Seminar on Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence

Issues in Intelligence
Bobby R. Inman

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The single speaker among the previous year's guests who rejoined us in 1981, Admiral Inman had just been appointed to his new position after serving jointly as Director of the National Security Agency and Chief of the Central Security Service. He chose to skirt what he called the "personal memoir" of the previous year in favor of a discussion of the principles and problems of intelligence, particularly as they relate to command and control, and of some of the central issues facing intelligence today.

Inman. In thinking through, over a great many years now, the process of how one provides intelligence to support competent command and control decision-making, I've come to concentrate on the need to get away from the normal boundaries. Instead of talking about what kinds of systems, or who owns or operates the systems, the critical necessity is to look at the problem as a question of information needs and information flow — easy to say, but very hard to get the US Government to undertake. There is a tendency, when one talks about information needs and intelligence, simply to break out a requirements list. And that, typically, turns into either a very narrowly defined federal requirement for a specific operation or, much more likely, a general response to "Tell me everything you know about a given process or a given circumstance."

In the period immediately after World War II, when the current national security structure was formed, an attitude prevailed, in addressing the question of information needs, that we should endeavor to obtain any information we might ever need to support any form of government activity. It was the World War II experience that, in trying to deal

with everything from long-term strategic policy formulation to day-by-day engagement in conflict, you needed an incredible array of intelligence on any given target or topic, or set of targets or topics, if you were to be effective in either the planning and decision-making process or, much more importantly, the execution.

That general philosophy led to the creation of a number of organizations and agencies. It led to a substantial investment in people, in systems and in a general approach of making available a very detailed data base — essentially a classified Encyclopedia Britannica: all you might ever need to know about any given topic. In my perception, less attention was given during that phase to the timely flow of that information — whether for indications and warning purposes, crisis monitoring or execution. The Korean War then provided a major shot-in-the-arm investment toward the goal of supplying any information which might be needed. So you had, at the national level, a number of intelligence agencies cooperatively working together to develop a very large and expensive data base. Those were the days before computers were available, so the data was essentially hardcopy publications, slow to produce, very difficult to maintain, and heavily manpower-intensive.

When the national mood began to shift with, during, because of (you may choose the preposition) the Vietnam conflict, a very sharp shift occurred in attitudes about the question of information need, at least as it applied to intelligence. And by 1969 the mold was very firmly established: "What can we do without?" was the prevailing view. To meet the pressing detailed needs of Vietnam, assets were dropped that had been involved in maintaining in-depth data bases against a large number of geographic targets of relatively low current foreign policy or military operations need. The people were diverted to work in depth on Vietnamese problems. Thus, when the new "What can we do without?" view took hold in 1969 and we began reducing assets — people, in large measure — there was no return to maintenance of that earlier expansive data base. Rather, there was a move simply to remove people from the inventory. And so the general health of that data base began to deteriorate at the end of the 1960s. It got a stimulus in the late 60s and early 70s, when new technology being developed, partly for the space race, offered new ways to access information which had previously not been available at all. But its general decline really began to impact on the US intelligence capability and ability to deal with information needs in the early 70s, with the decision to trade off manpower to buy advanced technical capability.

Let me digress, to deal with a myth. The popular literature holds that we gave up human intelligence collection assets to buy technical collection capability. I stress: that's a myth. We really gave up manpower-intensive technical collectors; and we did not buy the manpower to process the huge volumes of different additional information which were made accessible by a whole range of technical sensors. If you scan the notes of last year's talk you will know that I picked up much of my interest in the information flow part of this information-need/information-flow equation through watching the Government's difficulty in dealing with crises, beginning with the capture of the Pueblo, and the impact that slowness in the flow of available information had in restricting the government's options in trying to respond to that crisis. We made very little progress, at least through the first

half of the 70s, in dealing with that problem. We had lots of studies and a fair amount of investment in command and control systems that — from this critic's vantage point — too often were focused on ownership questions rather than on the degree to which the systems would accelerate the movement of information to a whole range of people who might be able to make effective use of it. We really did not get any change in the general attitude toward dealing with information-need/information-flow until the end of the 1970s. Now, I believe, we have again crossed a major obstacle: the attitude is moving toward "What do you need to know," not "What can you do without," and there is a growing awareness that much more has to be done than has been done to date in facilitating information flow. As one approaches that, one needs to keep in focus why you need the information, and what are the time limits dictating the speed with which you must be able to move information and assimilate it for decision-making purposes.

