

intelligence

The essence of intelligence is not spying. It consists in gathering information from the sweep of the minutiae of daily events. Most of these are public, are available, and in normal life are ignored or if noticed are soon forgotten.

Novels and former spies lead to the believe that intelligence and spying are synonymous - that spying is intelligence. In fact it is a minor part of any intelligence system. The former head of the CIA, Allen W. Dulles, who had been a clandestine operator for OSS in Switzerland in World War II and more a spymaster and political operative than a spy, titled his book The Craft of Intelligence. (There are rumors that E. Howard Hunt ghosted this book. The fact is that after the Bay of Pigs Hunt was assigned to Dulles' office. He discusses this in a taped conversation with a both former spy, Lucien Conein made at Charles Colson's instigation. It surfaced during the hearings of the Senate Watergate committee.) With or without a clandestine operative like Hunt working on his book, a man with the Dulles past would be expected to be inclined to the romantic concept. The fact is that under Dulles intelligence and dirty-works, which are not intelligence gathering but are acts, came to be confused in the public mind as they were in reality. These ~~sex~~ acts are designed to confound another country or its intelligence system or its military.

Former CIA man Victor Marchetti, who is not against intelligence per se but does oppose its excesses, came closer in titling his book The Cult of Intelligence. The old-boy network ~~for~~ of clandestine operators, as thought to justify the dirty ~~tricks~~ tricks of the operators, as those to quiet tiny pricks of conscience, popularizes the romantic notion. And clandestine operations themselves tend to become self-feeding piles with the operators and the information they get, real or imagined, becoming excuses for still more clandestine operations.

But in reality, the necessary, the legitimate information governments need, comes in overwhelming proportion from the public, non-secret sources. Newspapers are the most common.

Intelligence then becomes an art, not a science. The analyst, sifting through the gathered flotsam and jetsom, extracts meaning, sometimes ~~by~~ by the tedious putting together

of many tiny pieces of information, sometimes largely by instinct ~~data~~ developed on the job. The analyst sees and attributes meaning to information others do not perceive.

A minor case from my own experience as an analyst illustrates the point.

There was a revolution in Paraguay, which is anything but a major power. However, the government had to know what was going on in that little thought-of land. For a short while I sat at a Paraguay desk. After going over non-secret information - no single report of a single spy - I turned in a memorandum predicting that the command of the dictatorship's army would change and who would take command.

Within two weeks it happened.

There was no special trick to it. It was obvious to those who would look with care and not ignore obvious meanings. Within my organization that analysis of more than three decades ago was regarded as some kind of coup. It was not. It was a necessary and inevitable development easily forecast from readily-available information.

At the same time there were reports from spies that were fictions, not facts. Another simple illustration, which also shows the minor details that are gathered even by agents, ~~shows the~~ makes the point and shows the undependability of what spies often can't avoid reporting as well as the limitations imposed upon them by their own political views.

In those World War II days there was a natural and ~~proper~~ ^{necessary} interest in fascists and in any people and activities that could be considered pro-Hitler. Washington received reports of the mysterious activities of a young American in Latin America. He was said to be a new agent of Spanish fascism, the Flanage. Actually he was a college student working on his doctoral thesis.

This kind of misinformation coming from spies can and does have disastrous effect. It leads to wrong decisions, wrong and bad policy.

But often it is the product of policy, which seeks information to justify itself.

J. Edgar Hoover's paranoia about the American Communist Party is a classic case.

He penetrated it heavily, subsidized it and places his agents in its highest levels.

Some of these later surfaced in a series of trial and hearings that served no purpose outside of furthering the political beliefs of those who, like Hoover, held paranoid views. The Communist party was never a factor of any consequence, never had much membership or following, but the anti-democratic means used to interfere with it led to an increasing abandonment of democratic principles and to an increasing authoritarianism in the country.

They also fuelled the Cold War, which is one of History'd major turning points and a policy of futility and self-defeat.

But this was Hoover's sincere belief. He did what he genuinely believed was right. Because he believed his belief was right he believed that all he did and had done in pursuit of that belief also was right.

He surrounded himself with those who saw the world as he did. All distorted reality the same way.

Their agents reported only what they wanted to hear. Their agents on policy levels also did what they wanted done. If they did not, they would have been dispensed with. Hoover did not want to hear what was against his belief and everyone knew it. So he heard only what he wanted and of this he used only what he wanted, and the result is history, part of the story of the ruin of the world in pursuit of wrong and bad policy that bankrupted all the major powers.

Those in our government who disagreed were purged. Those not in government were pilloried and persecuted. The era and the practise came to be known as of McCarthyism after its ^{Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin,} most successful exploiter, /Actually it began with Hoover and the earlier Congressman
McCarthy was/Richard M. Nixon. Nixon did not invent it in Congress. He copied from an earlier political known-nothing, Martin Dies.