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# The CIA Analysts:

## Changes at the Top

New brooms, as the say is, sweep clean. The new director of the Central Intelligence Agency, James R. Schlesinger Jr., is an obviously vigorous broom. Normally, therefore, the large number of impending changes in the CIA's top personnel would not be of much significance to anyone outside the CIA itself.

This is emphatically not true, however, of the change in leadership that can be expected in the agency's huge hierarchy of estimators and analysts. These are the people charged with giving meaning to the CIA's vast daily income of raw data. There is a crucially important job. For it is of no great use merely to know, for instance, that the Soviets have a huge missile called the SS-9. Defense policy-makers also need to know the missile's main characteristics, and therefore its probable purposes.

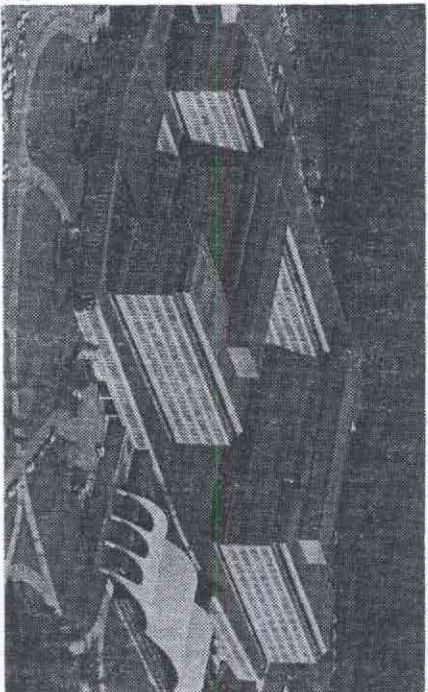
The government, of course, contains other estimators and analysts outside the CIA—in the Defense Department, for instance. But the CIA hierarchy is the largest and the most powerful of all. And it customarily provides the chairman of the Board of National Estimates, at present CIA veteran John Huzenga.

The point of this long explanation is, quite simply, that the CIA's estimating-analyzing hierarchy has long had a "line" of its own, which might even be called a marked historical bias. An extreme case is one of the very top

men, reportedly soon to depart, who was aggressively and successively wrong about the Soviet re-invasion of Hungary; about the Soviet missiles in Cuba; and about the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Departing CIA Director Richard Helms is far too wise and tough-minded a man not to have observed this peculiar historical bias in so large a group of his former colleagues and subordinates. To give one example, he has always taken the Soviet military build-up on China's northern border with the utmost seriousness. He has always regarded it, in fact, as the very opposite of a mere empty and expensive parade of Russian might. In contrast, the CIA estimating-analyzing hierarchy long dismissed the Soviet military build-up as "strictly defensive," and has only partly retreated from that view to this day. Thus in 1969, the official national estimates downgraded the Soviet build-up so completely that the facts had to be brought to the attention of Dr. Henry A. Kissinger by a dissident China-specialist, who was about to retire from the State Department. Whereupon the Soviet build-up became the main spring of President Nixon's intricate balance-of-power diplomacy.

It may be asked, then, why Helms, as CIA director, so long tolerated the bias of his analysts and estimators. The answer appears to be that Helms, a great



The CIA: A 'new broom' is sweeping it clean.

bureaucrat if ever there was one, had an institutional need of another kind.

His estimating-analyzing hierarchy had always been broadly gloomy about the Vietnamese war, albeit grossly erroneous in several key factual estimates about Vietnam. At the opening of President Nixon's first term, a violent attack on the CIA was developing from the left, both in Congress and in the press. The attack from the left was parried, and then caused to cease, by letting it be known—quite truthfully—that the CIA's Vietnam projections had always been the most pessimistic that were made in the government. The factual errors were not mentioned, of course.

This role of the estimating-analyzing hierarchy as the CIA's shield on the left is most unlikely to have escaped President Nixon's sharp eye. It is an informed guess, in fact, that while the President always much admired and thoroughly trusted CIA Director Helms, he strongly objected to the special historical bias of Helms' estimators and analysts.

As a new broom, therefore, Helms' chosen successor had the President's

backing and encouragement. Without explicit faith the sweeping clean could hardly be done so thoroughly by new broom Schlesinger. Reportedly, CIA Director Schlesinger is even bringing in from the Defense Department the most pungent and persistent single critic of the CIA's estimating-analyzing hierarchy. This detected figure is, in fact, to be named the new head of the hierarchy, unless present plans are changed.

This bold stroke is even capable of producing a considerable political rum-pus. Among the leftwing Democrats in the Senate, in academic-intellectual circles, and indeed in the newspaper business, there are a great many people with a longing for reassurance. They long to be told that the historical process, so harsh for so many millennia, has been miraculously defanged in the age of the H-bomb.

Rightwing tampering with "impartial judgment" will no doubt be charged. But about those "important judgments," the Czechs and the Hungarians know better.

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