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## Who Killed the CIA

*The Confessions of Stansfield Turner*

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ADMIRAL Stansfield Turner commanded a destroyer, a guided-missile cruiser, a carrier task force, a fleet, and the prestigious Naval War College before he was shunted away to a NATO post in Italy in 1975. When he was abruptly summoned back to Washington in February 1977 by his former classmate at Annapolis, President Jimmy Carter, he expected to be appointed to a high naval position or to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Instead, the new President asked him to be Director of Central Intelligence (DCI).

Although Turner had had little previous experience in intelligence, he viewed it simply as a problem of assessing data, or, as he described it to his son, nothing more than "bean counting." Accepting the position of "chief bean counter," he assumed that he could bring the CIA, and American intelligence, to the same standard of operational efficiency he had brought the ships under his command. The four-year effort to achieve this goal is the subject of his book, *Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition*.<sup>1</sup>

He quickly found, however, that the CIA was a far more complex and elusive entity than he had expected. To begin with, the acting CIA Director, Henry Knoche, rather than behaving like a ship's "executive officer," surprised Turner by refusing his "captain's" first order: a request that Knoche accompany him to meetings with congressional leaders. As far as Turner was concerned, this was insubordination (and Knoche's days were numbered). When he met with other senior executives of the CIA at a series of dinners, he found "a disturbing lack of specificity and clarity" in their answers. On the other hand, he found the written CIA reports presented to him "too long and detailed to be useful." He notes that "my first encounters with the CIA did not convey either the feeling of a warm welcome or a sense of great

competence"—an assessment that led to the retirement of many of these senior officers.

Turner was further frustrated by the system of secrecy that kept vital intelligence hermetically contained in bureaucratic "compartments" within the CIA. Not only did he view such secrecy as irrational, he began to suspect that it cloaked a wide range of unethical activities. He became especially concerned with abuses in the espionage division, which he discovered was heavily overstaffed with case officers—some of whom, on the pretext of seeing agents abroad, were disbursing large sums in "expenses" to themselves, keeping mistresses, and doing business with international arms dealers. Aside from such petty corruption, Turner feared that these compartmentalized espionage operations could enmesh the entire CIA in a devastating scandal. The potential for such a "disgrace," as he puts it, was made manifest to him by a single traumatic case that occurred in the 1960's—one which he harks back to throughout his book, and which he uses to justify eliminating the essential core of the CIA's espionage service.

The villain of this case, as Turner describes it, is James Jesus Angleton, who was chief of the CIA's counterintelligence staff from 1954 to 1974; the victim was Yuri Nosenko, a KGB officer who began collaborating with the CIA in 1962 and then defected to the United States in 1964, and who claimed to have read all the KGB files on Lee Harvey Oswald. The crime was the imprisonment of Nosenko, which, according to Turner, was "a travesty of the rights of the individual under the law." It all began in 1964, after Nosenko arrived in the United States. Turner states that Angleton "decided that Nosenko was a double agent, and set out to force him to confess. . . . When he would not give in to normal interrogation, Angleton's team set out to break the man psychologically. A small prison was built, expressly for him."

Nosenko was kept in this prison for three-and-one-half years, although he never admitted to being a double agent. He was then released and sub-

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<sup>1</sup> Houghton Mifflin, 304 pp., \$16.95.

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sequently put on the CIA payroll as a consultant.

After reviewing the conditions of his solitary confinement, Turner concluded scathingly that "the way Angleton treated Nosenko . . . was a case of stooping to the kind of behavior we expect from the Soviets and other totalitarian societies." He blamed it all on "compartmentalization" within the CIA. "I found it difficult to believe, for instance, that DCI Dick Helms knew what was being done to Nosenko. . . . I could see that Angleton had manipulated the system by constructing elaborate barriers around sensitive information."

