

THE CIA AND THE PERILS OF POLITICIZATION

By Melvin A. Goodman

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The CIA's mission to provide intelligence to policymakers renders the agency vulnerable to political pressure, particularly when policies fail and policymakers are tempted to control the flow of intelligence. The CIA was created as an independent, non-departmental agency precisely because its founders recognized the need for an intelligence service that was not part of a policy department and therefore would be less susceptible to manipulation in support of policy goals. Throughout the CIA's 60-year history, there have been many efforts to slant analytical conclusions, skew estimates, and repress evidence that challenged a particular policy or point of view. As a result, the agency must recognize the impact of politicization and introduce barriers to protect analysts from political pressures. Unfortunately, the CIA has largely ignored the problem.

CIA directors Richard Helms, James Schlesinger, Robert Gates, and George Tenet were guilty of politicizing intelligence, but no CIA director was as direct and vocal as Porter Goss in emphasizing that he would be tailoring intelligence on behalf of the White House. Two weeks after President George W. Bush's re-election in 2004, Goss sent an internal memorandum to all employees of the agency telling them their job was

to "support the administration and its policies in our work. As agency employees, we do not identify with, support, or champion opposition to the administration or its policies."¹ Thirty years earlier, Schlesinger didn't put it in writing, but he assembled the agency's Soviet experts and warned them "this agency is going to stop screwing Richard Nixon." I was one of

those Soviet analysts, and Schlesinger's language was actually stronger

and more vulgar. Currently,

critics of the intelligence community are citing

the new estimate on

Iran to accuse lead-

ing intelligence of-

ficers with trying

to embarrass the

Bush administra-

tion.

Schlesinger's

objective was to rein

in the CIA, which had

produced analysis that

challenged the Nixon admin-

istration on the war in Vietnam.

It is not unusual for decision-makers to blame the inadequacies of intelligence when their policies fail. In 1995, former Secretary of Defense McNamara wrote a memoir, "In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam," bemoaning the lack of reliable information on Vietnam for the crucial decisions that were made in the early 1960s. In fact, the CIA, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), and even the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) produced outstanding intelligence on Vietnam that accurately anticipated the failure of military



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force in Vietnam. When Lt. Col. John Paul Vann came back to Washington in 1963 with his account of the corrupt South Vietnamese government, he was not permitted to brief the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Also in 1963, a State Department analyst on Vietnam, Louis G. Sarris, wrote a memorandum for Secretary of State Dean Rusk with a critical analysis of the military situation. Rusk forwarded the memorandum to McNamara. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Maxwell Taylor, “hit the ceiling” over the INR report. McNamara warned Rusk not to issue “military appraisals without seeking the views of the Defense Department.” Rusk agreed that the State Department would never again issue an “independent assessment of the overall military situation in Vietnam.”²

As early as 1963, the intelligence community knew that the Vietnam War was slipping away. The Sarris memorandum was corroborated by intelligence assessments from the CIA that used statistical analysis supplied by the U.S. military mission in South Vietnam to demonstrate there was an “unfavorable shift in the military balance,” a decline in Viet Cong casualties, weapons losses, and defections and an increase in Viet Cong military attacks. Nevertheless, in 1967, General William Westmoreland, the commander in Vietnam, told a joint session of Congress that there was great progress in the war; several months later, the Tet offensive, which was predicted by Sarris at State and Bob Layton at the CIA, took place. Sadly, it took the United States another seven years and tens of thousands of fatalities and casualties to withdraw.

