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The CIA & The Cult of Secrecy

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Auburn, New York

**M. A., The College of William and Mary, May 2003
A. B., Dartmouth College, June 1999**

**A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

Lyon G. Tyler Department of History

**The College of William and Mary
May 2008**

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APPROVAL PAGE

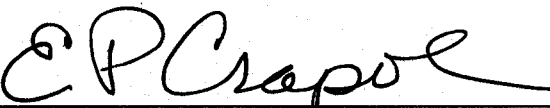
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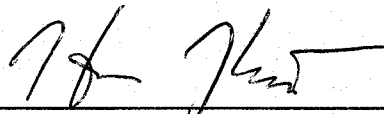


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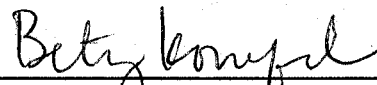
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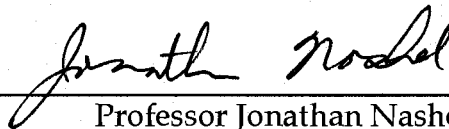
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ABSTRACT PAGE

This dissertation re-conceptualizes the scandals that engulfed the intelligence community in the mid-1970s. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) confronted an unprecedented crisis during these years: the Pike hearings in the House of Representatives, the Church Committee in the Senate, and an executive branch commission led by then Vice President Nelson Rockefeller. Historians and political scientists have studied these events before, but I present a nuanced interpretation of the intelligence investigations by placing them in a broader political and cultural context. To fully understand the impact of the so-called "Year of Intelligence," I argue that scholars need to focus on what was happening outside of Congress. The CIA encountered a backlash from both ends of the political spectrum. I provide the first history of Counter-Spy, a left wing magazine founded in 1973 that called for the abolition of covert action. The magazine's editors directly challenged the "culture of secrecy" at the CIA by publishing the names of Agency operatives. At the same time, conservatives embarked on a very different confrontation with the Agency. Like Counter-Spy, they charged that the CIA was keeping secrets from the American people, but their concern was with Agency analysis of the Soviet Union, not covert action. I also examine Hollywood portrayals of the CIA in this tumultuous era; rather than simply responding to the Congressional investigations and the Rockefeller Commission, filmmakers actually anticipated the widespread concerns about the complex relationship between espionage and democracy. The events of the mid-1970s badly tarnished the CIA's image. In response to this rapid decline in popular support, the Agency developed an aggressive public relations campaign designed to restore confidence in government secrecy and covert operations. This dissertation contains the first systematic history of CIA public relations. The public relations staff has consistently portrayed the CIA as the most open intelligence agency in the world, heroically protecting national security while accepting the necessity of Congressional oversight. But despite these public statements, Agency officials worked to revitalize the "culture of secrecy." They have dramatically restricted the ability of former employees to write critically about CIA activities; they have successfully lobbied Congress for exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); and they have repeatedly broken promises to de-classify historical records. Agency officials have been obsessed with protecting their image, and this obsession has frequently undermined historical research. Robert M. Gates launched an openness initiative in February 1992, but the culture at the Agency was not fundamentally changed. In fact, George Tenet shut down the voluntary de-classification program at the CIA in 1998. A key conclusion of this study is that the "culture of secrecy" at the Agency remains firmly entrenched. Since the CIA cannot be reformed from within, I argue that outside intervention is required.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	2
Chapter I. Watching Big Brother: <i>Counter-Spy</i> , Norman Mailer, and the Fifth Estate, 1973-1976	16
Chapter II. The Hunt For Red October: Team B Confronts The CIA	40
Chapter III. The CIA On The Silver Screen, 1973-1975	71
Chapter IV. 'Telling The Intelligence Story': William Colby, the ARIO, and the Selling of the CIA	98
Chapter V. Admiral Stansfield Turner, Herbert Hetu, and The Legend of CIA Openness, 1977-1981	132
Chapter VI. The Culture of Secrecy Unleashed, 1981-1987	168
Chapter VII. The Rise & Fall of the New Era of Openness at the CIA	207
Conclusion	247
Bibliography	259
Vita	277

For My Mom And Dad

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When I began the graduate program at William and Mary in August 2001, I never imagined that I would ultimately write a dissertation on the history of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). I planned on studying nineteenth century social history, but just a few weeks into the master's program, the attacks of September 11 left me with difficult questions about American foreign policy that I was unable to answer. It was around this time that I first met Professor Ed Crapol. I told him during office hours one afternoon that I was interested in examining American encounters with terrorism in the 1980s. He expressed interest in assisting with the thesis, and he kindly agreed to stay on as my dissertation advisor after his retirement in 2004. It is hard for me to imagine having written either my master's thesis or dissertation without his guidance and support. I want to thank Professor Crapol for all the assistance that he has provided in the past six years, and I am forever grateful to him for exposing me to the "Wisconsin School" of diplomatic history.

I also want to express my gratitude to the other three members of my dissertation committee. Professor Hiroshi Kitamura arrived at William and Mary shortly after I completed my comprehensive exams, and his optimism about my research motivated me to move forward—even when I was unsure where I was heading. His detailed comments on my dissertation in the fall of 2007 were extremely helpful. Professor Betsy Konefal's feedback helped me to think more carefully about the complexity of government secrecy, while Professor Jonathan Nashel of Indiana University, South Bend offered excellent advice on how to revise the dissertation for publication.

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since I started my dissertation research. I specifically want to commend Interlibrary Loan for tracking down *Counter-Spy* magazine. I benefited as well from the assistance of staff members at both the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland and the Library of Congress. John E. Taylor, who has been at the National Archives since 1945, gave me a terrific introduction to the CIA records at College Park when I first visited in June 2005.

Of all the scholars that I have cited in the footnotes of my dissertation, there are seven that I should mention at the outset even though I have met only one in person. Kathryn Olmsted's *Challenging The Secret Government* and Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones's *The CIA and American Democracy* were critical resources at every stage of the project. Peter Kornbluh's *The Pinochet File* is a masterful work of history, and it should be read by every student of American foreign relations. I only hope that my study expands on Angus Mackenzie's *Secrets: The CIA's War At Home*. Thomas Powers brilliantly explored the clandestine mindset in *The Man Who Kept The Secrets*, a study that had an immense impact on how I understand the "culture of secrecy" at the CIA. The second chapter on the Team B experiment would have been impossible without the earlier studies of John Prados and Anne Cahn. I have cited their articles and books numerous times in the footnotes, but I wanted to thank them again here. Prados also graciously agreed to serve as the chair and commentator on a conference panel that I organized in 2005.

J. Ransom Clark has compiled an impressive online bibliography of CIA history at http://intellit.muskingum.edu/cia_folder/ciatoc.html, which helped me tremendously. His bibliography is well organized and painstakingly annotated.

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Sadly, I must include what Stephen Aron has called an "anti-acknowledgment." To the person or persons who stole my laptop out of a locked office at Swem Library in October 2005, I have a simple message: @\$#& you!!

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, and I forgive them for dragging me to Colonial Williamsburg as a kid. I don't know how that I can ever repay them for all that they have done for me in the last thirty years.

THE CIA & THE CULT OF SECRECY

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INTRODUCTION

Few authors have better understood the “culture of secrecy” at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) than Victor Marchetti. In 1966, eleven years after joining the CIA as an analyst, Marchetti became the assistant to the deputy director, and he worked for the next three years on the elite seventh floor of headquarters in Langley, Virginia. There he learned about many of the CIA’s most guarded secrets: covert operations, budget and personnel statistics, front companies (known internally as “proprietary organizations”), and propaganda tactics, among others. He resigned from the Agency in 1969 disillusioned with the Vietnam War, the Agency’s old-boy bureaucracy, and the reckless use of covert action in the Third World.

Much to the dismay of his former colleagues, Marchetti soon articulated these grievances in *The Rope-Dancer*, a spy novel about the imaginary National Intelligence Agency (NIA). The main character, Paul J. Franklin, closely resembles Marchetti. Franklin is the special assistant to General Smithy, the NIA’s Deputy Director, and he no longer takes pride in working for the intelligence community. “I’m fed up with being a careerist in an organization that’s too big for its own good and out of step with the times,” he complains to his wife.¹ He later tells General Smithy that the “Agency has turned into a decrepit bureaucracy, dominated by incompetent old fools and self-seeking sycophantic phonies—all being manipulated by the

¹ Victor Marchetti, *The Rope-Dancer* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1971), 35; Henry Allen, “Ex CIA-Man’s Ultimate Fantasy: Selling U. S. Secrets,” *Washington Post*, 6 November 1971, C1; Henry Allen, “Quitting the CIA and Living to Tell About It, More Or Less,” *Washington Post*, 8 October 1972.

Director for his own gain.”² Franklin is disgusted with the Machiavellian director of the NIA, Kenneth Lewis, who refuses to deliver unwelcome news to the president and claims that the State Department does not have the right to know about an impending covert operation in South America.³ He begins selling NIA secrets to the Communists, but in the process, he discovers that Director Lewis is also working for the Soviet Union. Franklin regrets his betrayal of the United States and ultimately agrees to help the chief of counterintelligence, Frank Wellington, in his attempt to thwart Lewis’s sinister activities.⁴

When *The Rope-Dancer* was published in the fall of 1971, CIA officials easily grasped the parallels between the fictional NIA and their own institution. Richard Helms, the CIA director between 1966 and 1973, had clearly inspired Kenneth Lewis, while Wellington had been patterned after James Jesus Angleton, the legendary head of counterintelligence. Like Lewis, Helms was a talented Washington insider who understood how to protect his bureaucratic turf. Helms did not take kindly to the novel, and he ordered the Office of Security at Langley to launch a surveillance operation against Marchetti codenamed BUTANE. This secret operation began on March 23, 1972 and continued for about a month.⁵ In addition to monitoring Marchetti’s movements, the CIA used an informant in New York City to obtain a copy of

² Marchetti, 280.

³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 98, 291-296.

⁵ “Family Jewels” Report [PDF file], 27. After the report was de-classified in June 2007, the National Security Archive posted it on their website. See <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB222/index.htm> (accessed July 9, 2007).

a book proposal that had been mailed to six publishing firms.⁶ Even though Marchetti had not written the book yet, Helms claimed that it “[would] cause grave and irreparable harm to the national defense interest of the United States”⁷ Judge Albert V. Bryan, Jr. agreed and issued a life-long injunction against Marchetti in May that required him to obtain the CIA’s permission before publishing anything in the future. This injunction ultimately authorized the Agency to censor all material that was “classified.”⁸

Marchetti soon joined forces with John D. Marks, a former State Department official, to write the manuscript that became *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*. After submitting a draft to the CIA in August 1973, they discovered that Agency officials defined “classified” rather broadly. According to Marks’s account, the CIA “said that the book could only be published if we deleted 339 items, [an estimated] 15 to 20 percent of the book.”⁹ Marks, Marchetti, and the ACLU protested the number of deletions, and within five months, the CIA had reduced the list of deleted items to 168.¹⁰ The authors were now allowed to re-insert information that had obviously never presented a threat to national security; they could, for instance, tell readers that Helms had incorrectly pronounced the name of an African country during a meeting, and they also received permission to include

⁶ John Marks, “On Being Censored,” *Foreign Policy* 15 (Summer 1974): 96; Taylor Branch, “The Censors of Bumbledom,” *Harper’s*, January 1974, 56-63; Victor S. Navasky, “In Cold Print: Marchetti et Al.,” *New York Times Book Review*, 17 February 1974, 2-3; Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept The Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 282-283.

⁷ Helms quoted in Marks, 96-97.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 99; David E. Rosenbaum, “Judge Bars Book By Ex-C. I. A. Agent: Temporary Order Is Granted to Justice Department,” *New York Times*, 19 April 1972, 9.

⁹ Marks, 100.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

budget information that had been published in *The Congressional Record*.¹¹ They decided to sue the CIA over the deletions that remained in effect, and in early 1974, Judge Bryan granted them the right to print all but 27 of the items.¹² When the CIA appealed the case, however, Marks and Marchetti published their book in June with the 168 deletions in order to avoid further delays. They left spaces in the text to show readers where the Agency had censored material.¹³

In their legal battle with Marchetti, CIA officials were following a precedent that had been established in the 1960s with *The Invisible Government*. This groundbreaking CIA expose, written by journalists David Wise and Thomas Ross in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs invasion, threatened the mystique of the intelligence community, and as a result, the Agency unsuccessfully attempted to prevent Random House from publishing the book.¹⁴ In 1972, just months after Judge Bryan issued an injunction against Marchetti, CIA management once again attempted to interfere with a critical book when they convinced Harper & Row to send them a copy of Alfred W. McCoy's *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia* prior to its publication. Concerned with the accusations leveled by McCoy about the CIA's knowledge of illegal drug trafficking, Agency executives lobbied Harper & Row to re-consider sections of the manuscript, but the editors

¹¹ Ibid., 101-102; Eric Pace, "Cuts That C. I. A. Sought in Book Touch on Official Slips," *New York Times*, 15 April 1974, 24.

¹² Marks, 106.

¹³ Ibid., 107.

¹⁴ Evan Thomas, *The Very Best Men: Four Who Dared* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 319; David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, *The Invisible Government* (New York: Random House, 1964; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1974), viii.

refused.¹⁵ Since McCoy, then a Ph.D. candidate at Yale University, had never worked for the CIA, the Agency could not legally censor his writings.

The CIA's public image had changed significantly in the decade separating the publication of *The Invisible Government* (1964) and *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* (1974). *Ramparts* magazine had printed multiple exposes of the Agency in the mid-1960s that eventually prompted a short-lived inquiry within the executive branch in 1967.¹⁶ In retaliation for the articles, the Agency collected information on the citizens involved in *Ramparts*, and President Lyndon Johnson subsequently ordered Richard Helms to clandestinely monitor opponents of the Vietnam War.¹⁷ This domestic covert operation, appropriately codenamed MHCHAOS, accelerated during the Nixon administration. Then, after the botched Watergate burglary in 1972, Americans learned that several of President Richard Nixon's "plumbers" had connections to the CIA. It later became clear that the break-in had been authorized by the White House, not the CIA, but revelations about the Agency's initial willingness to cooperate with E. Howard Hunt, the retired CIA man who directed the operation, exacerbated the public's disillusionment with the intelligence community that had set-in

¹⁵ Seymour M. Hersh, "C. I. A. Aides Assail Asia Drug Charge," *New York Times*, 22 July 1972, 1; Richard R. Lingeman, "The C. I. A. As Book Reviewer," *New York Times Book Review*, 3 September 1972, 23.

¹⁶ Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy*, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 153-164. The *Ramparts* article that directly contributed to the inquiry revealed that the CIA had been funding the National Student Association (NSA). Nicholas Katzenbach, Undersecretary of State at the time of the scandal, chaired the commission, and according to Jeffreys-Jones, "[t]he salient feature of the Katzenbach reform was its cosmetic, stopgap character." *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁷ Angus Mackenzie, *Secrets: The CIA's War at Home* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 15-25.

during Vietnam. According to Thomas Powers, "Watergate did what the Bay of Pigs had not: it undermined the consensus of trust in Washington which was a truer source of the Agency's strength than its legal charter, and it gave outsiders their first good look at CIA files and tables of organization Watergate, in short, made the CIA fair game."¹⁸

It was around this time that former CIA officers began to speak out. Patrick J. McGarvey's *C. I. A.: The Myth and the Madness* was published in 1972, and it attempted to provide a more realistic depiction of the intelligence establishment. "In contrast to the Hollywood image of rugged individualism," McGarvey observed, "today's intelligence scene is dominated by the committee, the mainstay for intelligence decision making—belittling initiative, rewarding compromise, and contributing to the emergence of corporate yes-men."¹⁹ In the final chapter, he argued that intelligence reform was a necessity, calling the Agency "a tired old whore that no one has the heart to take in off the street."²⁰

As McGarvey had done in *The Myth and the Madness*, Marks and Marchetti focused on the failures of the CIA. *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, however, received far more attention. The CIA's aggressive campaign against them provided the authors free publicity, but an equally important factor contributing to the book's success was that it became enmeshed in a larger series of events leading to three major investigations of the intelligence community in 1975 and 1976—what historians refer to as the

¹⁸ Powers, 298.

¹⁹ Patrick J. McGarvey, *C. I. A.: The Myth and the Madness* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972; reprint, New York: Penguin Books, 1973), 28.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 221.

"Year of Intelligence." Marks and Marchetti disclosed aspects of CIA covert intervention in Chile prior to Salvador Allende's inauguration as the president of that South American country in 1970. The discussion of Chile, which appeared at the beginning of the second chapter, had been heavily censored during the CIA's review process. For instance, the authors were forbidden to include Henry Kissinger's now infamous comment at a meeting a few months before the Chilean election: "I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go Communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people."²¹ The CIA also prevented Marks and Marchetti from sharing information on what the Agency had done after Allende was democratically elected in September 1970. "Attempts were made to undercut Allende through continued propaganda, by encouraging a military coup d'etat, and by trying to enlist the support of private U. S. firms, namely ITT, in a scheme to sabotage Chile's economy," they explained.²² Although this passage was withheld from the first edition of the book, journalist Seymour Hersh began to put the pieces of the puzzle together, and in early September 1974, he wrote a front page story for the *New York Times* that detailed the CIA's destabilization operation against President Allende.²³ A few weeks after Hersh's story a photograph of then CIA director William Colby appeared on

²¹ Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974; reprint, New York: Dell Publishing, 1980), 12.

²² *Ibid.*, 16.

²³ Seymour M. Hersh, "C. I. A. Chief Tells House Of \$8-Million Campaign Against Allende in '70-73," *New York Times*, 8 September 1974, 1; Seymour M. Hersh, "Censored Matter in Book About C. I. A. Said to Have Related Chile Activities," 11 September 1974, 14.

the cover of *Time* with a provocative question emblazoned over his horn-rimmed glasses: "The CIA: Has It Gone Too Far?"²⁴

The revelations about the intervention in Chile served as the prologue to the most famous news story ever printed on the CIA. On December 22, 1974, Hersh revealed the existence of Operation MHCHAOS in another *New York Times* front-page scoop, setting the stage for the "Year of Intelligence."²⁵ President Gerald Ford initially hoped to head off a Congressional investigation by appointing Vice President Nelson Rockefeller to launch an inquiry into the allegations of domestic wrongdoing. The Rockefeller Commission issued a report in the summer of 1975, but it did not prevent both houses of Congress from creating separate investigative committees. Senator Frank Church (Democrat-Idaho) held hearings in the fall of 1975, and his committee published several lengthy reports in April 1976. The investigation in the House of Representatives, which was led by Congressman Otis Pike (Democrat-New York), received less cooperation from the Ford administration than the Church Committee. The Pike Report was leaked to *The Village Voice* in February 1976.²⁶

Much has been written about the Rockefeller Commission and the two Congressional investigations, and historians have debated the impact that

²⁴ The title of the actual story on the CIA answered the question posed on the front cover. See "The CIA: Time to Come In from the Cold," *Time*, 30 September 1974, 16-24.

²⁵ Cynthia M. Nolan, "Seymour Hersh's Impact on the CIA," *The International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 12, no. 1 (1999): 18-34.

²⁶ Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA and FBI* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 161-162; for a succinct overview of the Pike Committee, see Gerald K. Haines, "The Pike Committee Investigations and the CIA," *Studies In Intelligence* (Winter 1998-1999): 81-92.

they had on the intelligence establishment.²⁷ In *Challenging The Secret Government*, Kathryn Olmsted argues that the CIA and the other members of the intelligence community “clearly emerged the winners of their long battle with the investigators.”²⁸ Olmsted points out that scholars have exaggerated the achievements of the Congressional hearings. Although the inquiries directly contributed to the establishment of permanent oversight committees in both the House and Senate, the CIA continued to embark on covert operations in countries such as Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua. From the perspective of historian Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, “[a]ttacks of the ‘rogue elephant’ type [from Senator Church] were painful for a while but, in the process of being debunked, they actually helped the Agency. The CIA emerged from its trial with a refurbished reputation.”²⁹ Jeffreys-Jones, however, never precisely outlines how the CIA’s image was rehabilitated so quickly. This study agrees with Olmsted’s conclusion that the CIA survived the “Year of Intelligence” essentially unscathed, but it disagrees with the argument that the investigations “refurbished” the Agency’s standing. In reality, the events that unfolded in the mid-1970s badly damaged the CIA’s mystique, which had been assiduously cultivated since the Agency’s inception in 1947.

²⁷ Loch K. Johnson, *A Season of Inquiry: The Senate Intelligence Investigation* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985); Frank J. Smist, Jr., *Congress Oversees the United States Intelligence Community, 1947-1994*, 2nd ed. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994); for a detailed examination of William Colby’s role in the investigations, see John Prados, *Lost Crusader: The Secret Wars of CIA Director William Colby* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 297-330.

²⁸ Olmsted, 169.

²⁹ Jeffreys-Jones, 214-215.

With the passage of time, as Jeffrey-Jones suggests, the CIA's image did improve, but this development should be attributed at least in part to the public relations strategy of the CIA. Critics of the Agency in the 1970s directly challenged the "culture of secrecy" at Langley, and more than anything else, CIA higher-ups sought to protect that culture at all costs. In *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, Marks and Marchetti specifically warned that "secrecy and deception in intelligence operations are as much to keep the Congress and the public from learning what their government is doing as to shield these activities from the opposition."³⁰ As the Agency withheld information from Congress and the American public, they observed, it simultaneously promoted a clandestine mystique "designed to have us admire it as some sort of mysterious, often magical profession capable of accomplishing terribly difficult, if not miraculous, deeds."³¹ Marks and Marchetti recognized that public relations and government secrecy were simply two sides of the same coin, but unfortunately, they failed to elaborate on this crucial insight.

In 1989, Marchetti delivered a paper at a conference that re-visited several of the themes that he had raised fifteen years earlier. But rather than focusing on the inner-workings of the CIA, he chose to examine the ways in which the Agency aggressively guarded its own history. These PR schemes presented a unique challenge to scholars interested in studying the Agency: "By suppressing historical fact, and by manufacturing historical fiction, the CIA, with its obsessive secrecy and its vast resources, has posed a particular

³⁰ Marchetti and Marks, 6.

³¹ Ibid.

threat to the right of Americans to be informed for the present and future by an objective knowledge of the past. As long as the CIA continues to manipulate history, historians of its activities must be Revisionist if we are to know the truth about the agency's activities, past and present."³² My study, which traces the history of CIA public relations from the early 1970s through December 2007, confirms Marchetti's accusations. In fact, I have found it constructive to embrace a research methodology that analyzes *both* CIA secrecy and CIA public relations, since they have been inseparable from each other. The study opens with a nuanced discussion of the "Year of Intelligence" that illustrates the multi-faceted threat to the "culture of secrecy" at Langley. In addition to confronting the Congressional committees, I reveal that the CIA had to deal with criticism on the far Left as well as the far Right. Chapter 1 provides the first detailed history of *Counter-Spy*, a left wing magazine founded in 1973 that called for the abolition of covert action. The magazine's editors directly challenged the "culture of secrecy" by publishing the names of CIA operatives. Chapter 2 shows how conservatives embarked on a very different confrontation with the Agency. Like *Counter-Spy*, they charged that the Agency was keeping secrets from the American people, but their concern was with Agency analysis of the Soviet Union rather than covert action. In many ways, Hollywood anticipated the pervasive backlash against the CIA. Chapter 3 analyzes several espionage movies released between 1973 and 1975.

³² Victor Marchetti, "Propaganda and Disinformation: How the CIA Manufactures History," *Journal of Historical Review* 9 (Fall 1989): 319.

The dissertation's second section, Chapters 4-7, outlines how the CIA has used public relations to fight back against its critics since the 1970s. Admiral Stansfield Turner, the CIA director under President Carter, established a modern Office of Public Affairs at Langley in 1977. There has been tremendous continuity in CIA public relations since then. First, and most importantly, the PR staff has attempted to project an image of openness and accountability. Second, they have perpetuated the CIA's mystique, portraying the Agency as the heroic guardian of national security. "Our failures are known, our successes are not" has been a recurring mantra of this initiative. Third, PR officials have done their best to put a positive spin on secrecy. Turner's director of public affairs went so far as to suggest that there was "[m]ore openness with greater secrecy."³³

The history of PR at the CIA may appear fairly innocuous at first glance, but this history must be considered in conjunction with the Agency's successful efforts to withhold documents from historians and the media. While Admiral Turner described the CIA as the most open intelligence agency in the world, he was trying to undercut the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the ability of former employees to publish memoirs. Turner's successor, William Casey, continued the fight against the FOIA and secured passage of the CIA Information Act in 1984. He also employed PR in a clandestine domestic campaign to win public support for covert action in Central America. In the years following the end of the Cold War, the actions

³³ "ABC GOOD MORNING AMERICA 19 SEPTEMBER 1977," Briefing book prepared by Public Affairs Office for Admiral Turner, Document No. CK3100202484-CK3100202532, Declassified Documents Reference System [DDRS] (Declassified, 11 April 1985), Tab E, 2.

of CIA directors have repeatedly contradicted their public rhetoric. In February 1992, then CIA Director Robert M. Gates boldly promised a new era of openness, but he failed to deliver. While claiming in 1998 that the Agency did not have enough funds in the budget to continue the voluntary declassification program, George Tenet, the CIA chief from 1997 to 2004, had no trouble acquiring the money to sponsor a covert program to “re-classify” CIA documents at the National Archives.

The poisonous relationship between PR and secrecy is not unique to the CIA. In *The Presidency and Individual Liberties*, published in 1961, Richard Longaker recognized the widespread abuse of the classification system: “Exploiting the legitimate claims of secrecy, the executive branch habitually overclassifies documents, absurdly segments scientific research, and maintains convenient shields to protect administrators from the curiosity of the public and the press.”³⁴ Unless something was done to challenge the excessive secrecy, he warned, “the public will be forced to subsist on the sugar-water of the public relations man, and important aspects of public policy as well as administrative errors will go unobserved by Congress, the press, and the electorate.”³⁵

Nearly fifty years after Longaker wrote these words, the twin dangers of PR and secrecy have assumed more importance than ever before. This dissertation will use the CIA as a case study to illustrate how the complex interplay between secrecy and public relations undermines historical

³⁴ Richard P. Longaker, *The Presidency and Individual Liberties* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), 175.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 181; see also Philip H. Melanson, *Secrecy Wars: National Security, Privacy, and the Public's Right to Know* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2001), 183.

research. As any institution within a democracy, the CIA must be held accountable for its actions—past and present. But by withholding documents from scholars, Agency officials have effectively manipulated the historical record to create a mystique that has been repeatedly used to thwart calls for greater oversight.

CHAPTER I
WATCHING BIG BROTHER: COUNTER-SPY, NORMAN MAILER,
AND THE FIFTH ESTATE, 1973-1976

As Norman Mailer approached his fiftieth birthday in 1973, he was closely guarding a secret, something so important that he would later describe it “as the best political idea in my entire life.”¹ Mailer, author of such classics as *The Naked and the Dead* (1948) and *The Armies of the Night* (1968), had been deeply influenced by the political and social turmoil of the previous decade and had run unsuccessfully for mayor of New York City in 1969 with “No More Bullshit” as his campaign slogan. Mailer made it well known that he was keeping a secret, and he sent out around five thousand invitations to his birthday party, promising to “make an announcement of national importance (major)” at the event.² Given his reputation for activism and his legendary combative personality, it is not surprising that over five hundred people attended Mailer’s party on February 5 at Manhattan’s posh Four Seasons. Andy Warhol, Bernardo Bertolucci, Pete Hamill, George Plimpton, Larry McMurtry, Senator Jacob Javits (Republican—New York), Eugene McCarthy, Shirley MacLaine, Jack Lemmon, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. all showed up to hear Mailer reveal his secret.³

¹ Hilary Mills, *Mailer: A Biography* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984), 394; “Mailer Clarifies His ‘Fifth Estate’: Says Its Goals and Structure Are Still Not Decided On,” *New York Times*, 7 February 1973, 84.

² Mills, 389.

³ For descriptions of Mailer’s birthday party, see Mary V. Dearborn, *Mailer: A Biography* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 1-10; Carl Rollyson, *The Lives of Norman Mailer: A Biography* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 250-251; Mills, 388-392; Mel Gussow, “Mailer’s Guests (\$50 a Couple) Hear His Plan

The evening began around 10:00PM with considerable anticipation, but by the time Mailer was introduced, he had downed several glasses of bourbon. His speech, which he prefaced with a dirty joke, was incoherent and poorly received. He called for a Fifth Estate that would be "a people's FBI and a people's CIA to investigate those two [agencies] If we have a democratic secret police keeping tabs on Washington's secret police, which is not democratic but bureaucratic, we will see how far paranoia is justified."⁴ The disappointment with the announcement was obvious, and many guests simply walked out on Mailer. As Jules Feiffer later explained, "it was a wonderful evening that had stayed wonderful until the guest of honor got up and made a mess of it."⁵ One woman complained about the sexist joke he had told and proceeded to physically attack him.⁶ Perplexed by Mailer's drunken proposal for a Fifth Estate to monitor the FBI and CIA, but not angered, Pete Hamill wondered, "Why couldn't he just give a party and have everyone throw balloons?"⁷ The guest of honor was distraught over the negative response, and when someone expressed sympathy with his idea and asked for more details, Mailer ended the conversation abruptly: "I don't know. I'm too drunk and too stupid."⁸ At the end of the party, when only a few people remained, Mailer entertained them with an impromptu boxing match against

on 'Secret Police,'" *New York Times*, 6 February 1973, 23; Linda Francke, "A Half Century of Mailer," *Newsweek*, 19 February 1973, 78; Lucian K. Truscott IV, "'People's CIA?': and Mailer's Birthday," *Village Voice*, 8 February 1973, 1, 24-26.

⁴ Mills, 391.

⁵ Peter Manso, *Mailer: His Life and Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 533.

⁶ Sally Quinn, "Norman Mailer Turns 50," *Washington Post*, 7 February 1973, B7.

⁷ Francke, 78.

⁸ Quinn, B7.

Joe Shaw, a professional fighter. The birthday extravaganza finally came to an end shortly after 3:30AM.⁹

If nothing else, Mailer had boldly and sensationally declared war on the "culture of secrecy" at the CIA and FBI. Yet when he awoke after the evening of heavy drinking, he immediately recognized that his performance at the Four Seasons had jeopardized his vision of a Fifth Estate. He appeared at a press conference to clarify his proposal where he declared it was time "to face up to the possibility that the country may be sliding toward totalitarianism."¹⁰ Mailer specifically mentioned the need to further investigate the findings of the Warren Commission and the Watergate break-in, extending the hope that the Fifth Estate would someday compare to the ACLU in stature. "When you have a country as morally dastardly as this," he said, "you begin to question the whole shape of the country."¹¹ He explained that a steering committee would be assembled to supervise the creation of the Fifth Estate, and rather than running the organization himself, he wanted to have "an umbilical relationship" with it.¹² As he was wrapping up the press conference, Mailer acknowledged that the project might be a failure: "This may appeal to only 10 percent of the people. There may be apathy because people don't like to be told they're impotent."¹³

Mailer was suggesting that the Fourth Estate (the media) was poorly equipped to expose government conspiracies. Such conspiracies, if they

⁹ Francke, 78.

¹⁰ "Mailer Clarifies His 'Fifth Estate': Says Its Goals and Structure Are Still Not Decided On," 84.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "I Was a Hint Too Drunk, Quote Unquote," *Washington Post*, 7 February 1973, B7.

existed, required years of detailed scholarly research to uncover. Not surprisingly, most accounts of the birthday party did not take the Fifth Estate proposal seriously. When a reviewer for the *New York Times* took aim at the idea a few weeks after the announcement, Mailer, never afraid to pick a fight with his critics, responded to the attack with a lengthy essay that offered a more coherent outline of the Fifth Estate. He admitted that his drunken announcement at the Four Seasons “was a disgrace. It had neither wit nor life—it was perhaps the worst speech on a real occasion that the orator ever made.”¹⁴ But despite the inadequate presentation of his idea, Mailer believed that there were larger reasons why so few people were expressing interest in the Fifth Estate. He made reference to the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the attempted murder of George Wallace. Having confronted so much violence and national tragedy in recent years, Americans were dealing with “surrealistic shock,” and Mailer concluded that, as a result, “we must probably numb ourselves in advance in order to bear the next disaster.”¹⁵

He worried that the emotional toll of this shock was leading to both apathy and conspiracy thinking. Since people are naturally inclined to create explanations for events that they cannot fully understand, blaming tragedy on shadowy conspiracies was inevitable. Yet Mailer was concerned that no one was checking out any of these theories. “Is our history developing into a string of connected conspiracies, or is there less ground finally for our

¹⁴ Norman Mailer, “The Morning After,” *New York Times Book Review*, 11 March 1973.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

national paranoia than any have supposed," he asked.¹⁶ Perhaps after thorough investigation, it would turn out that Lee Harvey Oswald was truly a lone gunman. Perhaps the Watergate break-in was simply a botched burglary and nothing more. Once again, Mailer emphasized the limitations of "the walled-in eyes of the poisoned Fourth [Estate]" that only could be corrected with an organization devoted to intensive research of controversial events of national importance.¹⁷ He suggested that there might be some cooperation between the Fourth and Fifth Estate. Because the media often received obscure leads on a variety of stories that they did not properly explore given limited resources and tight deadlines, Mailer thought that the Fourth Estate could possibly share information with the Fifth Estate after it developed into a reputable organization.¹⁸

According to Hilary Mills, one of Mailer's many biographers, the prolific author eventually discussed "his counterintelligence Fifth Estate plan on more than twenty campuses and would compile a list of several hundred people interested in watching the CIA and FBI."¹⁹ Although Mailer's critics considered him a paranoid, the investigative reporting of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein ultimately demonstrated that there was indeed a massive conspiracy surrounding Watergate. These revelations prompted Frank Crowther, who had helped organize Mailer's birthday party in February, to write an article in the *Village Voice* that attempted to revive his friend's image.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Mills, 394.

"Not only was Mailer right," argued Crowther, "he was prophetic."²⁰ Mailer had long suggested that there was a story behind Watergate, but when he had proposed the Fifth Estate, he was apparently unaware that a similar organization already existed. Nat Hentoff brought this to Mailer's attention in his *Village Voice* column one week after Crowther's article. Hentoff explained that a group of former intelligence officers had formed the Committee for Action/Research on the Intelligence Community (CARIC) back in 1972. They published a magazine known as *Counter-Spy*, and after hearing about Mailer's call for a Fifth Estate, they attempted to contact him. As they told Hentoff, however, "we've never been able to get past his [Mailer's] secretary."²¹ Hentoff encouraged readers to provide support to CARIC, because "in following and expanding his [Daniel Ellsberg's] lead, [CARIC] is working full-time for all of us."²² He even made a direct appeal to Mailer: "Norman, these three ex-intelligence agents are legitimate. I mean really legitimate."²³

The three former intelligence officers that Hentoff referred to were Winslow Peck, Tim Butz, and Kenneth Barton Osborn. "Winslow Peck" was actually the pseudonym of Perry Fellwock. After spending about four years in Air Force intelligence working in collaboration with the secretive National Security Agency (NSA), Fellwock left the intelligence community and eventually revealed his secrets to *Ramparts* magazine in 1972 using his

²⁰ Frank Crowther, "Mailer's 5th Estate: Who's Paranoid Now?," *Village Voice*, 12 July 1973, 12; Angus Mackenzie, *Secrets: The CIA's War at Home* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 58.

²¹ Nat Hentoff, "After Ellsberg: Counter-Spy," *Village Voice*, 19 July 1973, 28.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid; Mackenzie, 59.

pseudonym. James Bamford, the leading expert on the NSA, observes that while some of Fellwock's revelations proved inaccurate, "the majority of the sixteen-page article was, unfortunately for the [NSA], quite accurate."²⁴ Around the time he decided to tell his story to *Ramparts*, Fellwock developed the idea for an organization to monitor the intelligence establishment. He explained to Hentoff that when he joined the Air Force, he "was apolitical at the time. But then I went to Vietnam for NSA, and that was no game. I was killing people."²⁵

Like Fellwock, Tim Butz had served in Vietnam with Air Force intelligence where he provided ground support for the aerial reconnaissance missions of a RF4C Phantom 2 spy plane; in addition to collecting intelligence on North Vietnam, these flights also routinely entered the airspace of Laos and Cambodia.²⁶ Hoping to put his life back together after returning from the war, Butz became a student at Kent State University. Allison Krause, one of the four students killed by the National Guard at Kent State in May 1970, was Butz's friend. As Angus Mackenzie observes, Butz's outrage over the tragedy convinced him to establish a local branch of Vietnam Veterans Against the War at the university. He later joined forces with Fellwock, a fellow member of the anti-war organization, and early in 1973 they began to publish *Counter-Spy* out of Butz's apartment in Washington, DC.²⁷

The other founding member of CARIC was K. Barton Osborn. Assigned to Army intelligence in Vietnam during the late 1960s, his tour of

²⁴ James Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace: A Report on America's Most Secret Agency* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1982; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1983), 334.

²⁵ Hentoff, 23.

²⁶ Mackenzie, 59; see also Hentoff, 23.

²⁷ Mackenzie, 59.

duty disillusioned him, and he became involved in the protest movement as well. Claiming direct knowledge of Operation Phoenix, the CIA's controversial counter-insurgency program against the Viet Cong, Osborn told a House Subcommittee in 1971 that the CIA was fully aware of severe prisoner abuses. The CIA had established interrogation centers in every province of South Vietnam, and based on his experiences in Quang Nam, Osborn explained to the subcommittee: "I never knew in the course of all those operations any detainee to live through his interrogation There was never any reasonable establishment of the fact that any one of those individuals was, in fact, cooperating with the VC, but they all died and the majority were either tortured to death or things like thrown out of helicopters."²⁸ Osborn was initially an editor of *Counter-Spy* along with Butz and Fellwock, and starting with the fall issue in 1974, he moved to the magazine's advisory board.

Soon after Mailer discovered the existence of CARIC, he met with Butz and Fellwock at the bar inside the Watergate complex. He agreed to support

²⁸ Osborn quoted in Douglas Valentine, *The Phoenix Program* (New York: William Morrow, 1990), 347; Kenneth Barton Osborn, "The CIA Scalpel Cut Deep," *Playboy*, August 1975, 58; see also Hentoff, 23; it should be noted that Mark Moyar has challenged the accuracy of Osborn's 1971 testimony, accusing historians of "a disturbing unwillingness to investigate the truthfulness of his claims." Moyar's main evidence against Osborn is the report of an investigation performed by Army intelligence officials after Osborn went to Congress with his allegations. Since Moyar criticizes other historians for failing to critically evaluate their sources, it is somewhat strange that he does not explore the potential weaknesses of the internal investigation of Osborn, for it should be obvious that Army intelligence had much to gain by discrediting him. It is certainly possible that Osborn exaggerated at times, but until more documents about Operation Phoenix are de-classified, the debate surrounding his role in the program will probably remain inconclusive. See Moyar, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: The CIA's Secret Campaign to Destroy the Viet Cong* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 94.

them financially, and his funding continued until early 1976.²⁹ It is important to emphasize here that Mailer did not create *Counter-Spy*; in fact, by the time of the meeting at the Watergate, two issues of the magazine had been published already.³⁰ The first issue of *Counter-Spy*, which came out in March 1973, began with a one-page description of CARIC, which included the following declaration: "We all know that Big Brother is watching, but no one in our government has taken the time to explain who is being spied upon, and why we are being watched. Too often, we American citizens don't even know who Big Brother is."³¹ The members of CARIC announced that their organization would "serve as an independent 'watchdog' on the government spy apparatus" and inform the public of their findings; they made it clear that because of the people's right to know, "[t]he secrecy with which the government surrounds itself must stop."³² The inaugural issue featured an article about FBI infiltration of right wing groups in San Diego that raised questions about the use of informants. *Counter-Spy* contended that the FBI was abusing their authority and collaborating with local police departments

²⁹ Mackenzie, 59-60; Dearborn, 395.

³⁰ According to Mary Dearborn, "Tim Butz and Winslow Peck [Perry Fellwock], leaders of the group [CARIC], had approached Norman in 1972 and asked him to join." In other words, Dearborn's narrative wrongly suggests that Mailer was aware of CARIC prior to his birthday party on February 5, 1973. Mailer's meeting with Butz and Fellwock took place in 1973, not 1972. CARIC did attempt to contact Mailer before Hentoff's column in July, but there is no evidence that they were successful. See Dearborn, 6; Philip Agee, a former CIA official who became an advisor to *Counter-Spy*, has also mistakenly given Mailer credit for founding the magazine. See Agee, *On The Run* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, 1987), 100.

³¹ "Why CARIC?," *Counter-Spy* 1 (March 1973): 1; Mackenzie, 59.

³² "Why CARIC?," 1.

to disrupt groups that they perceived to be subversive, which, in many cases, were actually committed to non-violent protest.³³

The second issue contained a detailed examination of pacification efforts in Vietnam that attempted to place the CIA's Phoenix program in historical context. The article discussed the French counter-insurgency strategy in Vietnam after World War II. Using information gleaned from *The Pentagon Papers* and other sources, *Counter-Spy* traced the gradual escalation of American intervention in the aftermath of the French withdrawal in the mid-1950s. They assessed early CIA involvement under the leadership of Edward Lansdale, the failure of the agrovillage project, and the similar fate of the Strategic Hamlet Program in the 1960s. From the perspective of *Counter-Spy*, "the pacification effort has been doomed to failure from the inherent contradiction of the American involvement—trying to make peace by waging war"³⁴ Frustrated by the continued instability in the country, the CIA formulated a counter-insurgency program that evolved into Operation Phoenix, described by *Counter-Spy* as "a systematic murder program" that "had the counterproductive effect in the provinces of instilling fear and hate for the GVN [government of South Vietnam] in the hearts and minds of an over-taxed and exploited rural population."³⁵ Included at the end of the article were diagrams of the command structure for both Operation Phoenix and its successor program, F-6.³⁶

³³ "The FBI and the Paramilitary Right: Partners in Terror," *Counter-Spy* 1 (March 1973): 4-12.

³⁴ "Pacification: The 100 Year Flight of the Phoenix," *Counter-Spy* 1 (May 1973): 5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

Through their expose of Phoenix, *Counter-Spy* clearly wanted to hold American officials accountable for their actions. They printed the names of individuals involved in the various pacification campaigns, and this list included Thomas Polgar, then CIA Station chief in Saigon, in addition to his five predecessors.³⁷ Accusing William Colby of committing perjury when he testified to Congress about Operation Phoenix, *Counter-Spy* called on him to resign. Anyone with "a career of directing assassination and torture programs can play no legitimate part in US government," they charged.³⁸ Despite the controversy over Colby's role in the Phoenix program, however, Richard Nixon appointed him to replace James Schlesinger as DCI later that year, and the Senate confirmed him. It appeared that few people were listening to *Counter-Spy*, but the editors remained determined to uncover evidence of malfeasance within the intelligence community. In the next issue, they wrote another story about American intervention in Southeast Asia, claiming that the intelligence establishment had helped overthrow the Cambodian government in 1970. The article blamed the United States for failing to accept Cambodia's neutralism and also criticized the Cold War mentality of "equating a nationalistic anti-imperialism with communism."³⁹

After the issue on Cambodia in the fall of 1973, *Counter-Spy* was not published again until the following summer. The summer edition, which contained both the fourth and fifth issue of volume one, obviously benefited from Mailer's donations. The magazine, now published from Suite 519 of the Dupont Circle Building, soon expanded to over fifty pages and displayed

³⁷ Ibid., 7

³⁸ Ibid., 24.

³⁹ "TARGET: Sihanouk," *Counter-Spy* 1 (Fall 1973): 5.

improved copy-editing, although it still contained some typographical errors. CARIC's new name was the Organizing Committee for a Fifth Estate, a change that Mailer apparently requested to Butz and Fellwock. The summer issue of *Counter-Spy* in 1974 was devoted to terrorism. The magazine predicted that the topic was destined to receive increasing attention in the years ahead: "the focus of security agencies in the United States has shifted from combating monolithic communism and dissent at home to the new focus of counter-terrorism. Terrorists are being promoted within the security community as the new 'Bogey Men,' and agencies are requesting less restraints and more money to develop new techniques."⁴⁰ In keeping with the terrorist theme of the issue, Butz wrote a story on the FBI's counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO).⁴¹ In retrospect, there was undoubtedly a conspiracy theory dimension to the issue's coverage of terrorism, but recent events have demonstrated that their underlying prediction in 1974 was accurate, since counterterrorism has certainly emerged as the primary mission of the American intelligence establishment.⁴²

In the second volume of *Counter-Spy*, the editors became far more focused on the activities of the CIA. Perry Fellwock, for instance, published a detailed overview of the relationship between the CIA and organized labor. He discussed Jay Lovestone's role in charting the AFL-CIO's foreign policy; "He, more than any other man, was responsible for shaping that policy,

⁴⁰ The issue was titled "Terrorism: What's Behind It?" "Editorial," *Counter-Spy* 1 (June 1974): 2.

⁴¹ Tim Butz, "COINTELPRO: An Analysis of the FBI Memos," *Counter-Spy* 1 (June 1974): 19-25.

⁴² The editors warned "that terrorist groups will either be formed or manipulated to justify the designs of those persons who have made security their lives." *Counter-Spy* 1 (June 1974): 2.

including its allegiance with the CIA."⁴³ Because of the AFL-CIO's willingness to cooperate with the Agency, "the CIA has been able to establish a pro-CIA infrastructure among foreign labor. This infrastructure has been used to gather information on foreign workers, governments and Third World national liberation movements," Fellwock alleged.⁴⁴ Compelling evidence indicated that the CIA manipulated an organization called the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) in order to collect this intelligence, and according to Fellwock, "a CIA case officer is undercover in almost every AIFLD office abroad."⁴⁵

The subsequent *Counter-Spy*, an issue dedicated entirely to the CIA, provided even more information on AIFLD, and it also told readers of another organization that the CIA had infiltrated.⁴⁶ A woman named Ann Roberts had brought her concerns about the Overseas Education Fund (OEF) to the Fifth Estate. After further investigating the OEF, a branch of the League of Women Voters, *Counter-Spy* found significant interlocking relationships with CIA officers that strongly suggested OEF was gathering "intelligence data under the guide [sic] of international sisterhood" unbeknownst to most of its members.⁴⁷ The story about the CIA and OEF,

⁴³ Winslow Peck [Perry Fellwock], "Clandestine Enforcement of U. S. Foreign Labor Policy," *Counter-Spy* 2 (Fall 1974): 38.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 43; for a good overview of the CIA-AIFLD connection, see Ronald Radosh, *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 431-433; for more on Jay Lovestone's ties to the CIA, which were confirmed when his personal papers were opened to the public, see Ted Morgan, *A Covert Life: Jay Lovestone* (New York: Random House, 1999), esp. Chp. 12 and Chp. 13.

⁴⁶ "AIFLD Order of Battle," *Counter-Spy* 2 (Winter 1975): 38-42.

⁴⁷ "CIA TARGET: WOMEN: The Inside Story of the Overseas Education Fund," *Counter-Spy* 2 (Winter 1975): 11.

however, was a relatively minor feature of the winter edition of 1975. This issue, the most famous ever published by *Counter-Spy*, devoted a section to the identification of over one hundred CIA station chiefs around the world. "The time has come for the cloak of secrecy surrounding the activities of the CIA to be examined and cut down to size, a size that reflects the people's right to know," said the magazine's editors in a preface to the list of CIA officials.⁴⁸ For every chief of station and chief of base mentioned, *Counter-Spy* provided their address—typically an American consulate or embassy—and a few pieces of biographical information. In the same issue, Philip Agee, who had just published a controversial book detailing the operations that he learned of while a CIA officer in Ecuador, Uruguay, and Mexico, praised the magazine for naming names: "Having this information, the peoples victimized by the CIA and the economic exploitation that CIA enforces can bring pressure on their so-often compromised governments to expell [sic] the CIA people. And, in the absence of such expulsions, which will not be uncommon, the people themselves will have to decide what they must do to rid themselves of CIA."⁴⁹

It was not the first time that *Counter-Spy* had revealed the identities of CIA officers, but the scope of the revelations gave many observers the impression that Agee was responsible for them. He had attached a twenty-five page appendix to *Inside The Company* that was a "list of CIA employees, agents and collaborators and of organizations which . . . were either financed,

⁴⁸ "Chiefs of Station: Who's Who and What They Do," *Counter-Spy* 2 (Winter 1975): 23.

⁴⁹ Philip Agee, "Exposing The CIA," *Counter-Spy* 2 (Winter 1975): 20.

influenced or controlled by the CIA,"⁵⁰ so he was a logical suspect. In reality, however, *Counter-Spy* had learned how to identify CIA officials using two State Department publications. John Marks, who co-authored *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* with Victor Marchetti, was a former State Department official, and in November 1974, he contributed an article to *The Washington Monthly* titled "How to Spot a Spook" that outlined a detailed method of exposing CIA operatives. Marks argued that the CIA was undermining the image of the United States by focusing too much attention on covert operations: "Could any rational person, after surveying the history of the last 20 years, from Guatemala to Cuba to Vietnam—and now Chile—contend that the CIA's clandestine activities have yielded anything but a steady stream of disaster? The time has come to abolish them."⁵¹ Once the CIA stopped intervening in the affairs of other countries, Marks thought that it would be better equipped to gather and analyze intelligence.

By cross-referencing the *Biographic Register* with the *Foreign Service List*, Marks explained, it was possible to uncover CIA officers stationed in American embassies. He pointed out that "more than a quarter of the 5,435 employees who purportedly work for State overseas are actually with the CIA."⁵² To show how easy it was to pinpoint CIA officers on the *Foreign Service List*, Marks advised readers to look for employees described as Foreign

⁵⁰ Philip Agee, *Inside the Company: CIA Diary* (London: Penguin Books, 1975), 599.

⁵¹ John Marks, "How To Spot A Spook," *Washington Monthly* 6 (November 1974): 11; Agee, *On The Run*, 100-101; Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA and FBI* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 151.

⁵² Marks, 6.

