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**The Developing Perspective of Intelligence
William E. Colby**

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THE DEVELOPING PERSPECTIVE OF INTELLIGENCE

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Intelligence, clearly, is an essential part of the input used by the command and control process. The Central Intelligence Agency is the United States' primary collector and analyst of intelligence on foreign activity. Bill Colby, as former CIA Director, presents the inside view on the problems involved in acquiring intelligence and delivering it in a useful manner for both strategic and tactical decision making.

I'd like to say a few words about where intelligence is these days. Most people think of intelligence as a spy service. I think most of the public thinks that way; a lot of the responsible people even think that way: that the function of intelligence is to have a spy steal a secret and get it to the general so the general wins the battle.

Well, that really was what intelligence was all about until the Americans got serious about working on the subject. We began to get serious right after Pearl Harbor, when we discovered that it really wasn't for lack of information that we were surprised there. It was the fact that though we had information in the Army, the Navy and the State Department, we hadn't brought it together — centralized it — in the sense we've since come to develop. We started at that period to reach out for a new concept of intelligence. General Donovan, who set up our wartime intelligence agency, was a World War I hero, and he did indeed run a service that sent spies and guerillas around the world. But he also added a new dimension to intelligence by reaching out here in America to find people who knew something about the distant parts of the world. He went to the colleges and universities, the businesses and industries that exchanged products and raw materials and the cultural, anthropological and geographic societies. He developed a core of experts and scholars to work on intelligence, to study these matters and come out with the best possible evaluation of them, and this was a change in some of the concepts of intelligence.

When Donovan disbanded the wartime agency at the end of the war, in compliance with our unbroken tradition of organizing spy services for wars and disbanding them afterwards, he gave a little ceremony. And the ceremony was very indicative, in that in his speech of praise for the people who had worked for him, he singled out first the scholars he had assembled in Washington for the unique contribution they had made to the President's and Joint Chiefs of Staff's understanding of some of the complex factors that were at work around the world.

We've continued along those lines since then. When we organized our intelligence service for the Cold War in 1947, we continued to put scholarship at the core of modern American intelligence. As a result you'll probably find about as many doctors and masters of all kinds of arts and sciences on the CIA staff as on the faculty of this university, and they are doing more or less the same thing: looking for the facts, gathering them together.

We made a second major innovation in the discipline of intelligence when we turned to technology to help us in the process of learning what's happening around the world. We put one of our great experts in aerodynamics together with some experts in photooptics and the chemistry of film systems and produced the U-2 aircraft, which flew higher and farther than anyone had to date. It flew over the center of the Soviet Union and gave us pictures of things we wouldn't have dreamed of having accurate information about until then. Though that aircraft was shot down after three years of flying, in those three years it brought home some invaluable pictures, so that when we saw certain shapes on the ground in Cuba in September 1962 we weren't baffled — we knew what they were. We'd seen the same shapes on photographs from the Soviet Union, and we knew that we were dealing with offensive missiles.

Now, this has revolutionized the intelligence business. We don't ask a spy to slink out of Hong Kong, work his way up through China to the Manchurian border and tell us what's going on there, because we look down on that border. We look down on the military units on both sides, we count the numbers of tanks and the pieces of artillery. We can even draw an organization diagram based on the way they bivouac and divide into subunits, come out with an estimate of how many people there are, and follow them from week to week.

In other words, we have enormously increased the scope and precision of our information about the world. We talk about the information aids available today, and the fact that technology is changing the nature of the world thanks to communications and the mass data we're able to manage. This of course, is a phenomenon in intelligence as well.

The result, however, is that we ended up with an organization which really didn't fit the concept of a spy service. It was much too big. It did too many other things. I think it was illustrative that we finally had to build a building to house it in 1961 because it became so big — a big building up along the Potomac with a sign in front of it saying "CIA." Robert Kennedy, when he was Attorney General, was driving home past it one time and said "This is the silliest thing I've ever seen. Here's a secret intelligence service by the side of a four-lane parkway with a great big sign pointing to it. Take the sign down." As Attorney General he had a certain influence on the authorities, and the sign came down. So for a good fifteen years we pretended the building wasn't there. Cognoscenti knew they should turn off at the little sign that said "Bureau of Public Roads." There actually was a Bureau of Public Roads — but it was a tiny building compared to the CIA, which we were pretending didn't exist.

Everybody agreed with that pretension; that represented a consensus about intelligence in America. The President, Congress, the press, opinion leaders, the public all thought: if you are going to have intelligence, spies, it has to be all secret. Therefore it can't be under the normal relationships of our government structure. Leave it to the President; it's just the President's business, nobody else's. Well, the fact was that it was too big and too obvious to fit within that old concept. By that time the airline pilots were using the building as their checkpoint on their way down toward National Airport (now they use Watergate). It really became ridiculous to pretend it wasn't there.

Finally we had to resolve the disparity between the reality and the theory. Partly it came about because the old consensus involved a contradiction with the constitutional definition of the responsibilities and accountabilities of government. Intelligence was a category that had just been passed over to the President — "You do it" — without any of the normal controls, without any rules being set up. My generation had to make up the rules as we went along, and we made a few mistakes in the process — not very many, I think, but a few, no question about it, because of that concept of a spy service at the edge of the President's desk that was nobody else's business. Congressmen and senators said they didn't want to know about it. They would just appropriate the money blindly and say — "Go in and do what is useful." Sooner or later that contradiction had to be resolved. Either we're going to have the constitutional system without exception, or we're going to have an exception to it, not just an understood exception, but one that is admitted in some fashion.

Well, we had those two problems: the organization's inherent size and activity because of its changed nature from an old spy service, and the inherent contradiction with the constitutional norms; and we had to resolve them in some fashion. Now we did that in the most clamorous fashion possible, waving our arms, and everybody got histrionic and denounced each other and we caused ourselves a lot of harm around the world in the process. We created the image that the CIA was under every bed and responsible for every volcano in the world. We also created the image that Americans really aren't serious about serious things and can't be trusted to be dealt with on a secret basis. Foreigners who had previously shared sensitive information with us would no longer do it, or they wouldn't work for us — they didn't dare.

Now, however, I think we've gone through that period, and the pendulum has swung back to seeking a sensible middle position. Now Congress is looking at a new, reasonable kind of charter — it's a novelty in the intelligence world, a charter enacted by Congress. It will have in it some procedures and strictures, some guidelines saying what intelligence will do and what it won't do. It will set up procedures for different people who have to be consulted and take responsibility, another novel concept since the old idea was that nobody was responsible for intelligence. The President could deny it, the spy could be disowned, and you couldn't prove it to the contrary; that was the old theory: plausible denial. But now two congressional committees are seriously involved in responsibility under the separation of powers, knowing and keeping the secrets and exerting Congress' full constitutional role.

Bringing the whole concept of intelligence under this constitutional system is, as I say, a very great novelty in the world, and one that many people still don't believe. Some of my former associates don't really believe it; some would like to go back to the good old days. But I don't think that's feasible. Others would like to have intelligence's hands tied, con-

duct it as a totally open thing. The ACLU came out with a resolution a few years ago which they've kind of forgotten recently. It said that we shouldn't collect anything secretly around the world, shouldn't have any secrets — which I think is a little absurd.

Well, the pendulum, as I say, is swinging to a center position, and the new charter is a reasonable solution of some of the contradictions. We are going to admit that we conduct intelligence activities, and we're going to conduct them under our constitutional system. We think we can do it. We think we can be just as effective, or even more effective, because we have a new concept of intelligence. I'm going down on Thursday to testify on the new charter. There are a couple of details in it I don't like, but we'll get a reasonable new consensus out of it.

