

Secret Heroes in CIA Go Unsung

Part 122/25
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and Les Whitten

Locked in the Central Intelligence Agency's vaults is another side to the CIA story, which probably will never be told.

The story can be found in the thick, top-secret transcripts of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, which watches over the CIA.

CIA officials were subjected to intensive questioning, which sometimes lasted a full day. This brought a great many reforms, which the civilian board pressed upon the CIA.

A former chairman, Clark Clifford, told us he was convinced from the sessions that the CIA not only is an effective but an essential organization.

In the nuclear age, he said, the CIA has become our first line of defense. If some agents have been fools, he said, others have been unsung heroes whose deeds surpass the most valorous in our history yet must remain unrecorded.

"The CIA has had some dramatic successes," he said. "But the successes must remain concealed or they no longer will be successes."

He singled out for praise undercover men who have been caught and have been subjected to skillfully cruel torture, yet have resisted with uncommon bravery the effort to extract information from them.

Of course, the CIA has also

had its blunders. The blunder of all blunders was the Bay of Pigs invasion. President Kennedy declared afterward that he "wanted to splinter the CIA in a thousand pieces and scatter it to the winds."

When he cooled down, Kennedy called in Clark Clifford, who had helped to draft the legislation establishing the CIA. Clifford told us he remembers the late President's words vividly.

"I made some bad decisions on the Bay of Pigs," said Kennedy. "I made these bad decisions because I had bad information. My information was bad, because our intelligence was poor. Something is gravely wrong inside the CIA, and I intend to find out what it is. I cannot afford another Bay of Pigs."

President Kennedy often attended the civilian advisory board's secret sessions and helped to fashion the reforms that were imposed upon the CIA.

Footnote: Our CIA sources say the advisory board lost some of its clout after Kennedy's assassination.

Strange Modesty—The Interior Department may be the only agency in Washington which doesn't like to crow about its successes.

For well over a year, the department's Fish and Wildlife Service has been cracking down on miscreants who seek pleasure or profit from killing, selling and trading endangered animals.

Teams of special agents, lawyers and intelligence experts, some of them working undercover, have zeroed in on the traffickers in animals. Scores of hunters, guides and dealers have been arrested, and millions of dollars worth of illegal animal products have been seized.

Some cases have been publicized. Interior, for example, has not hesitated to issue press releases about alligator poachers, Indians caught selling eagle feathers, or sheep ranchers convicted for shooting golden eagles from airplanes.

When the guilty party turns out to be a "Mr. Big," however, Interior remains mysteriously mute.

Last September, for example, the Justice Department successfully prosecuted George F. Gamble, the 34-year-old heir to the Procter & Gamble soap fortune.

He had been arrested by Fish and Wildlife agents for transporting across state lines the head of a Rocky Mountain big-horn sheep, which was killed in Yellowstone National Park.

The soap tycoon, who is also a California rancher with a degree in animal husbandry, was convicted, too, of illegally transporting parts of a trophy elk, which was shot on the Crow Indian reservation in Montana.

U.S. District Court Judge Robert Peckham threw the book at Gamble. He was fined \$10,500, was instructed not to hunt big game anywhere in the world for

the next three years, and was ordered to volunteer one day a week to a conservation cause. The case is now under appeal.

The Gamble conviction, in other words, was perhaps the Fish and Wildlife Service's most spectacular success. Yet despite the endless flow of press trivia from the Interior Department's public information office, not a single word was put out about it.

In a similar case last year, the world-famous ornithologist and director of the Yale University Peabody Museum, Dr. Charles G. Sibley, paid a fine of \$3,000 for importing rare bird eggs in violation of the wildlife laws.

Again, the Interior Department maintained a curious silence. The public found out about it only after Sports Illustrated magazine dug out the facts.

Spokesmen for the Interior Department say they don't issue press releases on criminal convictions, because the cases are frequently appealed. Yet announcements have been made of the arrests and convictions in other cases involving people of little renown. The Sibley fine, for that matter, came in a civil case.

Footnote: We were unable to reach George Gamble for comment. His attorney, James Martin MacInnis, did not return our calls.

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Congressional Straitjacket for the CIA

Even before the most recent expose of charges against the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), its freedom to conduct clandestine operations abroad had been quietly placed by Congress in a straitjacket with deeply disturbing implications for this country's security.

The straitjacket was an innocuous appearing amendment to the foreign aid bill sponsored by Rep. Leo Ryan, an obscure California Democrat. His amendment, requiring President Ford to report to Congress the details and justification of every secret CIA foreign operation before it can be approved, sailed through last month without visible opposition from an administration benumbed by the anti-CIA onslaught.

What makes the Ryan amendment a straitjacket for intelligence operations is its singling out the Senate Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs Committees among the "appropriate committees" of Congress which the President is ordered to take into his confidence.

Members of those two committees include the most vociferous critics of the CIA, particularly its clandestine operations or "department of dirty tricks." Until now, they had no regular access to intelligence secrets. Super-sensitive information had been limited to a handful of senior members of armed services and appropriations committees, making up the CIA oversight panels. Now these secrets will be distributed among nearly one third the

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total membership of Congress, including the CIA's most intransigent critics.

Gerald R. Ford and future presidents are thus forced to risk virtually uncontrollable security breaches by hostile members of Congress, some of whom never have accepted the need for CIA's secret political operations abroad. In today's post-Watergate atmosphere, where leaks of state secrets have become a way of life for politicians, this raises a real question whether the CIA's foreign operations can continue at all. That is, in fact, the intent of many congressional critics, who maintain the dubious notion that the blacker arts of espionage are a useless cold war relic.

There can be no ducking the clear language of the Ryan amendment, which began operating two weeks ago, when Sen. John Sparkman of Alabama, the new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, asked for a list of present CIA undercover operations abroad, with their justification attached. A letter from President Ford was dispatched to Sparkman last week with the complete list.

Sparkman, who has never been a CIA critic, obviously sought this explosive piece of information to protect himself from CIA critics on his committee. Sparkman is now discussing with the CIA a possible method for safeguarding this information, perhaps a "need to know" committee, rule which would place each senator under oath not to reveal it.

Skeptics, including many in Congress, doubt the information can be kept inviolate. Although the Ryan amendment singled out only the two foreign affairs panels, it requires the President to "report" to other "appropriate committees of the Congress." That language is assumed to include full memberships of armed services and appropriations committees. This makes up a small army: 153 members of six committees (with some overlaps) in the last Congress, and probably more in the new Congress.

Yet, when the Ryan amendment was passed by the House and Senate with scarcely a murmur in mid-December, neither the White House nor the CIA made any serious effort to organize

resistance. One Republican moderate on the Senate-House conference committee that wrote the final version of the foreign aid bill last month was amazed when the White House did not appeal for help.

"They were shell-shocked from the Chilean expose," he told us, "and just couldn't come to grips with the fact that in this thing they were playing with fire."

The White House was truly dealing with much more than it could handle last December: when the foreign aid bill, already six months delayed, came up for a final vote. The hottest issue was not drastic expansion of congressional CIA oversight but how to handle another congressional effort to dictate policy in the attempted out-of-Turkish aid.

Moreover, the damaging expose of CIA's efforts to influence Chilean politics followed by allegations of domestic spying, have created an anti-CIA mood which the beleaguered White House is unwilling to challenge.

That mood has destroyed the congressional confidence in the CIA necessary for it to function properly. Instead, one-third of Congress is now armed with the right to know the agency's most secret operations abroad. Under those absurd ground rules, foreign sources essential to CIA's clandestine activities will not risk involvement, for fear of exposure. Only time will tell the cost to the nation of such a straitjacket.