

THE THREAT

Inside the Soviet Military Machine.

By Andrew Cockburn.

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By WILLIAM E. COLBY

THE debate over America's defense policy and budget is all too often conducted in hyperbole. The Kennedy "missile gap" and the Reagan "window of vulnerability" frightened Americans into believing that the Soviet Union had leaped ahead of the United States in military power. In both these cases, as in others, more sober investigation revealed the facts to be considerably less threatening, but only after full political advantage had been taken of the public's fears.

The proper role of intelligence is to give an accurate picture of potential adversaries, neither exaggerated nor minimized. But since the easiest things to count are tangible forces and weapons and the hardest are military readiness, effectiveness, discipline and will to fight, the tendency is to rely more on the former than the latter.

In addition, the role of intelligence is generally assumed to be to assess only the adversary, rather than to compare his capabilities against our own. That function, called "net assessment," has had a very hard time finding a hospitable home in American intelligence. The National Security Council did the job for a short time in the early Nixon years; then the Pentagon took it over. Had net assessment evaluations been entrusted to an independent body, the official view of the balance of power might have differed from the Defense Department's recitation of the "hard facts" of Soviet weaponry and forces and the counterforces and counterweapons required by our side. "The Threat" by Andrew Cockburn is a major contribution to net assessment.

In the United States, any major strategic question must be discussed and settled in public. The debates over the B-1 bomber, the MX missile, additional carrier task forces — all are examples of Congress's participation in basic strategic decisions. Thus net assessment must be a public process that balances what we know about our adversaries against our knowledge of our own forces.

Mr. Cockburn, a journalist specializing in military affairs, adds greatly to public understanding of Soviet strength by going beyond mere numerical evaluation to the human factors behind the numbers. He has interviewed former members of the Soviet military now in the West and collected other information about the performance of Soviet forces and weaponry. And he concludes that the Soviet armed forces are far less of a menace than usually pictured. He reminds us that Murphy's Law can apply to the Russians as well as to ourselves.

"The Threat" cites the abominable discipline and widespread drunkenness of Soviet ground forces and the lack of any substantial noncommissioned officer class to provide battlefield leadership at the small unit level. Instead, Soviet officers are expected to perform many of the duties that Western armies, with great efficiency, delegate to sergeants. Moreover, deficiencies are covered up throughout Soviet ranks to prevent

word of weakness from reaching the top.

Mr. Cockburn dissects the formidable total figure for the Soviet armed forces, some 5.8 million, to demonstrate that it is not directly comparable to our smaller number. Nearly a million members of the Russian armed forces are construction and railroad personnel, jobs that are not included in our defense establishment. Many other positions, in categories like air defense, internal security and border control, do not appear in any number in our forces. Moreover, the Russians apparently require far greater numbers of people than we do to accomplish the same tasks. For example, there are 250,000 men and women serving in the Soviet Ministry of Defense, compared to about 60,000 at our Washington headquarters level. By Mr. Cockburn's calculations, about two million men would actually fight on each side in case of war.

Mr. Cockburn points to substantial weaknesses in the combat effectiveness of Soviet tanks, aircraft and ships. He analyzes the Soviet Union's poor maintenance and its emphasis on parade-ground-ready equipment at the expense of operational readiness; aircraft and tanks are parked when they might be used for training, and ships spend much time at anchor.

WHILE Mr. Cockburn sometimes overstates the tendency of the military establishments on both sides to paint a frightening picture of each other and so insure

continued appropriations and perquisites for themselves, his analysis is a healthy antidote to the usual hyperbole of our political debate, which portrays the Soviet Union as all-powerful and the United States as relatively weak. This book can help move us toward a more consistent and sensitive process of net assessment that will provide a more realistic evaluation of the readiness, effectiveness, discipline, will and training of the two sides.

But that assessment must also include an awareness, missing from "The Threat," that the weaknesses Mr. Cockburn finds in the Soviet forces were there during their bloody campaigns against Hitler, whose brilliant officers, splendid noncommissioned officers and perfect discipline could not in the end withstand the raw power of the Soviet onslaught. Debunking the Pentagon's more extreme assessments of the Soviet threat does not remove the need to meet real strength — but with the right weapons, not carbon copies of the enemy's arms and armor. ■

William E. Colby was Director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 1973 to 1976.

Colby and the freeze

You don't have to be a cooing white dove to be against nuclear madness. William E. Colby proclaims himself "an unreconstructed cold warrior." And Colby advocates a bilateral nuclear freeze.

Colby was director of the CIA from 1973 to 1975. "At the CIA," he told The New York Times, "it became obvious to me that the real function of intelligence is not to win battles but to help with the peace, to avoid the kind of destabilizing surprises that can occur.

"It is clear to me," Colby said, "that the arms race has us on the verge of another one of these terrible destabilizing steps that is moving us toward a hair-trigger world with all this talk of launch under attack. My God, we're talking about the fate of the world."