**T**HE problem with the story Turner tells is that it is untrue. Angleton did not order the arrest, incarceration, or hostile interrogation of Nosenko. Nor did he, or his counterintelligence staff, ever have jurisdiction over the case. The Nosenko case, from its inception in June 1962 until August 1967, was the exclusive responsibility of the Soviet Russia Division—the largest and most powerful unit of the CIA, which was responsible for all espionage operations against the Soviet Union. The precise sequence of events was unambiguously set forth in congressional testimony, which is also the source that Turner cites for his version.<sup>2</sup>

The full responsibility for imprisoning and attempting to break Nosenko was acknowledged by David Murphy, the chief of the Soviet Russia Division. His concern was that Nosenko might redefect as part of "a massive propaganda assault on the CIA."<sup>3</sup> After his deputy, Tennant Bagley, established that Nosenko had fabricated his rank and status in the KGB, and was lying on numerous other matters of concern to the CIA, including the KGB's relationship with Lee Harvey Oswald, Murphy decided to subject Nosenko to hostile interrogation. This meant he would be arrested and treated as an enemy intelligence officer. Murphy sought, and received, authorization to incarcerate Nosenko from Richard Helms, the future DCI, who then headed the clandestine side of the CIA. Helms testified that he only reluctantly gave this authorization because of the extraordinary circumstances of the case. He explained that Nosenko's reliability was the "key to the Warren Commission's determination of whether or not Oswald killed President Kennedy on instructions from the Soviet Union."

Angleton, to be sure, had believed from the outset in 1962 that the information Nosenko had offered was disinformation designed to mislead the CIA. Such judgments, right or wrong, were an integral part of his job of providing an overall picture of KGB strategy. He did not, however, recommend imprisonment or hostile interrogation. He was not even consulted by Murphy on the decision. When Bagley was asked directly about Angleton's relation to the Soviet Russia Division, he testified: "They are entirely separate. Mr. Angleton's counterintelligence staff had a staff role

as against an operational or executive role. . . . We would run the cases, handle the defectors."<sup>4</sup>

Nor did Angleton have anything to do with the conditions of the incarceration. Nosenko's prison was designed and built by the Office of Security. His diet and treatment, also under the auspices of the Office of Security, were supposed to be the equivalent of those afforded to Frederick Barghoorn, an American professor who had been arrested and detained in Moscow.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, Nosenko's treatment was hardly kept secret from Helms by Angleton, as Turner suggests, or by anyone else. Helms, as both he and Bagley testified, was kept informed by the Soviet Russia Division about the progress of the case, which Helms explained hung "like an incubus" over the CIA. Helms, concerned about the legal ramifications of the unprecedented incarceration of a defector, brought the problem to the attention of Lawrence Houston, the CIA's general counsel, Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, the Deputy Attorney General of the United States, and William Foley of the Department of Justice.<sup>6</sup> Nor was the case hidden in the recesses of the CIA: the Rockefeller Commission, which also investigated it, concluded: "[Nosenko's] confinement was approved by the Director of Central Intelligence; and the FBI, Attorney General, United States Intelligence Board, and selected members of Congress were aware to some extent of the confinement."<sup>7</sup>

Admiral Turner of course knew all these facts, and reviews them in the congressional testimony he cites in his book. He certainly has every right to disagree about the way this controversial case was handled (and, ironically, Angleton would probably agree with him), but by falsifying its history he shows himself far more adept as a bureaucratic politician than as a historian. If he had vilified those actually responsible for the incarceration of Nosenko, namely, the Soviet Russia Division, the Office of Security, and the top leadership of the CIA—the collective heart of the espionage organization—and accused them of being no better than "the Soviets," his own judgment, and perspective, might well have been questioned. By instead laying the blame on Angleton, and postulating a phantom "empire" within the CIA which kept the "crime" secret from the rest of the CIA (and the Department of Justice), he plays to a ready constituency in the press and government to whom Angleton has become a *bête noire*.

Turner is not doing this out of any personal vin-

<sup>2</sup> Select Committee on Assassinations, U.S. House of Representatives, 95th Congress, Second Session, Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Vols. II, IV, XII, September 1978, March 1979.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Vol. XII, pp. 633-34.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Vol. II, p. 499.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> Commission on CIA Activities Within the United States, Report to the President, Manor Books (1975), p. 32.

dictiveness toward Angleton (whom he has never met, and who left the CIA in 1974); he is merely using his name as a tactful metaphor for those in the intelligence establishment he prefers not to confront directly. When he writes about "Angletons incarcerating Nosenkos," he is really condemning a much broader spectrum of CIA activities. The point of this exercise is not to denigrate Angleton but to justify the radical cuts Turner made in the espionage branch itself.

