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# CIA: How Did It Ever Come to This?

BY ROBERT J. DONOVAN

WASHINGTON—When the Church committee report on the CIA's involvement in assassination plans is released soon, it will be, among other things, a monument to the miscarriage of a famous law creating the CIA 28 years ago.

The question will be raised again: How did the CIA go wrong? How did it turn out to be radically different from what those who voted to establish it believed it was going to be? The answers to those questions will help shape whatever restrictions are to be placed on the CIA for the future.

The main cause of the miscarriage was the cold war and the feeling it engendered that the end of achieving security against the supposed Soviet

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threat justified the means. Contributing factors were quirks in the law itself.

The law is the National Security Act of 1947, the principal purpose of which was not to create the CIA but to achieve the so-called unification of the armed services. The CIA was incidental to the larger goal of coordinating military policy and foreign policy.

Even so, members of the 80th Congress who voted for the act went out of their way to try to nail down the limits of the CIA's authority, and some of those old tigers would have been astounded at the things the CIA has done at home and abroad since the legislation cleared Congress and was signed by President Truman July 26, 1947.

Incredible as later events were to be, however, a rereading of the 1947 hearings almost suggests that the legislators of a generation ago instinctively feared that the CIA might get into just such things as domestic wiretapping, outfitting J.E. Howard Hunt Jr. with equipment for breaking into the office of Daniel Ells-

berg's psychiatrist, preparing psychological profiles on Ellsberg, or subsidizing business, labor, church and student groups through a maze of foundations.

Congress tried to legislate limits simply because it was nervous about creating for the first time in American history a huge peacetime intelligence establishment. The role of such an agency in a democracy posed questions, and today it is striking how often worried references to the Gestapo crept into the hearings on the bill.

Rep. Clarence J. Brown (R-Ohio) said that while he wanted the country to have the finest intelligence service, he did not wish the President—any President—"to have a Gestapo of his own." He inquired at a hearing whether the proposed CIA "might possibly affect the rights and privileges of the people of the United States."

"No, sir," replied Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, director of Central Intelligence under a previous interim intelligence establishment. "I do not think there is anything in the bill, since it is all foreign intelligence, that can possibly affect any of the privileges of the people of the United States."

Rep. Henderson Lanham (D-Ga.) asked another witness, Vannevar Bush, whether there was danger that the CIA would "become a Gestapo or anything of that sort?"

"I think there is no danger of that," replied Dr. Bush as chairman of the Joint Research and Development Board. "The bill provides clearly that (the CIA) is not concerned with intelligence on internal affairs, and I think that is a safeguard against its becoming an empire. We already have, of course, the FBI in this country concerned with internal matters

Officials of the Truman Administration recognized the concern in Congress that a new-fangled operation with dangerous implications for a democracy might be in the making, and they tried to lay this fear to rest.

James V. Forrestal, then secretary of the Navy, assured a House committee: "The purposes of the Central Intelligence (Agency) are limited definitely to purposes outside of this country, except the collation of information gathered by other government agencies."

"Collation" was a clue to understanding what was being asked of Congress: The CIA was to be an organization for centrally gathering and coordinating information. The CIA was to collect, evaluate, estimate. There was only a passing hint—and that from Allen Dulles, later a director of Central Intelligence—that the CIA would conduct operations intended not to report on events that had happened, but to do things—such as pour money into Chile in a covert operation—to cause them to happen.

In a little-noticed line in a memorandum, Dulles suggested that the CIA should have "exclusive jurisdiction to carry out secret intelligence operations." No such authority was written into the law. And anyhow, Dulles never mentioned secret political operations. Congress did understand that the CIA would engage in some activities in the United States, such as overt collection of intelligence, seeking information from American businessmen, scientists and others who had been abroad, and in general supplementing the CIA's basic foreign intelligence mission. But the domestic activities that have been revealed in the headlines in the last year or so were completely out

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