

THE ARMIES OF IGNORANCE

THE RISE OF THE AMERICAN
INTELLIGENCE EMPIRE

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wavered over how much personal control he wanted to have over the intelligence community. Eisenhower started out by knowing many secrets, and he later was acquainted with domestic as well as overseas covert operations. These he accepted as a given and turned over the responsibility for decisions concerning the limits of their illegality to key persons in his administration. In essence, past practice became basic justification, or rather provided a kind of unstated code of what would be acceptable in the future without new approval. The "turnover file of enemies' lists" was accepted as received from those who had kept them in the previous administration. This gave the intelligence community a degree of latitude which, perhaps justified by the Korean War, was too great once the Korean truce was reached.

By John F. Kennedy's accession on January 20, 1961, a truce of sorts had been reached in the intelligence community over the role of intelligence in determining national policy. The military intelligence services were not completely satisfied with their Cold War role. Their leaders resented their junior-partner status in the Dulles brothers' foreign policy firm. However, the rise of the National Security Agency and substantial increases in the army, navy and air force's independent communications intelligence organizations placated them a bit; their near monopoly on communications intelligence information served as a partial check on Dulles' CIA. To be sure, the military high command had no quarrel with the Dulles' Cold War doctrine; nonetheless, the military intelligence practitioners sought a more active role in the policy-making process. They wanted to be treated as coequals in matters which committed their resources rather than as compliant supporters of plans hatched by Allen Dulles' subordinates in the CIA. In most cases Dulles, through his considerable personal talents, prevented outright violations of the truce, and by coopting some key military personnel into the CIA staved off major confrontations between the military and the CIA.

In spite of the uneasy policy truce, in January 1961, there was still a fundamental division concerning the physical direction and control of intelligence resources. The military was reluctant to continue subsidizing the CIA by assigning military personnel to the Agency, a practice long part of the CIA and its predecessor organization, the OSS. However, by the end of the Eisenhower administration there were those in the military intelligence hierarchy who deeply resented the practice's implications insofar as they lost effective control of their personnel and also had to pay for them out of military appropriations.

Although control over military personnel was the paramount consideration, the cost of subsidizing military personnel on duty with the Agency was part of a larger disagreement in the intelligence community over the size and shares of the intelligence budget. This disagreement had festered for the last several years of the Eisenhower administration and by the time of Kennedy's accession had become a major problem. Aside from big-dollar expenditures on satellite photography and hardware for NSA, the military intelligence services' budgets

for personnel and operations during the late 1950s were quite austere; during the same period the CIA's budget was more than ample. Then as now, the argument over who got what and how much produced a running battle between the military intelligence services and the CIA. What particularly rankled military intelligence leaders was the fact that the CIA's budget was hidden in the Defense Appropriations Bill and its total amount was considered sacrosanct. The military intelligence leaders complained, and rightly so, that they had to justify down to the last penny every line item while the CIA had to justify nothing. Dulles smiled throughout and occasionally threw the military a bone, especially in "mutually beneficial" research and development money. There the situation rested as the military intelligence services waited to see if JFK would turn out to be a big intelligence spender or continue with Eisenhower's cutbacks in military spending for intelligence purposes.

During the transition period between JFK's election and inauguration, the intelligence money question never came up. The intelligence community's leaders—especially Dulles and his deputy, General Charles Cabell—had other, more important concerns, that is, to insure that control of the intelligence community stayed in the hands of Dulles and his "old boy" network. This was no trivial exercise; it involved convincing JFK that continuity in the intelligence community's hierarchy, as in the FBI, was above and beyond partisan considerations.

Dulles was more than equal to the challenge. He and his cohorts promoted the view of a selfless band of brothers whose personal loyalty to the president was absolute. At the intimate Georgetown dinners with JFK's advisers, the intelligence professionals carefully insinuated the idea that theirs was a different kind of bureaucracy. Dulles' psychological operations worked extremely well. As a particular case in point, Robert Kennedy came to believe that under Dulles the CIA had become a sort of refuge for the freethinkers and liberals who had been driven underground by the McCarthyites. Averell Harriman, for one, was enlisted to vouch for the indispensability of Dulles and his democrats-in-hiding.