To Colby, nuclear war is not a political issue; it is a practical matter of staying alive. He has not aligned himself with organizations that promote the freeze, although he assisted U.S. Catholic bishops in drafting their freeze endorsement. Instead, Colby conducts his own speaking tours and writes newspaper columns on the subject. At the same time, he supports the Reagan administration's stand in El Salvador and staunchly defends the propriety of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

It is not the first time that Colby has strayed from the party line to support a principle. In 1975, Colby went to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and exposed "the family jewels," the CIA's supersecret domestic spying operations. He also turned over to the committee evidence that former CIA director Richard Helms had lied to Congress about the extent of CIA involvement in the overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende.

As a result of those actions, Congress tightened the reins on the CIA's heretofore independent operations. Helms was prosecuted for his lies. He

pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge of false testimony and slipped silently from public life.

Colby has made numerous Washington enemies as he battles for personal principles, but he retains their respect. Unlike too many people in government, one never has to doubt Colby's sincerity in what he says.

"I think it's time for people to take this (nuclear) matter away from the (government) priesthood that has gotten us into this mess," Colby told a Georgetown University audience recently, "and to simply insist that we stop building these things."

Ex-C.I.A. Head Now Works for a Nuclear Freeze

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By PHIL GAILEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 13 — Eight years ago, while this city was undergoing its post-Watergate cleansing, William E. Colby did something unusual for a director of Central Intelligence.

He disclosed the agency's "family jewels," as its dark secrets and illegal activities were called by insiders, before a Senate committee. At the same time he turned over to the Justice Department the findings of an internal inquiry that led to the prosecution of Richard Helms, one of his predecessors, for lying to Congress about C.I.A. activities in Chile.

The agency's old guard reacted with harsh accusations and innuendoes. Some, including James J. Angleton, who had been ousted as head of counterintelligence by Mr. Colby, suggested at the time that he might be a Soviet mole; others accused Mr. Colby of paralyzing the agency's ability to conduct covert operations by kneeling before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence as if it were, in the words of one former C.I.A. director, "a mourner's bench." President Ford asked for Mr. Colby's resignation in late 1975.

These days Mr. Colby, who practices international law here, is again playing a surprising role for a former director of Central Intelligence. He has joined the public debate on nuclear arms control on the side of the Catholic bishops and the nuclear freeze movement, and this has brought a new round of criticism of Mr. Colby by some of his old C.I.A. colleagues who never forgave him for opening the agency's black bag to the world.

Known as a 'Soldier-Priest'

"My position is a little incongruous for a former C.I.A. man, and I understand that," he said, adding that, contrary to what some are saying, neither religion nor guilt brought him to his present view.

Still, friends and critics alike, including two former directors of Central Intelligence, suggest privately that Mr. Colby, known around the C.I.A. as the "soldier-priest," may be motivated in part by his deep commitment to his Roman Catholic faith and a sense of guilt from some of the most painful periods of his life.

After he was appointed C.I.A. Director in 1973, antiwar groups tacked up posters in Washington labeling Mr. Colby a "murderer" and war criminal for his role in directing Operation Phoenix, an effort to identify and recruit or imprison leaders of the Vietcong in South Vietnam. Some 20,000 Vietcong "suspects" were killed during the operation. Mr. Colby told a House committee that there had been some "excesses" despite his rules against illegal killings, but he insisted that the program had, on the whole, been successful.

Still, Mr. Colby was shaken by suggestions that he had condoned political assassinations. "How does it feel to be married to a war criminal?" he asked his wife when the posters went up.

His public tribulations were matched by his personal grief. In 1971 his eldest daughter died in Washington after a long illness, and friends say Mr. Colby, who was stationed in Vietnam during the years her health was deteriorating, felt a sense of guilt for not having spent more time with her.

Practical and Moral Aspects

Mr. Colby, whose poker player's face rarely betrays his emotions or private thoughts, nodded slightly as a reporter repeated this speculation about why he went from the cold to the freeze.

"If I were taking the other side, nobody would bat an eyebrow about it," he said. "I felt this way long before the bishops' letter came out and, in fact, I helped to some degree in explaining the issue to Catholic groups. I figure the priests can take care of the moral aspects and I'll talk about the practical aspects."

Mr. Colby, who is waging his personal freeze campaign on the speaking circuit and in newspaper columns, contends that his antinuclear activities are "a logical extension of what I was doing in the intelligence business."

He goes on: "At the C.I.A. it became obvious to me that the real function of intelligence is not to win battles but to help with the peace, to avoid the kind of destabilizing surprises that

can occur. It is clear to me that the arms race has us on the verge of another one of these terrible destabilizing steps that is moving us toward a hair-trigger world with all this talk of launch under attack. My God, we're talking about the fate of the world."

If Mr. Colby's former colleagues in the intelligence community are perplexed by the latest public role of this man who calls himself "an unreconstructed cold warrior," so are some liberals who have welcomed him into the ranks of the nuclear freeze movement despite his support for the Reagan Administration's policies in El Salvador and his unwavering defense of American involvement in Vietnam.

James R. Schlesinger, a former C.I.A. director, said that the freeze movement, "if anything but a political gesture, could be detrimental to the overall military balance." He said he did not doubt his former colleague's sincerity, but, like some other members of the national security community, said he felt that Mr. Colby's words were taking a turn toward stridency.

