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THE COLD WAR COMES HOME

return from the White House with evaluative comments like "Crap!" and "Utter garbage" scribbled across their faces in Dr. Kissinger's own hand. In late 1969 he began rejecting the CIA National Intelligence Estimates: he ordered, instead, that the Agency submit the unfinished data, the field materials for its estimates. Dr. Kissinger, it seemed, had decided to put the White House into the production of in-house intelligence estimates.

If the President's memoranda were the CIA's most important product, the National Intelligence Estimates were its cherished *chef d'oeuvre*. A separate bureaucracy of estimators and analyzers had grown up within the Agency, an elite subculture of scholars and statisticians and cultivated *feuilletonistes* who produced these voluminous, detailed studies for the National Security Council. To tell the Agency that the White House no longer wanted a finished NIE on some essential area of conflict (Vietnam or Biafra), just the field data—it was like telling James Reston not to bother with the typewriter: just phone in your notes; someone else will write the column.

Even before 1969 drew to a close, the thunderstruck intelligence bureaucracy heard something else, something that sounded like the crack of doom: the White House had begun hiring intelligence agents of its own. Presidential Counsel John Ehrlichman was reported to be recruiting operatives for "secret work" among retired New York City special-services plainclothesmen, and another White House lawyer—one of the new fixers who arrived with Nixon's entourage, Charles W. Colson, already on the "redline" list of both the FBI and the CIA for his brazen come-ons to labor leaders with criminal records—was said to have put a former FBI agent on his office payroll.

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN the statutory cornerstone and the hard-rock fundament of the national-security bureaucracy's power that it was the President's only source of intelligence information. Other government departments could put in their occasional *trouvailles*, but they could do so only through the channels of the "intelligence community" presided over by the CIA. Now this vital monopoly, this *lifeline* was being shredded. It isn't easy to render a condign description, a graphic reprise of the surprise, anger, and panic that convulsed the espionage establishment when it discovered that the White House was *putting operatives in the field*.

It was the beginning. Three years were to pass before the first burglary arrests at Watergate, then sixteen months of headlines and hearings, a great many mean things made public, and yet this opening chord, this first electric alarm of the great crisis somehow remained muffled, insulated, giving those who knew abo it the odd sensation that when Watergate final did begin to emerge into public view, it did backward.

And yet, the espionage establishment ne not have despaired. *Post equitem sedet at cura*. Watergate was etched subliminally b neath the very first instructions Ehrlichma and Colson issued to their agents. The fat curse of technicist bureaucratism overtook t new White House spymasters with the endem rapidity of tropical spirochetes engulfing a No wegian ship's crew.

Their intelligence operations quickly becan intragovernmental, that is, mutually compe tive. By the end of 1970, every first-rank Nixo aide had to have his own spy shop, or at lea be a partner in one. They internalized their i telligence activities with headlong speed. Th technified senselessly—charts, graphs, bugs, co cealed cameras, dart guns, phone taps, the mo expensive monitoring equipment ever to appe on any agent's expense voucher, where a sing inside source and a few intelligent questio would have been enough. They began to bureau ratize even while they were a handful, by co structing their own model of reality and falli under its artificial, self-generated norms. The failure to perceive other models of reality l them into the usual errors. Certainly they unde estimated both the bitterness and the subtlety the CIA hierarchs, and it is conceivable that t CIA arranged for a trap at the Watergate.

On the morning of June 17, 1972, the wate officer at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virgi ia, woke director Richard Helms a little aft seven to tell him about the arrest of "the Whi House crew," for that was how the intelligenc professionals had come to think of the agen hired by John Mitchell and John Ehrlichma and the other Nixon aides. Both the CIA an the FBI had long known, of course, about th existence of the Hunt-Liddy team. The CIA ha infiltrated it with a confidential informant, ju as if Hunt and Liddy had been foreign diplo mats, and the informant, an old Company op erative named Eugenio Martinez, code-name "Rolando," who had reported in advance on t Watergate project, was in fact at that momen himself under arrest for his part in the break-i

"Ah, well," Helms said, "They finally di it." He chatted for a few moments with th young watch officer, who said it was "a pit about McCord and some of those guys." "Wel yes," Helms said. "A pity about the Presiden too, you know. They really blew it. The sa thing is, we all think 'That's the end of it,' an it may be just the beginning of somethin worse. If the White House tries to ring m through central, don't switch it out here, ju tell them you reported McCord's arrest alread and I was *very* surprised."

A POPULAR THEORY. I DON'T BUY IT.