

# C.I.A., Bruised by Vietnam and Watergate,

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WASHINGTON, June 6 — Bruised by the domestic politics of the Vietnam conflict and the Watergate affair, its influence in the White House broken by the practitioners of détente, the Central Intelligence Agency is undergoing a major, perhaps fundamental, transformation.

Its claws—the covert operations that once marshaled large mercenary armies in Laos and Latin America and toppled undesired governments in Iran and Guatemala—are now largely retracted.

Its weightiest organ in the bureaucracy, the Board of National Estimates, a federal court of intelligence, has been abolished.

Under its new director, William E. Colby, some of the agency's functions and priorities have been shifted, with seemingly paradoxical results.

Although President Nixon has given Mr. Colby more power and responsibility than most of his predecessors, the director has markedly less access to the White House.

## Based on Nine Interviews

While he may not face as much rivalry from the military intelligence establishment as some critics feared, Mr. Colby's agency is being challenged by the State Department's intelligence and research bureau, newly revitalized at Secretary of State Kissinger's behest.

These changes, which by the nature of the intelligence profession have taken place quietly, became known through interviews in the intelligence community.

The rules of the game require that there be no attribution of information acquired from high intelligence officials. When Mr. Colby sees newsmen — he has done so more frequently than any of his predecessors since he took over last summer — he requests that not even the terms "officials" or "sources" be used.

The mandate given Mr. Colby by the President provides him not only the power to preside over all intelligence operations, but also the power to allocate the entire intelligence budget of about \$6-billion.

Even tactical intelligence, previously an activity jealously maintained by the military services, comes under his purview.

## Changes at the Top

Impelled by apparent failures of Israeli tactical intelligence during the October

# Undergoes Quiet Changes Under Colby

war, American intelligence officials have decided to place greater stress on relaying information on the deployment of opponent forces to field commanders in West Germany and South Korea.

But the most striking changes in the Central Intelligence

days or 24 hours. But it didn't like to. We used to schedule the work three to six months in advance."

Explaining why he believes the change was necessary, even though regrettable, the official went on:

"The board couldn't have gone on. It was in a helluva rut. It thought in big strategic terms and didn't get into grubby options. It was often too general and philo-

sophical. Also its profound skepticism on Vietnam didn't help the board in this town.

"Besides, Henry Kissinger is hopelessly antibureaucracy. He wants his intelligence handed to him scribbled on the back of an envelope."

An aide of Mr. Kissinger remembers the old blue-covered national estimates as "blah—they ended up with the least common denominator."

The new estimates, carry dissenting views from within the intelligence community as an integral part of their texts. In the old system dissents were registered as footnotes.

## Key Military Man Hired

A concern voiced by Mr. Colby's critics is that the military intelligence establishment, which makes up more than four-fifths of the intelligence community, may simply overpower the agency and its independent civilian views.

The preponderance of the military, even after the Congress slashed 9,000 people from the Defense Intelligence Agency last year, does not worry Mr. Colby.

He hired Maj. Gen. Daniel Graham, a defense intelligence specialist who had greater military control over military intelligence. General Graham is now Mr. Colby's liaison man within the intelligence community.

"You've got the fox in the chicken coop," said a critic.

But a former C.I.A. official who now works for State Department intelligence commented:

"I always thought the threat of the military was terribly exaggerated. It assumes that civilians are a bunch of dummies. I never found that the civilians were willing to roll over and play dead. They were always willing to challenge."

In addition to General Graham, Mr. Colby has appointed an admiral as his national intelligence officer on conventional forces. The Board

of National Estimates usually had two or three former admirals and generals.

Mr. Colby is satisfied with his system because he feels it has ruled out institutional differences with the military and made remaining differences a matter of factual appraisals rather than opinions.

## Rarely Sees President

Although he appears to have established his authority firmly under Mr. Nixon, he hardly ever sees the President. Under John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, the Director of Central Intelligence called at the White House almost every week.

Mr. Colby is on the telephone almost daily with the President's aides and he seems to feel comfortable with this arrangement, believing that his counterparts, Mr. Kissinger and Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger, have not much more time with Mr. Nixon than he does.

In the year since he has taken charge, Mr. Colby has let it be known that he wants the agency to concentrate on what he believes are new priorities—international trade, cultural relations and the monitoring of international agreements to reduce arms and armies.

To this end the agency continues to maintain agents in American companies engaged in foreign trade and in journalism, with perhaps 500 of 6,000 agents using the cover of businessman or reporter.

Mr. Colby, who spent most of his career with the agency in covert operations, is intent on keeping that capability. Even if it is being applied only sparingly.

"It is like keeping an aircraft carrier," said a man who believes in the value of covert operations. "You have it."

But there are lunchtime debates among the agency's senior officials about the value of maintaining the planes,

the weapons and the trainers that were associated with the secret armies.

"It doesn't seem to go with Nixon's idea of constructing world peace," said one official.

## State Department's Role

"It needs to be diminished very considerably," said another. "We are not in a position nor is it worthwhile to try influencing the course of action in every other country. There are also the



gence Agency have come at the top, having been initiated by Mr. Colby himself.

He replaced the 10-man Board of National Estimates and its staff of 20 last October with a system manned by what he calls national intelligence officers.

Founded in 1950 by Walter Bedell Smith, and run originally by the Harvard historian William Langer, the board in its heyday had been an "independent corporate entity," in the description of a former member. It produced long-range estimates of the intentions and capabilities of antagonists.

"I felt the board was essential to doing honest intelligence," this retired member continued. "It was impossible for the White House to order up something that fit their views. It was impossible then, but it's possible now."

The new 11 national intelligence officers are expected to range through the entire government and beyond to put together their evaluations.

Each has a geographic region or a topical area, among them the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Japan and the Pacific, Latin America, Europe, strategic forces, central purpose forces, economics and energy.

## More Short-Term Studies

The new officers are preparing more short-term assessments and fewer long-range estimates. This is partly in response to the demands of their chief consumer, Secretary of State Kissinger.

"It's ad hoc-ism," said an agency official. "The old board could respond to a request for an estimate in five

Intelligence and Research. The bureau, under William G. Hyland, has become more active and does much analysis work for Mr. Kissinger, with results that are said to please him.

budgetary realities." Mr. Kissinger apparently has also given some thought to reducing the size of the covert operations establishment, according to one of his aides in the Bureau of