Information needs for information flow ought to be addressed for five main categories of information use:
- Policy formulation
- Force development
- Contingency planning
- Crisis management
- Warfare

The timeliness and degree of detail you need varies substantially among them. Since the government's basic investment decisions are normally made at the national level, there is a great tendency to focus on policy formulation and force development in deciding how much you should invest and in what form, either for obtaining information or for insuring its flow. Therefore, in the past decade of "Say what you can do without," there's been a tendency to downplay the need for information for contingency planning, to some degree for crisis management, and to a substantial degree for warfare. Vietnam was behind us — we weren't going to do that any more. Korea and World War II were even more remote. So there was substantially less concern about the depth of detail on individual targets in vast areas of the world one might need to have, and to have rapidly, to support direct planning or execution of military operations.

In the policy formulation phase, and even in force development, information needs are reasonably well defined. Capabilities have been developed to deal with those by counting things, monitoring treaties, verifying arms control requirements, trying to understand weapons capabilities to guide your own development of new weapons. It is when we turn to contingency planning, crisis management or warfare that the real stress falls on the information flow of the command and control side. I believe if you are really going to improve that, you have to look at the process in a matrix. You have to look at each of those five major areas (probably you need to add "execution of foreign policy" or "support for foreign policy" somewhere high up in the list) in both a geographical and a functional sense.

Geographically, we have been heavily focused throughout the 1970s on the Soviet Union as a principal topic of concern, but less so on much of the rest of the world. For Eastern Europe, the Middle East, North Korea — areas where there was real potential

that we might have to deal with a conflict situation — we kept up a certain level of activity. But the Western Hemisphere — Central and South America — and also Africa and South Asia — for which during the 1950s we made substantial efforts to understand religions, cultures, internal political factors — fell by the wayside. And you know, simply from reading your newspaper, the number of times we as a nation have been surprised by events that have developed in those countries: unstable political situations, sudden shifts in the availability or cost of energy sources.

So I would set forth the principle that one needs to look at geographical targets, and that this country needs a given level of information on all parts of the world with which we have to interact — at least a level of detail sufficient to understand the key factors in all the countries with which we have to deal. To understand their degree of internal stability, to understand at least to some extent the economic forces at work, and to have at least a passing understanding of their military capabilities. And, increasingly, to understand what those capabilities may mean to us if they include equipment of friendly origin — US, British, French, German, Italian — as well as equipment that comes from the Soviet bloc. Iran is a case in point. It suddenly moved from being a fast friend to being a holder of hostages, and we contemplated the prospect of military activity in the rescue effort a year ago today. And the equipment we had to try to deal with, to collect information on, for direct operation support, was US equipment, with which US collection systems had never been designed to deal.

In a functional sense, meanwhile, one has to pay more attention to political and economic intelligence issues. At the same time a substantial level of effort, at least for the more advanced countries, must be focused on scientific and technical intelligence matters, watching for signs of instability, paying additional attention to internal security, in countries that have the potential for becoming targets of the Soviets and their proxies, or where our own specific national, economic or military interests may be directly at stake.

Looking at information needs from yet another angle, to make information usable to support command and control, you have to go through a basic process: collection, processing, analysis and reporting. Currently the collection process is largely seen either from the human collection or technical collection standpoint. Human collection all too often is taken to mean simply spies. And I would stress for you again the impact of the drawdown all across the national security account for a decade, which has impacted very heavily on the Foreign Service, to the point where a great deal of the information we normally should rely on from human reporting, from overt collection by Foreign Service personnel, simply is not forthcoming, because for much of that decade we have put a premium on reduction of American presence. And when you have gone through a long period when an ambassador makes his points with the President by the number of people he has reduced from the American presence in a country, rather than on the depth of understanding of that country's internal currents, crosscurrents and events, it should not be a great surprise that you end up being caught unawares by new developments or new activities.

