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Don't bring on the clowns

In the wake of the seizure of the U.S. hostages in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, everybody—the Carter Administration, Congress, and the press—began talking about the need for *remilitarization*. My problem is that I missed altogether the presumed *demilitarization* that brought about the need for *remilitarization*. I must have been in the bathroom.

I hope they tell us next time we *demilitarize*. It's something many of us would enjoy. The novelty value alone would make it worth watching. Given a little advance notice I, and I'm sure many others, would willingly adjust our ablutionary habits not to miss the spectacle.

I confess I have been unable to grasp just how *remilitarization* is expected, retroactively, to prevent the seizure of the hostages or the invasion of Afghanistan. On the other hand, I understand perfectly the compulsion our leaders—and, to some extent, even the American people—feel to take arms against a sea of trouble, regardless of the likelihood that they will turn out to be no more effective than those King Canute aimed at his own troubled sea. The hardest advice in the world to accept is to do nothing, though often enough that is the only thing to be done.

What I find absolutely incomprehensible is the parallel determination to "unleash" the CIA and recall to duty the old dirty tricksters who were laid off by Admiral Turner in one of the few periods of right reason the Agency has ever experienced. The

new demands to restore the CIA's capacity and license for covert actions are tantamount to advocating the return of Spiro Agnew to the Government because of the need for honesty.

It is a matter of public record that the CIA is responsible for the seizure of the American embassy in Iran. It is no secret that the Iranians, in the turmoil of the years after World War II, elected a leader, Mohammed Mossadegh, who promised to nationalize the country's oil. It is no secret that Anglo-Iranian oil enlisted the CIA to depose this upstart and bring back the Shah—then in exile in Rome and elsewhere—to insure Anglo-Iranian's continued proprietorship over the oil. It is no secret that the Shah, once returned to power, did, in fact, nationalize the oil, after a fashion: He personalized it, family-ized it, stole it for himself and his relatives and friends. Moreover, he proceeded to erect a powerful secret police force with the support and instruction of the CIA. This force, SAVAK, kidnapped, jailed, tortured, and killed all the anti-tyranny people it could. To our amazement, the Iranians, when at

last they got rid of the tyrant and torturer, seemed strangely to resent America's crucial help in putting him into power in the first place, maintaining him there, and instructing him in the uses of electricity for his pastimes.

All of this is rehearsed here not to spell out what is universally known, except by the Carter Administration, but to marvel at minds which can seriously advance the notion that reconstituting the Derring-Do Division of the CIA will provide insurance against the Ayatollahs and revolting students of the future.

Of course, this country needs an intelligence agency, and it's too bad that we don't have one, or that the one we have has been grievously harmed by the kooks who believe it possible to govern the world by assassinations, rigged up counterrevolutions, and what can only be called schoolboy mischief, as in the famous plot to destroy Castro by causing his beard to fall out. The troubles encountered by Admiral Turner apparently stem from the simple fact that he is the first grown-up to attempt to ruin the CIA.

If, for whatever reasons, it is thought necessary for this country to have an agency devoted to lunacy in foreign policy, by all means let us have one. But the function of gathering and evaluating information is too important to allow it ever again to come under the dominance of the clowns who are attracted to covert action.

—FRANK GETLEIN

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