

Remarks at A.B. Laffer Associates Conference

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Thank you very much. It is a great pleasure to be here and to continue a relationship that was started under Director Casey, a relationship I know that he valued. It's very early in the morning, and you have already been alerted by Congressman Gray of another subject. I will try to provoke your interest in some of the things that we do, and where I think the Central Intelligence Agency and the Intelligence Community fit into the process of executive decisionmaking. Then I'll be glad to answer any questions that might have occurred to you.

In this election year, we have all heard candidates from both parties present their views on what is needed for an effective foreign policy. It is not my role as Director of Central Intelligence to agree or disagree with their views. I have my own opinions, of course, as I know you do, but it is also not the role of the Director of Central Intelligence to develop foreign policy. But I would like to take this opportunity to clarify some of those issues that surround the foreign policy debate today.

Specifically, I would like to discuss the role that the CIA plays in supporting and implementing foreign policy—which is not the same as making policy—and I also would like to discuss how the CIA's relationship with Congress has changed since the days before legislated congressional oversight. There are a lot of assumptions that the CIA is making policy. Whenever I see a newspaper article attacking something we are doing on the basis of a policy issue, I find it ironic because we do not make policy. We are only implementing the declared foreign policy of this country.

The CIA's primary role is, as I am sure you are aware, to provide support to our nation's policymakers. We do that by providing intelligence that is useful, timely, and objective in order that policymakers—not the CIA—may make wise decisions affecting our foreign policy and other governmental issues.

Today our government depends heavily on useful, accurate intelligence: intelligence to formulate and implement our foreign policy, intelligence to verify the arms agreements that we have signed, and intelligence to understand both the intentions and the capabilities of our adversaries. I have recently testified before Congress on the Intelligence Community's ability to monitor the Soviet Union's compliance with the provisions of the INF treaty. While I think it would be inappropriate for me to try to discuss those details here, I can assure you that intelligence, the ability to monitor and to verify, is absolutely vital to these decisions—both to INF and to the prospect of a START treaty.

Intelligence must also be timely. Last summer I visited our NORAD facility in the Cheyenne Mountains and I also visited SAC Headquarters. These are principal early warning systems for our military defense, as you know. A day there can't help but make one aware of the critical importance of early and accurate intelligence for our national defense. Given the speed at which nuclear missiles are able to travel, we now think of survival warnings not in terms of weeks or months but in terms of minutes—minutes in which we must make critical decisions affecting our survival.

But not only must intelligence be useful and timely, it is important that the information that is collected be developed in an objective way. The Director of Central Intelligence and the people who analyze the information must be seen as giving the best estimates, not "cooking the books" or shaping or attempting to influence our foreign policy decisions, but rather providing the kind of information upon which wise decisions can be made in the interests of our national security.

Because the quality and objectivity of the intelligence we provide is so important, I have taken a number of steps to ensure that the Intelligence Community preserves its objectivity and its integrity. We have and will continue to "tell it as it is," avoiding bias as much as we can. On the other side of the coin, policymakers may not like the message they hear from us, especially if they have a different point of view. My position is that in the preparation of intelligence judgments, particularly in National Intelligence Estimates, we will provide them for the use of policymakers. They can be used in whole or in part. They can be ignored, torn up, or thrown away, but they may not be changed.

Let me give you an example which might be helpful. In June 1987, we provided a National Intelligence Estimate to the policy community on Iran and the superpowers in the Gulf. This was after the decision to flag had been made. We were working on the estimates, but the decision to flag was made without it. The intelligence estimate represented the coordinated views of all of the members of the Intelligence Community, but our position—our estimate—was not a popular one. This estimate assessed not only the probable immediate actions that Iran could take in an effort to head off the U.S. protection for Kuwaiti shipping, but also the probable Iranian strategy once the reflagging project was implemented. Although our view was not one that the policy community welcomed, we did not change it.

I think this kind of insistence upon objectivity must be one of the most significant contributions that I or any Director of Central Intelligence could make in galvanizing a cohesive Intelligence Community without compromising the integrity of the individual analysts or the program managers. Those estimates have stood the test of experience.

In addition to providing intelligence that is useful, timely, and objective, the CIA plays an important role in the implementation of our foreign policy. This is done through our covert action programs. These may include political work through communications—getting the message out—training, supplying important materials for those who need support, and giving advice.