Once Dulles' position as director of Central Intelligence (DCI) and director of the Central Intelligence Agency was assured, the intelligence community's hierarchy rallied round the flag and moved to get the hook in JFK. This they did by playing on JFK's almost fatal fascination with the elusive promise of covert operations to provide the communists with a sign of the new president's resolve. The intelligence leaders told JFK what he wanted to hear. The immediate focus was on Laos, Vietnam, and Cuba. Each was pictured as a low-risk, high-payoff, quasi-covert paramilitary operation. Success was assured by the intelligence leaders. The new president received no detailed options which laid out past failures in these areas, with the reasoned misgivings of those who had encountered serious obstacles in opposing communists. All he got from the intelligence spokesmen were promises of cheap, quick victories. The briefings, both intelligence and operational, which occurred produced an almost imme-

diate presidential sign-off which ordered the intelligence leaders to move full speed ahead with all operations.

It was a stacked deck. The conflicting views of those in the intelligence community who advised caution were summarily set aside in favor of those who advocated action without much consideration for what would happen, or the possibility of failure in the operations themselves. There was no effort made to provide JFK with a way out in the event things went wrong in any one of the areas.

The briefing instructions on the Laos, Vietnam, and Cuba covert paramilitary operations indicated a conscious intent on the part of the intelligence leaders not only to place these operations in the most favorable light, but also to marshal the intelligence community's resources in an adversary role. The distinction is subtle but important, because it promoted in the president's mind a form of selective misperception which encouraged the view that his intelligence advisers unanimously favored the proposed operations. In JFK's case, this practice produced rather disastrous personal results and rebounded to the severe disadvantage of the intelligence community's hierarchy. In short, they conned Kennedy and they were caught.

Another measure of the intelligence community hierarchy's duplicity in dealing with Kennedy involved the so-called missile gap. Following Kennedy's nomination, President Eisenhower directed that Kennedy be given briefings concerning the status of military, foreign policy, and intelligence matters.* In the course of these briefings Kennedy was made privy to the Gaither report which, among a wide variety of strategic evaluations, speculated about the future of Soviet missile development. From the various caveats and "on the

*Although, as indicated above, president-elect Eisenhower received a wide variety of intelligence briefings on President Truman's orders, these were not part of a formal presidential transition program *per se*. The briefings, in large measure, were due to Eisenhower's longstanding personal relationships with United States military commanders, and not to Truman's initiatives. Eisenhower resented Truman's inaction on this matter and consequently established a formal presidential transition program to insure that a new administration would be able to take over in smooth fashion. Eisenhower's initiative was followed by passage of the Presidential Transition Act on March 7, 1964. Its purpose was stated to be: "The Congress declares it to be the purpose of this act to promote the orderly transfer of the executive power in connection with the expiration of the term of office of a president and the inauguration of a new president. The national interest requires that transitions in the office of president be accomplished so as to assure continuity in the faithful execution of the laws and in the conduct of the affairs of the federal government, both domestic and foreign. Any disruption occasioned by the transfer of the executive power could produce results detrimental to the safety and well-being of the United States and its people. Accordingly, it is the intent of the Congress that appropriate actions be authorized and taken to avoid or minimize any disruption. In addition to the specific provisions contained in this act directed toward that purpose, it is the intent of the Congress that all officers of the government so conduct the affairs of the government for which they exercise responsibility and authority as (1) to be mindful of problems occasioned by transitions in the office of president, (2) to take appropriate lawful steps to avoid or minimize disruptions that might be occasioned by the transfer of the executive power, and (3) otherwise to promote orderly transitions in the office of president."

other hands" in the report, JFK deduced the existence of and a widening of the missile gap. As is well known, he made effective use of the missile gap in his campaign for the presidency. After his election he repudiated its existence. These two actions reveal the politicization of American intelligence. In point of fact the intelligence leaders allowed the erroneous Gaither report to stand without providing JFK with the valid hard intelligence in *their possession* which completely contradicted the report. Once JFK was installed as president, the intelligence leaders made it quite plain that they had known all along there was no missile gap, but had kept silent over what had become a political issue. The message was not lost on JFK, who concluded that he could count on the intelligence leaders to protect, if not further, his personal political interests.

From subsequent events it is clear that during the transition period, and until several months after the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion, JFK did not receive a complete intelligence sources and methods briefing. And then it was less a briefing than a post-mortem report from Robert Kennedy on the Bay of Pigs fiasco and an indictment of some intelligence community leaders for having played fast and loose with the new president and members of his administration.

In connection with the key question of sources and methods, JFK, like his two immediate predecessors, was given final-product intelligence which left unanswered the questions by whom and on what basis the information was actually acquired. This property is a matter of individual presidential preference; however, in Kennedy's case as in Truman's, the decision was made by Allen Dulles rather than the president himself. Obviously, there is no necessity to burden a president with case officer minutiae; but without adequate understanding of sources and methods, it is impossible for a president to make a decision based solely upon the finished intelligence he receives.

