

Editor's report

Stop whipping CIA

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Some segments of the media, in league with some liberal politicians, have been enjoying such a gleeful and irresponsible field day with this nation's vital Central Intelligence Agency that there is the distinct possibility its effectiveness has been nullified for some time to come.

After a series of "investigations" that degenerated into leaks to sympathetic newsmen of information—much of it classified and all of it valuable principally to Russia's counter-intelligence group—Congress begins its new session with the task of creating some sort of congressional committee to oversee both the expenditures and the so-called "covert operations" of the CIA. The American people can only hope that the full membership will approach the assignment with a great deal more responsibility than was displayed by



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either of the investigative committees in the Senate or House.

On Thursday night, the good judgment of a majority of the members of the House select committee on Intelligence prevailed when they acceded to the wishes of the White House and the intelligence agencies by voting to withhold release of the final report of their investigation until it had been censored. It was most revealing when the committee's chairman, Rep. Otis Pike, admitted that it mattered little, because most of the information had been leaked already. He ought to know.

On the eve of an assignment in Europe, I find myself worrying about what I will say to some of my worldly and sophisticated friends there, several of whom have already expressed incredulity at our seeming folly in wishing to destroy our nation's intelligence-gathering operation. They see us as wallowing in a form of masochistic self-flagellation, delighting in every self-inflicted pain.

"IS AMERICA GOING MAD?" asks the headline on an editorial in the London Daily Telegraph. Truly, our British cousins have good reason to wonder. So have all of our cousins throughout the world, no matter where they live. Show me, if you can, one other nation whose politicians have sought

to destroy their own intelligence arm. All others regard their intelligence functions as the "Primary Weapon — for both offense and defense." Their political leaders may be challenged, but not the agency that keeps their government informed of what other nations are doing.

There have been a few CIA agents who have chosen to turn on the agency. It has happened in other intelligence operations. What is different in the United States is that some of our media — both printed and electronic — have made heroes out of Philip Agee, John Marks, Victor Marchetti and Fletcher Prouty, eagerly bestowing credence to whatever these people have to say that is derogatory to or of the CIA.

There is little doubt in my mind that the enthusiasm with which some segments of the American communications industry took up the crusade against the CIA encouraged the periodical, under the sponsorship of an organization known as the "Fifth Estate," to publicize the name of Richard Welch, the CIA station chief in Athens, who was promptly assassinated.

Now there is a sort of game among the ultra left-wing periodicals around the world, and, supplied by Agee and the "patriots" of the Fifth Estate with the names of suspected CIA agents in their cities or countries, they are printing them prominently, as if asking assassins to move in and do their job. Isn't it

surprising how silent the so-called "new investigative press" has been about this?

Throughout the world, as a result of these developments, foreign citizens who have been eager to work with the CIA because they believed they were serving the American cause and freedom, are now afraid to be identified with our agents. They rightly fear for their lives. The result: our intelligence suffers.

Our super-fine intelligence agency, the best in the world, which started out as the vital Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II under the command of Gen. "Wild Bill" Donovan has been virtually brought to its knees. I ask simply, Why? What have we gained by this? If, under the direction of some presidents, notably Kennedy and Nixon, there have been abuses and, in the opinion of some, unwholesome planning for covert deeds, wasn't it possible to cure the illness without killing the patient?

It is possible to understand over-zealousness in politicians; many of them are merely vote-seekers instead of statesmen. It is less possible to understand what has happened to the media under the guise of the "New Journalism." Suddenly the journalist is no longer the reporter; no longer does he interview the advocate and seek a contrary opinion from someone who opposes the advocate. Now the advocate has become the journalist and, as a truth-seeking newspaperman, I have the feeling that the news is being engineered to the blueprints drawn by the advocate-journalist in advance.

It makes me worried about my profession — but it makes me more worried when I think about the future of my country. I know that a free press — an absolutely free press — is one of the primary guarantors of our freedom. I am too set in my ways, too sure of my convictions, to find a way to adjust to "advocative journalism. If we keep on this way the credibility of the press will suffer. It used to be "true" because "I read it in the paper." Nowadays the next question should be, "What paper?"

After members of Congress had either willfully shot down the CIA, or tacitly permitted it to be neutralized, both the Senate and the House this past week, knocked down a plea from the White House and State Department to provide financial support to pro-Western troops in Angola. Those troops wish to fight against Cuban mercenaries who are financed by Russia and who seek to make a Soviet base in that country, which dominates our oil-tanker routes in the South Atlantic.

All of this leaves some of us bewildered. If the Russians are so well-intended, if they mean us no harm, and if they are not, indeed, competing with us on a global basis, then perhaps we should do away with the CIA entirely. Perhaps, in addition, we should inform the Angolans who do not want to be Sovietized that they had best lay down their arms, because under detente what's good for Russia is OK with the U.S.A.

Is this the message we are to get out of all the current nonsense in Washington?