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which gave the Johnson administration a military blank check to pursue victory in South Vietnam, was based on an intentional misreading of intelligence. Forty years after the resolution legislated the use of force against North Vietnam, we learned senior officials at the National Security Agency (NSA) distorted critical intelligence the White House used to secure an overwhelmingly popular vote in Congress to endorse the use of force. In 2001, the senior NSA historian, Robert J. Hanyok, found a pattern of translation mistakes that went un-

corrected and altered intercept times that indicated there had been deliberate skewing of key evidence.³ Johnson had doubts there had actually been a second attack on U.S. ships and told Undersecretary of State George W. Ball, “Hell, those dumb, stupid sailors were just shooting at flying fish!” Thus, the escalation of a war that led to 58,226 American and more than one million Vietnamese deaths turned on intelligence that was doctored and then covered up. Ironically, NSA officials began moving in 2002 to declassify Hanyok’s work but the support for declassification lost momentum because of the controversy over the misuse of intelligence on Iraq.

In 1970, when the Nixon administration was planning the “incursion” into Cambodia, the CIA’s Board of National Estimates concluded that an “American invasion of Cambodia would fail to deter North Vietnamese continuation of the war.”⁴ CIA director Richard Helms refused to deliver this estimate to the White House, knowing the decision had already been made to invade Cambodia. He was one messenger who did not want to be shot. Helms also suppressed the accurate CIA analysis on the numbers of Communist guerrillas and self-defense forces in South Vietnam, preferring to forward the politicized figures of the Pentagon that deliberately undercounted the enemy presence in Vietnam. Helms was not willing to take on the Pentagon and national security adviser Walt Rostow at the White House.

The Politics of Team A vs. Team B

Following the withdrawal from Vietnam, President Gerald Ford removed the director of central intelligence, William Colby, and replaced him with a political appointee, George H.W. Bush. Ford, on the advice of his chief of staff Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, then appointed a team of right-wing academics and former government officials, headed by Harvard Professor Richard Pipes, to draft their own intelligence estimates on Soviet military power. Ford, Cheney, and Rumsfeld wanted to assure that CIA estimates and assessments would

be more supportive of administration policy. Whereas Colby refused to permit the Pipes' team to review CIA estimates, Bush was quick to permit the exercise to begin. Pipes and his team (Team B) had consistently labeled the Soviets an aggressive imperialistic power bent on world domination, and Team B estimates were drafted in order to reify Pipes' worldview. Team B predictably and falsely concluded the Soviets rejected nuclear parity, were bent on fighting and winning a nuclear war, and were radically increasing their military spending. Other members of Team B, particularly Paul Wolfowitz, deputy secretary of defense in the administration of George W. Bush, believed Moscow would use its nuclear advantage to wage conventional war in the Third World. Team B also applied worst-case reasoning to predict a series of Soviet weapons developments that never took place, including directed-energy weapons, mobile ABM systems, and anti-satellite capabilities. The CIA exaggerated its assessments of Soviet military spending and the capabilities of military technology, and it was a decade later before the CIA began to correct and lower these estimates. In the meantime, the Reagan administration used inflated estimates of Soviet military power to garner a trillion and a half dollars in defense spending in the 1980s against a Soviet Union that was in decline and a Soviet military threat that was greatly exaggerated.

CASEY AND GATES "COOK THE BOOKS"

William Casey and Robert Gates guided the first institutionalized "cooking of the books" at the CIA in the 1980s, with a particular emphasis on tailoring intelligence dealing with the Soviet Union, Central

America, and Southwest Asia. After he left the CIA in 1993, Gates admitted that he became accustomed to Casey fixing intelligence to policy on many regional issues. Casey's very first National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) as CIA director, dealing with the Soviet Union and international terrorism, became an exercise in politicization. Casey was convinced that a Soviet conspiracy was behind global terrorism. Casey and Gates pushed this line in order to justify more U.S. covert action in the Third World. In 1985, they ordered an intelligence assessment of a supposed Soviet plot against the pope, hoping to produce



PRESIDENT FORD WITH CHIEF OF STAFF DONALD RUMSFELD AND DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF DICK CHENEY IN THE OVAL OFFICE, APRIL 23, 1975.

a document that would undermine Secretary of State Shultz's efforts to improve relations with Moscow. The CIA also produced an NIE in 1985 that was designed to produce an intelligence rationale for arms sales to Iran, with national intelligence officer Graham Fuller collaborating with the National Security Council (NSC).