Another feature of JFK's investiture in the intelligence priesthood involved the manner by which he was informed about the intelligence community's efforts in domestic intelligence, internal security, and counterespionage. These were not covered in any real detail. JFK was given a broad overview which pictured these operations as an ongoing series of quiet, effective actions whose results would be reported routinely to the president through the National Security Council's Internal Security Interagency Group. Their necessity was stressed as part of the "big picture" of law enforcement and as an adjunct to American overseas containment of communism. No evaluation was provided to show that most of the actions were a waste of time and money. Also, no mention was made of the patently unlawful activities of the FBI, CIA, or NSA. Kennedy was given a few tidbits to indicate the community's counterintelligence capability in finding out what people were thinking and saying, but beyond the standard reference to the FBI's case files no hint was given the new president concerning the CIA's counterespionage files, the National Security Agency's "watch list," and the like. In this the intelligence leaders played on

JFK's vanity; they believed they could satisfy his curiosity about counterespionage matters with clandestinely acquired information about public personalities instead of with reports from the United States and "friendly" foreign spies and agents who had acquired similar information about American political figures. A big thing was made over source "Marianne," a member of General DeGaulle's personal and political inner circle and who was on the CIA payroll. Although Marianne's information was not very useful in terms of immediate practical intelligence, it provided a personal insight about DeGaulle which captured JFK's interest.

In today's post-Watergate terminology, the intelligence leaders "stroked" JFK in a way designed to lull him into letting them run the community according to their own perceptions. By itself this is not surprising. The permanent bureaucracy, in or out of the intelligence community, attempts to do the same thing with its transient heads. The turnover at the top in all phases of the executive branch, whether in the Department of Defense or Transportation, breeds a defensive attitude on the part of those who must provide for continuity of operations and who see themselves as the real guardians of the state. In JFK's case, the bureaucracy—especially those in the intelligence community—had mixed feelings about his call "to get the country moving again." To a point they favored a more active role for the intelligence community, but they were unsure about their place in such a move. Hence, as the new, young Camelotians took up their posts, the stroking was extended to those who had assumed key positions in the new administration. The clear message from the intelligence community's leaders to those on the working level who had to deal with the new appointees was "go slow, be careful, because the 25-year-old you slight today may end up in charge of a task force charged to reorganize your operation or disestablish your own personal sandbox tomorrow!"

From the intelligence leaders' point of view the transition from Eisenhower to Kennedy went splendidly. Dulles was particularly pleased because his rule of the CIA had been extended without question of a successor. No JFK watchbird had been placed in the CIA's executive suite to report back on what was being done in the new president's name. Kennedy underwent so many formal and informal briefings that it is hard to point out one which embodied the intelligence community's total approach. All the briefings were designed to ease JFK into his intelligence responsibilities without providing him with the means to challenge the status quo. For a time it appeared to be touch and go, because JFK was receiving warning signals from persons outside the intelligence community's direct control. Some of his young aides, especially Michael Forrestal—the son of former secretary of the navy and the first secretary of defense, James Forrestal—expressed reservations about the gibbousness with which problems were made to appear insignificant. However, following the briefing of January 25, 1961, at which time Kennedy was given a full dog-and-pony show about the forthcoming Bay of Pigs invasion, Dulles was convinced that the intelligence community's leaders were home free. From

reports of the briefing, it was clear that JFK did not demur in the slightest concerning the plans, and Dulles concluded that the president's support would be sufficient to keep the military on board for the duration. Until that time the military had some reservations about the Bay of Pigs. These were essentially tactical in nature, dealing with the poor choice of the landing area, the state of the Cubans' training, command and control procedures, etc. But once the military saw which way the presidential wind was blowing and received assurances from Dulles that they wouldn't be cut out of the action—and presumably the after-action rewards—their reservations disappeared. Nary a voice was raised by the Joint Chiefs of Staff against the operation. Although the Bay of Pigs was an amphibious operation, the views and opinions of the commandant of the Marine Corps, General David M. Shoup, about the CIA's plans were neither sought nor permitted to be placed in front of the president. In passing it is worthwhile to note that in the Bay of Pigs post-mortem (which resulted in Dulles' downfall) the military's earlier reservations about the CIA's lack of professionalism became part of the bill of particulars which provoked Kennedy to say that he wanted "to splinter the CIA into a thousand pieces and scatter it to the winds."

