NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS 1

' F. Stone

The Threat to the Republic

It can be said-but it would be unwise to dwell on it-that the Church and Pike committee reports represent the first time in history any country's legislature has ever investigated, exposed, and shamed its inteiligence agencies and their "dirty tricks." Long before electronics, as far back as the Rome of the Cacsars, a spy-haunted society feared, as Tacitus tells us, that somehow walls might have ears. But a degenerate Senate, though constitutionally and nominally still all-powerful, lacked the will to do anything about it.

Unfortunately there is little prospect that our Senate, and our Congress, will behave any better. Between the time this is being written and the time it will be read, the Senate is expected to vote on a first timid effort at reform, an intelligence oversight committee. But its prospects are dim, and some of its provisions dubious.

The Republican White House and the Democratic Old Guard in the Senate are in a bipartisan allimice against any real reform. A similar coalition in the House-led by the Republican McCloty of Illinois and the Democrat Stratton of New York-is blocking bills to revive and clear the way for publication of the suppressed Pike report. The secret agencies are sneagly confident that they have not only weathered the storm but entrenched theinselves.

Their strength has deep roots. The great masters of property in our sociaty are unwilling to give up "Jirly tricks" in defense of their investments and privileges at home and abroad for them, the end justifies the means just as surely as for their adversaries in Moscow and Peking. Radicals, opponents of the existing order, critics who go too far, are fair game, outside the law, on both sides, it is not an accident that—as the Church committee found—the FBI has twice as many informers in radical or liberal organizations as in organized come.

¹ "Never was Rome more districted and terror-stricted, Meetings, colors of tions, the ear of friend and strenger were alike shurned; ever thire must and lifely, the very root and with were eyed with suspicion "ITI and making Tecther, 460, Modern Laborry (district)."

Tacitus Annah A 10

The main job of a political secret potice in any society is to keep in power those who have it. When the Roman Senate, after one particularly terrible scandal, tried to put some limit on informers, the Emperor Tiberius interposed his veto, saying, "Better to subvert the concritation than to remove its guardians," Though no one today speaks so frankly, that is still the answer of those who cannot raing themselves, altogether to probabit udirty tricks."

To understand the intelligence miasma, one must look at the family tree of the CIA. The CIA is only the institutionalization, though on a vast and unprecedented scale, of what we have done for more than a century and a half in Latin America and an earlier China under the rubric of defending "American lives and property."

Then we used State Department agents and the US Marines. The Marines were hill collectors for National City Bank and enforcers for the banana, oil, and sugar companies. What the CIA has done in Indochina, Iran, and Chile is no different in kind from the crass way Marines turned patriots into bandits and puppets into presidents in Central America and the Caribbean. It is only the means that have grown to keep pace with the expansion of the American empire and new forms of exploitation like the multinationals.

You cannot run an empire without secrecy. And you have to be ready to deal with turbulent natives abroad and dissenting citizens at home. The FBI is well equipped to aid the CIA in that task. Its family tree, its dominant prejudice against liberals and the left, its coziness with the right, go back to the instinctive hostility of propertied interests to whatever elements in our society seemed to threaten property.

Stigneral Smedley Butler, one of the lest and bravest men the Marine Corps over produced, got into trouble for telling the fruth about the imperialist purposes he had served from Cuba to the Philippines. See Lowell Thomas's biography of bim, Old Ginler Eye (1933) and Butler's recently republished War Bu Racket (1935) in Three Generals on War, Garland Publishing,

This is how they saw abolitionists, trade union organizers, socialists, anarchists, radicals of any kind, and indeed all "do-gooders," a favorite term of contempt with J. Edgar Hoover. The bomb squads, Red squads, anarclust appeals that appeared to make a the Hall's programmes as they mentally be not the Hall's programmes as they mentall its could therefore, American list on can be read its a continuous struggle between democracy and projectly, and in that perspective there is no doubt where the secret police stand.

