

Post 9.27.77 *The CIA and the 'Risk of Disclosure'*

Your editorial on Sunday, September 19 ("George Bush and the Old Boy Net") totally missed the point I had made on various occasions regarding "risk of disclosure."

My point is simply this: I do not think that it is right for an individual member or staff of one of our seven congressional oversight committees—any more than for a member of the executive branch—to take upon himself publicly to disclose and thus destroy a covert action that has been properly authorized and briefed in accordance with legal, statutory, and administrative procedures now in effect.

I do favor consolidated congressional oversight. As opposed to reporting to seven committees of the Congress (I have made more than 35 official appearances before Congress in seven and one-half months as Director of Central Intelligence), personally, I would like to see a joint intelligence committee with representation from both House and Senate and with full but exclusive oversight responsibility.

In the meantime, I am cooperating fully with the various congressional committees, and I will continue to do so.

At the same time I will speak out against unauthorized disclosure—against the "leaks" that endanger the lives of people and abort properly determined programs.

One final word: You know very well that not so many months ago there was a wholly adversary relationship between some in the Congress and the CIA. As I said in my remarks to the Association of Retired Intelligence Officers, there continues to be a proper determination on the part of the Congress to see that the CIA lives within the law; to this end also the CIA is bound by presidential direction and internal administrative procedures. At present, however, the inquiries conducted by the Senate Intelligence Committee and other committees, provided they are not exploited for sensational publicity, are thorough and designed to strengthen our intelligence capacity while safeguarding the rights of American citizens. I think that is good for our country.

GEORGE BUSH,
Director,
Central Intelligence Agency.

Washington