Where does that leave intelligence in our government? What kind of intelligence structure are we going to have? Are we going to go back to the spy who steals a secret and gives it to the general? No. Intelligence is a different animal now, a big institution that performs some rather vital activities in our national decision-making. In the revolution in intelligence brought about by the concepts of scholarship and technology, the third factor is the concept of constitutionality.

Moreover, I think we're ready for a fourth revolutionary factor, and it relates to the problems you're wrestling with — the role of intelligence in command, control and communications. We're looking forward to a better way of analyzing the political, sociological and economic problems we see around us. This is not just a military subject. We realize now that the problems we will face in the next decade will be partly military, but that the dominant problems will be the economic problems of the developed world, the social problems of the less developed world, and the political problems that result from the mixture of the two. We're going to be living with the cultural problems of intercommunication — understanding other societies, other religions, other concepts of life. How do you wrestle with a terrorist who's completely committed and willing to die in order to accomplish his objective? How do you handle that when he has some of your people under his control? This is not just an old-fashioned military thing. You know exactly what his military potential is: it's nil. But you've got a lot more than that riding on it when you've got hostages, when your economic situation is in difficulty. So I think the new concept of central intelligence we're getting at now will enable us to begin to integrate all the different disciplines and do a better job of handling the problems.

Do we expect our intelligence system to be a crystal ball giving us an absolute prediction of what's going to happen in the future? No. In the first place it's probably not possible, because the number of variations and variables gets beyond you. Secondly you wouldn't want it if you had it; you don't want to be condemned to go through the experience the crystal ball predicts for you. The purpose of intelligence is to help you act so that you can have a better rather than a worse future. And if you act intelligently, and cause a change in that future, then of course the prediction turns out to be wrong — for the right reason, and you've really capitalized on what intelligence is all about.

Now how do you do this? We've had various attempts in various directions. We've tried to organize the pipe-smoking, tweed-jacketed professor with his yellow pad and his good judgment. We've tried to have a group of generalists sit around and try to make wise assessments about what the world's about. Over the years, however, some of those assessments have become progressively less useful to the harried and busy people they were sup-

posed to be helping, and increasingly the harried and busy people stopped reading them. On the other hand we have had some great ideas, such as enormous new automatic estimating systems where you put all the factors into a computer, develop the model, wiggle the factors a little bit, see how the result changes and that gives you an absolute prediction. But it's garbage in-garbage out; you've got a certain amount of garbage on both ends, and so that isn't the answer.

But then what do we have to do? After the Iranian revolution began the President wrote to Secretary Vance, Dr. Brzezinski and Admiral Turner and said "We have really got to do a better job on our political intelligence. You've got to give us better warnings on these kinds of explosions." Now, was that a collection problem? If we had just had a spy next to the Ayatollah Khomeini would that have changed the circumstances and made us more able to act? No. The Ayatollah Khomeini made it crystal clear what he wanted to happen in Iran. The factors that led to the explosion were all out in the open: the political difficulties, the weaknesses of some of the Shah's structures, the absence of a political base, the destabilizing effect of the massive changes that are taking place in Iranian society. The problem wasn't a matter of collecting some fact that said there's going to be a revolution in February, 1979. If you'd gotten a report that said that, you probably wouldn't have believed it anyway. I mean, nobody can produce that as the result of a report. You've got a much more complex job of assessing all the forces that impact on the problem and coming out with a resolution.

Now, we've had some successful estimates. The Pentagon Papers contain assessments of the likelihood that the North Vietnamese would give up, that the war would be taken care of by more military forces. They said both prospects seemed very unlikely — and those assessments turned out pretty good in retrospect. They weren't used, perhaps because the President didn't want to use them, because the Secretary of Defense thought we could put some more force into Vietnam and have an effect — just achieve numerical preponderance and everything would be all right. We didn't have the institutions to do some of the non-military things that for many years, maybe, should have been done — even things we knew should be done and were called for. But we did have the institutions to do the military action, and that was the easy thing, so we went ahead and did that — it was a case of "When in frustration don't just stand there, do something!"

So we've had both good ones and bad ones. I think we're going to be grappling with new methods of estimating, new methods of putting together these factors. I'll give you a gross oversimplification as an example. There has been a great deal of R&D trying to come up with better ways of estimating probabilities, and they still aren't very satisfactory. Some of the methods are useful in a way, at least for tracking the estimating ability of certain people. For a number of years we made different analysts write their estimates of the likelihood that war would break out in the Middle East. It was interesting to compare their attitudes — some would say 10 percent, some 50 percent, sometimes it would go up, sometimes down — and you'd try to establish why, and so there was a disciplinary effect. It didn't help you particularly with the estimate as such, since you were still basing it on the individual's judgment. It did help impart and enforce discipline on the process. Looking back at our estimates on Iran — I haven't read them, because they're classified and I haven't been reading classified ones — I'm sure you'll find some language in those of the last two or three years saying "There are political problems under the Shah, but probably he will continue to be in power." That word "probably" tends to make you

think, "Well, I guess I can forget that. There's some wild chance that he might fall, but the intelligence people have come up with a judgment that he's going to stay in there." So you forget about it.

Now suppose you go a step further and put the "probably" in numbers: 90 percent, 95 percent. You say, yes, there's a 10 percent chance that the Shah will fall, but that doesn't make much impression on you either. But then suppose your discipline calls for you to put next to each of these results a big multiplication sign. That is, you have to assign a factor for the importance of that development if it occurs, and you must multiply the probability factor by that importance factor. Well, if you were looking at Iran three years ago, I think you would say, "Well, if the Shah were thrown out, boy, that would be a real mess. That would be very, very important." So, doing the multiplication, you'd have a flag that says: "Hey, you'd better pay attention to this. This is something you really have to spend some time and effort thinking about, and act to avoid it happening."

I'm saying this to relate the job of intelligence to what I think this class is really all about: how do you make decisions? And not only how do you collect information, and analyze it so that you get pretty good judgments about what may happen, but how do you communicate that information? It doesn't do any good to have the best report in the world lying on the President's desk if the ideas aren't in his head.

You have to put those ideas into his head. How do you do that? I think this is part of the experiment you're working on. I think you've got to try new methods. We've tried various experiments; some worked and some didn't, some were liked and some were not. But part of the challenge that's before us is to develop these new techniques. Collection, in this information age and with the way we use and disclose substantive information, is really not much of a problem. Most of the major facts are pretty well known these days — a lot of tactical facts aren't, but the fundamental facts that drive world affairs are pretty well known, if you think about them: the demographics, the economics, the social backgrounds, the cultural factors. But I think a lot remains to be done to improve our management of the analytical process, our discipline of it, to shake out what I call the "mindset problem" that will afflict any organization you set up. That is, the inertia that means if they have gone through the alternatives 50 times and 49 times it came out in direction A, then the 50th time it's almost certain that that group is going to think it will come out in direction A again.

Oettinger. You talked about assessing the probability of the Shah toppling — say, 10 percent — and multiplying that by some importance factor. In the light of the mindset problem, suppose I am responsible for such an assessment, and I multiply it by a very large importance factor because by doing so I get some attention, or it gives me a feeling of significance? If everyone does that, and there's a large phalanx of such estimates, haven't we, with our mindset, simply assigned high importance and probability to things that corroborate what we believed in the first place?

