

Letters to the Ed

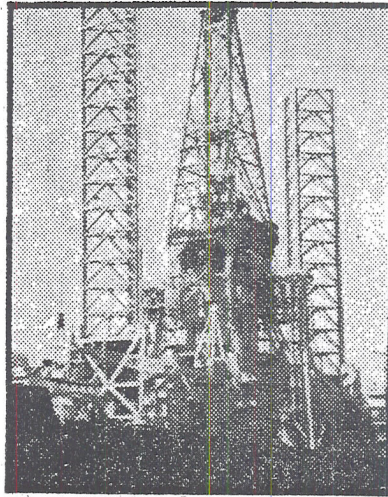
The Case Against Project Jennifer

To the Editor:

Your March 20 editorial on Project Jennifer defines the function of the C.I.A. as furthering the security of the United States by "learning as much as it can about the capabilities and intentions of potential foreign foes." This falls short of defining the limits that must be imposed if our security is not to be subverted by the extensive autonomous powers the agency has taken unto itself and the secrecy in the exercise of those powers, which pose a far greater threat to our democracy than Russian intelligence.

That a man like Howard Hughes had to be employed for this project, that its funding had to be hidden and scattered in back-page records known only to a few (whatever happened to the constitutional requirement for public accounting of public spending?), that our own Navy expressed serious doubts about the legality of the project as well as about the value of the obsolete codes and missiles that might be retrieved (at \$350 million per thrust) and that the operation was undertaken at a time when we were seeking to cool the cold war and could well undermine our efforts at achieving détente—all of these facts bespeak a mentality that can only dim our hopes for peace abroad and for the survival of an open society at home.

I cannot understand The Times. By its publication of the Pentagon Papers, by its Watergate exposés, by its recent revelations of the *modi operandi* of the C.I.A. and now by its detailed, if belated story of the Glomar Explorer, it has demonstrated that only



a citizenry made aware by a free press can counteract the threat of these clandestine governments within our Government.

Why then does your editorial on Project Jennifer gloss over the conclusions so patently suggested by your news story? Why does it fail to make mention of the dangers to our free society inherent in this kind of operation by these kind of people?

This "major engineering feat," as it is characterized by the editorial, not only constituted one country's grab for undersea riches that should belong to all countries but was carried out by men whose regard for our liberties leaves much to be desired. Can it be that The Times was trying to make up to the C.I.A. for having printed the Glomar Explorer story?

IRVING LERNER

Harrison, N. Y., March 22, 1975