

SEARCHING FOR HONEST HISTORY

DOMESTIC SURVEILLANCE

BY S. BRIAN WILLSON

M. Palmer and his 24 year old assistant J. Edgar Hoover, conducted in 1919 what are popularly called the "Palmer Raids" or "Red Raids," developing a data base and ordering the smashing of labor union offices and headquarters of communist and socialist organizations without search warrants, concentrating on "foreigners." That December, 249 of the arrested were forced onto a ship headed for the Soviet Union. In January 1920, another 6,000 were arrested without warrants, mostly members of the Industrial Workers of the World ('Wobblies'). During one raid, 4,000 "radicals" were grabbed in a single night, and all "foreign aliens" were deported. By January 1920, Palmer and Hoover had arrested more than 10,000 Americans.

During 1917-1918, as the United States entered World War 1, President Woodrow Wilson created the Office of Military Intelligence (OMI) in the War Department, to conduct wholesale clandestine surveillance of U.S. citizens suspected of "disloyalty."

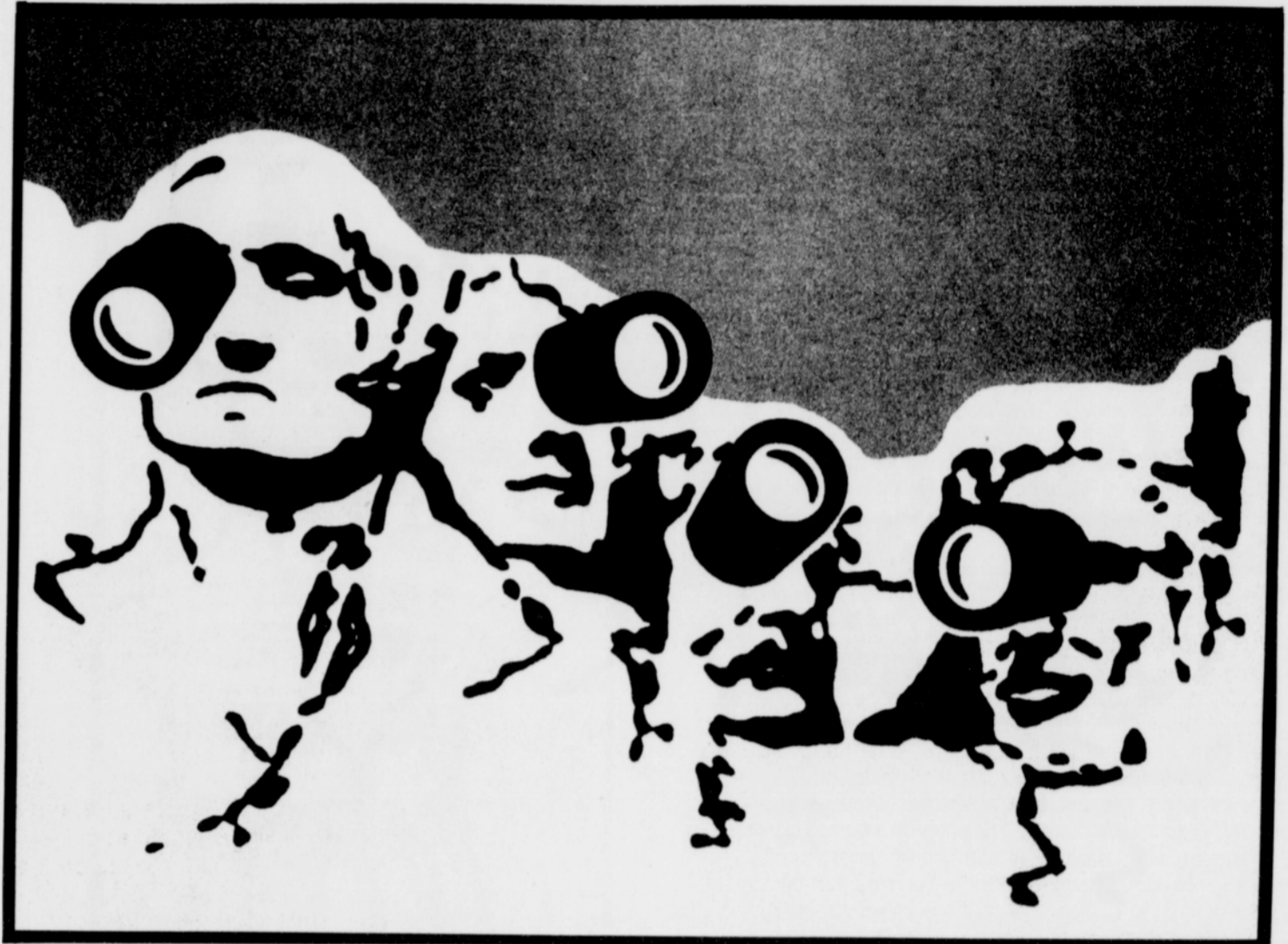
Before President Harry S. Truman established the National Security Agency (NSA) in 1952, government cryptologists were ordered to conduct domestic spy hunts under Project SHAMROCK. This was a super-secret operation that forced private telegraph companies to turn over the telegraphic correspondence of Americans to the government. SHAMROCK began in 1947, growing out of a World War 2 program that conducted government censorship of international telegrams. Until the program was shut down in 1975, the three major international carriers (RCA Global, ITT World Communications and Western Union International) delivered copies of messages on a daily basis to the NSA.