Colby. I think the multiplication factor would change the proportion of the numbers, and make you realize you had a bigger problem than you thought, and force that realization into the cognizance of the intelligence officer and decision maker.

Oettinger. But if everyone up the chain has that incentive because of their mindset, assigns a high probability and a high multiplier, you have, essentially, inflation. How do you control that?

Colby. You do have inflation, of course you do. But I think you must fix the President and the National Security Council with a clear statement of responsibility for judging and acting. You have told them that here is something they damn well have to pay attention to. The problem of what they do about it is theirs. But if you submit something that says the Shah's probably going to stay in office you haven't fixed them with any responsibility whatsoever.

Oettinger. But further down the line, how do you control "crying wolf," either out of mindset or self-aggrandizement?

Colby. Well, if they cry wolf too many times you just tell them to shut up, you're not going to read it any more. That's always a problem. We set up something called an alert memorandum, because after any event the likeliest thing is to find some report lying around that said that event was going to happen. You see it all the time. You know, someone yells "Intelligence gap. Oh no, there was a report." Never mind that there were 700 other reports saying it wasn't going to happen; it's just that one that you hear about. So I finally devised the alert memorandum. It works this way. If you think something important is going to happen, we fill out one of these memos and send it downtown to the NSC and the President. If we have sent an alert memorandum and the event happens, then there's no intelligence gap. But if there wasn't an alert memorandum and it happens, I'm telling you there's going to be an intelligence gap, whether other reports have gone down there or not, because it hasn't been brought to their attention. That's the communication factor: how do you bring it to the decision maker's attention? How do you fix him with responsibility so that he knew it, and was responsible for acting, and did one or the other? It's a way of forcing the leader to do what he thinks best about a given problem.

The numerical playing with the probabilities and the importance factors is the same thing. It's a way of fixing the leader with responsibility, by letting him know that it's a lot more complex than just a small probability of an event. There is, granted, a small probability it's going to happen, but if it happens it's going to be awful. Therefore he's responsible for taking action on it. I think that's the point. Of course you do get the "Wolf! Wolf!" And at some point you've got to tell your people "Look, we're not going to listen to you any more if you keep sending these things up just to cover yourself — we're CIA, not CYA."

Student. But I don't see how the CYA problem is resolved. CIA or no CIA, there's an awful lot of it going on. The fellow on the spot may think something is very likely to happen. So he sends it up — not in an alert memorandum to the NSC, but to his boss, and his boss thinks "Maybe it'll happen," and reduces the factor a little, and sends it to *his* boss. By the time this gets to a high level, somebody is ready to say "I don't know that this is going to happen, and if I bother them with it they're going to tell me to shut up." So he puts in the "probably." That's the reason for the "probably" in the first place. I don't see what good it does to put the numbers on it.

Colby. I agree with you, pure numbers aren't going to make much difference. Numbers with importance factors, I think, force a little more attention to the estimate. That's why I'm saying you've got to go beyond the pure intelligence assessment to the problem of communicating it to your leader. You're absolutely right that the hierarchy can dilute a message. If it dilutes too much, nobody reads it because it's just pap. There is some danger of that. But there is also an opposite effect because of the way intelligence moves now, primarily electrically. You don't have somebody writing out a report in Pango Pango and sending it home by galley to Madrid and deciding whether that piece of paper should go up to the king. Today he writes a message, or an intelligence report, and it goes into the electrical machinery. When it hits Washington it goes to the CIA, but it also goes to DIA, State and the White House. It's pretty much a field report. But if it's interesting, and gives a new slant, there will be a certain amount of interagency communication about it. In another few days the press will report it, and then you'll get some more communication. I'm not knocking that — it's a fact, and it will happen. Then if it's a novelty, it will get some attention. If it's just more of the same, it won't. And if your man in Pango Pango builds up a record of being pretty reliable you'll keep listening to him. If not, you won't.

I think the thing that is developing is expansion of important information seeking into unclassified areas. Intelligence, as it's developing, is not just for governments, but for all of us, helping us make our decisions about business and industry, about our personal affairs, all the rest of it. Intelligence is becoming much too important to be left to government, so it's coming out more and more into the public sector. Analysis centers are developing in the banks, in the multinationals, in the academic centers, and there are many kinds of independent analysis. Now, to a certain extent, you can even institutionalize those, and bring a "team B" or a "team C" into the intelligence process to argue alternatives within the government itself. There is value in that. The Air Force will always tell you that the greatest danger to the Republic is some new bomber on the other side. The Navy will say it's a new submarine; the Army will say it's a new tank. You have to decide which you think is the greatest danger. So argument among agencies is valuable. But it is not enough by itself. You have to go beyond the arguments, and I think that is the interesting phenomenon we're seeing. More and more of these factors are being argued in public, and I think that's a good thing. It may make life a little miserable for the intelligence people. But as long as it doesn't get into source revelations, if it's argument about substance, I think the exercise is healthy.

Albert Wohlstetter, in a brilliant article about five or six years ago, looked at the Secretary of Defense's annual posture statements, in which the Secretary defines the threat we're facing, outlines the size of the Soviet forces and predicts their capability in five years based on our knowledge of their current programs. The article surveyed ten such statements in a row from the 1960s, as I remember, and since each of them described Soviet capability at the time and made a five-year prediction, it was pretty easy to match up the prediction with what the Soviets actually had five years later. The usual impression had been that the military was scaring Congress to death, exaggerating everything, making it seem that the Soviets were really much stronger than we were and that therefore we needed bigger budgets. Many congressmen used to value the CIA by contrast; they said "You don't work in the Pentagon, so you'll give us an independent objective assessment of these figures." And of course those Pentagon figures are repeated in the Secretary's posture statement. Well, Wohlstetter demonstrated without a shadow of doubt that for that period of 10 years we had consistently underestimated the actual growth of Soviet power.

We had also underestimated the Soviets' military budgeting. In part this was mindset. In part it was a lack of outside people criticizing you and hammering at you. In part it was an honest belief that the estimates were true. But the fact is that they were wrong.

Now, how do you get the independent pounding you need? In this case they tried the "team B" exercise. It took rather hostile outsiders to really hammer at them to see how well one year's estimate stood up. And it stood up pretty well, though they made a few changes in it as a result of the hammering. Now that, I think, is the kind of process we can look forward to that will bring about better analytic systems and, I hope, better systems of communication.

You see, one of the problems of analysis is the relationship among those who collect information, those who analyze it and the policymakers who decide on it. The old idea was to hermetically seal each of the three areas so that they did not influence each other — so that the collectors are not just feeding the policymaker what he wants to hear, and the analyst isn't warping his judgments to be pleasant to whoever's in the White House at the moment, and isn't overwhelmed by the collector's enthusiasm for some particular item, but can be objective and independent. But quite frankly these theories are all wrong. What gives you real value is the degree to which you can put all those people together, so that you can begin to work on the problems the policymaker sees, instead of just reporting things that sound important to you that he really couldn't care less about. That doesn't mean that you should only report what he wants. Sometimes you have to report to him what he ought to know, things he doesn't know he needs: some new development he doesn't know anything about, for instance. But you do have to get communication among the collector, the analyst, and the decision maker extremely well hooked up, so that they can relate to each other and be of maximum utility to each other.

Student. I'd like to go back to your earlier comment about making substantive information available but not sources. Protection of sources is one of those statutory elements that carries criminal penalties. I don't see how you can separate substance from source. In deciding whether something that looks like a fact really is a fact, I've always felt very uncomfortable unless I've had a pretty good understanding of where the damn thing came from. It's the scholar's prejudice for primary as opposed to secondary sources. The conflict between source protection and assessment of validity, it seems to me, is a very important ingredient. When you strike the balance, where do you strike it?