Service Reserve (FSR) or Foreign Service Staff (FSS).⁵³ Since there were State Department employees legitimately designated as FSR and FSS, the proper identification of operatives required additional steps. First, employees categorized on the *Foreign Service List* as both FSR and political officers were most likely CIA officials. Second, after obtaining the names of suspected CIA operatives, their profiles in the *Biographic Register* were almost always different than actual State Department officials. Marks revealed that Agency employees typically had short biographies with "gaping holes," and in the event that the *Register* indicated an individual had previously worked as "an 'analyst' for the Department of the Army (or Navy or Air Force), you can bet that he or she is really working for the CIA."⁵⁴

Counter-Spy followed the directions outlined in "How to Spot a Spook" to identify CIA station chiefs for the winter issue in 1975. On page twenty-six of that issue, there was a brief entry for Richard S. Welch that listed him as the CIA's chief of station in Lima, Peru and offered some biographical information: "Born Connecticut, December 14, 1929. Graduated from Harvard in 1951. Has served in Cyprus, Guatemala, and Guyana."⁵⁵ The editors of *Counter-Spy* had no idea that the inclusion of Welch's name would turn out to be the most controversial item ever printed in the history of their magazine.

Ironically, Welch was actually serving as CIA station chief in Athens, not Lima, when Greek terrorists gunned him down on December 23, 1975 as

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁵ "Chiefs of Station: Who's Who and What They Do," 26.

he was coming back from a holiday party.⁵⁶ The *Athens News* had printed a letter to the editor on November 25 from a group that called themselves the "Committee of Greeks and Greek Americans to Prevent Their Country, Their Fatherland, from Being Perverted to the Uses of the CIA."⁵⁷ According to Kathryn Olmsted, this letter contained Welch's "name, address, and phone number."⁵⁸ It appears, then, that Welch would have been murdered even without the *Counter-Spy* disclosure. But what was the magazine attempting to achieve with the exposure of CIA officers? In the issue preceding the 1975 edition that disclosed Welch's name, the editors had renounced violence. "We believe that armed struggle is not, at this time, a valid tactic for opposing the forces of reaction," they said. "Such attempts are suicidal, unnecessary, and play into the hands of those committed to fascism."⁵⁹

Rather than encouraging violence against CIA officials, *Counter-Spy* claimed that they were trying to force the Agency to withdraw their operatives, a pivotal step in bringing an end to covert action. Yet there is no question that the magazine was taking a radical approach in their opposition to the intelligence establishment. Nothing reflects this better than the press release that the Fifth Estate issued the day after Welch was killed. According to the statement, "if anyone is to blame for Mr. Welch's death it is the C. I. A. that sent him there to spy, perhaps even to intervene, in the affairs of the Greek Government."⁶⁰ It also called attention to America's contribution to

⁵⁶ Mackenzie, 65; Olmsted, 151; John M. Crewdson, "Slaying of C. I. A. Officer Stirs a Debate on Identity Disclosures," *New York Times*, 4 January 1976, 2.

⁵⁷ Mackenzie, 65.

⁵⁸ Olmsted, 151; Mackenzie, 65, 89-90.

⁵⁹ *Counter-Spy* 2 (Fall 1974): 47.

⁶⁰ "C. I. A. Blamed for Death," *New York Times*, 25 December 1975, 3.

government repression in Greece and the CIA's role in "U. S.-supported tortures, imprisonment, and death [there], as well as intervention in the country of Cyprus."⁶¹ In response to the press release, the CIA and its supporters immediately went on the offensive. Agee later recalled that his friends in the Fifth Estate "were literally under siege—several times [they] had to call police for protection after threatening phone calls."⁶² DCI William Colby lashed out at the Fifth Estate's words, arguing that they were exploiting the tragedy to further their radical agenda: "The so-called Counterspy of The Fifth Estate, without even an expression of human sympathy, has issued a statement which can only be called a shocking attempt to use the death of a dedicated American as fuel for its irresponsible and paranoid [sic] attack on other Americans serving their country here and abroad."⁶³

Counter-Spy ultimately survived the ordeal, but the backlash proved costly. The most significant casualty of the negative publicity was Mailer, the symbolic leader of the Fifth Estate. Although his main contribution to the Fifth Estate was monetary, Mailer had attempted to re-invigorate it in the spring/summer issue of *Counter-Spy* in 1975. "The irony is that in fighting Communism," Mailer warned, "we have come to a point where we have been

⁶¹ Mackenzie, 90.

⁶² Agee, *On The Run*, 132.

⁶³ "C. I. A. Blamed for Death," 3; Colby would later downplay the role of *Counter-Spy* in Welch's murder. See John Prados, *Lost Crusader: The Secret Wars of CIA Director William Colby* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 333-334; William Colby and Peter Forbath, *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 450-451.

destroying our own potential."⁶⁴ Not surprisingly, he singled out the CIA as one institution that undermined this national potential. He referred to the Agency as "a sinister element in American life, as capable of destroying the reasonably free play of human forces as any other spiritual Mafia," and he even suggested that the CIA might be controlling "the Federal Reserve, the Securities Exchange Commission, and the stock market."⁶⁵ Over two years earlier, Mailer had wondered out loud in front of his birthday guests "how far paranoia is justified."⁶⁶ He was now convinced that his paranoia was totally justified. He proclaimed that the CIA "has manipulated and despoliated every left-wing movement in America" and "savaged the heart of Black militancy" through "so many dirty tricks and illicit manipulations of history"⁶⁷ Despite Mailer's impassioned rhetoric, he stopped supporting the Fifth Estate shortly after Welch's death. The IRS had revoked the organization's tax exemption, and as Mary Dearborn explains, the government "put a fifty-thousand-dollar lien on Norman's Brooklyn Heights property, presumably because he was taking deductions relating to the Fifth Estate's tax-exempt status."⁶⁸

Mailer's withdrawal from *Counter-Spy* forever changed the magazine. Starting with the winter issue of 1976, the editors dropped the hyphen and *Counter-Spy* became *CounterSpy*, but this was a relatively minor development compared to the issues that were dividing the magazine's staff. According to

⁶⁴ Norman Mailer, "The CIA vs. Democracy," *Counter-Spy* 2 (Spring/Summer 1975): 41.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Mills, 391.

⁶⁷ Mailer, "The CIA vs. Democracy," 41.

⁶⁸ Dearborn, 395; Agee, *On The Run*, 120.

the recollection of Agee, a member of *CounterSpy*'s advisory board, financial difficulties, fear of prosecution, and personality conflicts "had paralyzed the magazine."⁶⁹ With the problems mounting, the editors continued to expose the identities of CIA officers in a section of the magazine known as "CIA Around the World." The three issues that appeared in 1976 also included more revelations about the intelligence community. The winter issue had a story about American intervention in Angola, while the spring issue featured yet another examination of the FBI's COINTELPRO program by Tim Butz.⁷⁰

The December *CounterSpy* marked the end of an era. Butz had recently left the magazine, and the only editor that remained from the early days in 1973 was Perry Fellwock, who was still using his pseudonym. Fellwock wrote in the issue about the murder of Orlando Letelier, a Chilean diplomat who had been deposed along with Salvador Allende in 1973. Fellwock accused Pinochet's intelligence service (DINA) of orchestrating the car bombing on embassy row in Washington, DC that killed Letelier, but he did not end there. Not only did he claim that there were close ties between DINA and the CIA, he told readers of an elaborate plot to target left-leaning groups throughout Latin America.⁷¹ Although Fellwock's article most likely sounded like a bizarre conspiracy theory at the time, future revelations about

⁶⁹ Agee, *On The Run*, 220.

⁷⁰ "The Great Southern Africa War," *CounterSpy* 2 (Winter 1976): 34-39; Tim Butz, "COINTELPRO: Psychological Warfare and Magnum Justice," *CounterSpy* 3 (Spring 1976): 24-31.

⁷¹ Winslow Peck [Perry Fellwock], "Death on Embassy Row: CIA Covers Up Murder Web of Chilean Gestapo With False Stories and Terrorist Operations," *CounterSpy* 3 (December 1976): 8-15, 64-71.

Operation Condor would substantiate the general thrust of his 1976 report.⁷² Another article in December 1976 focused on suspicions of CIA maneuvering in Jamaica to counter Prime Minister Michael Manley. Ellen Ray, the editor who authored the story, had visited Jamaica with Agee, and based on her investigation there, she found that Manley's economic program posed a threat "to such corporations as Kaiser, Alcoa, and Reynolds, which have extensive investments in Jamaica."⁷³ "Though charges of destabilization in Jamaica are difficult to prove—just as they were in Chile before the coup—a pattern is discernable behind the events which rocked the country for six months," she argued,⁷⁴ noting that eleven Jamaicans died from a recent shipment of flour that had been poisoned with Parathion. The substance, which must be added intentionally, had previously contaminated flour in Guiana prior to the overthrow of Cheddi Jagan.⁷⁵

CounterSpy would not re-appear for another two years, and by that time, the original staff was long gone. John Kelly, the new editor, continued publishing the magazine until 1984 when it became the *National Reporter*. The magazine's hiatus resulted in part from the creation of a new journal dedicated to exposing American covert action, which was established by Agee, Lou Wolf, Jim Wilcott, Elsie Wilcott, Ellen Ray, and her husband Bill Schaap. The *Covert Action Information Bulletin* began publication in 1978, and

⁷² John Dinges, *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents* (New York: New Press, 2004); Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, The United States, and The Rise of The New Imperialism* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006), 63.

⁷³ Ellen Ray, "CIA and Local Gunmen Plan Jamaican Coup," *CounterSpy* 3 (December 1976): 37.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 39. Ray provided a list of CIA personnel in Jamaica. *Ibid.*, 39-40.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

in the tradition of *CounterSpy*, there was a regular "Naming Names" section.⁷⁶ The *Bulletin* continued the coverage of Jamaica that *CounterSpy* had started in December 1976. After a press conference where they identified fifteen CIA employees working in Jamaica, shots were fired outside the home of the CIA station chief in Kingston.⁷⁷ The story revived the controversy that had surrounded Welch's murder in 1975, and both incidents were later used to support the passage of the Intelligence Identities Protection Act in 1982. The 1982 legislation made it illegal for *CounterSpy* and the *Covert Action Information Bulletin* to print the names of any intelligence operatives. Rather than face the possibility of prosecution, the publications complied with the law. Two years later, after over thirty issues, *CounterSpy* came to an end. The *Bulletin*, on the other hand, survived, but it is now published under a different title.⁷⁸

Between the first issue of *Counter-Spy* in 1973 and the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, the anonymity of CIA officers was seriously threatened. Hundreds of operatives were named in the pages of *Counter-Spy* and the *Bulletin*, and the CIA believed that these disclosures were endangering its employees and national security. Of all the officers identified during this time, Richard Welch was the only one harmed. The Agency's investigation of his murder strongly indicated that *Counter-Spy* was not to blame, but this conclusion does not necessarily exonerate the magazine's radical tactics. The history of the Fifth Estate and their publication begs the

⁷⁶ Agee, *On The Run*, 255.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 339.

⁷⁸ The *Covert Action Information Bulletin* became *Covert Action Quarterly* in 1993, <http://www.covertactionquarterly.org/> (accessed March 29, 2008).

question: did the organization threaten national security and jeopardize the lives of American spies? Or were the disclosures necessary in the face of overwhelming evidence of CIA wrongdoing uncovered by Senator Frank Church (Democrat-Idaho) and Representative Otis Pike (Democrat-New York)?

These are emotionally charged questions that are difficult to answer objectively. From the perspective of CIA supporters, the Fifth Estate was guilty of treason; CIA critics—even those uncomfortable with the radical approach of *Counter-Spy*—would counter that the public had the right to know what the Agency was doing with their tax dollars. But what often gets overlooked in this debate is the undeniable impact of *Counter-Spy*. As a consequence of the magazine, the organization responsible for monitoring enemies overseas actually became the target of surveillance at home. This role reversal proved deeply troubling for the CIA's "culture of secrecy," especially since the editors of *Counter-Spy*, who Colby described as "a scruffy group of anti-CIA activists,"⁷⁹ based the vast majority of their revelations on open source intelligence. For instance, the realization that so many CIA officers could be identified from unclassified State Department publications raised embarrassing questions about the Agency's competence. More than anything else, though, *Counter-Spy* argued for the necessity of drastic intelligence reform. The founding members of CARIC started with the belief that the American people would seriously curtail the clandestine powers of the intelligence community if only they were better informed.

⁷⁹ Colby, 450.

The CIA, thanks to the efforts of William Colby in 1975, gradually accepted the inevitability of tougher Congressional supervision, but Agency officials aggressively fought against the more expansive definition of reform that *Counter-Spy* had embodied—the idea that, given the past abuses of the intelligence establishment, covert operations had to be abolished.⁸⁰ And, as later chapters will reveal, the CIA mounted a successful public relations campaign. By selling the Agency's mystique to politicians and the American people, CIA officials actively sought to preserve covert action and the "culture of secrecy."

⁸⁰ The editors of *CounterSpy* eventually called for the total abolition of the CIA "not only because we recognize that the CIA serves only the multinational corporate empire, which is thoroughly anti-democratic and un-American, but also because the CIA is a criminal organization and covert actions are criminal actions." See "Abolish the CIA and Covert Action," *CounterSpy* 2 (Winter 1976): 3. When the magazine resumed publication in 1978, the new editors would make similar declarations.

CHAPTER II
THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER: TEAM B
CONFRONTS THE CIA

Although the “Year of Intelligence” is most commonly associated with the Rockefeller Commission, the Church Committee, and the Pike Committee, historians of the intelligence community need to re-conceptualize the existing interpretation of the crisis that the Agency faced in the mid-1970s. A key limitation of the traditional narrative is its failure to include the conservative attack on the CIA. While Senator Frank Church (Democrat-Idaho) and Congressman Otis Pike (Democrat-New York) criticized the Agency from the Left, and the editors of *Counter-Spy* launched a campaign against covert action from the far Left, conservatives skillfully manipulated the situation to achieve different objectives.

Rather than viewing the CIA as too powerful, conservative critics, especially the members of the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB, pronounced Piffy-Ab), believed that Agency analysts were actually too weak. They worried that the “culture of secrecy” at Langley was obscuring what they perceived to be critical flaws in the Agency’s estimates on the Soviet Union. Several of these conservatives were also opponents of Henry Kissinger’s negotiations with the Soviet Union on arms control, and they argued that CIA reports had repeatedly downplayed the Soviet threat to national security in order to foster support for SALT I. They had been deeply concerned with Albert Wohlstetter’s two-part series in *Foreign Policy*, which

appeared in the summer and fall of 1974.¹ Wohlstetter, a professor at the University of Chicago at the time, bludgeoned readers with detailed quantitative analysis of intelligence estimates on the Soviet military build-up that were contained in previous posture statements of the Secretary of Defense. Contrary to a popular mythology of American overestimation of the Soviet threat, Wohlstetter attempted to show that there was actually a “systematic underestimate.”² He included several graphs to demonstrate his conclusion that “[i]n 49 out of 51 cases the eventual Soviet deployment exceeded the mid-range of the Secretary’s estimates. In 42 of the 51, it exceeded the Secretary’s high.”³

Critics of Wohlstetter immediately accused him of “selective analysis,” since he did not mention that there had been examples of intelligence estimates that exaggerated Soviet strength, most notably their ability to produce an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) defense.⁴ In his pioneering assessment of intelligence estimates during the Cold War, John Prados also shows that Wohlstetter’s criticism had limitations. Prados cautions that “the estimators were engaged in an inherently complex task,” and as a result, they made the assumption that the Soviets would retire obsolete missiles once

¹ Albert Wohlstetter, “Is There A Strategic Arms Race?,” *Foreign Policy* 15 (Summer 1974): 3-20; and Wohlstetter, “Is There A Strategic Arms Race? (II): Rivals, But No ‘Race,’” *Foreign Policy* 16 (Fall 1974): 48-81; for background on these articles, see Anne Hessing Cahn, *Killing Détente: The Right Attacks the CIA* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 11-14; John Prados, *The Soviet Estimate* (New York: Dial Press, 1982), 196-198; and Lawrence Freedman, *US Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977), 3.

² Wohlstetter, “Is There A Strategic Arms Race?,” 17.

³ Wohlstetter, “Is There A Strategic Arms Race? (II): Rivals, But No ‘Race,’” 49.

⁴ Comment by Morton Halperin and Jeremy Stone, *Foreign Policy* 16 (Fall 1974): 91.

better technology became available; "This single difference between assumption and reality accounts for over two hundred ICBMs in the 'underestimates' after 1966," he says.⁵ But what was the nuclear strategist hoping to achieve? He fundamentally disagreed with the widespread belief that arms proliferation on one side of the Cold War would inevitably lead to a similar build-up on the other.⁶ In certain circumstances, he theorized, a massive proliferation might convince an opponent that they were doomed, and that their only viable option would be to abandon the arms race altogether. Wohlstetter believed that the intelligence community's underestimates could be attributed to the false predictions of a missile gap in the early 1960s. Since they had overestimated the deployment of Soviet missiles, the analysts developed a more cautious approach later in the decade that, from Wohlstetter's perspective, turned out to be unwarranted. Interestingly, Wohlstetter worried that his conclusions could potentially lead to unintended consequences: "It would be unfortunate if we should swing now from understatement to the opposite extreme. It would be nice, though far from easy, to get it nearly right."⁷

PFIAB, which had been established during the Eisenhower administration, apparently did not take Wohlstetter's warning into consideration. Instead, they used his analysis to put pressure on the CIA's National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) dealing with the Soviet Union. Almost

⁵ Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, 198.

⁶ He likened this theory to a Cold War version of Newton's Third Law: "For Every Action, There Is An Opposing Equal Or Greater-Than-Equal Reaction." See Wohlstetter, "Is There A Strategic Arms Race? (II): Rivals, But No 'Race,'" 49.

⁷ Wohlstetter, "Is There A Strategic Arms Race?," 20.

a year after the resignation of Richard Nixon, George Anderson, the chair of PFIAB, questioned the accuracy of NIE 11-3/8-74 in a letter to President Gerald Ford. Anderson called the 1974 estimate of Soviet forces "seriously misleading in the presentation of a number of key judgments and in projecting a sense of complacency unsupported by the facts; as a consequence it is deficient for the purpose it should serve."⁸ Anderson recommended that there should be an outside critique of the estimate process, an idea that was first proposed by two of his colleagues on PFIAB, John Foster and Edward Teller. "If Wohlstetter's articles were the opening salvo in the conservative assault on the CIA's Soviet estimates," says Anne Cahn, "Anderson's letter . . . began the second round."⁹ CIA director William Colby refused to allow a group of outsiders to second guess CIA analysts. On November 21, 1975, Colby wrote to President Ford and explained why he could not allow the experiment in competitive analysis to take place: "It is hard for me to envisage how an ad hoc 'independent' group of government and non-government analysts could prepare a more thorough, comprehensive assessment of Soviet strategic capabilities—even in two specific areas—than the Intelligence Community can prepare."¹⁰

When Colby blocked PFIAB's request, it is important to realize that, technically speaking, he had been fired already. Colby's dismissal was just one dimension of President Ford's so-called "Halloween Massacre," a cabinet

⁸ Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 115.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 119; John Prados, *Lost Crusader: The Secret Wars of CIA Director William Colby* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 281. According to Prados, "Bill Colby did well to resist this exercise, something for which he has been given little credit." *Ibid.*

re-shuffling during the first week of November 1975 that would have a profound impact on American history. According to most historians, Donald Rumsfeld, Ford's chief of staff, was at the center of the dramatic shake-up. This skillful bureaucratic maneuver ousted both Colby and Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, who had served briefly as CIA director in 1973. Rumsfeld replaced Schlesinger at the Pentagon, while George H. W. Bush was appointed to Colby's position. Henry Kissinger remained Secretary of State, but he was forced to relinquish the title of National Security Advisor to Brent Scowcroft. Richard Cheney, one of Rumsfeld's closest allies, became Ford's new chief of staff. He was only thirty-four years old at the time, but he had already established a reputation for getting things done.¹¹

Colby remained in charge at the CIA until the Senate confirmed Bush late in January 1976. The following month the CIA revised its estimate of Soviet military expenditures, which was a calculation that had been the source of controversy in the intelligence community. CIA analysts had typically determined the amount of Soviet defense spending by using a technique known as the "building-block" approach. In essence, if there were "X" number of Soviet tanks, they would determine how much it would cost American manufacturers to produce the same quantity, and they then converted the figure into rubles through a series of complicated and arcane calculations. The analysts applied this approach to every weapon (tanks, missiles, planes, ships, etc.) to determine the total defense budget for the

¹¹ James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York: Viking, 2004), 65-67; Mann observes that "[i]n these intra-administration battles, Rumsfeld never lost, and Cheney was regularly at his side." *Ibid.*, 59; see Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 122-123.

Soviet Union. Since the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) did not agree with the "building-block" assessment, the CIA began looking for more concrete information to test their conclusion, and in 1975 it seems that the clandestine service was able to acquire a handbook that contained budget information. The CIA modified its estimate in response to the new intelligence; although they had previously believed that Soviet defense spending was 6-8% of their GNP, they now raised the figure to 10-15%.¹² This 40% increase became public, and conservative critics gave the impression that the CIA's revision somehow meant that the Soviets had 40% more weapons than the United States once thought.

As Prados demonstrates, however, "[t]he revised budget estimates did *not* mean that the Soviets were stronger than before—the number of 'observables' counted by intelligence did not change at all, but only the *cost* of these items to the Soviet economy and the burden of defense spending within that economy."¹³ In other words, American analysts had given too much credit to the Soviet military-industrial complex; in fact, even though there was considerable waste in America's defense industry throughout the Cold War, the Soviets were far more inefficient than the CIA had imagined. "We now know that the [Soviet] military burden was in play by the 1970s, probably already by the late 1960s, and that the Soviet economy was already contracting in the Brezhnev era," argues Prados.¹⁴ Contrary to what CIA critics claimed in the mid-1970s, the revised estimate of Soviet spending was a

¹² Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 132-135.

¹³ Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, 247.

¹⁴ John Prados, "Team B: The Trillion-Dollar Experiment," *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 49 (April 1993): 30.

sign of weakness rather than strength. The inefficiency of the Soviet economy was simply not conducive to long-term stability.¹⁵

The CIA completed another report in February 1976 that angered conservatives. The study was titled "The Track Record in Strategic Estimating," and it examined NIEs between 1966 and 1975 in order to assess the accuracy of past CIA predictions. It openly acknowledged "the failure of the earlier estimates to foresee the degree to which Soviets would not only catch up to the U. S. in number of ICBMs but keep right on going,"¹⁶ but as George Carver observed in his description of the report, "in no case have the Soviets ever deployed a major weapons system which the Intelligence Community did not spot and assess well before its operational deployment."¹⁷ PFIAB had requested the track record study, and a few months after the report was completed, the board renewed their request for outsiders to compete against CIA analysts. Carver, who believed "that the balance is very much on the plus side of the ledger [for analysts],"¹⁸ wrote a memo in which he warned that PFIAB's proposed experiment "would be extremely difficult to accommodate without prostituting the whole intelligence process."¹⁹ Bush, unlike Colby, accepted the recommendation at the end of May with a brief notation to Carver: "[L]et her fly. OK, GB."²⁰

¹⁵ Cahn says "the new data were interpreted [among CIA experts] to mean that the Soviet military sector of the economy was only half as efficient as had been thought." See Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 135.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 139.

Bush had set in motion a project that would have long-term consequences for CIA analysis. The group of outsiders was divided into three panels, and they later became known collectively as "Team B." Charles Lerch chaired the panel on the Soviet air defense system, Roland Herbst led the study of Soviet missile accuracy, and Richard Pipes, an expert on Russian history at Harvard University, became the chair of the panel on Soviet strategic objectives.²¹ The "Team B" study of Soviet strategic thinking is by far the most widely known of the three as well as the most controversial. This report, which remained classified until 1992, has developed a certain mythology among both its critics and supporters. Conservatives often argue that "Team B" forced the CIA to re-evaluate their allegedly dovish perspective on the Soviet Union. Paul Wolfowitz, who studied under Wohlstetter at the University of Chicago, had joined Pipes's panel as a technical advisor upon the recommendation of Richard Perle, an advisor to

²¹ Anne Hessing Cahn, "Team B: The Trillion-Dollar Experiment," *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 49 (April 1993): 24; Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 141; the assessment of Soviet strategy became part of the experiment after the Navy successfully blocked a proposal for "Team B" to study Soviet anti-submarine warfare (ASW). *Ibid.*, 126-127; the final report listed Richard Pipes as "[t]eam leader." William Van Cleave, Lieutenant General Daniel Graham (U. S. Army, retired), Thomas Wolfe (Rand Corporation), and General John Vogt (U. S. Air Force, retired) were referred to as "Associates," while Ambassador Foy Kohler, Paul Nitze, Ambassador Seymour Weiss, Major General Jasper Welch (U. S. Air Force), and Paul Wolfowitz (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) were members of the "Advisory Panel." See "Intelligence Community Experiment In Competitive Analysis: Soviet Strategic Objectives: An Alternative View, Report of Team 'B,'" December 1976, Record Group 263, Entry 23, Box 1, National Archives II (College Park, Maryland), iv; for background on Team B, see John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 622-624; Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy*, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 212-213; and Jerry W. Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 197-204.

Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson (Democrat-Washington). According to Wolfowitz, the experiment "demonstrated that it was possible to construct a sharply different view of Soviet motivation from the consensus view of the analysts, and one that provided a much closer fit to the Soviets' observed behavior" ²² Other alumni of Team B share Wolfowitz's assessment. Paul Nitze, veteran Washington insider and another advisor on the 1976 project, re-examined the report when it was de-classified and told the *Washington Post*: "I don't find anything wrong with it at all." ²³ Not surprisingly, the most vocal defender of Team B has been Pipes himself. In a 1986 article in *Commentary*, he claimed that liberals had unfairly maligned his panel. "So preoccupied were the politicians, journalists, and left-wing intellectuals with what they presumed to have been the motives of Team B and the potential political fallout from its findings that they never bothered to inquire whether its principal conclusion was correct," he observed. ²⁴ Pipes, an unrepentant cold warrior, suggests in his memoirs that the legacy of Team B directly contributed to Ronald Reagan's victory in the 1980 presidential election, contending that "while we [supporters of Reagan] argued on the basis of facts our opponents either spoke in terms of vague generalities or else resorted to ridicule and abuse." ²⁵

The Team A/Team B experiment began at the end of August 1976 and ran through December. The Team B panel on missile precision believed that

²² Mann, 74.

²³ Don Oberdorfer, "Report Saw Soviet Buildup for War," *Washington Post*, 12 October 1992, A11.

²⁴ Richard Pipes, "Team B: The Reality Behind the Myth," *Commentary* 82 (October 1986): 36.

²⁵ Richard Pipes, *Vixi: Memoirs of a Non-Belonger* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 141.

CIA analysts had underestimated the accuracy of Soviet ICBMs, but the real controversy unfolded when Pipes's panel clashed with their CIA counterparts. Despite the claims of Team B members about their panel's objectivity, it is difficult to believe that prior convictions did not influence their approach to the experiment. In fact, it would be something of an understatement to describe the members as hard-liners. Pipes, a Jewish émigré from Poland, had been forever changed by his first-hand encounters with the Nazis in the 1930s. "When you see this violence, when you see these cruel barbarities, you tend to look at things more realistically," he later argued.²⁶ Prior to his involvement with Team B, he had developed a reputation for criticizing the idea that American society and Soviet society would eventually experience a peaceful convergence. Pipes believed that there was an irreconcilable and fundamental difference between communism and democracy, which would inevitably lead to conflict.²⁷

Two other hard-liners on the panel were Professor William Van Cleave and Lieutenant General Daniel O. Graham. Van Cleave taught at the University of Southern California, and he had participated in the SALT negotiations in 1971. Van Cleave expressed significant reservations about these talks, and when secret information on SALT appeared in the *New York Times*, the Nixon administration considered him a prime suspect for the leak. Although he passed a polygraph, he did not deny talking with William Beecher, the *Times* reporter, and acknowledged there existed "some

²⁶ Sam Tanenhaus, "The Hard-Liner," *Boston Globe*, 2 November 2003, G1.

²⁷ Pipes, *Vixi*, 129-131.

possibility that I might have said something that could be taken to be an indiscretion—but I didn't think so."²⁸

Like Van Cleave, Lieutenant General Graham was deeply suspicious of the SALT process. Graham specifically distrusted CIA analysts for not taking a tougher stance on the Soviet Union; "There are more liberals per square foot in the CIA than any other part of government," he would say later.²⁹ This antipathy can be traced to an earlier confrontation that Graham had with the Agency during Vietnam while he was in charge of intelligence estimates for the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). A headstrong CIA analyst named Sam Adams asserted that the military was significantly undercounting enemy forces, which led to a heated confrontation in Saigon. Military intelligence refused to accept any estimate that placed the enemy order-of-battle above 300,000. Adams's calculations indicated that the so-called irregular forces—dismissed by the Army as women, children, and old men—needed to be included in the statistics, because a large percentage of American casualties were the result of booby traps. In other words, since Vietnam was not a conventional war, Adams argued that the order-of-battle had to be adjusted accordingly. He estimated that enemy forces totaled 500,000-600,000, a number that horrified military intelligence.³⁰

²⁸ Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 156.

²⁹ Graham quoted in Sanders, 198.

³⁰ Sam Adams, *War of Numbers: An Intelligence Memoir* (South Royalton, Vermont: Steerforth Press, 1994), Chp. 5, esp. 111-118; C. Michael Hiam, *Who The Hell Are We Fighting?: The Story of Sam Adams and the Vietnam Intelligence Wars* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Steerforth Press, 2006), Chp. 7, esp. 114-115; Adams originally went public with the controversy in 1975. See Sam Adams, "Vietnam Cover-Up: Playing War With Numbers," *Harper's*, May 1975, 41-44, 62-73; for a critical view of Adams, see James J. Wirtz, "Intelligence to Please?: The Order of Battle Controversy During the Vietnam War," *Political Science*

Much to the dismay of Adams, however, the CIA essentially accepted the MACV estimates in September 1967. Adams never forgave the CIA for refusing to challenge the military's numbers, and his story would eventually receive national attention in 1982 with CBS's "The Uncounted Enemy." In response to the accusations, General William Westmorland sued CBS. The resulting trial convinced Adams that "[i]t wasn't right to pin the whole thing on Westy As far as cutting the local forces, not many people knew. That was a Danny [Graham] operation approved by General Davidson" ³¹ Ironically, while Adams protested to his superiors at the CIA and fell into disfavor, Graham received promotions from the military, and he eventually became the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA).

Graham, Van Cleave, and the other members of Team B, believed that the CIA was not recognizing the true dimensions of the Soviet threat. In their meetings with CIA analysts (Team A), there were heated confrontations described as "absolutely bloody."³² "Sometimes we left them speechless," an unidentified Team B participant told the *New York Times*. "We had men of great prestige, some of them with memories going back 25 years or more, and they made devastating critiques of the agency estimates."³³ Team B reviewed old NIEs from 1962 to 1975, castigated their methodology, and outlined recommendations for changes. The CIA assigned junior analysts to Team A,

Quarterly 106 (Summer 1991): 239-263. Even though Wirtz criticizes the CIA's methodology, he concedes that "the general thrust of its critique of American policy [in Vietnam] has been vindicated by events." *Ibid.*, 261.

³¹ Bob Brewin and Sydney Shaw, *Vietnam On Trial: Westmoreland vs. CBS* (New York: Atheneum, 1987), 373.

³² David Binder, "New C. I. A. Estimate Finds Soviet Seeks Superiority In Arms," *New York Times*, 26 December 1976, 14.

³³ *Ibid.*

and their counterparts in the experiment saw the mismatch as an opportunity to influence the CIA's assessment of the Soviet Union. "I don't want to tell you guys you're going to lose your jobs if you don't get on board, but that's the way it is," Graham allegedly declared in one of the meetings at CIA headquarters.³⁴

The report that Team B submitted in December 1976 has been described as NSC-68 redux. NSC-68, of course, was a National Security Council document approved in 1950 that called for a massive military build-up in response to the perceived hegemonic intentions of the Soviet Union. It is not surprising that Paul Nitze, one of the principal authors of NSC-68, also served on the strategic objectives panel. At the beginning of the Team B report, the authors "agreed that all the evidence points to an undeviating Soviet commitment to what is euphemistically called 'the worldwide triumph of socialism' but in fact connotes global Soviet hegemony."³⁵ The third section of the study, which dealt specifically with the USSR's strategic objectives, presented an even darker view of the Cold War. Although the Soviets would prefer to destroy the capitalist system without fighting a war, Team B concluded that "*the Soviet Union is nevertheless preparing for a Third World War as if it were unavoidable* [italics original]."³⁶ "The intensity and scope of the current Soviet military effort in peacetime is without parallel in

³⁴ Graham quoted in Sanders, 200.

³⁵ "Intelligence Community Experiment In Competitive Analysis: Soviet Strategic Objectives: An Alternative View, Report of Team 'B,'" 5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

twentieth century history," they added, "its only counterpart being Nazi remilitarization of the 1930's."³⁷

The central thesis outlined in the report was that the Soviet leadership did not accept the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). Beginning in the early 1960s, American policymakers believed that the Soviet Union wanted to achieve nuclear parity with the United States. From their perspective, the quantity of nuclear weapons on both sides made it irrational for either country to launch a first-strike, since the subsequent retaliation would be suicidal. The advocates of MAD assumed that the Soviets would act rationally as nuclear weapons proliferated. But Team B vehemently disagreed with mirror-imaging, the tendency to make predictions based on American pre-conceptions: "[t]his conceptual flaw is perhaps the single gravest cause of the misunderstanding of Soviet strategic objectives found in past and current NIEs."³⁸ The first part of the report, mostly written by Pipes, complained that CIA analysts were too focused on "the hard evidence."³⁹ This evidence was collected using satellites and listening posts, and while such technology could determine the strength of enemy forces (e. g. the number of tanks, planes, ships, missile silos, and army divisions), it could not tell policymakers what the Soviets planned to do with their weapons. Moreover, it also could not explain why certain military projects were pursued and others abandoned. "Facts of themselves are mute: they are like

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

the scattered letters of an alphabet that the reader must arrange in sequence according to some system," observed Team B.⁴⁰

In order to understand Soviet intentions, Team B argued that it was important for the intelligence community to comprehend the profound cultural differences between Americans and Russians. Military strategists in the Soviet Union had inherited a history of expansionism, and according to Pipes, they continued to embrace the teachings of A. V. Suvorov, a Russian field marshal in the 1700s. (The report refers to Suvorov's treatise as the "science of conquest," but interestingly, Raymond Garthoff has explained "that the correct translation . . . is 'the science of winning' or the 'science of victory.'")⁴¹ The Soviets, unlike Americans, viewed nuclear warheads as just another weapon in their military arsenal. Most importantly, they were convinced that they could prevail over the United States in the event of nuclear war: "The evidence suggests that the Soviet leaders are first and foremost offensively rather than defensively minded. They think not in terms of nuclear stability, mutual assured destruction, or strategic sufficiency, but of an effective nuclear war-fighting capability."⁴² From the perspective of Team B, "both détente and SALT are seen by Soviet leaders not as cooperative efforts to ensure global peace, but as means more effectively to compete with the United States."⁴³ The Soviets, in other words, were lulling American policymakers into a state of complacency.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Garthoff quoted in Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 164.

⁴² "Intelligence Community Experiment In Competitive Analysis: Soviet Strategic Objectives: An Alternative View, Report of Team 'B,'" 2-3.

⁴³ Ibid., 6.

In the second section, the authors outlined specific problems with predictions in the NIEs. Team B said that "*Soviet strategic forces have yet to reflect any constraining effect of civil economy competition, and are unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future* [italics original]."⁴⁴ They warned that the CIA did not fully understand the danger of the Backfire bomber, predicting the plane's deployment "in substantial numbers, with perhaps 500 aircraft off the line by early 1984."⁴⁵ In other areas of their analysis, Team B members were puzzled by the lack of hard evidence to support their theories. For instance, they became convinced that the Soviets were developing non-acoustic technology to enhance their anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities. Rather than allowing the facts to undermine this belief, however, they concluded that the absence of evidence might mean "that the Soviets have, in fact, deployed some operational non-acoustic systems and will deploy more in the next few years."⁴⁶ Although Team B was referring to the defensive use of non-acoustic technology, readers of their report were left to wonder about the offensive potential of these systems. If the Soviets could prevent American submarines from retaliating with their SLBMs in a nuclear war, they might consider a preemptive strike to be a realistic option. Team B also worried that Soviet engineers were aggressively pursuing ABM technology through experimental laser and particle beam research, and while acknowledging it was difficult to evaluate development efforts, the report claimed "*that the Soviets have mounted*

⁴⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 32; Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 167.

*ABM efforts in both areas of a magnitude that it is difficult to overestimate [italics original]."*⁴⁷

It is difficult to understand why the alumni of Team B have so vigorously defended the report, for history has demonstrated that many of their assessments were wildly inaccurate. They predicted that the Soviet economy would remain strong in the years ahead, but in reality it soon collapsed under the weight of high military expenditures.⁴⁸ Instead of 500 Backfire bombers in 1984, there were only 235, and Team B had significantly exaggerated their range.⁴⁹ Not surprisingly, the Soviets did not possess a viable non-acoustic system or a research program for lasers and particle beams. In the aftermath of the Cold War, it turned out that the installation in Semipalatinsk, which Air Force General George Keegan believed to be a center of beam weapon research, "was used to test nuclear-powered rocket engines and was totally unrelated to so-called nuclear directed-energy weapons."⁵⁰ In the final analysis, CIA analysts were more accurate and intellectually honest than Team B, but this does not mean the NIEs that they produced were without error. In fact, a group of economists published a study in 1993 that indicated that the CIA had overestimated the strength of the Soviet economy.⁵¹ If the CIA had exaggerated the Soviet threat during the

⁴⁷ "Intelligence Community Experiment In Competitive Analysis: Soviet Strategic Objectives: An Alternative View, Report of Team 'B,'" 34.

⁴⁸ Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 168.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 136-137; James R. Millar et al., "An Evaluation of the CIA's Analysis of Soviet Economic Performance, 1970-90," *Comparative Economic Studies* 35, no. 2 (1993): 33-57. The CIA commissioned the study at the request of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. According to the authors of the study, "[o]ur most significant critical conclusion is that certain CIA

Cold War, it is fair to say that Richard Pipes and his colleagues had engaged in a process of irrational exaggeration in their 1976 study.

The Team A/Team B exercise was an internal experiment, and both groups had access to classified documents. The CIA assigned John Paisley, a retired officer who had previously served as Deputy Chief in the Office of Strategic Research, to be the liaison for Team B. When they wanted to examine a document, members of Team B submitted their request to Paisley, and in most instances, he complied.⁵² Since they had access to secret material with national security implications, it was abundantly clear that participants in the experiment could not reveal any information to outsiders. Yet at the end of October 1976, shortly before the presidential election, an article appeared in the *Boston Globe* that revealed the existence of Team B. Someone on Team B had clearly leaked information to *Globe* reporter William Beecher with the intention of publicizing the neoconservative complaints about American foreign policy. Although Pipes has been accused of the leak in the past, Cahn convincingly argues that “[Daniel Graham], directly or indirectly, communicated with Beecher.”⁵³ Subsequent stories on Team B appeared in both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* after Christmas. During the mid-1970s, conservatives often complained that liberals in Congress could not be trusted with the oversight of the CIA, because their political biases would

products during the 1970s and 80s may indeed have tended to overstate the size of the Soviet economy relative to the U. S. and, particularly, its military threat.” *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵² Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 139-140, 157; CIA officials had warned against putting Graham on the panel. Henry Knoche, the official in charge of CIA analysis, told Bush in August “that Danny has not been the most discreet ex-intelligence official around town.” *Ibid.*, 177.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 176; Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, 253-254.

inevitably lead to security leaks. Ironically, many of the same commentators wholeheartedly endorsed the Team B exercise even after at least one of its members talked with the media. This was a revealing double standard.⁵⁴

Paisley, the coordinator of the exercise, was furious with the leak. When he died in 1978 under circumstances worthy of an espionage film, he was reportedly investigating to determine what had gone wrong with the project. Paisley departed on his sailboat in late September 1978 and never returned. His body was found on October 1 in the Chesapeake Bay near the Patuxent River, and local authorities complained that the CIA's Office of Security contaminated the crime scene. Paisley was quickly cremated, but before this happened, his hands were cut off. The FBI identified the decomposed remains using an old set of fingerprints, because the official prints in Paisley's file could not be found. Although the gunshot wound that killed him entered towards the back of his head and the body had been weighted down, officials at the CIA viewed the death as a suicide. Reports said that radio equipment and CIA documents were found on board Paisley's sailboat, which led to speculation about his friendship with Soviet defector Yuri Nosenko. Since the CIA report on the investigation of Paisley's death remains classified, there is no shortage of conspiracy theories. Tad Szulc concludes that "[i]n the end we do not know, and we may never know, what happened to John Arthur Paisley. However he met his fate, in some sense he

⁵⁴ John Prados describes an incident in which a neo-conservative critical of détente had no qualms about receiving classified CIA material from a disgruntled analyst. "David S. Sullivan, a CIA analyst with the OSR, was fired after disclosing a highly classified CIA report to Senator Henry Jackson and his staff assistant Richard Perle, which concluded that the Soviets had deliberately deceived the U. S. on the size of the fourth-generation missiles." See Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, 243.

may have been the latest casualty of the great intelligence wars that are invisibly waged around us."⁵⁵

As stories about Team B began to circulate, there was a considerable backlash against the project. Ray Cline, a retired CIA official, famously called Team B "a kangaroo court of outside critics all from one point of view."⁵⁶ Henry Kissinger announced in January 1977 that the ordeal was an attempt to "sabotage SALT II."⁵⁷ Even Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev entered the fray, declaring in the same month that it was "absurd and totally unfounded" for anyone to believe that his country was preparing for a nuclear strike.⁵⁸ More than two years after Team B disbanded, a subcommittee of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence completed a review of the exercise. The final report was apparently a toned down version of earlier drafts that had harshly criticized Team B. Although "[t]he committee's report makes no attempt to judge which group's estimates concerning the U. S. S. R. are correct,"⁵⁹ it nevertheless concluded "that the outcome of the exercise was predetermined and the experiment's contribution lessened."⁶⁰ In essence, the report said that

⁵⁵ Tad Szulc, "The Missing C. I. A. Man," *New York Times Magazine*, 7 January 1979, 61; for more on this bizarre episode, see David Binder, "The Tormented Life and Death of a CIA Man," *Look*, 11 June 1979, 6-12, 18, 20; see also Prados, *Lost Crusader*, 2-3. Prados notes that William Colby went missing in the Chesapeake Bay not far from where Paisley did. Colby's body was discovered on May 6, 1996. *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁶ Cline quoted in Robert C. Reich, "Re-examining the Team A-Team B Exercise," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 3 (Fall 1989): 394.

⁵⁷ Kissinger quoted in Pipes, "Team B: The Reality Behind the Myth," 35.

⁵⁸ Brezhnev quoted in Reich, 397.

⁵⁹ Senate Select Committee On Intelligence, Subcommittee on Collection, Production, and Quality, *The National Intelligence Estimates A-B Team Episode Concerning Soviet Strategic Capability and Objectives* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 16 February 1978), 1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

Team B had been loaded with a group of devout conservatives, and recommended that in the future, "outside critiques of NIE's should continue to be conducted, but should, in each instance, be made by expert groups which are broadly representative in character, and whose procedures are thereafter more strictly monitored by the commissioning authorities than obtained in the [Team] A-B case."⁶¹

The review of Team B proved divisive, and three Senators on the committee had separate views attached to the report. Senator Gary Hart (Democrat-Colorado) charged that the "use of selected outside experts was little more than a camouflage for a political effort to force the National Intelligence Estimate to take a more bleak view of the Soviet strategic threat."⁶² Warning of the inherent danger of politicized intelligence, he advised that the writing of estimates must be insulated from external pressures. "Any attempt to bend intelligence to serve political needs other than the truth is a danger as great as the Soviet threat itself," he remarked.⁶³ Senators Daniel P. Moynihan (Democrat-New York) and Malcolm Wallop (Republican-Wyoming) both defended Team B in their separate opinions. Wallop's statement, which was probably written by a staffer named Angelo Codevilla,⁶⁴ complained that the committee's report made Team B look like "a

⁶¹ Ibid., 3.

⁶² Ibid., 7.

⁶³ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁴ Cahn says that Codevilla "alerted Daniel Graham and William Van Cleave about the draft Senate committee report. Codevilla told them the report vilified Team B and was an ad hominem attack on the motivations and qualifications of Team B members." See Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 181.

narrow band of zealots with preconceived notions."⁶⁵ Contrary to this characterization, he said that the members of Team B were justified in their attack on CIA analysts, since "it is quite accurate to characterize the NIE's thrust and tone as very doveish indeed!"⁶⁶

In response to the backlash in the media, Richard Pipes wrote an article for *Commentary* in July 1977 that summarized and attempted to explain the major findings of his panel. He focused on a perceived cultural divide separating the Soviet Union from the United States, emphasizing the idea that Marxism contributed to "an extreme Social-Darwinist outlook on life which today permeates the Russian elite as well as the Russian masses, and which only the democratic intelligentsia and the religious dissenters oppose to any significant extent."⁶⁷ Not only did Soviet leaders believe that they could win a nuclear war, they viewed nuclear weapons as a "compellant" rather than a deterrent.⁶⁸ Pipes made several observations about the Soviets: their population was less concentrated in urban areas than America's; they had aggressively pursued a civil defense program to protect important officials; and they were conditioned by the lessons of history to accept massive casualties in a war. According to Pipes, "the USSR could absorb the loss of 30 million of its people and be no worse off, in terms of human casualties, than it had been at the conclusion of World War II. In other words, all of the USSR's multimillion cities could be destroyed without trace or survivors, and,

⁶⁵ *The National Intelligence Estimates A-B Team Episode Concerning Soviet Strategic Capability and Objectives*, 12.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 13; for an overview of the Senate investigation and report, see Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 180-184; see also Reich, 395-396.

⁶⁷ Richard Pipes, "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War," *Commentary* 64 (July 1977): 26.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

provided that its essential cadres had been saved, it would emerge less hurt in terms of casualties than it was in 1945."⁶⁹ This interpretation led inexorably to the conclusion that the Soviets rejected MAD and were prepared to consider launching a pre-emptive strike under certain circumstances.

Pipes was profoundly skeptical of Soviet intentions, and he argued that this skepticism should be applied to the analysis of Russian documents. "Buried in the flood of seemingly meaningless verbiage," he explained to readers, "nuggets of precious information on Soviet perceptions and intentions can more often than not be unearthed by a trained reader."⁷⁰ He provided the following quotation from a military book on Soviet strategy as an example of such analysis: "[i]t is well known that the essential nature of war as a continuation of politics does not change with changing technology and armament."⁷¹ This sentence might seem innocuous enough to the untrained eye, but Pipes claimed that it was actually a "code phrase" for a sinister strategy, the Soviet belief that "thermonuclear war is not suicidal, it can be fought and won, and thus resort to war must not be ruled out."⁷²

When Pipes published his article in *Commentary*, he had already joined the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), "an organization that saw eye-to-eye with Team B" on the Soviet threat.⁷³ Paul Nitze, an advisor to Team B, helped form the CPD in 1976. Nitze had participated in an organization of the same title in the early 1950s, and he explains in his memoirs that the

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 27.

⁷¹ Ibid., 30.

⁷² Ibid.; a brief outline "of the case *against* Pipes" can be found in Jeffreys-Jones, 225.

⁷³ Pipes, "Team B: The Reality Behind the Myth," 40.

second CPD “owed a spiritual kinship to the first, but otherwise they were unrelated.”⁷⁴ CPD members could be found in both political parties, but they shared a common concern with the Soviet Union. The organization, which was announced after Gerald Ford’s defeat, “conducted press conferences, commissioned opinion polls, and released facts and figures on the strategic balance” with the hope of persuading Americans to adopt a starker view of the USSR.⁷⁵ The CPD challenged SALT II, called for a military build-up, and served as a networking apparatus for critics of the Carter administration.⁷⁶

Ronald Reagan, a prominent member, embraced the CPD foreign policy views in his 1980 campaign. After his election, over fifty of the organization’s members would serve in his administration, including several veterans of Team B (Richard Pipes, Paul Nitze, William Van Cleave, and Seymour Weiss).⁷⁷ Graham did not join the administration, but he established the High Frontier organization to lobby for a futuristic missile defense system in outer-space. The High Frontier contributed to Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).⁷⁸ As Jim Klurfield remarked in *Newsday*, “on November 4,

⁷⁴ Paul H. Nitze (with Ann M. Smith and Steven L. Rearden), *From Hiroshima to Glasnost: At the Center of Decision* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989), 354n; for more on the original Committee on the Present Danger, see Steven Casey, “Selling NSC-68: The Truman Administration, Public Opinion, and the Politics of Mobilization, 1950-51,” *Diplomatic History* 29 (September 2005): 686-687; see also Sanders, Chp. 2 and Chp. 3.

⁷⁵ Pipes, “Team B: The Reality Behind the Myth,” 40; Sanders, Chp. 6; Charles Tyroler, II, ed., *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger* (Washington and New York: Pergamon, 1984); Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 28-29, 188-189.

⁷⁶ Tyroler, 99-169.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, ix-xi; Sanders, 287-288.

⁷⁸ Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Public Affairs, 2000), 277; Graham had previously launched an attack on SALT II in *Shall America Be Defended?: SALT II and Beyond* (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House Publishers, 1979).

1980, Team B, in essence, became Team A."⁷⁹ It is true that Nitze would later become a driving force behind arms negotiations with the Soviet Union during Reagan's second term, but most of Team B never wavered in their distrust of Soviet intentions. For instance, Pipes wrote a *New York Times* editorial titled "The Russians Are Still Coming" in October 1989. He warned that "world stability and peace are nowhere as close as much of world opinion would like to believe," noting that the Soviets continued to interfere in the affairs of Third World countries like Syria, Angola, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan.⁸⁰ Pipes even theorized that Mikhail Gorbachev might be using détente "to restore [the Soviet Union's] flagging economy and popular morale, before resuming a worldwide offensive."⁸¹ Exactly one month after this was printed, the Berlin Wall came tumbling down. The collapse of the Soviet Union soon followed.

Pipes's failure to predict the end of the Cold War and his paranoid rants would be comical were it not for the damaging impact that Team B had on CIA analysis. In his succinct assessment of the Team A/Team B experiment, Robert C. Reich has argued that the principal short-term result was the revision of the intelligence community's most important National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet forces (NIE 11-3/8-76).⁸² Although Bush acknowledged in a memo that the final draft of the NIE "presents a starker appreciation of Soviet strategic capabilities and objectives," he also observed that "it is but the latest in a series of estimates that have done so as evidence

⁷⁹ Klurfield quoted in Pipes, "Team B: The Reality Behind the Myth," 40.

