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## A Better Choice for CIA

THE AUTOMATIC response to the nomination of Admiral Stansfield Turner might well be based on an assumption that President Carter, having erred first by nominating a liberal civilian to head the Central Intelligence Agency, is now averaging things out with a conservative military man.

The best evidence we can find suggests the automatic response would be wrong, and that Admiral Turner could well turn out to be a splendid choice. Since we have not had the chance to observe him firsthand, our assessment is based on a reading of his record. That record provides an insight into three attributes that should equip him to be an independent, tough-minded reformer of the CIA:

- As president of the Naval War College from 1972 to 1974, Admiral Turner acquired a reputation as a tough taskmaster and a reformer. He increased the work loads of students significantly. Each student was required to read three books on each weekly discussion topic, one-third of the students were required to write short essays each week.

His own scholarship, which put him near the top of his class everywhere he studied,



Turner: First assumptions wrong

caused him to change the curriculum drastically to teach naval officers how to cope with the Soviet Navy in an era of limited resources, public criticism and what was perceived at the time as lingering overconfidence.

- Both his record at the War College and the important article he wrote for the January "Foreign Affairs" suggest a healthy skepticism about the easy claims: the Pentagon sometimes makes about its own needs and the Soviet Union's gains. He disdains the naval "numbers game" and, in his analysis, draws sharp distinctions between the real needs of the U.S. Navy and the acknowledged gains of the Russian Navy on the one hand, and the assumptions that are sometimes made about what policy implications these shifts have.

- Though Admiral Turner does not qualify as a total outsider to the intelligence community, his own background is much more related to the system analysis end of intelligence work, which is the more important and less controversial part of the CIA's role. If the CIA is to be both effective and subject to adequate civilian control, it is going to have to rely heavily on the the compilation and interpretation of objective data as opposed to the cloak-and-dagger work that is the stuff of popular legend.

Obviously, Congress has an important role to perform in examining this appointment. We can't pretend to know enough about the admiral to make a final judgment. But there is a good bit of evidence to suggest that Mr. Carter has made a good choice for the CIA directorship, far better than his unfortunate initial nomination of Theodore Sorensen.

Admiral Turner appears to be a combination of a man with sufficient knowledge and sufficient skepticism to take on the job of reforming the CIA while nonetheless enabling it to perform its essential mission. We like what we know of him thus far.