Colby. I feel we ought to have better legislation to protect our sources, and that's one of the things I'm going to be supporting. But journalists for 150 years have successfully operated by telling you the substance and protecting their sources. They cite a "reliable source" or an "official source;" they don't tell you who he is. Sooner or later you begin to put a certain amount of faith in a particular journalist who's got a good track record — or in a particular newspaper. If you read something in the New York Times you're inclined to believe it, because they probably wouldn't print it if they didn't have some confidence that it was basically true. You read stuff in the National Enquirer and you just ignore it, no matter what it says. In intelligence you gradually develop the same sense — that a given agency is really quite serious about these things, and they're going to be hesitant about quoting something unless they're pretty sure it's right.

Student. But I thought part of the process was to check out information whose source was secret with other sources, to correlate them with each other, so that you are not just accepting one source.

Colby. Sometimes there is only one source. If you intercept a message from Omsk to Tomsk that says there's a new missile, can you produce that fact that there's a new missile? The purists would say absolutely not, because if you reveal that you know about the missile, the Soviets will know you got it from that message and your source will be compromised. But that message from Omsk to Tomsk is on the way between Vladivostok and Moscow, and has probably been repeated half a dozen times on the way. There must be ten people at each terminal who are aware of it. So in producing your intelligence you don't say that the message from Omsk to Tomsk says there's going to be a new missile. You say that there's a report that they have a new missile. And that drives them crazy trying to figure out how you found it out. They don't know whether it's the message from Omsk to Tomsk or what.

We have had a national debate in this country during the last year on very specific details of Soviet nuclear missilery: throw weight, number of warheads, all that. It all comes from highly technical, highly secret sources. For years the Soviets themselves wouldn't even use their names for their missiles. In Vienna they finally told us their names for their missiles, which screwed up the whole thing, because our "SS-18" turns out to be their "RS-19" or something, and you can't figure out which one's which any more.

But the fact is, we are still protecting those sources — the specific technology and exactly where we're learning various things — and yet we're producing the designs and technical factors of Soviet missiles. You can do it. It takes a little ingenuity; I'm not saying it's easy. And, yes, there are a few things you couldn't do it with, where there absolutely could be no other source, so producing it would reveal it. Even so, however, you may be able to put it into a general statement, not really indicate it precisely, and circulate it that way.

Now, if your intelligence officer feels the responsibility to get a certain message over to the people who need to know it, who in this country needs to know about a new Soviet missile? The President, the Secretary of Defense, the military. Is that enough? Not by a long shot. The congressional committees absolutely have to know it if they're going to do their job right. Opinion, the media, the public need to know about that startling new weapon system.

When the Soviets began to build a big boat in one of their yards, we saw the keel being laid, and we had a big argument in the intelligence community as to whether it was an aircraft carrier or not. We watched it grow, and finally, sure enough, there it was. We followed it for about three or four years, we followed it when it was launched and on its trials, and all the rest. When that carrier sailed through the Bosphorus, it didn't have the impact on America that Sputnik had had; it didn't suddenly frighten us to that extent, because we had circulated, not only in the official community but in public, in *Aviation Week*, designs of what that aircraft carrier was probably going to look like. The fact that that information had been prevalent contributed to our thinking process.

Oettinger. If I hear you correctly, you're saying there really is no incompatibility between source protection and wide availability of the information. Do you believe the paranoia is waning about extending source protection to make information unavailable, not just to the public, but to some segments of the intelligence community or military?

Colby. It's definitely waning, partly as a fact of life. One of the most dangerous things right now is that, if you train your intelligence officers to write reports which include reference to the sources, when they're leaked they leak the sources too. That's the worst of all worlds. If we could at least train them to write reports which summarize the situation and try not to reveal sources, then when the material goes out, even if it's sensitive it wouldn't contain the source references.

Oettinger. I'd have a problem with that, not perhaps if I were a member of the public, but if I were in a staff or line position. Without the sources, I'm robbed of the audit trail that enables me to make an independent judgment of the credibility of the material.

Colby. That's why I say you have to develop confidence in the source of the report. In other words, the intelligence officer cannot duck by saying, "I just got the report, I don't know whether it's any good or not." Either he makes a judgment that it is good enough to put out, or he throws it away.

Student. How much information does the decision maker get, and how much does he want? You talked about alert memorandums. It seems that at one extreme you can send him a memorandum saying, "We think the Egyptians are going to attack the Israelis tomorrow." Now, that alerts him, and you have committed your assessment mechanism to a position. You have also said you are right about half the time. Now if I were the President, given the criticality of some of these assessments, half the time might not be a good percentage, even though considering all the factors involved it might be a very good job.

Colby. It's usually predicting things that don't turn out to happen, quite frankly, that makes the percentage drop.

Student. So it seems to me that there would have to be some additional information to help the decision maker determine the credibility of the assessment, or whatever kinds of things he looks for in assessments to trigger his concern.

Colby. It depends on the person and his style of operation.

Student. Then how best can the decision maker make an input into the system to get out of it what he wants? All these intelligence systems were designed by computer people or systems analysts, and they produce the things that are best produced by their particular piece of hardware or software. General Paschall told us that they wanted to know the Marines had left the landing craft in the Caribbean in the middle of the crisis. When they couldn't provide that particular piece of information, everybody said to hell with it. Obviously the system isn't worthless, but if somebody at the top wasn't informed according to his criteria —

Colby. It depends on the style of management that's operating. Some people like to man-

age down to the last detail, and will insist on knowing the name, rank and serial number of every source or they won't believe a thing. In the early 1960s, after the Cuban Missile Crisis, there was an enormous flush of effort to get hard evidence of North Vietnamese involvement in South Vietnam. Well now, what is hard evidence? Interrogation of somebody who came down the Ho Chi Minh trail and reported it wasn't hard enough. If you had a photograph of him as he came down that'd be a little better. A picture of the trail, well, that may say something. But suppose a few guys with bicycles are going along, what does that prove? The Kennedy administration in particular wanted evidence they could put in the paper and prove it beyond any doubt. That kind of evidence didn't exist for that kind of war, and yet they insisted on it. Other administrations would be content to be given the judgment and go with it, would accept what you say without asking for hard evidence.

Student. What do you do as a system architect, as one who's responsible for having a responsive system, to draw out of the decision maker the kinds of output he'll be looking for? Is there some sort of interaction?

Colby. Well, you go to the meetings and find out what's concerning him, and what's going on where the problems are — that sort of thing.

Student. Do you find a willingness among top people to give you that kind of information routinely, or only when a crisis breaks out?

Colby. Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Mr. Kissinger was not all that anxious to reveal all the secret activity to everybody in Washington, because it immediately leaked. I was sympathetic to that. I finally told our analysts, "Look, you're never going to learn about some of his activities because this town is such a sieve. And after the Marchetti book I cannot say the CIA's the one agency that doesn't leak; it does leak. Therefore you have to be content to analyze what information you have. I'll send your report down to Kissinger. If it coincides with what he hears from his additional sources, it'll reinforce his confidence that he's in the right. If it differs from what he has, he's going to have to decide whether we're right and he's being led astray, or whether he's right and we just don't have the total picture. It's his responsibility to make that decision.

Student. The decision maker needs multiple and independent sources of information. So if the only source he has is an integrated assessment, isn't that a bad thing?