Their true role is the jamssarles of property is only implicit, of course, in these corefully municured Church reports. Nor do the reports make more than a partial breach in the secrecy which shrouds the aconcles. We must assume, after all we have learned, that the committee staff itself was penetrated by the agencies. The reports themselves—as internal evidence will reveal to a careful reading-were the product of a continuous wrangle among the staff, the committee and the agencies. The agencies controlled what went out of their files and what went into the reports. The effort to censor as much as possible and the effort to tell is much as possible have left their marks. The final product must be read with extreme care. Every formulation, almost every word, must be evaluated not only for what it does say but for what it does not say. The latter is sometimes the more revealing.

The committee had power of subpoena, on paper, but there are indications throughout the report that the agencies withheld much in many areas which the committee wanted to explore. "The Central Intelligence Agency," the committee says in the introduction to Volume 1 tp. 7), "and other agencies of the executive branch have limited the Committee's access to the full record.... In some highly important areas... the Committee has been refused access to files or documents."

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE n assessing the feasibility of conssional oversight, one must not get this initial and successful defiice of the power given Congress by the Constitution to oversee and control very department of government. This muted note indicates that the Church committee knuckled under. The precedent bodes ill for congressional oversight. If this was the best the Church committee could do, after the multitudinous revelations of Watereate, what can one expect of a permanent committee when press and public opinion are once again somnotent?

This withholding of whatever the rencies did not wish to disclose was oly the beginning of the struggle At · outset of its inquiry the committee its neck into a noose by agreeing a meeting with President Ford" it would not disclose any classiinformation given it without conthing the agencies and "carefully essider(ing) the Executive's reasons a maintaining secrecy." The commit-· says that it retained final decision. that it was inhibited because attempts ; go against agency wishes would risk . White House blast and a refusal of cooperation. So 'virtually all difficulties were resolved" and "the only significant exception" was the release of the Assassination Report fast November even though the executive wanch thought this "would harm naand security." Since even Ford had , go on record against assassination. least of other nations' leaders and at it in pracetime, the White House ; the agencies had to swallow dei on that one.

But down to and well past the winal deadline for the report, it is ear that the committee had to suffer astant revision and censorship. The mmittee notes that three chapters, . "Cover," "Espionage," and "Budgry Oversight," were omitted altoher on the insistence of the agenes, along with two sections of the apter on "Covert Action of the iA" and one section of the chapter Department of State," Elsewhere 'particular passages" rewritten on the insistence of the intelligence agencies were denoted by "italics" and a footnote explaining them.

An example is Chapter X on CIA affuence in academic institutions, the edia, and religious organizations, are are several italicized references "university officials and professors" of "provide leads and make introduc-

tions for intelligence purposes." One suspects that originally the phrasing plainly said they helped the CIA recruit on campus. The report as published did not speculate on the fact that the relation between university officials and professors on the one hand and students on the other is hardly one of equality, and the door is thus opened to favoritism or discrimination, depending on the student's reaction to the indecent proposal.

The most dramatic evidence of lastminute struggle is the blank white and the notation "[deleted]" which cover all but a few lines on page 332 of Book 1. This was the concluding portion of that section on the lotal size of the aggregate intelligence budget for fiscal year 1976, which begins at page 330 with the sentence, "The Committee's analysis indicated that [deleted] billion constituted the direct costs to the United States for its national intelligence program for FY 1976." A footnote said it was "deleted pending further Committee consideration," and the very morning the report was given to the press the committee voted to let the full Senate decide on whether to disclose the full figure.

The nonsense that publication of that figure would somehow reveal secrets to the enemy prevailed in committee and will probably prevail on the Senate floor, although former CIA director James Schlesinger testified

"that our enemies already know in the first place and it's broadly published." Elsewhere (p. 470) the report says that direct and indirect intelligence costs are roughly 3 parcent of the total budget. The total is now over \$400 billion. That would bring the total costs, direct and indirect, secret and budgeted, of all intelligence to about twelve billion dollars. But committee sources, in this deplorable and labyrinthine comedy, say that this figure is too high and that their own way of reporting was misleading. So now we must wait for the promised Senate vote on whether to disclose the real figure or leave it hidden. That vote will be a neuralgie point in American constitutional history.

