P.S. to the NEWS
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OUR BLIND EYE: THE INTELLIGENCE GAP

"Know your enemy" is a maxim fundamental to all military, political and athletic contests, both for offensive and defensive operations. To go out on the field of battle (or play) without knowing the opposition is like blindfolding one eye.

The Central Intelligence Agency has become America's blindfolded eye in the interdependent world we live in. It is not doing the intelligence-gathering job it was designed for, and, as a result, our nation is paying bitter consequences for being unprepared for each world crisis.

The loss of Iran was due as much to a failure of intelligence as to a failure of policy. U.S. failure to assess the role of the Marxists, the PLO, and the pro-Soviet Afghani Secret Service in the anti-Shah activities led to Carter's demand, in the name of "human rights," that the terrorists be released from jail. They promptly fomented the successful revolution.

After the Shah was overthrown, Carter ordered Iranian military officers not to try a military coup. That was based on the false judgment that the Bakhtiar regime could maintain control. Hundreds of military officers who took Carter's bad advice (transmitted via General Robert Huyser) were executed by Khomeini kangaroo courts.

When the alleged Iranian students captured the U.S. embassy and imprisoned American hostages, it took weeks for the Carter Administration to discover that the students are Marxists with PLO and other terrorist connections. We can't use anti-Khomeini factions to overthrow him and release the American hostages because we have no reliable intelligence contacts inside Iran.

U.S. intelligence failures in Afghanistan have been just as bad. The Soviet takeover didn't begin in January 1980 when the Russian tanks and troops rolled in. The troop movement was only a demonstration of the Brezhnev doctrine: "we use troops to keep what we have already taken."

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The Soviets actually took Afghanistan nearly two years ago when they coopted the Afghani military operations and installed a pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. But U.S. intelligence didn't seem to realize it, even when the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan was murdered with Soviet officials as spectators.

Last year, the Carter Administration transferred nearly $400 million of U.S. military equipment to North Yemen (via Saudi Arabia) based on the assessment that North Yemen was friendly to the West. North Yemen is now letting Soviet military personnel train its army and police (using our equipment).

It took the Carter Administration many months to confirm and admit that a Soviet combat brigade is in Cuba. Like the spouse who is always the last to find out about infidelity, the Carter Administration was the last to learn how the Soviets have built up a military base in Cuba during the last three years with MIG-23 fighter-bombers, two Foxtrot-class submarines, and a new Cienfuegos pier to service submarines.

There is only one agency capable of ferreting out and transmitting the foreign intelligence information we need: the CIA. It certainly hasn't been a paradigm of virtue or accuracy, but it's better than flying blindfolded from crisis to crisis.

The CIA has been sabotaged by a combination of internal "reforms" and external exposes carried out by American civil libertarians who think the grassroots must be privy to every national-security secret. "Reform" is probably the most misused word in the English language, but it takes more than usual gall to apply "reform" to the forcible retirement of some 2,000 of the most experienced CIA senior personnel, plus another 820 from the division responsible for covert operations.

New regulations imposed as a result of the Church and Pike Committee exposes now give 74 Senators "oversight" privileges over CIA. Did you ever try telling something to 74 persons and asking them to keep it secret?

The time has come to restore the intelligence-gathering effectiveness of the CIA by rebuilding the morale of dedicated personnel and redefining their ability to do their job free from Congressional meddling.

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