Although covert action is not defined by law, the term has come to be understood to refer to activities conducted in support of national policy in such a way that the role of the United States Government is not apparent.

Covert capability, essential in our foreign policy, provides needed support for liberation movements, often supplies support for governments under siege whom we favor, and allows us to work in collaboration with governments who do not wish, for legitimate political reasons of their own, to have the U.S. role and involvement publicly known.

From President Franklin Roosevelt forward, every President in my lifetime has endorsed and used covert action to support the foreign policy of this country. Although covert actions traditionally claim only a very small part of the resources of the Intelligence Community—less than three percent—they are the focus, as you know, of the greatest public and congressional attention.

And Congress is very interested in what the CIA does. I recently addressed a group of retired intelligence officers, and they recalled the days when no classified papers went from the CIA to either branch of Congress and the only classified briefings to congressional committees were given by the Director himself, or with the Director present. At one time, the Senate Appropriations Committee had one cleared staffer, the House Appropriations Committee one or two. Today, four congressional committees closely examine the Agency's activities, and the number of individuals who see classified material far exceeds the one or two of the past. Fifteen years ago the CIA gave 175 briefings to Congress; last year we gave over 1,000 briefings on a variety of topics. These topics included arms control, Soviet weapons, the Persian Gulf situation, and conflict in Central America. We provide information on topics of current interest to Congress, but we also like to anticipate the information Congress and the policy community will need in the future. We provide such information in the form of National Intelligence Estimates or research papers. Virtually all CIA assessments go to the two congressional intelligence committees, most also go to the Appropriations, Foreign Relations, and Armed Services committees. Eight congressional committees get the CIA's daily national intelligence report. In the last year, the CIA sent more than 5,000 intelligence reports to Congress.

I have tried to speculate on how this circle works because, as you know, we **now** have, or it is said that we have, 500 secretaries of state. I suppose that if this

is true it is very important that our 500 secretaries of state at least have the best information that we can supply. Others might argue that if we supplied less information, we would have fewer secretaries of state, but that is a choice I won't try to make today.

In addition to briefings and papers, we also testify before Congress. I have spent a fair amount of time on the Hill lately, and I suppose that there is no end in sight. Because I know of the need to be absolutely candid with Congress and of the responsibility that intelligence professionals have to protect sources and methods, I have established guidelines governing our dealings with Congress. And I have made it absolutely clear that in dealing with Congress there is no excuse for deception. There will be occasions, and there have been occasions, when I myself have declined to answer questions or said that I had an answer, but did not think it was appropriate to make it in that forum, and have given my reasons. This at least gives Congress and the committees involved the opportunity to raise it, to apply heat if necessary, or to accept my judgment and my reasons. There is not going to be any more occasion for saying that we failed to answer because they didn't ask precisely the right question or that we answered in some disingenuous way.

I firmly believe that the oversight responsibilities exercised by Congress are both beneficial and necessary. There must be a dependable system of oversight and one that builds, rather than erodes, trust between those who have the intelligence responsibility and those who are the elected representatives of our people.

As part of my effort to establish an open relationship with the Congress, I make a point of meeting with the leaders of our oversight committees at least monthly. It might interest you to know what percentage of our Senators and Members of the House have served, or are now serving, on intelligence committees. Twenty-six percent of the Senators now in the Senate have been on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. This is a rotating committee and a Senator may only serve six years. Only five percent of those now serving in the House have been on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. The Members of Congress I have just mentioned share with the Intelligence Community the responsibility of preserving the nation's intelligence secrets.

I have been talking a good deal about disclosures in the oversight process. **Now** I would like to say a few words about secrecy. It seems quite clear to me that **it would** be impossible to carry out our clandestine activities as a part of our collection of intelligence or to carry out covert action without secrecy.

Both Congress and the judiciary have recognized the need for secrecy in **matters** of national security. The main purpose of secrecy is to preserve and **protect** sources and methods. If we cannot protect our sources, we will not get **the** information that we need. If we cannot protect the sensitive methods by which

we collect the information, both in terms of individuals on the ground and satellites in space, we will cease to have the means of collecting information. It seems to me to be that simple.

Secrecy is a necessary part of effective intelligence collection. But it is, historically, that part of intelligence that has generated the most suspicion and distrust. My good friend, General Vernon Walters, former Deputy Director of Central Intelligence and now our Ambassador to the United Nations, described the view many have not only of secrecy, but of intelligence in general. "Americans," he observed, "have always had an ambivalent attitude toward intelligence. When they feel threatened, they want a lot of it, and when they don't, they tend to regard the whole thing as somewhat immoral."