Casey and Gates were supporting an aggressive policy in

Central America that included covert action in Nicaragua (Iran-contra) and a covert role for the CIA in the civil war in El Salvador that found the United States supporting the brutality of the Salvadoran government. The U.S. ambassador in El Salvador, Robert E. White, was so unhappy with the role of the CIA that he wanted to replace the CIA station chief in San Salvador. White accused him of filing politicized reports to justify continued military support for the government, arguing that Casey "put intelligence at the service of policy and provided justifications for ever-deeper involvement."⁵ White also took issue with a State Department White Paper, drafted by CIA analysts, falsely picturing a "flood of arms" from such Soviet allies as Vietnam, Ethiopia, and Bulgaria through Nicaragua to El Salvador. CIA analysts were pressured

4 to make their assessments match the reports of the CIA station chief in El Salvador. Secretary of State Haig eventually fired White because of his contrarian views, and several analysts were forced out of the CIA's Central American branch because of their opposition to politicization.

Politicization was a major reason for the CIA's failure to track the decline and demise of the Soviet Union. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the CIA's Office of Soviet Analysis (SOVA) analysts "reported Soviet military spending growing at the enormous rate of 4 to 5 percent a year."⁶ But, in 1983, these analysts realized they had significantly exaggerated the growth rate and that a growth rate of one percent was closer to the mark. Gates would not permit the paper with the revised growth rates to be published, but warned Secretary of Defense Weinberger, who "went nuts," according to two former CIA analysts. Two years later, in 1985, Gates finally permitted the paper to be circulated, but he refused to publish a paper arguing that the "Soviets had made a deliberate decision to curtail their spending on strategic forces in the mid-seventies, when they attained strategic parity with the U.S."⁷ Even in 1987, when analysts were arguing that Gorbachev's failure to modernize Soviet industry would ultimately lead to lower defense

spending, Gates ordered his economists to forward an assessment to Weinberger on increased Soviet economic strength.⁸

Presumably it would have been more difficult for President Reagan to get his unprecedented peacetime increases in the U.S. defense budget from 1981 to 1986 if the CIA had published accurate assessments of the troubled Soviet economy and the backward aspects of the Soviet military. The late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) asked in 1990, "Would we have spent as much on our military during the 1980s if we had believed that the Soviet defense burden simply was not sustainable? I think not, and if I am correct, then the issue has been a momentous one for the state of the American economy."⁹

Suppressing Sensitive Intelligence on Nuclear Proliferation

One of the costliest suppressions of intelligence evidence in the 1980s involved sensitive details on Pakistan's nuclear program. The Reagan administration wanted to turn a blind eye to this program because the Pressler Amendment in the summer of 1985 had stipulated that continued U.S. military assistance to Pakistan would stop if there were evidence of Pakistani possession of a nuclear explosive device.

Since Pakistan was the conduit for record amounts of covert assistance to the Afghan rebels, the Reagan administration did not want anything to complicate bilateral relations with Islamabad. The Symington Amendment in 1961, moreover, demanded that Washington terminate military assistance to any nation developing a nuclear weapons capability. This legislation actually had forced the Carter administration to stop military assistance in early 1979, when the U.S. intelligence community discovered Pakistan was operating a clandestine uranium enrichment facility at Kahuta. During the campaign against Carter in 1980, Reagan asserted that "nuclear nonproliferation is none of our business," which foreshadowed



DCI WILLIAM CASEY'S CLOSE CAMPAIGN RELATIONSHIP WITH RONALD REAGAN WON HIM CLOSE AND FREQUENT ACCESS TO THE PRESIDENT BUT ALSO LED HIM INTO CONTROVERSIAL INVOLVEMENT IN POLICY MATTERS

the shift to a closer military relationship with Pakistan that abandoned nonproliferation. The strategic retreat from nuclear nonproliferation was completed in the Bush administration with the abrogation of the ABM Treaty, the building of a national missile defense, and the cooperative nuclear arrangement with India, which is not a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In 1984, there were reports that Pakistan was trying to circumvent U.S. export controls to purchases krytron switches to trigger a nuclear device, and a leading Pakistani nuclear scientist, A.Q. Khan, began bragging in public about the achievement of a nuclear weapons capability. In the previous year, U.S. intelligence discovered China was providing the Pakistanis with a design for solid-core nuclear weapons, and Pakistan was having success in uranium enrichment, which Khan confirmed in 1984 when he announced Pakistan crossed the nuclear threshold.