Colby. He's going to have a lot of sources. Some of them are called journalists. The newspapers arrive on the desk every morning. TV has the nightly news, from Iran or wherever. Those additional sources are always going to be there, and they're going to have a political influence on his thinking about what's right and what's wrong.

Student. History is replete with examples of people taking part of the information and drawing conclusions about the whole situation from it — and those conclusions may even be valid, as far as they go. So you can get strong judgmental analyses that are accurate based on available information, which nevertheless are completely invalid in the real world because the analysts don't have enough information and don't know enough about the source. An example that comes to mind is Nixon on television waving the CIA tele-

gram which reported a conversation with a journalist in India — a usually reliable source, and an enemy of Mrs. Gandhi — saying she was planning to invade Pakistan. He used that as a major justification for his tilt toward Pakistan. But if he had said (or even if he had known) that it was a third-hand report from a political enemy of Mrs. Gandhi, the analysis of that particular piece of secret CIA information would have been different. It would have had a lot less impact. If you allow wide circulation of information without the sources closely detailed I think you're going to have proliferation of wrong conclusions.

Colby. That's a good example; let's look at it. He goes on TV and says "This secret CIA source says Mrs. Gandhi's going to go after the Pakistans." The missing link is that the CIA evaluates the report as marginal. Now, suppose that report had been made much more public, so that instead of being a secret picked up and used by the President, it was much more generally available, complete with CIA's reservations.

Student. It would have made life a lot more difficult for journalists (and collectors) in India.

Colby. No, when the President picked it up, that's what made life more difficult for journalists in India. But you wouldn't say your source was a journalist; you'd say there was evidence from a marginal source that cast doubt on the information. If that had been made more generally available the President wouldn't have been able to do what he did. What you're saying is that the President abused the report and gave it more importance than, in its original form, it really had.

Oettinger. The critical distinction the new bill makes is that you can't avoid responsibility for assessing the piece of information and accompanying it with your estimate of its validity.

Colby. They really have to worry, they wrestle with this all the time. The stuff comes in, as they say, over the transom, and let's face it, the National Enquirer puts out exactly that story. And you don't read it.

Student. When the President of the United States puts it out, I do.

Colby. But if you had a better basis for criticizing the President's misuse of that statement —

Student. Isn't that why you pay analysts, to perform all those functions for you, to prepare the estimate based on their 20 years' expertise? You may say they have mindsets; but their mindsets are based on experience. For the most part they have been more than willing to change their minds when circumstances warranted.

Student. Things are different; the world is changing. It seems to me this whole push to get more and more raw material higher and higher in the system is very self-defeating. You do have a filter in place. And the filter has worked for a number of years. I've watched higher- and higher-level people ask for more and more raw data, and they don't know what to do with it. They have the same problems about sources. They eventually have to go to the source.

Colby. You're right, but frankly I think it's a fact of life, and there's very little you can do about that tendency to reach for more raw material and subject it to multiple and even public analysis. The fact is, you know, it's the way we've been operating in crisis all along that's the tragedy. The theory is that the analyst is the screen, thinks about intelligence and then gives a judgment. But every time you hit a crisis, bang! it all short-circuits. I've seen the President of the United States pick up raw reports right off the cable line, cutting out of the circuit the very person he should turn to at exactly the time he's most valuable. Now, how do you get the analyst back into it at a time of crisis? I think you get him back into it by making the material more broadly available beforehand, so that the thought process has already gone into the material and the President doesn't think the raw data is the only source he had — he's aware that he has a lot of other centers of analysis working with him. Then I think he'll pay more attention to intelligence analysis.

This is really one of the great frustrations of intelligence, to my mind. Here you have a splendid core of analysts, who, as you say, are generally first-class — they at least know where the country is that's under discussion, which is more than you can say for most of the people in the Cabinet Room who are making the decisions. And yet that's when everybody's sitting there reading the raw stuff, making decisions, and sending carrier task forces all over the place. Nobody's asked the analyst about that country's politics or attitudes.

Student. I appreciate the caricature, but even if the decision maker wanted to find the analyst, would he have the foggiest notion where to find him?

Colby. That's the organizational problem. In a very good book, "Strategic Intelligence and World Policy" (1949), Sherman Kent wrote that you can organize analysis geographically, or by discipline, functionally; and he said we ought to organize it geographically. He said that all the economists, political scientists, social scientists and military experts who work on East Asia should be interrelated in an East Asian Analytical Center, and we'd get somebody to speak for an estimate of East Asia. But we organized the intelligence community exactly the opposite way. We put the economists in one bureau, political scientists in another, physical scientists in another and the military experts in another, in the best academic tradition, because that's the way you organize universities. The result, I think, has been a great mistake, because you don't know who speaks for East Asia. I had a problem about China shortly after I got into my job, and I called in the people who knew something about it from the different offices. About ten people came into the room, and I was the only central point for them. I said, this is ridiculous. I don't have time to integrate all these different elements of the problem. Get some other system so that somebody else does the integrating and then he helps me.

Student. At the State Department they have the opposite problem. The real clout is at the desk where they have integrated information for each country. You say, "Give me the man on China," and the head of the China desk will come in and give you the China perspective. But what you lose is the functional perspective on how the economic problem in China is relating to the rest of East Asia or other concerns. Don't you need a multiple approach?

Colby. Yes. The problem is that, when we made an estimate on say, Bulgaria, we'd make a political estimate and then tack on a military estimate and then maybe an economic estimate. But they'd be annexes to the basic paper. The three groups would never sit down and analyze it together.

Student. So you're saying that the process should be reversed — have the generalist make the analysis and then have the economists, the military guys —

Colby. Contribute to it through the machine. Yes, you need both cuts of the problem. But I think the dominant one ought to be geographic.

Student. You need two separate organizations?

Colby. Within limits.

Student. I have a question about sources of human intelligence — if that's not beating a dead horse.

Oettinger. Just a second, that's not a dead horse, that's a very live and thrashing animal of unknown genus. It is critical. If human intelligence is not kept irritated and worried all the time, it is the surest way to go downhill. No matter what the organization's scheme, it seems to me, if it stays frozen you're dead. To avoid reopening this question over and over again strikes me as the height of folly, and I don't think there is any one single answer to it.

Colby. There is a thesis that you ought to organize it one way for five years and then the other way for the next five years to shake everybody up. There's some value to that.

Student. Well, one of the things in your book, in your relationship with James Angleton, is your disagreement with his belief that defectors from the Soviet Union are manipulated by the KGB and that the information that came out was not to be trusted because of that. And your belief that the intelligence sources had to be opened up, that because of Angleton's or his people's belief we weren't able to utilize certain intelligence sources. Well, how do you balance his problem with your need?

Colby. I think you accept the fact that the other side is going to pull tricks on you. There's no question about that, it's a fact of life. Sometimes the source is going to be telling you what he honestly believes and he's just plain wrong, that's possible too. A lot of people around this country still believe in UFOs; they're wrong, but still they believe it. If you get a report from them, they're going to tell you all about UFOs, but you're going to make a judgment that they're not right. You're going to have to make that kind of judgment on what you get anyway. I don't have any problem with the counterintelligence process in that sense, looking suspiciously at it. My argument with Jim was that I thought he went overboard on it, that he had a blanket approach that the wily KGB was totally powerful and that everything we had was wrong, and I just disagree.

Student. So you accept that there's a certain amount of manipulation and that it's going to happen? That people are going to be telling you things that aren't backed up?

Colby. Oh, yes, people tell you things that aren't true every day of the week. Whether they say them as lies or mistakes doesn't make a hell of a lot of difference. They're still wrong.

