

Text of Statement by Helms to Senators on C.I.A.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 16 — Following is the text of a statement by Richard M. Helms, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, to a Senate subcommittee.

It so happens that the word "foreign" does not appear in the title of this statement. I have no doubt that the members of the subcommittee are familiar with the concept of a peacetime intelligence service agency in 1944, the idea was attacked in the press as a device for fastening a Gestapo on the nation.

It was precisely for the purpose of banishing such fears, however groundless, that the language of the founding act specifies that the Central Intelligence Agency would have no police, law enforcement, or subpoena power, and no internal security function.

To my certain knowledge, all the Directors of Central Intelligence in their turn accepted the division of the foreign and domestic intelligence and security tasks as an absolute—a separation confirmed by the mandate of Congress. Our work lay in foreign fields.

Efforts Based in U.S.
So that there may be no misunderstanding, we all know that just as photographic satellites are launched from American soil, a considerable portion of our effort is based in this country. The agency is charged with collecting foreign intelligence domestically from United States citizens or residents traveling abroad.

Overseas activities may need a home base in this country and in any case are basically administered from headquarters in Virginia, where also are the bulk of our analytical and estimative personnel.

As I will describe in a minute, the interface with the Federal Bureau of Investigation is continuous and we have never in any way challenged their jurisdiction. And finally the Director of Central Intelligence has the statutory responsibility for the protection of intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure. But in all this the target remains abroad.

Provisions of the Law
The function—the work, that is—of the Central Intelligence Agency is well spelled out in the National Security Act of 1947, the same act that gave rise to the Defense Department as we know it today.

That law was passed after much debate. It has endured the test of time and nearly three decades of international turbulence.

Basically, the charge laid upon the agency—its controlling mission—is to collect, synthesize and evaluate information associated with foreign happenings that affect the national security. The finished product is passed directly to the President and the relatively few members

of his staff who are responsible for the conduct of our foreign policy and national defense.

That distrust is a healthy one and the intelligence services should accept such skepticism as an inescapable occupational hazard. They are, after all, essentially reporting services.

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Allegations of some kind are bound to be made in the conduct of any business, the press included. It is a daily occurrence in our society. The current press campaign against the agency is a particularly serious responsibility.

We in the intelligence community and the press in its world are both in the business of reporting information in the public interest. I say in all seriousness that for some of the press to pound the public with such a farrago of charges can only result in scarring the reputation of an arm of the government without serving a useful purpose.

I offer, if I may, another observation. It is that quite apart from the question of the motives that may or may not have fostered the attack on the agency, the press plainly lacked a firm understanding of the practices and precepts of American intelligence.

I see now, in hindsight, a fairly urgent need for educating the press, and through the press the American people, in the not particularly arcane distinctions that exist in the intelligence community.

If my estimate is correct, it took the more responsible elements of the press a full fortnight to grasp what has actually gone on inside the different parts of that community. If this distinguished panel should agree with me that much of ruinous misunderstandings of these past weeks could have been avoided if only the intelligence function had been more widely understood, then perhaps you will find a way to make certain the confusion will not be repeated.

Two Parts of Budget

To begin with, there is the matter of straightening out the public conception of the various bodies that make up the intelligence community, the boundaries that separate them and the common concerns they share.

It is well known, to be sure, that our total Federal intelligence effort is both extensive and expensive. Not so well known is the fact that the Central Intelligence Agen-

cy's fraction of the total machinery, in terms of money.

The bulk of its budget is spent on the collection and assessment of information. In contrast, the counterintelligence side, the side that seems most to fascinate our critics, is small both in budget and in people. It has the highly professional job of detecting and countering foreign efforts to penetrate and subvert our institutions and policies.

In this task the counterintelligence branch must by necessity work closely with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The FBI handles the counterintelligence function inside our shores. The C.I.A. does the job abroad. Manifestly, since agents come and go, there has to be a continuous in-

terchange of information between the two organizations, and an exchange of files as well.

Trust and confidence are the sovereign coinage in this work. One simply cannot pass such valuable people as identified foreign agents to and fro between the foreign and the home systems as the international and domestic air carriers do with their passengers. Our sources of intelligence would not last long if we were that indifferent.

I have a last point to make. In normal times few Americans would ever come within the purview of our foreign intelligence operations. That happened only when evidence appeared of their involvement with subversive elements abroad.

Until the recent past, such involvements were rare occurrences. Then in the late 1950's and early 1960's came the sudden and quite dramatic upsurge of extreme radicalism in this country and abroad, an uprush of violence against authority and institution, and the advocacy of violent change in our system of government.

By and in itself, this violence, this dissent, this radicalism were of no direct concern to the Central Intelligence Agency. It became so only in the degree that the trouble was inspired by, or coordinated with, or funded by, anti-American subversion mechanisms abroad. In such event the C.I.A. had a real, a clear and proper function to perform, but in collaboration with the F.B.I. the agency did perform that function in response to the express concern of the President. And information was indeed developed, largely by the F.B.I. and the Department of Justice, but also from foreign sources as well, that the agitation here did in fact have some overseas connections.

As the workload grew, a very small group within the already small counterintelligence staff was formed to analyze the information developed here and to give guidance to our facilities abroad. As you can see from the material furnished by the agency, the charter of this group was specifically restricted to the foreign field. How, then, is it possible to distort this effort into a picture of massive domestic spying?