In 1986, Deputy Director for Intelligence Gates issued an ultimatum there would be no reporting on Pakistani nuclear activities in the *National Intelligence Daily* that was sent to the Senate and House intelligence committees. The CIA made sure that no finished intelligence on Pakistani nuclear activities got beyond the six or seven readers of the President's Daily Brief (PBD). The annual certification of Pakistan had become a farce. In 1993, the former deputy director of the CIA, Richard Kerr, told Seymour Hersh "there is no question that we had an intelligence basis from 1987 on" to deny military aid to Pakistan.¹⁰

Commissioning Reports to Take the Preferred Line

Gates often created his own line of analysis on sensitive subjects when he disagreed with the consensus within his intelligence directorate. In order to boost support for President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, Gates gave speeches that distorted the intelligence record on Soviet strategic policy in order to create the impression of a major Soviet strategic defense effort. In a speech in San Francisco in November 1986, Gates said that the CIA estimated the Soviet Union had spent \$150 billion on its own Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) over the past decade, but he omitted the fact that most of this spending was on air defense and not antimissile or strategic defense. He falsely claimed Soviet activities in this field were

5
"more significant and more ominous than any one previously considered," and suggested the Soviet Union "may be preparing" an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) defense of its national territory with laser weapons. There was no intelligence to support the notion of a Soviet ABM with laser weapons, but Gates' statement was used by the Heritage Foundation to release a report calling for the speedy deployment of sophisticated ground-based interceptor missiles at Grand Forks, North Dakota.

The worst example of commissioning an intelligence estimate to support operational policy took place in 1985, when the national intelligence officer for the Middle East, former directorate of operations officer Graham Fuller, wrote a flawed estimate on Iran. Fuller's NIE became the intelligence product justifying the policy of Iran-contra. There were many officers in the Directorate of Intelligence who disagreed with the estimate's conclusions that Iran was reducing its support for international terrorism, that the Soviet Union was on the verge of gaining a foothold in Iran, and that there were moderates in Iran who wanted to open a dialogue with the United States. But Gates provided them no channel to express their opposition to the final product. Meanwhile, Fuller had been briefing both Gates and relevant National Security Council officers, particularly Howard Teicher, with the progress of the draft estimate, and had lined up their substantive and bureaucratic support. Gates picked Fuller to draft an estimate that would provide intelligence support to the illegal sale of weapons to Iran, just as Gates picked the drafters of the Papal Plot assessment that was done *in camera*. This is a process that I referred to as "judge-shopping in the courthouse" in my testimony to the Senate intelligence committee in October 1991.

CIA involvement in covert action led directly to pressure on analysts to tailor their conclusions to support numerous operational policies. Casey and Gates pressed analysts to downplay the increased evidence of Iraqi use of lethal weapons against innocent civilians in the 1980s in order not to compromise CIA covert actions supporting U.S. military assistance to Saddam Hussein. This activity was largely unknown during the 1991 confirmation hearings for Gates but, in 1995, former National Security Council adviser Teicher filed a sworn affidavit linking Gates to the illegal sale of weapons to Iraq during the 1980s war with Iran. Ac-

6 cording to Teicher, both Casey and Gates were behind the effort to sell cluster bombs and other munitions to Iraq. Teicher's affidavit corroborated earlier testimony in the 1980s linking Gates to the weapons sale but, at that time, Gates was protected by George Tenet, then staff director of the Senate intelligence committee.

