector Colonel Penkovsky, who did provide important military information on Soviet missile strength when it could not be obtained by observation satellites, some propaganda victories in the fight for the "hearts and minds" of European intellectuals in the early postwar period, limitation of Soviet influence in the international labor movement, collection of Kremlin gossip by bugging Party limousines, etc.) But in the weak countries of the Third World the intervention of the CIA can make a crucial difference in setting the political direction, and it often has. If we are to abandon the secret warfare which makes the United States Government the enemy of political change around the world, we must abandon the basic goal of attempting to influence the direction of internal politics in other countries to serve U.S. military and corporate interests.

In the aftermath of Watergate the CIA has been revising the official rationale for its extensive clandestine operations it gives to Congressmen and columnists. According to Miles Copeland, former CIA official, the Agency is now explaining its mission for the mid-1970's in Congressional briefings in the following terms:

1. Meticulous monitoring of the detente.
2. Collection of data on international terrorist groups.
3. Protection of access to strategic materials.
4. Cooperation with multinational corporations.

It is worth examining each of these proposed missions to determine whether the risks involved outweigh the advantages and to ask whether such legitimate security interests as they may be designed to serve can be advanced in other ways.

Certainly the detente must be "meticulously monitored", if by that is meant we should keep track of what the Soviet Union is doing. The most important information about the Soviet Union relevant to detente is the character and state of readiness of the armed forces. Satellite observation and the collection of order of battle intelligence by conventional means is the best way to monitor this information. Spies in the Kremlin, if indeed there are any, and document snatchers are unlikely to provide reliable information in a society that invests as much as the Soviet Union does to avoid penetration. The effort itself of course jeopardizes detente. "Testing" the Soviet air defenses by penetrating their air space is a provocation which serves no legitimate military purpose. The best way to obtain information about Soviet attitudes toward detente is to press them hard for real measures of disarmament. The problem is not one of finding some piece of esoteric information that will provide the key to Soviet behavior but rather of developing an analysis that is comprehensive and dynamic enough to make use of the vast amount of information already available. Monitoring the detente is a mission for diplomats with analytical skills, not spies.

There is no doubt that terrorism will be an increasing problem in a world in which the avenues of peaceful change appear to be blocked. There is no way to "monitor" real or imagined terrorist groups without violating the civil liberties of thousands of people. There is no evidence to suggest that a world-wide surveillance network can in fact prevent random acts of terror which are typically the work of individuals or small splinter groups.

Even if the prospects for pre-empting terrorist attacks through surveillance were more probable, the political damage caused by widespread surveillance in other countries outweighs any possible benefits.

The suggestion that the clandestine services of the CIA are needed to control international drug traffic is amusing in the light of the many well-documented cases of CIA officials promoting illegal drug traffic in Southeast Asia and other places.

To say that clandestine services must be available to aid U.S.-based multinational corporations is to make a virtue of the classic imperialist relationship in which the power of the state is used to bail out private interests abroad. The U.S. traditionally equates the "national interest" with the interests of ITT or Kennecott or some other corporation in conflict with the local government. But such a policy risks involvement in military interventions, frustrates possibilities of development, and confirms the charge that the U.S. is interested only in a "structure of peace" that preserves its power to dominate weak economies. U.S. corporations should be required to stand on their own in their dealings with other countries. If they are prepared to do business in a way that will benefit the host country, they do not need espionage or "dirty tricks" supplied at the taxpayers' expense. Similarly, access to raw materials is a problem of bargaining skill and technological innovation. Unless we are prepared to make war on the producing nations of the Third World in order to obtain access to resources on our own terms, there is no place for the CIA in this drama.

