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The CIA Dinosaur

Recent international events have rendered the CIA an obsolete tool of national security policy. The CIA should be disbanded and its necessary functions spun off to the rest of the national security bureaucracy.

The intelligence community, at the center of which is the CIA, is a result of the 1947 National Security Act, devised in response to threats from an international environment that no longer exists. Its initial justification was to draw intelligence under one centralized authority to avoid the catastrophe represented by the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, when critical intelligence was not disseminated to key policy makers. But the community grew from its 1947 roots without a grand design, and intelligence responsibilities were increasingly defined by parochial interests with the result that duplication in collection requirements and resources is a major problem.

Articulated threats to national security in the years since 1947 included the attempts of Soviet communism to extend hegemony over Europe and, later, large parts of the Third World. As the nature of the threats changed, and the challenges to democracy shifted, the basic structure of the intelligence community has survived intact.

Large resources have been devoted to the analysis of the Soviet political and military dynamic, to uncertain result. Academia and think tanks specializing in Soviet studies have at least an equal record in forecasting significant trends and developments in the Soviet Union. Some have done better despite the lack of access to sensitive intelligence data. In the Third World

the analysis of the threat from Iraq prior to August 1990 was clearly inadequate. This CIA failing may have mirrored U.S. policy makers' fixation with improving relations with Saddam Hussein but is not remissible.

The clandestine services, the operating arm of the CIA, is still in search of a vital mission following the collapse of Marxism-Leninism as a propulsive force in international events. It evidently lacks a vision of how to adapt its essentially conservative orientation to a rapidly changing world and is ill equipped to deal with the problems of the 21st century. It is time to go beyond the Senate and House Intelligence Oversight committees' timorous surveys of reorganizational requirements and confront the core question: Is the CIA relevant in the contemporary world?

The problem with the reformist approach to intelligence is that it is being undertaken largely from a definition of what national security requirements for intelligence are in the next century. Conflict will be as much a hallmark of the 21st century as it has been of this one, but the nature of the threats continues to metamorphose with nuclear proliferation, biological and chemical warfare capability, narcotics production, technology transfer and economics issues as national security concerns.

Requirements on the capabilities of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons will remain matters of vital concern, whether the focus is the Soviet Union, China or the Third World. Monitoring arms control will continue to be a necessary intelligence function. But all of these activities can be managed outside CIA. The gulf war

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demonstrated what future conflicts in the Third World might be, and it is apparent that CIA intelligence support to the U.S. military is wanting. Part of the recent reorganization of the Pentagon's intelligence infrastructure has been in recognition that the military will have to support its own intelligence requirements.

Beyond the reduction in intelligence requirements conditioned by the structural changes in the Soviet Union, the emergence of a multipolar international security environment will require expansion of political and military intelligence collection in areas where CIA has focused insufficient resources. The lens of U.S.-Soviet competition is now fractured, but objectives previously considered of secondary importance will now move to the top of policy makers' agendas.

International terrorism and hostage taking are in decline, but the "gray areas" problem is growing—those areas of the world outside international access or even national authority. The Sudan, the Andes, Ethiopia, the Sahara, the Himalayas and Central Asia are examples. There is increasing control by xenophobic guerrillas who, not so incidentally, are involved in the production of the illegal drugs flooding into the United States and, now, Western Europe. The *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru is an example of such an insurgent movement exploiting narcotics to fund activity. Intelligence collection and the preemption of narcotics trafficking have been deficient, to the point where some policy makers in the United States have given up.

What can be done? Sen. Daniel Patrick Moyni-

han introduced the "Cold War Act of 1991," which would subsume the CIA's intelligence collection responsibilities under the Department of State. It is a start. The removal of the KGB as a serious threat is removing many of the imperatives behind the CIA's intelligence operations. Third World political and economic collection can be more coherently and intelligently managed from the State Department. State may oppose it and argue that the intelligence mission will compromise its diplomatic mission. But diplomatic cover for intelligence officers has undermined this distinction over the years.

Military intelligence is far better collected by the Pentagon and its service organizations. It has both the expertise and the collectors in the form of military attaches. It understands its requirements better than any civilian agency can. Counter-terrorism is a functional responsibility that can more efficiently and relevantly be managed by the assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low intensity conflict. The political and diplomatic aspects of anti-terrorism can continue to be professionally handled by the State Department's Counter Terrorism Office. The CIA's paramilitary capabilities have belonged in the Pentagon for several years, and now that Special Operations has found delayed recognition from the joint chiefs, the time to move that mission is now.

The writer is former chief of counter-terrorism operations for the CIA and former director of intelligence programs at the National Security Council.