⁸⁰ Richard Pipes, "The Russians Are Still Coming," *New York Times*, 9 October 1989, A17.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Reich, 396.

has accumulated on the continuing persistence and vigor of Soviet programs in the strategic offensive and defensive fields.”⁸³ Bush vigorously denied that Team B had pressured CIA analysts into modifying the estimate; “There is no truth to such allegations,” he said.⁸⁴

It is now abundantly clear that Pipes’s report contributed to the increasing politicization of intelligence. Team B entered the scene at a moment when the CIA was at the crossroads. Agency officials had been dealing with Vice President Rockefeller’s Commission, Congressional hearings, *Counter-Spy* exposes, and low morale among employees. There had been significant internal shake-ups as well. In 1973, then CIA director William Colby disbanded the Board of National Estimates (BNE) and replaced it with twelve National Intelligence Officers (NIOs).⁸⁵ While the BNE was designed to be insulated from outside pressures, the NIOs, who were either in charge of geographic regions or specific issues of concern, answered directly to Colby. Although there is no comprehensive history of the NIO system, it is fair to say that it was more vulnerable to politicization than the BNE, which had worked effectively for two decades.⁸⁶ Colby acknowledged in his memoirs that NIOs “were to have no more staff than

⁸³ George Bush to “Recipients of National Intelligence Estimate 11-3/8-76, ‘Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Conflict Through the Mid-1980s,’” Record Group 263, Entry 23, Box 1, National Archives II (College Park, Maryland), 1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁵ William Colby and Peter Forbath, *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 351-353; Prados, *Lost Crusader*, 276-278.

⁸⁶ Ray S. Cline calls Colby’s decision to abolish the BNE in 1973 “a tragedy,” arguing that “NIEs ought to be responsive to the evidence, not the policymaker.” Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars: Blueprint of the Essential CIA* (Washington, DC: Acropolis Books, 1976), 140; for a similar perspective, see Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, 293.

one assistant and a secretary so that they could identify totally with my position and not develop a role of their own."⁸⁷ The system may have been an effective tool for streamlining the bureaucracy at Langley, but unlike the BNE, it was not conducive to independent thinking. If the Team A/Team B exercise had happened at a different time, it is probable that its impact would have been less noteworthy. Under the circumstances, however, Team B's findings put further pressure on CIA analysts and successfully accelerated the shift to a darker interpretation of Soviet objectives.

Yet many conservatives were not satisfied with the changes in CIA estimates. They did not forget Team B's attack on the Agency, and shortly after Reagan's election in 1980, his CIA transition team formulated draconian proposals for intelligence reform. This team, headed by Bill Middendorf, had several members with different backgrounds, but as John Ranelagh observes, "Angelo Codevilla led the ideological assault [against the Agency]."⁸⁸ While serving as Senator Wallop's staffer on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI), Codevilla had vehemently disagreed with the Senate report in 1978 that lambasted Team B. It is therefore not surprising that the preliminary transition report in November criticized the CIA in a strident tone. Although many policymakers in Washington believed "that the CIA is a highly professional, non-political agency that produces 'objective' intelligence," the transition team warned that "[t]hose assertions are arrant

⁸⁷ Colby, 352-353.

⁸⁸ Ranelagh, 659. Laurence Silberman was initially in charge of the transition team. In addition to Codevilla, the members included Ed Hennelly, John A. Bross, Walter Pforzheimer, George Carver, Mark Schneider, Kenneth deGraffenreid, and Roy Godson. Ibid.

nonsense”⁸⁹ The report described the Agency as “an elitist organization” that planned “to capture and co-opt the next Director.”⁹⁰ During their meetings, the team outlined a long list of perceived intelligence failures that rehashed portions of the Team B critique, blaming analysts at Langley for “the consistent gross misstatement of Soviet global objectives.”⁹¹ The team concluded that “[t]hese failures are of such enormity that they cannot help but suggest to any objective observer that the agency itself is compromised to an unprecedented extent and that its paralysis is attributable to causes more sinister than incompetence.”⁹²

Codevilla developed a proposal to dismantle the CIA that would give rise to three separate institutions: “a new counterintelligence agency composed of CIA and FBI staffs in this field; an analytical agency made up of people from the Estimates side of the agency; and an operations agency to perform the functions of the old CIA clandestine service.”⁹³ Unfortunately for Codevilla, there were former CIA officials on the team who opposed his radical approach. George Carver, who had earlier outlined the dangers of the Team A/Team B experiment to Bush, joined forces with John Bross. Bross had served in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II before embarking on a successful career at the CIA. When William Casey, Reagan’s campaign manager, was selected to run the CIA, Carver and Bross

⁸⁹ Ibid., 661.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 664.

⁹² Ibid., 665.

⁹³ Ibid., 660. The joint CIA-FBI counterintelligence proposal was not included in the final report on December 22, 1980. Ibid., 669-670; Bob Woodward, *VEIL: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 60.

warned him about the inherent danger of Codevilla's plan. According to one account, "Bross argued that the crazies on the transition team were trying to sell Casey a bill of goods from some spy novel, some romantic notion of a golden espionage past."⁹⁴ The anti-Codevilla forces prevailed in the end, and Casey disbanded the transition team. His biographer provides a thoughtful summary of this decision: "The report reminded Casey of what he had concluded long ago about his fellow conservatives: the greatest enemies of a cause are its blindest believers. He was not about to take over an empire in order to dismantle it."⁹⁵

One wonders what would have happened if a different person was appointed CIA director under Reagan. Would they have embraced or rejected Codevilla's strategy? It is, of course, impossible to provide a satisfactory answer to this counterfactual question, but it is nevertheless clear that the CIA came far closer to being dismantled in 1980 than it did in the aftermath of the Congressional hearings five years earlier. This conclusion emphasizes the fundamental importance of Team B's legacy. So much attention has been given to Senator Frank Church and Representative Otis Pike that "The Year of Intelligence" is wrongly remembered as a liberal attack on the intelligence community, when, in reality, the conservative offensive that began in August 1976 had a far greater impact in the long term.

The hearings directly contributed to the establishment of intelligence oversight committees in both the Senate and House of Representatives, but

⁹⁴ Woodward, 75.

⁹⁵ Joseph E. Persico, *Casey: From the OSS to the CIA* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 204-205; for a detailed explanation of Casey's decision to end the transition team, see Ranelagh, 671.

they did not lead to permanent changes at the CIA. In fact, in the midst of the sensational investigations, the Agency was mounting a covert venture in Angola.⁹⁶ A few years later the CIA, which had allegedly been emasculated by Pike and Church, launched an operation in Afghanistan that would eventually become its largest since Vietnam. The Team B exercise, unlike the Congressional investigations, did undermine the CIA. The hard-line conclusions of Pipes and his committee helped push CIA analysts to be increasingly skeptical of Soviet intentions. To be sure, there had been political pressures on the CIA since its establishment in 1947, but the politicization of analysis that resulted from Team B was unprecedented. In a different era, the BNE might have resisted this outside pressure. Yet in 1976 the BNE no longer existed, and Team B took full advantage of the vacuum.

Richard Pipes, like the editors of *Counter-Spy*, believed that the CIA was keeping secrets from the American people. Rather than worrying about the morality of covert operations in the Third World, however, Pipes believed that the CIA was withholding information that indicated the Soviets were readying themselves for World War III. He represented a markedly different challenge to the CIA than critics on the Left, but he shared with them a concern about the secrets hidden away inside Langley vaults. In the end, Pipes and his fellow conservatives proved far more successful in their attempt to "reform" the CIA, especially when compared to the rapid demise of *Counter-Spy* magazine. Agency officials fended off the Left, but they were less successful in dealing with the reactionary right. The politicization of

⁹⁶ For an insider's account of the Angolan operation, see John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1978).

intelligence since the late 1970s, and its tragic consequences for American foreign relations, is the undeniable legacy of Team B.

CHAPTER III
THE CIA ON THE SILVER SCREEN, 1973-1975

What is it with you people? You think not getting caught in a lie is the same thing as telling the truth.—Joe Turner, Three Days of the Condor

Turner . . . comes close to wreaking more havoc on the C. I. A. in three days than any number of House and Senate investigating committees have done in years.—Vincent Canby

Between 1973 and 1976, the public became increasingly distrustful of the CIA. In the summer of 1973, only 19% of Americans questioned in a Gallup poll had a negative view of the Agency. Two years later the number of negative responses would rise to 39%,¹ and by January 1976, a separate polling service found that almost 50% of those surveyed disapproved of the CIA's performance.² When George H. W. Bush took over at Langley, he desperately wanted to escape from the skeletons that had been unleashed during the Congressional investigations. He delivered a speech to CIA employees on March 4, 1976 inside the Bubble, the Agency's domed auditorium, and although he acknowledged that recent polling data indicated the Agency had "a fundamental public relations problem," he did his best to put a positive spin on the situation.³ Bush told the audience that the Harris Poll was somewhat misleading, since it did not take into consideration the pervasiveness of the anti-establishment mentality in the aftermath of

¹ Cynthia M. Nolan, "Seymour Hersh's Impact on the CIA," *The International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 12, no. 1 (1999): 21.

² Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA and FBI* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 140, 224n122.

³ DCI Speech to CIA: Today and Tomorrow, 4 March 1976, 3. CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

Watergate. "We're going through a time in our country's history where the American people seem to take delight in tearing down our institutions," he observed, ". . . there were some mistakes made here . . . but I'll not be troubled by these numbers because I'm not sure that the CIA, in terms of basic support from the American people, is suffering more than other institutions."⁴

The movies that appeared in the mid-1970s support Bush's argument that there was widespread disillusionment in the country. At the same time, however, the CIA came to symbolize American fears of government conspiracies and the threat they presented to the nation's democratic ideals. "[W]e can already look back to Hollywood in the 70s as the period when the dominant ideology *almost* disintegrated," argues film scholar Robin Wood.⁵ Likewise, Peter Lev concludes in *American Films of the 70s* "that the films of the period constitute a dialogue or debate about the nature and the prospects of American society."⁶ Happy endings were temporarily abandoned, and social commentary became increasingly popular. Until now, scholars have claimed that the negative depictions of the Agency on the silver screen during the 1970s represented Hollywood's response to the "Year of Intelligence." Through an examination of five espionage movies that premiered between 1973 and 1975—*Scorpio*, *The Spook Who Sat By The Door*, *Breakout*, *Three Days of*

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Robin Wood, *Hollywood From Vietnam To Reagan . . . And Beyond*, rev. ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 62; for an excellent history of Hollywood moviemaking during the 1970s, see Peter Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

⁶ Peter Lev, *American Films of the 70s: Conflicting Visions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), xi.

the Condor, and *The Killer Elite*—it becomes clear that screenwriters and directors actually anticipated the backlash against the intelligence community. These films outwardly criticized the intelligence community's obsession with secrecy, portraying the CIA as an elitist, cold-blooded organization that engaged in assassinations, cover-ups, and political intrigue.

In the spring of 1973, MGM released Michael Winner's *Scorpio*, which marked the beginning of a new era in spy films. *Scorpio* offers what is perhaps the first unflinchingly negative portrayal of the CIA in film history; a poster for the movie depicted a dead body sprawled across the seal of the CIA, and the trailer boldly declared: "When the Agency wants to get rid of someone, they do it, even when it's their best man."⁷ When the film begins, CIA assassin Gerald Cross (Burt Lancaster) is overseas on assignment with his protégé Scorpio (Alain Delon). Cross soon discovers that the CIA has turned against him, and after he goes on the run, a top Agency official convinces Scorpio to track down and kill Cross in exchange for money and Cross's job.

Agency goons break into Cross's home in hopes of gathering information that will help them in the manhunt, but his wife returns home early from a party, confronts the intruders, and gets killed. Cross hunts down and kills his former boss in retaliation. Yet he is ultimately unable to evade Scorpio's wrath, and as Cross lays dying in a parking garage, he laments the futility of their chosen profession: "it's a bit like monopoly, only more people get hurt. There's no good and no bad. The object is not to win,

⁷ "Theatrical Trailer," *Scorpio*, DVD, directed by Michael Winner (1973; Culver City, California: MGM Home Entertainment, 2000).

but not to lose, and the only rule is to stay in the game."⁸ The CIA apparently has no interest in rewarding Scorpio with Cross's job, for at the end they send an assassin to eliminate him.

Despite the movie's fast pace, critics complained about the convoluted plot. From Roger Ebert's perspective, *Scorpio* contained "[t]oo many characters, too many situations, [and] finally too many twists."⁹ The reviewer for the *New York Times* was even more blunt: "There are people who take [Michael] Winner seriously . . . but I doubt if anyone could take 'Scorpio' seriously, and that is the best I can say about it."¹⁰ Winner has argued that the movie would have received a better reception among critics if its release had been delayed to take advantage of the headlines about the Watergate cover-up. "Watergate and the C.I.A. had not quite hit the big time. I think just nine months later and we would have done much better in America," he explains.¹¹ In an interview in 1994, Winner continued to characterize *Scorpio* as a prophetic movie: "It showed the CIA doing things that nobody at the time believed they did. And that now everybody believes they do."¹²

In fairness to Winner, the movie did predate both Watergate and the revelations about the Agency's assassination plots. In fact, during the filming of *Scorpio* in 1972, some of the cast and crew were staying at the Watergate complex, and shortly before the break-in at the office of the Democratic

⁸ Bill Harding, *The Films of Michael Winner* (London: Frederick Muller Limited, 1978), 91; "Two For One" (31), *Scorpio*, DVD.

⁹ Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times*, 1 May 1973, www.rogerebert.com (accessed February 9, 2005).

¹⁰ Roger Greenspun, "Winner's 'Scorpio,' Spy Melodrama, Bows," *The New York Times*, 19 April 1973, 52.

¹¹ Harding, 89.

¹² Winner quoted in Gary Fishgall, *Against Type: The Biography of Burt Lancaster* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 285.

National Committee, Burt Lancaster and Alain Delon had a chance encounter with the burglars.¹³ Gerald Wilson, who wrote the final screenplay for *Scorpio*, clearly envisioned the movie as a blistering critique of modern espionage. As he explained in an interview, "I know people connected with the intelligence business and I find the whole thing repugnant; self-servicing, brutal, ugly and obsolete in the extreme. So I decided to write a story which combined that with the question of real loyalties, instead of boundary loyalties."¹⁴ Wilson's negative assessment of spying finds expression in Cross's interaction with KGB agent Sergei Zharkov (Paul Scofield) and his dying words; however, Robert Gregg exaggerates when he describes the movie as "one of the strongest indictments of the Cold War on film."¹⁵ Zharkov wins the respect of the audience not only by protecting Cross, but also through his forceful renunciation of Soviet atrocities during the Stalin era. In the final analysis, the film's political message remains in the distant background. "The plot is a peg to hang the action on," lamented Roger Ebert, "and there is a lot of action in *Scorpio*. Maybe too much."¹⁶ Even Burt Lancaster confessed to the inherent limitations of the movie, describing it as "nothing incisive, just a lot of action [it's] one of those things you do as part of your living, but you try to avoid doing them as much as you can."¹⁷

Unlike *Scorpio*, Ivan Dixon's *The Spook Who Sat By The Door* (1973) never allows the action to undermine its commentary on the CIA. The movie,

¹³ *Ibid.*, 286; Fred Emery, *Watergate: The Corruption of American Politics and the Fall of Richard Nixon* (New York: Random House, 1994), 130.

¹⁴ Harding, 89.

¹⁵ Robert W. Gregg, *International Relations on Film* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 100.

¹⁶ Ebert, 1 May 1973.

¹⁷ Lancaster quoted in Fishgall, 286.

which is based on a Sam Greenlee novel, begins in the office of a United States Senator who is trailing in the polls. Realizing that the black vote would secure his re-election, the senator decides to deliver a speech accusing the CIA of racial discrimination.¹⁸ The CIA responds to the criticism with a special recruitment program for African-Americans. The only recruit that successfully completes CIA training is Dan Freeman (Lawrence Cook). Freeman, a veteran of the Korean War, is a stereotypical "Uncle Tom" on the surface, and he does not protest his appointment as the Agency's "top secret reproduction center section chief."¹⁹ When Freeman is not busy making copies, he also volunteers to lead tours to show how the Agency is "integrating."²⁰

Everything changes after Freeman resigns from the CIA. He moves to Chicago and finds employment as a social worker, but the audience quickly learns that this is simply a cover job. Freeman uses his CIA training to develop an underground guerilla movement, telling his recruits that black men are ideal secret agents for domestic operations. "A black man with a mop, tray, or broom in his hand can go damn near anywhere in this country," he explains, "and a smiling black man is invisible."²¹ Freeman teaches his followers the fundamentals of black nationalism; "what we got now is a

¹⁸ "Give It To Me Straight," *The Spook Who Sat By The Door*, DVD, directed by Ivan Dixon (1973; Monarch Home Video: Obsidian Home Entertainment, 2004); former CIA officer Victor Marchetti revealed that an internal study in 1967 indicated "there were fewer than twenty blacks among the CIA's approximately 12,000 non-clerical employees" See Marchetti and John D. Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974; reprint, New York: Dell Publishing, 1980), 238.

¹⁹ "Congratulations," *The Spook Who Sat By The Door*, DVD.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "The Next Stage of Your Training," *The Spook Who Sat By The Door*, DVD.

colony, but what we want to create is a new nation," he declares.²² And since he believes "there is no way that the United States can police the world and keep us on our ass too unless we cooperate," Freeman advocates a militant challenge to the power structure.²³ After the Chicago police shoot a black man in the back, there is a riot that prompts Freeman's organization to initiate a well-coordinated insurgency.

The National Guard is ordered to the city, but they prove no match for the well trained "black freedom fighters of Chicago."²⁴ Freeman's men capture the commander of the National Guard, paint his face black, force him to drop acid, and then kill him. CIA officials cannot understand the success of the urban uprising, and they become convinced that the Soviets have organized the insurgency. Not realizing that Freeman developed the movement using cells, the CIA wrongly believes that they can stop the rebellion by eliminating the leader. The audience learns that the rebellion has spread to other cities, and the film ends with an ominous radio announcement: "The president has declared a state of national emergency."²⁵

Although it was shot on a low budget, *The Spook Who Sat By The Door* became a cult classic in African-American communities. It also inspired future black moviemakers like Robert Townsend. When it was released in the fall of 1973, most reviewers were clearly not prepared for the movie's aggressive tone. Vincent Canby of the *New York Times* concluded that "[t]he rage it projects is real, even though the means by which that rage is projected

²² "Nightmare," *The Spook Who Sat By The Door*, DVD.

²³ "We Can Paralyze This Country," *The Spook Who Sat By The Door*, DVD.

²⁴ "Gotta Go," *The Spook Who Sat By The Door*, DVD.

²⁵ "The Revolution," *The Spook Who Sat By The Door*, DVD.

are stereotypes."²⁶ The reviewer for the *Christian Science Monitor* explained that the film "culminates in a violent series of scenes that can only be described as an incitement to riot," calling it "a virulent form of propaganda [and] as much of a blueprint for violence as 'Battle of Algiers.'"²⁷ Film critics recognized the powerful emotions unleashed by *The Spook Who Sat By The Door*, but they obviously were troubled with its violent implications. In many ways, the criticism directed at Dixon's movie anticipated what some reviewers would later say about Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing* (1989), which also ends with a black uprising in the inner city.

The Spook Who Sat By The Door mysteriously disappeared from circulation until it was re-released on VHS in 1993, and there have been unproven allegations that the government may have acted to suppress the movie. It should have been clear to reviewers in 1973 that the film was more of a cautionary tale than a call to arms. Adrienne Manns, one of the few writers at the time who seemed to understand the movie, explained in the *Washington Post* that "its triumph is that it lends humanity to persons who are usually portrayed as vicious, savage, sub-humans—the street gangs, the young people who have in many cities terrorized the communities they live in. They are the real heroes, this time."²⁸ As Manns understood, the film addresses conflict within the black community while arguing that race is a social construction. Freeman warns his followers that "this is not about hate

²⁶ Vincent Canby, "Screen: Using the C. I. A.," *The New York Times*, 22 September 1973, 18.

²⁷ Louise Sweeny, "The Spook Who Sat Next To The Door," *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 September 1973, 14.

²⁸ Adrienne Manns, "A Constructive Black Movie," *Washington Post*, 30 October 1973, E4.

white folks."²⁹ In fact, Freeman selects Willie (David Lemieux), who is either white or incredibly light-skinned, to serve as the organization's "minister of information."³⁰ The movie also provides a stinging indictment of America's black bourgeoisie for their unwillingness to acknowledge what is happening in the ghetto. The black bourgeoisie is best symbolized in the character of Dawson (J. A. Preston), a Chicago police officer and Freeman's childhood friend. When Dawson discovers that Freeman is the leader of the insurgency, he attempts to stop him; in the confrontation that ensues, Freeman kills Dawson. Although *The Spook Who Sat By The Door* appeared in the midst of the blaxploitation phenomenon, it was definitely not a blaxploitation movie. Lawrence Cook's riveting performance as Dan Freeman helps to make the film one of the most unique ever made about the CIA.

It is important to emphasize that both *Scorpio* and *The Spook Who Sat By The Door* were conceived before the Watergate break-in. As a consequence, it is wrong to characterize these movies as a response to the criminal activities of the Nixon administration. Peter Lev has observed that film scholars should not overlook the continued popularity of movies with conservative themes. "If the early 1970s were the period of youth culture on film," he says, "they were also the period of right-wing cop films starring Clint Eastwood and Charles Bronson."³¹ Lev's conclusion is undoubtedly true when taking a broad view of the decade's movies, but there are also films that complicate his assessment. He points to Charles Bronson's role in Michael Winner's *Death Wish* (1974) as a classic example of a conservative Hollywood movie. Yet

²⁹ "Minister of Information," *The Spook Who Sat By The Door*, DVD.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Lev, xviii.

Winner had previously directed *Scorpio*, and Bronson would soon appear in *Breakout* (1975).

Like *Death Wish*, *Breakout* is intended primarily as entertainment; however, in *Breakout* it is the CIA that engages in criminal activity, not urban hoodlums. The CIA frames Jay Wagner (Robert Duvall) for a murder committed in Mexico, and after Wagner's extradition from Chile, the Mexican government convicts and imprisons him. His grandfather is Harris Wagner (John Huston), president of the Transpacific Fruit and Steamship Corporation. Early in the movie, Harris Wagner meets with a CIA officer (Paul Mantee) in New York City. The CIA officer informs him that they have successfully framed his grandson, and it appears that Jay Wagner has done something to embarrass the CIA. The CIA officer expresses disappointment that Jay's grandfather intervened to prevent his assassination, since he worries that Jay might try to escape from prison.³²

Predictably, Jay's wife Anne (Jill Ireland) organizes a rescue attempt and hires a freelance pilot named Nick Colton (Charles Bronson). Colton, a man of few words, agrees to fly Anne into Mexico, but he is initially unaware of her intentions. The first rescue attempt fails, prompting Colton to develop a scheme in which he sends his friend Hawk (Randy Quaid) into the prison disguised as a prostitute. The Mexican authorities are not tricked by such a cunning plan, and they eject Hawk from the prison after severely beating him. This makes Colton even more determined to exact vengeance on the

³² "The Frame-Up's Complete" (3), *Breakout*, DVD, directed by Tom Gries (1975; Burbank, California: Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment, 2002).

“pepperbellies” and rescue Wagner.³³ For the third rescue attempt, Colton lands a helicopter in the prison yard at a pre-arranged time. Wagner is rescued this time, but unbeknownst to him, his life remains in danger. When flying back to the United States, customs officials at Brownsville, Texas order Colton to land for an inspection. The Agency has arranged this inspection in order to kill Wagner. In the movie’s finale, Colton intervenes to protect Wagner from the CIA officer chasing him. But just as the CIA man is about to shoot Colton on the runway, he is sliced into pieces by the propeller of a departing plane.

In his review of *Breakout*, Roger Ebert explained that he was somewhat surprised “to find Charles Bronson starring in a Ramparts magazine cover story”³⁴ As Ebert notes, the movie is indeed based on a true story. Joel David Kaplan was rescued from a Mexican prison with a helicopter in August 1971 where he had been serving a 28-year sentence for a murder committed a decade earlier. Kaplan, president of the American Sucrose Company, came from a wealthy family. Prior to the helicopter rescue in 1971, there had been several unsuccessful escape attempts. In addition to declaring his innocence, Kaplan claimed that he was connected with the CIA, which might help to explain why he entered Mexico with a fake passport. His uncle, J. M. Kaplan, operated a charitable foundation that the CIA had previously used to funnel over one million dollars into Central America.³⁵ *Breakout* is

³³ “Myrna & Nick” (19), *Breakout*, DVD.

³⁴ Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times*, 29 May 1975, www.rogerebert.com (accessed March 13, 2005).

³⁵ Anthony Ripley, “How an Heir Escaped Jail—by Air,” *The New York Times*, 6 September 1971, 1; “Copter Plucks 2 From a Jail in Mexico,” *The New York Times*, 20 August 1971, 4; “Mexico Says Fugitive Fled to the U. S.,” *The New*

adapted from Eliot Asinof's book about the escape.³⁶ Like *Scorpio*, however, the movie emphasizes action, and it is "more concerned with the rescue mission than with any shadowy political implications."³⁷

The movie does not contain any precise explanation for why the CIA wants Wagner dead, but in comparison to other films with depictions of the CIA, it is somewhat unusual. Patrick McGilligan argues that of all the movies dealing with the Agency that appeared in 1975, *Breakout* "is the most interesting politically, even though it is the least interesting, cinematically."³⁸ "In this film," says McGilligan, "the *entire* CIA is understood as the 'enemy,' not simply a splinter cabal."³⁹ In other words, *Breakout* flagrantly violates one of the most common themes of CIA movies: the idea that the sinister activities of the CIA are attributable to a limited number of rogue agents. It is possible that the CIA officer in *Breakout* is acting on his own, because the audience never sees any other official from the Agency on screen. Yet it seems unlikely that a rogue agent would be able to pressure the Mexican government into framing an innocent American civilian.

The sensational "Year of Intelligence" undoubtedly contributed to the popularity of Hollywood's increasingly negative depictions of the CIA. Kathryn Olmsted correctly identifies *Three Days of the Condor* (1975) as "[t]he

York Times, 21 August 1971, 3; Paul P. Kennedy, "Mexico Weighing Plea By American," *The New York Times*, 7 February 1965, 31.

³⁶ Eliot Asinof, Warren Hinckle, and William W. Turner, *The 10-Second Jailbreak: The Helicopter Escape of Joel David Kaplan* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973).

³⁷ Ebert, 29 May 1975.

³⁸ Patrick McGilligan, "Three Days of the Condor: Hollywood Uncovers the CIA, Sydney Pollack Interviewed," *Jump Cut*, no. 10-11 (1976): 11.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

movie that best exemplified this change in the CIA's popular image"⁴⁰ At the same time, however, Olmsted incorrectly suggests that "the film included plot changes that demonstrated the influence of the investigations."⁴¹ Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the movie is that it was written prior to the publication of Seymour Hersh's story in December 1974. As Sydney Pollack, the movie's director, later explained in an interview, "[t]he film was three-quarters finished before any of these CIA revelations began to happen."⁴² Pollack insisted that no changes were made to the script in the final weeks of shooting, since "[w]e had shot the whole set-up, the whole plot, we were locked. We couldn't, all of a sudden, start changing scenes."⁴³ By the time the Congressional hearings began, *Three Days of the Condor* was already in post-production.

Hollywood producers traditionally defend the lack of message movies by arguing that the American public is only interested in entertainment, but this argument only begs the question: isn't it possible to make films that are both entertaining and thought provoking? This is exactly what Pollack hoped to achieve with *Three Days of the Condor*; in his words, "[t]he attempt was, first of all, to make it faithful to the genre of a thriller. And within that, to explore certain ideas of suspicion, trust, morality, if you will . . . it was not intended in any way as a documentary, I suppose, but as a warning—using the CIA almost as a metaphor, and drawing certain conclusions from post-Watergate

⁴⁰ Olmsted, 102.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² McGilligan, 11.

⁴³ Ibid., 12.

America."⁴⁴ One of the most effective features of the movie is the character development; unlike the vast majority of thrillers, the villains in the film are not simply cardboard cutouts. Interviewed during the shooting of the movie, Robert Redford said that he was attracted to the project because of the script's complexity: "I think the movie is about trust and paranoia, it's about bureaucracy run amok. That's something that really frightens me. A film that just says 'Hey, the CIA are bad guys!' wouldn't interest me. We all know that. But how frightening it is not to know how far you can trust the CIA—how big it is and what it's doing."⁴⁵

The movie opens with Joe Turner (Robert Redford) arriving late for work one December morning at the American Literary Historical Society, which is a CIA research office in New York City. It is later explained that Turner, whose codename is Condor, gets paid to read books dealing with a wide range of topics. He analyzes these books in an attempt to provide the CIA with new ideas as well as information about potential intelligence leaks. After Turner enters the office, his boss, Dr. Lappe (Don McHenry), reminds him that it is his turn to get everyone lunch. Dr. Lappe also asks Turner whether he is happy with his job as an analyst. Turner confesses that he has trouble not telling people what he actually does for a living, explaining that unlike many of his colleagues, "I actually trust a few people."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁵ Redford quoted in Tom Donnelly, "Waiting For Redford," *Washington Post*, 3 December 1974, B6.

⁴⁶ "The American Literary Historical Society" (1), *Three Days of the Condor*, DVD, directed by Sydney Pollack (1975; Hollywood, California: Paramount Pictures, 1999).

Turner leaves the building through the basement, and when he returns with the lunch orders, he discovers that all six people in the office have been gunned down. He instinctively takes the secretary's handgun before calling the CIA's panic line from a nearby phone booth. The CIA arranges a meeting in an alley with Turner's section chief in Washington, S. W. Wicks (Michael Kane), in order to bring him out of the field. At this meeting, however, Wicks attempts to kill Turner, forcing him to return fire. Turner now realizes that he can no longer trust the CIA, and he randomly selects a woman to kidnap. Although Kathy (Faye Dunaway) is obviously scared of Turner, he ultimately gains her trust. In keeping with one of the most important rules of CIA movies, Kathy sleeps with him not long after her abduction and then helps him track down Higgins (Cliff Robertson), Deputy Director of the CIA. Turner becomes convinced about the strong possibility that "there's another CIA, inside the CIA."⁴⁷

After saying goodbye to Kathy, Turner travels to the home of Leonard Atwood (Addison Powell) in Chevy Chase, Maryland. He believes that Atwood, the Agency's Deputy Director of Operations for the Middle East, will be able to unlock the mystery. But Joubert (Max von Sydow), the freelance assassin responsible for wiping out Turner's colleagues, kills Atwood before he can disclose information to Turner. Joubert allows Turner to live, and he tells Turner that he should leave the country. Although William R. Taylor describes Joubert "as the most villainous of all of Pollack's

⁴⁷ "The Suspicion Business" (11), *Three Days of the Condor*, DVD.

characters,"⁴⁸ he also manages to win the audience's sympathy for sparing Turner. Joubert tells Turner that being an assassin "is not a bad occupation . . . [i]t's quite restful, it's almost peaceful. No need to believe in either side or any side . . . there's only yourself. The belief is in your own precision."⁴⁹

Turner, however, refuses to take Joubert's advice about traveling to Europe; "I was born in the United States," he says, "I miss it when I'm away too long."⁵⁰ Instead of fleeing America, he arranges a meeting with Higgins in New York City outside the *New York Times* building. Turner has concluded by this point that he stumbled upon Atwood's covert plan to invade the Middle East that the CIA was not willing to sanction. When he confronts Higgins about these suspicions, Higgins replies, "We have games. That's all. We play games. 'What if?', 'How many men?', 'What would it take?', 'Is there a cheaper way to destabilize a regime?' That's what we're paid to do."⁵¹ Higgins emphasizes that Atwood had embarked on "a renegade operation," but he proudly observes that "there was nothing wrong with the plan. No, the plan was all right. The plan would have worked."⁵² This response leads to a famous exchange that is worth quoting at length:

Turner: Boy—What is it with you people? You think not getting caught in a lie is the same thing as telling the truth.

Higgins: No, it's simple economics. Today it's oil, right? In ten or fifteen years, food, plutonium. Maybe even sooner. Now what do you think the people are going to want us to do then?

⁴⁸ William R. Taylor, *Sydney Pollack* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), 135; see also Janet L. Meyer, *Sydney Pollack: A Critical Filmography* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1998), 80-85.

⁴⁹ "For That Day" (15), *Three Days of the Condor*, DVD.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ "Telling Stories" (16), *Three Days of the Condor*, DVD.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Turner: Ask them!

Higgins: Not now, then. Ask them when they're running out. Ask them when there's no heat in their homes and they're cold. Ask them when their engines stop. Ask them when people who've never known hunger start going hungry. You want to know something; they won't want us to ask 'em. They'll just want us to get it for 'em.

Turner: Boy, have you found a home.⁵³

Turner proceeds to inform Higgins that he has told his story to the *New York Times*. Dumfounded by this development, Higgins declares to Turner that he has "done more damage than you know." Turner's reply is bold in its simplicity: "I hope so."⁵⁴ Will the *Times* print the story, or will the CIA somehow arrange to block its publication? The answer remains unclear as Turner walks away from Higgins with Christmas carolers singing "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" in the background. The movie ends with a dramatic freeze frame of Turner looking back at Higgins over his shoulder, which serves to reinforce the ambiguity of the ending. Turner's facial expression suggests defiance, but it also appears he understands that he is "about to be a very lonely man."⁵⁵

When *Three Days of the Condor* opened in September 1975, most critics enthusiastically embraced the movie. According to Vincent Canby, "Turner . . . comes close to wreaking more havoc on the C. I. A. in three days than any number of House and Senate investigating committees have done in years."⁵⁶ "At its best moments," said Canby, "[the movie] creates without effort or

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Vincent Canby, "Redford a C.I.A. Eccentric in 'Three Days of the Condor,'" *The New York Times*, 25 September 1975, 60.

editorializing that sense of isolation—that far remove from reality—within which super-government agencies can operate with such heedless immunity.”⁵⁷ The reviewer for the *Christian Science Monitor* also recognized the political issues raised by the movie, calling it “a thinking man’s spy story” with an ending “that mingles liberal humanism with a smidgen of skepticism and a dash of doubt.”⁵⁸ Joy Gould Boyum took notice of how effectively the film explored the conflict between the various characters; “The villains here are not traitors working for an enemy government. They, and the heroes as well, are working for what they apparently believe to be in the best interests of our own nation.”⁵⁹

However, there were others who complained about the movie’s political message. In his assessment of the film’s ending, William Buckley, Jr., conservative guru and former CIA officer, observed with a hint of sarcasm that “[t]he director failed only to emblazon under [the *New York Times* building], ‘Daniel Ellsberg Slept Here.’”⁶⁰ Buckley also criticized promotional material for the movie, which said that the filmmakers wanted to describe “the climate of America.” “They really mean,” he complained, “[t]he climate of America as seen by I. F. Stone, Seymour Hersh, Susan Sontag and Shirley MacLaine.”⁶¹ *Three Days of the Condor* also upset Ben Stein, and in an article in the *Wall Street Journal* titled “Let’s Tar and Feather the CIA,” Stein called the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ David Sterritt, “Redford’s Latest: This Time He’s ‘A Sort of Superspy Librarian,’” *Christian Science Monitor*, 26 September 1975, 25.

⁵⁹ Joy Gould Boyum, “Robert Redford vs. the CIA,” *Wall Street Journal*, 29 September 1975, 11.

⁶⁰ William F. Buckley, Jr., “The Case of Redford vs. the C. I. A.,” *The New York Times*, 28 September 1975, sec. 2, p. 1.

⁶¹ Ibid.

movie "complicated and simple-minded at the same time" ⁶² Stein criticized the filmmaker and other critics of the intelligence community for failing to consider "the possibility that the CIA might serve some valuable function for the nation and that the Soviets may not be the friends they seem to be. Fashion must be served."⁶³ Both Buckley and Stein were not pleased with American popular culture in the aftermath of Watergate, and they equated the movie with the liberal politics of Sydney Pollack and Robert Redford.

In fairness to the conservative critics, there is no question that the political beliefs of Pollack and Redford influenced the movie. Pollack openly expressed disillusionment with American government: "I tried to deal, as much as I could [in the movie], with trust and suspicion [and] paranoia, which I think is happening in this country, when every institution I grew up believing was sacrosanct is now beginning to crumble."⁶⁴ The movie's screenplay, which was adapted from James Grady's *Six Days of the Condor*, is considerably different than the novel, and the modifications in the story are obviously intended to enhance the film's political commentary. In the book, the rogue CIA officers are smuggling drugs rather than developing plans to invade the Middle East. The villains in the novel ultimately shoot the Kathy character (Wendy Ross); believing that she has been killed, Turner's character (Ronald Malcolm) tracks down the assassin (Maronick) at National Airport

⁶² Benjamin Stein, "Let's Tar and Feather the CIA," *Wall Street Journal*, 2 October 1975, 24.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ McGilligan, 12.

and murders him. He then returns to the CIA.⁶⁵ In short, the book contains more action and sex, but it does not address the ethical issues surrounding espionage as Pollack does in the movie. The book's ending provides closure, while the movie's finale leaves the audience feeling uncertain about Turner's fate. Yet despite the changes to Grady's novel, Pollack vehemently denied the charge that he was advocating the abolition of the CIA, stating in an interview that "I don't think we should abolish the CIA. What we have to do is find some way of making a check and balance system work that, conceivably, hasn't been working before."⁶⁶

But Pollack's willingness to accept the necessity of the CIA troubled McGilligan, who referred to *Three Days of the Condor* as "a wide-screen whitewash tantamount to the Rockefeller Commission" that was nothing more than "a souped-up contemporary spy caper with lukewarm political impact."⁶⁷ McGilligan faulted the movie for portraying the villains as "a small, dangerous yet ultimately controllable clique—that is presumably motivated by abstract power-mongering rather than economic imperatives."⁶⁸ From McGilligan's perspective, in other words, the real villain should have been the CIA itself. The film's ending creates problems for this analysis, however. It becomes clear during Turner's exchange with Higgins that

⁶⁵ There are also other differences between the novel and the screenplay. The setting of the novel is Washington, D. C., not New York City, and Grady's story unfolds in the spring during the course of a single week starting on a Wednesday. Moreover, after Wendy is shot, Malcolm spends a night with a teenage prostitute. He is also nursing a cold in the book. James Grady, *Six Days of the Condor* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974). After the movie's release in 1975, the book was re-published as *Three Days of the Condor*.

⁶⁶ McGilligan, 12.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

economic factors (i.e. the desire for Middle Eastern oil) were a motivation behind Atwood's plan, and even though Higgins reminds Turner that Atwood was indeed the leader of renegade group not sanctioned by the CIA, Turner is unimpressed with the distinction: "who the hell is Atwood? He's you. He's all you guys. Seven people killed. And you play fucking games!"⁶⁹ Should the CIA be allowed to continue the "games" that Higgins and other CIA men play behind closed doors at Langley, or as Turner suggests in the finale, would it be better for officials to incorporate the American public into the policymaking process? This is a provocative question that moviegoers must resolve for themselves. Turner trusts that the American people will do what is right, while Higgins is far more cynical, claiming that most Americans are unconcerned about foreign policy as long as it preserves economic prosperity at home: "they won't want us to ask 'em. They'll just want us to get it for 'em."⁷⁰

Sam Peckinpah's *The Killer Elite*, an adaptation of a Robert Rostand novel, opened approximately three months after *Three Days of the Condor*, and in the final week of December, it was the highest grossing movie, earning \$849,000.⁷¹ The commercial success of the movie proved short-lived, which is not surprising given its disjointedness. A transcript of an interview with Lawrence Weyburn (Gig Young) appears on the screen at the beginning of the movie:

Q. What do you mean by special departments Mr. Weyburn?

⁶⁹ "Telling Stories" (16), *Three Days of the Condor*, DVD.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ David Weddle, *If They Move . . . Kill 'Em!": The Life and Times of Sam Peckinpah* (New York: Grove Press, 1994), 500.

- A. Some countries have 'special' departments for directly or indirectly eliminating defectors and others who carry away secrets which may jeopardize its national security.
- Q. Does our country have a similar department?
- A. Not to my knowledge.
- Q. Would you admit it if we had?
- A. No.⁷²

This transcript is followed with a somewhat ironic disclaimer, reminding the audience that "[t]his film is a work of fiction. There is no company called [COMTEG] and the thought the C. I. A. might employ such an organization for any purpose is, of course, preposterous."⁷³ Mike Locken (James Caan) and George Hansen (Robert Duvall) are secret agents, but they do not work directly for the CIA. Instead, they are employed with a clandestine organization that essentially does contract work for the Agency and other groups willing to pay. They are experts on dirty work, but when they are assigned to guard a prominent defector, Hansen betrays his partner at the safe house. He kills the defector before cruelly shooting Mike in the knee and arm.

Forced to go through months of painful rehabilitation in the hospital, Mike remains determined to return to his job. Mike's boss, Cap Collis (Arthur Hill), initially wants nothing to do with him after the shooting, but Collis later recruits him to protect a foreign leader from Asia who has been targeted by ninja assassins. Although Collis tells Mike that Hansen is now working with the enemies of the Asian leader, in reality he still answers to Collis and COMTEG. Mike recruits two friends, Mac (Burt Young) and

⁷² "Logo/Title/The Bomb" (1), *The Killer Elite*, DVD, directed by Sam Peckinpah (1975; Culver City, California: MGM Home Entertainment, 1999).

⁷³ Ibid.

Jerome Miller (Bo Hopkins), to participate in the mission. Later in the movie, in what Michael Bliss has labeled “the film’s most analytical speech,”⁷⁴ Mac warns Mike that “[y]ou’re so busy doing their dirty work you can’t tell who the bad guys really are.”⁷⁵ Mike proceeds to explain that he defines the bad guys as “anybody that tries to hurt me.”⁷⁶ Mac, however, is not satisfied with this response; “They need guys like you to do their bloodletting while they’re busy making speeches about freedom and progress. They’re all full of bullshit.”⁷⁷ During the final sequence that unfolds in a graveyard of abandoned warships, Collis expresses a similar sentiment: “sides, sides, all full of shit. They all want the same thing: to be in charge.”⁷⁸ Mike shoots Collis, and the movie ends with Mac and Mike sailing off together, symbolizing their abandonment of the world of assassinations and dirty tricks. (Miller is unable to join them, because he has been killed shortly after shooting Hansen on the pier.)

According to Bliss, “*The Killer Elite* is interesting, but it exhibits a great deal of pessimism about the possibility of being delivered from corruption, this not only in spite of, but to a fair extent because of, its unrealistic ending.”⁷⁹ One reviewer at the time noted that the movie’s “theme is the world as universal sell-out” and compared *The Killer Elite* to *Three Days of the*

⁷⁴ Michael Bliss, *Justified Lives: Morality & Narrative in the Films of Sam Peckinpah* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 268.

⁷⁵ “Mac Philosophizes” (21), *The Killer Elite*, DVD.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*; see also Bliss, 268.

⁷⁷ “Mac Philosophizes” (21), *The Killer Elite*, DVD; see also Bliss, 268.

⁷⁸ “Cap Gets Capped” (27), *The Killer Elite*, DVD.

⁷⁹ Bliss, 13.

Condor.⁸⁰ Yet this comparison is somewhat misleading, for in many ways, *The Killer Elite* is actually more similar to *Scorpio* than Pollack's film. Except for Mac's critical assessment of covert operations, it is a traditional Hollywood action movie that is often difficult to follow. Bliss is correct when he maintains that the film's ending "fails to confront the moral problems inherent in the lives of secret agents."⁸¹

By any standard of measurement, the movie is seriously flawed even though it had the potential to be an engrossing thriller. Peckinpah blamed the producers for the weaknesses of *The Killer Elite*; during pre-production, he had sent a memo to Mike Medavoy, the executive in charge of production at United Artists, complaining about how he had been prohibited from modifying the script. Medavoy responded with a memo that re-iterated that Peckinpah was expected to leave the screenplay alone. Angered by Medavoy's reply, Peckinpah had T-Shirts made "with his [memo] on the front and Medavoy's response on the back" and provided the shirt to everyone on the set.⁸² Peckinpah's feud with the producers continued throughout the production, and it has been suggested that he intentionally sabotaged the movie to retaliate. For instance, David Weddle claims that "[Peckinpah] had his actors ad-lib sophomoric asides that undercut the drama and encouraged the audience to jeer at the movie they'd paid good money to see."⁸³

⁸⁰ Richard Eder, "'Killer Elite,' or Copping Out of the Universal Sell-Out," *The New York Times*, 18 December 1975, 62.

⁸¹ Bliss, 273.

⁸² Garner Simmons, *Peckinpah: A Portrait in Montage* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 211.

⁸³ Weddle, 499.

Rampant cocaine use on the set also helped to undermine the quality and coherence of the film. Peckinpah “would forget conversations that he had with you,” recalled stunt director Whitey Hughes, “[y]ou’d set up a stunt, you’d discuss it with him and he’d approve it, then he’d come out of his trailer and we’d do a take and he’d completely reverse himself”⁸⁴ One of the movie’s producers would later attempt to reconcile with Peckinpah. Not surprisingly, Peckinpah was uninterested in mending fences; as he explained to the producer, “[m]y problem is, I do not suffer fools graciously and detest petty thievery and incompetence. Other than that, I found you charming, and on occasion, mildly entertaining.”⁸⁵ Although Peckinpah certainly had legitimate grievances, he deserved more of the blame for the problems with *The Killer Elite* than he was willing to acknowledge. Moviegoers were left to wonder how the director of *The Wild Bunch* (1969) and *The Ballad of Cable Hogue* (1970) could have faltered so badly with *The Killer Elite*. The first sentence of the review in the *New York Times* probably explained it best: “Sam Peckinpah knows how to make movies but perhaps he has forgotten why.”⁸⁶

The espionage movies of the 1970s demonstrate the importance of studying the cultural history of the “Year of Intelligence.” Films like *Scorpio* and *Three Days of the Condor* have been frequently imitated in the past three

⁸⁴ Ibid., 500.

⁸⁵ Simmons, 224.

⁸⁶ Eder, 62; for a completely different assessment of the movie, see Pauline Kael, “Notes on the Nihilist Poetry of Sam Peckinpah,” *The New Yorker*, 12 January 1976, 70-75. Kael acknowledged that “[m]uch of what Peckinpah is trying to express in ‘The Killer Elite’ is probably inaccessible to audiences” Ibid., 74. Yet she confided to readers that his ability as a filmmaker “makes me feel closer to him than I do to any other director except Jean Renoir” Ibid., 72.

decades. Regardless of whether they romanticize or demonize the CIA, filmmakers love to turn unsuspecting CIA analysts into heroic field operatives in the image of Joe Turner (*The Amateur, The Hunt for Red October, The Sum of All Fears*). There is also a tendency to examine what happens when the CIA hierarchy turns against their own officers (*Spy Game, The Bourne Identity, The Bourne Supremacy*). And, of course, much attention has been given to assassination (*In The Line of Fire, Conspiracy Theory, The Bourne Identity, The Bourne Supremacy*), mind control experiments (*Conspiracy Theory*), and allegations of the CIA's connection to the mafia (*JFK, Agent On Ice*).

Popular culture is more than just a reflection of society, for it has almost certainly helped to shape the public's perception of the intelligence community. In the same speech where he attempted to downplay the PR problem facing the CIA, Bush's optimistic facade vanished when discussing Hollywood's portrayal of the Agency. He explained to CIA employees that he "made the mistake" during the holiday season of going to see *Three Days of the Condor* with his daughter, "who is madly and passionately in love with Robert Redford."⁸⁷ He described the movie as "a fairly good shoot-em-up and, if I were totally untutored in this business, I might have got a yak out of it"; despite this complimentary remark, however, he warned that "it was a very vicious and sinister piece because what it did was to lay at the CIA's doorstep all kinds of outrageous things that the CIA by its severest critics has never been accused of."⁸⁸ The new CIA director was especially appalled that the movie's finale implied that *The New York Times* might somehow be in

⁸⁷DCI Speech to CIA: Today and Tomorrow, 4.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

cahoots with Langley. From Bush's perspective, the accusation seemed irresponsible and downright foolish: "Well, if we control it, we're doing a hell of a job with the editorial content they're coming out with! This is tough propaganda."⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER IV
'TELLING THE INTELLIGENCE STORY': WILLIAM COLBY, THE ARIO,
AND THE SELLING OF THE CIA

Although George H. W. Bush conceded in March 1976 that the CIA confronted "a fundamental public relations problem," his attempt to combat the negative publicity was simple: "I want to get the CIA off the front pages and at some point out of the papers altogether," he informed President Ford that summer.¹ Bush's primary objectives were to revive Agency morale and regain the trust of Congress, and from the perspective of most observers, he succeeded admirably. Yet this "no publicity is good publicity" strategy differed from the approach of his predecessor, William Colby. Colby, who headed the CIA during this contentious era, decided that it was necessary to reveal some of the Agency's darkest secrets in order to ensure its survival. As John Prados has explained in *Lost Crusader*, Colby became "the man in the middle"² Not only was he caught between the Congressional investigators and the White House, he also found himself in the middle of two opposing factions within the CIA. The first believed that it was acceptable for him to share information with Congress and the public, while the second lobbied aggressively for him to stonewall.³ Even though Colby infuriated the old school Cold Warriors for cooperating with the investigations, it is now clear, as Prados concludes, that the embattled CIA

¹ Anne Hessing Cahn, "Team B: The Trillion-Dollar Experiment," *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 49 (April 1993): 25; Herbert S. Parmet, *George Bush: The Life of a Lone Star Yankee* (New York: Scribner, 1997), 196.

² John Prados, *Lost Crusader: The Secret Wars of CIA Director William Colby* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 330.