Student. This has to do with whether or not we accept the validity of sources.

Oettinger. But that's a problem in academe as much as in intelligence. You're stating a fundamental problem of scholarship. Indeed, my daily work in researching and using sources out of industry, books, or whatever has exactly the same problem. I have to worry about whether they're trying to plant one on me so that I make an argument that's pro-AT&T or pro-IBM or something. It seems to me that problem is nothing unique to intelligence or the CIA; that's a fundamental problem of knowledge.

Colby. And it makes no sense to spend all our time struggling with the KGB at the expense of developing what I think is the CIA's purpose: to avoid the KGB and get over into the real centers of Soviet thinking. I couldn't care less about struggling along with the KGB; if I can get around them, that's fine. That's my argument with Jim. He thought the big problem was the KGB.

Oettinger. The parallel is the academic illusion that the way to knowledge is to read other academics and worry about what they say about you in their journals. If you get too hepped up with that, you miss the real world.

Student. But we can deal with other academics; with the Soviets we have a slightly different problem.

Colby. You can deal with the Soviets too; you've got a lot of different sources even on something as tough as the Soviets. You've got the published documents, you've got the published technical journals, you've got a whole lot of reporting. You've got independent reporters, you've got travelers, you've got lots of defectors you can compare. You've got foreign diplomats sending their reports, and you have a few spies you can check something against. So I don't buy the idea of our being totally led astray by some brilliant Soviet deception. That notion is built on the British success during World War II, when there were a couple of brilliant deception moves, most of which depended entirely on the fact that the only communication running out of Britain to the Continent was British-controlled. They had gotten hold of the German spy network, and they were running it, and there wasn't anything else, so Hitler believed what they put onto his desk about the existence of the Patton army and the likely landing on the Pas de Calais. It was a brilliant operation, but if the Germans had had independent news reporters wandering through the country of Norfolk reporting that those trucks were empty as they drove up and down the roads, the Allies would have had a hell of a time.

Student. We don't have reporters in Omsk and Tomsk.

Colby. No, but we've got photographs, and a lot of electronics and a lot of other things.

Student. Then hasn't deception kept up with the methods of coping with deception?

Colby. No, that's the whole point: we are moving into a world which is much more open, just due to technology. We can look at a Soviet factory and see how much power and what kind of coolants and materials go into it, and what kind of freight cars are there — on a steady basis.

At the moment there's a big argument on the subject of charged particle beams. If you read exactly what General Keegan says, he's really not far out. If you believe the implications, you're scared to death. What he says is that the Russians are working on charged particle beams — that may be true, that's probably pretty close. He then projects it to "If they make a breakthrough, they can change everything." Well, that's a big jump, but nonetheless you can check up on things like that. In other words, he puts a large importance factor on the low probability. In that sense I think he is a very valuable guy. A lot of people don't like him, they say oh, he's just running scared again, but I always thought he was a guy who said, "Daddy, the Emperor doesn't have any clothes on," and he was pretty useful.

Student. But it seems to me that — even if you grant more ability to deceive than you are willing to grant — that doesn't alter the argument. If you believe everything is deception, it seems to me you are in as much trouble as if you believe everything you look at is absolutely true.

Student. I certainly wouldn't say that you have to believe that everything's deception, but it seems to me, from what I've read about Angleton's opinions, that you build on information. You build on the credentials of one defector, and your acceptance of his credentials is used as the basis of another person's. So the possibility exists that you could have a really bad screwup later on because you had accepted the bona fides of somebody and it built up in one particular area. Not across the board, but in some particular area.

Colby. Well, my argument was that I really couldn't find the results of this activity. If I found a few defectors who clearly were false, fine, but I couldn't find anything other than suspicions. And suspicions are easy. It was an argument between two professionals; I ended up on one side and he on the other, and I had to make the decision. That's how we split.

Student. In marketing research you are constantly getting hit with public statements. You talk to somebody in a company, or in one of their competitors, and they may not tell you the truth. But if you talk to enough people, and your own internal people have some basic idea of what's going on, you get a pretty good idea: yes, there's a product of such-and-such a type that's coming on, they've been holding it back — why? It turns out they've got a problem in their plant. Some of your other people are running around saying they want to avoid cannibalizing because it's so profitable. Then you talk to the place where they're testing it and they say it's great. Then half the time the product breaks when you install it, and that explains why this supposedly super product isn't happening. You can often bury yourself in Machiavellian scheming, when the thing won't work. In business, if you have multiple conflicting scenarios or sources, a product manager's job is to go talk to political scientists and economists, so in essence he's your country desk officer. His function is to integrate those disciplines, and he is very much hired and marked and promoted on the basis of his ability to make those people work together. I was won-

dering what kind of attempt along those lines had been made by the intelligence community.

Colby. Well, there have been attempts. We have someone called the National Intelligence Officer; we've appointed about 10 or 12 of them, one for China, one for Europe, one for Latin America. I always thought they had the best job in Washington. They had an assistant and a secretary and no other staff, and their job was to wander around the community, try to shake all the ideas together, show where there was a difference of opinion and what the unresolved issues were, and then come up with some kind of judgment about the problems. And there are various committees in the intelligence community on various subjects, particularly military subjects, that get the different agencies together and try to shake it out. There is the annual estimate schedule. You always have an estimate on Soviet strategic tactical forces. In the course of working up that estimate the different agencies have to fuss and squabble and object to each other, and that's a useful process.

Student. I was reasonably certain that would happen for consistently large problems — but how about the occasionally large problem, let's say Brazil or Argentina?

Colby. More or less anybody with any responsibility can ask for an estimate on Argentina, and somebody will put it together and it will be the subject of interagency argument and debate.

Student. In the hearings before the Pike Commission, Congressman Dellums asked you some questions about whether or not the CIA was using its computers to help out its pension fund and to follow economic trends and use economic intelligence, similarly to what they claim the Soviets did in the grain deal in 1973. Are they involved in that kind of work?

Colby. His question was not about a pension fund, but an employee investment fund. The question was whether we were using our economic intelligence to beat the market and come out ahead. And the basic answer was no, we weren't.

Student. You said in your testimony that like most of the money market funds they had lost money, that their investments had not come out as well as they could have.

Colby. There wasn't any killing on it, but the basic answer is yes. As for economic issues, there's a whole office of economic intelligence, economic research, because economic problems are big world problems. The CIA put out public reports on the oil problem; they published a report a few months ago that said the Soviets are going to be an oil importer in the next couple of years. It's a matter of considerable importance.

Student. I'm more interested in the manipulative side. The Soviets are said to have used the information they were getting from the communications of grain companies to help them out in the grain deals.

Colby. Oh no, the Soviets in 1972 just came in and stole the market. They used the best form of totally free-enterprise capitalism. They kept their purchases secret, signed up a lot of contracts for large amounts of grain, got them all locked in, and then it all became

public and the prices went way up. After that we exacted an agreement out of them that they would buy a flat amount every year, 8 million tons, and if they were going to buy any more they damn well would come and tell us so beforehand and not go around and lock up a lot of sources and then run the price up; because they are big purchasers. The thing that we're concerned about is their ability to pick up microwave communications. We know for certain that they do it; all those gadgets on the roof aren't just for decoration, and it just so happens that they chose as their new embassy site one of the highest points in Washington. How we let them get away with it I'll never know.

Student. Isn't it directly under the microwave link from Alexandria, Virginia to upper Wisconsin Avenue?