One further aspect about JFK's rites of passage into the intelligence community is worth mentioning: the dossier analysis of JFK which was used to help decide the appropriate thrust for his briefings. How sinister this kind of practice sounds depends largely on one's point of view; there is a practical side in knowing the right way to approach any president with information and/or problems requiring a decision. There is no simple solution to this question. No two presidents' styles are exactly alike, and their preferences and personalities are crucial to the decision-making process. Some presidents prefer a one-page, either-or decision memo; others the full-scale briefing ritual; some an on-the-run verbal summary by a single key aide; and in rare cases a one-to-one presentation by the "technician" who actually must implement the decision once it is approved. An indirect assessment of JFK was made in order not to offend him by the method of presentation, or to trigger subjective, antagonistic response to well established operations and practices in the intelligence community. The intelligence leaders realized that JFK knew he had to have an intelligence service, but they also knew he did not necessarily have to buy the one they were selling.

Among other personality considerations, the indirect assessment of JFK sought to identify in advance how he could be expected to respond when informed about the intelligence community's covert operations. In broad essence, the indirect assessment sought answer to the question, "What sort of a man is he?" Those who worked to find an answer were quite aware that the difference between Kennedy's public and private images was crucial (as it is with most public officials, elected or otherwise). To assist them, CIA psychologists were given access to the quite considerable Kennedy family files, not just those pertaining to JFK himself. Much of the early information about him was

not of American origin. It had been provided to the OSS in late 1942 by the British Special Operations Executive MI-5 organization. MI-5, with responsibility for counterintelligence and its long experience in the field, held extensive files on many thousands of Americans. Under the terms of the agreement with the British, the OSS was allowed to copy MI-5's files, and was thus able to achieve a quantum leap in the fields of counterintelligence and counterespionage. Between the MI-5 files and the information which, in consequence of Kennedy's wartime security clearances, had been compiled about him over time by various American intelligence agencies, a profile concerning his expected behavior as first intelligence officer was drawn. Much of the material in these files was extremely personal in nature. This was not the intelligence community's immediate concern. Regardless of one's personal opinion concerning the merit of the intelligence community's making an appraisal of the president as an intelligence leader, there is some justification for those who know the particular and peculiar demands associated with intelligence decisions to understand his strengths and weaknesses in that role. It is quite true by virtue of a person's election that the people, in essence, give their stamp of approval of a man's fitness to serve as president. The electoral process provides considerable scrutiny of a potential president's health, finances, and positions on issues, as well as his political philosophy. Nonetheless, this process is imperfect as a means to predict a president's subsequent performance in such varied roles as chief executive, commander in chief of the armed forces, and especially as first intelligence officer. There is no easy way to know in advance how a president will respond to the temptations to use intelligence resources for partisan purposes, or to use secret intelligence means to achieve controversial, if not illegal, ends. The intelligence community's dilemma over these questions has been profound; it is difficult to say no to a sitting president.

The intimidating power of the American presidency which is scarcely equaled in unquestioned obedience on the part of underlings which is scarcely equaled in despotic societies. Early on in their careers, the intelligence community leaders learned that while individual presidents might publicly proclaim their desire to have some "no-men" in their band of advisors, such a role—if one is naive enough to believe such a statement—has indeed been lonely and quite unrewarding. Since Franklin Roosevelt, there has always been a place for a "court jester" in the White House, but hardly any room for a truly skilled devil's advocate. As a consequence, the intelligence leaders have adopted the protective coloration of total obedience to the president while pursuing their own ends and visions. Or there has been apparent harmony, and final resolution of the dilemma has been deferred until the next president takes office.

In the case of JFK, the intelligence community resolved its dilemma by not laying out the seamy specifics of their operations. The intelligence leaders relied instead on JFK's disinterestedness with detail. The briefings, with the exception of the one about the Bay of Pigs, were painted with an extremely broad brush. This was done not so much to cover up particular operations as

it was to avoid directing JFK's attention to specific aspects concerning the costs, personnel, and cover stories for the operations. Each briefer was advised that it was his responsibility to respond to JFK's questions, but not to raise questions.

In sum, the intelligence community leaders acted on the assumption that it was not their place (or in their self-interest) to provide JFK with the questions he needed to ask if he were to understand fully what the troops in his newly acquired intelligence empire were actually doing. The broad facts were presented in a carefully chosen way which suggested that their meaning was self-evident. This device played on the normal human reaction which deters a person from asking what might appear to be a stupid question, or to acknowledge that he didn't know something which someone in his position should be expected to know. The technique works exceptionally well in dealing with the circulating elites of Washington politics, where possession of before-the-fact information is the coin of the realm.

