

WXPost

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The CIA: 'Security at What Price?'

The argument you put forth for continued secret intelligence gathering and domestic surveillance in your editorial "The Need for Intelligence" is appalling to anyone concerned about the welfare of this nation. Its unspoken assumptions smack of the arrogance that led our Cold War imperialism to the disaster and tragedy of Vietnam. Moreover they beg the large political question of why this nation has adversaries of the sort that seem to require a CIA.

In the first place there is the assumption of radical innocence: the United States, a would-be friend of all, must face the fact of evil in the outside world. "The world is complex," you write, "and fast changing; and some nations in it are hostile to our own." Their hostility is the reason we arm, spy, and assassinate. Their hostility is the basis for giving our "policy-makers" (after all, aren't they honorable men) refurbished guidelines for their domestic dirty tricks. I question this assumption of innocence and I question the assumption that the CIA functions solely to protect our alleged innocence. In other words, it is at least valid to consider that the United States has acted in a predatory and malevolent fashion over the past 25 years, and that the CIA is a structural feature of this aspect of our international behavior.

But even should the assumption of innocence be sustained by the evidence (which the authorities seem determined to keep secret — *vide* the

June 13 Post quoting CIA's Colby on his hope to convince Senator Church not to tell all he has learned), the existence of a CIA-FBI counter-intelligence apparatus gives the lie to your paper's contention that "we shape and execute domestic policy in the open . . . on the presumption that all of us have the nation's best interest at heart." For in the last analysis it is the same set of bureaucrats which secretly decides who our international "enemies" are, which also determines those of our citizens who pose a threat to its definition of national security.

I ask: who in fact is a threat to this nation's security? Is it the struggling nations of the Third World and their friends in this country? Or is it the gangsters who have twice in 25 years led us into bloody Asian wars and then had those among us who protested, spied upon and arrested. I suspect the latter and have termed them gangsters, because their pattern of behavior suggests criminal intent.

We do not need the sort of CIA-FBI your editorial and Rockefeller's commission envision and endorse. They are the death of democratic politics and should be disposed of root and branch. If we want to discover where a major threat to peace is we have no farther to look than Langley, Va. We shall do ourselves and the world a favor by destroying it and returning the decisions about what constitutes a threat and who is an enemy to the open forum of our Congress.

John J. Rumbarger.

Washington.

Recent revelations concerning domestic spying and other invasions of privacy have led me to ask what I feel is a very basic question: What does our country represent in our own eyes? Do we value security and a "taut ship" above human decency?

Of course, security is important and vital, but security at what price? We can all agree that the gathering of intelligence is absolutely essential to the formation and conduct of foreign policy and even necessary for the insurance of "domestic tranquility" when threatened by known criminals, but the support and continuation of a terroristic secret police system to spy upon persons simply because they do not think exactly as we may think has always been one of the hallmarks of the totalitarianism the United States has steadfastly opposed with "blood, sweat and tears".

In my opinion, we could most appropriately celebrate our Bicentennial by getting rid of that monster the CIA has grown into and relying again upon what have been (until 28 years ago) the conventional intelligence gathering agencies.

So I say, "Right on, Senator Church." Let's find out what sort of activities we are putting the stamp of approval of the United States upon, be they good, as defined by ethical and legal, or bad, as defined by unethical and/or illegal.

Margaret E. Marthens.

Bethesda.