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The CIA: Reform is not Enough

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The impact of intelligence organisations on the international politics of the past 30 years has been the subject of very little systematic study. Many textbooks and general works on international relations have entirely ignored this interesting and important question, perhaps partly because of a lack of adequate information. Now, however, such a plea of ignorance cannot be made with anything like the same force. In the past few years a vast amount has been published about the activities of one country's intelligence organisations—those of the United States. There has been a flood of books by individual writers, some of whom have had direct experience of their subject.¹ There have been the leaks of official documents, including the Pentagon Papers on Vietnam, first published by the *New York Times* in 1971²; and the ITT papers on Chile, first revealed in the *Washington Post* in 1972.³ Most important of all, however, have been the various reports of official bodies, such as the Rockefeller Report on CIA activities inside the United States⁴; the numerous volumes of the U.S. Senate Select Committee to Investigate Intelligence Activities⁵; and the secretly-leaked report of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, which reveals a good deal not in the Senate volumes.⁶

Never before have the intelligence and clandestine action agencies of any government been subject to so searching a scrutiny. A sorry picture has emerged of poor intelligence assessments, widespread interference with the civil rights of citizens, petty inter-agency squabbles, political manipulation, and endless covert operations abroad, many of them scatter-brained and criminal both in conception and execution. The weight of the evidence has pointed particularly to the Central Intelligence Agency as the main instrument whereby this series of errors and failures occurred.

Yet the impression persists that such reforms as have resulted from all the governmental investigations have been inadequate. Capitol Hill has laboured, and brought forth a mouse. The CIA is still very much in business, but the arrangements for congressional oversight of its activities have been slightly altered. Instead of being answerable more or less equally to several different House and Senate committees, the CIA is now principally subject to one—the Senate Intelligence Oversight Committee, established in 1976.

As an instrument for controlling the CIA there is a good deal to be said for the Senate Intelligence Oversight Committee. Its creation was the result of a justifiable dissatisfaction with the White House's Execu-

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