The battle over the figure still to be fought on the Senate floor involves: the most fundamental constitutional considerations. Congress has two weapons in dealing with the intelligence agencies. One is the power of disclo-

sure. The other is the power of the purse. A vote to blank out the total will be a vote to surrender both powers to the agencies. The fight against absolutism, the fight for parliamentary supremacy, began with the power of the purse. In the eyes of the Framers nothing was more important in the Constitution than Article L. Section 9. Clause 7, which embodies that power. It says "no Money shall be drawn from the Treasury" except in pursuance of appropriations made by law and that "a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time." The CIA, unlike the FBI, has from its beginning completely evaded that clause. Will the Senate take the final step in constitutional emasculation by voting to keep secret even the aggregate total of the cost of all intelligence agencies?

The baneful influence does not end with the suppression of facts and figures. The reports read as if written not only with the agencies peering over the shoulders of the writers but actually participating in the phrasing. There are some passages which sound as if they were written or rewritten at Langley or in the FBI headquarters. There is throughout a tendency to opaque, sotto voce, bureaucratic phraseology of a kind at which the White House and the State Department have always been adept. The prose style-to single out one of the recent masters in this genre-is sometimes downright Nixonian. There are many instances of what could legitimately be called brain-washing-the bland, almost subliminal assertion as eternal verities of dubious propositions, propositions the investigators were supposed to challenge and test, not to accept without exemination as major premiscs. A grime example is the statement at the very beginning of the CIA report that "a national intelligence system is a permanent and necessary part of our government. The system's value to the country has been proven."

Humanity will never get rid of the intelligence miasma until that overblown nonsense is challenged. The greatest intelligence networks of our time failed to prevent the most disastrous surprise attacks their regimes suffered. Pearl Harbor, the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, the place and timing on the D-day invasion of Hitler's Fortness Europe were historic disasters. The American, the Soviet, and the

in programs of but noted when he's was it a rughtide oal more ethout priced of a didentification under the Coars and the bird Empire of Napoleon. Yet they suffered unprecedented loss through effective suprise in those three tremendous area ks. One put the Nazi armies abnost at the pates of Moscow before effective defense could be organized. the a only coppled our naval and gu forces to the Pacific from Hawale to the Polleyings the third was the beginning of the and for Hitlerism, All three is norm had explicit and correct warmags, but in all three cases the warning, were drowned in the sheer volume of hillowing reports and by the tailure of the center to assess all this information correctly. "Intelligence" is not the some as intelligence.

Intelligence networks have rudnly been proven effective in intimidating their own peoples. But no regime has yet been saved from disastrons error by "intelligence." The American Republic got along quite well internally without a Federal Bureau of Investigation until 1908 and without a "dirty tricks" agency abroad until 1947. Since then, as the Church report says, the US "has devoted enormous resources" to its intelligence network. But never has the United States bean more poorly advised and suffered more shanieful pratfalls than in that period The postwar successes of Western capi talism have been due to the vitatity of enterprise, the superior advantages of an open society, and the moral banksuptcy of the Soviet regime. And that last was more than anything else the product of Russia's reliance on secrecy and the secret police. The dead-end course of Stalinism is the same course on which we are being impelled in the name of "national security."

If the US is hated by the best youth in Iran, in South Kores, in Chile, in the Dominican Republic, wherever the writ of our secret agencies and its puppet regimes has run, the Soviet Union is hated in Kiev, in Warsaw, in Prague, and in Bucharest for the very same reasons. The agencies on both sides have succeeded to the extent that brutality and repression can succeed, but the price will be paid in future explosions on both sides.

The secret apendies for he the task of really intelligent assessment of human espiration and social forces for several reasons. One is that they attract a large proportion of screwbilling crack pots, paragoids. A second is that the nature of the profession makes parts nois its occur ational disease. The thereis that rubog classes and bureaucracies generally prefer the paragoid explanation. If trouble, if protest against the Vietnam war, if radical agastion for social justice, if racial rising against discrimination are just the product of Satanic "subversives" plotting unrest, then there is no need to amend policies, to give up ruling class phvi leges. All one need do is purge and miprison the "conspirators". The spice hand their masters comfortably to realities. It wasn't for lack of spies that the Czars fell.

The CiA could foment the mob that fulled Mossadeq in Iran, It could help to bring about the killing of Lumanha in the Congo and Allende in Chile, but there is no evidence that it can successfully Canute the tides of change in our time. Each side in the cold war struggle now beginning again has profited by the excesses and inhumanities of the other. Read Sakharov's great memoranda and ask yourself whether the stultification and rigidification that secrecy has imposed on Soviet science, industry, and society recommend a similar experiment on our side.