I mentioned earlier the number of briefings and documents that we provide Congress yearly. What I did not discuss were the laws defining the nature of the relationship between Congress and intelligence—the laws that tell us what to provide and when to provide it. I think it is worth summarizing so that you will understand that there are procedures and requirements already in place that if followed effectively protect the interests we all cherish. They were not followed in the Iran-Contra situation, but they were in place.

In 1976 and 1977, both houses of Congress established intelligence oversight committees to monitor all significant intelligence activities and expenditures. Many of the rules which govern our activities are found in the National Security Act. The oversight committees, operating under that act, have formalized the reporting of intelligence and covert actions to Congress. The Intelligence Community is now required by law to keep the intelligence committees fully and currently informed of all intelligence activities. Under the Hughes-Ryan Amendment, the President must find that each covert action is important to the national security before the operation can be initiated.

Under law, it is our duty to notify the committees of any significant intelligence activities. This includes any activities requiring a Presidential finding. When necessary, the President can limit that notification to the chairman and ranking minority member of the intelligence committees, to the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate—which we refer to, in trade parlance, as the "Gang of Eight." And there is another statutory requirement: the intelligence committees must be fully informed in a "timely fashion"—that is the statutory language—of intelligence operations for which prior notice was not given, and the President must state the reasons for not giving prior notice in those instances.

But it is not enough just for the President to make a finding authorizing and directing us to take some covert action. Before submitting the proposal to the President, we in the Intelligence Community have a responsibility—and I have set

the parameters of that responsibility—to see, and to conclude, that it can be done and done in a lawful way. And we must be sure that the individuals who are out on the firing line, outside the protection of our Constitution and our laws in many instances, can do their work with the flexibility that they need and with the clearest understanding of their responsibilities to the Central Intelligence Agency and to the country. Sometimes in a congressional process that flexibility is taken away from us, but I continue to emphasize the need for it in my appearances and meeting with congressional leaders.

Although it is dangerous to predict anything in an election year, I will spend a moment considering the changes that are occurring in intelligence and the kind of information we will be providing Congress and the policy community in the near future.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number and diversity of subjects the Intelligence Community is required to address. While much of our effort is still focused on the Soviet Union, we are spending more time and resources collecting information on Third World nations. We are interested in both the political and economic stability of countries from Brazil to Bangladesh, from Mexico to Malaysia, and from Turkey to Tanzania. We are also concentrating on interdisciplinary problems such as international terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and technology transfer. And a good deal of our attention is being placed on world problems such as the spread of AIDS and the various economic problems that affect us all.

We believe the Soviet Union's appetite for American technology is growing, particularly in the area of information technology. The Soviet strategy appears to be modernizing the electronics-based sector of the economy before moving to invest more heavily, in the 1990s, in military production facilities. We have every reason to believe that Soviet industrial espionage will intensify in the next decade, and the Soviets will continue to devote whatever resources and manpower are necessary to fulfill their critical military collection requirements, have no doubt about that.

Issues like technology transfer have changed our own collection requirements. That's why we must continue to attract top people to help us. We are fortunate, I think, in that last year over 100,000 men and women expressed an interest in working for the Central Intelligence Agency. You have probably read about some protests on college campuses when CIA recruiters are present. Interestingly enough, these protests and the publicity they generate often work in our favor. Our recruitment centers are inundated with resumes after each campus demonstration. But we are not responsible for the campus demonstrations. Actually our applications are coming in at the rate of 1,000 a month, and I have met with many of our new trainees, both at Headquarters and at our off-site training facilities, and found them to be extraordinarily gifted, talented, and dedicated young men and women.

I hope that we will be able to continue to attract those best suited to carry out our mission—particularly those who are risk takers but not risk seekers. People who are dedicated and responsive to our law and our discipline, people who understand and play by the rules, people to whom fame and fortune are not particularly a necessary part of their lives but who can find in our work an avenue to pursue their highest aspirations for a safer and a better world.

With such people we can continue to provide the intelligence that policy-makers need, observing the rules of oversight and accountability that both Congress and the members of the Intelligence Community have a right to expect. I believe this is what you would want of us, I believe it is what the American people want of us, and we will do our very best to supply it.