In a recent paper at the Naval War College Vice-Admiral John M. Lee (Ret.) discusses the use of American military power for what he calls "resource control", the protection of U.S. access to strategic materials and energy sources. Arguing that it is "hard to conceive of a situation...where direct combat operations against a Third World resource country to obtain its resources would

commend itself as feasible, effective, and on balance, productive," he does suggest possibilities "of covert operations and proxy wars." This "latent military threat" he argues, reinforced "with other elements of American strength" does produce "leverage". There is nothing new about the use of covert action to protect access to raw materials. Much of CIA operations in the Mediterranean and Latin America have been for precisely this purpose. If we see no alternative way to maintain our economy other than to spread intimidation, confusion, and murder in the Third World, then indeed there will always be a role for the intelligence underworld in American foreign policy.

It is frequently asserted that the United States must make extensive use of espionage and other secret means of collecting information about other nations in order to protect our national security. Here again the crucial issue concerns a basic choice in foreign policy. Certain kinds of policies require certain kinds of information. Some information can be obtained only by clandestine means. Generally speaking, with the exception of counter-espionage, which we will take up a little later, covertly collected information is useful only for the conduct of military or para-military operations. Richard Bissell argues that espionage in the poorer countries is needed to produce "timely knowledge" of "tactical significance." In fact most clandestine collection of information serves no purpose other than to support covert action. Bissell himself concedes that sometimes "the tasks of intelligence collection and political action overlap to the point of being almost indistinguishable." For what legitimate purpose does the United States need to immerse itself in the internal political developments of Third World and other countries which pose no threat to the security of the United States other than the assertion of their own independence?

If the foreign policy of the United States dictates a large-scale "destabilization" program for Chile, the information needed to conduct it can be obtained only by secret means. Such data as the names of Chilean subversives prepared to conspire with a foreign government against their own constitutional system, how much it will take to bribe them or equip them, etc. become vital "national security" information. Since every government takes some pains to keep such information out of hostile hands, the process of collecting it must be an undercover operation. Had the decision been made to permit a freely elected government in Chile to survive such information would not have been needed. The plain truth is that there is no information under the control of Third World governments that the U.S. needs to know unless it is in the business of manipulating and controlling their internal development. In many cases United States public and private agencies already have better organized and more accurate information about finances, resources, and state of the military than the local government itself. The massive penetration of Third World countries by U.S. espionage agencies produces information the U.S. does not need for any legitimate purpose, and in the interests of international stability, should not seek to acquire.

If the United States were genuinely prepared to live in a "world of diversity", as it sometimes claims, it would still need political information, but it would not need to obtain it by illegal and subversive means. Indeed, if the U.S. actually engaged in building a "structure of peace" evolving toward global equity instead of one seeking to freeze a highly unjust and unstable status quo, then most of the information needed could be obtained from open sources and direct inquiry. The principles of espionage were developed for war and the more closely diplomacy resembles war the more it must

rely on espionage. Undercover operations against other countries are no more nor less justifiable than war itself. But they have a way of surviving the wars they are supposed to support. The Pueblo was captured off North Korea in 1967 while engaged in eavesdropping operations that might have been defensible during the war that concluded fourteen years earlier but served no plausible purpose in 1967. Similarly, much of the covert intelligence apparatus was developed for a "backalley war" with the Soviet Union that has been overtaken by events. It is not surprising that Richard Bissell told the Council on Foreign Relations in 1968 that "the underdeveloped world presents greater opportunities for covert intelligence collection."

There is indeed an information and analysis gap, but the information the United States most needs is not under the control of any foreign nation and it cannot be wrested from it. The analysis we need cannot be done by professional spies. The "clandestine mentality" fostered by intelligence bureaucracies is a form of trained incapacity to see the importance of information that does not have to be stolen. We are witnessing a profound crisis in the economic underpinnings of the postwar world. The behavior of the world political economy is confounding experts who only a few months ago professed to understand the "laws" under which the world-wide flow of goods and services was supposedly operating. Today, it is commonplace to read public admissions from such experts that they do not understand what is going on--why we have inflation and recession at the same time, why the old economic remedies such as the manipulation of interest rates do not work. There is a crisis of understanding about what is happening to our institutions, and it has assumed the status of a national security crisis (as well as an international security crisis). The greatest cost to the U.S.