IN THE summer of 1977, after setting in motion a plan to eliminate 820 positions in the espionage branch (and notifying the affected case officers by a computerized form letter), Turner reported to President Carter that "the espionage branch was [now] being run ethically and soundly." This was no doubt what the President wanted to hear from his Director of Central Intelligence. The problem was that ethical espionage is a contradiction in terms. There are of course forms of intelligence-gathering which violate no laws or ethical standards. For example, "national technical means," which includes satellite photography and electronic interception of data, is sanctioned by the United States and the Soviet Union in the SALT agreements; embassy attachés are permitted to report on what they observe; and defectors and travelers can be debriefed. But espionage, by definition, is illegal. It is the theft of secrets from a foreign state. It involves bribing, blackmailing, or otherwise persuading a foreign national, in contravention of the laws of his country, to supply secret material or to plant an eavesdropping device. In addition, it is almost invariably necessary to use false identities, lies, and other deceptions to hide the theft itself. The process of organizing lawbreaking, as well as deceit, may be justified on the grounds that it is necessary for the safety and survival of a state, or, as it is called, *raisons d'état*, but it can hardly be elevated to an ethical plane.

Consider, for example, the espionage flap that confronted Turner early in his career at the CIA. In July 1977 a young Soviet diplomat, Anatoli Filiatov, whom the CIA had been grooming as a "mole" in the Foreign Ministry, was caught by the KGB in Moscow. Then his American case officer, who had diplomatic cover, was entrapped—and photographed—leaving espionage equipment, including lethal cyanide ampules, in a "dead drop" for the Soviet spy. After the American diplomat was expelled from Moscow, Soviet sources reported that a Soviet diplomat, who worked with Filiatov in the Foreign Ministry, was killed with a similar cyanide capsule, implying murder or suicide. In addition to losing an agent, and having a case officer exposed and implicated in a possible cyanide poisoning, the CIA had to assess whether it had been betrayed from within. Even though this disaster did not develop into a public scandal, Turner no doubt realized that activities such as

these could not be easily converted into ethical espionage.

The new role Turner proposed for the espionage service was determining, through polling techniques, public-opinion trends in such countries as the Soviet Union, Iran, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, and Argentina. As he explains: "The espionage branch is the ideal instrument . . . for uncovering such trends, even if doing so is almost an overt activity." Specifically, he suggested "using either undercover case officers or agents," with "the polling skill of George Gallup," to "take the pulse of a foreign country." The espionage branch, instead of illegally inducing enemy diplomats and intelligence officers to spy for the United States, would under such a scheme employ sociologists and anthropologists for this ethical, if somewhat academic, intelligence-gathering. He notes that there was strong resistance to this radical reform of his, explaining that it "was not considered espionage by the professionals." Nor would Stanfield's reform produce the enemy codes, plans, and other secret documents for which traditional espionage strives.

In any case, Turner offered his poll-taking idea only as a sop. His real design for the CIA involved effectively abolishing espionage, except as an ad-hoc supplement in certain prescribed circumstances, and replacing it with "technical collection," which is information gathered by electronic and image interceptors in satellites, ships in international waters, and other remotely-based platforms. This is a fully understandable preference: espionage, done by human agents who are vulnerable to arrest, is inherently dirty, unethical, unreliable, and potentially explosive; technical collection, performed by machines, is clean, legal, reliable, and invulnerable to scandal. Turner's thesis, which he argues lucidly, is that in recent years "the growth in technological methods of information-gathering," such as satellites and computers, has produced revolutionary gains for American intelligence which render traditional espionage all but unnecessary—except as a backstop for technical collection.

WHILE this "revolution" has been going on since World War I, Turner is correct in asserting the paramountcy of technical collection today. It supplies the preponderance of intercepted data and reportedly accounts for well over 90 percent of the national intelligence budget. America's ability to suck in and "vacuum clean" data is superb: technical collection can detect enemy planes taking off, radar being switched on, missiles being fueled, and even tanks starting their engines. It can also, as Turner rightly points out, extrapolate from these data an enemy's intentions as well as his capacity for war.

