

Probing the probers

By William Randolph Hearst Jr.
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LOS ANGELES —The present continuing storm over allegedly illegal "domestic spying" by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) came at a bad time for me. Because my schedule called for a series of quick trips between San Simeon, San Francisco and this city, it was difficult to keep up with — much less find time to write about — all the confusing details of what strikes me as a big to-do over very little.



W. R. Hearst Jr.

Needing some really reliable background and editorial advice I turned — as so often in past years — to one of my oldest and closest personal friends, Charles Gould, the long-time publisher of our Flagship paper, the San Francisco Examiner. His written report is so cogent, enlightening and timely that today's column is being turned over to its reproduction.

The report is typical of the thoughtful, carefully-researched approach to controversial problems which

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Charles always has shown during his lifetime career with The Hearst Newspapers. He now is retiring as a publisher to become executive director of The Hearst Foundation, and his great journalistic abilities are going to be sorely missed. I would never let him go were it not for the important promotion he has so richly earned.

As a retired Navy captain who has worked with the Office of Naval Intelligence, Charles Gould knows whereof he speaks. That will become apparent quickly in reading his memorandum — which follows herewith and for which I am indebted to him, as usual.

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"Dear Bill: I think it is too early to take sides in the current controversy over the CIA. I share your concern over the latest charges but, at this point, I am not sure whether I hope the allegations are right . . . or wrong.

"Most of the people in our free society have a knee-jerk reaction to any report that Uncle Sam has his super sleuths keeping book on our people. Our citizens — and their representatives in Congress — are quick to sound off about the evils implicit in the first hint of an invasion of privacy.

"Ironically, however, the same citizens and representatives are just as quick to criticize the government for failing to maintain proper surveillance on subversives and misfits if they feel such individuals or groups threaten the comfort and security of our way of life.

"When John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas in November of 1963, our intelligence people came under attack for failing to keep known nuts and revolutionaries (like Oswald) under wraps during the President's visit. So, too, when Martin Luther King and Sen. Robert Kennedy were killed in 1968.

"In short, Bill, we tend to want it both ways. We want complete freedom from government spying on our people while, at the same time, demanding that our government take all necessary steps to protect us and our system from the madmen and anarchists in our midst.

"When I read the first reports on the CIA charges, some of the charges had a familiar ring. A check of our library quickly confirmed that today's internal spying flap has been played in various versions over the years.

"On Jan. 7, 1970, one newspaper report said, in part: 'Today the Army maintains files on the membership, ideology, program and practices of virtually every activist political group in the country.' A congressman quoted by the Associated Press on March 2, 1970, estimated the filed names totaled seven million.

"Then came a switch. The Army went out of the political watchdog business, destroyed its computerized files, and a Department of Justice intelligence unit took over as the government's main eyes and ears on dissidents. According to the N.Y. Times of April 11, 1971, the latter unit by that date had compiled computerized dossiers on nearly 14,000 Americans.

"So the seven million figure reported in the March of 1970 story was down to 14,000 by April a year later. The current report on the CIA has its spy files containing 10,000 names. At least the number is shrinking.

"However, if you do enough research, you can find almost any statistics you wish. Warren Hinckle III, editor of the short-lived Scanlon's Monthly, charged in his issue of January, 1971, that 'the Pentagon national intelligence analysis division has a subversive bank with 1.5 million names.'

"Hinckle went on to say: 'The Secret Service has indices of 10,000 radical names and extensive dossiers on 50,000 revolutionaries presumed to be dangerous.' And that's not all. He pointed out that 'The FBI has 194 million fingerprints in its files and quick access to 264 million police records, 324 million medical histories and 279 million psychiatric dossiers.'

"If all of those psychiatric records came as hard as the shrink report on Daniel Ellsberg, those surveillance men earn their pay.

"Hinckle did not say how he came by his 'facts.' Presumably, by doing a little spying of his own. Or, perhaps, by depending on informers. Even as does the CIA, the FBI, the New York Times and a flock of other newspapers including, of course, the Examiner.

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"In this period of relative calm in our country, we tend to forget some of the explosive happenings of the recent past when many in our nation feared we were moving toward anarchy or something worse.

"Just skimming through bales of relevant newspaper clippings permits you to relive those fearful days and nights of terrorism when our campuses were on fire, government buildings were sacked, ROTC offices were destroyed, power facilities were dynamited, draft records were put to the torch and hate marched across our land.

"Our law enforcement agencies would have been guilty of malfeasance had they not attempted to keep some record on the leaders of these crimes against society.

"Many of the revolutionaries were on the international circuit, traveling to Hanoi, Peking, Moscow or Havana. Thus they would — and should — come under the watchful eye of the CIA.

"I would like to see all spying eliminated in the United States. BUT — NOT BEFORE IT ALSO IS ELIMINATED IN ALL OTHER NATIONS AROUND THE GLOBE.

"I have little respect for those congressmen who take pious poses and condemn our surveillance system. If they don't like it, they should not fund it.

"The record of our growth in the spy business since the start of World War II is shocking. The costs have doubled and doubled and doubled again. Our intelligence agencies, in fact, have proliferated to the point that it would take a fairly large surveillance outfit to keep track of them all.

"According to figures compiled by Newsweek and published in its issue of Nov. 22, 1971, this nation now has something like 150,000 investigators, analysts, cryptographers and researchers assigned to the task of protecting the security of this nation through surveillance activities of various official bodies.

"Among the latter are the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, Army Intelligence, Navy Intelligence, Air Force Intelligence, the FBI, the Treasury Department, the Atomic Energy Commission, State Department intelligence and the Secret Service.

"The costs are high — running in excess of \$6 billion a year.

"They could be a lot higher if we didn't have these intelligence forces."

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Just on deadline of this column, there were reports that the Justice Department has given the CIA a list of names of Americans with reputations for trouble-making in this country when they traveled abroad. This is certainly the province and responsibility of the CIA.

If it turns out that this is what all the fuss is about, President Ford's blue-ribbon probe panel, which meets tomorrow, won't have too much to do.