

James Bond Is Irrelevant Now

To the Editors:

The Central Intelligence Agency is not a threat to our liberties and never has been. It is composed of dedicated officers who have high standards of integrity and patriotism. Should anyone attempt to subvert the agency to purposes that would threaten our society, CIA members would be the first to sound the alarm.

But the CIA is still a problem. Intelligence agencies rely on secrecy and deception. Yet secrecy corrodes public confidence in the Government and trust between the U.S. and other countries.

The problem is magnified when intelligence agencies engage in covert action, attempting to influence events, as we did in Chile. Covert action is questionable on moral grounds. It is expensive in dollars and in political repercussions. But the real irony is that these operations are rarely effective. The CIA is given credit for everything mysterious that happens in the world, but the truth is that the agency is not that good.

The main point to be pondered, however, is the way our policymakers use the CIA. In a world of sovereign states we need an intelligence agency, and as intelligence agencies go, the CIA is fairly good. The problem occurs when Presidents and Secretaries of State begin to think that James Bond has any relevancy to the real world. It is not William Colby who should be brought to judgment about the U.S. role in Chile, but Henry Kissinger.

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President Ford's glib defense of the CIA's covert involvement in the internal political affairs of Chile represents a remarkable rejection of our professed foreign policy goals. One wonders how he squares such tactics with the oft-cited rationale for our involvement in Viet Nam: to allow national self-determination.

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The salutary cleansing of America, symbolized by the Administration of Gerald Ford, cannot be completed without inquiry into the operations of the CIA. If the superannuated sleuths of Watergate had their counterparts in the tragedy of Cyprus, it is time to call a halt. If investigation reveals CIA activity in relation to Cyprus, President Ford or Congress should terminate this virtually independent organization that has so often worked against the best interests of America and the world.

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