It is a fact of life that a great deal of the world is not as open to us as it was 20 years ago. For a variety of reasons a lot of countries, including newly emerged countries, feel no need to have a close relationship with the US or to make information easily available to us about their own internal activity. It is therefore a hard fact of life that for a good deal of information, particularly to really understand the internal security equation, clandestine human collection must be contemplated. We can no longer get away with focusing clandestine human collection solely on the communist countries.

Technical collection, divided into two broad categories — imagery and signals intelligence — can do a great deal for you, for your basic data base and for your information needs, depending on what those needs are and where they are. It can do marvelous things for you in monitoring treaties, for counting, if the weather's right. Potentially you can develop systems that will even give you an all-weather capability. What they will not tell you is what enemy intentions are, or how enemy capabilities will be used.

Now let me deal briefly with another myth: that you must have human intelligence to find out about intentions. Imagery will not give you intentions; radar intercepts will rarely, other than inferentially, indicate intentions. Interception of telemetry will not give you intentions. But I refer you back to the released information from World War II on the battle of Midway. Certainly from communications intelligence a great deal of intentions information was available, and proved to be of enormous value to our command and control process in effecting successful execution of military operations. It will not surprise you that I am not prepared to go into greater detail on the potential for success in deriving intentions from communications intelligence, but I can say that it is a very important part of understanding intentions. The human side is your other recourse, and you really have to work on both sides constantly to insure that you are not caught by surprise.

Now, as to processing: when one goes through a period of austerity, a decade of saying, "What can you do without," those who are most intimately involved try to operate intelligence organizations and keep them going, to protect the critical essential kernel, and that usually is access. Therefore they will try to protect the number of agents in the field and the technical collection access in various areas; and it is the processing function — even more than analysis — that tends to be underfunded. When you are making great leaps forward in technology, and you are maintaining a stable or slightly reduced analytical work force, a decision to acquire additional technical capabilities to give you huge volumes of information, and not to make the processing investment that will offer the opportunity of greater productivity, is a very foolhardy approach to the problem — but it's taken us a decade to really understand that and to begin to turn it around. That will get a great deal of additional attention, I believe, in the early part of the decade ahead.

In the field of analysis there is a manpower part, driven by simply the need to deal with volumes of information. But there is a much greater need for quality and, as elements of that quality, for people to understand in substantial depth the targets they are examining. You cannot take an individual, however well educated, put him on a new target and give

him bits and pieces of information, and expect that he will give you insightful, in-depth understanding of what those fragments mean in a very short time. The track record of the decade is that the analytical elements, in fact, were not drawn down as much as the collection side — notwithstanding some public mythology that might lead you to believe otherwise.

But the problem, I believe, is that we did not expand our analytical work force at the same time that the volume of data was being vastly expanded, and we suffered significantly from the public attitude toward getting the quality of input to that analytical effort that we had been able to draw in an earlier decade. There is a perceptible impact to that. We also failed to buy the technical kinds of things that would have improved the productivity of the analyst and lessened some of that impact. And again, as you draw down your investment, incentives which produce quality unfortunately tend to be among the earliest casualties. One gives up the extra incentives to maintain in-depth language proficiency in a variety of languages, one gives up the sabbaticals that let someone get a totally fresh outlook on the problems. One gives up, not necessarily by choice, the relationships and the dialogue with other organizations, other institutions, which may not have access to the same depths of classified information, but that have different insights and attitudes about the same kinds of targets you're examining, that might have helped you to understand what those bits and pieces mean.