³ David Atlee Phillips, *The Night Watch* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1977), 372; for more on the internal divisions inside the CIA at the time, see Prados, 310-311.

director was “far less open to inquiry than his critics claimed.”⁴ In fact, Colby’s PR efforts—in conjunction with the well-organized campaign of former CIA officials—helped make it possible for the CIA to emerge from the “Year of Intelligence” essentially unscathed. In the end, Colby managed to protect what he referred to as the “good secrets.”⁵

As the headlines announcing news of CIA scandals multiplied in the mid-1970s, Colby began to realize that publication relations could help to rehabilitate the CIA’s image. He explained in his memoirs, *Honorable Men*, that “[t]he CIA must build, not assume, public support, and it can do this only by informing the public of the nature of its activities and accepting the public’s control over them.”⁶ Rather than weakening the CIA, Colby concluded, creating the perception of greater openness would re-invigorate it: “A public informed of the CIA’s accomplishments and capabilities will support it. A public aware of its true mission and the limits of its authority will accept it A public convinced of the CIA’s value will help protect its true secrets.”⁷ It is important to keep in mind that Colby did not invent CIA public relations; in fact, as a budding CIA officer in the 1950s, he witnessed how effectively Allen Dulles had used publicity to win support for the Agency.⁸

Dulles, more than any other person, cultivated the mystique of the CIA that Colby and other Agency defenders would work so hard to protect in the

⁴ Prados, 311.

⁵ Colby quoted in Phillips, viii, 372.

⁶ William Colby and Peter Forbath, *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 21.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ When Colby was stationed in Stockholm, Sweden, he briefed Dulles while the CIA director was in the bathtub. Prados, 52.

mid-1970s. In reflecting on the contributions of “the Great White Case Officer,” one of his protégés perceptively observed that “. . . Dulles loved [the mystique], helped create it, and in many ways embodied it.”⁹ When Dulles became CIA director in 1953, he led the Agency into what is commonly known as the “golden age of operations.”¹⁰ Dulles controlled the covert dimension of American foreign policy under President Eisenhower, while his brother, John Foster Dulles, ran the State Department.

Despite the cold war consensus that emerged in the 1950s, Dulles’s clandestine power did not go unchallenged. In July 1953, just five months after Eisenhower selected Dulles to be the country’s top spymaster, Senator Mike Mansfield (Democrat-Montana) made a proposal that stunned the intelligence establishment. Mansfield, a former history professor who had been elected to the Senate the previous fall, offered a resolution that would establish a Congressional oversight committee on intelligence with ten members drawn from both the House and Senate.¹¹ Dulles’s supporters on Capitol Hill easily quashed the resolution, but in March 1954, Mansfield would try again. This time he delivered a stirring speech on the floor of the Senate, declaring that “secrecy now beclouds everything about CIA—its cost,

⁹ Ray S. Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars: Blueprint of the Essential CIA* (Washington, DC: Acropolis Books, 1976), 119; see also Jonathan Nashel, “The Rise of the CIA and American Popular Culture,” in *Architects of the American Century: Individuals and Institutions in Twentieth-Century U. S. Foreign Policymaking*, ed. David F. Schmitz and T. Christopher Jespersen (Chicago: Imprint Publications, 1999), esp. 66-73.

¹⁰ Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy*, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), Chp. 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 78; David M. Barrett, *The CIA & Congress: The Untold Story From Truman To Kennedy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 171-172.

its efficiency, its successes, and its failures."¹² Mansfield even included a prophetic warning in his address: "until we create some sort of 'watchdog committee' . . . we will have nothing but continued anxiety about the Central Intelligence Agency and its widespread activities."¹³

The evidence now available indicates that Dulles was reluctant to challenge Mansfield publicly.¹⁴ Dulles fought back against the senator indirectly using a masterful display of PR, and the crowning achievement of this campaign appeared in the form of a three-part series in *The Saturday Evening Post*. The articles, written by Richard and Gladys Harkness, would have been impossible without insider assistance at the Agency. Peter Grose, Dulles's biographer, claims that Dulles did not simply leak stories to the reporting team, but he does concede that the CIA director granted them full access and later proofread their articles over dinner, "making a few corrections or suggestions here and there."¹⁵

Judging from the content of the series, however, Dulles most likely had far more control over the articles than Grose suggests. In fact, "The Mysterious Doings of the CIA" nicely illustrates what historian Jonathan Nashel has called "the incestuous and corrosive mix between the government

¹² Mansfield quoted in Barrett, 173.

¹³ Ibid., 174.

¹⁴ According to one observer's diary entry, "[Dulles] said that we did not like this proposal [from Mansfield] in its present form, but that we did not want to appear to fight it." Ibid., 172.

¹⁵ Peter Grose, *Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), 416; Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept The Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 100, 375n20, 376n24.

and the media that developed during the Cold War years."¹⁶ The first article, which appeared on October 30, 1954, revealed to readers that the CIA had been covertly involved in Guatemala. The reporters claimed that this intervention was justified since Dulles had "proof that the communist-dominated government of Guatemala was part and parcel of a Red conspiracy, hatched in Moscow, to give Russia a military toehold in Latin America hard by the Panama Canal."¹⁷ President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala had been a "communist puppet," and his supporters were Soviet hardliners posing as reformers.¹⁸ Thankfully, from the perspective of the authors, Dulles and his CIA operatives "met the Reds early enough to hand Russia its defeat in Guatemala."¹⁹ As a consequence, the United States had averted the possibility of a large-scale military intervention "to save Latin America."²⁰ It is evident, however, that Dulles and his subordinates withheld crucial information during interviews for the story. In the aftermath of Arbenz's downfall, the CIA conducted PBHISTORY, an examination of thousands of captured documents. This secret study firmly indicated that Arbenz had not been Moscow's puppet.²¹

The second article in the series told readers that the CIA had achieved a similar success in 1953 when "the strategic little nation of Iran was rescued

¹⁶ Jonathan Nashel, *Edward Lansdale's Cold War* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 98.

¹⁷ Richard and Gladys Harkness, "The Mysterious Doings of CIA," *Saturday Evening Post*, 30 October 1954, 20.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

²¹ Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account Of Its Operations In Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), 106-107.

from the closing clutch of Moscow."²² Like Arbenz, Muhammad Mossadegh was in cahoots with the Communists, according to the authors, and they obviously took pleasure in boasting that the Iranian prime minister "was captured as he lay weeping in his bed, clad in striped silk pajamas."²³ If the coverage of Iran was propaganda masquerading as journalism, the final article on November 13 was even worse. The Harkness duo described Dulles as "a tough-minded, hardheaded, steel spring of a man with an aptitude and zest for matching wits with an unseen foe."²⁴ On the final page, they editorialized about the necessity and cost effectiveness of the Agency: "A helping hand in the rescue of one country such as Guatemala or Iran from communism is worth CIA's annual budget many times over."²⁵ In the event that readers had somehow missed the implicit rebuke of oversight proposals, they were reminded that "qualified observers in Washington believe that CIA deserves the trust and confidence of Congress and the people."²⁶

The PR campaign ended in success for the CIA when the most recent Mansfield proposal was defeated 59-27 in April 1956.²⁷ Dulles remained committed to CIA public relations in the ensuing years. As Jonathan Nashel reveals, the CIA director became so interested in the Hollywood adaptation of Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* that he was willing to help the

²² Richard and Gladys Harkness, "The Mysterious Doings of CIA," *Saturday Evening Post*, 6 November 1954, 68.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Richard and Gladys Harkness, "The Mysterious Doings of CIA," *Saturday Evening Post*, 13 November 1954, 30.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 134.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Grose, 416; Barrett, 223-233; Jeffreys-Jones, 79-80.

production team shoot the movie on location.²⁸ Unlike Greene's original story, the movie version celebrated American involvement in Vietnam. Edward Lansdale, the CIA's point man in Southeast Asia, helped director Joseph Mankiewicz modify the script to transform "Pyle [the American character] into a hero and Fowler [the British character] into a communist stooge."²⁹ Dulles also did not disapprove of the fact that E. Howard Hunt, the CIA officer who later became infamous for his role in Watergate, was moonlighting as a spy novelist, and after he was forced to resign following the Bay of Pigs debacle, he enlisted Hunt and Agency veteran Howard Roman to ghost write *The Craft of Intelligence*.³⁰

Future CIA directors did occasionally try to promote the Agency mystique as Dulles had done. Not long after the Soviets executed Oleg Penkovsky in 1963, the CIA funded the publication of *The Penkovsky Papers* in order to publicly flaunt the contributions of their high-ranking asset inside Soviet military intelligence.³¹ In the early 1970s, moreover, Richard Helms

²⁸ Nashel, *Edward Lansdale's Cold War*, 166.

²⁹ Seth Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 110; Nashel, *Edward Lansdale's Cold War*, 163-171, esp. 164-166.

³⁰ Grose, 539; James Srodes, *Allen Dulles: Master of Spies* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1999), 552; according to Tad Szulc, "Hunt himself quietly collaborated with Dulles in drafting the former CIA Director's book, although the Agency nowadays denies this with vigor." See Szulc, *Compulsive Spy: The Strange Career of E. Howard Hunt* (New York: The Viking Press, 1974), 21. Szulc also says that future CIA director "[Richard] Helms kept copies of Hunt's spy novels around his office and often gave or lent them to friends and visitors." *Ibid.*, 105.

³¹ John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 331, 397, 400-402; Jeffreys-Jones, 151. Jeffreys-Jones says that "[Penkovsky] supplied the Western powers with thousands of pages of secret strategic documents, some of which contained information that could be usefully collated with satellite evidence. The combined picture destroyed the 'missile gap' theory." *Ibid.*, 114; Victor S. Navasky, "Why Sue The C. I. A.?" 26 October 1982, A29.

allowed the director of *Scorpio* to film the exterior of Langley. But unfortunately for Helms, he was apparently unaware that the screenplay called for the protagonist in the movie to gun down a high-ranking CIA official.³² A few years later Helms accepted an invitation to visit the movie set for *Three Days of the Condor*. He was then serving as Ambassador to Iran, and according to the film's director, Sydney Pollack, Helms appeared to be "having a great time" and was even "giggling." Cliff Robertson recalls that at the moment Turner (Robert Redford) confronted his character (Higgins) about CIA involvement in assassinations, he glanced over and noticed that the former DCI was grinning. "As his grin wrapped around his mouth, the hairs on the back of my neck stood upright at attention," says Robertson.³³

By the time *Three Days of the Condor* was released in 1975, however, CIA officials were not laughing. On October 30, 1975, an ad hoc task group chaired by Lieutenant General Samuel V. Wilson sent Colby a memo entitled "Telling the Intelligence Story." Not surprisingly, Wilson and his colleagues noted that "[p]ublicity on the CIA in the last year has not resulted in a rounded story. Much attention has been focused on specific sensational bits and pieces of information."³⁴ The authors of the memo proposed a strategy for overcoming the negative publicity. "Altering this situation will require patience and a gradual approach. It will also require a more open and forthcoming attitude in the Agency's dealings with the media, which provide

³² Gary Fishgall, *Against Type: The Biography of Burt Lancaster* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 286; Phillips, 312.

³³ *The Directors: Sydney Pollack*, DVD, directed by Robert J. Emery (1997; New York: Fox Lorber CenterStage, 1999).

³⁴ Task Group Memo to DCI, "Telling the Intelligence Story," 30 October 1975, 1, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

our only significant access to the American public," they advised.³⁵ The group outlined four recommendations for improving the CIA's relationship with the media. They began with the suggestion that the Agency "collaborate with the media when asked to do so in developing features articles, articles for publication on selected topics, or television features," and in an attachment, they listed several topics that might interest journalists.³⁶ Second, the committee thought that "[t]he present program for providing substantive background briefings [for columnists] should be expanded as opportunities arise."³⁷ They also believed that high-ranking CIA officials should consider making more "public appearances and speeches," while their final recommendation sought to highlight "CIA contributions to the advancement of technology and keeping the peace."³⁸

In addition to their proposals for dealing with the press, the ad hoc group hoped that other people might be encouraged "to help tell the true story of intelligence."³⁹ The CIA should ask "senior statesmen" to get involved, and perhaps more importantly, they pushed for a stronger relationship with ex-officers: "We can provide judicious assistance to selected former Agency employees and retirees who want to defend the CIA in books, articles, or public appearances. 'Judicious' and 'selected' are the operative words."⁴⁰ Although the memo did not explain how "judicious" and

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid. Six topics were mentioned in the attachment: "the operations center," "personality interviews," "current intelligence," "academic skills," "counter-intelligence," and "backgrounders." Ibid., TAB A.

³⁷ Ibid., 1.

³⁸ Ibid., 2.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

“selected” would be defined in practice, it is obvious that the authors were only interested in dealing with individuals willing to support their former employer.

Since Colby had already embraced similar ideas before receiving “Telling the Intelligence Story,” the memo should be viewed as a synopsis of pre-existing policies that offered a blueprint for modifications in the future. President Ford fired Colby only a few days after the document was prepared, and although he stayed on for a few more months, he did not have much time to implement changes. Yet there is no question that Colby desperately wanted to change public perceptions of the Agency. As he explained in his memoirs, the CIA adopted a “gradual strategy” for public relations during his tenure at Langley,⁴¹ an approach intended “to get our story out to the American people.”⁴² In order to maintain ties with ex-officers, for instance, he established an event called “alumni day.” This reunion was viewed as more than an opportunity for intelligence veterans to reminisce about old adventures, since Colby intended “to arm them with the answers they needed to defend the institution to which they had given their loyalty.”⁴³ There was undoubtedly a recruitment dimension to Colby’s efforts. Groups of high school students on trips to Washington visited CIA headquarters every Tuesday night during the spring, and the Agency also opened its doors to several college delegations.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Colby, 379.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 378.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; Phillips says that “[w]e had hundreds of visitors to our building: college classes, high school students, and businessmen. The last college group I saw in the halls was from the Malcolm X College.” See Phillips, 312.

Colby's efforts were not always successful. Seeking to improve relations with the media, he initiated a briefing program for reporters that proved disastrous. The first session with journalists, which Colby thought would focus on world events, led to a confrontation over the CIA's relationship with American businessmen. Finding himself cornered, he accidentally blurted out the approximate number of Agency contacts in the business community. Colby learned from the embarrassing incident; in the future, such briefings would be done on a smaller scale that would enable the CIA to retain more control over the topics discussed.⁴⁵

Unlike many of his colleagues in the clandestine service, David Atlee Phillips, a twenty-five year veteran, supported Colby's strategy. At the same time, however, he worried that the backlash against previous wrongdoing might lead to the CIA's destruction. The media, which Dulles had manipulated with such ease in the 1950s, had turned on Phillip's beloved Agency. He described the "Year of Intelligence" as "[t]he storm which changed my life," a crisis that he believed could be solved using public relations.⁴⁶

Phillips drew inspiration from the plight of Ray S. Cline and Harry Rositzke. Cline had been Deputy Director for Intelligence (DDI) at the CIA before leaving in 1969 to run the State Department's intelligence division (INR), and Rositzke was previously a high-ranking officer in the Directorate

⁴⁵ Colby, 378.

⁴⁶ Phillips, vii; Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA and FBI* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 146-147.

of Plans (called the Directorate of Operations since 1973).⁴⁷ In October 1974, Rositzke reviewed the history of the relationship between the CIA and the executive branch in a *New York Times* editorial, noting that the Agency did not operate independently of the president. "Political-action operations—secret support of foreign leaders, political parties and labor unions, and the preparation of coups and countercoups—have been carried out under the aegis of every postwar President," he observed.⁴⁸ While Rositzke advised that paramilitary operations like the Bay of Pigs should be moved to the Pentagon, he believed that "more post-mortems" were unnecessary.⁴⁹ Cline argued in the *Times* the following month that covert action was vital to national security: "we should not be obsessed with piety but instead should think earnestly of every way possible short of total war to insure that our society and political structures and alliances with like-minded peoples will continue to flourish"⁵⁰ As the "Year of Intelligence" unfolded, Cline and Rositzke also appeared on television to defend the intelligence community.⁵¹

⁴⁷ It became known as the Directorate of Operations in 1973.

⁴⁸ Harry Rositzke, "Controlling Secret Operations," *New York Times*, 7 October 1974, 35.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Ray S. Cline, "The Value of the C. I. A.," *New York Times*, 1 November 1974, 39. Cline argued that America intervened in foreign politics to protect democracy, a proud tradition that he said could be traced back to the Agency's role in Italian elections during the early years of the Cold War. He proclaimed that "[t]he principal supporters of President Salvadore Allende Gossens' administration intended to establish a dictatorship of the revolutionary left, abolish Congress and neutralize or destroy the entire managerial and middle class." *Ibid.*, 39. Not surprisingly, Cline failed to mention that Allende had been democratically elected in September 1970, and he presented no concrete evidence to explain how events in Chile were connected to the national security of the United States. In September 1974, Seymour Hersh had revealed details about CIA involvement in Chile. *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Phillips, 346.

Phillips admired their efforts, but it was obvious to him that they were badly outnumbered.

If he had learned one thing during his years of service in the CIA, however, he realized that low manpower was not an insurmountable handicap. His understanding of propaganda convinced him that even though Colby should be forthcoming at the Congressional hearings, the Agency had to simultaneously push back against critics. Phillips approached Colby with his concerns, hoping to convince his boss to launch a more aggressive public relations campaign aimed at restoring the public's confidence in the CIA. Though he agreed with Phillips in principle, Colby considered the approach too risky. He reminded Phillips about *The Selling of the Pentagon*, a documentary that CBS had first broadcast in February 1971.⁵² Narrated by Roger Mudd, the expose outlined the Pentagon's massive efforts to win the support of the American public, from displays in shopping malls to promotional films that showed how the military was winning in Vietnam. It revealed that the annual PR budget at the Defense Department had risen from \$2.8 million in 1959 to \$30 million in 1971. (According to the Twentieth Century Fund, the budget was actually closer to \$190 million.)⁵³ Colby

⁵² Ibid., 345.

⁵³ "The Selling of the Pentagon," VHS, produced and written by Peter Davis (1971, New York: Carousel Film & Video); Garth S. Jowett, "The Selling of the Pentagon," The Museum of Broadcast Communications <http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/S/htmlS/sellingofth/sellingofth.htm> (accessed February 21, 2006); the origins of the documentary can be traced to Senator J. W. Fulbright (Democrat-Arkansas). Fulbright, *The Pentagon Propaganda Machine* (New York: Liveright, 1970); Jack Gould, "TV: C.B.S. Explores Pentagon Propaganda Costs," *New York Times*, 24 February 1971, 83; Jack Gould, "The Unselling of the Pentagon," *New York Times*, 7 March 1971, D17; see also William C. Berman, *William Fulbright and the Vietnam War: The Dissent of a Political Realist* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1988), 142.

understood that the CIA could not allow a similar controversy to happen to them. After Hersh's story, critics might characterize any PR venture as nothing more than sinister propaganda. "We're just going to have to take the heat," Colby declared.⁵⁴

Phillips accepted Colby's decision, but he could no longer tolerate watching events from the sidelines. He left the CIA in the spring of 1975 to form the Association of Retired Intelligence Officers (ARIO). When Phillips began planning the ARIO, he hoped that Cline might be interested in serving as the president. Cline, an executive director at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) at the time, declined the offer. "You know that I have been trying to build up a reputation as a scholarly commentator on intelligence as distinct from a 'committed' defender of CIA," Cline explained in a letter to Phillips. "While I am not sure my tactics have been entirely successful, I do want to stay in the public view as an independent rather than a partisan 'CIAnik'."⁵⁵ Although it is unclear whether he sought out anyone else about the position, Phillips ultimately became the first president of ARIO.

Taking addresses from the mailing list that his family used for Christmas cards, he had sent out a letter to fellow intelligence officers in March announcing his objective "to explain why our country needs an intelligence service and to help clear up some of the erroneous impressions and sensationalism surrounding us by explaining what CIA is and, more

⁵⁴ Colby quoted in Phillips, 345.

⁵⁵ Ray Cline to David Phillips, 27 March 1975, The Papers of Ray Cline, Part I: Container 7, Folder 3, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

important probably, what it is not."⁵⁶ Membership was open to anyone who had previously worked within the American intelligence community, and annual dues of ten dollars included a subscription to *Periscope*, ARIO's newsletter. More than anything else, the organization provided a network for ex-intelligence officers. Starting in 1975, for instance, the ARIO held conventions every year.⁵⁷ Over 1,000 people had joined by the fall of 1976.

Phillips hoped to address what he referred to as "a tough credibility problem" for American intelligence.⁵⁸ The ARIO established a speaker's bureau for anyone in the organization who wanted to publicly defend the intelligence establishment against its detractors. Phillips, arguably the most prolific speaker in ARIO, made numerous appearances across the country after leaving the CIA. He spoke about his adventures with the Agency, and he assured audiences that the policies of reform were working effectively. Not everyone accepted what Phillips had to say. In fact, when he appeared in Madison, Wisconsin to deliver a speech in 1976, approximately four hundred people protested against him.⁵⁹ But for the most part, demonstrations of this magnitude were uncommon.

In addition to their speeches in front of local groups, Phillips and select colleagues from the ARIO spoke to journalists and went on television shows

⁵⁶ David Phillips, ARIO Form Letter, 15 March 1975, The Papers of Ray Cline, Part I: Container 7, Folder 3, Library of Congress Manuscript Division; "C. I. A. Aide Quitting to Defend Agency," *New York Times*, 22 March 1975, 39; Phillips, 348-349.

⁵⁷ Jean M. White, "Intelligence Gathering: Insiders Meet on the Outside," *Washington Post*, 18 September 1976, B1; Phillips, 366.

⁵⁸ Joseph Novitski, "CIA Aide Quits, Will Head Drive," *Washington Post*, 10 May 1975, A4.

⁵⁹ Maggie Kennedy, "With Speeches Spy Comes Out of Cold," *Dallas Times Herald*, 4 November 1976, newspaper clipping, Papers of David A. Phillips, Container 5, Folder 3, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

to provide a counterpoint to opponents of the CIA. Kathryn Olmsted correctly observes that "he guaranteed reporters that pithy, pro-CIA quotes were just a phone call away."⁶⁰ On an ABC morning show, Phillips squared off against John Marks and Philip Agee, the former CIA officer who revealed the names of Agency operatives in *Inside The Company*, and on another show he sparred with Victor Marchetti.⁶¹ Unlike Agee, who Phillips called "the first CIA defector,"⁶² Marchetti had not outed any CIA employees. Marchetti contends that Phillips put pressure on him to renounce any connection to *Counter-Spy*, the radical magazine in Washington, DC that was exposing the identities of Agency officers. "Marchetti respected the CIA's power and took the warning to heart," says Angus Mackenzie, "[h]e withdrew from the magazine and talked others into leaving with him."⁶³ Phillips briefly mentioned in his memoirs that Marchetti left *Counter-Spy*, but he omitted any reference to his conversation with the noted CIA critic.⁶⁴

The omission was not especially surprising, since ARIIO members typically wrote their memoirs with the intention of shaping public opinion. Having seen how effectively former officers such as Marchetti, Agee, Frank Snepp, and Patrick McGarvey had used their books to criticize the Agency, they believed that the genre offered a terrific opportunity to counterattack. Less than three weeks after leaving the CIA, Phillips complained in the *New York Times* that the media was treating the Agency unfairly. Phillips placed

⁶⁰ Olmsted, 147.

⁶¹ Phillips, 364, 376.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 364.

⁶³ Angus Mackenzie, *Secrets: The CIA's War at Home* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 65.

⁶⁴ Phillips, 376.

stories about the CIA into three categories: “factual,” “sensationalist,” and “fact-and-fallacy.”⁶⁵ The first type “we can endure stoically,” he explained, while the second “we can also endure because the ridiculous is patently short-lived.”⁶⁶ What most frustrated Phillips and his colleagues was “the hybrid (fact-and-fallacy) story” because it “refuses to die or be straightened out, and sinks into the public subconscious as durable myth.”⁶⁷

Ironically, despite Phillips’s concerns about so-called “hybrid” news stories, he and fellow CIA defenders did not respond with “factual” accounts of the Agency; on the contrary, they used their memoirs to create their own “durable myths.” Phillips published *The Night Watch* in 1977, a skillfully written account of the various positions he held at the CIA between 1950 and 1975. After his initial recruitment in Chile, he gained extensive experience with the Agency throughout Latin America—in Guatemala, Cuba, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and Venezuela—before finishing his career as the head the Western Hemisphere Division in the Directorate of Operations. In reflecting on his quarter century of service, Phillips admitted the CIA had made mistakes. He condemned the MKULTRA experiments that the Agency secretly conducted in the 1950s and 1960s. “Without question,” Phillips acknowledged, “conducting the drug research on unwitting persons or in a manner that could lead to suicide, as in the instance of one man [Dr. Frank Olson], was unjustifiable.”⁶⁸ He also criticized the CIA’s actions leading up to the Bay of Pigs invasion of April 1961. Phillips, who had

⁶⁵ David Atlee Phillips, “This Is About (shh),” *New York Times*, 25 May 1975, 181.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Phillips, *The Night Watch*, 351.

participated in these events, concluded that “[a]t some time we [CIA] should have cried ‘enough.’ When told the plan was to be changed from a classic guerilla landing at Trinidad to a military operation we should have protested individually to the point of refusing to go along.”⁶⁹

Phillips’s primary objective, however, was not to apologize. Throughout *The Night Watch*, he attempted to refute negative allegations that had been leveled against the Agency. For instance, in order to counter the accusation that the CIA lacked diversity, he casually mentioned that “[o]ne of my friends became the first black Chief of Station,”⁷⁰ and later described how he “appointed the first female Chief of Station in CIA’s history.”⁷¹ Interestingly, when Janine Brookner successfully sued the CIA in 1994 for gender discrimination, evidence came to light that contradicted Phillips’s assertion that he had named the first woman station chief. Brookner, who joined the Agency in the late 1960s, had served as Acting Deputy Chief of Station in Venezuela, and she later became Jamaica Chief of Station in 1989. Brookner’s lawyer described her as the first female director of a CIA station in Latin America.⁷² If this information is indeed accurate, Phillips appears to have misstated the facts in his book.

There are also significant flaws with the information he provided on covert actions. In 1954, four years after the CIA first recruited him in Chile,

⁶⁹ Ibid., 140.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 290.

⁷¹ Ibid., 311.

⁷² Victoria Toensing, “CIA’s ‘Cone of Silence’ Guards Glass Ceiling,” *The Seattle Times*, 4 May 1995, B7; Peter Carlson, “Looking to Sue the CIA?: First Find Janine Brookner,” *Washington Post*, 10 March 2004, C1. Brookner’s trouble began when “she reported her male deputy [in Jamaica] for his repeated and admitted wife beating, at least once to the point of the wife’s collapse.” See Toensing, B7.

he helped overthrow President Arbenz in Operation PBSUCCESS. Phillips's version of PBSUCCESS evoked memories of "The Mysterious Doings of the CIA." He referred to Arbenz as "a Soviet sycophant" who "would have undoubtedly succumbed to the political flattery and pressures of his [Communist] advisers."⁷³ Phillips proudly told readers how the radio broadcasts he initiated on May 1, 1954 were designed to convince Arbenz that the opposition forces of Castillo Armas were too powerful for his government to stop. "Arbenz would not have resigned had he not been manipulated into what he conceived as an impossible situation by the rebel radio," Phillips observed, "especially in creating a climate in which he would not allow his pilots to fly or permit the colonel from St. Cyr to commit his troops."⁷⁴ He relaxed in Guatemala City after Armas prevailed by playing golf at a local course, and in a somewhat bizarre twist, he learned afterwards that the spikes he wore during the outing actually belonged to Arbenz.⁷⁵ Not only did Phillips perpetuate the well-worn myth that Arbenz was a Soviet pawn, he also appears to have exaggerated the effectiveness of his propaganda campaign (Operation SHERWOOD).⁷⁶

Since Phillips portrayed covert action as a method of spreading democracy and containing communism, he went to great lengths to explain away CIA intervention in Chile. After Salvador Allende was democratically elected in September 1970, President Nixon ordered the CIA to prevent the

⁷³ Phillips, 68.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 67; see also Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 294-296.

⁷⁵ Phillips, 66.

⁷⁶ Cullather, xi, 76-77.

Chilean leader from taking office. The Agency established a secret Chile Task Force to execute this mission and appointed Phillips to direct it. Phillips said in his memoirs that he was aware he would be working to undermine democracy, which made him reluctant to take the job: "Track II [Nixon's covert policy in Chile] was the only episode in my CIA career which disturbed me to the point that I even considered resigning in protest."⁷⁷ Instead of resigning, however, Phillips accepted the position to run the Task Force. Starting in the middle of September, he spent over forty days plotting against Allende, and by his own estimation, he typically "worked twenty hours a day" during the operation.⁷⁸ De-classified CIA records indicate that Phillips and his Task Force sought to establish "a coup climate [in Chile] by propaganda, disinformation and terrorist activities."⁷⁹ Phillips and the head of the Western Hemisphere Division sent a cable to the CIA station in Santiago on September 28 that bluntly outlined their objectives: "We conclude that it is our task to create such a climate climaxing with a solid pretext that will force the military and the president to take some action in the desired direction."⁸⁰

Phillips attempted to disassociate the CIA from the assassination of General Rene Schneider, the official determined to protect Chilean democracy, but he neglected to mention that the Agency provided \$35,000 to the conspirators after the murder.⁸¹ He also kept secret the praise that he had

⁷⁷ Phillips, 352.

⁷⁸ Phillips, 286; for Phillips's account of the Task Force, see *ibid.*, 282-287.

⁷⁹ Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier On Atrocity And Accountability* (New York: New Press, 2003), 14.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

lavished upon CIA officials in Santiago after hearing about the attack on Schneider. "The Station has done [an] excellent job of guiding Chileans to point today where a military solution is at least an option for them," he said in an October 23 cable.⁸² Even though he later claimed that he had been reluctant at first to participate in Track II, the sentiment expressed in this cable reveals that Phillips took great pride in his work once he committed himself to the covert project.

Phillips blamed Track II on President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, calling the covert policy of the White House "inexcusable."⁸³ The condemnation of a plan that he implemented with such determination seems rather self-serving to say the least. Some might be inclined to sympathize with Phillips's situation in the fall of 1970: after all, he received orders from his superiors, and he loyally followed them despite significant reservations. Yet the evidence demonstrates that Phillips was a willing participant in events rather than a hapless victim. After General Schneider was gunned down on October 22, Phillips claimed in his memoirs that the CIA aborted Track II.⁸⁴ He argued that the CIA was not responsible for the military coup that toppled Allende on September 11, 1973. Rather than de-stabilizing the Chilean government, Phillips maintained, the objective of the CIA "was just the opposite—to stabilize [Chile] by keeping alive democratic institutions until the election . . . scheduled for 1976."⁸⁵ Cord Meyer, a retired CIA officer who published his memoirs three years after Phillips, essentially made the

⁸² *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸³ Phillips, 352.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 286-287.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 352.

same argument about Allende. Track II was an “unhappy incident” and “secret Nixonian aberration” in Meyer’s assessment, but “the Agency was specifically enjoined from any action that might be construed as supporting coup plotting” once the program ended in October 1970.⁸⁶ Like Phillips, Meyer said that the purpose of CIA involvement in Chile after Track II “was to ensure the survival of a democratic coalition that would have a reasonable chance of winning back the Chilean presidency in the election scheduled for 1976.”⁸⁷

Denying CIA complicity in Allende’s downfall was central to the defense of covert action, since Agency supporters recognized that the American public would not tolerate an institution that undermined democracy and promoted dictatorships. Recently de-classified CIA files show that the assertions of Phillips and Meyer were significant distortions of the historical record. Meyer served as the Deputy Director for Plans between 1967 and 1973, and in June 1973, Phillips took over as chief of the Western Hemisphere Division. Given their high-ranking positions within the clandestine service, both men would have known that the covert operations against Allende continued in the three years preceding the September 1973 coup. Thomas Karamessines, who ran the Directorate of Operations during this era, later admitted that “Track II never really ended.”⁸⁸ Although the CIA avoided any involvement in the logistical aspects of the coup, an Agency report concluded in 2000 that Langley “provided assistance to militant right-

⁸⁶ Cord Meyer, *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 187.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁸⁸ Kornbluh, 114.

wing groups to undermine the president [Allende] and create a tense environment."⁸⁹

Phillips and Meyer perpetrated a clever disinformation campaign to hide what the CIA had done in Chile. Phillips believed that the truck strikes in the months prior to the military takeover directly contributed to the success of Pinochet, but he denied that the CIA had financed the truckers.⁹⁰ This denial was literally true; at the same time, however, it was completely misleading. Instead of directly funding the labor unrest, the Agency offered money to other groups ("cutouts") who, in turn, "supported . . . key sectors fomenting economic and social upheaval, notably the truck owners and strikers that paralyzed Chile in 1973."⁹¹ The CIA also supported *El Mercurio*; rather than stabilizing Chilean democracy, the newspaper sought to destroy it, using propaganda to force the resignation of Carlos Prats in August 1973. Peter Kornbluh has eloquently summarized the tragic implications of his resignation: "Like his predecessor, General Schneider, Prats had upheld the constitutional role of the Chilean military, blocking younger officers who wanted to intervene in Chile's political process."⁹²

Phillips, a true believer in the power of propaganda who once owned a newspaper in Santiago, took over the Western Hemisphere Division at the same time events began to escalate inside Chile. Was this simply a coincidence? Perhaps. But it is certain that Phillips knew about ongoing

⁸⁹ Ibid., 90.

⁹⁰ Phillips, 327.

⁹¹ Kornbluh, 90.

⁹² Ibid., 111; Kornbluh demonstrates that the CIA concocted a propaganda scheme "designed to convince the Chilean generals that Allende was secretly plotting with Castro to undermine the army high command" The objective, of course, was to set the stage for a coup. Ibid., 94.

efforts to undermine Allende, participated in them, and then worked assiduously to cover up the CIA's ties to the Chilean right-wing. "The argument that these [CIA] operations were intended to preserve Chile's democratic institutions was a public relations ploy, contradicted by the weight of the historical record," Kornbluh notes in *The Pinochet File*.⁹³ Phillips and his ARIO friends were key architects of this "public relations ploy," and they unleashed their propaganda techniques on Americans to mislead them about what really happened in Chile during the early 1970s.

Phillips and Meyer downplayed the domestic operations of the Agency using similar tactics of obfuscation. In his famous expose of the CIA in December 1974, journalist Seymour Hersh revealed that the Agency had "conducted a massive, illegal domestic intelligence operation during the Nixon Administration against the antiwar movement and other dissident groups in the United States"⁹⁴ Defenders of the CIA took issue with Hersh's decision to use the words "massive" and "illegal" in the opening sentence of the article, which appeared on the front page of the *New York Times*. "Based on the extensive evidence that is now available," argued Meyer, "my own view is that the domestic surveillance activity involving antiwar activists conducted by the Agency was neither massive in scope nor clearly illegal at the time that it was undertaken."⁹⁵ Operation MHCHAOS led to the infiltration of anti-war groups, but he rationalized the activity by claiming that the informants were simply attempting to establish whether the

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁹⁴ Seymour Hersh, "Huge C. I. A. Operation Reported In U. S. Against Antiwar Forces, Other Dissidents in Nixon Years," *The New York Times*, 22 December 1974, 1.

⁹⁵ Meyer, 209.

protestors were the puppets of Moscow. While he acknowledged that the CIA team implementing CHAOS had "clearly exceeded its instructions" on three occasions,⁹⁶ Meyer concluded that "[Richard] Helms was correct in his judgment that the foreign dimension of domestic dissent was clearly within the Agency's jurisdiction and that there was no choice but to trace down every lead."⁹⁷

Not surprisingly, Meyer blatantly distorted Helms's assessment of CHAOS. In February 1969, Helms had sent a letter to National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, informing Kissinger that "[t]his is an area not within the charter of this Agency, so I need not emphasize how extremely sensitive this makes the paper [on the anti-war movement]. Should anyone learn of its existence, it would prove most embarrassing for all concerned."⁹⁸ Both Meyer and Phillips cited the report of the Rockefeller Commission to support their claims. Phillips first developed this strategy in 1977: "these violations were not 'massive'; the undisputed findings of the Rockefeller Commission established less than a dozen cases which could be described as clearly illegal."⁹⁹ Phillips embraced a puzzling definition of the word "massive." In reality, the Rockefeller Commission actually disclosed that the CIA had created files on approximately 7,200 Americans while

⁹⁶ Ibid., 216.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 215; Angus Mackenzie discovered in his investigation that Meyer received a thorough briefing on CHAOS in 1972. Richard Ober, the project manager, outlined "the tremendous scope of MHCHAOS." Mackenzie, 55.

⁹⁸ U. S. Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities [Church Committee], *Final Reports*, 94th Cong., 2d sess., 1976, *Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans* (Book III), "CIA Intelligence Collection About Americans: Chaos and the Office of Security," 697.

⁹⁹ Phillips, 350.

simultaneously maintaining a secret computer database in the basement of Langley with "the names of more than 300,000 persons and organizations."¹⁰⁰ In outlining their defense of the CIA, these Agency veterans also chose to sidestep one minor detail: the National Security Act of 1947, which established the CIA, specifically prohibits it from engaging in domestic operations.

Skeptical observers in the 1970s charged that there was an active relationship between Langley and the ARIO. The organization's decision to move into an office building that was a short drive from CIA headquarters did nothing to diminish this perception. While Colby approved of the project and became a member after his retirement, he told Phillips "that he [Phillips] could have no special help from or relationship with CIA or we would be pilloried for attempting to run a covert operation on the American public."¹⁰¹ Phillips vehemently denied any connection. "I wish to make it absolutely clear that the C. I. A. management has not had, and will not have, a hand officially, unofficially or otherwise in this organization and its efforts," he said to the media in 1975.¹⁰²

At first glance it appears that the ARIO, which was renamed the Association of Former Intelligence Officers (AFIO) in 1977, had a fairly innocuous relationship with CIA headquarters. Evidence suggests that they made referrals to each other if they considered it appropriate. For instance,

¹⁰⁰ Commission on CIA Activities within the United States, *Report to the President by the Commission on CIA Activities within the United States* [Rockefeller Commission] (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975), 130.

¹⁰¹ Colby, 412.

¹⁰² "C. I. A. Aide Quitting to Defend Agency," 39.

when a staffer on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence contacted the Agency's Office of Legislative Counsel in January 1976 to see if Phillips could make a speech in Texas, the Counsel's office extended a cautious response. "I told [the staffer] we are at arms length with Mr. Phillips but provided him the phone number where Mr. Phillips can be reached," wrote the official.¹⁰³ Referrals also worked in the other direction, since members like Cline kept contact numbers for the CIA's public affairs office on hand. One member, an assistant professor at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York, sent the CIA a letter to arrange for students visiting Washington to meet with Agency officials. The professor described the proposed meeting as "an opportunity for the Agency to contact a group of highly motivated, intelligent, and patriotic young men and women."¹⁰⁴

The editor of *Counter-Spy* magazine leveled one of the most sensational charges against Agency veterans connected to ARIO, alleging in 1979 that Cline and thirteen other Georgetown employees were still working for the CIA. Cline lashed out at the accusation in the campus newspaper while claiming that the magazine was "set up by Cuban intelligence, run by the KGB (Soviet secret police) . . . Where do you think they get their funds from?"¹⁰⁵ He further defended himself in a memo on the episode, saying he had "received no compensation of any kind from CIA since [resigning in

¹⁰³ Journal-Office of Legislative Counsel, 14 January 1976, 2, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

¹⁰⁴ Stafford T. Thomas to Herbert Hetu, 29 August 1979, 1, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

¹⁰⁵ Jay Vogel, "Faculty Accused of Affiliation: 14 Linked with CIA Alleges Kelly," *Georgetown University Hoya*, 2 February 1979, 1, 11, newspaper clipping, The Papers of Ray Cline, Part I: Container 26, Folder 18, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

1969] except for three or four lectures given to training classes at CIA. My total income from fees for such lectures is only a few hundred dollars spread over several years."¹⁰⁶ In truth, Cline had remained in contact with the CIA even though he was not on the payroll. Shortly after Admiral Stansfield Turner succeeded George H. W. Bush as CIA director, Cline offered to assist him. "If there is anything at all that I can say or do to help you," Cline wrote in March 1977, "please let me know."¹⁰⁷ He sent a more detailed letter about four months later: "I wish I had an opportunity to counsel with you and your staff with a view to supporting from outside of government the legitimate goals of coordinated central intelligence. I have consulted your staff several times in the past month to see if you ever have any time for sympathetic old hands, so far with no response . . . if you can think of any way in which I can be helpful to the intelligence community, please let me know."¹⁰⁸

It appears that Turner never followed up on Cline's overtures.¹⁰⁹ Yet there is also no question that other ARIO members received assistance from inside Langley. While working for the CIA's history staff in the early 1990s, Nick Cullather was amazed to discover that Phillips's chapter on the Guatemala coup in *The Night Watch* had been "copied almost verbatim from a

¹⁰⁶ Ray Cline to M. Jon Vondracek, 31 January 1979, Papers of Ray Cline, Part I: Container 26, Folder 18, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

¹⁰⁷ Ray Cline to Admiral Stansfield Turner, 14 March 1977, Papers of Ray Cline, Part I: Container 26, Folder 14, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

¹⁰⁸ Ray Cline to Admiral Stansfield Turner, 18 July 1977, Papers of Ray Cline, Part I: Container 26, Folder 14, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

¹⁰⁹ Frustrated in part by this rebuff, Cline eventually turned against the Carter administration and joined Ronald Reagan's campaign in 1980. In a letter to Daniel Schorr in September 1979, Cline referred to Turner as "poor old Stan." Cline to Schorr, 24 September 1979, 2, Papers of Ray Cline, Part I: Container 26, Folder 18, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

debriefing report that is still classified."¹¹⁰ Assuming that Phillips did not possess a photographic memory or steal documents from headquarters before he retired, Cullather's remarkable finding suggests that the president of ARIO was actually collaborating with former friends still working at Langley in the mid-1970s. This directly contradicts the official proclamations of both Colby and Phillips in which they denied a relationship between Langley and the ARIO. CIA officials apparently had no problem leaking classified information as long as Phillips could spin it to make them look good. Ironically, when two authors filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for documents on the Guatemala operation, the Agency turned them down and ultimately prevailed in the legal battle that ensued.¹¹¹ CIA lawyers failed to disclose that at least one of the documents requested had been published already in *The Night Watch*. If the information had not been withheld from the court, it would have been far more difficult for the Agency to win the case.

What most united the former intelligence officers was their belief that the intelligence community needed to operate in secrecy.¹¹² Much has been

¹¹⁰ Cullather, 122.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² As with any organization, it is important to emphasize that differences of opinion sometimes surfaced within the ARIO. There was an early dispute over Phillips's decision to grant membership to Sam Adams, the former CIA analyst who had tangled with the Pentagon during Vietnam. At least one person resigned from ARIO in protest. See David Phillips to Board Members, 30 July 1976, 2, The Papers of Ray Cline, Part I: Container 7, Folder 4, Library of Congress Manuscript Division; in addition, when the organization created the George Bush Award to honor contributions to the intelligence community, several members complained that the prize should have been named after someone with a more distinguished record than Bush such as William Donovan. For the press release announcing the George Bush Award

written already about how the White House used Richard Welch's murder in December 1975 to turn public opinion against the investigations of Senator Frank Church (Democrat-Idaho) and Representative Otis Pike (Democrat-New York). Frederick A. O. Schwarz, Jr., the Chief Counsel of the Church Committee, has described it as a Machiavellian PR campaign: "They danced on the grave of Welch. They egregiously and unfairly took advantage of the situation. In a short-term, tactical way, they rejoiced in his death."¹¹³ It is important to remember that the Ford administration received assistance in this effort from the ARIO and William Colby, who did everything in their power to portray Welch as a fallen hero.

To commemorate the arrival of Welch's remains at Andrews Air Force Base on the morning of December 30, 1975, Phillips, Colby, and about twenty-eight others formed a receiving line and watched as an Air Force honor guard escorted the casket from the C-141 transport plane to a nearby hearse. Television crews filmed the brief ceremony, and thousands of Americans saw the footage on the news. Perhaps the most iconic image of the event was of Colby standing next to Welch's ex-wife and crying daughter, all three with hand over heart.¹¹⁴ The CIA organized a memorial ceremony for Welch inside the Bubble at Langley, and although the press was not allowed to

and the resulting controversy, see *The Papers of Ray Cline, Part I: Container 7, Folder 3, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.*

¹¹³ Schwarz quoted in Frank J. Smist, Jr., *Congress Oversees the United States Intelligence Community, 1947-1994*, 2nd ed. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 64; for the most thorough overview of the PR surrounding Welch's assassination, see Olmsted, 151-155; see also Scott M. Cutlip, "Public Relations in the Government," *Public Relations Review*, 2 (Summer 1976): 14-15.

¹¹⁴ "Slain C. I. A. Man Honored," *New York Times*, 31 December 1975, 47; Eugene L. Meyer, "Slain CIA Agent Receives Unusual Honor," *Washington Post*, 31 December 1975, A1; Olmsted, 152.

attend, the Agency released detailed information about the service. It began with the National Anthem and closed with "America The Beautiful." In between the singing, Colby delivered a eulogy for Welch.¹¹⁵ President Ford granted a special waiver to authorize Welch's burial at Arlington Ceremony on January 6. The funeral, with an estimated five hundred people in attendance, garnered national media attention.¹¹⁶ "Although the Welch family requested that reporters be barred from the chapel where the funeral service was performed," observed Laurence Stern of the *Washington Post*, "provision was made for news coverage of what the Ford administration clearly conceived of as an important event."¹¹⁷ As Senator Church recognized, the White House carefully "stage-managed" the entire event.¹¹⁸

Phillips nicely complemented the Ford administration's PR efforts. He spoke out against the editors of *Counter-Spy* for disclosing the names of American operatives, and just three days after Welch's killing, the *Washington Post* ran a front page story drawn almost exclusively from information he provided. Dan Morgan, the *Post* reporter, focused on Phillip's claim that Welch had foreseen the possibility of terrorists murdering CIA officers. He quoted Phillips several times in the article, which allowed the ARIO president to shape the story's content. The reporter's sources portrayed Welch as a CIA martyr, "an 'erudite' man with a mastery of classical and modern Greek, Spanish and French," and a person who "reportedly would enliven

¹¹⁵ "Colleagues Pay Tribute To Welch," *Washington Post*, 1 January 1976, A6.

¹¹⁶ Laurence Stern, "CIA Agent Welch Buried," *Washington Post*, 7 January 1976, A1; James M. Naughton, "Ford At Funeral For C. I. A. Officer," *New York Times*, 7 January 1976, 8; Olmsted, 152-153.

¹¹⁷ Stern, A1.

¹¹⁸ Church quoted in Smist, 64.

government meetings on current topics by citing anecdotes and precedents from ancient Greek and Roman history."¹¹⁹ Phillips described Welch, who worked for him in the Western Hemisphere Division, as someone "who had the potential for aiming at any position in the agency, given time and experience."¹²⁰ Phillips later dedicated *The Night Watch* to Welch, and he even based the title on a comment that Welch made to a CIA recruit at Camp Peary's bar: "[that intoxicated instructor is] trying to tell you that the night watch can be lonely, but that it must be stood."¹²¹ Phillips and his organization would keep alive the memory of Welch, lobbying forcefully in the years ahead for a federal law to guard against the disclosure of intelligence officers. This effort directly contributed to the passage of the Intelligence Identities Protection Act in 1982.

In order to turn Welch into a martyr, however, important evidence was withheld from the American public. Kathryn Olmsted points out that the CIA had unsuccessfully encouraged Welch to use a home in Athens that was less conspicuous,¹²² and John Prados found in his research that Welch's house "was regularly pointed out on sightseeing tours of the Greek capital."¹²³ Yet in the immediate aftermath of Welch's death, Agency officials kept secret the warnings that they had sent. Supporters of the CIA placed blame for the assassination on *Counter-Spy*, and a *Washington Post* article even claimed that *Athens News* contacted the magazine's editors before deciding to print

¹¹⁹ Dan Morgan, "Slain Agent Feared For CIA Lives," *Washington Post*, 26 December 1975, A20.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Phillips, 271.

¹²² Olmsted, 151; Morton H. Halperin, "CIA News Management," *Washington Post*, 23 January 1977, 30.

¹²³ Prados, 329.

Welch's name on November 25. Although a CIA investigation concluded the *Post* story was "untrue," the Agency only released this information after a Freedom of Information Act request forced its disclosure.¹²⁴

On January 8, 1976, two days after the Welch funeral, *Times* columnist Anthony Lewis perceptively observed that the events "[were] being manipulated in order to arouse a public backlash against legitimate criticism [of the intelligence community]."¹²⁵ He expressed concern about the "careless legitimizing of secrecy," predicting that President Ford and Langley would exploit the situation "to prevent any thoroughgoing reform of the C. I. A."¹²⁶ Lewis was arguably the first person to recognize that the forces of secrecy were turning the tide against the Congressional investigations. These inquiries, which initially threatened the future of the CIA, ended within four months of Lewis's editorial. It is true that both the House and the Senate established intelligence oversight committees, but at the same time politicians refused to take more radical action.

In describing how Americans viewed the Agency prior to the Congressional investigations, Jonathan Nashel offers an interesting observation: "[t]he fact that the American public simultaneously respected, feared, and approved of the CIA's actions until the 1970s was the result of one of the most successful promotions undertaken by the U. S. officialdom."¹²⁷ Allen Dulles, of course, was the mastermind behind the "promotions." But if

¹²⁴ Mackenzie, 89. Mackenzie notes that two other publications had identified Welch: Julius Mader's *Who's Who in the CIA* in 1968 and a Peruvian journal in 1974. *Ibid.*, 89; see also Philip Agee, *On The Run* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, 1987), 133.

¹²⁵ Anthony Lewis, "Death and Secrecy," *New York Times*, 8 January 1976, 31.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Nashel, *Edward Lansdale's Cold War*, 98.

Dulles built up the Agency with PR wizardry in the 1950s, it is equally fair to say that William Colby and David Atlee Phillips helped save the institution two decades later using the same techniques. These men correctly perceived that the American public had not completely lost their fascination with the Agency despite all the ugly revelations that emerged in the mid-1970s. It was not accidental that Phillips intentionally evoked the legendary CIA mystique by emphasizing the anonymous heroism of intelligence officers on the final page of *The Night Watch*. "They have been in dark alleys working hard—with some mistakes and some success—to protect those [American] values," he observed, and then hopefully predicted: "American intelligence will survive."¹²⁸

In retrospect, PR deserves at least part of the credit for making this prediction come true.

