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CIA, FBI: Menaces Again?

Many Americans are too young to remember the period, almost a decade ago, when the FBI and the CIA were gravely damaged by revelations of outrageous violations of law and abuses of people's rights at home and abroad.

As top officials in both the CIA and FBI were indicted, and reputations were ruined, Americans told themselves: "It will be a long time before anyone in those agencies tries that stuff again."

"A long time" has passed, and there is disturbing evidence that people in the CIA and FBI are trying "that stuff"—trying to do "business as usual."

"A growing number of my colleagues question whether the CIA is complying with the law" in its operations in Central America. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan said recently. He said many senators believe that the CIA is involved in efforts to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, despite the omnibus appropriations bill for this fiscal year that prohibits such American support.

In the name of preventing communism from spreading in this hemisphere, this administration seems to be encouraging the CIA to do everything it did in Chile and elsewhere a decade ago.

The FBI, in the name of fighting "terrorism," or "anticipating and pre-

venting crime," proposes again to infiltrate many groups that the FBI (or the attorney general) designates as "violence-prone." It may sound fine to have the FBI place informers inside unpopular groups like the Ku Klux Klan, until you remember that the federal government is even now being sued for millions by people who claim that FBI informers were the perpetrators and agitators of a lot of KKK crime, including the murder of Viola Liuzzo, in the 1960s.

The infiltrations start out with "terrorist"-type groups and soon the nuclear freeze, anti-draft, civil rights, women's rights and other groups become targets. Then we're back to "Cointelpro," the discredited old FBI scheme to disrupt and destroy groups on the hit-list of the director, the attorney general, or both.

The current FBI director, William Webster, a former judge, restored most of the FBI's lost respect by operating the bureau under guidelines that were perfectly acceptable to the bureau in times when it was obvious that neither the Ford nor Carter administrations, nor the American people, would accept anything that looked like a drift back to the old abuses. But this administration likes some of the old procedures and thinks that it can restore them while the public dozes.

A jury recently convicted FBI vet-

eran H. Edward Tickle Jr. on several counts of obstructing justice, ignoring his claim that the FBI began a vendetta against him after he told Webster that he had participated in two illegal entries on behalf of the FBI.

Maybe former "black bag" specialist Tickle was lying to try to save his hide. Whatever the case, it's ill both for the FBI and for the director's fine reputation to have charges of illegal entry surfacing again.

Such charges become more believable when people note that the FBI has jumped out front in efforts to mangle the Freedom of Information Act; that a move has sprung up in this administration to give the CIA authority to infiltrate domestic groups; that President Reagan has made it harder for the public to get foreign policy information by ordering secrecy classifications stamped on documents and data never before given secrecy labels.

Moynihan and the rest of Congress had better stand up the way they did in 1974 and 1975 when revelations of CIA and FBI abuses so outraged the nation. Attorneys general and CIA directors must not operate under whatever set of "guidelines" they like in a given portion of their tenures.

Congress ought to set the rules for the FBI and the CIA and ensure that incumbent directors abide by them.

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