

Part  
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## And the Credentials for CIA

WE HAVE no candidate of our own for Director of Central Intelligence, but we do have some views on the kind of person Mr. Carter should be looking for—and the qualifications that person should bring to the job. If we had to sum these up briefly we would do so by negative definition: the essential qualifications have practically nothing to do with those being elevated to the status of divine attributes in the aftermath of the Sorensen affair.

The idea has gotten around that the issue is this: whether an *outsider* who is also, if not of the Left, at least *not of the Right* can be confirmed as director of intelligence. Tucked away in the question are a couple of assumptions. One is that only an "outsider" can be "independent" enough to do what needs to be done. The other is that only a Left-liberal, as distinct from a Right-conservative, would have the appetite and instinct to do it. Frequently, the dove-hawk formulation is substituted for the Left-Right one.

We think these assumptions are wrong. Neither John McCone nor Admiral William Raborn, after all, was an "insider," when he took over the job. And yet if either of these "outsiders" did anything other than join up, the fact is unrecorded—even in this day of the unaccustomed recording of CIA business. In fact, far and away the most independent director of the CIA in anyone's memory was James Schlesinger: He upended the place. He issued the famous May of 1973 order that employees report directly to him knowledge they had of wrongdoing and charter violations. And he produced the findings that eventually leaked to the press (and thus to the President and the Congress and the public), which caused the great flurry of hearings and inquiries that got under way in the winter of 1974-75.

If Mr. Schlesinger's independence proceeded from a liberal orientation or a dove-like outlook on life, it is the best-kept secret in our public life. In fact, by any fair accounting you would have to put him well to the

right of many of those agency bigwigs who have yet to forgive his tempestuous tenure there. Likewise, William Colby, the quintessential CIA "insider," rose brilliantly to the imperative of shaking up the agency when that was required of him; he was even taxed by fellow "insiders" with being too frank with Congress about the agency's excesses.

Our point is not that the new director should be a) an insider or b) a right-winger or so-called "hawk". Rather it is that the categories are misleading and beside the point. They do not tell you whether a nominee is or isn't fit to head the CIA. And they are also, in our view, behind the times. Yes, the CIA needs an independent soul to run it, but it does not—as it previously did—need someone to come in and crash around among its sacred furniture. That's been done. And while there is no doubt more to be corrected, and while it is crucial that a Director assert and maintain control over the workings of the agency to protect against revival of discredited practices, those duties now have to share time and attention with another of equal importance.

That is the duty to create a genuinely effective, revived intelligence operation within the newly created political constraints. The intelligence product prepared for the President and other top policy makers has got to be as objective and relevant as it can be. Such covert operations as are contemplated must be chosen on the basis of their absolute necessity and the consensus they can command. How can these things best be done? What will be the cost of those constraints—the increased congressional oversight, the presumption against the legitimacy of covert operations and the rest? Hawk/dove, Left/Right, Insider/Outsider—forget it. The categories have next to nothing to do with whether Mr. Carter's next nominee will be able first to recognize the primacy of these questions, and second to deal honestly and competently with them.