

1 CIA Chief Slanted Data, Critics Say

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By David Binder
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Admiral Stansfield Turner, director of Central Intelligence, is being accused in the intelligence community of distorting estimates to make them dovetail with the Carter administration's foreign policy. He denies the allegations.

The estimates cover long-range prognoses on such issues as Soviet military capabilities, the balance of forces on the Korean peninsula, Soviet strategic intentions in the Indian ocean and the outlook for energy production worldwide, particularly in the Soviet Union. Often they form a basis for far-reaching policy decisions by the President on foreign relations and defense priorities.

As described by one of the director's critics, an official in the intelligence community, "Turner has been highly dissatisfied with a large number of national intelligence estimates, and he has been more demanding and more preemptive than any director of Central Intelligence in recent times."

In an interview, Turner ac-

knowledged that he had heavily involved himself in the production of the so-called national intelligence estimates — considered the most important product of the American intelligence community — as well as in lesser estimate and analysis functions. However, he maintained that he had neither distorted estimates nor manipulated them to serve White House policy goals.

"If I am ever suspected of slanting estimates in favor of policy, I will be much less useful," he said. "If I wanted to influence policy, I would have to be so subtle. If detected, it would reverse the effect."

None of his critics denies his technical right to take charge of the production of intelligence estimates, which is authorized under executive orders. As in the past, the national estimates are issued under the director's name. What has changed, it appears, is Turner's involvement in what he describes as restructuring and redrafting.

In a number of instances, according to the critic of Turner in the intelligence community, he has "asked the community to redo the estimates or, has rewritten them and sent them on without further reference to the National Foreign Intelligence Board, or he has sent them back to convince, cajole or bully the other participants into alternative estimates." As a result, this official and others said, there have been noticeable delays in the production of estimates.

Lately the concern of the critics has focused on the question of whether Turner has used his function as the court of last resort on estimates to support administration policy. This criticism arose over data on the Soviet economy, particularly its energy sector, where Turner was alleged to favor "worst case" analysis to suggest that the United States could effectively apply pressure on the Soviet Union through denial of exports of advanced technology.

Last summer, President Carter

drew on some of these estimates in making his decision to order top-level review of all such export deals with the Soviet Union and to delay authorization of a sale of oil-drill bits for a time, intelligence officials said.

One of those critical of Turner put the situation this way: "The great trap of intelligence is to search for evidence supporting your own view. That is forbidden territory, and if you have access to policy makers you can become sensitized into justifying their decisions." This critic said that Turner's estimations of Soviet energy development "was a classic of transgression." The director, replying to the allegations, said: "I have no policy-making function. It is mandatory that I present good estimates."