The NSA kicked its large spy campaign into high gear in the 1960s, especially under President Lyndon Johnson. The FBI demanded that the NSA monitor antiwar activists, Civil Rights leaders, and drug peddlers.

The FBI's secret, illegal COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program) was conducted from 1956 to 1971, targeting the Black Panthers, the American Indian and Civil Rights movements and Vietnam Veterans Against the War, among others. The FBI admitted 2,218 separate COINTELPRO actions, many involving a variety of illegal operations, such as warrantless phone taps (2,305), secret bugs against domestic targets (697), and systematic interception of mail correspondence (57,846).

In 1967, the CIA initiated Operation CHAOS (and later Project MERRIMAC and Project RESISTANCE), exceeding its statutory authority in response to a Presidential request that the agency discover ties between U.S. antiwar groups and "foreign interests." From 1967 to 1974, it indexed 300,000 names, kept 13,000 subject files, and intercepted voluminous letters and cables to compile information on domestic activities of U.S. citizens.

However, there is evidence that Operation CHAOS began much earlier — in 1959, when President Dwight Eisenhower used the CIA to seek exiles who were fleeing Cuba after Fidel Castro's triumphant revolution. The CIA sought contacts



PAUL SAHRE

in the exile community to recruit them for use against Castro — arguably illegal, although Eisenhower ordered FBI director J. Edgar Hoover to accept it as a legitimate CIA function. The CIA considered this a normal extension of its authorized infiltration of dissident groups abroad, even though the activity was taking place within the United States. Disdain for Congress permeated the upper echelons of the CIA. Congress could not hinder or regulate what it did not know about, and neither the President nor the director of the CIA told them.

The Department of Defense, the Directorate for Civil Disturbance Planning & Operations, and the U.S. Army Intelligence Command conducted domestic surveillance on thousands of U.S. citizens throughout the 1960s. More than 1,500 Army plainclothes agents worked out of 350 separate offices and record centers to spy on ordinary U.S. residents. They operated without authority from Congress, the President, or the Secretary of the Army. Databanks were kept on as many as 100,000 individual entries, focusing on the feared Civil Rights movement and the "New Left" anti-Vietnam War movement. The assumption was that there were foreign influences in the Civil Rights and antiwar movements. During 1967 to 1974, Presidents Johnson and Richard Nixon repeated Wilson's OMI activities through the Army Security Agency, which worked with other military intelligence units to illegally survey the communications and activities of U.S. citizens who expressed opposition to the war. Called Operation MINARET, it kept a watchlist of suspected Americans and collected their phone calls and telegrams made in and out of the country. The names were submitted to the NSA by other agencies, because the targets were suspected of involvement in terrorism, drug trafficking, threats to the President, and civil disturbances.

The Department of Justice's Internal Security Division, established under President Nixon, worked with a vast network of domestic intelligence agencies, including Nixon's own 'Huston Plan' (the "White House Plumbers"), acquiring information and conducting 'dirty tricks' on "persons and organizations not affiliated with the Department of Defense."

An intense debate erupted during the Gerald Ford administration in 1975-1976 over the Presidential power to

eavesdrop without warrants to gather foreign intelligence using NSA. George H.W. Bush (director of the CIA), Donald Rumsfeld (Ford's chief of staff) and Dick Cheney (Rumsfeld's deputy) were involved. Bush wanted to ensure "no unnecessary diminution of collection of important foreign intelligence" under a proposal to require judges to approve "terror" wiretaps. Bush complained that some major communications companies were unwilling to install government wiretaps without a judge's approval, claiming such refusal "seriously affects the capabilities of the intelligence community." President Ford supported what became the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton expanded the use of warrantless searches to include entirely domestic situations with no foreign intelligence value whatsoever. In a radio address promoting a crime-fighting bill, President Clinton discussed a new policy to conduct warrantless searches in "violent public housing projects."

Searching for honest history enables us to possess a critical frame of reference in which to judge current policies, and in which to reevaluate the authenticity of our supposed constitutional republic.

S. Brian Willson, a longtime activist, started his war opposition while serving in Vietnam in 1969. He lost both legs when a train carrying nuclear materials refused to stop as he lay across railroad tracks in protest in 1986. He is the Northern California contact for Vietnam Veterans Against the War. He wrote this article for the Spring 2006 issue of the VVAW publication *The Veteran*.

THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS

John Negroponte, America's first czar of intelligence, was U.S. ambassador to Honduras during the first administration of Ronald Reagan, from 1981 to 1985. Honduras, a "banana republic" dominated by a coalition of the U.S. embassy, United Fruit Company and the Honduran military, was a base of operations for Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries, who were more accurately U.S. paid terrorist mercenaries hired to overthrow the Sandinista government that had successfully revolted against the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship.

As American ambassador, Negroponte obliquely supervised military operations that included illegal funding of the Nicaraguan Contras (Reagan's "freedom fighters") and a massive buildup of the Honduran armed forces, the construction of bases, airfields and supply dumps. He chaperoned a 20-fold increase in U.S. military aid to Honduras and defended the country as a model of democracy while silencing reports of killings and torture, and threatened dissenting Honduran officials by accusing them of aiding communism.

A U.S. sponsored torture manual was written and distributed to police and military in Central American countries during the Reagan/Bush Sr. years to use against "leftist insurgencies" — which belies current claims of only a few enlisted "bad apples" torturing prisoners in Iraq and Guantanamo.

"Negroponte would have been totally blind not to know about human rights violations in Central America," a former ambassador to Honduras prior to Negroponte has said, saying that Negroponte's claim of ignorance of torture and mass murder by American-trained soldiers and rightwing death squads "is inexcusable and his plea of non-culpability is a lie."

Honduras was not Negroponte's introduction to covert operations. He was political affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon from 1964 to 1968, a position that often serves as a cover for CIA operatives, and from 1969 to 1971 was an aide to Henry Kissinger in the Paris peace talks, reportedly criticizing Kissinger for making too many concessions to the Vietnamese. From 1971 to 1973 he was back in Vietnam working for the National Security Council.

Negroponte seems to have been the quintessential fixit man in dark circumstances, capable of countenancing torture as well as the liquidation of political adversaries, union leaders, student organizers and other opponents of American foreign policy.

He didn't have much opportunity to carry out his usual routine as ambassador to Iraq — if the November 2004 obliteration of Fallujah is discounted — before President George W. Bush appointed him as chief spook of U.S. intelligence agencies last year. His chief aide, Air Force General Michael V. Hayden, mastermind of illegal NSA warrantless surveillance, has been appointed CIA director.

Negroponte, dark knight and master Machiavellian minister of the shadow world, literally has the whole world in his hands.

~MICHAEL McCUSKER

A SHORTFALL OF CANDOR

Long before she committed suicide, Jean Seborg claimed the FBI had destroyed her film career by spreading false and malicious rumors about her because she supported the Black Panthers. The FBI denied it. Finally, a week after the actress overdosed on barbiturates, the FBI was forced to change its story and release documents that proved she told the truth all along.

The FBI decided to discredit her in 1970 because of her public support of the Panthers. Agents spread the rumor among Hollywood columnists that a Panther had made Seborg pregnant. By many accounts she never had much of a career (her major role was as *Saint Joan* in a film adaption of George Bernard Shaw's play), but the planted rumor could not have helped. Hollywood had never recovered from the McCarthy era when it blacklisted its best writers and performers. And what the FBI did to Seborg it did to thousands of others.

The FBI constantly broke the law in its mission to destroy any organization or any individual who practiced beliefs different than the standard orthodoxy. Its agents lied, slandered, broke into private homes, stole from, assaulted, and even murdered American citizens.

After conceding that it had committed high crimes against Jean Seborg, the FBI insisted that the country take its word nothing of the sort will happen again.

Of course we will believe the FBI that it will reform itself, like we have countless times before. We have not yet been abused that one time too many, it seems. We will raise holy hell that our freedoms are being taken away when a city council wants to keep cars off the beach, but when it comes to opposing the powerful forces destroying our most vital rights and freedoms, we bow and scrape and allow them to deceive us again, to kick us again.

~MICHAEL McCUSKER
(NCTE 9/14/1979)

TIMES EAGLE WORD SEARCH

F A S C I S T B F B U G S
D O N R U M S F E L D A I
I E P I G N O R A N T X G
N L M A E B R O R T H I B
J E L O R G R I F N S S I
U W A E N A O T U S T O G
S C E H G I N I L A N F B
T N G R G A C O I V A E R
I S P Y U E L T I H G V O
C W I R E T A P E D O I T
E D A N G E R O U S R L H
M A S B U F F O O N R H E
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INSTRUCTIONS — CIRCLE EACH HIDDEN WORD, FOUND BELOW, IN THE GRID ABOVE. WORDS MAY BE HORIZONTAL, VERTICAL OR DIAGONAL, FORWARD OR BACKWARDS. USE UNCIRCLED LETTERS — IN ORDER — TO REVEAL A MESSAGE MEANT JUST FOR OUR READERS.

DON RUMSFELD	FASCIST	FEARFUL	AXIS OF EVIL
TORTURE	ARRAGANT	PARANOID	WIRETAP
INJUSTICE	DANGEROUS	BIG BROTHER	NSA
BUGS	EGO	IGNORANT	REACTIONARY
BUFFOON	ILLEGAL	SPY	DEMONIC