In the twenty-plus years I have spent in the intelligence field, it has been my experience that you almost never get, whether by human or technical collection, something that tells you the entire story about matters in which you are interested. You will on rare occasion get the manual that tells you exactly how the new radar works, and it's great when you get it, but it's a very rare event. Usually what you have are bits and pieces of information, sometimes large volumes of the same kinds of bits and pieces, and your conclusions about what all those mean are formed in large measure by the assumptions you bring to examining them and by the rigor with which you are forced to defend your assumptions and your conclusions. Retaining objectivity is probably the greatest prize for analysts in the intelligence process, probably also in other fields. But when you leave people in the same area for a long time without any break, without any incentive to go elsewhere, without any encouragement to continue to be promoted by broadening themselves, you run a very high risk that they will become enamored of answers for the topics they're dealing with, that they will select those bits and pieces of information which support their predetermined theory, and that they will be far less likely to give any credence at all to bits and pieces of information which would challenge that or send them off in an entirely different direction.

Finally comes reporting. All the collection, processing and analysis do you very little good if you do not have the mechanisms to report the results, to disseminate the information to a whole range of users. In a period of reduced manpower there is an automatic tendency to try to make one format answer the needs of everyone. Or you will try to use a single daily publication or a single annual estimate as a means to convey the distillation of all of your knowledge. Since it is written to cover every potential user's interest, it all too often ends up as a compilation that will be read in depth by few people if

any, except maybe another intelligence analyst, and that will not convey the essential information to a decision-maker in any of those basic areas — policy formulation, force development, contingency planning, crisis management, or even warfare — with the kind of precision and tailoring of detail that will allow you to accelerate the command and control function rather than serving as a drag on it.

You can organize in a whole variety of ways to tackle the problems of acquiring information, understanding it and getting it to flow. At the national level we have a command and control structure, developed in the immediate post-World War II period and designed to fight another World War II. We have a force structure and various departments that have grown up tied to that basic approach and structure, very resistant to any change which might alter their assigned missions or functions, and therefore we have a great reluctance to approach new problems or new ways of solving problems. Anyone who comes forward bearing a new approach to deal with a problem is suspect of fostering a Trojan horse to try to take away some of their missions and functions.

I'd love to get into that topic with you in much greater detail. Unfortunately I couldn't think of any really good unclassified example. I have all kinds of classified horror stories. In my last four years at the National Security Agency we tried to focus on information needs and information flow, and to get interested in the needs at a whole variety of military levels, and we found there were really some unique new ways to use new technology to access information. And that if you had the kind of dedicated communications that would insure rapid, uninterrupted information flow, you could put in the military's hands information of potentially great value for planning their operations. But you had to jump over several chains of military command to do that, and the decision about what to provide them was being made in a distant area not directly involved in their operations. Some people were willing to undertake that gamble and do some interesting experimenting, but they were relatively few.

Oettinger. Sounds very familiar — you might have been describing a university — or industry.

Inman. In trying to solve these problems over the decade ahead, one has to use the mechanisms that are now in place. You have the Director of Central Intelligence. He heads the Central Intelligence Agency, which oversees the coordination responsibility for all clandestine human collection and has some substantial scientific and technical intelligence collection capabilities. Some major analytical elements of the government, and the senior customers of the government, are his special province. Under the Director also are some coordination responsibilities and, in the current structure, some resource allocation responsibilities for a very substantial portion of the overall national intelligence effort.

When you're telling people what to do without, they are very reluctant to cooperate or have any dialogue with you at all. If — as part of a new approach toward defense, toward the entire national security field — substantial additional money flow is going to become available, and the Director of Central Intelligence is going to be the mechanism by which some of that largesse appears, there may indeed be potential for finding new avenues for

dialogue with people at many different levels of the command and control process who will be willing to undertake new experiments and new approaches. It's on that wistful, hopeful note that I'll stop this long monologue and ask for questions.

Oettinger. I'd like to take you up on your point about resource allocation. We've seen that situation, of course, in other areas where we're in the process of dismantling resource allocation schemes, as in the telecommunications industry. Do you feel that there have been other times since 1947 when there were increases in available funds and such coordinating mechanisms as were in place, including the Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, were pretty impotent in spite of the largesse? You said a moment ago that you thought organizational changes were not in the wind. Do I infer correctly that you believe that things like the Intelligence Community Staff and the statutory, and more particularly the Presidential directive, authorities of the Director of Central Intelligence enabled his office even to channel largesse, let alone arbitrate cutbacks?

