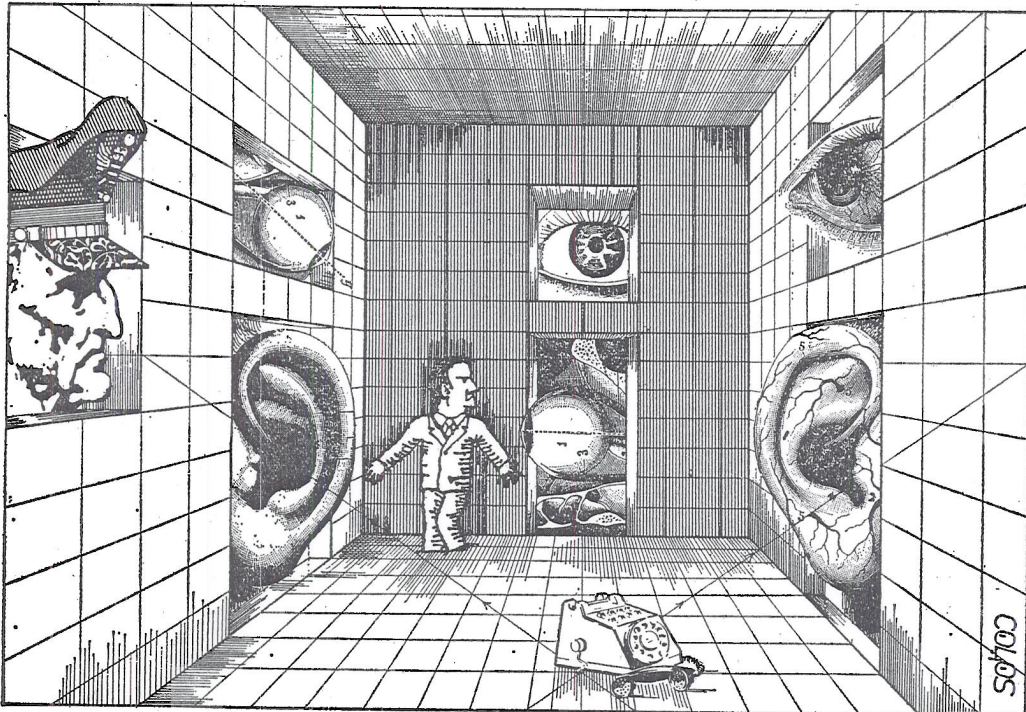


A Right to Intelligence



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By MAJ. GEN. THOMAS A. LANE

Consider the plight of the United States Army. Called to emergency service in support of the civil authority when Detroit was a shambles from the savagery of its own people, supervised by the Mayor of Detroit, the Governor of Michigan and the Deputy Secretary of Defense, sent in with unloaded guns to face the ghetto snipers, it is now pilloried for assembling information about friend and foe in the performance of this distasteful duty.

Crowning insult, it is accused of seeking to usurp civil authority!

An ex-G.I. who served in Army intelligence charged that he spied on leaders in the civilian community. The American Civil Liberties Union brought suit to restrain the Army and to destroy its files on civilians. News media took up the cry. The Army Secretary denied spying on Senator-elect Adlai Stevenson. Senator Sam Ervin said the charges "if true" would represent a serious threat to constitutional government. He promised to have his Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights investigate in February. The Secretary of Defense removed the Defense Intelligence Agency from the control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to his personal care, vowed to protect the civilian community.

The country is in a strange fever of confusion. For twenty-five years it has wrestled with the new experience of cold war. Rich, powerful, productive and frustrated, it is in a mood of escapism.

In shaping this change the Vietnam war has played a major role. By its very persistence, it has become a major psychological battleground. Communist strategy aimed at defeating the United States not on the battlefield but on the home front has succeeded.

When radical newsmen surfaced charges that American soldiers massacred defenseless civilians in Vietnam, the Nixon Administration first deplored the alleged event, then set out to investigate it. For almost two years, the mystery of what happened at My-lai was kept before the public by official action, a peg for charges that the war was debasing the American character.

The charges of "spying" extend this attack on the "military establishment." Our laws provide for military aid to the civil authority. When civil strife overwhelms police and National Guard, the Army is called to restore order.

In 1967 and 1968 urban riots ravaged some American cities. The Army was called out to support civil authority. Just as police must maintain information about people and forces which constitute a danger to public order, any agency assuming police responsibility must have the information essential to the performance of its task.

The fraud on the American people lay in the implication that this essential information reflected a purpose to establish improper influence over civil society. Actually, intervention in support of the civil authority is the most disagreeable of all military roles. They

are trained to confront the country's enemies, not to discipline our own people. The tasks in our cities were undertaken reluctantly, only on the direct order of the President and his civilian Cabinet officers.

The military forces do, of course, perform the police function on their own installations. In this work, they cooperate with the F.B.I. and with state and local police departments. This is a normal security operation entailing protection against all persons, civilian or military, who may threaten the installation.

False alarms about military usurpation of civil authority seem especially contrived in an era when President Johnson could boast that not a chicken shed in North Vietnam was bombed without his permission. The trend of the time is to civilian management of war, not to military intrusion on civil affairs.

The era of Napoleon is long dead. We live in the age of civilian dictatorships, all socialist, modeled on the examples of Lenin, Mussolini and Hitler.

The question remains: why has the Nixon Administration failed to give a full and frank disclosure of the Army role in support of the civil authority? Is it covering up for the civilians who called the Army to this duty? Perhaps Senator Ervin will get the story from Ramsey Clark in February.

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