Intelligence agencies thrive by telling the boss he's doing fine. When reports signal the truth, they are more than often ignored. There were, we now know, intelligence reports which questioned the dominant delusions about the Vietnam war, which warned that the Bay of Pigs invasion would not trigger a popular uprising in Cuba, and which advised two years before Allende's election that the days of our copper monopoly in Chile were numbered no matter who won the coming election. But they were ignored and men who ventured such reports risked the query, "Who let that pinko in?"

You cannot - as even such great liberal papers as The New York Times and

The Washington Post in their que of editorials on the CIA while-square the circle. You cannot stake lawlesness lawful. You cannot bring "diray tricks" within a constitution d system. In this bicentennial your we are le gut ting the basic lessons of the Revolution and the basic advantages and virtues of an open society. It cannot be open without ijik, but the risks of free discussion over and over again have proven superior to the risk, or repression. Some intelligence activity is inescapable for military and law enforcement purposes, but how much? The evidence suggests that we are drawning in intelligence, that we need not more but less "collection," not more spying but more analysis and thought. And thought requires debate. And you connot have debute so long as ideas and expressions are watched and "collected." There is no room in on open society for a thought police, and that is what the FBI and the CIA, with occasional assists from the military, have become. -

The picture which emerges from the Church reports, muted and mutilated as they are, must be made explicit. The CfA has become a huge conglomerate, with its secret tenticles in almost every section of American life, prostituting the universities, books, the press, and teligious institutions; it runs a network of businesses at home and abroad, some wholly fictitious, some real enough to be insurance companies and aviation lines. The magnitude is veiled but at one point the report says that these ostensibly private businesses gross \$1.6 billion a

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The whole Angola business was financed in this way. The CIA has become a big business, a conglomerate, operating behind various "legitimate" fronts as a conspiracy against society, with its "hit men" and "enforcers" on the Mafia model. It can provide—and has provided—presidents with the means to operate outside the constitutional system, even to the point of waging secret war. Here hies the lesson of Watergate, already half forgotten.

It has been said over and over again that the bribery, the corruption of elections, the assassinations, and the other "dirty tricks" the CIA has been practicing abroad must inevitably spread to the domestic front. But few of us fully realized until the Church report on the FBI the extent to which J. Edgar Hoover had been practicing "dirty tricks" at home. The most shameful, of course, was the long harassment of Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement. It is depressing that despite all we now know Attorney General Levi has rejected recommendations from within the Justice Department for an independent citizens' investigation of King's assessination and insists on turning it back for another self-inquiry by the FBI. This is the only field of law enforcement in which it is left to the suspect to investigate himself.

And it is alarming that even the Church committee recommendations would still allow the FBI to engage in "preventive intelligence," the catchword which has allowed the worst abuses and invasions of privacy and basic rights in the past. We applied Senator Philip A. Hart for pointing out in a separate opinion appended to the Church report on the FBI that the recommendations in this respect would for the first time give "statutory authorization" for the very abuses the committee has exposed.

The intelligence agencies have become a cancer that threatens the Republic. The authority of the FBI should be restricted to crimes. Terrorism is a crime, even though politically motivated, and can be handled like any other crime. This and all other kinds of crime would be better handled if the FBI did not waste so substantial a portion of its resources on the whole spectrum of what it calls "do-gooders," all of them treated prima facie as suspect. And it should be made a statutory offense for the FBI to practice "duty tricks," to act as an agency for secretly defaming citizens it dislikes and disrupting their lives by just that kind of "disinformation" in which the CIA has specialized abroad and can also resort to at home.

I believe the Church CIA report does not tell the full truth about the CIA's origins. "Dirty tricks" were justifiable for the OSS, its predecessor, in wartime; the CIA took over the same practices in peace. Its conditioning, its personnel, and a substantial part of its activities still link it indissolubly to "dirty tricks." I believe the wise course would be to outlaw "dirty tricks" and abolish the CIA altogether and let its legitimate intelligence functions be taken over by other agencies. Otherwise Big Brother is here to stay.

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