Inman. The jury is still very much out on the issue. First, the new administration has not yet decided what the organization will look like. But notwithstanding a lot of things said during the transition time, I do not find any impetus for major realignment of organizations themselves or the way they function, at least not until they have been given a chance to try to work better. There is one very substantial difference that has evolved with time, because of the great sensitivity related to sources and methods and, in fact, our national unwillingness to admit that we engage in intelligence activity as a necessary and fundamental part of government activity. Throughout the 1950s and 60s decisions were made in very closely held groups, and Intelligence dealt with Congress by looking for support from a handful of committee chairmen.

That's changed now in very major ways. First, there are new mechanisms to examine needs and requirements and look at the whole allocation process. Their performance has been pretty spotty, but I'm not persuaded that the problem is an organizational one; it may be more one of people and approach. The major change is in Congress, where two Select Committees now serve as authorizing committees, much as the Armed Services Committees do for the Defense Department, with all the mechanisms necessary to conduct detailed discussion at any classification level and examine the process in very substantial depth.

An interesting feature in watching this process over the last decade is that Congress by itself, substantially ahead of the Executive Branch, reached the decision that we needed to start investing more in our intelligence capabilities. Had the leadership not been in the same party as the President, I think we would have seen a greater impetus to do more, and more quickly, but they found themselves in the very difficult position that it was not politic to add to the budget of the President of their own party when he was unwilling to have them do so.

We're going to have an interesting time now with the split Congress. The appropriations committees are not necessarily as far advanced as the authorizing committees in

accepting the need to do more. I believe you had as one of your earlier lecturers this year* one of those who served as an anchor for this process for a good deal of the 1970s — a very intelligent anchor. I would reserve for a year, maybe two years, comment on whether the current organizational structure, in the Executive Branch as well as the Legislative Branch, offers the opportunity to deal with these problems much more intelligently than we have in the past. I think the potential is there.

Student. You mentioned that the large database that had been accumulated in the 1950s started falling apart at the end of the 60s. That was about the time when some of the really big mainframe computers started coming out — the IBM 360, for example.

Inman. The potential was there. If we had simply devoted the manpower to convert the database to computers at that stage of the game, we could probably have avoided a good deal of the dropoff we had. But it was a manpower question, and manpower had to be either added or diverted to do that. We did begin to make use of computers in some parts of the intelligence game. The database in the technical areas was substantially better than elsewhere; it stayed at a higher level. Where it really dropped was in understanding the events that shaped internal political and economic forces, inside a great many countries on which our effort simply fell below the level where the resources could follow the problem.

Student. When the decision was being made not to devote the manpower to converting the database —

Inman. Even to maintaining a database, much less converting it.

Student. Was the problem that people did not understand what the computer would actually do? Often when you start using a large computer the locus of power shifts. The data processing people become more powerful than the people who used to administer the operation.

Inman. I think there may have been some slowness in recognizing the full potential of maintaining the database in a computer, and the degree to which it would be accessible for all kinds of analytical efforts and manipulation. I can remember my own reactions in the early 1960s, when reports I was accustomed to dealing with from the field began to arrive in computer format. I was outraged! I had been able to deal with the volume of field reporting, but not this. That probably did not help the conversion process; but it was much more a problem of lack of allocation of resources. We had shifted to the "What can you do without" mode. And there was a basic sense that, for a great many of these countries, we really did not have a pressing need to know. After all, the world of the 1970s was going to be one in which détente was moving; we needed to direct our intelligence assets toward monitoring treaties, and we felt we really did not need to know that much about the rest of the world — we weren't going to get involved.

*See the discussion by Charles W. Snodgrass earlier in this volume.