Altering or Streamlining the Intelligence Structure to Control the Finished Product

While serving as deputy director for intelligence from 1982 to 1986, Gates wrote the manual for manipulating and centralizing the intelligence process to get the desired intelligence product. Since its creation in 1947, the CIA had maintained a competitive analytic process, permitting independent offices to pursue competitive analysis and alternative methodologies. In this way, there would be constant debate over substantive issues, creating the best opportunity for challenging assumptions and creating a balanced product. But Gates changed this in 1982, when he became the deputy director for intelligence. He made himself the final reviewer of all intelligence products before they were delivered to the CIA director. As both deputy director for intelligence and chairman of the National Intelligence Council, he accumulated unprecedented control over finished intelligence. He was the final reviewer of the President's Daily Brief; he also controlled the agenda for NIEs and appointed national intelligence officers. As deputy director for intelligence, he supervised most of the estimate drafters and had the power to prevent CIA dissents to an estimate, which he did on numerous occasions.

Serving in these capacities, Gates placed loyalists in management positions in both the Directorate of Intelligence and the National Intelligence Council; he loosened standards to permit publication of desirable analysis and "tightened" standards to prevent publication of undesirable analysis. As there was no other outlet for the papers he rejected, they were effectively killed. Finally, Gates required that no drafts of intelligence products could be sent to other intelligence agencies for review or comment until he had seen them. Casey and Gates changed the entire culture of the Directorate of Intelligence, introducing a successful corporate-style takeover of the CIA's finished intelligence. Their campaign was modeled after Thomas Wolfe's "Wall Street," with Casey serving as

the corporate raider, Gordon Gecko, and Gates serving as his protégé, Bud Fox.¹¹

A senior CIA clandestine officer, the late John Horton, resigned because of Casey's efforts to get Horton, the national intelligence officer for Latin America, to support the Reagan administration's policies. Horton had a distinguished career in the Directorate of Operations, had been station chief in Mexico, and retired with the CIA's Distinguished Intelligence Medal. He was called out of retirement to become the national intelligence officer for Central and Latin America. But Casey's efforts to get Horton to produce an NIE describing Mexico on the brink of revolution led to major battles between the two. After fighting the good fight, Horton decided to quit the agency. Unfortunately, resignations are rare in these circumstances, and the congressional oversight committees rarely display any interest in those who resign on matters of principle. Casey and Gates simply deputized another senior analyst, Brian Lytell, to draft the estimate they were seeking. Lytell was another example of judge-shopping in the courthouse, as he was carefully selected as a "hired pen" for the task Horton refused.

Encouraging the Publication of Reports that Take the Preferred Line

One of the worst examples of an assessment to support a policy position with no credible intelligence reporting took place in 1985, when the CIA director ordered a paper to make the case for Soviet complicity in the attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II in 1981. Between 1981 and 1985, there were numerous credible reports that demonstrated the Soviets had nothing to do with the assassination attempt and had even warned their East European colleagues to avoid contacts with non-state terrorist organizations. Virtually all analysts who worked on the problem of the papal plot found no credible evidence to support such a hypothesis, and even Deputy Director for Intelligence Gates told congressional intelligence committees in 1984 there was no evidence of Soviet involvement. But in 1985, a clandestine report from a Bulgarian source operating with third-hand information and no contact with the Soviet or Bulgarian KGB referred to Soviet complicity. For Casey and Gates, but only Casey and Gates, this was the "smoking gun." Given the nature and plethora of intelligence reporting, it

is always possible to find some report that makes a needed argument at a particular time.

Casey's portrait at CIA headquarters is labeled facetiously "Great White Case Officer," and his management of the specious intelligence assessment on the papal plot displayed all the manipulative skills of a case officer in the field. He commissioned Gates to prepare a paper on Soviet complicity and to do the paper *in camera*, a highly unusual step at CIA. Gates found three willing deputy directorate of intelligence analysts, two Soviet analysts from my own office and a third from the Office of Global Intelligence, which was known for its worst-case views on international issues. The three analysts were instructed to make sure that the agency's experts on the issue of terrorism in the Directorate of Intelligence and Directorate of Operations did not see the paper. All three received cash awards and promotions for their efforts.

