

Trust us, we don't spy on Americans.

This was the universal interpretation of the plea of then CIA director Richard Helms when he emerged from his Langley, Va., isolation for his only major public speech during his long tenure. Helms was shrewd. He selected as his audience the American Society of Newspaper Editors, meeting in Washington April 14, 1971. His gave him the most select and powerful opinion-making audience in the country and the most courteous and considerate. If any one of the editors present commented on Helms' failure to mention ~~Helms'~~ Helms' Department of Dirty Tricks, known in CIA as "operations", I have yet to see or hear of it.

Nor did any one call him a liar. Yet I doubt that any of the editors of the major papers had not already reported what proved Helms a liar.

Helms was careful not to say that the CIA never spies on Americans inside the ~~United~~ United States. ~~He~~ He seemed to say it. It is a fair interpretation of what he did say. But it is not what he actually said.

Nor did he say his Department of Dirty Tricks does not operate within the national boundaries. That he also implied. He seemed to say this, he was interpreted as having said it. But he didn't And they do.

It was no easy matter for me to get the full, official text of Helms' speech. That is the CIA. I asked for it immediately and several times, beginning with the reporting of the speech in the next morning's papers. It was finally mailed to me three months to the day later.

What Helms actually said is that the National Security Act of ~~1947~~ 1947 "specifically forbids the Central Intelligence Agency to have any police, subpoena or law enforcement powers, or any domestic security functions. I can assure you that except for the normal responsibilities for protecting the physical security of our facilities and our classified information, we do not have any such powers and functions; we have never sought any; we do not exercise any. In short, we do not target on any."

This, he asserted, "I emphasize".

Carried away with his own rhetoric, Helms declared, "we propose to adapt intelligence

work to American society, not vice versa".

Helms was real gung ho for the democratic society and the inalienable rights of all Americans, if he was a little weak on the evidence, as the Washington Post, for one, noted editorially four days later.

He put it this way: "the nation must to a degree take it on faith that we, too, are honorable men devoted to her service. I can assure you that we are but I am precluded from demonstrating it to the public."

A year before the irrefutable disproof was on every front page, when he got swinging into this dedication to all things truly American, Helms added a denial that "the CIA is somehow involved in the world drug traffic." His denial is one of the few explicit passages of the heralded and almost entirely unquestioned speech:

"We are not." To say otherwise is "arrant nonsense".

~~Now~~ Now the whole world knows this, too, is a big lie. There is virtually no aspect of the drug traffic in which the CIA was not then involved, up to the injection into the veins of American service men.

The proof is in books, before Congress, on all the front pages. There is no point in rehashing here the deep CIA ~~is~~ "somehow" involvement in narcotics in South East Asia's golden triangle, in Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and other places.

"The nation must", Helms and the CIA said, "take it on faith that we, too, are honorable men, devoted to her service."

O.K. Let us assume with Helms that being a major part of international^{al} traffic in heroin is "honorable" and a devotion to the nation's service, even if that heroin often shot into the veins of Americans and seems~~to~~^{to} have been one of the major causes of the astronomical increase in addiction and its enormous human toll and the domestic crime without which the addiction cannot be satisfied.

To himself and itself, Helms and the CIA might have said that the course of true patriotism lay in subsidizing and in every way possible aided^{ing} those mercenary cutthroats in Southeast Asia because those monsters were, at least in theory, on our side there.

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(Interestingly, Helms also tried to get the idea across that the CIA has nothing to do with foreign policy. Again he fell short of saying precisely that. What he actually said on page 7 of the official text is, "We not only have no stake in policy debates, but we cannot and must not take sides. The limit of intelligence in policy formulation is limited to providing facts". By the time the corpse of John F. Kennedy stopped revolving on that Arlington hillside Helms was onto other things. The fact is that the CIA, not in its intelligence role but through its Department of Dirty Tricks, has never stopped making policy, especially in Southeast Asia. Its role in Laos, without which the subsequent Vietnam debacle would have been impossible, is set forth with precision and in great detail ^{by} David Wise and Thomas B. Ross in their excellent book, The Invisible Government. In Vietnam itself the CIA waged what Wise and Ross called "The Secret War". Despite this, Helms denied to the unquestioning editors "that the Central Intelligence Agency is an 'invisible government', a law unto itself, engaged in provocative covert activities repugnant to a democratic society and subject to no controls.")

But what about inside the United States, where the law seems to prohibit any covert or intelligence functions for the CIA. What legitimate domestic-intelligence functions there is falls within the jurisdiction of the FBI. If it is legitimately must less than the FBI asserts, there is no doubt that the CIA is precluded by law and by Congressional intent.

Here, too, Helms lied. He did and the CIA did spy on Americans.

Including me.

Of this there can be no doubt. I have carbon copies of ~~the~~ some of the surveillance on me. Not xeroxes, carbons.

This improper - I think genuinely subversive - surveillance was conducted by people who grossly exaggerated the CIA's interest in me, calling me "that old nemesis of the CIA". One of those engaged in it actually said that in my field I hold "the all-time track record" for CIA interest.

Let us set the record straight. In my view, in the world of today there is no country that

country that can afford not to have an effecient intelligence system service During
0.S.S.,
World War II I was voluntarily part of our country's. I served in the forerunner of
the CIA. Prior to that, as an investigative reporter, I provided our government with
intelligence data- voluntarily. And during that part of my life I was what today would
be called an "unregistered agent" of British intelligence.

I am neither the "nemesis" of the CIA nor opposed to proper intelligence gathering
I am opposed to subverting a democratic society in the false notion that this is
true patriotism. It is authoritarianism, regardless of Helms' and the CIA's self-
serving descriptions.

Within

In the United States the CIA has its own fronts to "cut off", the classic
intelligence phrase, from domestic in spying Its _____,
using the services of _____

Within the United States the CIA has its own secret fronts. They are, in the
classic intelligence phraise, the "cut off", the means of isolating the CIA at
Langley, the official structure, from its domestic spying. The carbons I have were
are copies of the surveillance sents to the CIA's _____ by the
agency it used, the _____. The recipients of this surveillance
upon me were _____ and _____. ~~THESE ACCOUNTS~~ They paid for it with
checks drawn upon the _____ bank. Their checks are printed, but their
stationery is not. They typed the return address of P.O. BOX _____ on the
envelopes in which they mailed their checks.

I have originals or xeroxes of all these things.

Trust Helms and the CIA if you want. Impart the "faith" he says you "must".
But don't kid yourself, law or no law, they do spy on Americans.

They also libel ~~and~~ them and ~~ruin~~ ^{private lives and careers.} their right to do this was affirmed
by the Supreme Court only five days after Helms' speech.

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The day after Helms' speech I wrote to tell him that whether or not he knew or approved, his CIA did spy on American, including me. I told him I had the proof. I asked his comment. To date he has not responded. This means, of course, that neither he nor anyone in his name made even pro forma denial.

If he made the "thorough investigation" I asked, it has not been reported.

"If you are opposed to such things", I told him, I gave him a chance to end them.

He didn't. It was much later that I was told I hold that alleged "all-time track record".