

CIA and Openness

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An oxymoron is a figure of speech which is seemingly self-contradictory. Examples might include "bureaucratic efficiency," "government frugality," or "CIA openness." The latter oxymoron is the subject of my remarks today.

You might anticipate that a speech on openness in CIA would be a prime candidate for the collection of the world's shortest addresses. It is a subject that rockets every outside observer's most cynical instincts into the starting blocks -- prepared to disbelieve every word, beginning with "I'm glad to be here today."

Now that you know that I know that I stand here looking out over a yawning chasm of credibility, like Indiana Jones in the "Last Crusade" I will now step out into that chasm on faith, the faith that what I have to say will persuade you of our seriousness of purpose and action.

First, let me set the scene, establish a context. The bloodiest, most inhumane century in the history of man is drawing to a close. Revolution and war have cost, conservatively, a hundred million lives since 1914 -- some 50 million in Russia and the Soviet Union alone.

Yet, in the space of three years, the world created by the Bolshevik revolution and communism, and two world wars, has been turned upside down. 1991 joins 1776, 1789, 1815, 1914 and 1945 as a date fixed in history's firmament, as a turning point, a division between an old world and a new one. As Goethe said at the Battle of Valmy in 1792 when French troops stopped the Prussians and saved the revolution, "From this place and this time forth commences a new era in world history and you can all say you were present at its birth."

All historical experience suggests to us that while the revolutionary upheavals we have seen and experienced have succeeded in breaking us loose from the past, the final shape of the future is far from established. We should expect continuing change and upheaval around the world -- aftershocks if you will -- before the form and patterns of a new era settle into place.

Our national security institutions, especially defense and intelligence, must change -- and they are changing dramatically -- to meet the new and different challenges of this new and different world. But, our changes must also conform to the reality of an unstable, unpredictable, dangerously over-armed, and still transforming world, not yet the world of our hopes and dreams. We must avoid the costly mistake of 1919, 1945, 1953 and 1975 in thinking that we could disengage

from the world and of too quickly disarming ourselves -- of letting our hopes and our weary impatience overshadow our judgment, good sense, and historical realism.

With the collapse of the Soviet empire and the end of the Cold War, we have an opportunity unparalleled in the last 45 years to examine intelligence institutions created initially to wage the war against communism, and to alter them to meet the needs of the future.

While this is a uniquely propitious moment for change, for more than 15 years, American Intelligence has been evolving away from a preoccupation with the Soviet Union. Even before the dramatic changes of the last three years, we had reached the point where half or less of our resources were focused on the USSR. We devoted more and more effort to non-proliferation; counterterrorism; counternarcotics; political, economic and military developments in the Third World; technology transfer; international energy issues; a wide range of international economic issues and problems; international arms trafficking and many more.

Now, change is underway or planned in virtually all the major aspects of our work. More than a dozen task forces are developing proposals for far-reaching changes in intelligence structure and process. Some task forces, such as one on how to improve intelligence support to military operations, have completed their work and changes in both organization and process are now being implemented. Others will complete their work soon.

These changes, when taken together, will alter dramatically the way we have done our work for decades. The changes also will reflect the outcome of the presidentially directed, zero-based review by more than 20 policy departments and agencies of their intelligence needs for the next decade or more.

In sum, the American intelligence community today, drawing on its own ideas for constructive change as well as ideas from the private sector, the Congress, other elements of government and outside experts, is being transformed. It is changing better to meet the challenges of a different but still unstable and dangerous world -- to be more responsive; to improve accountability; to be better, more effectively managed; to reduce costs; to eliminate unneeded redundancy; to be more flexible; and, above all, to improve performance.

Changes in structure and process are unlikely truly to improve performance unless they are underpinned and preceded by changes in attitude and approach. This involves not only how we look at our mission but how we work together as an intelligence community and how we relate to the outside world. This includes our overarching attitude toward secrecy.