Two agency post-mortems were critical of the intelligence assessment, noting that alternate views were not included in the key judgments of the paper, conflicting evidence was played down, and alternate scenarios were not provided. The utmost secrecy was observed in drafting the paper, and every aspect of analytic tradecraft was breached. The panel of senior managers who reviewed the paper found "no one at the working level in either the Directorate of Intelligence or the Directorate of Operations – other than the primary authors of the paper – who agreed with the thrust of the assessment." In pointing to the "irregularities" that accompanied the drafting of the paper, the managers nevertheless concluded they could not find examples of politicization. Indeed, the irregularities themselves were acts of politicization, introduced to manipulate the system and obtain the desired analytical result. The group of managers included the eventual deputy director of CIA, John McLaughlin, who had an even bigger role in the politicization of intelligence in the run-up to the Iraqi War in 2003. According to the chief of one of the *post mortem* teams, Ross Cowey, McLaughlin was the only team member who wanted to hide the hand of Gates in manipulating the publication.¹²

Gates' Hearings Document Politicization

The hearings before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on the nomination of Gates as CIA di-

rector documented the efforts of Casey and Gates 7 to politicize intelligence.¹³ The preparation of such documents as the 1981 NIE on international terrorism, the 1985 NIE on Iran, and the 1985 intelligence assessment on the papal plot offer a guidebook to the how and why of politicization, particularly the pressure from senior levels of the CIA to shift the line of analysis, prevent publication of undesirable analysis, or exclude from consideration "unacceptable" views in order to support Casey's policy agenda. In some cases, such as the 1981 NIE on terrorism and the 1985 papal plot assessment, Casey simply ordered a particular line of analysis to be advanced. The experience of the politicization on intelligence on the Soviet Union in the 1980s should have made intelligence analysts more resolute in protesting the misuse of intelligence in the run-up to the war in Iraq in 2002-2003, but the agency had misplaced its moral compass once again.

The confirmation hearings in 1991 for Gates as director of central intelligence provided a guide to the problem of politicization and an opportunity for critics to describe the tools of politicization applied to intelligence in the 1980s. Politicization rarely involves a direct order to tailor the intelligence to policy; there are other approaches that are slower and more cumbersome, but more difficult to detect and posing less risk. These are insidious steps that involve manipulating the analytic process by changing either personnel or procedures. This can be done by finding "right-thinking" analysts to do the reporting; removing or excluding "wrong-thinking" analysts from the process; hiring or moving those who will advance the desired line into key management positions; encouraging the publication of reports that take the preferred line; repressing reports that do not support the preferred line; and altering or streamlining the intelligence structure in order to control the finished product. All of these methods were used during the Casey-Gates era to affect intelligence production, and these methods were revived in 2002-2003 to support the Bush administration's case to go to war.

Intelligence Cooked to Support the Iraq Invasion

The U.S. rush to war against Iraq marked the worst intelligence scandal in the history of the United States. The CIA cherry-picked the evidence to support the case for war and thoroughly corrupted the intelligence process to convince Congress and the American people

8 of the need for war. The Bush administration would have gone to war even if the CIA had gotten the intelligence right, had not drafted a specious NIE and unclassified White Paper, and had not prepared a phony speech for Secretary of State Powell. Indeed, when the CIA refused to circulate the worst of the intelligence materials, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld collaborated to create the Office of Special Plans at the Pentagon to do so. This does not absolve the CIA of its own abuse of power. It is possible that honest leadership from George Tenet and John McLaughlin and a strong CIA stand could have created more opposition from Congress, the media, and the public.