¹²⁸ Phillips, 378; Phillips subsequently wrote a guide on how to start a career in the intelligence field. "If we decide that covert action is wrong because it constitutes meddling in other peoples' affairs," he said in the chapter on the CIA, "we should re-examine not only our intelligence activities but our entire foreign policy, our foreign aid program, and our tariff policies (to mention only a few examples) because each of these can have a profound effect on the internal affairs of any number of countries and very often is designed to have just such an effect." See Phillips, *Careers in Secret Operations: How to Be a Federal Intelligence Officer* (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1984), 38.

CHAPTER V
ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER, HERBERT HETU, & THE
LEGEND OF CIA OPENNESS, 1977-1981

In March 1992, William Colby provided a succinct and convincing description of his objectives during the Congressional investigations: "I was fighting for (a) survival of the agency, [and] (b) survival of the covert action mission. We won both."¹ Public relations helped Colby achieve this victory, and it would also assist his successors in their efforts to repair the CIA's tarnished image. When Admiral Stansfield Turner became CIA director in 1977, he immediately revamped how the Agency interacted with the public. Two years earlier Colby had shied away from using the Department of Defense as the model for his PR campaign; citing the fallout from "The Selling of the Pentagon" documentary on CBS, he worried the Agency might be accused of violating the National Security Act's prohibition on domestic activity. Given Turner's naval background, he was much more willing than Colby to institutionalize public relations at the CIA. He recruited an outside PR expert to establish a modern Office of Public Affairs, and between 1977 and 1981, this office developed media strategies for the Agency that are still in use. Turner and his advisors sought to create the impression that the CIA had learned its lessons from the intelligence scandals; that Agency officials accepted and welcomed the newly established oversight committees; and that the reforms were working effectively. By projecting an image of openness to both Congress and the American public, they hoped to avoid further

¹ Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA and FBI* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 169.

investigation of the intelligence community. The PR hype served simultaneously to obscure what was happening at the CIA in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Ironically, at the same time that Agency executives talked publicly about their acceptance of greater openness, they worked forcefully to undermine the Freedom of Information Act and the ability of former intelligence officers to criticize the CIA.

Agency employees distrusted Admiral Turner and the outsiders he brought to Langley, but it immediately became clear to them that the new policies on public relations were not open for debate. In April 1977, E. Henry Knoche, Turner's deputy, sent his boss a packet of material titled "Suggestions for CIA Outreach to the Public"—two pages of which remain classified—that contained proposals for addressing public relations. For each recommendation, the report's authors provided a short description, estimated the related costs, and assessed the idea's advantages and disadvantages. Not only did Turner read the packet thoroughly, he also made notations at the bottom of several pages. He approved most of the recommendations, even offering detailed suggestions for improvement in certain cases. One of the proposals was to provide tours of the Agency for groups from Congressional offices that would offer politicians "the chance to look good in front of the constituents."² In response to the idea that these visitors could watch "old Agency P. R. films," Turner enthusiastically wrote: "Let's get a new one."³

² E. H Knoche to Admiral Turner, "Suggestions for CIA Outreach to the Public," 19 April 1977, "Tour of Agency Headquarters-Congressional Sponsors," CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland). Most sections of the document were declassified in 2002.

³ Ibid.

He also advised that there should be an exhibit in the passageway between the main building and the Bubble.⁴

The packet contained a proposal to bring regional experts from universities to CIA headquarters for a visit, a recommendation that had obvious benefits for recruitment. Turner was warned that “[m]any of the target academics have been hostile or critical of the Agency in the past, and at least a few might well choose to make an issue of such an effort.”⁵ Yet despite the potential challenges, such visits represented a tremendous opportunity: “[t]he target academics are among the most prestigious and influential regional experts in the United States, and in each instance where we succeed in improving their understanding and appreciation of the intelligence process there would be an extensive multiplier effect among both faculty and students.”⁶ Similar proposals were made for think tank directors; meetings with these officials could “identify areas in which the research of private centers complements our own with an eye toward possible contractual relationships in areas where they are especially well qualified.”⁷ In addition to embracing the above suggestions, Turner approved a plan to participate more extensively in career fairs at high schools and colleges.⁸

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ E. H. Knoche to Admiral Turner, “Suggestions for CIA Outreach to the Public,” 19 April 1977, “Meetings with Directors of University Area Study Centers.”

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ E. H. Knoche to Admiral Turner, “Suggestions for CIA Outreach to the Public,” 19 April 1977, “A Series of Agency Forums with Directors of Private Think Tanks.”

⁸ E. H. Knoche to Admiral Turner, “Suggestions for CIA Outreach to the Public,” 19 April 1977, “Public Affairs Suggestion” [High School and College Career Programs].

The packet on public outreach included ideas that would have delighted David Phillips. The Office of Public Affairs wanted to recruit a "group of well qualified public speakers to represent the Agency at local level speaking engagements . . . throughout the country. Retired employees could be used for this purpose along with public personalities."⁹ The proposal did not make reference to the speaker's bureau that the ARIO had already established, but it is clear that the intention was to institute a similar program under Agency auspices. The CIA apparently no longer worried that the project might be characterized as a domestic operation. Turner wanted to pursue an ambitious public relations campaign, and few ideas were off limits. His staff even proposed holding an "Open House" at Langley "advertised in advance to which the public at large would be invited."¹⁰ Turner, however, ultimately decided against the plan, most likely because of concerns about "a staged incident" and the possibility that the event could be condemned "as a 'Disneyland' approach to selling the Agency's image, i.e., 'huckstering.'"¹¹ Agency officials wanted to sell their image, but they planned on closely guarding their tactics.

The person responsible for "selling the Agency's image" was Herbert E. Hetu, a jovial PR man with over two decades of experience in the Navy, who Turner would later praise for implementing "a far-reaching but carefully

⁹ E. H. Knoche to Admiral Turner, "Suggestions for CIA Outreach to the Public," 19 April 1977, "Public Affairs Suggestion" [Expanded Public Speaking Program].

¹⁰ E. H. Knoche to Admiral Turner, "Suggestions for CIA Outreach to the Public," 19 April 1977, "Public Visitation Day," 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

controlled plan."¹² Since public affairs at the Agency had been conducted internally in the past, Hetu's arrival proved somewhat controversial at first, especially since he reported directly to Turner and received the title "Assistant to the Director." Hetu recalled in a 1984 interview that he joked privately about looking underneath his car for explosive devices before driving to Langley in the morning: "going in there perceived as the guy who was going to let the press in, open the windows . . . oh boy, [there was] a lot of hostility."¹³

During a series of interviews in 1996, Hetu explained that his introduction to public relations began while serving as a deck officer on the *USS Salem*. The Ionian Islands in the Mediterranean sustained extensive damage in August 1953 after several earthquakes hit, and the *Salem* provided emergency assistance to the disaster victims. Hetu, the assistant public affairs officer on the cruiser, submitted reports on the situation that were used in newspaper accounts of the tragedy. *Time* even printed a quote from one of Hetu's dispatches.¹⁴ After completing his tour on the *Salem*, the Navy selected him to run the magazine and book division of the Office of Information where he soon became a protégé of Pickett Lumpkin. Hetu

¹² Stansfield Turner, *Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985), 104.

¹³ Jeanne Edmunds, "They Didn't Laugh When I Invited CBS to Film the CIA," *Washington Post*, 15 July 1984, B3; for background on Hetu, see Ronald Kessler, *Inside The CIA: Revealing the Secrets of the World's Most Powerful Spy Agency* (New York: Pocket Books, 1992), 215-220; for an overview of his career in the Navy, see *The Reminiscences of Captain Herbert E. Hetu U. S. Navy (Retired)*, Interviewed by Paul Stillwell (Annapolis, Maryland: U. S. Naval Institute, 2003).

¹⁴ *The Reminiscences of Captain Herbert E. Hetu U. S. Navy (Retired)*, 42-44; according to Hetu, "I wrote all the first communiqués, and for the first 12-18 hours, everything in the press worldwide was coming out of the Salem, and I was writing it." *Ibid.*, 43.

described Lumpkin as a member of the "40 Thieves," the moniker given to the founding fathers of the Navy's PR apparatus in the early Cold War years.¹⁵ Hetu fondly remembered the advice that Lumpkin bestowed on junior officers before sending them to meet with a reporter: "Write the music and play him like a violin."¹⁶ Lumpkin made it perfectly clear that the objective of PR officers in the Navy was to emphasize the positive and downplay the negative. This might sound like government propaganda, but Hetu perceived it differently: "We were always trying to think about telling the good side of the Navy. I suppose that's, in the classic of the definition, propaganda in a way, but [it was] not propaganda in that we didn't manipulate the message to be untrue or to say something that wasn't honorable or truthful."¹⁷

Yet the evidence indicates that that the Navy did "manipulate the message" on several occasions. In fact, Hetu was directly connected to the two most important books published about Vietnam during the 1950s. While running the magazine and book division, he arranged for Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, then Chief of Naval Operations, to write the foreword for Tom

¹⁵ As Hetu explained the term, "those were the first people after World War II who, when the Navy decided to make public information a specialty, a separate designator, 1650, 1655, these were the first 40 people. People now are not sure there were exactly 40, but I'm working on that in my other hat as the public affairs alumni association." *Ibid.*, 50. "Pickett Lumpkin was one of the greatest guys we've ever had in this business. He was a sweet, smart, nice man and taught me an enormous amount about public affairs," said Hetu. *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 153; interestingly, Hetu described the Watergate scandal as "a terrible PR blunder" and even suggested that President Nixon might have survived the crisis. "You know, if Nixon would have hung a couple of those guys on the White House lawn, they would be making gold statues of him. He would have been a hero." *Ibid.*, 154.

Dooley's *Deliver Us from Evil*. He also helped organize a national tour to promote the book. Seth Jacobs, author of *America's Miracle Man In Vietnam*, observes that "*Deliver Us from Evil* was a brilliant work of cold war propaganda in which the communist enemy was irredeemably evil and the Americans and their South Vietnamese allies were virtue incarnate."¹⁸ Dooley, a Navy doctor in Vietnam, ultimately became a PR liability when, in Hetu's words, "[t]hey found out that he and his sailors were running more than a dispensary"¹⁹ After discovering Dooley's homosexuality, Hetu admitted, the Navy forced him to resign.

Hetu left the magazine and book branch in 1956 and spent the next three years with the Pacific Fleet in Hawaii. He briefly shared an office there with William Lederer, who was in the process of co-authoring *The Ugly American* with Eugene Burdick. The novel, which was published in 1958, inspired countless Americans to more aggressively confront communism in the Third World, most notably in Southeast Asia. "Few books have had greater influence on American popular and elite opinion," argues Jacobs.²⁰ Since Lederer asked Hetu for feedback on drafts, the young public affairs

¹⁸ Seth Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 154; see also Jonathan Nashel, *Edward Lansdale's Cold War* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 62-63. James T. Fisher says that the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) compiled a dossier on Dooley that was seven hundred pages. This dossier included graphic descriptions of Dooley's sexual encounters with informants. See Fisher, *Dr. America: The Lives of Thomas A. Dooley, 1927-1961* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 84-89.

¹⁹ *The Reminiscences of Captain Herbert E. Hetu U. S. Navy (Retired)*, 60; Fisher, 86.

²⁰ Jacobs, 111. Jacobs points out that "*The Ugly American* became one of the most popular books in U. S. history, remaining on the best-seller list for seventy-eight weeks and ultimately selling over five million copies." *Ibid.* See also Nashel, 173-178.

officer had the opportunity to “read the book as it came out of the typewriter.”²¹ During his tour of duty in Hawaii, Hetu received another interesting job when asked to be the location scout and technical adviser for the movie *South Pacific* (1958).²² He subsequently served a year in Hollywood using his PR skills to convince producers to portray “the Navy in a good light.”²³ Hetu and his PR colleagues actually collaborated with writers to achieve this objective, even developing the entire plotline for an episode of “The Real McCoys.” He believed that their efforts improved perceptions of the Navy: “Some people would think it was a waste of time, but the McCoys then had a . . . big audience . . . they were one of the top shows. We said something about the Navy to those people and that’s what we were trying to do.”²⁴

With the guidance of Pickett Lumpkin, Hetu learned how to persuade reporters and producers to focus on the Navy’s best attributes. During the 1960s, however, he also became a pioneer in the field of crisis public relations. In April 1963, the *USS Thresher* sank off the coast off Massachusetts, and CBS soon informed the Navy that they had plans for an hour-long program on the loss of the nuclear submarine. Navy officials initially wanted nothing to do with the documentary, but the PR experts convinced their superiors that it was possible to “at least get a positive spin on the story . . .” if they provided

²¹ *The Reminiscences of Captain Herbert E. Hetu U. S. Navy (Retired)*, 69.

²² *Ibid.*, 75-79. Hetu explained that the Navy would “bring the ships around and put them off the beach for a day or two, so they could shoot these scenes with the ships in the background.” *Ibid.*, 77.

²³ *Ibid.*, 97.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 98; Hetu was later a consultant on Otto Preminger’s *In Harm’s Way* (1965). *Ibid.*, 132-137.

assistance to CBS producers.²⁵ By getting involved with the project, Hetu discovered, “[w]e were able to turn the thing around.”²⁶

Hetu pursued his interest in crisis PR at Boston University by writing a master’s thesis on peacetime naval disasters. He stressed the importance of disaster plans in the thesis: “The single most important conclusion of this study is that the success or failure of public relations in a naval disaster is the result of detailed preparation and planning, or the lack of it.”²⁷ Hetu outlined strategies for dealing with the media in the aftermath of a tragedy, including a comprehensive “do” and “don’t” list. “Be alert to positive stories which may develop such as the heroic work of relief workers, [and the] number of doctors and nurses working to treat survivors,” he advised.²⁸ In June 1969, after the *USS Frank E. Evans* was sliced into two pieces by an Australian aircraft carrier during a naval exercise, Hetu applied his theories to handle the crisis. He coached the survivors on the most effective way to deal with the media: “If you do want to tell stories, from what I’ve heard just talking to some of you guys, there’s some real heroics that went on, people helping people out [in] the dark, out in the middle of the night. People helping other people off the ship and in the water . . . And those stories, you can’t tell

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 236.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 237.

²⁷ Herbert E. Hetu, “Public Relations During Peacetime Naval Disaster” (master’s thesis, Boston University, School of Public Communication, Division of Public Relations, August 1965), 108; he also observed: “it becomes obvious that the actions taken before disaster occurs are often the most important. When disaster strikes, the organizations which have planned to meet the informational requirements are the ones which most effectively survive public scrutiny. Perhaps the two most important words to remember in a disaster situation are—Planning and Candor.” *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

enough of those."²⁹ He obviously hoped that these instructions would shift news coverage away from the mistakes that caused the tragedy and towards the heroism of Navy survivors.

Given Hetu's expertise on crisis public relations, he was a perfect match for the CIA in 1977. He had warned in his thesis about the dangers of cutting ties to the media when confronted with a tragedy. Hetu understood that this was an understandable psychological response to a traumatic situation, but nevertheless, he concluded that isolation only made matters worse.³⁰ He argued that the media was an indispensable ally in repairing the image of an institution under attack. Colby had previously attempted to regain the trust of reporters, but his understanding of PR was limited. Hetu, on the other hand, knew how to handle tough questions without giving the appearance of stonewalling. "I had a standing order in my office," he explained, "[w]e never said, 'No Comment.' I thought it was important, even if we couldn't comment, to tell the reporter why"³¹ While Hetu was in charge of CIA public affairs, journalists frequently contacted him to discuss stories that they were preparing. He listened to their information, provided assistance if possible, and made sure that the names of covert operatives did

²⁹ *The Reminiscences of Captain Herbert E. Hetu U. S. Navy (Retired)*, 229; in April 1969, when North Korea attacked an EC-121 spy plane, Hetu had managed the PR response for the Navy. *Ibid.*, 209-214.

³⁰ "If the P. I. O. [Public Information Officer] can establish himself as an ally of the stricken society rather than a potential enemy, he will most probably serve that community, his organization, and the media in a positive and constructive manner," he observed. Hetu, "Public Relations During Peacetime Naval Disaster," 18.

³¹ Hetu quoted in Edmunds, B3; see also Turner, 105; "We are trying a new openness policy," said Hetu, "[w]e want advice on how better to serve the media." Robert Green, "New CIA Image," *Manila Bulletin*, 27 October 1977, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

not get revealed accidentally.³² If the media needed a favor, Hetu was more than willing to help. For example, when *Time* magazine asked the CIA to participate in an event that they were hosting for European businessmen, he helped set up a meeting for them with Turner in October 1977.³³

Hetu also moved quickly to combat unexpected PR problems. In November 1977, CIA officer Paul Chretien spoke at a high school, and in addressing concerns about the MKULTRA experiments, he criticized the program but defended its underlying objective, observing that “[i]f you could control the mind of (Soviet Premier Leonid) Brezhnev it could be useful.”³⁴ Displeased with the incident, Hetu sent a memo to the Deputy Director for Administration in which he complained that Chretien was “meeting with the public on a regular basis with little or no guidance from, or contact with this office I am really concerned that Paul may get himself or the Agency inadvertently into some serious difficulties by trying to field questions such as the ones described in this article.”³⁵ He emphasized the necessity of coordinating all public appearances through his office to prevent PR gaffes.

Rather than obsessing about minor mishaps, however, Hetu focused on larger objectives. He developed plans for CBS to film a “Who’s Who”

³² Edmunds, B3.

³³ Hugh Sidey and John L. Steele to Admiral Turner, 9 August 1977, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland); Herbert E. Hetu to Acting Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, “Briefing of TIME-Sponsored Tour of Western European Industrialists,” 25 August 1977, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

³⁴ Leonard Levitt, “CIA Visits Glen Cove,” *Newsday*, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

³⁵ Herbert E. Hetu to Acting Deputy Director for Administration, “Public Briefings,” 29 November 1977, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

segment inside Langley shortly after joining the CIA, and not surprisingly, he had to overcome the skepticism of some Agency employees. One official worried that Dan Rather might "air his own personal views about CIA and the Intelligence Community" during the show,³⁶ while Robert Gambino, the CIA's Director of Security, expressed concern that permitting "CBS to film this program would be setting a precedent which has unknown future complications."³⁷ Gambino requested that CBS producers allow the Agency to view the footage to ensure that employees in classified positions did not appear on screen.

Even though he acknowledged the risks involved, Hetu advised Turner that CIA officials could "positively impress [Dan] Rather and realize an overall good show."³⁸ The CBS visit represented an excellent opportunity for the Agency to receive positive media publicity, and it would be, in effect, a preemptive strike against those who continued to criticize the culture of secrecy at Langley. "If we don't open our doors under our own terms, we could be forced to do so by external pressures (Congress, White House, media, public opinion, etc.)," wrote Hetu. "I think it better to move in the direction of openness voluntarily and in an orderly fashion. We may as well get credit for opening our own doors and enjoy the credibility that goes with

³⁶ Paul V. Walsh to Hetu, "CBS - 'Who's Who,'" 14 April 1977, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

³⁷ Robert W. Gambino to Deputy Director for Administration, "CBS - 'Who's Who,'" 13 April 1977, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

³⁸ Herbert E. Hetu to Admiral Turner, "CBS - 'Who's Who,'" 18 April 1977, 2, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

such a decision."³⁹ Breaking with long-standing Agency fears about outsiders, Turner signed off on the project.

Hetu's "openness" initiative was an image-making operation and nothing more; when he spoke about "opening our own doors," he was not signaling the end of Langley's obsession with secrecy. He wanted to protect the Agency's mystique, but he also hoped to draw the public's attention away from the scandals that had occupied the headlines just a few years earlier. In the summer of 1977, Hetu began collaborating with ABC's "Good Morning America" on a program devoted to the thirtieth anniversary of the CIA. The two-hour show, which aired on September 19, 1977, contained short segments on the Agency that had been formulated in consultation with Hetu and his PR staff. In addition to "a live interview with the DCI at the ABC studio in Washington," there were proposals to feature the following aspects of the CIA:

the automated cartography program; the Headquarters Library facilities; the recruitment process employed in hiring employees for several diverse positions; preparation of analytical material on such issues as Soviet economy, PRC [People's Republic of China] oil, weather and ecology; the Operations Center; the support activities of the [Directorate of Administration]; and various aspects of security—burn baskets, safes, and vaults.⁴⁰

"[W]e will have no control over the narrative or story content," Hetu acknowledged to Turner, "[b]ut I am confident that, as in the case of [the CBS show], the product will sell itself."⁴¹

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁰ Herbert E. Hetu, Memorandum for the Record, "Second Meeting with ABC GOOD MORNING AMERICA Representatives," 4 August 1977, Document No. CK3100202459, Declassified Documents Reference System [hereafter cited as DDRS] (Declassified, 11 April 1985).

Part of Hetu's confidence stemmed from the fact that his cooperation with ABC made it unlikely that "Good Morning America" would deviate from the script at the last minute. In fact, the only uncertainty would be the questions directed at Turner during the broadcast. After receiving the authorization to move forward with the project, Hetu made arrangements for ABC to shoot four segments at Langley on a Saturday. He knew in advance which topics the producers had selected from the list created in early August, informing the Acting Deputy Director that the camera crew would be filming "a walking tour of the building" as well as features on security procedures, cartography, and employee recruitment.⁴² Then, on the morning of September 19, "Good Morning America" conducted a live interview with Turner at 2430 E Street, the landmark building that had housed the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II and the CIA between 1947 and the early 1960s. Although it is unclear who made the decision to use 2430 E Street instead of the studio at ABC, the new location was a vivid reminder of the mystique that developed around the CIA in the early years of the Cold War. William Donovan, the legendary OSS chief, and several CIA directors had used the office where the interview took place.⁴³

⁴¹ Herbert E. Hetu to Turner, "ABC - 'Good Morning America,'" 10 August 1977 Document No. CK3100202460/CK3100202461, DDRS (Declassified, 11 April 1985), 1.

⁴² Herbert E. Hetu to Acting Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, "ABC GOOD MORNING AMERICA," 24 August 1977, Document No. CK3100202462, DDRS (Declassified, 11 April 1985).

⁴³ Herbert E. Hetu to Turner, "GOOD MORNING AMERICA Program," 16 September 1977, Document No. CK3100202463/CK3100202464, DDRS; Hetu provided Turner with a briefing book to help prepare for the show, and they conducted a walk through of 2430 E Street the day before the interview. He also offered advice on how to dress: "I suggest you wear a light-weight, dark colored summer suit and a loose-fitting, comfortable shirt. You might

Since the CIA continues to withhold records on Hetu's tenure at the CIA, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of his overall strategy. However, the statistics for 1979 are revealing. That year public affairs scheduled about thirty speaking engagements for Agency officials; provided tours of Langley for over forty groups; and conducted 139 press briefings.⁴⁴ In October 1980, Acting CIA Director Frank Carlucci nominated Hetu and his office for a Congressional public service award, praising them for developing programs that "resulted in an overwhelmingly favorable reaction from a greatly enlightened and supportive segment of the American public."⁴⁵ Carlucci explained that the Office of Public Affairs had helped implement "a new policy dedicated to the belief that a well-informed and supportive public is essential to the fulfillment of the Agency's mission, and that the public has a right to know as much as possible about the role of intelligence and the responsibilities of CIA."⁴⁶ He emphasized, however, that the public's right to know did not extend to CIA secrets. From his perspective, "[t]he new policy [of openness] had a vital counterpoint: secrets essential to an effective

consider bringing an additional shirt of the same color on a hanger to change during one of the lengthy film segments." *Ibid.*, 2; for related documents on the "Good Morning America" program, see Sonya Selby-Wright to Hetu, 28 June 1977, Document No. CK3100202458, DDRS (Declassified, 11 April 1985); Sonya Selby-Wright to Hetu, 29 September 1977, Document No. CK3100202552, DDRS (Declassified, 11 April 1985); and David Hartman to Hetu, 3 October 1977, Document No. CK3100202553, DDRS (Declassified, 11 April 1985).

⁴⁴ Nomination for Congressional Award for Exemplary Service to the Public, 14 October 1980, 2-3, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

⁴⁵ Frank Carlucci to Incentive Awards Branch, Office of Personnel Management, 14 October 1980, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

⁴⁶ Nomination for Congressional Award for Exemplary Service to the Public, 14 October 1980, 1-2, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

intelligence organization must be protected at all costs."⁴⁷ Informing Americans of the need for secrecy was "a major objective" of Hetu's office.⁴⁸ In other words, CIA officials believed that PR could be exploited to tutor the public about the positive aspects of secrecy. In the briefing book that Hetu assembled to prepare Turner for the "Good Morning America" interview in 1977, for instance, he advised his boss to argue that there was "[m]ore openness with greater secrecy."⁴⁹

Despite Hetu's concerted effort to spin the American public, of course, there was a fundamental incompatibility between openness and secrecy. The rhetoric of openness diverted attention from the real strategy of the CIA during the late 1970s. Rather than working to reform the culture of secrecy at Langley, Agency officials were actually attempting to re-invigorate it. The former CIA officers who published memoirs critical of the intelligence establishment were directly threatening this entrenched culture. Patrick McGarvey, Victor Marchetti, and Philip Agee differed significantly in their motives and methods, but they all accused the CIA of using secrecy to hide evidence of incompetence and malfeasance. In responding to these unprecedented exposes, CIA officials viewed the Publications Review Board (PRB) as a convenient tool to re-assert control over disgruntled intelligence officers. George H. W. Bush had created the PRB in June 1976 "to review nonofficial writings of current employees," but as Stansfield Turner took over

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ "ABC GOOD MORNING AMERICA 19 SEPTEMBER 1977," Briefing book prepared by Public Affairs Office for Admiral Turner, Document No. CK3100202484-CK3100202532, DDRS (Declassified, 11 April 1985), Tab E, 2.

at the CIA in early 1977, the board received a much broader mandate.⁵⁰ In addition to examining the writings of individuals still on the Agency payroll, the PRB now had the power to inspect anything written by former personnel. Given the board's responsibility for protecting classified information, one might expect that the person chosen to supervise it would have been an Agency veteran, someone with the years of operational experience necessary to determine what information could conceivably threaten intelligence sources and methods. But the man selected as the chairperson of the PRB was none other than Herbert Hetu, the head of public affairs at Langley.

During the years that Hetu chaired the PRB, the board received a wide range of submissions, from articles and books to speeches and editorials. The annual number of PRB reviews increased from 42 in 1977 to 148 three years later.⁵¹ Hetu informed a Congressional subcommittee in 1980 that the members of the PRB "consider ourselves negotiators. We often sit down with authors and work out the differences. In other words, it is not an arbitrary, cold-blooded process."⁵² Hetu said that the board objectively evaluated each item submitted without taking into consideration the author's opinions of the Agency, asserting that defenders of the CIA and its critics received equal treatment. Observers of the PRB, however, have accused the board of more

⁵⁰ Charles A. Briggs to Deputy Director for Administration, "Inspection Report of the Office of Public Affairs" [July 1981], Chapter V, "The Publications Review Board," 2. CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5. Between 1977 and June 4, 1981, there were 420 submissions to the PRB. 360 were described as "non-fiction," while the remaining 60 were categorized as "fiction." *Ibid.*

⁵² U. S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Oversight, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *Prepublication Review and Secrecy Agreements*, 96th Cong., 2nd sess. (April 16, 24 and May 1, 1980), 4.

readily approving the submissions of Agency loyalists. "While it gave the appearance of an orderly, even-handed approach," charges Angus Mackenzie, "its purpose was to increase the CIA's ability to censor the writings and speeches of CIA officers."⁵³ Congressman Les Aspin (Democrat-Wisconsin) offered a similar analysis of the PRB in 1980, calling it "a very arbitrary and capricious system."⁵⁴

In an internal assessment of the Office of Public Affairs written in 1981, the CIA's Inspector General found only two recorded complaints against the board. One person had appealed a PRB ruling to the deputy director, while another had filed a lawsuit.⁵⁵ The report did not disclose the percentage of submissions modified by the PRB during the review process; however, it did reveal that members of the board attempted "not only to delete specific classified items but to recast entire passages and segments of manuscripts that the DO [Directorate of Operations] considers damaging."⁵⁶ Although the Inspector General never explained how the Agency defined "damaging," one suspects that there was an overarching concern about potentially embarrassing information.

In November 1977, less than a year after Hetu became the PRB's chairperson, the CIA discovered a critical flaw in the review system when

⁵³ Angus Mackenzie, *Secrets: The CIA's War at Home* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 71.

⁵⁴ Aspin quoted in George Lardner, Jr., "CIA Defends Its Selective Censorship of Ex-Agents' Writings," *Washington Post*, 6 April 1980, A10.

⁵⁵ "Inspection Report of the Office of Public Affairs" [July 1981], Chapter V, 4; of the 198 submissions to the board during the first three years of its existence, Hetu testified in March 1980 that they completely rejected three while four were withdrawn from consideration. George Lardner, Jr., "CIA Defends Its Selective Censorship of Ex-Agents' Writings," A10.

⁵⁶ "Inspection Report of the Office of Public Affairs" [July 1981], Chapter V, 5-6.

Frank Snepp published *Decent Interval*. Snepp, a CIA officer who had witnessed the fall of Saigon in 1975, decided to violate the Agency secrecy agreement by not submitting his book to the board. While Philip Agee had hoped to stop covert operations, Snepp had entirely different objectives. He accused the CIA of betraying agents in South Vietnam, leaving hundreds of them behind and failing to destroy classified documents that revealed the identities of several informants. Snepp vehemently condemned the Saigon withdrawal: "It is not too much to say that in terms of squandered lives, blown secrets and the betrayal of agents, friends and collaborators, our handling of the evacuation was an institutional disgrace. Not since the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961 had the agency put so much on the line, and lost it through stupidity and mismanagement."⁵⁷

The following February the CIA initiated a landmark lawsuit against Snepp.⁵⁸ Rather than claiming that the former CIA officer had disclosed classified material, Agency lawyers focused instead on Snepp's violation of his secrecy agreement. Judge "Roarin" Oren Lewis ruled against Snepp in a bench trial that was far from impartial. Fred Barbash of the *Washington Post* observed that the outcome was hardly a surprise, since "[t]hroughout the 1 1/2-day-long non-jury trial, [Judge] Lewis had made little effort to conceal his

⁵⁷ Snepp quoted in Seymour M. Hersh, "Ex-C. I. A. Man Assails Saigon Evacuation," *New York Times*, 18 November 1977, A22; see also Seymour M. Hersh, "C. I. A. Says Agent Violated Oath By Publishing Book About Saigon," *New York Times*, 19 November 1977, A1; and Seymour M. Hersh, "Ex-Analyst Says C. I. A. in Saigon Gave False Reports to Newsmen," *New York Times*, 21 November 1977, 26.

⁵⁸ "U. S. Sues Ex-CIA Agent for Book Profits," *Washington Post*, 16 February 1978, G1; for a description of the complex legal battle, see Frank Snepp, *Irreparable Harm: A Firsthand Account of How One Agent Took On the CIA in an Epic Battle Over Secrecy and Free Speech* (New York: Random House, 1999), esp. Parts III and IV; see also Mackenzie, 73-77.

personal view of what Snepp, whom he generally referred to as 'Shepp,' had done, lecturing him angrily when he took the stand and saying at one point that 'it won't make any difference' what the evidence is."⁵⁹ Lewis ordered Snepp to turn over all profits from *Decent Interval* to the federal government. Although an appeals court concluded in March 1979 that Snepp had indeed violated the secrecy contract, they overturned most of Lewis's decision.⁶⁰ But in February 1980, the Supreme Court upheld the original verdict without bothering to hear oral arguments.⁶¹ Some attributed the 6-3 decision, one of the most reckless ever issued, to an expose of the Court that Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong had recently published. Not only did the Court rule in favor of the Agency, they described the CIA as "essential to the security of the United States and—in a sense—the Free World."⁶²

As a result of the Supreme Court's judgment, Snepp would ultimately forfeit over \$140,000 dollars. The decision was an undeniable victory for the culture of secrecy and a massive defeat for the advocates of openness. After the PRB received the high court's sanction, Turner wasted little time in pursuing John Stockwell, who had refused to submit his scathing account of the Agency's covert operation in Angola to the board. This operation had

⁵⁹ Fred Barbash, "Snepp Breached Contract, Judge Says," *Washington Post*, 22 June 1978, A10.

⁶⁰ Fred Barbash, "Appeals Court Says CIA Agent Was Punished Improperly for Violating Secrecy Agreement," *Washington Post*, 21 March 1979, A16.

⁶¹ Fred Barbash, "High Court Backs Secrecy Restraint On U. S. Workers," *Washington Post*, 20 February 1980, A1. According to the three dissenters (John Paul Stevens, William Brennan, and Thurgood Marshall), "The court seems unaware of the fact that its drastic new remedy has been fashioned to enforce a species of prior restraint on a citizen's right to criticize his government." *Ibid.*, A15.

⁶² Jim Mann, "Snepp and the CIA: A Few Troubling Questions Remain," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 March 1980, E3.

occurred at the height of the Congressional investigations.⁶³ Turner, however, did not target all former CIA officials in violation of the secrecy agreement. Even though the Agency discovered that the French edition of William Colby's *Honorable Men* was not submitted to the PRB before its publication, the former CIA director received no punishment and was allowed to keep the money he earned from his memoirs. Colby, unlike Snepp, had even revealed classified information.⁶⁴ Nothing happened either to Cord Meyer, who had started a second career as a syndicated columnist. Hetu attempted to convince Meyer to allow the PRB the opportunity to review his columns, but according to the findings of the Inspector General, Meyer refused, "insisting that as a journalist he writes only his opinions of current developments in foreign affairs without discussing operations or other activities which he knows about as a former Agency officer."⁶⁵ The Inspector General discovered "that some believe that Meyer has maintained close ties with still active former colleagues and periodically visits Agency Headquarters"⁶⁶ Despite the evidence that Meyer was possibly receiving insider information, the CIA did not take him to court. "We have less concern that Mr. Meyer would deliberately reveal a secret or would

⁶³ "Third Ex-C.I.A. Agent Sued by U. S. for Profits," *New York Times*, 4 March 1980, A13.

⁶⁴ Laurence Stern, "Ex-CIA Chief Bares More In French," *Washington Post*, 19 November 1978, A13. Colby revealed details about the *Glomar Explorer* and identified a station chief by name. *Ibid.*, A13; John Prados, *Lost Crusader: The Secret Wars of CIA Director William Colby* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 338; Snepp, 114-115, 156-158, 308-309.

⁶⁵ "Inspection Report of the Office of Public Affairs" [July 1981], Chapter V, 11.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

deliberately do harm," Agency lawyer Ernest Mayerfeld explained in congressional testimony.⁶⁷

Mayerfeld came close to admitting that there were two sets of guidelines. Agency supporters like Colby and Meyer would be forgiven for clear violations of the secrecy agreement, while Snepp, Stockwell, and other CIA critics received no such mercy. In the aftermath of the Snepp ruling, the PRB wielded its authority even more subjectively than before. Wilbur Eveland, a former National Security Council employee who had assisted CIA covert operations in the Middle East during the 1950s, had recently finished a manuscript about these activities when he learned of the Snepp verdict. Eveland had been secretly assigned to Allen Dulles in 1955 and participated in a covert CIA mission to undermine the government of Syria. After contacting the CIA to determine if he had signed a secrecy agreement, a CIA lawyer informed him in March 1980 that since the contract was "contained in a document which is currently properly classified, I am not at liberty at this time to forward it to you."⁶⁸ Eveland knew that he had not signed any contract prior to September 1957, so he balked at the CIA's demand to review the entire manuscript. "I'm sure as hell not going to let you get into anything before I signed the agreement [in 1957]," he declared.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ George Lardner, Jr., "CIA Defends Its Selective Censorship of Ex-Agents' Writings," A10.

⁶⁸ George Lardner, Jr., "CIA Delays Printing of Ex-Aide's Book," *Washington Post*, 3 April 1980, A13.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, A13; Wilbur Crane Eveland, *Ropes of Sand: America's Failure in the Middle East* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1980), 13-14; Mackenzie, 129-133. The CIA later released the secrecy contract. As Mackenzie explains, however, Eveland had not signed the document. "Even more important," says Mackenzie, "the employment contract contained no explicit assertion of a prepublication review agreement." After the CIA threatened litigation,

The CIA's pettiness was on display again a few months later when the PRB analyzed a novel that Snepp had written. Snepp had included the identities of actual CIA operatives in the book, and the board instructed him to remove one of these names in early July. The PRB, however, apparently forgot that they had permitted David Phillips to identify the same person in *The Night Watch*. "That gives you an idea of how good the clearance process is," Snepp wryly observed, "[t]hey'd allowed one of their 'good old boys' to release a name and now they were trying to get me to help squeeze the toothpaste back in the tube."⁷⁰ He would ultimately remove the name from the book, but not before chastising the PRB for the inconsistencies of its reviews: "I have gone to great lengths to avoid exposing a secret, a name or an intelligence source whose confidentiality is crucial to the effective functioning of our intelligence services. Although your own review staff has shown itself to be somewhat less diligent, I will not violate my own moral responsibility."⁷¹

The PRB reacted with even greater hostility to a manuscript Ralph McGehee submitted one week after the Supreme Court ruled against Snepp, demanding that he delete 397 items. When he protested these deletions, Agency officials were less than gracious. "It's too bad you didn't work for the Israeli intelligence service," he was told. "They know how to deal with

Eveland reluctantly agreed to sign a secrecy pledge in December 1982. *Ibid.*, 131.

⁷⁰ Snepp quoted in George Lardner, Jr., "CIA to Snepp: Delete Name of (Known) Agent in Novel," *Washington Post*, 14 July 1980, A11.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

people like you. They'd take you out and shoot you."⁷² The CIA reviewers took issue with his discussion of Langley's liaison arrangements with Thailand even though McGehee could demonstrate the "relationship was so well known that books had been written about it, academic studies discussed it, pictures of CIA station chiefs appeared in the Thai press, and high-level Thai officials openly bragged in the media about CIA support for their organizations."⁷³

Another PRB deletion pertained to McGehee's criticism "of the Agency's long-term operations against mainland China."⁷⁴ McGehee quickly pointed out that they previously cleared Peer de Silva's *Sub Rosa*. De Silva, an Agency supporter who had once headed the CIA station in Hong Kong, had criticized the operations as well.⁷⁵ The board initially reversed their decision, but then the China Division of the Directorate of Operations developed an entirely different justification for blocking the undesired commentary on their past failures, alleging that the manuscript divulged a technique associated with CIA methods. "That technique, recruiting persons from the other side, was just slightly newer and less well known than prostitution," argued McGehee.⁷⁶ The PRB backed down when McGehee demonstrated that Agency defenders such as Phillips revealed extensive information about

⁷² "Bob" quoted in Ralph W. McGehee, *Deadly Deceits: My 25 Years in the CIA* (New York: Sheridan Square Press, 1983; reprint, Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 1999), 197.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.

recruitment techniques in their writings.⁷⁷ Based on his experiences with Hetu's board, McGehee believed that the double standard was self-evident:

The PRB, taking its responsibilities seriously, labels just about everything secret until an author who is critical of the Agency can prove this not to be the case. But the situation for ex-employees who are advocates of the CIA is the opposite. They are given almost *carte blanche* to discuss operations and techniques, and in some instances they are assisted in the research and writing of their works.⁷⁸

Moreover, he contended that the board wanted to protect the CIA's image even in cases where there was no legitimate reason for withholding material. "Agency officials show no hesitation in trying to censor embarrassing, critical, or merely annoying information," he warned.⁷⁹

While the PRB made it increasingly difficult for current and former employees to criticize the Agency, there was a simultaneous effort to combat the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The CIA and other members of the intelligence community had been largely exempt from the FOIA, which President Lyndon Johnson had grudgingly signed in 1966, until Congress passed an amendment to the law that took effect in early 1975.⁸⁰ This amendment, inspired in part by the Watergate scandal, made it possible for requestors to gain access to Agency records, but the CIA could still withhold documents for a long list of reasons. When speaking publicly, CIA officials went so far as to cite the FOIA amendment as evidence of the new era of openness and accountability at Langley. In 1977 Acting CIA Director John F.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 202.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 203.

⁸⁰ Bill Moyers, "In The Kingdom Of The Half-Blind," 9 December 2005, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/anniversary/moyers.htm> (accessed July 28, 2006).

Blake, who also chaired the CIA committee in charge of complying with the new law, told a subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee that the legal changes “constituted a somewhat traumatic experience” for the Agency.⁸¹ At the same time, however, Blake proudly reported: “[m]y colleagues have worked very hard during these past 30 months to make the act work according to the letter and spirit. We have been able to make the necessary adjustments. I am pleased to report that, in fact, I think the Agency is better off for it [the 1974 FOIA amendment].”⁸²

Sadly, Blake’s optimistic testimony did not accurately reflect what was happening behind closed doors at Langley. In reality, as an ACLU lawyer explained in 1984, the Agency hierarchy “developed a siege mentality toward the public and the FOIA” in the 1970s.⁸³ About fifteen months after he gave the impression that the CIA had benefited from the increasing number of FOIA requests, Blake, then Deputy Director for Administration, forwarded a report on the FOIA and Privacy Act to Deputy Director Carlucci. The study indicated that there was a backlog of 2,700 FOIA requests, that around seventy full-time CIA employees were needed to respond to those inquiries,

⁸¹ U. S. House of Representatives, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *Central Intelligence Agency Information Act*, 98th Cong., 2d sess., 1 May 1984, H. Rep. 98-726: Part I, 6.

⁸² U. S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights of the Committee on Government Operations, *The Freedom of Information Act: Central Intelligence Agency Exemptions. Hearings on H. R. 5129, H. R. 7055, and H. R. 7056 To Enhance the Foreign Intelligence and Law Enforcement Activities of the United States By Improving the Protection of Information Necessary to Their Effective Operation*, 96th Cong., 2d sess., 20 February and 29 May 1980, 71.

⁸³ U. S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Legislation of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, “Statement of Mark H. Lynch On Behalf Of The American Civil Liberties Union,” *Legislation To Modify The Application Of The Freedom of Information Act To The Central Intelligence Agency*, 98th Cong., 2d sess., 8 February 1984, 40.

and that the Agency spent nearly \$2.4 million dollars in 1977 on FOIA processing.⁸⁴ Rather than outlining the benefits of the FOIA to researchers, it referred to "the burden imposed on the CIA"⁸⁵ Thus, the author of the report informed his superiors that "a good case could be made for total exemption from the Act, or, if that is impossible, partial relief."⁸⁶ While he warned that there would be opposition to such an exemption, the official argued "that all of our old 'dirty linen' has by now been thoroughly exposed to public scrutiny. The public's interest in preventing future abuses or illegalities by U. S. intelligence organizations will be adequately served by the elaborate oversight mechanisms that have been established in the Agency, the Intelligence Community, the White House, and the Congress."⁸⁷ In referring to the increased oversight of the intelligence establishment, the report came close to describing the FOIA as a wasteful redundancy. "There is no

⁸⁴ John F. Blake to DDCI, "IPS Report on Impact of the FOIA and Privacy Act," 6 December 1978, 7, 10, 11, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives II (College Park, Maryland); CIA officials blamed the extensive backlog of FOIA cases on the Agency's records management system. David Wise has vividly shown the limitations of these firewalls in his study of Aldrich Ames, the CIA turncoat arrested in 1994. "On June 13, 1985, in his fourth-floor office, Ames wrapped up between five and seven pounds of cable traffic and other secret documents in plastic bags, took the elevator down, and pushed his laminated ID card into the turnstiles that block the exits from headquarters No guard asked to look inside the plastic bags." Wise, *Nightmover: How Aldrich Ames Sold the CIA to the KGB for \$4.6 Million* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 118.

⁸⁵ John F. Blake to DDCI, "IPS Report on Impact of the FOIA and Privacy Act," 6 December 1978, 15. "While we take no issue with the concept that the American public has a right to know what its Government is doing," the report claimed, "we do submit that in the case of foreign intelligence records the public benefits deriving from the Act have not been commensurate with the costs." Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 15-16.

compelling need . . . for the Freedom of Information Act to be a means of monitoring Agency activities," it concluded.⁸⁸

Although there is no question that CIA officials wanted to press for exemptions to the FOIA, they recognized that lingering memories of the "Year of Intelligence" would make politicians reluctant to assist them. In fact, the author of the 1978 FOIA study acknowledged "that the prospects for obtaining relief th[r]ough amendments to the Freedom of Information Act are not bright."⁸⁹ Instead of abiding by the law and opening their files in response to FOIA requests, the CIA adopted unethical tactics to thwart these inquiries. John Stockwell, the CIA officer who served in Angola, disclosed in his memoirs the existence of "blind" memos. These documents were not even allowed into the filing system, and as a result, "the inner-most records of the war [in Angola] would forever be immune to any Freedom of Information Act disclosures, or congressional investigation. Technically they did not exist: legally they could be destroyed at any time."⁹⁰ Stockwell asserted that the tactics used by the Africa Division were directly connected to concerns about the FOIA: "Since the Freedom of Information Act, the agency increasingly uses a system of 'soft,' 'unofficial,' or 'convenience' files for sensitive subjects, especially any involving surveillance of Americans. Such files are not registered in the agency's official records system, and hence can

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁹⁰ John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1978), 169; Athan G. Theoharis, "Researching the Intelligence Agencies: The Problem of Covert Activities," *The Public Historian* 6 (Spring 1984): 69.

never be disclosed under the FOIA."⁹¹ (Interestingly, Blake revealed that the CIA did indeed use "soft files" in his 1977 testimony.⁹²)

At the same time Admiral Turner publicly talked about the CIA's greater openness, his deputy was quietly attempting to undercut the new FOIA statute. Carlucci began to lobby Congress for broad relief from the FOIA in April 1979. In order to downplay concerns about civil liberties, the CIA said that it did not want to eliminate the ability of individuals to file first-person requests to determine if they had been subjected to Agency surveillance or experimentation. The Agency would also allow people to submit FOIA requests for completed intelligence reports prepared by the Directorate of Intelligence. In essence, Carlucci argued that all of the so-called operational files should be placed off limits to the FOIA. After Carlucci shared his concerns with Congress, Representative Robert McClory (Republican--Illinois) drafted H.R. 5129, a bill that used "language which [was] all but identical to [the CIA's]."⁹³

Carlucci, unsuccessful in 1979, appeared in front of a subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations the following February to continue his support for the proposed exemptions, offering a variety of reasons why Congress should allow the CIA to more easily reject FOIA requests. He told the members of the subcommittee about the backlog of 2,700 cases, and he claimed that requests for operational material inevitably

⁹¹ Stockwell, 228n.

⁹² Theoharis, 68.

⁹³ *The Freedom of Information Act: Central Intelligence Agency Exemptions*, 23. There were other bills in both the House and Senate at the time that would have provided the CIA with exemptions to the FOIA. See, for instance, H.R. 6316, H.R. 7055, H.R. 7056, S. 2216, and S. 2284; Mackenzie, 79-80.

forced Agency personnel to search through mountains of documents that they ultimately could not release.⁹⁴ Such processing wasted time and money, argued Carlucci, and the backlog could be substantially reduced if the CIA was allowed to simply deny any request for operational files at the outset. Even though the CIA's own study of the FOIA had acknowledged that the risk of accidentally releasing classified information in response to a request was minimal, Carlucci warned about the dangers of human error. If the FOIA processors made a minor mistake, an enemy of the United States might be given the final clue needed to damage national security—a concern known as the mosaic theory.⁹⁵ The deputy director even suggested: "there still exists the very real possibility that an orchestrated effort by persons hostile to the Agency could literally swamp the Agency with FOIA requests."⁹⁶ By covertly inundating the Agency with FOIA letters, in other words, the communists could potentially cripple the intelligence establishment. This argument was shockingly duplicitous. The CIA report forwarded to Carlucci for his review had concluded that there was no evidence that the Soviet Union or China had filed any FOIA requests.⁹⁷

Carlucci focused extensively on the alleged difficulty of convincing potential intelligence assets and foreign governments that they could share secrets with the Agency. He claimed there had been situations "where agents have cited the FOIA as the reason for unwillingness to either cooperate

⁹⁴ *The Freedom of Information Act: Central Intelligence Agency Exemptions*, 29-31.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 28, 67.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹⁷ "IPS Report on Impact of the FOIA and Privacy Act," 6 December 1978, 7.

initially, [to] continue to cooperate, or [to] cooperate as fully as in the past."⁹⁸ Carlucci admitted that the Agency had the complete power to protect secrets under the existing laws, but he believed that foreigners "have an entirely different perception."⁹⁹ Although he recognized that there were reasons other than the FOIA that might explain why agents were reluctant to turn over information to the CIA, he described the Act as an important "symbol" of the problem.¹⁰⁰ He was essentially asking Congress to grant the CIA an exemption to correct a problem that did not exist. Perhaps even more troubling, Carlucci denied that the FOIA should contribute to the oversight of the Agency. The internal safeguards within the intelligence community and the designated committees in Congress were responsible for holding the CIA accountable, "not . . . 23,000 foreign and American FOIA requesters"¹⁰¹

Several representatives on the subcommittee responded skeptically to Carlucci's testimony. Congressman John Erlenborn (Republican—Illinois) wondered why the Agency "wanted relief from a misperception."¹⁰² When Congressman Peter Kostmayer (Democrat—Pennsylvania) further pressed Carlucci on this point, he offered an Alice and Wonderland reply: "I think

⁹⁸ *The Freedom of Information Act: Central Intelligence Agency Exemptions*, 26; historian Lloyd Gardner questioned Carlucci's accusation that foreign governments had expressed concern about the FOIA, noting that the State Department had encouraged countries to complain during the controversy over the Pentagon Papers. The objective, of course, was to manufacture protest that would help justify the government's position in its case against Daniel Ellsberg. He implied that the CIA might have used similar tactics to build support for restricting the FOIA. Interestingly, the revelations about the State Department resulted from a FOIA request filed by a student of Walter LaFeber. *Ibid.*, 181.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 25, 28.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 53.

that we have to base this decision on the reality in which we live, and the world of perceptions in the intelligence business is the world of reality."¹⁰³ Later in the hearing, Kostmayer expressed concern that changing the current law might make it easier for the CIA to withhold information on illegal operations, observing that "the record of the Central Intelligence Agency leaves a great deal to be desired in terms of upholding the law."¹⁰⁴ This comment led to a testy exchange:

CARLUCCI: Mr. Kostmayer, you are posing hypothetical upon hypothetical based on an assumption that nobody in the CIA is an honorable person, and I frankly cannot accept that.