All these marvels notwithstanding, technical collection remains a different form of intelligence-gathering from espionage. It essentially intercepts

data that are allowed to leak into the international ether. These data remain available either because an enemy does not know they are leaking, which is usually a temporary situation, or because an enemy does not deem it worth the expense to protect them through encryption, camouflage, or deception. Most of what is intercepted by technical collection therefore is not secret—at least in the sense that the enemy knows it is being intercepted. And nations can protect truly sensitive data that can potentially be intercepted. If, for example, the Soviet Union does not want secret transmissions to be read by American intelligence, it encrypts them in a one-time computerized code, which cannot be broken without knowing the constantly changing cipher. The raw data of course are still intercepted by American antennas, but they cannot be deciphered. Similarly, if the Soviet Union wants to prevent an object from being photographed by an American satellite, whose paths are predictable, it hides or disguises it. The picture is still taken, but the object is not visible.

Whereas technical collection is based on the leakage from electronic transmissions and physical phenomena, espionage is predicated on human leakage: it seeks to compromise individuals with access to secrets. If successful, it not only forces the individuals illicitly to divulge secrets, but it keeps the enemy from knowing that his secret has been compromised. In doing so, it often provides the key which enables technical collection to be productive against secret information. For example, the breaking of the German Enigma coding machine in World War II, which is usually regarded as a triumph of technical collection, proceeded from an unsung espionage triumph. In 1931, French intelligence recruited as a spy a German clerk in the Reich Cipher Center named Hans-Thilo Schmidt. He provided the instruction manual and daily key settings for the Enigma machine over a two-month period. If these cryptography secrets had not been obtained, the German military codes generated by Enigma—though intercepted by the Allies—might never have been deciphered.

Espionage, since it is based on human vulnerability, can penetrate even the most heavily guarded repositories of national secrets. Soviet intelligence demonstrated this in the 1950's when it recruited no fewer than five different American sources in the ultra-secret National Security Agency (NSA), the unit that supplies the codes and ciphers used by the American government. One of these KGB spies, Jack E. Dunlap, the chauffeur for the NSA's Chief of Staff, organized a number of staff officers into a larceny scheme, which allowed him access to the highest level cryptography, the "keys to the kingdom," as one military investigator put it. He delivered this material to his Soviet case officer in the Chief of Staff's limousine (the only car which could leave

headquarters without being searched). This human spying made it possible for the Soviet Union to decipher the American data that had been gathered by its technical collection, and also to ascertain many of the targets of American technical collection.

Espionage can also succeed over relatively long periods of time, since an agent, once enticed into illegally cooperating, can be blackmailed into continuing and recruiting others. The most recent example is the present Walker-Whitworth case. Here the KGB induced John Walker, a warrant officer in the U.S. Navy's submarine-operations room, to provide it, over a twenty-year period, with cryptographic key lists. These lists, together with naval encoding machines that the Soviet Union's North Korean ally had captured, allowed it to decipher submarine codes. Walker then recruited other family members and friends in the Navy to help him. This espionage enabled Soviet intelligence to decipher submarine transmissions and penetrate electronic deceptions which otherwise would have rendered useless whatever data its satellites, underwater sonar buoys, and other technical collection devices had picked up. As it turned out, the Navy, not realizing that its codes had been compromised, went right on using them for a decade.

**I**N EACH of these cases, espionage provided secrets that could not be garnered by even the most powerful machines of technical collection. But the distinction between these two modes of intelligence-gathering—espionage is unexpected theft from within the enemy's inner sanctum, technical collection is expected interception from outside—was not fully appreciated by Admiral Turner. He was determined to make the espionage branch a part of his technological "team"—although acknowledging that "it is never easy redirecting the thrust of an established, proud, and successful organization." By the time he left in 1981, he had not only drastically reduced the size and mission of the espionage branch—reassigning its case officers to such activities as poll-taking in friendly nations and servicing the scientific apparatus—but had radically revised the underlying assumptions on which intelligence was evaluated.

