

Shift Sought Of CIA Role To Pentagon

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One of the military's top-ranking intelligence officers has called for a reassertion of the military's dominant role over civilians in the critical business of estimating national security threats to the United States.

The case for giving this responsibility to the Pentagon rather than the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and other civilian-dominated intelligence agencies—is laid out in a highly unusual article appearing in the April issue of Army magazine.

The article is by Army Maj. Gen. Daniel O. Graham, currently deputy director for estimates in the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA).

Graham is scheduled to move over to the CIA on May 1 to join the staff of its new director, James R. Schlesinger.

Thus, the appearance of Gen. Graham's article in public could indicate that at least part of his new job at CIA will be to help bring about the return of a major portion of the highly important intelligence estimating job to the Pentagon. The estimates of military threats are a major factor in planning the Pentagon's annual budget and in the course of U.S. foreign policy.

While Graham's article reflects his personal judgment, U.S. defense officials say the appearance of the article at this time "was not accidental," implying that it had an official okay.

Graham's pending transfer to the CIA has prompted concern among some civilian intelligence officials. They fear that the critical annual intelligence estimates on such things as Soviet missile devel-

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opments, for example, might take on an even harder line.

Graham argues, however, that the job of judging and describing the various military threats the United States might face properly belongs to the military. And, he states it was the military's own fault—through "a series of bad over-estimates—later dubbed the bomber gap, missile gap and megaton gap"—that military credibility was shaken and the principal job of figuring out what the Russians and others were up to gradually was won over by the CIA and other agencies.

But in the past three years, he says, the new Defense Intelligence Agency has "come a long way since the missile gap."

He argues that the quality of military analysis has now improved considerably and that most, though not all, of the military men who use intelligence have learned not to bend it for their own self-interest or force intelligence analysts to do that.

"To sum up," he writes, "I think that the time is ripe for the military profession to reassert its traditional role in the function of describing military threats to national security."

In a key statement that may foreshadow some reduction in the CIA's estimating role in favor of the Pentagon, Graham writes:

"While there will always be a legitimate reason for independent judgments from outside the Department of Defense on issues of critical importance to national decision-makers, there is no longer a need, in my judgment, to duplicate the Defense Intelli-

gence Agency's efforts in other agencies."

Throughout the article, the two-star general is sharply critical of the military's past history of usually describing the threat to U.S. security in the worst or scariest terms. Not only did it produce scepticism in government, forcing officials to turn to other intelligence agencies, but it actually hurt the military in other ways, he writes.

Inflated estimates of enemy strength in Vietnam, he claims, "gave the erroneous impression that the more casualties we inflicted on the Vietcong and North Vietnamese, the stronger they got."

Many Pentagon planners have now learned, he says, that these so-called "worst-case estimates can be used to squelch military programs just as quickly as to support them." In other words, he argues, overestimating the So-

viet Union's missile capabilities can prematurely kill off U. S. projects by leading officials to discount the estimates entirely.

The inflated intelligence estimates also raise problems for the strategic arms limitations talks where, he says, "the very real possibility" exists of trading off actual U. S. capabilities against those of an enemy that exist only on paper.

Graham also criticizes the technique of assessing only Soviet capabilities rather than intentions as well.

"For example," he says, "since World War II the Soviets have never, to our knowledge, deployed forces or fielded hardware as fast as their total capability permitted. To estimate that they would do so with regard to some weapon system... in the future would make little sense."