Mr. Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense in the Nixon and Ford Administrations, said he read with dismay Mr. Colby's recent remarks to an antinuclear group at Georgetown University. Mr. Colby told that audience: "I think it's time for people to take this matter away from the priesthood that has gotten us into this mess and to simply insist that we stop building these things."

In an interview, Mr. Schlesinger said: "I get restless, and I suspect others do too, over firebrand comments about a supposed nuclear priesthood. Bill knows better than that. Discussions regarding nuclear strategy have been quite open, more

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This President Wants Silence By Censorship

Reagan's new rule could gag officials for life

By Frank Snapp

WHEN THE SUPREME Court ruled against me in 1980 and upheld the enforceability of government secrecy agreements, my father — who is a conservative superior court judge — predicted that “one of these days some patriot in the White House will realize the power the Brethren have given him,” and saddle us with a system of censorship such as we’ve never seen in this country.

My father has been proven right. President Reagan, citing *Snapp v. U.S.*, has decreed that every bureaucrat “with authorized access to classified information shall be required to sign a nondisclosure agreement. . . .”

This order will obligate some bureaucrats to submit all work-related writings for government censorship for the rest of their lives. And the Supreme Court made clear in my case that these government workers won’t even have to sign secrecy agreement to become censorship candidates. All they have to do is get assigned to an official “position of trust” with “conceded access to confidential sources and materials.” From that point on, they’re implicitly obligated not to publish anything, classified or not, about their work, without official approval. Forever.

In a “fact sheet” attached to the Reagan order, the Justice Department reminds all bureaucrats of this implicit “fiduciary duty.” This clears the way for a censorship system that is virtually open-ended.

Steven Garfinkel, the official responsible for monitoring governmentwide security programs, has conceded to Congress that though he can’t say for sure how many bureaucrats traffic in classified information, at least 65 official departments and agencies do. The mind boggles at the potential number of gag victims this estimate implies. The 11 agencies that make up the U.S. intelligence community, by themselves, are 200,000-strong.

In practical terms, if the Reagan order is enforced, many of the turnstile bureaucrats who come and go with each administration will be out of business.

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Heritage Foundation who’ve served the Reagan White House be happy about being censored by the liberal constituents of a Mondale, Glenn or Cranston administration?

You don’t need a definitive answers to these questions to view the Reagan order as ill-conceived and dangerous.

Predictably, the administration has had a problem selling its scheme. Deputy Assistant Attorney General Richard Willard, principal author of the Reagan directive, initially claimed that the secrecy agreements were needed to stem a flood tide of leaks which “has increased in severity over the past decade.” But then Garfinkel, the government’s designated auditor of leaks, conceded to a congressional subcommittee that only a half-dozen leaks had been reported to his office in the past three years.

Willard tried to recoup. In a TV interview, he said it wasn’t the quantity or severity of leaks that necessitated the gag rule. Rather, it was the worries of our allies — their “lack of confidence in our government’s ability to keep secret important information. . . .”

Since most of our allies (witness the British) have far more stringent secrecy regulations than we do — and far more serious security problems — Willard’s attempt to justify the Reagan directive is a token of how desperate his case has become. And no wonder. Numerous authoritative voices have been raised against its assumptions.

Writing in *Foreign Policy* last fall, former CIA Director Stansfield Turner declared: “Fortunately, while several leaks about actual espionage in the past six or seven years have involved serious breaches of security, very little information harmful to U.S. intelligence interests has been revealed. In short, the impression that intelligence agencies cannot keep secrets is highly exaggerated.”

Former Deputy CIA Director Bobby Inman has also cast doubt on the wisdom of the administration crackdown. Last winter he told *U.S. News & World Report* that the

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Angelo Codevilla

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By focusing so exclusively on rules and standards of operations, the intelligence debate of the mid-1970s did not answer the fundamental question of what the United States expects of its intelligence services or what they are to accomplish in order to meet the challenges of the 1980s.

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The Substance and the Rules

Since the early 1970s, this country's intelligence agencies have been asking, "What does the country expect of us?" That question had not arisen in the postwar period because the American political system had left the agencies to the total discretion of those appointed to lead them. In the early 1970s, factional conflict among those leaders spilled over into a national debate about what America's practitioners of intelligence ought to have foremost in mind. That debate continues.

Recently, Admiral Stansfield Turner, President Carter's Director of Central Intelligence, and his former special assistant, George Thibault, published an attempt both to answer that question and to indict the Reagan administration's handling of intelligence. The author's answer seems to be that

the American people expect their intelligence agencies to be as innocuous as possible. They charge that the Reagan administration is undermining the agencies by loosening too many restrictions. The authors thus contend that for our civil liberties' sake, and for the sake of the agencies' own standing in the country, the agencies ought to concentrate on formulating for themselves the right kinds of rules and restrictions. However, one would not suspect from Turner and Thibault's article that the rules by which intelligence officers live ought to flow from the intelligence profession's substantive requirements.

Nevertheless, in intelligence as in other areas of government, the American people rightly want their employees to accomplish the functions for which they are paid. This author will argue that Stansfield Turner is