CIA is an intelligence organization, many of whose activities are and must be conducted in secrecy. For most of our history, the less anyone knew about those activities the better. Human sources could be protected, our technical capabilities shielded and, for the most part, our hand hidden. Secrecy toward the outside world was paralleled by secrecy internally.

This legitimate need for secrecy and compartmentation even inside unfortunately created an environment in which communication between organizations and people within CIA was too often stifled. Indeed, for many years,

armed guards and physical barriers separated some parts of CIA from others. In this environment, there was little sharing of information inside the CIA across organizational lines, within the same organization, or with rank and file employees -- even when their futures, their careers and their daily lives were involved. (And, I might add, this culture helps explain why it took so long to develop an open and candid relationship with our congressional intelligence committees -- a relationship that finally is working as it should.)

There has been improvement in communication within CIA and the intelligence community over the years, but it has been too slow and too uneven. One of our task forces addressed this problem of internal communication -- drawing in part on the experience of major private sector organizations noted for successfully tackling this problem. The result is a number of changes in structure and process aimed at an aggressive, agency-wide effort to open up lines of communication from managers at all levels to employees and vice versa -- to create an environment in which an amazingly talented and creative workforce knows that the ideas and constructive criticism of all employees are welcome and encouraged as part of a broader effort to change, to improve our work, and to build teamwork.

If communication inside CIA and the intelligence community has been a problem, our relationship to the outside world has been worse still. Over the years, CIA's approach to dealing with the media and the public has been, at best, uneven. Long ago, our key chiefs of station overseas were well known to American newspaper correspondents assigned in the same foreign capital and they would often meet and talk. Off and on, CIA for years has provided background briefings for many journalists traveling overseas. For decades, we have sent our substantive experts to universities to speak to classes about their specialty and about CIA. We have brought university deans and presidents and other groups to CIA to talk about our profession. The director and deputy director have given public speeches, met with editorial boards and, more rarely, been interviewed on television. But all of this took place against a backdrop of overall continuing and undifferentiated secrecy, a reluctance to talk at all -- much less on the record -- about intelligence issues and process. This is going to change.

But, before announcing the steps I have decided upon, let me reaffirm that CIA is and will remain an intelligence organization which acquires secretly information critical to our national security and which conducts legitimately secret activities. I have statutory responsibility to protect our sources and methods and I will do so vigorously. There will be no press room at CIA and our employees will be expected to maintain discipline and refer all press inquiries to our public affairs office. In short, we still must be able to keep secrets in order to do our work.

The purpose of greater openness is to make CIA and the intelligence process more visible and understandable. We must try to help people understand better what CIA does and how we do it. Our new approach grows out of the belief that it is important that CIA should be accountable to the American people -- both directly and through the Congress -- as a law abiding organization comprised of talented people of integrity who have a critical role in supporting national security policymakers in a complex and often dangerous world.

We are under no illusions that CIA, whatever the level of its efforts, will be able to win recognition as an "open" institution. What we hope to do is all we can to be as forthcoming, candid, informative and helpful as possible to the public, the media, and academia consistent with our mission and the protection of sources and methods.

Bearing in mind these considerations, CIA will take the following initiatives with respect to the public and the media, the academic community, and the declassification of historical documents.

First, the public and media:

- The public affairs office will provide more background briefings to the media as opportunities arise, including on intelligence issues, organization, and process. This office also will continue to respond to telephonic inquiries.
- Senior officials of CIA, to include the Executive Director, Deputy Director for Intelligence, Deputy Director for Administration, Deputy Director for Science and Technology, General Counsel, Director of Congressional Affairs and Director of Public Affairs, will be available to provide both background and on the record interviews about CIA and the intelligence process.
- CIA will allow, on a case by case basis, individual profiles of CIA officers not under cover to highlight the quality of our people and the diversity of our workforce, as well as to personalize the work of intelligence.
- For decades, CIA has had a high quality classified internal journal, *Studies In Intelligence*. Over the years, many hundreds of articles have been written by intelligence professionals on every aspect of our work. I have directed the open publication of unclassified articles as well as articles that can be declassified from this journal. As one example, I will soon release to the Smithsonian Institution such an article dealing with CIA's role in the early development and operation of the SR-71. We are currently discussing with several university presses their publishing compendia of these articles. We also are considering publishing them ourselves and making them available to the public in the same way as other unclassified CIA publications.
- CIA will develop additional unclassified information on the agency, its history, mission, function and role, and also will expand its briefing program for schools, civic groups and other organizations.