Approved For Release 2004/11/01 : CIA-RDP88-01315R000200030003-0

in maintaining an anachronistic secret warfare department, beside its damage to the reputation of the nation and the corrosion of American institutions, is that it distorts our own perspectives. We are spending several billions a year acquiring knowledge that is useless for solving our most urgent problems. There is a distinction, as Marcus Raskin has pointed out, between problem-creating knowledge and problem-solving knowledge. Information wrested from poor countries to support subversion is problem-creating knowledge because even when the information is accurate and the political operations for which it is used do not backfire, as in Singapore, Greece, and other cases discussed in this conference, nothing is solved.

On June 27, 1970 Henry Kissinger at a meeting of the "Forty Committee" declared, "I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go Communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people." The problem, as Kissinger conceived it, was how to overturn a popular election in a foreign country that produced a result the U.S. government did not like. Once defined in this way, the problem became simple. The United States could employ some of the same methods used in Guyana against Cheddi Jagan, in Guatemala against Arbenz, in Brazil against Goulart. The information needed to carry out such a policy was easy to identify and to obtain. But the problem of Chile remains. Because the United States made it clear from the outset to Allende's opposition that they did not need to compromise with the Unidad Popular since they had the strong backing of the U.S. the internal politics of the country became polarized. The Junta has not merely repealed the reforms of Allende's abortive peaceful revolution. It has turned the clock back two generations and in a burst of gunfire has obliterated reforms won under conservative and Christian Democratic presidents. The economic situation, bad under Allende, is now desperate. Inflation is worse than

ever. Large parts of the middle class are considerably worse off than under the regime they were so happy to be rid of. The incompetence of the Junta has brought tens of thousands in the bottom strata of the population to the brink of starvation. (The price of food has risen precipitously; real wages have fallen; and, incredibly, crops are being exported to earn foreign exchange to buy manufactured goods from abroad.) It is hard to see how from any point of view the "success" in Chile has advanced the interests of the American people. (That it has advanced the interests of a few U.S. firms that had been or were about to be nationalized is clear.) Adding another "sick man" to the international economy is not going to solve the problems that now challenge our basic institutions.

The intelligence gathered with respect to Chile was useful for aggravating the economic problems of Chile but not for solving them. That successful operation also had the effect of complicating U.S. relations elsewhere in the hemisphere. In his State of the Union Speech delivered a little over a week ago Mexico's President Luis Echevarria made it clear that the lessons of the Chile "success" have not gone unnoticed:

[Terrorist groups are] easily manipulated by covert political interests, whether national or international, that use them as irresponsible instruments [for] acts of provocation against our institutions.

This manipulation and control from outside is conducted with great dexterity, and at times one might think that...it is the work of extreme leftist groups; but when one realized the ideological unpreparedness of these groups and that their object is really to provoke repression, what one may call a "witch hunt", one is immediately led to think that it could very well be that they are using covert methods to provoke repression with the effect of halting the function of our institutions, as has occurred in other countries, and to cause the curtailing of our liberties when we have only just begun to follow a policy of economic nationalism in our country. In several Latin American countries, coups d'etat have been preceded by rumor campaigns that have their origin in certain irresponsible groups of businessmen and have also been encouraged by these acts of terrorism which attempt to sow confusion.

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If in or outside of Mexico there are interests that try to divide us, I do not wish to remember that in 1848 we lost half of the territory we inherited from our indigenous and Spanish fathers, after an unjust war with the U.S., in which internal division played a fundamental role...If these groups that try to divide us wish some day to provoke the intervention in any form by any of the powerful nations, let them know that we have full historic awareness of what has happened in Mexico...

This is an extraordinary statement from the chief of a state as thoroughly dependent upon the United States as Mexico. That the President of Mexico would make such a thinly veiled accusation against the United States is evidence not only of the depth of distrust which our "dirty tricks" have earned us but it is also an indication of the erosion of American power. Ironically, the U.S. spy network is creating a political backlash in Thailand, Greece, as well as Mexico, with the result that these traditional clients are seeking a more independent course. How much better it would have been for U.S.-Greek relations had the CIA apparatus been withdrawn before it was expelled.