Three years after the invasion of Iraq, a senior CIA analyst, Paul Pillar, documented the efforts of the Bush administration to politicize the intelligence of the CIA on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and so-called links between Iraq and al Qaeda.¹⁴ Pillar accused the Bush administration of using policy to drive intelligence production, which was the same argument offered by the chief of British intelligence in the Downing Street memorandum prior to the war, and aggressively using intelligence to win public support for the decision to go to war. Pillar could have added that the administration used politicized

intelligence to achieve an authorization to use force against Iraq in October 2002, and acknowledged his own role in producing a corrupt “White Paper” on WMDs that was distributed to Congress before the vote authorizing force. He does not explain why no senior CIA official protested, let alone resigned, in the wake of the president’s misuse of intelligence on Iraq’s so-called efforts to obtain uranium ore in Africa. Pillar falsely claimed “the intelligence community’s own substantive judgments do not appear to have been compromised,” when it was clear that the CIA was wrong on every conclusion and had to politicize the intelligence to be so egregiously wrong.¹⁵

Politicization of the National Security State

One of the most remarkable features of the Bush administration has been the politicization of virtually every agency in the national security arena, not just the CIA. In addition to the politicization of intelligence to make the case for war against Iraq, the CIA has been brought into a world of “secret prisons,” extraordinary renditions, and torture and abuse to support the war against terrorism. The National Security Agency (NSA) developed an illegal and unnecessary intrusion into the privacy of all Americans with a program of warrantless eavesdropping, that is far

more comprehensive than we have been led to believe. The wiretapping program was conducted without congressional or judicial approval, although it was challenged by former Attorney General John Ashcroft and Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), the ranking minority member of the Senate intelligence committee. The program was established by a secret executive order that ignored the criminal prohibitions against such surveillance in the FISA Act of 1978. NSA’s spying has inundated the FBI with thousands of “leads” that turned out to go nowhere.¹⁶



IN THE LEAD UP TO THE INVASION OF IRAQ, DICK CHENEY AND DONALD RUMSFELD COLLABORATED TO CREATE THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL PLANS AT THE PENTAGON TO CIRCULATE THE WORST OF THE INTELLIGENCE MATERIALS.

The Pentagon played a major role in the campaign of politicization, falsifying intelligence to make the case for war and creating the *ad hoc* Office of Special Plans and the Counter Terrorist Evaluation Group to circulate intelligence the intelligence community considered worthless. The Pentagon created the Counter Intelligence Field Activity (CIFA) in 2003 to conduct surveillance against American citizens near U.S. military facilities or in attendance at anti-war meetings. In the summer of 2004, CIFA monitored a small protest in Houston, Texas against Halliburton, the giant military contractor once headed by Vice President Cheney. Then-Undersecretary of Defense Wolfowitz also created a fact-gathering operation called TALON (Threat and Local Observation Notice) to collect “raw information” about “suspicious incidents.”¹⁷ The unauthorized spying of CIFA and the computer collection of information on innocent citizens and organizations for TALON are illegal.

A new U.S. estimate on Iran in December 2007, which concluded that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons program in the fall of 2003, indicated that the intelligence community may be trying to regain the credibility that it lost when it politicized intelligence on Iraq. The willingness to confront Bush and Cheney with intelligence that did not support their policy prescriptions for Iran indicated that the new intelligence leadership was willing to tell truth to power. The estimate put the U.S. intelligence community in line with the official views of European and Russian leaders, as well as with international arms inspectors. The new estimate also supported those critics of the Bush administration who believe that deterrence can work with Iran, concluding that Iran’s nuclear weapons program was “halted primarily in response to international pressure.” In the final analysis, the only protections against politicization are the integrity and honesty of the intelligence analysts themselves as well as the institution of competitive analysis that serves as a safeguard against unchallenged acceptance of conventional wisdom.



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IPR - National Security

Center for International Policy
1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite 801
Washington, DC 20036-2000
(202) 232-3317
Fax: (202) 232-3440
cip@ciponline.org
www.ciponline.org

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