Second, with respect to academia:

- The officer-in-residence program, by which CIA overt professionals (like diplomats and military officers) spend a year as guest lecturers at universities, will be expanded as opportunities arise and as resources allow.

- CIA's Center for the Study of Intelligence will strengthen its outreach program to universities. We will encourage the development of intelligence studies' programs at universities and increase the source and teaching materials we can provide to help such programs.
- CIA will support more academic conferences on issues of mutual interest.
- The Center for the Study of Intelligence will sponsor, both unilaterally and in cooperation with academic institutions, conferences on the history and craft of intelligence.
- CIA will expand its program of providing to universities its experts and officials as guest lecturers on specific issues and the intelligence profession.

Third, with respect to declassification:

- CIA for years has complied with requirements to review documents for declassification under the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act and Executive Orders. Congress, in recognition of the special sensitivity of intelligence operations, in 1984 passed the CIA Information Act exempting certain categories of operational, security and technical files from search and review under the Freedom of Information Act. In conformity with all these laws, last year CIA received over 4,500 new requests for document declassification and completed action on some 4,000. Some 5,700 pages of CIA documents were declassified.
- Separately, CIA has had a voluntary historical review program since 1985 to review and declassify historical CIA records. However, apart from a very limited volume of documents declassified from the files of CIA's history staff and turned over to the national archives, we must acknowledge that the results of our historical review program have been quite meager -- the consequences of low priority, few resources, and rigid agency policies and procedures heavily biased toward denial of declassification.

I have directed a new approach that will change this situation while still protecting intelligence sources and methods and conforming to the 1984 CIA Information Act.

- I am transferring the unit responsible for historical review for declassification to the Center for the Study of Intelligence, where there will be a bias toward declassification of historical documents. Line components seeking to appeal a decision by the center staff to declassify a document can appeal only to the head of the center and from there only to the DCI, to me.
- In this time of scarce and diminishing resources, as a measure of the priority I attach to this effort, I am directing the allocation of 15 full-time positions to form the historical review unit.

- Subject to the 1984 CIA Information Act, the unit will review for declassification all documents over 30 years old.
- Beyond this, the unit will review for declassification all national intelligence estimates on the former Soviet Union ten years old or older.
- In addition to systematic review of 30 year old and older documents, I have directed that several of the reviewers be assigned to focus on events of particular interest to historians from the late 1940s to the early 1960s so that these materials need not await their turn in the queue. Such events might include the 1954 Guatemalan coup, the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.
- This unit will be responsible for CIA participation in preparation of the State Department's Foreign Relations of the United States series and compliance with related statutes governing the review of historical material.
- CIA will publish on an annual basis an index of all documents it has declassified under all categories of review, including historical review.
- I am transferring custody of all documents CIA possesses relating to the assassination of President Kennedy to the Historical Review Program. As I have told Senator Boren, Congressman McCurdy and Congressman Louis Stokes, CIA will cooperate fully and willingly in any government-wide effort to declassify these documents. Our ability to act unilaterally is hindered by the Privacy Act, sequestration of many documents we have by the House Select Committee on Assassinations, and the fact that many other documents we hold on this tragedy belong to other agencies. But CIA will not be found lagging in any broader government effort to review and declassify these documents.

I believe that these measures, taken together, represent a real shift on CIA's part toward greater openness and sense of public responsibility. I am convinced that, over time, these efforts will contribute to better public understanding of the role and value of intelligence in today's world.

I also am convinced that this is the right course, both on its merits and as evidence that real -- not cosmetic -- change in both attitude and process is underway in U.S. intelligence as we cope with a radically changed and changing world.