Some months later, in discussing the period of the initial intelligence briefings with Robert Kennedy, he commented that at the time their problem was knowing the right questions to ask and a failure on his and the president's part to recognize the full span of the intelligence community leaders' interests.

The abrupt accession of Lyndon Johnson to the presidency gave the intelligence leaders no time to ease him into his role as first intelligence officer. By nightfall on November 22, 1963, President Johnson was in the center of a maelstrom as each of the intelligence agencies rushed to feed information into the White House in partial explanation of what happened and why in Dallas. It was a time of incredible confusion. The usual quiet efficiency of the Pentagon and White House command centers was upset by the presence of many officials who normally would have been kept informed by aides or printed material. These persons seized on messages as they were decrypted almost the way J. P. Morgan would rip a stock quotation out of his personal office ticker. Thus, the orderly flow of intelligence information about the assassination was broken and disjointed as the far-flung outposts of the intelligence community attempted to respond to the crisis. The hourly intelligence summaries and spot reports painted a picture of panic not unlike that at the time of Pearl Harbor. Because everything reported was assumed to bear on the assassination, there was scant effort spent on determining which items were truly relevant. The situation was further aggravated by the worldwide Red Alert which had been ordered while *Air Force One* was in flight back to Washington; this literally blew the intelligence and military's most sophisticated communication circuits.

The crisis atmosphere prevailed for several days as a frantic search for what might lie behind JFK's assassination was sought. The situation led to such inadvertent disclosures to Johnson as, "We got this from our tap on so and so," or "Our man in the Mafia, Vietnam's Presidential Palace, the Kremlin, Havana, etc. says . . . etc." Taken together these bits and pieces of basically

raw, unevaluated information provided Johnson with a sources-and-methods briefing unlike any those of his predecessors had received. Also, they indicated to Johnson that the games each of the intelligence agencies had been playing in the field of domestic intelligence were far more extensive than had been commonly supposed by him or anyone on the White House staff.

In the course of sorting out the kaleidoscope of events and correcting much of the information which had been passed to him, it became obvious to the new president that many of his inherited intelligence crisis managers were less able than he or Kennedy had thought. After the immediate crisis had passed, the intelligence leaders tried to cover their tracks, but it was too late. For those at the top of the intelligence community in Washington, the first few days after JFK's death were a nightmare. For example, somehow the intelligence community lost track of key Soviet leaders, whose absence was considered as a clear signal of imminent nuclear war. This lack of information was primarily responsible for initiating the worldwide Red Alert. Although this procedure has a human, go-no-go feature, it failed to stop the machines which sent the order because the "human" with the responsibility was overcome with grief over Kennedy's death. So much for "fail safe" provisions during times of unexpected crisis.

Khrushchev's appearance the next day at the United States embassy in Moscow, after an all-night train ride from the Black Sea, allayed some fears. His presence made headlines, but the alert continued for several more days, during which war by intelligence accident was a real danger. Only in the course of the intelligence post-mortem was it discovered that key Kremlin personnel hadn't been lost or out of Moscow, but that the regular reports of their movements and whereabouts had been submerged by the communications tidal wave which had inundated Washington. As the fear of war and further assassinations of American officials receded, the intelligence community's leaders found themselves in a new and uncomfortable position.

The new president began to probe deeply into the intelligence community's sources and methods. He wanted to know what marching orders had been given to the intelligence community's legions, especially with respect to Castro. This curiosity was based on a CIA report he was shown during the crisis period which highlighted Castro's remarks warning reprisals against American officials for trying to kill him. As a consequence, Johnson was told about the several years' efforts to kill, or get someone to kill, Castro. This information led Johnson to make his posthumously quoted remark that "Those guys were running their own Murder Incorporated in the Caribbean."

In the course of conducting his own intelligence evaluation Johnson rapped many knuckles and took his own independent measure of the community's leaders. Today it is not possible to detail the full extent of what Johnson was told; this information is only available in its entirety on the tapes located in the Johnson Memorial Library in Austin, Texas. These tapes, many of which contain information provided Johnson by persons outside of the normal chain

of command and/or the intelligence leaders' control, have not been transcribed and are still under lock and key. Nonetheless, CIA, JCS, and FBI files clearly set forth that information about illegal and extralegal activities, which has entered the public domain as a consequence of recent Congressional investigations and revelations, was at least partially covered by the intelligence leaders.