Colby. But then, you see, if you absorb masses of this stuff, and then put key words into the computer, you can drag out by phone number or some criterion everything that comes out of a given office. That's the danger: that they will build up coverage of specific economic events, of matters that they can use for blackmail or exploitation. That's why the pressure's on for some solution to this problem, in the Washington area anyway, and the same problems occur in various other areas. I think just the unbearably large volume of American communications may solve it, since I doubt even a big Soviet computer could keep up with it.

Student. I want to get to the practical effects of a couple of the things you have raised, as an analyst in the CIA. For one thing, I think you kind of undersold yourself when you talked about being briefed on China and having ten people come in and talk to you. I think there's something that you forget as Director that you are aware of from the lower levels. I gave a briefing once, and when I walked in there were 85 people there. I would say six-tenths of them were there because of the opportunity to be briefed. They didn't know anything about China, but they felt they wanted to know what I knew because knowledge is power; that's how bureaucracy works. The other four-tenths were there to make sure I didn't flub up. And when the Director says, "I'd like to think about this problem," it gets transmitted down the line. The effect of this notion of protecting sources and methods and breaking down the barriers is that all your descriptions of your human sources read exactly the same: "usually reliable source." And when you are asked as an analyst to assess the reliability of the source you have no track record because they all sound the same. So what's happened now is that they've stopped asking the analyst on the grounds that they can't reveal the source and methods because they have to be protected. They're not going to give the analysts a look at the stuff that they can tell about it before they make fools of themselves. They're putting it out for everybody to see, and what they've done is put out an awful lot of garbage, all of which reads the same way, and you can't distinguish the source.

Colby. The only solution is to increase the personal relationship of the collectors and the analysts.

Student. The internal games don't change very much if under the guise of protecting sources you lock out the analyst.

Colby. You know the analyst too well, and you don't want someone you do know to know who your source is.

Student. We used to look askance at certain sources who consistently were giving us lousy information, and we would beat on the China people. I became known as the person who was after this source. I arrived in Hong Kong and bang, "What do you have against this guy?" But the effect of breaking down the barriers is that the source is going to be afraid the analyst is after him, instead of being protected by being unavailable.

Colby. Well, if the collector has to state a reliability factor, not just give a garbage source, then the problem is, when he issues a report, it just doesn't go to the CIA analyst, it goes all over hell's half acre. Therefore he's not going to put anything very specific on it. If on the other hand you can develop, compel, a relationship between an analyst and collector in the CIA, I think you'll get a better feel for which sources seem to be good. Now sometimes a source will be a fabricator, and your colleagues will think he's the greatest thing since sliced bread, and you're going to say no, and you're going to have an argument about it. There's nothing wrong with that. The arguments are good, and you're going to have to wait until it gets shaken out in some fashion.

Student. I get worried about the trend of this discussion, along with your earlier comment about thinking hard and soft intelligence and reliability. I think exactly the same thing is true of technologically derived intelligence. It's a matter of degree. At one extreme you talk about garbage in, garbage out. At the other extreme there's the tendency to believe that if you've eyeballed it, or if it has passed some technical censor, it's hard truth. My sense is that it is a spectrum and that, whether it's human intelligence or technical intelligence or book learning or anything else, assessing, and occasionally being able to swim upstream and check out in every detail the validity of a piece of information, is absolutely essential. Not in the sense that the President of the United States every day digs down personally to some kind of technical agreement, but that there are audit trails so that at various levels and at various times that can be done. I just don't buy the notion that there's a distinction between kinds of intelligence, that there are problems and technical stuff which is per se "hard," but that other material is "garbage in, garbage out."

Colby. Some people used to follow the thesis that nothing ever happened unless it had occurred in signals intelligence. You could have a bridge built across the Hellespont, but it wasn't there until the Egyptian attache reported it to Cairo. Seriously, there are people who work that way.

Yes, there is an audit trail. When one of our analysts writes a paper on what's going on in lower Slobbovia, she'll have a system of annotations as to where she got that paper, why they said that, and they'll have that pretty well recorded. Then if, as you do once in a while, you go back and run a post mortem on particular papers or particular crises you'll find that really a lot has depended on report X, which turned out to be a fabrication. But you didn't know it at the time, and you'd better be a little more alert.

Student. I'd like you to talk about the Agency's relationship to the press, particularly in light of what you said about the new concept of intelligence, that the CIA has to be accountable.

Colby. Well, in the past we had an officer whose sole function was to say "no comment," and that really was the press relations right there. It was supplemented, however, by a cer-

tain amount of background and briefing — not on the operational aspects of what the Agency was doing, but if somebody was going to be assigned to India, they'd come over and talk to the analysts about India and what was going on there. And I always thought that was a useful thing. Once we were going to try to have an occasional meeting with newsmen in which we talked about what was going on in the world, and gave them the benefit of our judgments. Well, the first meeting was such a total disaster that we never had another, because the newsmen couldn't have been less interested in what happened in the world. All they wanted to talk about was the CIA. And so I figured to hell with it.

Nowadays the CIA does have a certain public relations program to try to explain what intelligence is all about. The CIA is going to be, in detail, responsible to the committees of Congress as to the superstructure set up in the charter to control its day-to-day operations, and so forth. But I think there are issues that come up which CIA quite legitimately is going to have to speak to. I'm remembering the Pike report. When that came out I called a press conference to say I thought it was a lot of garbage. It was a very poor report. You know, I think you have to put your word out in this noisy society, and if you don't you won't be heard. So there is a certain press relationship, but you can't rely on the press.

Student. Do you think that point of view predominates in the Agency?

Colby. I'm not the best judge at this point, but I think there is a realization that you can't go back to the "stiff upper lip and no comment." I think we've gone beyond that in this country, and the institution is too big to have that kind of approach. It might be dandy, but you're not going to be able to do it, you're going to have to respond.

Student. I'd like to draw you, if I may, into a different area that hasn't come up and I think is important. In your book you talked about the limitations on the power of the Director of Central Intelligence to deal with tactical intelligence and its requirements. In this course we have used the metaphor of muscle for weapons in intelligence, and C³ as the eyes and nervous system. Pursuing that metaphor, the connection between what is strategic and what is tactical sort of disappears; it's an integrated whole. If the Director of Central Intelligence hasn't got enough muscle to pull it all together, then is it worth pulling together in some sense at some level? And if so, who might best do it? If not, how does one address this, if you buy the notion that a nervous system is a whole and if you chop off any of its parts something's going to go awry?

Colby. I think you're dealing here with at least two meanings of the word intelligence: the service that does the work, and the substance of what's reported. I'm inclined to agree with you that there isn't a distinction between tactical and national when you're talking about the product that's reported, because obviously you're interested in a new Soviet submachine gun in either case, since it can bear on the total balance of power. Is the fact that the Soviets have fitted their armored personnel carriers and their tanks for biological and chemical warfare a tactical problem, or a national one? Obviously it's both. But there is clearly a distinction in the intelligence services that work on national problems. They try to integrate all the evidence on a problem. Dealing with the Soviet Union is different from the problem of some battalion commander having enough sensors out in front of his position to make sure he isn't going to be surprised. And if you involve the Director of Central Intelligence in the problem of deciding exactly how many radars should be on each destroyer, I think you waste his time.

Student. That's so obvious that I have to take it for granted — but it also gets my head up. If those radars and the systems they feed data to are incompatible with the things he needs to get a picture that includes intelligence from national sources as well, then you've got a mismatch, because at the tactical level you've got something that's been designed to look for mines 100 yards out trying to work with something that gets information back from Washington — and the poor guy is sitting there and he's got two disparate pieces and there's nobody to pull it all together. In a sense your picture considers the services distinct but the functions need to be integrated, and that's a problem.

