Thick Blanket of Secrecy Wrapped Around Central Intelligency Agency

Editor's note: Fictional spies accomplish the impossible in the nick of time and usually win a beautiful girl. Real life spies for the United States operate in secrecy and probably see little glamor. In the following dispatch, the first of four, UPI national reporter Harry Ferguson begins a report on U.S. espionage activities.

By HARRY FERGUSON

Washington – (UPI) – America's super - spy organization lists its number in the telephone book and once issued a road map showing how to get to its headquarters. But frankness stops right there and no organization in Washington wraps itself in such a thick blanket of secrecy as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Congressmen frequently complain the CIA is too secret. They are frustrated because they cannot find out precisely what the organization does, how much money it spends and whether the charge is true that it sometimes exceeds its authority by dabbling in U.S. foreign policy even to the extent of helping overthrow governments.

Thus there were many quiet smiles in Congress when Lytton H. Gibson, a lawyer representing some construction firms, told a story at a zoning commission hearing in nearby Fairfax County, Va. The CIA was building its new headquarters at Langley, Va., and Gibson's clients planned an apartment project nearby. They wanted to know how many persons would be employed at CIA headquarters.

"I called several congressmen and senators," Gibson said, "and was told they could not get the information. On the spur of the moment I phoned the Russian Embassy. The second person I talked to told me his information was that CIA had about 3,500 people at Langley and eventually would have 11,000."

Reporters attempting to check such things are likely to be handed this statement by CIA:

"The Central Intelligence Agency does not confirm or deny stories of the press whether good or bad; never explains its organization; never identifies its personnel except for a few in the top echelons; and will not discuss its budget, its methods of operation or its sources of information."

What the critics of CIA fail to consider is that if it didn't operate in secrecy it would be out of business within a month. You cannot conduct espionage in the open the way the Agricultural department collects figures and issues crop reports. But the fact seems to be that congressional irritation over the CIA reflects a distaste on the part of Americans for spying.

It goes all the way back to the end of World War I when Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson ordered the disbandment of the "Black Chamber," a group of experts who had been cracking enemy codes. Noting that the war was over, Stimson explained: "Gentlemen don't read each other's mail."

Until Pearl Harbor

That philosophy prevailed until the Sunday morning when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Informed persons are substantially in agreement that there was plenty of little pieces of information around Washington to warn of the attack. But no organization nor person was charged with the duty of fitting the pieces together and making a picture of what was about to happen.

That is now the function of CIA. It is not the only intelligence agency in Washington. The Army, Navy and Air Force have intelligence agencies, and recently an over-all group has been set up by the Defense Department. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is charged with the duty of fighting Communist subversion and sabotage inside the United States. The State Department and the Atomic Energy Commission have intelligence units.

Representatives of all these organizations meet once a week, or more often if developments indicate the necessity. They must be ready on short notice to come up with facts that will help the National Security Council and the President formulate policy.

It is the responsibility of the director of the CIA to assemble and evaluate the information collected by all these intelligence groups. He also must prepare a daily "intelligence bulletin" which is placed on the desk of the President every morning and contains the latest information from all parts of the world.

Remain Anonymous

Except for the men in the top jobs, agents of all these intelligence units remain as anonymous as possible. Charles Corddry, UPI Defense Department correspondent who knows his way around the Pentagon better than most major generals, had never seen or heard of the young man who conducted the nationally televised briefing on Russian weapons in Cuba on Feb. 6.

He was John T. Hughes, 34, a special assistant in the Defense Department's intelligence unit. Apparently he is a specialist in briefing generals and admirals, but he never has been available to Pentagon reporters and now that his brief hour as a national television celebrity is over he has again retired into the shadows. One phrase that Hughes kept repeating – "the intelligence community" — puzzled many persons. He was referring to all the intelligence groups that gather weekly with the CIA to trade and evaluate information.

The CIA keeps "watch officers" on duty around the clock under orders to call the director if something significant comes in. The director decides which government officials must be notified immediately. Nobody can get the President of the United States on the phone so fast as the director of the CIA.

Next: The CIA vs. the Russian Colossus.

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The Medical Roundup

by Walter C. Alvarez

Emeritus Consultant in Medicine Mayo Clinic
Emeritus Professor of Medicine Mayo Clinic
(Register and Tribune Syndicate, 1963)

The Electromyogram

Every so often I see a patient who complains of weakness in one or more muscles. Sometimes I can get an idea as to the cause of this from talking to the person, while in other cases, an able neurologist, after his careful examination, will give me the diagnosis.

Alvarez

Perhaps he will find that the muscle was weakened by an old polio; or he may find the beginnings of a hereditary "amyotrophic lateral sclerosis" (a disease of the spinal cord); or there may be some other nervous or muscular disease.

In rare cases, there may be a tumor of the spinal cord or some injury to the cord. There may be a ruptured spinal inter-vertebral disc, or there may be a severe arthritis of the vertebral column with pressure on one or more nerves. Or a nerve may have been injured in a wound, or in a fracture line; or there may be a "crutch-paralysis" due to pressure from a crutch, or a nerve may have been caught in some scar tissue.

There may be a beginning myasthenia gravis (a hereditary form of muscle weakness). There may be a rare inflammation of the skin and the muscle together (a dermatomyositis), or a toxic goiter; or rarely, nerves may have been poisoned by some chemical, such as too much alcohol or tobacco.

But sometimes even an able neurologist is puzzled as to the diagnosis, and then he is likely to make an electromyogram — an electric record of what goes on in a weakened muscle as it contracts. Often, with this, a definite diagnosis can be made, and an expert can say whether the disease causing the weakness is in the nerve or in the muscle, or in the very important "end plate" between the nerve and the muscle.

Also, the expert may learn that the person with what looks like a paralysis is a malingerer, or he is suffering from hysteria.

The myogram may help greatly to clear up a medico-legal problem, such as comes up all the time in insurance medicine. The person who has had an accident may feel sure he has been badly injured, when really all that has happened is that he has lost confidence in some of his muscles.

Pains in the joints may be caused by some form of arthritis. To understand its forms better, send for Dr. Alvarez' booklet about arthritis by enclosing 25 cents and a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request. Address Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, Box 957, Des Moines 4, Iowa.

Cheney Only Bidder For Forest Timber

Cheney Forest Products, Central Point, was the only bidder Monday for 1,260,000 board feet of national forest timber in the Neil Creek Roadside area, Ashland Ranger district, Rogue River National forest.

Forest Supervisor C. E. Brown reported the bid totaled $19,934.40, the forest service appraised price.

The timber in this unit consisted of 690,000 board feet of Douglas-fir bid at $18.15 per thousand board feet; 69,000 board feet of ponderosa pine bid at $16.60 per thousand board feet; 40,000 board feet of sugar pine bid at $14.45 per thousand board feet, and 470,000 board feet of white fir and other species bid at $9 per thousand board feet.

Ernie Smith, First Pacific Flier, Dies

San Francisco – (UPI) – Ernie Smith, 70, retired Air Force major who was the first civilian to fly the Pacific 36 years ago, died Tuesday at his home here.

His historic flight from Oakland, Calif., to Hawaii was completed on July 15, 1927, after 25 hours and 36 minutes in the air.

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