KOSTMAYER: I am not suggesting that, and you are basing part of your testimony on assertions which you acknowledge are not valid, so I do not think you are in a position to criticize my hypothesis.¹⁰⁵

Carlucci also faced tough questioning from other members of the subcommittee. Father Robert Drinan, a Democratic Congressman from Massachusetts, drew attention to the fact that the Agency had a perfect record in FOIA litigation, and Congressman Ted Weiss (Democrat—New York) was apprehensive about the lack of judicial review.¹⁰⁶ Weiss recognized that if the CIA received an operational files exemption, a judge would be obligated to reject all appeals from FOIA requesters any time the CIA claimed that the relevant documents were considered operational in nature. Like Congressman Kostmayer, Weiss forcefully reminded Carlucci that Congress had every reason to be suspicious of the promises made by CIA officials.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 58.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 70.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 51, 62.

"[T]he gentlemen who preceded you were thought to be every bit as high minded, and noble, and patriotic American citizens as you are, and yet all kinds of terrible things happened during their directorships," he declared, "and I think the reason for our concerns—the reason for FOIA—is that terrible things can happen, and that is why we need the protections of the law."¹⁰⁷

When the hearings on the proposed exemptions resumed three months later, the ACLU, historians, and other groups stepped forward to block the legislation. The Center for National Security Studies (CNSS), a division of the ACLU, submitted a detailed report that provided a point-by-point refutation of Carlucci's testimony. The study re-iterated that "as of March 1980, not one sentence has been released to the public under a court order in circumstances where the CIA has argued that release would injure the national security."¹⁰⁸ Moreover, CNSS highlighted the dangers associated with reducing the intelligence community's accountability to the public: "The CIA says it is willing to give all information to the Congress for purposes of oversight and that this is further reason for granting the exemption. Yet disclosures under the FOIA have shown that the CIA did not turn over all information about past operations to the Congress"¹⁰⁹

Lloyd Gardner, a history professor representing the Organization of American Historians, joined the ACLU in denouncing the CIA's campaign to restrict the FOIA. "This will be a tragedy if it is allowed to go unchallenged,"

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

he argued.¹¹⁰ Gardner told Congress that the exemptions would seriously undermine historical scholarship on American foreign relations. He lamented that “the post-Vietnam backlash against declassification and against FOIA can only remind the historian of days when kings banished prophets who displeased them and sent messengers bearing bad news to oblivion. Surely, we are not prepared to go that route.”¹¹¹ William Corson, the author of *The Armies of Ignorance* (1977), elaborated on Gardner’s protest, bluntly advising “that the Congress should be encouraged by the CIA’s attempt to gain further exemptions from the FOIA. That, to me, is the best evidence that the FOIA is working, albeit not completely as some might prefer, but nevertheless still working.”¹¹² He called the proposed legislation “a bureaucratic Trojan horse,” since it would enable the Agency to withhold any document from FOIA requesters by simply labeling it an operational file.¹¹³

The forces aligned against the CIA in 1980 confirmed what Agency officials had anticipated two years earlier: the political climate, still shaped by the legacy of the Church and Pike committees, was not conducive to rolling back the FOIA. Since Congress refused to grant the CIA’s request for exemptions to the FOIA, many requestors were able to obtain fascinating information from the Agency between 1975 and the early 1980s. John Marks, for instance, gained access to 16,000 pages of records on MKULTRA, which enabled him to write *The Search For The “Manchurian Candidate”: The CIA and Mind Control*. “Without these documents,” he admitted, “the best

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 171.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 186.

¹¹³ Ibid., 184

investigative reporting in the world could not have produced a book, and the secrets of CIA mind-control work would have remained buried forever, as the men who knew them had always intended."¹¹⁴ The legal battle with the Agency had taken three years, but Marks remained optimistic about the FOIA, observing in October 1978 that "the system has worked extremely well."¹¹⁵ Journalists also used the Freedom of Information Act successfully at this time. Students at the College of William and Mary learned in April 1980 that the CIA had conducted surveillance of "radicals" on their campus during the Vietnam War.¹¹⁶ The Office of Security at Langley ran the operation as part of Project Resistance, a program of domestic espionage that targeted faculty and students at several colleges. The college newspaper at William and Mary, *The Flat Hat*, had acquired the sensational information through a FOIA request, which had been filed two years earlier.¹¹⁷

The victories of FOIA requestors in the 1970s gave credence to the image of openness that Hetu worked so hard to create. The tragedy of CIA history during these years is that Agency officials wanted nothing to do with openness. They complied with FOIA requests with considerable reluctance, and when they saw embarrassing information released to critics like John Marks, it only reinforced their commitment to secrecy. The Agency's crusade against openness began with the formation of the PRB, which seriously restricted what former employees could say about the intelligence

¹¹⁴ John D. Marks, *The Search for the "Manchurian Candidate": The CIA and Mind Control* (New York: Times Books, 1979; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), xix.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Jennifer McBride, "The CIA On Campus: 1969-1971," *The Flat Hat*, 18 April 1980, 1.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

community. The secondary target in Turner's secrecy campaign, of course, was the FOIA amendment of 1974. His deputy fought aggressively to win exemptions for the Agency, and although the ACLU and the Organization of American Historians prevailed in that battle, the CIA would mount another offensive a few years later in a much friendlier environment.

If Turner had actually embraced openness while CIA director, it is possible that he could have done something to change the irrational obsession with secrecy at Langley. But in choosing to become a forceful defender of that culture—sanctioning the lawsuit against Frank Snepp, encouraging Herbert Hetu's bait and switch PR tactics, and allowing Frank Carlucci to lobby against the FOIA—Turner helped set the stage for the abuses of power committed by his successor, William Joseph Casey.

CHAPTER VI
THE CULTURE OF SECRECY UNLEASHED, 1981-1987

By the end of the Carter administration, it appeared that Herbert Hetu's policies had staying power. But when William Casey became President Ronald Reagan's CIA director, he questioned the need for continuing the public relations campaign at Langley. The CIA had survived the scandals of the 1970s, the Republicans now controlled the White House, and the intelligence community's budget was no longer in jeopardy. As a result, Casey wondered why the Agency still found it necessary to publicly defend itself. He soon brought an end to the Agency's press briefings, and on July 1, 1981, he shut down the Office of Public Affairs. "[T]he difficulties of the past decade are behind us," he declared.¹ Casey acknowledged that the public relations office served a purpose when it was first created, but he told employees that "the time has come for CIA to return to its more traditional low public profile and a leaner—but no less effective—presence on Capitol Hill."² Hetu did not welcome Casey's decision,³ and in August 1981, he left the Agency to found Hetu & Lukstat, a public relations firm. The remnants of

¹ George Lardner, Jr., "CIA Is Lowering The Blinds, Closing More Shutters," *Washington Post*, 30 June 1981, A3; "Intelligence Agency Will Abolish Office Providing Press Data," *New York Times*, 1 July 1981, A17.

² Lardner, A3; Joseph E. Persico, *Casey: From the OSS to the CIA* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 270; Bob Woodward, *VEIL: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 139.

³ According to Ronald Kessler, Hetu had previously sent Casey a memo in which he urged his new boss to reconsider the decision to end press briefings. Casey responded poorly: "I didn't ask you to debate it. I asked you to stop it. Now I'm ordering you to stop it. Stop it today. If you have any scheduled today, cancel them." Kessler, *Inside The CIA: Revealing the Secrets of the World's Most Powerful Spy Agency* (New York: Pocket Books, 1992), 220.

his office merged with the downsized Congressional liaison staff to form a new division under the direction of future CIA chief Robert Gates.⁴ Contrary to Casey's thinking in 1981, however, the difficulties were only just beginning. In fact, his first year at Langley forced him to completely reverse his views on the value of public relations, and he would ultimately embrace the most aggressive PR tactics in the history of the CIA. He used PR to combat the media, to (covertly) sell the American public on the desirability of covert action in Nicaragua, and to convince the ACLU to endorse the CIA Information Act of 1984.

Max Hugel, a businessman Casey befriended during the Reagan campaign, was a PR crisis waiting to happen. Hugel had never worked for the CIA before, but Casey decided to let him run the Directorate for Administration, the division in charge of personnel and management. In May 1981, when the clandestine services was in need of a new director, Casey moved Hugel into the position, a maneuver that dumfounded Agency insiders. Gates subsequently described Hugel as "the appointment from hell,"⁵ recalling that "[s]hort Max, with his toupee and mannerisms, his style of speech and dress, was put down by the Agency hierarchy—apart from Bill—as soon as he arrived."⁶ Officials in the Directorate of Operations did not respect Hugel, and they were determined to undermine him. "Leaks to the press about Hugel's mistakes, mannerisms, and faux pas began nearly

⁴ "Intelligence Agency Will Abolish Office Providing Press Data," A17.

⁵ Robert M. Gates, *From The Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 211.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 210.

immediately," says Gates.⁷ It also appears that disgruntled Agency employees helped mobilize the powerful network of former intelligence officers. Less than two weeks after Hugel had been selected, Cord Meyer, the author of *Facing Reality*, wrote a scathing assessment of the director's decision, calling it "a breathtaking gamble for which the country will have to pay heavily if Casey has guessed wrong."⁸ A week later the *New York Times* printed an editorial titled "The Company Mr. Casey Keeps" that compounded the negative publicity. "Who can be surprised if there are fears of a replay [of past abuses] in an Administration that talks loosely about 'unleashing' the C. I. A.," asked the *Times*. "These fears are fanned when an outsider with tenuous credentials is given command of The Company's most free-wheeling division."⁹

Despite the backlash in the media and the frustration of his employees, Casey adamantly defended Hugel. Viewing Hugel as a political lackey, skeptics at Langley were equally stubborn and somewhat merciless. Agency humorists even compared him to Tatoo on *Fantasy Island*: "What does Hugel say each morning to Casey? 'Boss, Boss—the plane, the plane!'"¹⁰ Jokes about his height undoubtedly proved embarrassing to Hugel, but the greatest humiliation did not surface until July. *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Patrick Tyler had been pursuing a story about Hugel's

⁷ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁸ Cord Meyer, "Casey Picks Amateur for Most Sensitive CIA Job" *Washington Star*, 15 May 1981, A15, The Papers of Cord Meyer, Container 5, Folder 6, Library of Congress Manuscript Division; Persico, 245; "C. I. A. Acknowledges Ex-Campaign Official Is Placed In Key Post," *New York Times*, 16 May 1981, 11.

⁹ "The Company Mr. Casey Keeps," *New York Times*, 22 May 1981, A26; Persico, 246; Woodward, 133.

¹⁰ Woodward, 131.

business dealings from the early 1970s. They had received tapes from Thomas and Samuel McNell that revealed Hugel had provided Thomas with insider information. The McNell brothers, both former high-rolling brokers on Wall Street, were disreputable and openly despised Hugel. But when Woodward and Tyler played the tapes for Hugel, he admitted that they contained his voice.

The investigation ended with a sensational front-page story on July 14, 1981. According to the article, which contained extensive quotations from the recorded conversations, Hugel told Thomas McNell information about Brother Limited that was unavailable to the public: "We originally forecast sales in the U.S. [at] \$80 million . . . We now forecast \$70 million, okay, which is a \$10 million swing."¹¹ In a subsequent conversation, he offered details about a recently completed deal between Brother and another company. "I'm telling you confidential stuff, now," he warned, "[y]ou understand that?"¹² The tapes also revealed that Hugel had made illegal loans to the McNells, and at one point, he politely advised Thomas to pay the money back, because "if you don't, I'll cut your balls off I'll get my Korean gang after you and you don't look so good when you're hanging by the balls anyway."¹³ Hollywood screenwriters simply could not have written a better script for the scandal. On the morning that the article appeared, Hugel resigned from the CIA.¹⁴ He

¹¹ Bob Woodward and Patrick E. Tyler, "Hugel Denies Leaking Inside Business Information," *Washington Post*, 14 July 1981, A8.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, A9.

¹⁴ "Letters In Hugel Resignation," *New York Times*, 15 July 1981, A18; for a good overview of the entire Hugel affair, see Persico, 243-252; see also Woodward, 140-147.

blamed his demise on "the old-boy network. Some guys on the inside were out to get me. Some were retired guys working from the outside."¹⁵

With Hugel out of the picture, Congress and the press increasingly scrutinized Casey's own business ventures. "The papers provided the grist," observed Joseph Persico, Casey's biographer, "and the Senate intelligence committee provided the mill."¹⁶ The committee selected Fred Thompson, a prominent attorney and future Republican Senator, to investigate the allegations of financial wrongdoing. Casey was one of the people charged in a lawsuit with deceiving the investors of Multiponics, an agricultural company that had gone bankrupt years earlier, and reporters discovered that he had withheld information from the disclosure forms that federal appointees are required to submit. Casey, moreover, initially refused to put his massive portfolio into a blind trust.¹⁷ After the CIA director testified in detail to the intelligence committee about previous investments, the senators ruled "that no basis has been found for concluding Mr. Casey is *unfit* to serve as DCI."¹⁸

¹⁵ Hugel quoted in Persico, 250.

¹⁶ Persico, 268.

¹⁷ For an assessment of the controversy surrounding Casey's finances, see *ibid.*, 254-261, 267-269; Woodward, 148-152; Paul L. Montgomery, "Judge Asserts Casey, C. I. A. Chief, Misled Stock Buyers In '68," *New York Times*, 15 July 1981, A1; Judith Miller, "Senate Panel To Review Charges On Chief Of C. I. A.," 18 July 1981, 8; Terence Smith, "Moynihan Assails White House On Casey Files," *New York Times*, 22 July 1981, A1; Judith Miller, "Some Call For Resignation," *New York Times*, 25 July 1981, 1; "Financial Filings At Issue," *New York Times*, 25 July 1981, 1; Judith Miller, "Director Of C. I. A. Asking A Hearing To Answer Critics," *New York Times*, 27 July 1981, A1; Judith Miller, "Casey Summoned To Testify Today," *New York Times*, 29 July 1981, A11; and Arnold H. Lubasch, "Judge Withdraws Decision Against Casey In Suit," 11 November 1981, A1.

¹⁸ Persico, 261; Judith Miller, "Senate Committee Finds Casey Fit For C. I. A. Job But Pursues Inquiry," *New York Times*, 30 July 1981, A1.

More than anything else, the extended controversy in 1981 convinced Casey that there was indeed a crucial need for public relations at the CIA. In 1982 Casey dismantled the office he had created a year earlier; as Persico explains, “[h]e went back to the arrangement that had prevailed when he took over the CIA, a separate lobbyist for the Hill and a separate Office of Public Affairs for the media.”¹⁹ Charles E. Wilson, Hetu’s former assistant, initially ran the public affairs division, but Casey ultimately selected George V. Lauder, a member of the clandestine service for over three decades, to take over the PR campaign in 1983.²⁰ Lauder had spent years in the Middle East, and although he was an amateur in the realm of public relations, he knew the basics. For instance, CBS repeatedly approached him about the possibility of interviewing Casey. Given Casey’s tendency to mumble, Lauder shrewdly declined the offer from *60 Minutes*. “If you had a guy who talks like Bill Casey,” he told them, “would you put him on television?”²¹

As the CIA’s top PR man, Lauder obviously communicated with Casey on a wide range of issues. Yet in responding to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request filed in 2005, the CIA claimed that it was unable to find any correspondence between Lauder and Casey. The Agency subsequently turned over sixty documents in Lauder’s files when confronted with another FOIA inquiry, but this material only included correspondence with individuals outside of the CIA. In other words, the Agency essentially took

¹⁹ Persico, 300.

²⁰ Woodward, 265-266. Casey named Clair George the Congressional liaison. Persico, 301; Kessler, 220-222.

²¹ Lauder quoted in Persico, 455; George V. Lauder to Mike Wallace, 7 July 1986. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request; Senator Barry Goldwater (Republican-Arizona) often referred to Casey as “flappy” and “flapper lips.” Woodward, 148.

the position that they could not locate any internal memos written by Lauder while he headed public affairs. It is difficult to re-construct how PR strategies were formulated in the mid-1980s given the paucity of de-classified information. Lauder assured a newspaper editor in 1985 that “[w]e [the CIA] do not lie to the American public nor do we engage in ‘public relations flimflam to boost’ our ‘image’ in the U. S.,”²² but the documents that have been de-classified do not substantiate this statement. In fact, not only did Lauder and Casey employ PR “flimflam” to defend the CIA, they also used heavy-handed tactics that were undoubtedly intended to intimidate the media.

Lauder routinely lambasted newspapers for printing articles that portrayed the CIA in a negative light. In October 1984, he complained to an editor at the *New York Times* about two earlier stories that had linked the CIA with “death squad related activities in El Salvador.”²³ Noting that a Senate investigation of the allegations had arrived at different conclusions, Lauder ridiculed the *Times* for its failure to issue a retraction: “The NEW YORK TIMES says it carries ‘All the News Fit to Print.’ Apparently, a story that corrects previous NEW YORK TIMES reporting isn’t fit to print. I think the TIMES owes the Agency and its readers better than that.”²⁴ Despite the CIA’s complaints about the articles on El Salvador, it is now clear that the Agency

²² George V. Lauder to Emil Slaboda, 17 September 1985. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request; Lauder’s letter was published in *The Trentonian*. “CIA Response,” *The Trentonian*, 25 September 1985. Copy released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request.

²³ George V. Lauder to Max Frankel, 15 October 1984. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

supported the right wing government in that country throughout the 1980s. CIA officials almost certainly knew about the violent campaigns that the El Salvadoran military unleashed on the opposition.²⁵ Two years later Lauder went on the offensive against the editor of the *Christian Science Monitor* after the newspaper ran a story about the downing of a plane in Nicaragua. The article said that the aircraft was on a CIA mission, and not surprisingly, Lauder rejected the accusation. "Mr. [Joseph] Harsch [the author of the story] owes the employees of this Agency an apology for his outrageous defamation of them," he declared.²⁶ Even though the plane did not belong to the CIA, Lauder failed to mention that the Agency had previously supplied an aircraft that was used to send military equipment to Iran.

Like most PR men, Lauder insisted that he was not trying to manipulate public opinion. When Vitaly Yurchenko, a Soviet operative, defected to the United States, William Casey used the situation to hype the Agency's mystique in the media. In June 1986, the *New York Times* provided details of how the CIA had leaked information to journalists. Yet Lauder claimed "that CIA said nothing at all about Yurchenko in other than classified hearings or meetings until he redefected."²⁷ Lauder acknowledged that the

²⁵ See, for example, Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, The United States, and The Rise of The New Imperialism* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006), Chp. 3, esp. 95; see also Michael McClintock, *The American Connection: State Terror and Popular Resistance in El Salvador* (London: Zed Books, 1985).

²⁶ George V. Lauder to Earl W. Foell, 21 October 1986. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request.

²⁷ George V. Lauder to Leslie Gelb, 3 June 1986. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request; Lauder had previously issued a denial to *The Wall Street Journal*: "The CIA has made no information public concerning Mr. Yurchenko. Moreover, it is forbidden by Presidential Executive Order 12333 from propagandizing or attempting to influence the American public." George V. Lauder to Robert Bartley, 5

details on Yurchenko's short-lived defection resulted from leaks, but he denied that the Agency was responsible for them.²⁸ This denial was rather unconvincing, especially since few individuals outside the CIA knew much about Yurchenko. Lauder was obviously worried about any accusation that the CIA had engaged in activity that violated Executive Order 12333, which prohibited the CIA from engaging in domestic propaganda. When Washington insiders discovered that Casey had been meeting with Bob Woodward of the *Washington Post*, Lauder sent an angry letter to Woodward: "if you are saying or implying that we are co-collaborators [on the book] you are suggesting that we are in violation of the Executive Order [12333] We resent both the violations of the ground rules under which we agreed to talk to you and the implication that your product has our approval. It doesn't."²⁹ Casey, of course, had most likely agreed to meet with Woodward in hopes of shaping how the legendary reporter portrayed the CIA. When this strategy backfired, Lauder attempted to distance the Agency from the upcoming publication of Woodward's *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987*.

In his correspondence with the press, Lauder frequently lectured editors about the sanctity of classified information. He declared to *American Legion Magazine* that "the media must . . . bear the responsibility for acting as a 'fence' for stolen goods and for its involvement in damaging the nation's

November 1985. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request.

²⁸ Lauder to Bartley, 5 November 1985.

²⁹ George V. Lauder to Bob Woodward, 20 February 1986, p. 2. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request.

security."³⁰ When *USA Today* ran an editorial that criticized the government's excessive use of classification, Lauder suggested that there was nothing wrong with the current system. He warned that lives were at stake: "In short, the press often carelessly tosses about the verbal hand grenades that a leaker hands it. When they explode, killing people and inflicting great damage, the press shrugs and says in effect, well, it's a free country."³¹ Despite the serious accusations leveled against the media, he failed to offer any specific examples of irresponsible journalism.

Lauder was certainly entitled to share his opinions about the First Amendment, but in at least two situations, he found himself accused of seeking to undermine the freedom of the press. In October 1985, he challenged the accuracy of an article that William Gertz wrote for the *Washington Times*.³² Less than two months later, he again contacted Arnaud de Borchgrave, then the editor of the conservative newspaper, claiming that he had been quoted inaccurately by Gertz.³³ De Borchgrave, however, defended Gertz and wondered whether Lauder was trying to pressure the paper into re-assigning the young correspondent. Lauder replied that he had no intention of telling de Borchgrave who should be assigned to cover the

³⁰ George V. Lauder to Daniel S. Wheeler, 29 October 1986, p. 2. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request.

³¹ George V. Lauder to John Seigenthaler, 21 April 1986, p. 2. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request.

³² George V. Lauder to Arnaud de Borchgrave, 22 October 1985. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request.

³³ George V. Lauder to Arnaud de Borchgrave, 12 December 1985. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request.

CIA,³⁴ but he also made it clear that Gertz was at risk of becoming persona non grata at the Agency. "You should know that Gertz is the only journalist in Washington who consistently misrepresents what we tell him," he asserted. "We have arrived at a point where I have had to issue instructions that two of my media relations officers must be on the phone whenever any of us is talking to Gertz so that we will be able to confirm what was and what was not said to him."³⁵ Lauder informed de Borchgrave that the CIA would no longer grant background interviews to Gertz, and he lamented that the *Washington Times* was not providing friendlier coverage. "THE WASHINGTON POST at least quotes us accurately," he observed.³⁶

De Borchgrave allowed Gertz to continue covering the intelligence community, and he never went public with his concern that Lauder was maneuvering to undermine the reporter. Jack Anderson, the legendary columnist, did not keep silent when he experienced a similar confrontation with the CIA's Office of Public Affairs. On the same day that Anderson wrote an editorial indicating that the CIA might be involved in drug trafficking, Lauder sent the columnist an unusual letter. "Since you have identified your source," he wrote, "you should have no trouble in making the information available. If no such evidence is forthcoming, we will assume that you have none."³⁷ Lauder requested that Anderson turn over evidence to the CIA, the

³⁴ George V. Lauder to Arnaud de Borchgrave, 27 December 1985, p. 2. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁷ George V. Lauder to Jack N. Anderson, 26 December 1984. Released by the CIA to the author on 19 September 2006 in response to a FOIA request; Jack

Justice Department, and the appropriate Congressional committees.³⁸ Anderson quickly brought the incident to the attention of fellow journalists. "I think the letter smacks of intimidation," he told the *Los Angeles Times*, "but it's not going to be successful."³⁹ In his reply to Lauder's demands, Anderson quipped that he "would be happy to exchange sources with the CIA at any time."⁴⁰ Until CIA officials divulged their informants to Anderson, in other words, he would never reveal his sources of information to them. He realized, of course, that the Agency would never agree to such a proposal. His reporting had angered the CIA in the past, and in the early 1970s, the Agency even placed him—along with his staffers—under surveillance. Yet, according to Anderson, it was the first time that the CIA had ever approached him directly about a story.⁴¹

Lauder's confrontation with Anderson was part of a broader CIA effort to downplay the Agency's connection to an investment company in Hawaii known as Bishop, Baldwin, Rewald, Dillingham, & Wong (BBRDW). Ronald Rewald had established the firm in 1978, and when it collapsed five years later, he attempted to commit suicide in a hotel room. Rewald survived and ultimately went on trial for allegedly defrauding over four hundred investors of approximately \$22 million in what was called at the time "a

Anderson, "Ex-Agent Cites CIA Drug Scheme," *Washington Post*, 26 December 1984, E8.

³⁸ Lauder to Anderson, 26 December 1984.

³⁹ David Crook, "CIA Sought His News Sources, Anderson Says," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 January 1985, E1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, E23.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

classic Ponzi scheme."⁴² Although BBRDW portrayed itself as an investment house that offered a 20% rate of return, only a small percentage of the money deposited was actually invested. Rewald embezzled millions of dollars to finance a high-rolling lifestyle of polo matches, luxury cars, and beautiful women.⁴³ Rewald rejected the accusation that his company had been nothing more than a financial scam, arguing in a lawsuit that BBRDW had been the creation of the CIA. He said that the Agency had used the firm to finance arms deals with countries in the Far East and to spy on foreign leaders such as Ferdinand Marcos. He even claimed that the CIA had sent him on a secret mission to steal the designs for a Japanese bullet train.⁴⁴ Although CIA officials denied most of Rewald's more sensational charges, they publicly admitted "a slight involvement" with Rewald's firm.⁴⁵ Agency lawyers also made sure that the documents in the Rewald case were sealed.⁴⁶

⁴² Kenneth B. Noble, "Firm Citing C. I. A. Link Is Charged," *New York Times*, 25 August 1984, 38.

⁴³ "According to reports by bankruptcy trustees, Rewald spent \$250,000 on a fleet of cars, including three Cadillacs, two Mercedes-Benzes, a Rolls-Royce and a Jaguar; \$66,000 on boats; \$82,000 on jewelry and art; \$154,000 on travel; \$102,000 on relatives; \$225,000 on household help, including tutors, and \$541,000 on horses and other polo club expenses." See Howard Kurtz, "Investors Say Bankrupt Firm Had CIA Tie," *Washington Post*, 16 April 1984, A3.

⁴⁴ For good overviews of the Rewald affair, see Jonathan Kwitny, "Suits Focus On Extent Of CIA Involvement In An Alleged Fraud," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 April 1984, 1; Jonathan Kwitny, "House Panel Seeks Justice, SEC Records As Probe of Rewald-CIA Case Is Launched," *Wall Street Journal*, 22 May 1984, 6; John Kelly, "Cover to Cover: Rewald's CIA Story," *Counterspy* 8, no. 4 (June-August 1984): 8-17, 48-57; Marita Hernandez, "Hawaii Investment Adviser Held In Fraud," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 September 1984, A23; and David Crook, "Adventures In Paradise: How ABC Enraged the CIA—and Why the CIA Fought Back," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 May 1985, R4.

⁴⁵ Kurtz, A3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

It is possible that Rewald was telling the truth: perhaps the CIA manipulated BBRDW for covert objectives and then allowed him to be the patsy when the scheme imploded. After all, John Peyton, the federal lawyer who prosecuted Rewald, was a former CIA man.⁴⁷ Yet the evidence points to a less sinister—but more embarrassing—scenario. Rewald moved to Hawaii in 1977 shortly after he had been convicted of swindling two teachers in Wisconsin, and it appears that he approached the CIA station chief in Honolulu.⁴⁸ Explaining that he was an American patriot, he offered to provide jobs in his new company for CIA officers who needed non-official cover. The Agency admitted that seven officers worked for BBRDW subsidiaries; that Rewald was re-imbursed for around \$2,700 in expenses; that he signed a secrecy agreement; and that his son spied on foreign students at Brigham Young University's campus in Hawaii.⁴⁹ When Jack Kindschi, the Honolulu station chief, retired from the Agency in 1980, Rewald hired him as a consultant, paying him an annual salary of \$48,000. Kindschi's replacement, Jack Rardin, met with Rewald on several occasions, visited the offices of BBRDW, and agreed to interfere with an IRS investigation of the firm.⁵⁰ Reporters in Hawaii also discovered "that as many as 14 CIA [officers]

⁴⁷ Jonathan Kwitny, "Suits Focus On Extent Of CIA Involvement In An Alleged Fraud," 1.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Kurtz, A3; David Crook, "Adventures In Paradise: How ABC Enraged the CIA—and Why the CIA Fought Back," R6; Jack Anderson said that "at least 17" CIA officers used BBRDW for cover. Anderson, "Ex-Agent Cites CIA Drug Scheme," E8; see also Jack Anderson, "CIA Role Was More Than Low-Level," *Washington Post*, 2 November 1984, D12.

⁵⁰ Jonathan Kwitny, "Suits Focus On Extent Of CIA Involvement In An Alleged Fraud," 1.

invested more than a total of \$300,000 in personal funds in the company."⁵¹ While Kindschi, Rardin, and other Agency employees were investing money in BBRDW, Rewald bragged extensively that he worked for the CIA and promised clients that the federal government would insure all of their deposits. Agency officers receive extensive training in the art of deception, but the CIA investors apparently never worried that Rewald, a man with a criminal record, might be trying to scam them.

Ronald Rewald became a household name in Hawaii in July 1983, but the story did not receive much attention on the mainland until the following spring.⁵² Then, in September 1984, ABC News reported a new development in the ongoing saga. "Not only was Bishop, Baldwin involved in selling arms to Taiwan, India and Syria and promoting financial panic in Hong Kong," said reporter Gary Shepard, "it was also fueling capital flight from two allies, Greece and the Philippines . . . in exchange for intelligence information."⁵³ ABC claimed in a second report that the CIA had plotted to kill Rewald. The accusation was based on an interview with Scott T. Barnes, who had once been a prison guard in Oahu. According to Barnes, CIA officers instructed him to eliminate Rewald; "We gotta take him out . . . You know, kill him," they declared.⁵⁴ About a week after ABC aired the story, the CIA insisted that the charges were false and requested a retraction.⁵⁵ Peter Jennings issued a

⁵¹ David Crook, "Adventures In Paradise: How ABC Enraged the CIA—and Why the CIA Fought Back," R8.

⁵² John Kelly, the editor of *Counterspy*, actually helped to ensure that the story received wider coverage. See David Crook, "Adventures In Paradise: How ABC Enraged the CIA—and Why the CIA Fought Back," R8.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, R6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, R5.

⁵⁵ "C. I. A. Denies A Murder Effort," *New York Times*, 28 September 1984, B7.

partial retraction on "World News Tonight" in November, acknowledging that ABC could not corroborate Barnes's claims.

Unsatisfied with ABC's response, CIA officials filed a petition with the FCC on the same day.⁵⁶ The Agency argued "that ABC deliberately distorted the news and violated the fairness doctrine" and asked the FCC to "determine what corrective action should be taken by ABC."⁵⁷ After investigating the reports, the FCC rejected both the complaint and the CIA's subsequent appeal.⁵⁸ But although ABC prevailed in the proceedings, legal experts worried that the precedent established in the case could potentially make the media more reluctant to pursue controversial stories. In essence, the FCC ruled that any government agency had the right to file a complaint against radio or television stations; in the event that the commission sided with the government, broadcasting licenses could be revoked as punishment. "If this (the fairness doctrine) is held to apply to a government agency," observed an ACLU official, "then we are concerned about the chilling effect

⁵⁶ "Complaint By C. I. A. Over Report On TV," *New York Times*, 22 November 1984, A25; Ward Sinclair, "In FCC Complaint, CIA Says ABC Distorted News," *Washington Post*, 22 November 1984, 17; David Crook, "CIA Asks FCC To Probe ABC Report For Fairness," *Los Angeles Times*, 27 November 1984, G8; "CIA and ABC," *Washington Post*, 27 November 1984, A18; David Crook, "ABC Retraction Of CIA Murder Plot Detailed," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 December 1984, M1.

⁵⁷ "Complaint By C. I. A. Over Report On TV," A25.

⁵⁸ For the FCC's response to the complaint, see George Lardner, Jr., "FCC Rejects CIA Complaint Of 'News Distortion' by ABC," *Washington Post*, 11 January 1985, A24; and David Crook, "FCC Staff Rejects CIA Complaint Against ABC," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 January 1985, B33. For an overview of the CIA's appeal, see David Crook, "CIA Renews Its Charges Against ABC," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 February 1985, A14; David Crook, "CIA Comes Out Firing Against ABC," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 February 1985, G1; and Penny Pagano, "FCC Dismisses CIA Charges Against ABC," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 July 1985, C1.

on investigative reporting."⁵⁹ When faced with stories that they perceived as unfair or inaccurate, Lauder and Casey certainly had every right to issue a rebuttal. Yet the CIA's response to ABC News reflected a glaring contempt for the First Amendment. The FCC complaint, which undoubtedly left the network with significant legal costs, was not an aberration. It was consistent with the tactics employed against William Gertz and Jack Anderson.

At the same time that Lauder publicly battled the media from inside the Office of Public Affairs at Langley, there was also a covert dimension to Casey's PR strategy. Robert Parry and Peter Kornbluh have persuasively argued that the CIA director actually helped to establish "what appears to be America's first peacetime propaganda ministry."⁶⁰ In the summer of 1982, a CIA officer named Walter Raymond, Jr. joined President Reagan's National Security Council with Casey's direct approval. Raymond had much in common with David Atlee Phillips; both men had been educated at The College of William and Mary, and both were propaganda specialists.⁶¹ Robert Parry would later describe Raymond as "a slight, soft-spoken New Yorker who reminded some of a character from a John le Carre spy novel, an

⁵⁹ David Crook, "'Chilling Effect' Cited In FCC Decision," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 July 1985, E1.

⁶⁰ Robert Parry and Peter Kornbluh, "Iran-Contra's Untold Story," *Foreign Policy* 72 (Fall 1988): 5.

⁶¹ Raymond graduated from William and Mary in 1950. Phillips had attended the college before World War II, but in the aftermath of a wild road trip, he missed his exams. According to Phillips's account, "I had attended a weekend prom at a now defunct girls' school in Washington and accepted, perhaps in an alcoholic haze, an invitation from a convivial fellow to ride with him back to school. I slept well in his car, but unfortunately his school turned out to be Yale." He then enrolled at Texas Christian University. See Phillips, *The Night Watch* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1977), 3.

intelligence officer who 'easily fades into the woodwork'"⁶² Raymond initially headed the Intelligence Directorate at the National Security Council,⁶³ which was not an unusual assignment for an intelligence officer. Yet his job description changed tremendously after President Reagan signed National Security Decision Directive 77 in January 1983. This directive bolstered and centralized the administration's "public diplomacy" apparatus, defined as "those actions of the U. S. [g]overnment designed to generate support for our national security objectives."⁶⁴ While public diplomacy had been used in the past to build support for the United States overseas, it was now re-defined to include the American public. Raymond, who became the director of the Office of International Communications and Public Diplomacy at the NSC, outlined a "political action" offensive to covertly influence domestic perceptions of American foreign policy, especially as it pertained to Central America.⁶⁵

Much as Phillips had done in 1975, Raymond eventually resigned from the CIA to ensure that "there would be no question whatsoever of any contamination of this."⁶⁶ He vehemently denied the accusation that Agency executives were involved in the public diplomacy crusade: "At no time

⁶² Robert Parry, *Lost History: Contras, Cocaine, the Press & 'Project Truth'* (Arlington, Virginia: The Media Consortium, 1999), 49.

⁶³ *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, 100th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 100-433, S. Rept. 100-216, Appendix B: vol. 22, Deposition of Walter Raymond, Jr., 155.

⁶⁴ National Security Decision Directive Number 77, 14 January 1983, "Management of Public Diplomacy Relative To National Security," <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-077.htm> (accessed March 29, 2008). Parry and Kornbluh, 9; Parry, *Lost History*, 49-50; Grandin, Chp. 4, esp. 123-124.

⁶⁵ Parry and Kornbluh, 9; Parry, *Lost History*, 50.

⁶⁶ Parry and Kornbluh, 9; *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, Deposition of Walter Raymond, Jr., 166.

during my 5 years with the NSC did I receive any instructions or guidance from Casey or any other senior CIA official."⁶⁷ However, as Parry and Kornbluh have shown, Raymond's deposition during the Iran-Contra investigation reveals a completely different story. In fact, he told Congressional staffers "that he met with then CIA Director William Casey every Thursday between January and July 1983."⁶⁸ Raymond, in other words, continued to meet with Casey in the months following his official departure from the CIA in April 1983. When asked during the deposition if he talked about public diplomacy in these meetings, his response was woefully vague. "I wouldn't rule it out that we might have. I cannot remember anything specific on that," he said.⁶⁹ Fortunately for historians, Raymond's memos, which were de-classified in the Congressional report on Iran-Contra, provide a clearer picture of events than his deposition. On August 29, 1983, for instance, he informed an official on the National Security Council that Casey had phoned him three days earlier to discuss PR strategies. Raymond apparently recognized that this ongoing communication with the CIA raised constitutional issues, and he alluded to "an effort to get him [Casey] out of the loop."⁷⁰

⁶⁷ "Letters," *Foreign Policy* 73 (Winter 1988-1989): 173.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 177; *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, Deposition of Walter Raymond, Jr., 70-71.

⁶⁹ *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, Deposition of Walter Raymond, Jr., 71.

⁷⁰ Walter Raymond, Jr. to John M. Poindexter, "Central American Outreach," 29 August 1983, reprinted as OLN-220 in U. S. Congress, Senate Select Committee On Secret Military Assistance To Iran And The Nicaraguan Opposition and the House Select Committee To Investigate Covert Arms Transactions With Iran, *Iran-Contra Investigation*, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 100-7, Part III: Appendix A (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1988), 874; Parry and Kornbluh, 11.

Raymond may have wanted to establish plausible deniability for the CIA in 1983, but Casey was still inside the loop three years later. After Congress allowed the CIA to re-commence covert action in Nicaragua, Raymond drafted a memo for Casey in August 1986. "It is clear we would not have won the House vote without the painstaking deliberative effort undertaken by many people in the government and outside," he declared.⁷¹ In the same memo, he also noted that he continued to hold a weekly meeting on public diplomacy. Several officials attended these sessions, including "a representative from CIA's Central American Task Force, and key NSC [s]taffers."⁷² Raymond later defended his former boss with the unconvincing claim that Casey was acting "not so much in his CIA hat, but in his advisor to the president hat."⁷³ The General Accounting Office (GAO) asserted in 1987 that the Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean at the State Department, which Raymond helped launch in the summer of 1983, had engaged in "prohibited, covert propaganda activities designed to influence the media and the public to support the Administration's Latin American policies."⁷⁴

⁷¹ Parry and Kornbluh, 27; "They were trying to manipulate [U. S.] public opinion . . . using the tools of Walt Raymond's trade craft which he learned from his career in the CIA covert operation shop," explained an anonymous NSC insider. *Ibid.*, 4-5; *Iran-Contra Investigation*, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 100-7, Part III: Appendix A (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1988), 843.

⁷² *Iran-Contra Investigation*, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 100-7, Part III: Appendix A (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1988), 843.

⁷³ Parry and Kornbluh, 11; *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, Deposition of Walter Raymond, Jr., 49.

⁷⁴ Parry and Kornbluh, 20. They observed that "[i]n its first year alone, [the Office of Public Diplomacy's] activities included booking more than 1,500 speaking engagements, including radio, television, and editorial board interviews; publishing three booklets on Nicaragua; and distributing

Raymond downplayed his relationship with Oliver North in his deposition: "I do know he was in contact with the contras, but beyond that, I was not really involved in the details of his activities."⁷⁵ Yet according to North's checklist for the final week of February 1985, he shared responsibility with Raymond for "[a]ssign[ing] U. S. intelligence agencies to research, report, and clear for public release Sandinista military actions violating Geneva Convention/civilized standards of warfare."⁷⁶ Needless to say, they did not request intelligence reports on the human rights abuses and drug trafficking of the Contras. Parry and Kornbluh point out that the Congressional investigations could have done more to explore the propaganda campaign that Raymond orchestrated in collaboration with North, but Congressman Richard Cheney (Republican-Wyoming) skillfully worked behind the scenes to prevent that from happening, "arguing that the domestic operations were outside the committees' scope."⁷⁷

If there had been a more detailed investigation, the public would have undoubtedly learned that Casey was not an innocent bystander. In fact, it turns out that he had invited PR experts to meet with him in the Old Executive Office Building to develop ideas on the best way "to sell a 'new

materials to 1,600 college libraries, 520 political science faculties, 122 editorial writers, and 107 religious organizations." *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁵ *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, Deposition of Walter Raymond, Jr., 88.

⁷⁶ *Iran-Contra Investigation*, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 100-7, Part III: Appendix A (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1988), 859; Raymond said that he was not involved in this effort. *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, Deposition of Walter Raymond, Jr., 124; "North's calendars show some 70 public diplomacy strategy sessions with Raymond between 1984 and 1986—though Raymond has asserted that North was 'not a regular attendee' at the meetings." Parry and Kornbluh, 12.

⁷⁷ Parry and Kornbluh, 28.

product'—Central America—by generating interest across-the-spectrum."⁷⁸ William Greener, then the director of public relations at Philip Morris, was a key participant in the meeting. Given his work for Philip Morris, Greener instinctively recognized that secrecy and PR were inseparable. His company knew for decades that cigarettes caused cancer and a long list of other health problems, but instead of acknowledging the facts, executives at Morris suppressed the data, claiming that the scientific evidence was inconclusive. The CIA implemented a similar strategy during Casey's tenure. Rather than providing a balanced view of events in Nicaragua, Raymond concocted blatant propaganda: "concentrate on gluing black hats on the Sandinistas and white hats on UNO [the *contras*' United Nicaraguan Opposition]," he instructed in 1986.⁷⁹

In his determination to win support for the Contras in Nicaragua, Casey went so far as to personally embark on a domestic covert operation against Senator Patrick Leahy (Democrat-Vermont), arguably his most vocal critic on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. During Leahy's campaign for re-election, Casey leaked a letter that he had written to Leahy that criticized him for allegedly revealing sensitive information about the *Achille Lauro* hijacking.⁸⁰ Casey apparently spoke with Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, and they subsequently wrote an article in *Reader's Digest* in the lead-up to the election. Evans and Novak argued that Leahy's alleged breach

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 10; *Iran-Contra Investigation*, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 100-7, Part III: Appendix A (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1988), 875; Parry, *Lost History*, 62.

⁷⁹ Parry and Kornbluh, 5-6.

⁸⁰ Persico, 532-533; Woodward, 486-487; for background on the tense relationship between Casey and Leahy, see Gates, 370-371.

of national security "is one of many showing that the current era of Congressional oversight of the CIA is simply not working."⁸¹

Although Casey could not prevent Leahy from winning a third term, he found it much easier to suppress the views of former CIA officials. In order to combat the criticism from these insiders, he turned to the Publications Review Board (PRB). Ralph McGehee, who had earlier battled the PRB while Stansfield Turner headed the CIA, submitted an article to the board in 1981 that alleged the Agency was falsifying intelligence on Central America in order to hype the threat of the Soviet Union. McGehee provided examples from CIA history to illustrate what was happening in El Salvador, but the PRB barred him from mentioning details of previous "disinformation" operations in countries like Indonesia.⁸² The harassment continued the following spring when he asked board members to review a revised version of the manuscript that they had already cleared. The PRB now ruled that McGehee had to delete several sections of the book, including his description of a sophomoric prank at Camp Peary in the 1950s "involving the booby-trapping of a toilet seat with a military firecracker."⁸³ The CIA allowed him to re-insert passages that contained information released by

⁸¹ Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Congress Is Crippling The CIA," *Reader's Digest*, November 1986, 99.

⁸² George Lardner, Jr., "CIA Is Sued Over Its Censorship Of Article On Fabricating Data," *Washington Post*, 28 March 1981, A20.

⁸³ George Lardner, Jr., "CIA Veteran Decries Effort to 'Reclassify' Material in His Book," *Washington Post*, 1 April 1982, A12; Ralph W. McGehee, *Deadly Deceits: My 25 Years in the CIA* (New York: Sheridan Square Press, 1983; reprint, Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 1999), 200-203.

Senator Frank Church's committee, and after several more disputes with the board, he finally managed to publish *Deadly Deceits* in 1983.⁸⁴

Admiral Stansfield Turner encountered similar problems after the PRB examined his memoir. Turner, an ardent critic of the Reagan administration, believed "that between 10 and 15 percent of the time it took me to complete the book was spent in arranging with the CIA for its clearance It was all most unreasonable and unnecessary."⁸⁵ The irony, of course, was that Turner had expanded the powers of the review board back in 1977. "As long as there is almost no check on the arbitrariness of the CIA," he warned, "it is likely that there will be further abuses of the public's right to knowledge about its government."⁸⁶ When Frank Snepp learned about Turner's displeasure with CIA censorship, he criticized the former director for creating a policy that restricted the First Amendment rights of ex-intelligence officers: "I hate to think of anybody being censored, but I think there is poetic justice in the fact that the architect of the C. I. A.'s censorship should now be feeling the heat."⁸⁷

In addition to worrying about criticism from former insiders like McGehee and Turner, Casey and his advisors were concerned about student protests against covert action in Central America. Nearly seventy student activists at Brown University attracted publicity by initiating a citizen's arrest of CIA recruiters in 1984, which was inspired in part by revelations of the

⁸⁴ McGehee, 200.

⁸⁵ Stansfield Turner, *Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985), x.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁸⁷ Snepp quoted in Seymour Hersh, "Ex-Intelligence Director Disputes Censorship Of His Book On C. I. A.," *New York Times*, 18 May 1983, A1. "I think Turner deserves everything the censors visit on him because he failed to recognize just how dangerous censorship was in the first place," Snepp remarked. *Ibid.*

Agency's illegal mining of Nicaraguan harbors.⁸⁸ Casey thought that public relations could revitalize the Agency's recruitment efforts on campuses, and in 1985 he instituted the Officer in Residence Program, a PR effort that allows CIA employees to join college faculties for two years to teach classes related to their area of expertise. This program has proven especially attractive to universities, because the Agency pays for most of the costs. There are between eight and twelve Officers in Residence at any given time, and more than fifty schools have welcomed CIA officers to their campus in the past two decades. According to the CIA's website, "Harvard, Princeton, Georgetown, University of South Carolina, University of Oregon, University of Kentucky, Texas A&M, Marquette University, Ohio State University and the military academies" are a few of the universities that have participated in the project.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ "Students Punished For Protest," *New York Times*, 9 December 1984, 32; Cory Dean, "Student Activism Alive At Brown U.," *New York Times*, 14 February 1985, A18; there was also controversy involving the CIA at Harvard University. This scandal began in the fall of 1985 when *The Harvard Crimson* revealed that the director of the school's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Nadav Safran, had taken around \$46,000 from the CIA to finance a conference. It also emerged that the CIA had paid over \$100,000 to assist him with the researching and writing of *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest For Security*. See Stuart Lavietes, "Nadav Safran, 77, A Professor and an Expert in Mideast Politics," *New York Times*, 27 July 2003, 30; "C. I. A. Aid For Meeting Protested," *New York Times*, 14 October 1985, A16; Charles R. Babcock, "Author Defends CIA Aid For Book About Saudis," *Washington Post*, 15 October 1985, A3; Colin Campbell, "Harvard Widens Inquiry In C. I. A. Aid To Professor," *New York Times*, 20 October 1985, sec. 1, 54; Colin Campbell, "C. I. A. Grant Raises Questions On Research Rules At Harvard," *New York Times*, 5 November 1985, A23; Fox Butterfield, "Scholar To Quit Post At Harvard Over C. I. A. Tie," *New York Times*, 2 January 1986, A12.

⁸⁹ Center for the Study of Intelligence, "Officer in Residence Program," <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/academic-relations/officer-in-residence-program.html> (16 July 2007). "CIA hopes to demonstrate the quality and competence of its people, and the Agency benefits when its officers can work in an academic environment. The officers, and the Agency, benefit from the substantive outreach to students, faculty, and administrators on US campuses." Ibid.

Although Officers in Residence must now acknowledge their connection to the CIA and are forbidden to recruit students, the venture obviously began as a strategy to repair the CIA's relationship with the academic community. Harry Fitzwater, the Deputy Director for Administration under Casey, explained in an August 1985 memo that a key objective was to "[a]ssist Agency staff recruiting efforts by placing in selected schools experienced officers who can spot promising career candidates, can counsel students as to career opportunities, and can use their knowledge and experience to address questions or concerns students may have regarding the Agency."⁹⁰

Casey also established PR programs for businessmen who operated internationally. His biographer estimates that "[b]etween 1984 and 1985, nearly three hundred major American business leaders came to the Agency's executive seminar."⁹¹ When Casey spoke to these visiting executives, he typically explained that Americans "returning from overseas trips have been invaluable not only in providing information but in giving us leads to people willing to make available information which may be critical to our national interests."⁹² Casey made little attempt to disguise that he was attempting to secure their cooperation. In soliciting help from corporations, he was even willing to do favors for them. On one occasion, he instructed CIA analysts to

⁹⁰ John Hollister Hedley, "Twenty Years Of Officers In Residence," *Studies In Intelligence* 49, no. 4 (2005), https://www.cia.gov/csi/studies/vol49no4/Officers_in_Residence_3.htm (accessed July 21, 2006).

⁹¹ Persico, 456.

⁹² Casey quoted in *ibid.*

research the market for chocolate products in Eastern Europe, and he turned the results over to Mars Candy.⁹³

Enhancing the "culture of secrecy" was the most important objective of Casey's legislative agenda, and he understood that PR could be used to secure the passage of the Intelligence Identities Protection Act and to undercut the Freedom of Information Act.⁹⁴ The protection act, which made it illegal to knowingly reveal the name of a covert operative, was an easy sell, and it passed in 1982. Winning relief from the FOIA, on the other hand, was much more complicated. Casey recognized that the earlier campaign for an exemption had failed because of outrage from advocates of civil liberties. Admiral Turner, moreover, had allowed his deputy to lobby Congress for the legislation.

Casey initiated a public relations offensive against the FOIA; in many of his public appearances, he talked about why the CIA could no longer tolerate it. During a speech in March of 1982, which was later reprinted as an essay in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, he announced that "the presumption that all Government records should be accessible to the public, unless the Government can justify in detail a compelling national security rationale for withholding them, *unwarrantedly* disrupts the effective operation of an intelligence agency."⁹⁵ He did not explain that the CIA spent only a tiny fraction of its budget on FOIA compliance, that there were less than thirty employees assigned to process requests on a full-time basis, and that the

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 231. According to Persico, "[t]o Casey, the Freedom of Information Act was democracy turned on its head." Ibid., 290.

⁹⁵ William J. Casey, "The American Intelligence Community," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 151.