Thus the sort of knowledge developed by clandestine collection services is in the present world situation problem-creating. The sort of knowledge needed to solve the overwhelming institutional crises cannot be obtained by adversary means. Cooperation and exchange of information--about the workings of national economies, about the structural changes in the world economy, about the successes and failures of social experiments, about the impacts of domestic policies of one country on another--is absolutely essential if any country is going to be able to develop a comprehensive enough understanding of what is happening to the world political economy in order to devise practical policies and solutions. The development of a much higher level of international trust is a necessary precondition for a serious cooperative assault on the real threats facing the American people--inflation, unemployment, loss of liberty, and in the background, nuclear war. The intelligence underworld is a serious obstacle to the building of that new relationship between the United States and the world now needed for our survival.

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From time to time CIA officials emerge from Langley to reassure the public that the tax dollars with which they support the intelligence underworld (amount undisclosed) are well spent. The classic argument in support of a large secret warfare department is that other nations have them too. The "clandestine mentality" pervades the Soviet Union and the record of the KGB for murder, theft, torture, and forgery is probably unmatched. But do criminal activities of other countries require us to maintain our own? Certainly, some counter-intelligence effort against penetration and manipulation of our government and theft of military secrets is necessary. That is a job principally for the FBI to be carried out within the framework of U.S. constitutional safeguards. As the Watergate experience demonstrates, there is a point rapidly reached at which the costs of ferreting out "enemies" and preventing leaks far outweigh the benefits. If the U.S. were out of the covert action business, its counter-espionage requirements would be drastically reduced. Much effort is now devoted to preventing the penetration of our intelligence underworld by the Soviet intelligence underworld. If we did not have one, we would create an unemployment problem for the KGB. Similarly, if what the U.S. actually does in other countries did not diverge so sharply from what we say we do, or, to put it more bluntly, if habitual lying in the "national interest" were no longer a dictate of duty, then the government would not need to spend so much money concealing things from other governments and from the American people. But counter-espionage, which within limits is a legitimate defensive activity, is one thing, and secret warfare against other nations is another. (There is, to be sure, the risk that the one can be disguised as the other.)

The "dirty tricks" gap, if indeed there is one, is no more justification for the U.S. to corrupt our own society and to distort our foreign relations than the missile gap or the bomb shelter gap or all the other arms races we have been running to a great extent with ourselves. There is nothing to suggest that adding a spy to the payroll will cause the Soviets to retire one or that "winning" the "dirty tricks" race is a significant victory. Indeed, most U.S. clandestine operations in the Third World do not appear to be effectively countered by the Soviet Union at all. The "backalley war", which Allen Dulles used to maintain, required fighting fire with fire, was a reasonable description of the Cold War confrontation over Europe. It does not describe what is happening in the Third World where the war is not between U.S. and Soviet intelligence agents but between U.S. agents and weak indigenous political forces which, as in Chile, have received little help from the Communist powers.

U.S. covert action and clandestine intelligence collection (excepting satellites) could be abandoned unilaterally with a net gain in security for the American people. This is so not only for the reasons we have already discussed but also because most of the information so expensively and dangerously procured by secret agents is politically worthless. The work product of the spy is inherently suspect because specialists in espionage are in the business of producing disinformation as well as information. Indeed, the more esoteric and elaborate the deception required to produce a given bit of data, the less likely the spy's political superiors are to believe it. Thus some of the great intelligence coups of history--the advance warning to Stalin of the impending German attack, for example, have

gone unheeded. (Only a year ago advance warning of the Defense Information Agency that the Egyptians and Syrians were about to attack Israel was ignored by policy makers who questioned its reliability.)

For the protection of our own society the "dirty tricks" department must be recognized for what it is, a criminal enterprise. Dismantling it and preventing its reappearance in newer and slicker disguises would be one of the first acts of a new administration genuinely concerned to preserve constitutional liberty and to stop the wreckage our paid pranksters are causing around the world.