Up until Turner's reforms, for example, the CIA depended on a concept of disinformation in dealing with reports from Soviet espionage sources. Since Soviet officials recruited abroad by the CIA tended to be either intelligence officers, diplomats, or military attachés, the possibility had to be anticipated that some of them might report the contacts to Soviet security. If so, it was further assumed that these officials, known to be in contact with American intelligence, would be supplied with misleading messages—or "disinformation." In the CIA, disinformation meant private messages between adversary intelligence services that

rarely, if ever, came to the attention of the media.<sup>8</sup>

Sifting this disinformation, which often turned out to be an impossible task, required fitting it into the entire mosaic of reports from the Soviet Union and its allies over an extended period of time. The task also implied some conspiratorial theory of how the KGB operated. Turner rejected this sort of inductive analysis, which he associated with the past "paranoia of the CIA's counterintelligence staff." Instead, Turner preferred to rely on more scientific methods, such as the testing of volunteer Soviet agents by polygraph machines and CIA psychologists. He even provided multimillion-dollar allocations from the intelligence budget for research on extra-sensory perception (ESP). All this allowed him to redefine disinformation, as he does in his book, as a threat to the public media—rather than as one to the CIA. After discounting much of Soviet disinformation as chimerical, he asserts: "Any disinformation campaign must pass through our own media. Because those media are inherently probing and skeptical, and because there are so many sources of media information in our society, we have built-in defenses."

By abnegating the CIA's responsibility for defending against disinformation, Turner automatically downgraded the role of counterintelligence. If misleading messages could be ferreted out through scientific technology by case officers, there was no need for a centralized staff to review the intelligence in a synoptic context—or to supply any sort of "institutional memory." The counterintelligence staff, already purged of most of its long-time staff officers by Turner's predecessor, William Colby, now lost its conceptual *raison d'être*. What remained of the counterintelligence function was relegated to police work. According to Turner's redefinition: "The job of counterintelligence is to find those Americans who do become agents of a foreign power." This greatly shrinks the bailiwick of counterintelligence, especially since the FBI, not the CIA, has jurisdiction in America for spy-catching (and the five spies he cites in his chapter on "Counterintelligence" were actually FBI cases).

Finally, Turner revised the concept of "operational security," which had, up to then, ruthlessly sealed off from any unnecessary risk data upon which foreign agents' lives depended. When, in

1978, a senior CIA officer—a station chief—came under suspicion after being identified by a CIA source in Soviet intelligence as a Soviet mole, Turner did not remove him from his position, even though he had access to highly secret data, or even place a warning in his file to restrict his access to future sensitive information. He explains: "That would have played it safe for the country but would have ruined the man's career without his knowing why."

Turner's presumption, which might have been laudable in any line of work other than secret intelligence, was that a staff officer had a right to retain his position until legally proved guilty. Turner therefore arranged a test for the suspected station chief in which he would be given secret material and placed under surveillance to see if he passed it to the Soviets. To Turner's great relief, the suspect did not contact the Soviets while under surveillance. While this non-event might have been explained in any number of ways—for example, he, or his Soviet contact, might have been warned or have detected the surveillance—Turner concluded: "I decided our entrapment effort had been sufficiently well-executed for me to rest my suspicions. I then ordered that no record of our suspicions and the ensuing investigation be put in the man's personnel record." While Turner's new concept of "security" protected the civil rights and career tenure of CIA officers, it left espionage agents, like Filiatov, who was compromised and sentenced to death, out in the cold.

THE new CIA undoubtedly provided its staff officers with a more efficient, ethical, and happier work environment. Turner, appreciating the need for a captain to know the "attitudes and morale . . . on his ship," held regular group discussions with "middle-management people like espionage officers at mid-career, secretaries, analysts at the desk level, minorities, and the handicapped." By this time, however, under Admiral Turner's command, the "ship" was something other than a secret intelligence organization.

<sup>8</sup> Turner's own Deputy Director for Operations, John McMahon, testified that "'disinformation' . . . almost never receives public attention." CIA Study: Soviet Covert Action and Propaganda, Presented to the Oversight Committee, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House of Representatives, February 1980.