Agency had never lost a FOIA lawsuit. Casey lashed out against the FOIA once again in a speech to the American Legion. "I question very seriously whether a secret intelligence agency and a Freedom of Information Act can coexist for very long," he proclaimed.⁹⁶ He told the audience that it was time to "[g]et rid of the Freedom of Information Act."⁹⁷ No longer did the CIA want an exemption for their operational files; they now demanded a complete exemption from the FOIA. "Instead of nourishing paranoia," the *New York Times* complained, "Mr. Casey could ease those concerns by explaining to everyone how freedom of information really works."⁹⁸

Yet Casey knew exactly what he was doing. "Nourishing paranoia" helped win support from the American public, a tactic that had proven successful for him as Reagan's campaign manager in 1980. Although he complained that the media had "repeatedly distorted" his American Legion speech, he nonetheless re-iterated the "inherent incompatibility in applying an openness in government law to intelligence agencies whose missions must be carried out in secrecy."⁹⁹ When read between the lines, Casey was essentially saying that he had no problem with the FOIA as long as it did not apply to the intelligence establishment. He recycled most of the arguments that Frank Carlucci had first used in 1979, emphasizing, for instance, that Congress was in charge of overseeing the CIA. He did not view the FOIA as an instrument of accountability, since he claimed that the CIA was already fully accountable to the intelligence committees. Casey even made reference

⁹⁶ "Pious Deceptions," *New York Times*, 12 September 1982, E20.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ William J. Casey, "Freedom of Information Harmful to the C. I. A.," *New York Times*, 1 October 1982, A30.

to Philip Agee's FOIA lawsuit by quoting a federal judge who called the case a "waste of resources."¹⁰⁰

At the same time Casey was lobbying the public to support changes to the FOIA, he was shrewd enough to understand that nothing could be done unless the Agency neutralized the ACLU. Although it is difficult to prove, it appears that Casey's demand for a total exemption was a classic bargaining tactic. He had been a successful venture capitalist for most of his adult life, so he knew the importance of demanding more than you expect to receive during negotiations. In essence, when the CIA said that they would be willing to consider an exemption for the operational files, it appeared that they had made a concession. In reality, however, their proposal was comparable to the legislation introduced by Carlucci. The ACLU had effectively blocked the CIA's campaign in 1980, but Casey and Agency attorney Ernest Mayerfeld skillfully manipulated the organization. As Angus Mackenzie has documented, Mayerfeld met with Mark Lynch, then an ACLU attorney, in June 1982. Mayerfeld and Lynch established an informal agreement at the meeting: "the ACLU would no longer oppose the exemption, if, in return, the CIA would not seek to be totally exempt from the

¹⁰⁰ Judge Gerhardt Gesell quoted in *ibid.* The irony, of course, is that the CIA Information Act of 1984 continued to allow first-person FOIA requests. Since Agee was asking for information pertaining to him, the exemptions did not apply. See Philip Agee, *On The Run* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, 1987), 42-44, 90-91, 331, 340. Frank Carlucci had used the same tactic in 1980. See George Lardner, Jr., "CIA Uses Agee Case In War On Freedom Of Information Act," *Washington Post*, 15 March 1980, A2. Melvin Wulf, an attorney who represented Agee, claimed that the CIA was "working the Agee angle in order to destroy the Freedom of Information Act." *Ibid.*

FOIA."¹⁰¹ The ACLU, in what is undoubtedly one of the most shameful moments in their history, reversed their earlier position. Rather than fighting the CIA's effort to gain a massive exemption from the FOIA, ACLU officials accepted its inevitability. Mayerfeld and Lynch kept in regular contact with each other after their initial compromise in June, and the following March they formalized the deal in the presence of Congressman Romano L. Mazzoli (Democrat—Kentucky).¹⁰²

Reports of the ACLU's negotiations with the CIA first surfaced in May 1983,¹⁰³ and on June 18, almost a year after Lynch and Mayerfeld had initially talked about the FOIA exemption, the *Nation* revealed that "the agency has convinced the American Civil Liberties Union to agree to exempt 'operational files' from the Freedom of Information Act. It's a dangerous exemption."¹⁰⁴ ACLU officials, however, denied the accusation, persuading the magazine to issue a "clarification" on July 2.¹⁰⁵ Mackenzie soon discovered that the ACLU's denials were misleading, and he wrote a story about the ongoing negotiations between Lynch and Mayerfeld in late September. Observing

¹⁰¹ Angus Mackenzie, *Secrets: The CIA's War at Home* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 105; Mackenzie described the relationship between Lynch and Mayerfeld in the following way: "For eight years, while fighting against Mayerfeld in court over the FOIA, Lynch had grown to respect his opponent, despite the fact that the men seemed in every respect such opposites—Mayerfeld, a shrewd, tough fireplug of a man; Lynch, tall and fragile-looking with an unfortunately naïve demeanor. Lynch's idealism compelled him to follow his vision of what ought to be, while Mayerfeld was a crafter of opportunity, carefully exploiting each opening. Mayerfeld was expert at creating the impression that he might accommodate his opponent's desires—without ever doing so." *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 106-107.

¹⁰³ Robert Pear, "C. I. A. Is Nearer Pact On Release Of Certain Files," *New York Times*, 30 May 1983, 1; Paul Taylor, "Limited Exemption For CIA Under FOIA Now Acceptable," *Washington Post*, 31 May 1983, A2.

¹⁰⁴ "The Plot Thickens," *The Nation*, 18 June 1983, 1; Mackenzie, 114-115.

¹⁰⁵ "Clarification," *The Nation*, 2 July 1983, 2; Mackenzie, 115.

that "the A. C. L. U. appears to have swallowed the C. I. A.'s 'trust us' argument," he advised that "[the organization] should tell Congress the deal is off, and it should use its influence to kill the legislation."¹⁰⁶ Morton Halperin and Allan Adler of the Center for National Security Studies rejected any suggestion that "the A. C. L. U. is being taken for a ride."¹⁰⁷ They talked about a bill in the Senate (S. 1324) introduced by Senator Barry Goldwater (Republican—Arizona), but they made no reference to what was happening in the House of Representatives. Mackenzie has pointed out the ACLU's agreement "was with Congressman Mazzoli in the House. In the clever manner of a Capitol Hill insider, Halperin's denial was literally truthful, while being wholly misleading."¹⁰⁸ Halperin and Adler, in other words, had parsed their words quite carefully.

Goldwater's bill, which had been developed with assistance from the CIA and closely resembled Carlucci's legislation, began a long debate over the FOIA's impact on the CIA. Agency officials had continued to argue that the FOIA helped explain why some foreigners were reluctant to assist them. When Casey testified in front of a Senate subcommittee, for instance, he claimed that at least two assets had recently quit because "they felt insecure."¹⁰⁹ Yet Senator Leahy (Democrat—Vermont) pressed Casey to elaborate on how the examples he mentioned related to the FOIA, and the director conceded that he could not specifically blame the law: "Well, I can't

¹⁰⁶ Angus Mackenzie, "A C.I.A.-A.C.L.U. Deal?: The Operational Files Exemption," *The Nation*, 24 September 1983, 234; Mackenzie, *Secrets*, 115-116.

¹⁰⁷ Morton H. Halperin and Allan Adler, "There Is No Deal," *The Nation*, 24 September 1983, 234.

¹⁰⁸ Mackenzie, *Secrets*, 116.

¹⁰⁹ Persico, 290.

say that. I can't say FOIA [is the reason]."¹¹⁰ Casey and his subordinates also readily admitted that they already could withhold information from FOIA requesters by invoking a variety of exemptions, something that Victor Navasky learned after he filed a FOIA request in 1976 for a list of all the books that had been published for the Agency prior to 1967. After the Agency rejected his request and subsequent appeal, he took them to court. The lawsuit dragged on for over five years, but the CIA ultimately prevailed when the Supreme Court refused to hear the case on appeal in October 1982. The Agency maintained that the documents that Navasky wanted had to be withheld to protect sources—presumably the authors and publishers of the books—and methods (e. g. the fact that the Agency engages in propaganda). Agency lawyers also claimed that releasing the book list, which was over fifteen-years old, would undermine national security, and "that its assertion on this matter need not be buttressed by evidence, even shown in camera."¹¹¹ Navasky was left to wonder "why the Director wants the C. I. A. exempted from a law that has yet to be seriously enforced against his agency."¹¹²

The Agency had a flawless record in FOIA litigation, and Casey could not provide specific examples of agents who quit because they feared that a

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Victor S. Navasky, "Why Sue The C. I. A.?" 26 October 1982, A29; the Supreme Court accepted a case involving a FOIA lawsuit against the CIA a few years later, ruling in favor of the Agency in 1985 (*CIA v. Sims*). The FOIA requester was seeking "the names of the institutions and individuals that had performed MKULTRA research." James X. Dempsey, "The CIA and Secrecy," in *A Culture of Secrecy: The Government Versus The People's Right To Know*, ed. Athan G. Theoharis (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 42. "As a result of the *Sims* case," says Dempsey, "the phrase 'sources and methods' [the B-3 exemption] has attained talismanic significance as grounds for withholding from the public information about the CIA. Protecting sources and methods trumps other values." Ibid., 44.

¹¹² Navasky, A29.

FOIA request would lead to their disclosure. When the Senate Intelligence Committee held hearings on the Goldwater bill in June 1983, however, Deputy Director John McMahon explained that “[i]t is difficult to convince one who is secretly cooperating with us that some day he will not awaken to find in a U. S. newspaper or magazine an article that identified him as a U. S. spy.”¹¹³ Rather than dwelling on the benefits that the exemption would provide the Agency, McMahon emphasized that the bill would significantly reduce the backlog of FOIA requests at the CIA. This would make it possible for the Agency to respond more quickly to journalists, scholars, and other FOIA requesters. Skeptics of the CIA remained unconvinced by McMahon’s promises, and they were especially alarmed by the absence of judicial review in the Senate bill. Anna Kasten Nelson, a history professor who testified on behalf of both the American Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians, warned that the Agency might “place ever-increasing numbers of documents in file cabinets marked ‘operational,’ including those that might be merely embarrassing.”¹¹⁴ Nelson was also one of the few observers to point out that the proposed exemption of operational files would be permanent. No matter how old these files were—whether three years old or thirty years old—they would be entirely exempt from FOIA requests.¹¹⁵

Despite the concerns about the exemption, the Senate passed the bill by voice vote in November. The debate over the FOIA then shifted to

¹¹³ McMahon quoted in “C. I. A. Seeks Protection Against Opening Files,” *New York Times*, 22 June 1983, A16; McMahon made the same claim to a House subcommittee in February 1984. See “C. I. A. Aide Complains Of Deterrent to Agents,” *New York Times*, 9 February 1984, A2.

¹¹⁴ Nelson quoted in Robert Pear, “C. I. A. Data Access Runs Into Snags,” *New York Times*, 4 September 1983, E16.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Congressman Mazzoli's bill in the House.¹¹⁶ In February 1984, during an appearance in front of a subcommittee of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, McMahon repeated his assurance that the proposed legislation would improve the Agency's ability to process FOIA requests.¹¹⁷ Congressman Mazzoli asked him whether the Agency could be tempted in the future to adopt a broad definition of operational documents in order to stymie legitimate FOIA requests. "Yes . . . if we were prepared to do something that violated the spirit and the legality of the law, that would be possible," McMahon replied.¹¹⁸ Yet he promised that this would never happen; like Richard Helms, he believed that Agency employees were honorable men, and as a consequence, "[m]y firm belief is that . . . there will not ever again be a repeat of the improprieties of the past."¹¹⁹

Shockingly, the ACLU did not challenge the "trust-us" mentality of the CIA. In his prepared statement to the subcommittee, Lynch gave the impression that the legislation under consideration in the House was a good deal. "Only the operational files of the CIA's Directorate of Operations, Directorate of Science and Technology, and Office of Security will be exempt from search and review," he noted. "Thus, operational information located elsewhere in the Agency will be subject to search and review."¹²⁰ But this

¹¹⁶ Mazzoli introduced H. R. 3460, and Congressman Whitehurst introduced H. R. 4431. In March 1984, Mazzoli, Whitehurst, and two other Congressmen introduced H. R. 5164, which was a compromise between the earlier versions.

¹¹⁷ U. S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Legislation of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *Legislation To Modify The Application Of The Freedom of Information Act To The Central Intelligence Agency*, 98th Cong., 2d sess., 8 February 1984, 5, 14.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

description reflected a glaring ignorance of the CIA's filing system, since few operational documents are found in the Directorate of Administration or the Directorate of Intelligence. It is true that final reports based on information gathered through espionage could still be requested through the FOIA, but this was very similar to what the CIA offered in 1979, a deal that the ACLU had justifiably opposed.

Another House subcommittee held hearings on H. R. 5164, a revised version of two previous bills, in May. The ACLU predictably endorsed this bill, since "the delay in responding to requests will be reduced and no meaningful information which is currently released will be lost."¹²¹ Angus Mackenzie took issue with the ACLU's position, and he told the members of the subcommittee about his research on Operation MHCHAOS, the CIA domestic surveillance program in the 1960s and early 1970s. Although the House bill had specified that operational files must still be searched in the event that they were "the specific subject matter of an investigation by the intelligence committees of the [C]ongress, etc.," Mackenzie believed that this language was overly restrictive.¹²² In the mid-1970s, both the Church committee and the Rockefeller Commission had investigated Operation CHAOS, but since Congress "did not SPECIFICALLY inspect the agency's files on the underground press," the CIA had a "loophole" to reject any

¹²¹ U. S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture of the Committee on Government Operations, *CIA Information Act: Hearing On H.R. 5164 To Amend The National Security Act of 1947 To Regulate Public Disclosure of Information Held By the Central Intelligence Agency, and for Other Purposes*, 98th Cong., 2d sess., 10 May 1984 [hereafter cited as *CIA Information Act*], 41; Stephen Engelberg, "C. I. A. and A. C. L. U. Support Curb On Information," *New York Times*, 11 May 1984, A15.

¹²² *CIA Information Act*, 84.

requests pertaining to the program.¹²³ In fact, Ernest Mayerfeld acknowledged that Mackenzie's FOIA lawsuit might be thrown out if the legislation passed.¹²⁴ "What the CIA needs is not this legislation to clear up its paperwork, but rather instructions from Congress that it must now comply with the FOIA," Mackenzie told the subcommittee.¹²⁵ Ralph McGehee, author of *Deadly Deceits*, had similar concerns about the legislation. He predicted that the Directorate of Operations (DO) would be able to claim an exemption for "some 80 to 90 percent" of their records if the bill was approved.¹²⁶

The hearings in May were essentially a formality; only four members of the subcommittee bothered to attend. With the ACLU supporting H.R. 5164, the protests from skeptics such as Mackenzie and McGehee could be ignored. The ACLU of Southern California soon complicated the situation by voting in June to fight against any legislation that would offer the CIA an exemption to the FOIA. In order to reduce the lengthy backlog of requests at the CIA, the 22,000 member ACLU affiliate proposed that Congress should make it more difficult for the Agency to engage in "obstructive conduct."¹²⁷ One member of the affiliate complained that "[t]he New York and Washington offices of the A. C. L. U. seem to have become a part of the establishment. They have become comfortable with the Washington

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 87-88. There were eleven other pending cases listed by the CIA. Ibid., 85.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 88. After it became clear that Congressman Mazzoli would not allow the CIA to use the legislation to block pending litigation, Mackenzie received the Operation Chaos documents on May 15, 1984. See Mackenzie, 117.

¹²⁶ *CIA Information Act*, 89.

¹²⁷ "Policy Adopted by Executive Committee of the ACLU of Southern California on June 5, 1984," reprinted in *ibid.*, 203. See also R. Samuel Paz and Ramona Ripston to Congressman Glenn English, 7 June 1984, reprinted in *ibid.*, 201-202.

bureaucrats.”¹²⁸ The conflict within the ACLU became such a problem that Ira Glasser, the executive director of the organization, ordered a last minute review of the legislation in September.¹²⁹ By that time, however, it was too late. When the bill came up for a vote on September 19, Congressman Ted Weiss went to the House floor, imploring his colleagues to oppose it. He had helped block the earlier attempt to exempt CIA operational files from the FOIA, but he was a voice crying in the wilderness in the fall of 1984. Only 35 representatives joined him in voting against the bill.¹³⁰ The following month Casey threw a party on the seventh floor of CIA headquarters to celebrate the CIA Information Act (Public Law 98-477). Three days later, President Reagan signed the law.¹³¹ He described the Information Act as “a small but important first step,” anticipating that the relief it provided to the CIA “will become available to other agencies involved in intelligence, who also must protect their sources and methods and who likewise wish to avoid unnecessary and expensive paperwork.”¹³² During the debate over the FOIA exemptions,

¹²⁸ Mae Churchill quoted in David Burnham, “The Increasing Dissent Within the A. L. C. U. [sic]” *New York Times*, 14 August 1984, A16.

¹²⁹ David Burnham, “A. C. L. U. Reviews Support of Information Bill,” *New York Times*, 9 September 1984, 24.

¹³⁰ Mackenzie, 117-118; George Lardner, Jr., “Measure Protecting CIA Files Blocked In House,” *Washington Post*, 18 September 1984, A4; “Shielding CIA Files,” *Washington Post*, 20 September 1984, A3; “House Approves A Bill Restricting C. I. A. Files,” *New York Times*, 20 September 1984, B22. The final vote was 369-36.

¹³¹ Woodward, 383-384.

¹³² “Statement on Signing the Central Intelligence Agency Information Act, 15 October 1984, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1984, Book II—June 30 to December 31, 1984* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1987), 1541.

critics worried that the administration would not stop with the CIA. It turned out that their concerns were justified.¹³³

In fairness to the ACLU, they honestly believed that the CIA Information Act would dramatically cut down the backlog of FOIA requests at Langley. Once Congress passed H. R. 5164, Casey promised the House Intelligence Committee that "the Agency will establish a specific program designed to substantially reduce, if not entirely eliminate, the current two-to-three year backlog of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests."¹³⁴ He also pledged not to reduce the funding allocated to FOIA compliance for two years.¹³⁵ Anyone who has filed a FOIA request with the Agency since 1984 can attest that these commitments were not kept. Not only does the backlog remain a problem, McGehee's prophesy about DO files turned out to be accurate. According to James X. Dempsey, an expert on FOIA litigation, "it has become much more difficult, if not impossible, for FOIA requesters to obtain anything involving a program that was once in this directorate."¹³⁶ Moreover, one of the provisions in the Information Act requires the CIA to review exempted files every ten years. Congress expected that the exemptions might be removed for some older documents, and although this did happen during the first decennial review, the Agency actually

¹³³ Jeffrey T. Richelson, "Holding Back: How Agencies Thwart The Freedom Of Information Act," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 59 (November/December 2003): 29-30.

¹³⁴ William J. Casey to Congressman Edward P. Boland, 27 April 1984, reprinted in U. S. House of Representatives, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *Central Intelligence Agency Information Act*, 98th Cong., 2d sess., 1 May 1984, H. Rep. 98-726: Part I, 12-13.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹³⁶ Dempsey, 48.

undermined the public's right to know by increasing the number of files placed off-limits to FOIA requests in 2005.¹³⁷

Remarkably, despite all of his efforts to undermine historical scholarship on the CIA, William Casey continued to take steps that portrayed the CIA as an open institution. In 1985 he established the Historical Review Program, but in a fitting tribute to Casey's obsession with secrecy, this program did not result in the de-classification of any CIA records until 1989, two years after Casey died of brain cancer.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Ibid., 49; Steven Aftergood, "CIA Expands Operational File Secrecy," *Secrecy News*, 19 April 2006.

¹³⁸ "Long-Secret History of C. I. A. Sheds Light on Battles Over Authority," *New York Times*, 28 November 1989, A18.

CHAPTER VII
THE RISE & FALL OF THE
NEW ERA OF OPENNESS AT THE CIA

A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or perhaps both.—James Madison (1822)¹

If you want a secret respected, see that it's respectable in the first place.—Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1996)²

Secrecy in Government is fundamentally anti-democratic, perpetuating bureaucratic errors. Open debate and discussion of public issues are vital to our national health.—Justice Hugo Black (New York Times v. United States, 1971)³

There's a big difference between openness and P. R.; what we've got here is P. R.—Steven Aftergood⁴

Public relations at the CIA did not die with William Casey. If anything, his successors improved and expanded the PR initiative. William Webster used public relations to rehabilitate the Agency's image in the aftermath of Iran-Contra; in 1992, with the Cold War over, Robert Gates promised a new era of openness to assuage the concerns of CIA critics; R. James Woolsey and John Deutch reached out to Hollywood to ensure a more positive portrayal of the CIA in popular culture; and George Tenet embraced PR to protect the Agency's legendary mystique. Like Stansfield Turner in the

¹ Warren F. Kimball, "Openness and the CIA," *Studies In Intelligence*, no. 10 (Winter-Spring 2001): 65.

² *Ibid.*, 66.

³ U. S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture of the Committee on Government Operations, *CIA Information Act: Hearing On H.R. 5164 To Amend The National Security Act of 1947 To Regulate Public Disclosure of Information Held By the Central Intelligence Agency, and for Other Purposes*, 98th Cong., 2d sess., 10 May 1984 [hereafter cited as *CIA Information Act*], "Statement of Charles S. Rowe," 63.

⁴ Aftergood quoted in Elaine Sciolino, "Cameras Are Being Turned On A Once-Shy Spy Agency," *New York Times*, 6 May 2001, 36.

late 1970s, all of these directors portrayed the CIA as an open institution. Gates and Woolsey even expressed a willingness to de-classify CIA records on covert operations. But in the final analysis, the "culture of secrecy" at Langley prevailed. The reforms at the CIA between 1987 and 2007—most notably the de-classification of millions of pages of documents—were primarily the result of intervention from historians, Congress, and the White House.

After William Casey resigned in early 1987, it appeared for a time that his loyal deputy, Robert Michael Gates, would be the next CIA director. However, because of the ongoing controversy surrounding Iran-Contra, Gates withdrew his name from consideration and FBI Director William Hedgcock Webster got the job instead. The new director continued to utilize public relations during the final years of the Cold War. As Stansfield Turner had done a decade earlier, Webster brought an outside PR specialist to Langley. Bill Baker, who had perfected his craft at the FBI, re-invigorated the CIA's public affairs division before handing the position over in 1989 to James Greenleaf, a fellow G-man.⁵ In 1991, according to an internal report, public affairs fielded 3,369 telephone calls from the media, delivered 174 background briefings, and scheduled 164 interviews with high-ranking CIA

⁵ Arthur S. Hulnick, "Openness: Being Public About Secret Intelligence," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 12, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 469-470; Ronald Kessler, *Inside The CIA: Revealing the Secrets of the World's Most Powerful Spy Agency* (New York: Pocket Books, 1992), 222-227, 232-235. "When Baker took over the CIA's public affairs in June 1987," says Kessler, "he found that much of the good work Herb Hetu had accomplished under Turner had been torpedoed by Casey." *Ibid.*, 224.

officials.⁶ Webster helped repair the damage that Casey had inflicted on the CIA's image, and unlike his predecessor, he managed to keep himself out of the headlines.

But as Webster distanced himself from Casey's recklessness, the CIA continued its irrational obsession with secrecy. In 1989, for instance, the State Department's historical division released a volume in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series that focused on American foreign policy in Iran between 1952 and 1954. Since the CIA refused to release documents on the toppling of Muhammad Mossadegh in 1953, the FRUS volume did not even mention the event. Diplomatic historians were outraged by the omission, arguing that the American role in the Shah's coup had been previously disclosed in the memoirs of Kermit Roosevelt, the CIA man who helped execute the mission. Warren Cohen, the chairperson of the historical advisory committee at the State Department, resigned in protest the following February. Cohen characterized the volume on Iran as "a fraud," and he described the inherent danger of "an overly elaborate, costly declassification process that encourages distortion and coverup."⁷

Senators Claiborne Pell (Democrat-Rhode Island), David Boren (Democrat-Oklahoma), and Jesse Helms (Republican-North Carolina)

⁶ Members of Task Force on Greater CIA Openness to Gates, "Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness," 20 December 1991, <http://www.cia-on-campus.org/foia/pa01.html> (accessed March 24, 2006), 6.

⁷ Warren I. Cohen, "At The State Dept., Historygate," *New York Times*, 8 May 1990, A29; "History Bleached At State," *New York Times*, 16 May 1990, A26; for a superb overview of the background to Cohen's resignation and its complicated aftermath, see Page Putnam Miller, "We Can't Yet Read Our Own Mail: Access to the Records of the Department of State," in *A Culture of Secrecy: The Government Versus The People's Right To Know*, ed. Athan G. Theoharis (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 186-210.

responded with a legislative proposal to bring greater oversight to the publication of the FRUS.⁸ Senator Helms summarized the bi-partisan concern about the government's de-classification procedures when he complained: "too much about our foreign policy is hidden for too long from public scrutiny."⁹ Congress eventually passed Public Law 102-138 in 1991 to change how the State Department compiled and published the FRUS. As historian Warren Kimball has explained, the legislation established a new advisory committee that had the power to "kick open the doors, look at the records, and then raise holy hell when it concluded that the bureaucrats were withholding 30-year-old secrets without a legitimate 'national security' reason"¹⁰ Not only did PL 102-138 establish a thirty-year rule for document de-classification, it also *required* government agencies like the CIA to share information with the State Department's history staff. The law was a stunning rebuke to the CIA's clandestine mindset.

When Webster stepped down in 1991, President George H. W. Bush boldly decided to replace him with Gates. The confirmation process was brutal. A group of Gates's colleagues testified that he intentionally politicized intelligence while running the Agency's analytical division between 1982 and 1986. According to Melvin Goodman, a retired CIA analyst, Casey and Gates had selectively used analysis to support "operational commitments" in Central America, Afghanistan, and the Middle East, while simultaneously manipulating the evidence to present a more

⁸ Miller, 195; Kimball, 66-67.

⁹ Helms quoted in Miller, 199.

¹⁰ Kimball, 66-67.

pessimistic interpretation of the Soviet Union.¹¹ CIA veteran Harold Ford substantiated Goodman's accusations, arguing that Gates's actions went "beyond professional bounds and clearly constitute a skewing of intelligence, not in the fields of military and strategic issues, but chiefly concerning Soviet political matters and the Soviets and the Third World."¹² Gates, in other words, only interfered with CIA analysts in certain situations. As former CIA analyst Jennifer L. Glaudemans explained at the hearings, "politicization is like fog. Though you cannot hold it in your hand or nail it to the wall, it is real. It does exist. And it does affect people's behavior."¹³ Gates adamantly denied the accusations, and the Senate ultimately confirmed his nomination.

Even before the controversy over the alleged politicization began, however, Gates promised the senators on the intelligence committee that he intended to make the CIA more accessible to Congress and the American public. He acknowledged that Langley continued to have an image problem, and from his perspective, "changing perceptions first requires greater openness by the Agency."¹⁴ As the opposition to his nomination mounted, Gates repeated his promise of increased openness, even writing Senator Sam Nunn (Democrat-Georgia) a letter in which he described his strategy for

¹¹ U. S. Senate, Select Committee on Intelligence, *Nomination of Robert M. Gates, To Be Director of Central Intelligence*, 102d Cong., 1st sess., 3 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), II:143.

¹² *Ibid.*, 193.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 261; see also Angus Mackenzie, *Secrets: The CIA's War at Home* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 183.

¹⁴ *Nomination of Robert M. Gates, To Be Director of Central Intelligence*, I:444; for Gates's assessment of the confirmation process in 1991, see Robert M. Gates, *From The Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 545-552.

leading the CIA into the post-Cold War world.¹⁵ There was obviously an element of self-interest involved in Gates's proposals for the future; in fact, he admitted to committee members that the Agency had to evolve in order to justify its existence: "CIA and U.S. intelligence must change, and be seen to change, or confront irrelevance and growing sentiment for their dismantlement."¹⁶

On November 18, 1991, just six days after he was sworn-in as CIA director, Gates sent a memo to his director of public affairs, Joseph R. DeTrani, requesting the establishment of a task force to examine the Agency's existing policies on openness. Gates wanted the group to complete its study by December 20, asking them to formulate "additional proposals for making more information about the Agency available to the American people and to give greater transparency to our organization"¹⁷ DeTrani wasted no time in assembling what became known as the Task Force on Greater CIA Openness. Four days later he reported to Gates that a task force of seven CIA officials had been formed with himself as chairperson, noting that the group planned "to meet with John Scali of ABC, Jack Nelson of The Los Angeles

¹⁵ Gates, 551.

¹⁶ *Nomination of Robert M. Gates, To Be Director of Central Intelligence*, I:444; for background on the hearings, see Richard L. Berke, "Bradley Goes One-on-One With Gates," *New York Times*, 18 September 1991, A14; Elaine Sciolino, "Gates Almost a Side Issue in Hearings," *New York Times*, 1 October 1991, A19; and "Excerpts From Senate Hearing on Nomination of C. I. A. Chief," *New York Times*, 2 October 1991, A16.

¹⁷ Robert M. Gates to Joseph R. DeTrani, "Greater CIA Openness," 18 November 1991. Released by the CIA to the author on November 29, 2005. This memo had been previously de-classified in response to a FOIA request; Mackenzie, 184.

Times, David Ignatius of the Washington Post, and Jerry Seib of The Wall Street Journal, and others."¹⁸

The task force first met on November 25, and during this session, they started to brainstorm ideas. Although it remains unclear whether DeTrani and his colleagues were aware of the recommendations that a similar ad hoc group had offered to William Colby sixteen years earlier, they developed suggestions that sounded much the same. For instance, the task force advised that it would be useful to seek outside assistance in defending the CIA. Not only should the Agency "get our customers to speak for us on the value of our work/product," the members wanted to "do more with and through professional organizations."¹⁹ They also believed that the Agency must "aggressively respond to 'cheap shots' by the media with op-ed pieces or letters to the editor and if they aren't printed, work [the response] into public statement by DCI."²⁰

The task force solicited comments on their project from both insiders and outsiders. During the first week of December, they held discussions with Agency employees, and at their second meeting, the group listened intently to an invited guest named George Tenet, then staff director

¹⁸ Joseph R. DeTrani to Gates, "Task Forces on Greater CIA Openness and Internal Agency Communication," 22 November 1991, p. 1. Released by the CIA to the author on November 29, 2005. This memo had been previously de-classified in response to a FOIA request. With the exception of DeTrani's, all of the names of task force participants are redacted from the document. Ibid., 1. A task force on Internal Agency Communication was established at the same time, but the group had different members. John Hedley became its chairperson. Ibid., 2.

¹⁹ Joseph R. DeTrani to Gates, "Report of First Meeting of Task Force on Greater CIA Openness," 26 November 1991. Released by the CIA to the author on November 29, 2005. This memo had been previously de-classified in response to a FOIA request.

²⁰ Ibid.

for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI). DeTrani told Gates in a detailed memo that Tenet provided them with several “admonitions”; of the ten that DeTrani listed, the first was undoubtedly the most significant: “keep the mystique—we could lose if we are perceived as an ordinary bureaucracy (in resource game and in public image).”²¹ Instead of de-mystifying their clandestine activities, in other words, Tenet encouraged them not to sacrifice the CIA’s mystique. This recommendation unwittingly highlighted the fundamental contradiction of CIA public relations since the “Year of Intelligence” in that the Agency had consistently viewed openness in terms of self-preservation rather than the public’s right to know. “[G]ive the public a better understanding of what [the CIA does], the quality of [CIA] people and the risks they take,” Tenet advised, “. . . keep openness institutional rather than issue-oriented.”²² In keeping with this sycophantic tone, he observed “that Doug MacEachin, Bob Blackwell and George Kolt are the ‘best show in town’ on the Soviet Union and should be seen and heard more widely.”²³ Tenet further advised the Agency to reach out to academics by possibly re-evaluating classification rules and “packaging information on former denied areas to get some credit for past efforts.”²⁴ As the staff director of the senate

²¹ Joseph R. DeTrani to Gates, “Task Force on Greater CIA Openness - Week Two,” 6 December 1991, p. 1. Released by the CIA to the author on November 29, 2005. This memo had been previously de-classified in response to a FOIA request.

²² *Ibid.*, 2; Angus Mackenzie contends that “[o]penness’ [for Gates] meant adopting a well-crafted public relations scheme aimed at the most important opinion makers in the nation.” Mackenzie, 187.

²³ Joseph R. DeTrani to Gates, “Task Force on Greater CIA Openness - Week Two,” 1.

²⁴ *Ibid.* DeTrani outlined additional recommendations from Tenet in his memo: “whatever path we pursue on openness, be consistent . . . if we aren’t consistent, our efforts could be seen as manipulation or politicization”;

oversight committee, Tenet had a responsibility to ensure the CIA's accountability to Congress. Yet his recommendations were dominated by a focus on PR, eerily foreshadowing his tenure at the CIA.

In the week following Tenet's visit, officials on the task force kept a busy schedule. They journeyed to *Washington Post* headquarters for a meeting; they listened to presentations from CIA officials; and they had conversations with scholars, retired CIA director Richard Helms, and reporters such as Wolf Blitzer and Doyle McManus.²⁵ After gathering at least twice to discuss their findings, the group submitted their final report to Gates on December 20 for his review. On the second page of this document, the authors borrowed several of Tenet's ideas without attributing them to him, advising Gates to "preserve the mystique."²⁶ The following page of the report was reminiscent of the "Telling the Intelligence Story" memo that had been sent to Colby in 1975. "We have an important story to tell," the task force announced, "a story that bears repeating. We are the most open intelligence agency in the world which is proper in our form of democracy."²⁷ Yet despite this pre-existing openness, they worried, "many Americans do not understand the intelligence process and the role of intelligence in national security policymaking. Many still operate with a romanticized or erroneous

"admit when we are wrong and work to find ways to cover dissent in our product"; "recognize the dilemma in the intelligence success/policy failure sequence and how to deal with that as an executive branch agency"; and "be excellent in what we do in public." Ibid.

²⁵ Joseph R. DeTrani to Gates, "Task Force on Greater CIA Openness - Week Three," 13 December 1991. Released by the CIA to the author on November 29, 2005. This memo had been previously de-classified in response to a FOIA request.

²⁶ Members of Task Force on Greater CIA Openness to Gates, "Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness," 2.

²⁷ Ibid., 3.

view of intelligence from the movies, TV, books and newspapers."²⁸ In essence, the report suggested that only the positive elements of the CIA mystique were worth protecting.

The Task Force on Greater CIA Openness described for Gates a variety of "steps we can take which will benefit us and the American people," offering him a total of 30 recommendations to either approve or reject.²⁹ The media should be a top priority for the Public Affairs Office, the task force concluded, and they believed it would be beneficial to "[p]rovide more background briefings, when practical, to a greater number of print and electronic media journalists" and to encourage the media to interview top CIA officials.³⁰ Their report then mentioned the possibility of allowing reporters to do "individual profiles" on CIA employees to "help personalize the world of intelligence in broad circulation newspapers or magazines," which might also demonstrate "the growing number of women and minorities in each directorate and increasingly in more senior positions."³¹ Gates accepted almost all of the ideas for improving media relations, telling DeTrani that "[c]areful records should be kept of such contacts [with the press]."³² In responding to proposals outlined in another section of the report, Gates supported the production of more PR-type material, expressed an

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 7.

³¹ Ibid., 8.

³² Robert M. Gates, "Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness," 6 January 1992, p. 2. Released by the CIA to the author on November 29, 2005. This memo had been previously de-classified in response to a FOIA request. Gates prohibited his subordinates from offering "groups of reporters unclassified background briefings when there is a major international event" unless given approval from him. Ibid., 3; Mackenzie, 186-187.

interest in making television appearances, and agreed that “[t]he Agency’s briefing program for the full range of potential audiences should be expanded as opportunities arise.”³³

For anyone familiar with the history of CIA public relations, it is obvious that the majority of recommendations in the report were not new. The task force apparently thought they had developed a new idea when they advised Gates to invite CEOs to Langley for seminars, but in reality, Casey and other CIA directors had previously encouraged such visits.³⁴ Moreover, the speaker’s bureau that Herbert Hetu initiated over a decade earlier was revived prior to Gates’s arrival, and according to the task force, Agency employees had made over sixty public appearances in 1991. Accepting the report’s advice, Gates called for the program to be expanded.³⁵ In addition to reviewing the recommendations that were approved in January 1992, it is important to consider those that were rejected. Generally speaking, Gates viewed the program as a chance to sell the Agency’s image to a wide audience. He concurred with the task force “that our objective is to make CIA and the intelligence process more visible and understandable rather than to seek inevitably incomplete or unattainable openness on specific substantive issues.”³⁶ When translated into practice, this mentality helps to explain why Gates did not approve a recommendation to encourage the intelligence

³³ Robert M. Gates, “Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness,” 6 January 1992, p. 2. Gates also supported the attempt to publish an anthology of selected articles from the CIA’s in-house journal, *Studies In Intelligence*. Ibid.

³⁴ Members of Task Force on Greater CIA Openness to Gates, “Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness,” 12; Mackenzie, 187.

³⁵ Robert M. Gates, “Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness,” 6 January 1992, p. 4.

³⁶ Ibid., 1; see also Mackenzie, 184.

committees to "issue an unclassified annual report on the performance of the Intelligence Community."³⁷ Gates wanted better PR, not accountability.

Less than a week after Gates issued his assessment of the task force's report, Elaine Sciolino broke the story on the front page of the *New York Times*.³⁸ DeTrani sent a memo to Gates about the article on the following day. "Given the fact that Sciolino insisted on running this story now despite my best efforts to convince her to hold off," he wrote, "I think the story is about as good as we could have hoped for."³⁹ DeTrani was most likely hoping to keep the task force's existence under wraps until Gates could publicly announce the CIA's new policy on openness. In a speech to the Oklahoma Press Association on February 21, 1992, about five weeks after Sciolino's article, Gates formally outlined his strategy. At the beginning of the talk, he jokingly compared his situation to the scene in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) where Jones must cross to the other side of a deep canyon on faith alone. "I will now step out into that chasm [of credibility] on faith," he said, "the faith that what I have to say will persuade you of our seriousness of purpose and action."⁴⁰ Although Gates acknowledged that there had been previous attempts at greater openness, he noted that "all of this took place against a backdrop of overall continuing and undifferentiated secrecy

³⁷ Members of Task Force on Greater CIA Openness to Gates, "Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness," p. 11.

³⁸ Elaine Sciolino, "Panel From C. I. A. Urges Curtailing Of Agency Secrecy," *New York Times*, 12 January 1992, A1; Michael Isikoff, "CIA Task Force Urges Speedier Declassifications," *Washington Post*, 13 January 1992, A1.

³⁹ DeTrani to Gates, "RE: Stories on Openness Task Force," 13 January 1992. Released by the CIA to the author on November 29, 2005. This memo had been previously de-classified in response to a FOIA request.

⁴⁰ Robert M. Gates, "CIA And Openness," Oklahoma Press Association, 21 February 1992, p. 2. Released by the CIA to the author on November 29, 2005. This memo had been previously de-classified in response to a FOIA request.

[t]his is going to change."⁴¹ He focused on three aspects of the task force report—the media, academia, and de-classification policies—and assured the audience “that these measures, taken together, represent a real shift on CIA’s part toward greater openness and sense of public responsibility.”⁴²

By proclaiming greater openness at the CIA, Gates won excellent publicity for the Agency. His promise to de-classify more documents was especially well received at the time. Yet the praise quickly turned into embarrassment when Agency officials refused to show the press a copy of the Task Force Report On Greater CIA Openness.⁴³ The Center for National Security Studies at the ACLU soon filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the document, but the FOIA office ruled that “[it] must be withheld in its entirety.”⁴⁴ Gates would later contend that the report had been withheld initially “because some of the people who signed it were under cover.”⁴⁵ This explanation was somewhat misleading. On March 18, Gary Foster, DeTrani’s replacement at public affairs, told a Congressional committee that in addition to the names of the signers, other information in the report had to remain classified. He claimed that the unclassified sections

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 25; for coverage of the speech in the press, see “CIA May Lift Its Veil,” *Houston Chronicle*, 22 February 1992, A1; George Lardner, Jr., “Gates Acts to Promote CIA Openness,” *Washington Post*, 22 February 1992, A4.

⁴³ DeTrani told Angus Mackenzie on January 14 that the report had to remain classified, since Gates had not finished reviewing it. In reality, as Mackenzie observes, Gates had completed this review eight days earlier. See Mackenzie, 186.

⁴⁴ George Lardner, Jr., “CIA Report On Openness Classified Secret,” *Washington Post*, 23 April 1992, A1.

⁴⁵ Handwritten note from Gates to Congressman Lee H. Hamilton, 13 April 1992. Released by the CIA to the author on November 29, 2005. This document had been previously de-classified in response to a FOIA request.

"wouldn't mean much to anybody."⁴⁶ Gates, however, ultimately overruled Foster, and in early April, he de-classified the internal study and his memo of January 6, choosing simply to redact the relevant names while allowing most everything else to become public.

After looking over the recommendations of the task force, an ACLU official dismissed the report as little more than "an internal discussion of how we [the CIA] can get people to like us."⁴⁷ Steven Aftergood, editor of the *Secrecy & Government Bulletin* [now *Secrecy News*], had previously quipped that the CIA was "invulnerable to irony."⁴⁸ For why else would the Agency classify as secret a study on greater openness to the public? CIA officials most likely were worried about disclosing aspects of the report that evaluated previous PR efforts. In the section on the media, for example, the authors of the study boasted that the "PAO [Public Affairs Office] now has relationships with reporters from every major wire service, newspaper, news weekly, and television network in the nation. This has helped us turn some 'intelligence failure' stories into 'intelligence success' stories" ⁴⁹ They observed that "[i]n many instances, we have persuaded reporters to postpone, change, hold, or even scrap stories that could have adversely affected national security

⁴⁶ Foster quoted in Lardner, "CIA Report On Openness Classified Secret," A1; Mackenzie, 186.

⁴⁷ Leslie Harris quoted in Lardner, "CIA Report On Openness Classified Secret," A1.

⁴⁸ *Secrecy & Government Bulletin*, no. 7 (February 1992). Aftergood also remarked that "[t]he major change is that Director Gates is on TV a lot more, and has testified at several open Congressional hearings." He cited one source as describing the openness policy as 'media puffery.' Ibid.

⁴⁹ Members of Task Force on Greater CIA Openness to Gates, "Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness," 6; see also Lardner, "CIA Report On Openness Classified Secret," A1.

interests or jeopardized sources and methods."⁵⁰ The report also mentioned that public affairs routinely mailed material to around 700 professors, held bi-annual events at Langley for college administrators, and was then in the process of "building a database of information about Agency contacts with academia"⁵¹

Three days before Gates announced the new policy in Tulsa, DeTrani issued an update on what had been accomplished so far. He informed his boss that a video entitled "In America's Interest" was nearing completion; that briefings for the press had been expanded (twenty-eight during the month of January); and that planning was underway for CEOs to tour the CIA.⁵² DeTrani's office had also hosted several guest speakers, including an astonishing visit from Norman Mailer.⁵³ Even though Mailer had once accused the CIA of manipulating the stock exchange and eviscerating American radicalism, he published a book about the Agency in 1991 called *Harlot's Ghost* that depicted the Agency as "a company of the elegant, secretly gathered to fight a war so noble that one could and must be ready to trudge for years through the mud and the pits."⁵⁴ During his promotion of the epic novel, which totaled over 1,200 pages, Mailer did not hesitate to share his personal views of the CIA. "I could have been in the CIA," he remarked.

⁵⁰ Members of Task Force on Greater CIA Openness to Gates, "Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness," 6; Mackenzie, 185.

⁵¹ Members of Task Force on Greater CIA Openness to Gates, "Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness," 8.

⁵² Joseph R. DeTrani to Gates, "Progress Report on Actions/Recommendations Relating to the DCI Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness," 18 February 1992.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Mary V. Dearborn, *Mailer: A Biography* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 409.

"And I probably would have been pretty good at it."⁵⁵ He also condemned his participation in the Fifth Estate, telling *Vanity Fair* "I cringe when I think of the name now."⁵⁶ Then, shortly before the nineteenth anniversary of his Four Seasons debacle, Mailer visited CIA headquarters, delivered a speech, and met with top CIA officials in Robert Gates's conference room. The size of the audience was comparable to the turnout in 1973, but unlike the apathetic party guests, the CIA employees were thrilled with the speech, offering Mailer "standing ovations several times."⁵⁷ In his speech inside the "the Bubble," Mailer announced that the Agency should assassinate Saddam Hussein. He emphasized the importance of espionage in the aftermath of the Cold War. "Now that the cold war is over," he observed, "the C. I. A. can get out of the beartrap of ideology and begin to provide serious and needed intelligence on the rest of the world."⁵⁸

In addition to the obvious PR component of Gates's new policy, scholars were promised a radically different approach to the de-classification of CIA records. The task force had outlined a proposal to "[e]stablish a senior-led, Agency-wide group to review the Agency's policy and practices related to declassification and release of records under the Historical Review and FOIA programs with a view to accelerating the process," and they followed this with a recommendation to de-classify "historical materials on specific events, particularly those which are repeatedly the subject of false allegations, such as the 1948 Italian Elections, 1953 Iranian Coup, 1954

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 410.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 414; Elaine Sciolino, "Mailer Visits C. I. A. and Finds He's in Friendly Territory. Really," *New York Times*, 3 February 1992, A10.

⁵⁸ Sciolino, A10.

Guatemalan Coup, 1958 Indonesian Coup and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962."⁵⁹ In his speech to the Oklahoma Press Association, he confessed "that the results of our historical review program have been quite meager—the consequences of low priority, few resources, and rigid agency policies and procedures heavily biased toward denial of declassification."⁶⁰ Gates, however, selected his words very carefully that evening. He announced "a new approach" to increase the number of records de-classified, but in the same sentence, he added an important caveat: the program would abide by the CIA Information Act of 1984.⁶¹ This meant that operational records would be exempt from the review process.

Of all the records that the task force listed for possible de-classification, Gates only approved the release of documents pertaining to the Cuban Missile Crisis. CIA officials organized a conference at Langley on the missile crisis to commemorate its thirtieth anniversary, and during this event, "[the Agency] issued a handsomely printed volume of documents tracing the history of the crisis."⁶² As James X. Dempsey has observed, however, it was

⁵⁹ Members of Task Force on Greater CIA Openness to Gates, "Task Force Report on Greater CIA Openness," 3-4.

⁶⁰ Robert M. Gates, "CIA And Openness," Oklahoma Press Association, 21 February 1992, p. 20.

⁶¹ Ibid. For background on the law, see "Archive Calls on CIA and Congress to Address Loophole Shielding CIA Records From the Freedom of Information Act," The National Security Archive, 15 October 2004, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB138/> (accessed May 25, 2006).

⁶² James X. Dempsey, "The CIA and Secrecy," in *A Culture of Secrecy: The Government Versus The People's Right To Know*, ed. Athan G. Theoharis (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 53; Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account Of Its Operations In Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), xii; Karl E. Meyer, "Inside the C. I. A.: A Bit of Sunlight on the Missile Crisis," *New York Times*,

not accidental that the CIA selected the missile crisis as the subject of its inaugural symposium; after all, the Agency's handling of the nuclear standoff is widely considered to be one of its finest moments.⁶³ Given the obvious PR concerns about accentuating the positive, the Agency hierarchy rejected a plan to hold a conference on the Team B episode.⁶⁴ Such an event would inevitably raise questions about the politicization of intelligence, a topic that Gates and his subordinates most likely wanted to avoid.

R. James Woolsey, who served as President Bill Clinton's first CIA director from February 1993 through January 1995, attempted to cultivate the support of the American public using the same techniques as Gates. In order to more effectively convey the CIA message during television interviews and other public appearances, he even hired a PR consultant to provide pointers on public speaking.⁶⁵ He told Congress that he would continue the openness initiative, promising a "warts and all" approach to the de-classification of older documents.⁶⁶ In September 1993, he testified about plans to release documents on several covert operations from the Cold War. The CIA would move forward with Gates's "plans to declassify records on the Bay of Pigs

24 October 1992, 22; Zachary Karabell, "CIA Clings to Secrecy," *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 February 1993, 18.

⁶³ Dempsey, 54.

⁶⁴ Cullather, xii.

⁶⁵ Charles Fenyvesi, "Washington Whispers," *U. S. News & World Report*, 22 August 1994, 22; for background on Woolsey, see Michael R. Gordon, "Campus Activist to Insider: Journey of the C. I. A. Nominee," *New York Times*, 11 January 1993, A1; for the details of Woolsey's troubled relationship with the Clinton White House, see Tim Weiner, "Tension With White House Leaves C. I. A. Chief Out In The Cold," *New York Times*, 25 December 1993, A10.

⁶⁶ Douglas Jehl, "C. I. A. Releases Files on Korea and Cold War," *New York Times*, 1 October 1993, A7; Tim Weiner, "C. I. A. Opening Files On Cold War Role," *New York Times*, 29 August 1993, A7.

operation, the coups against President Arbenz of Guatemala and against Prime Minister Mossadeq in Iran, and operations in the Dominican Republic and the Congo," said Woolsey, and another six operations would be added to the list: "France and Italy in the 1940s and 1950s . . . Support to anti-Sukarno rebels in Indonesia in 1958; Support to Tibetan guerillas in the 1950s and early 1960s; Operations against North Korea during the Korean War; and, Operations in Laos in the 1960s."⁶⁷

But despite these assurances, Woolsey's primary concern was the improvement of public relations. While previous directors had reached out to the media and academia, Woolsey understood that the CIA also needed to focus attention on the entertainment industry. In 1994 he agreed to enter negotiations with Television Production Partners (TPP), a production company financed by advertising firms that was interested in developing a series based on the CIA. Interestingly, plans for a CIA television show had been kicking around for nearly three decades. During his retirement, Allen Dulles hoped that CBS might develop a series on the CIA similar to "The F. B. I." (1965-1974), a fictional show about the bureau that J. Edgar Hoover enthusiastically supported.⁶⁸ The proposal re-surfaced during the "Year of Intelligence," and although William Colby was intrigued by the idea, George H. W. Bush reportedly had no interest in pursuing the project after his arrival

⁶⁷ U. S. House of Representatives, Permanent Select Committee On Intelligence, *Increasing Accessibility To CIA Documents*, 103rd Cong., 1st sess., 28 September 1993 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1994), 4.