Colby. Well, I think you can solve that. There is a provision in the new charter and in the Executive Order that says that the national intelligence will support the tactical services. I think there should be an equal provision that says that the tactical services will be designed to contribute to the national needs. You've got to be able to hook them together so you pass the information back and forth. We fought the Vietnam war largely on signals intelligence collected by a lot of different aircraft and other gadgets out in listening posts in Southeast Asia, off the coast and up in the air and everywhere. All of it was sent back immediately to Fort Meade, integrated and fed back out to Vietnam in time for the brigade commander's morning coffee, at which time he'd be briefed on what he was facing right across his lines. I think that's a perfect example of the combination. It gave him the kind of tactical advice he needed with the support of some national systems. And the tactical picture was available to the national authorities in Washington, or anywhere else they were. I think this is a good thing.

If you think of tactical versus national as a service problem, I think you just have to say there are some things the Director's not going to get interested in, things he will leave to the services and let them worry about them — so long as they do interconnect. The Director is not going to decide how many radars are on a destroyer. I got into a position under the early directive, which said that I was responsible for tactical intelligence, and particularly the budget. I went through a series of briefings at the Pentagon, and one of the big issues I was dealing with was whether there should be a new Bachelor Officer Quarters for some unit out in Korea. I allowed that I couldn't give one good goddamn whether there was a new BOQ out there or not. I was totally wasting my time even being briefed on that subject, which should be taken care of by somebody in the Army or whatever service it was. It had gotten mixed up with technical intelligence because it was an intelligence unit, part of the budget.

Student. Are you sure there wasn't a KGB plan to divert you via the Pentagon?

Colby. It diverted me! One other thing that came out of it was my clear realization that the alternative is one big centralized, controlled, managed intelligence community that will feed its reports to all the customers at any level. I saw through that one right away. If you took intelligence away from the Army they would develop an institution called the Research Department and do exactly the same thing they've been doing — because they have to. They need their own intelligence that's responsive to what they are asking for from day to day. You'd be going through a useless exercise to separate them.

Student. Could you address tactical and strategic intelligence from the point of view of strategic warning? We have satellites for infrared plumes, to tell us if we're being

attacked. Estimates we've been given range from less than 15 to a maximum of 30 minutes. Obviously you don't have time to send that kind of information through the analyst, check sources, discuss it in the community and bounce it upstairs. As DCI have you taken that kind of information straight to the user because it's so direct and automatic you can't wait, but have to go ahead and divert a satellite to the testing area to see what they're building?

Colby. What we've done is set up a staff in the Pentagon which sits astride the inputs from the satellites that pick up that last-minute stuff and is also responsible for forward-thinking strategic warning. You know, it really is very unlikely that this thing will burst upon us, that 1,000 missiles will suddenly arrive from the Soviet heartland aimed at us. You're going to have an awful lot of indicators that something is wormy before that, just as we did before Pearl Harbor. The real mistake at Pearl Harbor was not that we were sitting there quietly not expecting to be attacked, but we thought the attack would take place in the Philippines and Malaysia, not Honolulu and Pearl Harbor. But we had a lot of warning that we were getting into a wormy situation with the Japanese. And, of course, the Japanese admiral had been directed that if he were discovered at sea, he was to turn around and go home, so all it would have taken was one reconnaissance aircraft out there to have aborted the whole thing.

Now, the Strategic Warning section in the Pentagon today doesn't just sit around there saying, "Well, guess the next 15 minutes are all right." They're responsible for looking forward to sense the political tensions that are arising, compare the indicator lists — there are masses of lists of evidence that tensions are getting higher — and so forth. That warns you to be more attentive to lots of different things.

Student. Where is the interface between the office of C³I that's been developed under an assistant secretary of defense, oriented to the immediate tactical situation, and DCI?

Colby. The strategic warning staff sitting in the command center in the Pentagon constitutes a combined DIA-CIA staff, with people from both agencies.

Student. So you're still very much a part of that?

Colby. Yes — particularly in thinking of warning a lot farther ahead than 15 minutes.

Student. I heartily agree with you about the need to better the two-way flow of information for decision making all the way down to the collectors. But when you were asked how you find out what the decision makers want, you said you listen at meetings, you pick up information. That's a very inefficient method, but it's pervasive. How do you set up a system so that the people down the line know what are the concerns of the people further up the line at each level?

Colby. I'll give you the theoretical answer and the real answer. The theoretical answer is that there's a system of requirements, very carefully considered by the President and his staff, as to what they want to know about the world. Obviously the President doesn't really have time to figure out what he wants to know about the world. He's counting on somebody telling him what he needs to know about the world, so he's not going to pay

any attention to that. Therefore a staff develops those requirements; and the staff, like most staffs, wants to make sure that it's never found wanting, so it covers everything in the requirements. That's a natural reaction. The requirements look like a list of everything in the world, and therefore they're useless to the collectors, who never read them because they express the obvious in great detail — so much detail that it bores you to tears when you read it and you know you're not getting anywhere. The only function it has is that sometimes the reports are indexed to the requirement numbers to prove what a good job you did in responding to the requirements.

Now, the real answer is twofold. One is osmosis, which works either well or poorly, depending on the situation. I think it's working better at the Director-President level now than it did when I was there, because the Director sees the President, I think, about once a week, and that's a good thing. He sits down and talks with him about intelligence. He probably gets a lot of hints as to what the President's concerned about in that meeting, and he can get things across formally. When I was there President Nixon was preoccupied with the Watergate problem and didn't have the time. Moreover, Henry Kissinger was in the circuit, and I wasn't about to indicate that I was trying to get around Henry, because I would have lost my head the next day. I don't object to that; he was right for the position; he was trusted and did a good job. I saw President Ford a lot more than I did Kissinger, but in meetings. But osmosis does work through regular meetings of leadership and filters down through the regular command structure.

The other side of the real picture is the intelligence officer's responsibility not to just sit there and say, "Well, golly, the Russians are coming over the hills, but it isn't here in the requirements so I guess I won't report it." He's responsible for being out there and reporting things that look like they ought to be reported and, if he's worth his salt, he's got his eye fixed out ahead and sees things that are threatening, and dangerous, and problems, and he reports them. If he gets a phobia about something that turns out to be absolutely boring to Washington, and Washington doesn't want any part of it, why, they can tell him "Cool it, forget it."

Student. The day before it comes true?

Colby. Well, maybe.

Student. It would seem, though, that contrasting requirements may mirror reality — may overstate the case to the extent that the requirements game may constrain budgets, which then make it difficult to do the kind of thing you described as reality. It seems to me the tensions come from formalization of the unreality through the budgetary process, and resulting loss of flexibility on the other side.

Colby. Well, sure, you do have to make judgments about resource allocations; everybody'd like to have big budgets and everybody can't have a big budget, so you've got to make choices. You're going to decide that you really don't need a 50-man staff to worry about Albania. It really would be a waste of time. I'm not even sure that anybody worries about Albania, but I'm sure that 50 men are better spent worrying about Yugoslavia or China. You're going to make those judgments as you look at the budget with some general sense of priority. But that doesn't mean you have to fill a requirement list that goes off into hundreds of items, which is what they are apt to do. In other words, I do

believe you have to set up some system of priority. Obviously you're going to spend more of your time and energy worrying about the Middle East than Latin America these days — though I can give you a good case that we need to spend more attention on Latin America. You have to cut them as you see them.