These files reflect the manner in which a presidential briefing is put together. Depending on the topic and the rank or status of the briefer, the file might contain a briefing aide de memoire, institutions concerning the extent of information to be provided, or the briefer's verbatim remarks. Normally briefing papers are not read to the president. The emphasis is on eye contact and the conveyance of a few major points which can be explained in a brief and concise manner. Aside from the daily pins-on-the-map kind of presentations, those made by key officials who are not briefers per se, but who would lay out, for example, the mail-intercept program, are backed up by a "Black Book" which includes all the necessary background and detailed specifics about the program. Filling these books, keeping them current and finding enough time to study them is a major activity of those who must brief the president about the intelligence community's many enterprises.

In spite of the intelligence community's rear-guard attempt to orchestrate the flow of information about its activities, Johnson knew how to get what he wanted. His techniques were simple; sometimes he would turn on the charm and others his temper. Usually these worked well enough, but his most effective technique was one whereby he would "outdumb" those he believed were trying to hold something back or deceive him. He would pretend not to understand what he was being told and thereby force the official to go into greater detail and reveal the missing links in what was being provided. Another effective LBJ technique involved bringing a lower-level member of the intelligence community in to the White House for a special "prebriefing" on a topic scheduled later for a formal briefing. Under this procedure the individual prebriefer was sworn to secrecy as one of the president's own, and was persuaded to divulge what the president would *not* be told about the topic at the formal briefing. By this means Johnson came to know how far he could trust his intelligence leaders and perhaps even more importantly, how much they really knew about what was actually going on in their organizations.

Johnson's deep probing set the intelligence community leaders completely off balance. Their first conclusion was that one of their peers had broken the gentleman's agreement which held that criticism of one by the other to the president should not be personal or based on specific foul-ups. The intelligence leaders never discovered the source of the "leaks." Although orders were issued in the military intelligence services and the CIA prohibiting "unauthorized transmission of information to the White House," nothing much came of the effort. Similarly, little notice was given to the small cadre of relatively obscure members of the intelligence community who resigned from their own agencies and quietly took up positions working for, or in, the White House.

These persons gave Johnson an edge in dealing with the intelligence community. It didn't hold throughout his presidency, but it did help him in gaining a semblance of initial control over some of the community's activities.

Once the first briefings had been completed and the Warren Commission established, Johnson gave a flickering green light to the intelligence leaders: its legions were to continue the march. One significant caveat was added: "Thou shalt not contemplate, engage in or otherwise abet plots involving political assassination." Johnson believed quite strongly this was a no-win proposition which almost certainly generated counterproductive aftereffects, if not reprisals. Other practices, like the mail-intercept program, break-ins, and surveillance for political purposes—as well as political "destabilization" and the use of third-country counterespionage resources for non-American-attributable operations—were allowed to continue. Thus operations of extremely dubious legality were authorized only very indirectly by Johnson. He acknowledged his awareness of the illegal practices like a sphinx, leaving their advocates to draw their own conclusions about his approbation or lack thereof. Those involved felt some trepidation; although Johnson had not said no, they came away with the clear impression that in the event their activities went awry they would be offered up as sacrificial goats. This fear, plus the belief that up there—somewhere—was a personal agent of Johnson's looking over their shoulders, served to curb some of the more outrageous practices and operations. It also helped to force the intelligence leaders to learn more about the actual operations of their agencies. The lesson of John McCone being fired for not knowing what was going on in the CIA with respect to the Castro "hit" was not lost on the other intelligence leaders.

Johnson brought the intelligence community under some real, if not permanent, presidential control. His personal style was much more effective than if he had overtly relied on executive orders, presidential directives, and the like to make his will known. Unlike his predecessors, Johnson had a superb grasp of the fact that the informal centers of power in the intelligence community, as well as the rest of the federal government, were of much greater consequence than the transient formal ones shown on an organization chart.

The national traumas associated with the assassination of John Kennedy served to mute the intelligence community's current disagreements. In November 1963, these included jurisdictional disputes between the military services and the CIA over who had the lead in positive intelligence operations in Southeast Asia. There was also an argument between NSA, the military communications intelligence organizations, and the CIA about whether the CIA should continue with, or expand, its communications intelligence activities. A peripheral disagreement involved control over the satellite photo program and how its take should be disseminated. These matters reached Johnson's desk, but he made little effort to resolve the disagreements. Instead, he pursued a policy of watchful waiting which was designed to take the measure of those engaged in the bureaucratic in-fighting. It was a shrewdly designed ploy. There