⁶⁸ John Kelly, "CBS as CIA," *Counterspy* 5, no. 1 (Nov. 1980-Jan. 1981): 3-4; "Hollywood Plots A CIA TV Series," *Washington Post Magazine*, 17 August 1980, 2.

at the CIA in 1976. CBS began to develop a similar program in the summer of 1980 with the support of the AFIO.⁶⁹

It remains unclear whether Woolsey was aware of these earlier projects, but even if he did know about them, he clearly wanted to take a new approach. The agreement the Agency signed with TPP at the end of 1994 reflects Woolsey's desire to directly involve the CIA in the production process. It gave the CIA the authority to "review and approve or deny all stories and scripts produced. In exchange for this extraordinary control, CIA . . . granted TPP the right to use the CIA name and seal in the production and to state that the stories are fictional accounts based on actual CIA files."⁷⁰ According to Dennis Boxx, then Public Affairs Director at Langley, "[t]his project presents an unprecedented opportunity for CIA to influence the portrayal of this Agency and US intelligence in a potentially high profile and successful television series reaching millions of Americans. It has been briefed to and has the support of both congressional oversight committees."⁷¹ In order to adequately evaluate the scripts for the show, Boxx proposed the establishment of an internal review board that "may include an Associate Deputy Director from each directorate as well as the General Counsel and the Director of Public Affairs [Boxx]."⁷²

⁶⁹ "Hollywood Plots A CIA TV Series," 2.

⁷⁰ Dennis R. Boxx to Executive Director, "CIA Television Series," 16 April 1996, 1. Released by the CIA to the author on 21 December 2005 in response to a FOIA request.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 2.

Since the CIA has only de-classified two memos pertaining to the agreement with TPP,⁷³ what happened to the project remains a mystery. John Deutch, President Clinton's second CIA director, shared Woolsey's interest in shaping the CIA's image in popular culture. CIA officials on the "seventh floor" approached a case officer named Chase Brandon with the idea of starting the first film liaison office at the Agency. After initially declining the offer, Brandon, who has family connections to the film industry, subsequently re-considered and made the decision in 1996 to come out of the cold and into the spotlight.⁷⁴ He remained in the position until the summer of 2007.⁷⁵

Brandon began his career at the Agency in the early 1970s, shortly before the CIA entered the contentious "Year of Intelligence." "[The] CIA and I were both born in 1947," he proudly explained in 2005, "and I was recruited into its organizational ranks when we were both 25 years old."⁷⁶ Brandon holds a Ph.D. in linguistics and spent over two decades in the Directorate of Operations. The details of his clandestine work for the CIA are obviously classified, but it is known that he participated in paramilitary operations in El Salvador and other Central American locations during the 1980s. By the mid-1990s, the Agency hierarchy had selected him to run the CIA station in

⁷³ In addition to Boxx's April 1996 memorandum, another memo was released to the author on 21 December 2005. [Redacted] to Dennis Boxx, Vin Swasey, [Redacted], "CIA Television Series Project," 3 October 1995.

⁷⁴ Chase Brandon, telephone interview by author, September 8, 2005.

⁷⁵ Paul Barry took over as the entertainment industry liaison in June 2007. See Amy Argetsinger and Roxanne Roberts, "The CIA Has A New Man On A Special Mission—To Hollywood," *Washington Post*, 5 June 2007, C3; Press Releases & Statements, "CIA Names New Entertainment Liaison," 4 June 2007, <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/press-releases-statements/cia-names-new-entertainment-liaison.html> (accessed August 3, 2007).

⁷⁶ Chase Brandon, e-mail to author, 24 May 2005. [In author's possession].

Houston. Brandon remained undercover while serving as the Houston station chief, and he appears to have worked closely with oil companies with interests in Latin America. In fact, he sometimes distributed business cards that indicated he was the Vice President of Patriot Petroleum in Baytown, Texas.⁷⁷ In reality, of course, Patriot Petroleum was simply a CIA front company.

Between 1996 and 2007, Brandon participated in a long list of movies and television shows. He described his philosophy of the liaison job by paraphrasing a famous line from *The Field of Dreams*: "if I give them a phone number, they will call."⁷⁸ By implementing a strategy he called the "three legs of a stool approach" (i. e. documentaries, movies, and television shows), Brandon attempted to "showcase good qualities" of CIA employees in hopes of improving the CIA's public image.⁷⁹ When determining whether to offer CIA assistance to a project, he examined outlines and scripts to make sure that they were "fair and balanced."⁸⁰ He openly admitted to withholding support from proposals that might have portrayed the Agency in a negative light: "if there is something wrong or maliciously ugly about us, they can correct the part that's factually wrong or temper whatever is maliciously ugly, and maybe they can film here. But if they have clichés about us as rogue assassins, I'm sorry, but we're not going to let them come film here and

⁷⁷ Robert Dreyfuss, "Left Out In The Cold," *Mother Jones*, January/February 1998, <http://www.motherjones.com/news/feature/1998/01/dreyfuss.html> (accessed July 20, 2006).

⁷⁸ Chase Brandon, telephone interview by author, September 8, 2005.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

According to the late Angus Mackenzie, “[f]or the average outsider, being taken into the CIA’s confidence can be breathtaking.”⁸⁶ Mackenzie recognized that CIA officials often use the basic strategies of agent recruitment for PR purposes. Interestingly, Brandon was once an instructor at “the Farm,” the CIA’s not so secret training facility at Camp Peary on the outskirts of Williamsburg, Virginia.⁸⁷ Winning a person’s trust is something that comes naturally to him. Recognizing that Hollywood celebrities are often distrustful of the CIA, he frequently invited writers, actors, and directors to visit Langley. He skillfully used these VIP tours to promote the Agency’s mystique. For instance, after Patrick Stewart journeyed through the halls of the CIA in December 1997, he admitted that “[t]his visit has certainly shifted my perceptions and made me review my attitudes toward the Agency and my conditioning from previous reading about you [most notably, Harvey Weinstein’s book on MKULTRA].”⁸⁸ Since he and his fiancée planned on forming a production company, Stewart promised that he would be willing to consider “projects that give a more positive view of the good work of your organization.”⁸⁹ In fact, he was so impressed with the Agency that he even offered to make a subsequent visit to deliver a lecture in the Bubble on acting in espionage films.⁹⁰ Will Smith, Robert DeNiro, Ben Affleck, Dean Cain, and Dan Ackroyd are just a handful of other actors who have toured the CIA with

⁸⁶ Mackenzie, 186.

⁸⁷ Chase Brandon, telephone interview by author, September 8, 2005.

⁸⁸ “Patrick Stewart Visits CIA Headquarters,” *What’s News At CIA*, no. 483 (24 December 1997). Released by the CIA to the author on 21 December 2005 in response to a FOIA request.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Brandon.⁹¹ Like Stewart, Affleck commented on how normal the CIA seemed during his visit to prepare for the role of Jack Ryan in *The Sum Of All Fears* (2002): "It wasn't some kind of cloak-and-dagger operation, but more like an office with a very diverse group of people—highly competent and very smart people—who are dedicated, patriotic Americans."⁹² Of course, neither Affleck nor Stewart appears to have considered that their tour of Langley was undoubtedly carefully managed from start to finish.

Having once encouraged Agency officials to maintain their mystique, it is not surprising that George Tenet ardently supported the film liaison office when he became CIA director in 1997. He soon took an interest in a project that Brandon had undertaken with Robert Cort, a successful Hollywood producer who briefly worked as a CIA analyst in the early 1970s. Cort had written a story about a fictional CIA operation, and Roger Towne, the screenwriter of *The Natural* (1984), was enlisted to prepare an adaptation. Actor Tim Matheson, best known to moviegoers as the unforgettable Eric "Otter" Stratton in *Animal House* (1978), signed on as the film's director. As plans for the television movie began to crystallize, Matheson, Cort, and David Madden, the co-producer, visited Langley where Tenet personally welcomed them. Matheson explained that he fully intended "to capture on film the

⁹¹ "Dan Ackroyd Developing Television Series On CIA," *What's News At CIA*, no. 358 (24 October 1996); "Mr. Smith Goes To CIA," *What's News At CIA*, no. 488 (21 January 1998); "Superman Visits Headquarters," *What's News At CIA*, no. 799 (10 October 2000). The CIA released all three articles to the author on 21 December 2005 in response to a FOIA request.

⁹² *Sum of All Fears*, Production Notes, <http://www.contactmusic.com/new/home.nsf/webpages/fearsproductionx25x07x02> (accessed July 20, 2006).

professionalism, dedication, and patriotism which CIA truly represents and which the American public little understands."⁹³

Matheson and the producers made arrangements for several of the actors in the movie to receive similar tours. Tom Berenger, who in the film portrays a CIA officer sent to North Korea on a covert operation, went to the CIA for two days, meeting with Tenet and at least one top official in the Directorate of Operations. Ron Silver, the actor selected for the role of DCI, also visited CIA headquarters to prepare for the film. Silver said that Tenet provided him with invaluable advice: "There's no way I could have ever prepared as thoroughly for this role without talking to Mr. Tenet. His responsibilities are enormous and I deeply appreciate the time and insights he gave me—both will better enable me to portray the DCI in this movie."⁹⁴ Then, on June 20, 1998, two months after the start of principal photography, Matheson spent the entire Saturday at CIA headquarters filming scenes in the lobby, hallways, and rear entrance. Over fifty CIA employees participated as "extras," because it would have been too time-consuming for the Office of Security to obtain clearances for civilians.⁹⁵

⁹³ Matheson quoted in "DCI Meets Director of 'The Agency' [*In The Company of Spies*]," *What's News At CIA*, no. 519 (May 5). Released by the CIA to the author on 21 December 2005 in response to a FOIA request.

⁹⁴ Silver quoted in "The Agency's Lead Characters Visit Headquarters," *What's News At CIA*, no. 528; Alice Krige also journeyed to the CIA. See "Actress Alice Krige Visits Headquarters," *What's News At CIA*, no. 532. The CIA released both articles on 21 December 2005 in response to a FOIA request.

⁹⁵ Chase Brandon, "LIGHTS . . . CAMERA . . . ACTION!," *What's News At CIA*, no. 538. Released by the CIA to the author on 21 December 2005 in response to a FOIA request.

When the editing of the Showtime movie was completed, Tenet arranged for *In The Company of Spies*⁹⁶ to premiere at the CIA in October 1999. Not only did Agency officials literally roll out the red carpet for the event, they also positioned klieg lights near the entranceway to welcome about five hundred invited guests.⁹⁷ Tenet had claimed only a year earlier that the Agency simply could not afford to continue its voluntary de-classification program, but he somehow managed to find room in the budget for the extravaganza. Tenet commended the production team, happily noting that “[t]hey were great to work with. They portray us in a good light, and I want the American people to know the values we believe in. Our work is secret and it will always be secret. But every now and then, we should take the opportunity to portray ourselves. A little bit of fun—there’s nothing wrong with that.”⁹⁸ The CIA director had good reason to be thrilled with what he saw on the screen inside “the Bubble” that evening, and for the rest of his tenure, he commonly described *In The Company of Spies* as “our movie.”⁹⁹ At the beginning of the film, a senator thanks Ron Silver’s character for his

⁹⁶ The original title was *The Agency*.

⁹⁷ Vernon Loeb, “The CIA’s Operation Hollywood,” *Washington Post*, 14 October 1999, C1; Charles Strum, “The C. I. A. As (Surprise!) The Good Guys,” *New York Times*, 24 October 1999, TV63; “Agency Hosts Movie Premiere and Sneak Preview,” *What’s News At CIA*, no. 683. Released by the CIA to the author on 21 December 2005 in response to a FOIA request; Central Intelligence Agency, Press Releases and Statements, “Central Intelligence Agency Hosts Premiere Screening Of Showtime And Paramount Network Television Spy Thriller, ‘In The Company of Spies,’” 14 October 1999. Released by the CIA to the author on 21 December 2005 in response to a FOIA request; “Showtime Movie A Hit,” *What’s News At CIA*, no. 685. Released by the CIA to the author on 21 December 2005 in response to a FOIA request.

⁹⁸ Tenet quoted in Loeb, C1.

⁹⁹ Elaine Sciolino, “Cameras Are Being Turned On A Once-Shy Spy Agency,” 36.

honest testimony in front of the Senate Intelligence Committee. "We are, after all, entering a new era of openness and accountability," he observes.¹⁰⁰ The movie perpetuates the idea that the public only learns about the CIA's failures. After the mission in North Korea is perfectly executed, the president is over-awed with the CIA's brilliance: "By God, when the agency is good, it's spectacular. And no one even knows!"¹⁰¹ CIA critics, however, were less than impressed with the movie's message. "For people who get their information from government documents, not from television and the movies, there has actually been a reduction in accountability," said Steven Aftergood. "They're going to have to do better than TV movies."¹⁰²

Given the success of *In The Company of Spies*, Brandon continued to assist television producers. *The Agency*, a show that offered a fictionalized view of Langley operations, premiered on CBS in 2001. The production team received guidance from CIA officials, and they were allowed to film inside Agency headquarters in April 2001. CBS apparently retained creative control over the episodes, but the evidence also suggests that the CIA's willingness to provide assistance to the network helped ensure that they were portrayed positively. In a letter thanking Agency personnel for their support, the production manager boasted that a scene from the pilot, which was filmed on the first floor of Langley, "could be a recruiting movie for the CIA."¹⁰³ Brandon must have been thrilled with this compliment.

¹⁰⁰ Loeb, C1.

¹⁰¹ Ibid; Elaine Sciolino, "Cameras Are Being Turned On A Once-Shy Spy Agency," 36.

¹⁰² Aftergood quoted in Loeb, C1.

¹⁰³ Herb Adelman quoted in "'The Agency' Gets The Green Light," *What's News At CIA*, no. 882 (17 May 2001). Released by the CIA to the author on 21

Brandon served as a consultant to ABC's *Alias* (2001-2006), a television show about an Agency operative named Sydney Bristow (Jennifer Garner). Bristow is a full-time graduate student, but when she is not writing papers, she wears tight outfits, hunts down the enemies of the United States, and then punishes them with spin-kicks. Brandon acknowledges that Garner's character is far-fetched, but he believes that Bristow displays many of the qualities that the Agency looks for in potential recruits. Most importantly, he says, Bristow is "rock solidly patriotic."¹⁰⁴ In 2003 he recruited Garner for a CIA recruitment video; this advertisement appealed to the patriotism of young Americans:

I'm Jennifer Garner. I play a CIA officer on the ABC TV series *Alias*. In the real world, the CIA serves as our country's first line of defense in the ongoing war against international terrorism. [The] CIA's mission is clear and direct: safeguard America and its people. And it takes smart people with wide-ranging talents and diverse backgrounds to carry out this mission . . . people with integrity, common sense, patriotism and courage . . . Today, the collection of foreign intelligence has never been more vital for national security¹⁰⁵

Having established connections in Hollywood, Brandon pursued movie projects as well. He helped Roger Towne write another screenplay

December 2005 in response to a FOIA request; Elaine Sciolino, "Cameras Are Being Turned On A Once-Shy Spy Agency," 1; Duncan Campbell, "Hollywood Helps CIA Come In From The Cold," *The Guardian*, 6 Septemeber 2001, 15; John Patterson, "The Caring, Sharing CIA: Central Intelligence Gets A Makeover," *The Guardian*, 5 October 2001, 5.

¹⁰⁴ Chase Brandon, telephone interview by author, September 8, 2005; Mark Rahner, "Eyes On Spies," *Seattle Times*, 12 October 2003, K1.

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.cia.gov/employment/garner/index.html> (accessed September 4, 2004); "Innovative Additions to the CIA Career Website Include Jennifer Garner Recruitment Video," *What's News At CIA*, no. 1281 (10 March 2004). Released by the CIA to the author on 21 December 2005 in response to a FOIA request.

about the Agency, sharing information about his experiences as an instructor at Camp Peary. *The Recruit* (2003) centers on the recruitment and training of James Clayton (Colin Farrell), a computer genius who graduated from MIT at the top of his class. When Walter Burke (Al Pacino), a veteran CIA officer, attempts to sign him up, Clayton is initially uninterested, mocking the CIA as “a bunch of fat, old white guys who fell asleep when we needed them most.”¹⁰⁶ Clayton, however, believes that his father was working for the CIA, not an oil company, when he died in a plane crash in 1990. He reconsiders Burke’s offer in hopes of learning what actually happened to his dad, and he begins his training at “the Farm.” One might argue that Burke’s proclamations are directed at both the actors *and* the audience; “Our failures are known,” he says, “our successes are not.”¹⁰⁷ He also reminds the recruits that “our cause is just,” and that enemies of the United States are “all around us.”¹⁰⁸

Reviewers were not kind to *The Recruit*. A. O. Scott jokingly described the movie as an “Al Pacino crazy mentor picture,” noting that “what Mr. Pacino provides is an acting lesson, one that Mr. Farrell would do well to heed.”¹⁰⁹ Stephen Hunter of the *Washington Post* went so far as to argue that the movie “clinically illustrates *everything wrong with the modern American motion picture* [italics original].”¹¹⁰ Although Brandon concedes that the final

¹⁰⁶ *The Recruit*, DVD, directed by Roger Donaldson (2003; Burbank, California: Touchstone Home Entertainment, 2003).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ A. O. Scott, “Hard Lessons in a Devilishly Devious C. I. A.,” *The New York Times*, 31 January 2003, E1, E23.

¹¹⁰ Stephen Hunter, “‘The Recruit’: Haven’t We Met Somewhere Before?,” *Washington Post*, 31 January 2003, C1.

cut was "not nearly as good as the story was originally," he claims that *The Recruit* is "hugely popular" at the CIA.¹¹¹ In fact, he says that since the movie was released, all of the recruitment classes are required to watch it during training.¹¹²

The CIA does not sign contracts with filmmakers they are assisting; on the contrary, the film liaison office prefers to establish "a gentlemen's agreement."¹¹³ When he discovered a problem in a script, Brandon simply presented filmmakers with alternative options. For instance, during a conference call with Universal Studios about *Meet The Parents* (2000), he says that the production team asked him what the CIA's kidnapping and torture manuals might look like, because they wanted Ben Stiller's character to find them on a desk to establish that his soon to be father-in-law was a CIA operative. Uncomfortable with the idea, Brandon proposed that they make the CIA connection by showing "a panoply of photographs" of Robert DeNiro's character with several international figures.¹¹⁴ The Universal executives loved the suggestion, and they decided to write it into the screenplay.

As Tenet expanded the scope of the Agency's PR crusade, he showed little interest in releasing historical records. He essentially viewed the declassification process as an extension of its PR efforts; since documents had the potential to undermine the CIA's mystique, they needed to be withheld from the public. In May 1997, during his Senate confirmation hearing, Tenet

¹¹¹ Chase Brandon, telephone interview by author, September 8, 2005.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Robb, 152.

¹¹⁴ Chase Brandon, telephone interview by author, September 8, 2005.

warned about the perils of too much historical inquiry: "the new challenges rushing toward us make it dangerous, frankly, to keep looking over our shoulders."¹¹⁵ Later that month the *New York Times* ran a story about a speech that George Herring had delivered at a historical conference.¹¹⁶ Herring, a well respected diplomatic historian and an expert on the Vietnam War, belonged to the Agency's Historical Review Panel from 1990 until 1996 when he was asked to step down. Reflecting on his experiences, he felt "a nagging sense of frustration and a persisting anger at having, on occasion, been used."¹¹⁷ After the panel first met in August 1990, he revealed, it did not meet again for another four years. Herring was outraged that the CIA projected an image of openness throughout the committee's lengthy hiatus: "Now I'm from Kentucky, and I'm not supposed to be swift, but it didn't take too long even for me to realize that I was being used to cover the agency's ass while having no influence. The fact was that . . . the CIA panel had no chair, met at the whim of the Agency, exerted no real influence, and at times was used as window dressing."¹¹⁸ He described Gates's openness initiative as "a brilliant

¹¹⁵ U. S. Senate, Select Committee On Intelligence, *Nomination Of George J. Tenet To Be Director Of Central Intelligence*, 105th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1998), 55; for a discussion of Tenet's testimony, see Jonathan Nashel, "The Rise of the CIA and American Popular Culture," in *Architects of the American Century: Individuals and Institutions in Twentieth-Century U. S. Foreign Policymaking*, ed. David F. Schmitz and T. Christopher Jespersen (Chicago: Imprint Publications, 1999), 77; see also Cullather, xv.

¹¹⁶ Tim Weiner, "C. I. A.'s Openness Derided As A 'Snow Job,'" *New York Times*, 20 May 1997, A16.

¹¹⁷ George C. Herring, "My Years With The CIA," Newsletter of the Organization of American Historians, May 1997, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/eprint/herring.html> (accessed May 20, 2006).

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

public relations snow job" that established "a carefully nurtured myth that was not at all easy for me to dispel."¹¹⁹

Tenet and his advisors responded to Herring's attack with a demonstration of their PR tactics. Nick Cullather, who joined the CIA's history staff about five months after Gates announced the openness initiative, wrote a classified history of Operation PBSUCCESS, the covert venture that led to the overthrow of President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954. Although Cullather had completed the study before leaving the Agency in 1993, it remained locked away inside Langley along with the thousands of pages of primary documents on the operation. Suddenly, two days after the Herring story appeared in the *Times*, the CIA notified Cullather about the impending de-classification of his project. The CIA had been promising to release the documents on PBSUCCESS since 1992, but nothing was de-classified until Herring slammed the Agency for its intransigence. Rather than turning over all the files to the National Archives, the CIA initially retained almost everything. In fact, Cullather estimates that "less than 1 percent of the total collection" emerged in 1997.¹²⁰ (A large percentage of the remaining documents were finally released in 2003 as part of the *FRUS* series.)

By releasing Cullather's study, the CIA hoped to deflect the criticism directed at the Agency's de-classification process. Yet it remained obvious that the Agency had not honored the promises that had been made in 1992 and 1993. In attempting to explain the failure of the openness initiative, CIA officials claimed many of the documents had been destroyed. Less than two

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Cullather, xiv.

weeks after the article on Herring's speech, the *Times* reported that most of the records documenting the coup against Mossadegh were long gone.¹²¹ But in April 2000, a front-page article in the newspaper revealed that the CIA had been distorting the truth. Approximately 1,000 pages of the material on the covert operation in Iran remained. James Risen, the story's author, also received a classified history of the operation that had been completed by Donald Wilber in early 1954.¹²² Wilber, one of the CIA operatives involved in the coup, had been frustrated by the lack of attention given to his study, writing in his memoirs that "[i]f this history had been read by the planners of the Bay of Pigs, there would have been no such operation."¹²³

Interestingly, although Gates had pledged in February 1992 to declassify documents on the Bay of Pigs invasion, nothing had been released by 1996. A non-governmental organization housed at George Washington University called the National Security Archive decided to file multiple Freedom of Information Act requests for the records, and after stalling for two years, in February 1998 the CIA finally released the internal report on the operation written by Lyman Kirkpatrick, the inspector general of the CIA between 1952 and 1963.¹²⁴ The Kirkpatrick Report presented a scathing assessment of the Bay of Pigs, and the CIA had burned most of the copies. If the report ever became public, officials worried about what would happen to

¹²¹ Tim Weiner, "C. I. A. Destroyed Files on 1953 Iran Coup," *New York Times*, 29 May 1997, A19; "CIA Says It Is Trying To Determine Extent Of Document Destruction," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 30 May 1997, A12.

¹²² James Risen, "How A Plot Convulsed Iran in '53 (and in '79)," *New York Times*, 16 April 2000, 14.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Bay of Pigs Declassified: The Secret CIA Report On The Invasion of Cuba*, ed. Peter Kornbluh (New York: The New Press, 1998), 5, 10.

the mystique that Allen Dulles had so painstakingly created during the 1950s. "In unfriendly hands," warned the CIA's deputy director in December 1961, "[the Kirkpatrick Report] could become a weapon unjustifiably [used] to attack the entire mission, organization, and functioning of the Agency."¹²⁵

In July 1998, about five months after the release of the inspector general's report, Tenet shut down all de-classification projects at the CIA not mandated by law.¹²⁶ Nick Cullather perceptively described the article in the *Times* on Tenet's decision as "an obituary for the openness program."¹²⁷ Since the CIA was unwilling to voluntarily release information, Congress found it necessary to pass the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act in 1998. The CIA had long downplayed the use of former Nazis during the Cold War, but the documents released in response to the law proved the skeptics had been correct.¹²⁸ In June 2006, the media reported that the Agency had been told in 1958 the alias of Adolf Eichmann and that he was hiding in Argentina. Even though they knew that Israel had been searching for Eichmann, Agency officials did not turn over the information. It took the Mossad another two

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹²⁶ Tim Weiner, "C. I. A., Breaking Promises, Puts Off Release of Cold War Files," *New York Times*, 15 July 1998, A13; George Lardner, Jr., "CIA Won't Declassify Files, Blames Budget," *Washington Post*, 16 July 1998, A15.

¹²⁷ Cullather, xv.

¹²⁸ Jonathan Riskind, "Bill Ok'd To Open U. S. Files On Nazis," *The Columbus Dispatch*, 7 August 1998, A5; Mark Fritz, "CIA Opens Its Files On Third Reich Figures," *Boston Globe*, 27 April 2001, A2. Fritz wrote a nine-part series in the *Boston Globe* based on records de-classified in 2001. See "The Secret History of WWII," 11 March 2001, 15 April 2001, 31 May 2001, 1 July 2001, 2 July 2001, 26 August 2001, 19 November 2001, 3 December 2001, and 26 December 2001; the first volume of documents was published in 2004. See Richard Breitman, Norman J. W. Goda, Timothy Naftali, and Robert Wolfe, *U. S. Intelligence and the Nazis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

years to capture him.¹²⁹ Researchers also learned more about Heinz Felfe, an ex-Nazi that the CIA trusted to run counterintelligence in West Germany. Felfe had actually been a classic double agent, betraying American secrets and personnel to the Soviets.¹³⁰

Within a year of the War Crimes Disclosure Act, President Clinton's National Security Council ordered the intelligence agencies to "review for release . . . all documents that shed light on human rights abuses, terrorism and other acts of political violence during and prior to the Pinochet era in Chile."¹³¹ The CIA released around six hundred documents in June 1999, but they initially refused to de-classify records on the American effort to destabilize Chile in the years prior to the 1973 coup against Salvador Allende. As Peter Kornbluh bluntly observed at the time, "[CIA officials] have decided to sabotage this commitment to openness with the same degree of success they used to sabotage the economy in Chile. The CIA is directly challenging the president of the United States and the integrity of this White House-mandated project."¹³²

Despite the fact that the CIA was now mandated to participate in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series, Tenet allowed his subordinates to obstruct historians at the State Department. According to

¹²⁹ Scott Shane, "C. I. A. Knew Where Eichmann Was Hiding," *New York Times*, 7 June 2006, A3; Christopher Lee, "CIA Ties With Ex-Nazis Shown," *Washington Post*, 7 June 2006, A21.

¹³⁰ Shane, "C. I. A. Knew Where Eichmann Was Hiding," A3.

¹³¹ Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier On Atrocity And Accountability* (New York: New Press, 2003), 472.

¹³² Kornbluh quoted in Vernon Loeb, "Top CIA Officials Won't Declassify Some Chile Files," *Washington Post*, 11 August 2000, A23; for more on the conflict between the White House and Langley, see Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 472-476.

Page Putnam Miller, a scholar who has carefully examined the CIA's interference with the FRUS, "[t]he most troubling, unresolved barrier to ensuring publication of an accurate and comprehensive account of U. S. foreign policy remains the CIA's lack of cooperation."¹³³ The CIA refused to turn over documents on the Agency's operations in Japan for the FRUS volume on Northeast Asia (1961-1963). The advisory committee, frustrated by Langley's continued intransigence, warned readers in the preface of the volume "that this published compilation does not constitute a 'thorough, accurate, and reliable documentary record of major United States foreign policy decisions,' the standard set by Public Law 102-138"¹³⁴

In 2000, four years after the release of the Northeast Asia volume, the CIA once again intervened with the publication of the series. CIA officials successfully blocked for three years the release of the volume covering American foreign policy in Greece in the mid-1960s, and a few officers even claimed that the revelations would lead to a resurgence of Greek terrorism.¹³⁵ The following spring the CIA used similar tactics to prevent the distribution of a FRUS compilation on Indonesia. Yet the Government Printing Office (GPO) had already sent copies to several libraries. The documents on Indonesia did not contain any information that could damage national security, but they did reveal how the American government had turned over lists that helped Indonesian officials track down and violently eliminate left-

¹³³ Miller, 206.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 203; Dempsey, 55; Karla Haworth, "Historians' Panel Faults CIA For Delays In Declassification," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 5 September 1997, A52.

¹³⁵ George Lardner, Jr., "History of U. S.-Greek Ties Blocked," *Washington Post*, 17 August 2001, A21.

wing opposition in the country.¹³⁶ A retired State Department official lamented the CIA's power to withhold its history: "It's basically a case of the CIA putting pressure on State and the State's bureaucratic culture being wimpy. CIA usually gets its way."¹³⁷ In truth, the CIA is now a far more open institution than it was in 1992, but this openness resulted more from external forces than the policies of Gates and Woolsey. Executive Order 12958, which President Clinton issued in April 1995, attempted to mandate the release of government records over twenty-five years old.¹³⁸ This order began with good intentions, but it soon became clear that the Agency wanted exemptions for over 60% of its records.¹³⁹ The most important result of EO 12958 was the establishment of the CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) at National Archives II in College Park, Maryland. The CREST system is an electronic database of de-classified CIA material that researchers can search using four computers located on the third floor of the Archives building. CREST contains over half a million CIA documents prior to 1982, which total around ten million pages.¹⁴⁰ Unfortunately, most of the documents in the

¹³⁶ For more information on the Indonesia volume, see "CIA Stalling State Department Histories: Archive Posts One Of Two Disputed Volumes On Web," The National Security Archive, 27 July 2001, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB52/> (accessed July 7, 2006).

¹³⁷ James E. Miller quoted in Lardner, "History of U. S.-Greek Ties Blocked," A21.

¹³⁸ Dempsey, 50-51.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁴⁰ CIA Press Releases and Statements, "CIA Releases Five Million Pages of Historical Records," 20 November 2003, http://www.cia.gov/cia/public_affairs/press_release/2003/pr11202003.htm (accessed July 9, 2006).

database are not from the Directorate of Operations.¹⁴¹ The CREST system also includes thousands of pages of clipping files, articles from newspapers and magazines that CIA personnel have routinely compiled. This so-called open source intelligence is often valuable to researchers, but by de-classifying old stories from newspapers like the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, the CIA can inflate the number of documents that they release annually in response to EO 12958. Even though the database is undeniably a positive development, it is important to keep in mind that the Agency continues to withhold literally millions of pages in its archives older than twenty-five years.

The basic axiom of CIA public relations is that the Agency's failures are known while its successes are secret. But if this statement is indeed true, it would seem that the de-classification of older records would actually help the Agency's public image. In reality, the documents released so far have routinely undermined the Agency's mystique; the evidence that has emerged from the archives on CIA operations in countries such as Iran, Guatemala, and Chile has vividly shown that missions once viewed as successes frequently had tragic long-term consequences. As Agency officials point out, they have the power to keep secrets for reasons of national security. The National Security Act of 1947 also requires the CIA director to protect intelligence sources and methods. No observer would question that there are very good reasons for classifying documents. Too often, however, the CIA

¹⁴¹ For scholars interested in studying other divisions of the CIA, CREST proves quite useful. See, for instance, the footnotes in Chapters 4-7 of this study for citations to documents found in the database dealing with CIA public relations.

has invoked "sources and methods" to keep embarrassing information out of the hands of scholars.

As Thomas Powers explained in *The Man Who Kept The Secrets*, the forces of secrecy at Langley have repeatedly distorted the Agency's history: "CIA people are cynical in most ways, but their belief in secrets is almost metaphysical. In their bones they believe they know the answer to that ancient paradox of epistemology which asks: If a tree falls in the forest without witness, is there any sound? The CIA would say no. It would agree with historian David Hackett Fisher that history is not what happened but what the surviving evidence says happened. If you can hide the evidence and keep the secrets, then you can write the history."¹⁴²

Sadly, not enough has changed at the CIA since Powers made this observation in 1979.

¹⁴² Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept The Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 344.

CONCLUSION

Although the National Security Act of 1947 specifically prohibits the CIA from engaging in domestic operations, the Agency has not always abided by the law. During the Vietnam War, it is now known that the Agency spied on American citizens in a program called MHCHAOS. The CIA has also repeatedly targeted the American public with propaganda since the early years of the Cold War. Allen Dulles orchestrated an extensive PR effort in the 1950s to ensure that the CIA remained unaccountable to Congress; two decades later William Colby used similar tactics to prevent the abolition of covert operations. After the intelligence investigations of the mid-1970s, CIA officials embarked on a public relations campaign to rehabilitate the Agency's damaged image. They promoted the CIA's mystique to defend against challenges to the "culture of secrecy." This study has demonstrated that there has been overwhelming continuity in CIA public relations between 1977 and the present. While CIA directors have created the myth of greater openness, they have simultaneously obstructed legitimate inquiry of the Agency's past.

It will be recalled that in 1977 Herbert Hetu arranged for ABC's "Good Morning America" to film segments at the CIA and to interview Stansfield Turner. Not only did he hope to win favorable publicity for the Agency on its thirtieth anniversary, he also saw the program as an opportunity to put a positive spin on secrecy. In November 2005, twenty-eight years after Hetu first invited ABC inside Langley, "Good Morning America" returned.

Instead of launching a thorough and balanced investigation of the CIA, ABC accepted the Agency's PR at face value. Reporter Charles Gibson even parroted the CIA's favorite PR mantra, reminding viewers at the top of the show that "[the CIA's] successes by nature have to remain secret."¹ Gibson had earlier taped an interview with then CIA Director Porter Goss, which was briefly shown. Gibson asked a few tough questions about a CIA interrogation method known as water-boarding, but when Goss pleaded ignorance on the topic, Gibson did not press the issue. From that point forward, ABC's coverage descended into an elaborate publicity festival that had been carefully scripted by the CIA's Office of Public Affairs.

Gibson next participated in a scavenger hunt that the CIA had clearly designed to sell the Agency's mystique to viewers at home. The Agency left a hidden clue for Gibson outside of the headquarters building in a piece of wood under a tree—a classic illustration of a "dead drop." He subsequently executed a "brush pass" with an unidentified Agency employee in a hallway. As he walked past this individual, Gibson received a pen with an enclosed message. He read the word that was written ("Kryptos"),² crumpled up the paper, and placed it in a bottle of water. Much to the amusement of Barbara Walters back in the New York studio, Gibson proceeded to drink out of the bottle to demonstrate how quickly the message had dissolved.³

But ABC's hard-nosed reporting on the CIA did not end there. The producers of the show made sure to include Claire Shipman's pre-taped

¹ ABC, *Good Morning America*, 29 November 2005, "Undercover Live Inside The CIA: Security, Secrets, Spies."

² Kryptos is a monument on the grounds of the CIA.

³ ABC, *Good Morning America*, 29 November 2005.

discussion with a former CIA disguise expert named Bob Barron. After retiring from the Agency, Barron devoted himself to helping people with severe facial injuries. The segment revealed how Barron has used his covert training to re-construct countless faces, and by any standard of measurement, his results are impressive. The profile on Barron masterfully re-enforced the CIA's mystique, and the viewers were left to imagine all of the breathtaking missions he must have participated in during his years of service. If he can re-build the faces of skin cancer victims, one is left with the impression that perhaps *Mission: Impossible* might not be so far-fetched after all.⁴

Gibson also talked about how effectively the CIA destroys records. However, rather than examining the historical implications of the Agency's often reckless document destruction, he enthusiastically observed that "it is almost impossible to recreate any kind of a document that has been shredded coming out of [the Langley shredder/incinerator]" and noted that the machine is taxpayer friendly since it helps to heat and cool the headquarters.⁵ ABC did not report on the CIA's long-standing contempt for the public's right to know and its appalling backlog of FOIA requests. From Gibson's perspective, Americans apparently have no need to worry: the CIA might eviscerate secrets, but at least it is energy efficient.⁶

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. At the end of the program, Gibson did a live interview with Chase Brandon. He asked a few questions about the CIA's use of assassination as depicted in Stephen Gaghan's *Syriana* (2005), but Brandon politely refused to answer them. Brandon re-iterated that he only assists projects that are "fair and balanced," and he also plugged *In The Company Of Spies* as one of the most realistic espionage films. Ibid.

As the CIA conveyed an image of openness to Charles Gibson and ABC viewers, Langley was actually in the midst of a covert operation directed against scholars. The CIA, along with other government agencies, had been secretly re-classifying documents at the National Archives since the late 1990s. In essence, although George Tenet claimed that the CIA could not afford de-classification expenses, he had no problem finding a way to finance the re-classification project. This program expanded after President George W. Bush took office in 2001,⁷ and audits have revealed that over 50,000 pages were re-classified in following years.⁸ Instead of telling researchers what was happening, the CIA signed a secret Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Archives that instructed Archives staff to embrace the principle of plausible deniability. "NARA [National Archives and Records Administration] will not attribute to CIA any part of the review or the withholding of documents from this exposed collection," said the MOU.⁹

⁷ In March of 2003, President Bush signed Executive Order 13292. This order amended EO 12958, making it easier for the government to keep material classified. It also gave the vice president increased power to classify (and de-classify) government records.

⁸ Scott Shane, "U. S. Reclassifies Many Documents In Secret Review," *New York Times*, 21 February 2006, A1; Jeffrey R. Young, "How The National Archives Struck A Secret Deal With The CIA," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 5 May 2006, 43; Matthew M. Aid, "Declassification In Reverse: The U. S. Intelligence Community's Secret Historical Document Reclassification Program," The National Security Archive, 21 February 2006, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB179/> (accessed May 25, 2006); Idem, "The Secret Reclassification Program," *OAH Newsletter* 34, no. 2 (May 2006): 1, 10, 18-19; Bruce Craig, "Historians Expose Government Reclassification Effort," *Perspectives* 44, no. 4 (April 2006): 29-30.

⁹ "Memorandum of Understanding Between The National Archives and Records Administration And The Central Intelligence Agency," October 2001, 2. The National Security Archive, "Secret Agreement Reveals Covert Program to Hide Reclassification from Public," 11 April 2006, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/news/20060411/index.htm> (accessed March 24, 2008).

Matthew M. Aid, an expert on the National Security Agency, became suspicious when he noticed that records formerly available to researchers at the National Archives had been withdrawn. He also discovered that the CIA had removed documents from the CREST system.¹⁰ Thanks to his determination and investigatory skills, the *New York Times* broke the story in February 2006. Subsequent reports demonstrated that the CIA had re-classified files for reasons unrelated to national security or sources and methods. In fact, many of the CIA records removed dated to the early years of the Agency. Personnel from Langley arrogantly believed they had the right to re-classify material that detailed an unsuccessful Cold War mission to distribute propaganda in Eastern Europe using balloons; an inaccurate prediction that China would not enter the Korean War; and an angry response from the CIA director in 1948 about the negative publicity that resulted from his analysts being unable to anticipate anti-American violence in Colombia.¹¹ In 1999 the official in charge of the Office of Information Management at the CIA had proudly explained that the de-classification of the Korean War document was evidence of Langley's greater openness to scholars; Langley would not withhold material simply because it might prove embarrassing, he declared.¹² Needless to say, the covert re-classification team at the National Archives obviously disagreed.

¹⁰ Aid, *OAH Newsletter*, 19n9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 18; Craig, 30.

¹² Edmund Cohen, "The CIA and the Historical De-Classification of History Programs," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 12, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 341; the Agency's decision to unveil the documents from the Korean War had received coverage in *The New York Times*. See Douglas Jehl, "C. I. A. Releases Files on Korea and Cold War," *New York Times*, 1 October 1993, A7.

Nothing better illustrates the CIA's obsession with secrecy than the clandestine withdrawal of records between 1999 and 2006. When the *Times* exposed the operation, it became abundantly clear that the Agency's rhetoric about valuing de-classification, which had been perpetuated by every CIA director since Robert M. Gates, was PR flimflam. General Michael Hayden took over at the CIA a few months after the expose, and he recognized that the Agency needed to take action to regain the trust of the academic community. He delivered a speech in June 2007 to the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAHR) in which he spoke of the "CIA's social contract with the American people."¹³ While making no reference to the scandal at the National Archives, he claimed that the Agency's right to operate in secrecy was "[n]ot a grant of power, but a grant of trust. Each day, we have to earn that trust—as our democratic system demands—by acting as our fellow citizens expect us to: Skillfully, boldly, and always in keeping with the laws and values of our Republic. That's our social contract."¹⁴

As Gates had done in February 1992, Hayden expressed a willingness to release documents of historical value. De-classifying records, he explained, "is in CIA's interest: We want our history and our role in key decisions to be written accurately and fairly."¹⁵ He pledged that the CIA would continue to release material for the State Department's FRUS series; that officials would review classified CIA documents housed in the libraries of former presidents; and that more National Intelligence Estimates and Cold War reports would

¹³ "General Hayden's Remarks at SHAHR Conference," 21 June 2007, <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2007/general-hayden-remarks-at-shafr-conference.html> (accessed March 26, 2008).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

be de-classified.¹⁶ The audience also received complimentary copies of a volume that contained "147 documents amounting to more than 11,000 pages of analysis done between 1953 and 1973" on the Soviet Union, China, and their often tense relationship with each other.¹⁷ Hayden's gifts, however, were overshadowed by an announcement he made at the beginning of the speech: the "Family Jewels," an infamous collection of memos and other documents assembled in the early 1970s that detailed illegal CIA activities, would soon be turned over to the public.

In the media frenzy surrounding the release of the "Family Jewels," most reporters failed to mention that a FOIA request had been filed for the collection as early as 1992.¹⁸ The Agency should have de-classified the documents at that time, since it is now obvious that none of the records would have undermined national security or jeopardized sources and methods. But in the years following the end of the Cold War, there were calls in Washington for the CIA to be dismantled. Perhaps CIA officials worried that the scandals outlined in the "Family Jewels" would provide too much damaging ammunition for their critics. Whatever the motivation, the CIA

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. This volume was later posted on the CIA's website. See "The CAESAR, POLO, and ESAU Papers: Cold War Era Hard Target Analysis of Soviet and Chinese Policy and Decision Making, 1953-1973," <http://www.foia.cia.gov/cpe.asp> (accessed March 26, 2008).

¹⁸ For newspaper accounts of the "Family Jewels," see Scott Shane, "C. I. A. to Release Documents On Decades-Old Misdeeds," *New York Times*, 22 June 2007, A16; Karen DeYoung and Walter Pincus, "CIA to Air Decades of Its Dirty Laundry," *Washington Post*, 22 June 2007, A1; Mark Mazzetti, "C. I. A. Chief Tries Preaching A Culture Of More Openness," *New York Times*, 23 June 2007, A11; Karen DeYoung and Walter Pincus, "CIA Releases Files On Past Misdeeds," *Washington Post*, 27 June 2007, A1; and Mark Mazzetti and Tim Weiner, "Files on Illegal Spying Show C. I. A. Skeletons From Cold War," *New York Times*, 27 June 2007, A1.

brazenly stonewalled the FOIA petition for fifteen years. Despite the blatant violation of federal law, however, Hayden had the audacity to characterize the CIA's processing of FOIA requests as "very successful."¹⁹ Hayden neglected to mention that the CIA won the non-profit National Security Archives' "Rosemary Award" in 2006 for the worst FOIA compliance of any federal agency.²⁰

It should be clear to all observers that Agency officials want to withhold historical files from the public in order to prevent embarrassing revelations from undermining the PR offensive started in the mid-1970s. Hayden proclaimed in June 2007 that the "Family Jewels" records "provide a glimpse of a very different time and a very different Agency."²¹ His spin evoked memories of the tactics that had been employed to secure passage of the CIA Information Act; you can trust us, the Agency told Congress, the improprieties of the past will never happen again. Yet these promises have been broken on many occasions. The most recent betrayal occurred in 2005 when the head of the clandestine service ordered the destruction of videotapes that showed the interrogations of two Al Qaeda prisoners. After the story leaked in December 2007, Hayden unconvincingly argued that the tapes were eliminated to protect the identities of Agency operatives. The investigative reporting of Scott Shane and Mark Mazzetti has shown that, in reality, the Agency wanted to protect its image: "every action in the

¹⁹ "General Hayden's Remarks at SHAFR Conference," 21 June 2007.

²⁰ "CIA Wins 2006 'Rosemary Award' for Worst Freedom of Information Performance by a Federal Agency," 13 March 2006, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB182/rosemary.htm> (accessed March 26, 2008).

²¹ "General Hayden's Remarks at SHAFR Conference," 21 June 2007.

prolonged drama of the interrogation videotapes was prompted in part by worry about how its conduct might be perceived—by Congress, by prosecutors, by the American public and by Muslims worldwide.”²² To guard the “culture of secrecy,” the Agency once again destroyed the historical record.

The concerns about image are not unique to the CIA. Long before the CIA modernized its Office of Public Affairs, the Pentagon had mastered the art of public relations. More recently, public relations and secrecy were the cornerstones of President George W. Bush’s eight years in the White House. An advisor to President Bush brilliantly described the White House’s PR strategy: “We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out. We’re history’s actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.”²³ In creating their “own reality,” the Bush administration withheld secrets from the public that might have undercut their assorted PR campaigns. This, after all, was the president who flew on a fighter jet to an aircraft carrier in May 2003 to deliver a speech in front of a “Mission Accomplished” banner.²⁴

²² Scott Shane and Mark Mazzetti, “Tapes By C. I. A. Lived and Died To Save Image,” *New York Times*, 30 December 2007, A1. For the initial story on the tapes, see Mark Mazzetti, “C. I. A. Destroyed 2 Tapes Showing Interrogations,” *New York Times*, 7 December 2007, A1.

²³ Ron Suskind, “Without A Doubt,” *New York Times Magazine*, 17 October 2004.

²⁴ Frank Rich, *The Greatest Story Ever Sold: The Decline and Fall of Truth From 9/11 to Katrina* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 88-91.

But even as most Americans have learned to disregard President Bush's PR schemes, the CIA's mystique continues to thrive. A Harris Poll in November 2004 revealed that 53% of Americans questioned ranked the CIA's performance as either "excellent" or "pretty good." Only 11% of those surveyed said that the Agency was doing a "poor" job.²⁵ Perhaps more tellingly, 70% of respondents in June 2002 agreed that "the C.I.A. (Central Intelligence Agency) should work secretly inside other countries to try to weaken or overthrow governments unfriendly to the United States"²⁶

Yet is there any evidence to suggest that the CIA's PR has influenced its public image over the years? Some observers would say no: approval ratings are impossible to control and tend to fluctuate unpredictably over time. In October 1975, at the height of the "Year of Intelligence," 53% of Americans polled gave the CIA a positive rating,²⁷ exactly the same level of public support that the Agency would have nearly three decades later. This study, however, adopts an alternative interpretation of the polling statistics. It contends that the Office of Public Affairs should be given at least part of the credit for maintaining the CIA's image over the years. By focusing on the positive and diverting the public's attention from the negative, CIA officials have protected both covert operations and the culture of secrecy. In reviewing a book about American public diplomacy in France after World

²⁵ Harris Interactive, "Ratings of Federal Agencies," 24 November 2004, http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=524 (accessed August 9, 2007).

²⁶ CBS News/New York Times Poll, 21 June 2002. Polling the Nations, http://poll.orspub.com/document.php?id=quest02.out_5557&type=hitlist&num=6 (accessed March 24, 2008). 82% of Republicans answered yes, while 62% of Democrats responded affirmatively. Ibid.

²⁷ Cynthia M. Nolan, "Seymour Hersh's Impact on the CIA," *The International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 12, no. 1 (1999): 21.

War II, Christopher Endy has pointed to the power of ambivalence. He noted that the book's author acknowledged that public diplomacy did not change French opinions of the United States, prompting Endy to ask an insightful question: "what if ambivalence was all the United States needed to obtain its goals? Ambivalence, after all, was not a coherent call to reject U. S. influence."²⁸ A similar argument could be made about the CIA's PR efforts since the mid-1970s. Although the public often says that other agencies are doing a better job—even the Internal Revenue Service—they tend to forgive the CIA for its transgressions. In the aftermath of scandals like Iran-Contra and the arrest of CIA mole Aldrich Ames, the poll numbers typically drop before ultimately rebounding.

In the final analysis, Americans do not always trust the CIA, but they have been convinced of the Agency's mystique; this mythology, which is not supported by the historical evidence, has protected the Agency's "culture of secrecy." A key result of this culture has been, in the words of historian Jonathan Nashel, the creation of a vast "warehouse of hidden histories" inside Langley.²⁹ If these "hidden histories" are ultimately revealed, how will they change our understanding of American foreign relations since 1947? Will they indicate that American policymakers have spread democracy and uplifted the downtrodden, or will they provide even greater evidence for the existence of what revisionist historians have termed the "American empire"?

²⁸ Christopher Endy, "The Empire Sneaks Back," review of *Remaking France: Americanization, Public Diplomacy, and the Marshall Plan*, by Brian Angus McKenzie, *Diplomatic History* 31, no. 4 (September 2007): 763.

²⁹ Jonathan Nashel, "The Rise of the CIA and American Popular Culture," in *Architects of the American Century: Individuals and Institutions in Twentieth-Century U. S. Foreign Policymaking*, ed. David F. Schmitz and T. Christopher Jespersen (Chicago: Imprint Publications, 1999), 77.

Warren Kimball complained in 1998 that the CIA's unwillingness to abide by their legal obligations to de-classify older records for State Department historians made it increasingly likely that the FRUS series could become "an official lie."³⁰ Needless to say, this "official lie" almost always supports the orthodox interpretation of American foreign policy while concealing the darkness on the edges of empire: the coups that have toppled democratically elected leaders and replaced them with authoritarian regimes, the interlocking relationships between the intelligence establishment and American multi-national corporations, and the frequent manipulation of foreign elections.

It is time for Congress to force the CIA to thoroughly de-classify the older records in its archives. It, of course, remains uncertain how future revelations will influence the field of diplomatic history, but it seems likely that more documents will only strengthen revisionist scholarship. After all, if the records promised by Robert Gates and R. James Woolsey in the early 1990s would improve the CIA's approval ratings, why haven't officials de-classified them yet? The answer to this question, and to many others, remains classified.

³⁰ Kimball quoted in Aid, *OAH Newsletter*, 10.

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