

Espionage and an Open Society

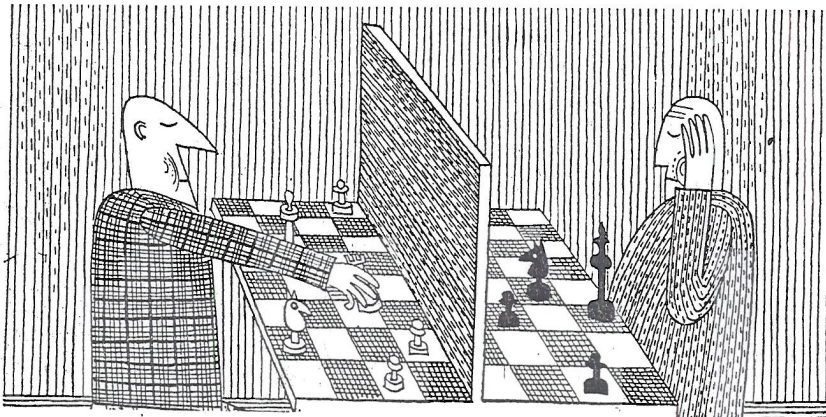
The following is excerpted from the CIA report of the Rockefeller Commission.

During the period of the commission's inquiry, there have been public allegations that a democracy does not need an intelligence apparatus. The commission does not share this view. Intelligence is information gathered for policymakers in government which illuminates the range of choices available to them and enables them to exercise judgment. Good intelligence will not necessarily lead to wise policy choices. But without sound intelligence, national policy decisions and actions cannot effectively respond to actual conditions and reflect the best national interest or adequately protect our national security.

Intelligence gathering involves collecting information about other countries' military capabilities, subversive activities, economic conditions, political developments, scientific and technological progress, and social activities and conditions. The raw information must be evaluated to determine its reliability and relevance, and must then be analyzed. The final products—called "finished intelligence"—are distributed to the President and the political, military and other governmental leaders according to their needs.

Intelligence gathering has changed rapidly and radically since the advent of the CIA in 1947. The increased complexity of international political, economic, and military arrangements, the increased destructiveness of the weapons of modern warfare and the advent of electronic methods of surveillance have altered and enlarged the needs for sophisticated intelligence. Intelligence agencies have had to rely more and more on scientific and technological developments to help meet these needs.

Despite the increasing complexity and significance of intelligence in national policymaking, it is also important to understand its limits. Not all information is reliable, even when the most highly refined intelligence methods are used to collect it. Nor can any intelligence system ensure that its current estimates of another country's intentions or future capacities are accurate or will not be



By Maris Bishofs for The Washington Post

outrun by unforeseen events. There are limits to accurate forecasting, and the use of deception by our adversaries or the penetration of our intelligence services increases the possibility that intelligence predictions may prove to be wrong. Nevertheless, informed decision-making is impossible without an intelligence system adequately protected from penetration.

Therefore, a vital part of any intelligence service is an effective counterintelligence program, directed toward protecting our own intelligence system and ascertaining the activities of foreign intelligence services, such as espionage, sabotage and subversion, and toward minimizing or counteracting the effectiveness of these activities.

This commission is devoted to analyzing the domestic activities of the CIA in the interest of protecting the privacy and security rights of American citizens. But we cannot ignore the invasion of the privacy and security rights of Americans by foreign countries or their agents. This is the other side of the coin—and it merits attention here in the interest of perspective.

Witnesses with responsibilities for counterintelligence have told the commission that the United States remains the principal intelligence target of the Communist bloc.

The Communists invest large sums of money, personnel and sophisticated technology in collecting information—within the United States—on our military capabilities, our weapons systems, our defense structure and our social divisions. The Communists seek to penetrate our intelligence services, to compromise our law enforcement agencies and to recruit as their agents United

States citizens holding sensitive government and industry jobs. In addition, it is a common practice in Communist bloc countries to inspect and open mail coming from or going to the United States.

In an open society such as ours, the intelligence opportunities for our adversaries are immeasurably greater than they are for us in their closed societies. Our society must remain an open one, with our traditional freedoms unimpaired. But when the intelligence activities of other countries are flourishing in the free environment we afford them, it is all the more essential that the foreign intelligence activities of the CIA and our other intelligence agencies, as well as the domestic counterintelligence activities of the FBI, be given the support necessary to protect our national security and to shield the privacy and rights of American citizens from foreign intrusion.

The commission has received estimates that Communist bloc intelligence forces currently number well over 500,000 worldwide.

The number of Communist government officials in the United States has tripled since 1960, and is still increasing. Nearly 2,000 of them are now in this country—and a significant percentage of them have been identified as members of intelligence or security agencies. Conservative estimates for the number of unidentified intelligence officers among the remaining officials raise the level to over 40 per cent.

In addition to sending increasing numbers of their citizens to this country openly, many of whom have been trained in espionage, Communist bloc countries also place considerable emphasis on the training, provision of false identification and dispatching of "illegal" agents—that is, operatives for whom an alias identity has been systematically developed which enables them to live in the United States as American citizens or resident aliens without our knowledge of their true origins.

While making large-scale use of human intelligence sources, the Communist countries also appear to have developed electronic collection of intelligence to an extraordinary degree of technology and sophistication for use in the United States and elsewhere throughout the world, and we believe that these countries can monitor and record thousands of private telephone conversations. Americans have a right to be uneasy if not seriously disturbed at the real possibility that their personal and business activities which they discuss freely over the telephone could be recorded and analyzed by agents of foreign powers.

This raises the real specter that selected American users of telephones are potentially subject to blackmail that can seriously affect their actions, or even lead in some cases to recruitment as espionage agents.