Underlying that was an almost know-nothing attitude: that knowing too much had caused us to get into difficulties. That is part of the anti-Vietnam syndrome. If we did not know about some distant disturbance, we wouldn't be inclined to get involved in it. And that accelerated the general approach of simply not investing in retaining basic knowledge and understanding of what was happening in foreign countries. In that kind of approach, when a host government is disinclined to have its watchers report dialogue with the opposition, it's pretty easy to say, "Let's use those people elsewhere, don't upset the local ruler, he doesn't want us talking to the opposition in any case." When you are putting your focus on drawing down, on demonstrating that you have reduced numbers of people, you are not likely to have retained observers who understand what is being said in the bazaars and mosques and on the campuses. And by the time the situation moves to a prerevolutionary stage, where there is data that you can collect by technical means, you're already in deep, deep difficulty in understanding or being able to respond to activity in that country. Much of the database I'm talking about is information which in large measure is available through overt human collection, nothing clandestine about it. But we simply stopped doing that, stopped maintaining the information in any regular kind of way.

Student. I have a question, and a caveat. First off, for background, I'm in Army Intelligence, and the last time you and I were in the same room was in I Corps Group in the All-Source Center in Korea. I had the same question then, but discretion being the better part of valor, I thought I'd wait until a later time. So this is that time. The caveat: when I raised a similar question at the last session, Professor Oettinger admonished me that several speakers from last year, including Admiral Inman, were very much in the forefront of the move toward decompartmenting some of the information. My question is on that general area, and I think it relates to crisis management, analysis and so on.

I realize, and agree, that information flow is important. But it seems to me that there is another basic problem with crisis management, and if we ever are in a war situation the same thing would hold true there. I think it goes back to our experience in World War II and the feeling that came out of that conflict about the great need to protect information. What happens is that, because of compartmentation, people in other military branches, areas other than intelligence, and even probably in areas outside the military, are not familiar with what information is available, how to use it, how to combine it with other things, what the dangers are in terms of threat, and that reduces people's ability to use the information. Overall, I think it hurts the credibility of the intelligence community, because so much can't be shared that it begins to turn people off. It seems to me it would not be very valuable just to open up a slot here or a slot there. Usually when people talk about decompartmenting things the reaction is, "Well, maybe we can get another couple of slots here or there." I think what might be more valuable, in a peacetime situation, at least — and discounting the obvious need to know where it touches the technology involved, and sources when there's a danger there, and that sort of thing — would be to open up a lot of the material, in sanitized or in whatever form, to people at a lower level, getting them used to working with the information. Then when the crisis comes, when the war comes, they'll know what to ask for and how to use it and that sort of thing.

Inman. I agree on some parts of what you say, and differ on some others. My views on this area are largely shaped by my experience in the Seventh Fleet in supporting combat operations in Southeast Asia, and when there was substantial fear on a couple of occasions that I was going to have to support combat operations in Northeast Asia. That pressure does wondrous things in cutting through the ownership syndrome. You very quickly get down to basic essentials: your ability to get information fast, and hopefully accurately. The most important thing is that it's fast. If it isn't accurate, very often you'll drop the source, you won't want it any more.

The second thing that happens, though, after you turn it on, is that you get drowned in information that is of peripheral interest. When you have a crisis, in particular, everybody is suddenly willing to turn on what they know, even down to a fairly compartmented level. And people at the receiving end never have the time at that point to sort through the huge volume of data which, in a crisis, suddenly becomes available — unlike the peacetime situation, when usually you complain that there isn't enough available to keep you going. I have a strong belief that most of the imagery data can be totally decompartmented; it has no need to be compartmented, because there is very little that a target country can do, without great expense, to deprive you of the value of the intelligence you have derived, even if it knows about it. In fact, if you can cause that country to spend a lot of money on camouflage, cover and deception instead of on a new weapons system, that may not be a bad tradeoff, because once the enemy starts moving, that cover and deception isn't going to be a great deal of value to him.

On other matters the potential for loss of access is much greater. And there you're forced to a different approach: to take information out of compartments entirely, sanitize it at the very first point of access, and to flow it by the fastest available communications into the hands of those who can potentially use it for tactical purposes. (If I appear to be searching for words as I go through this process, it's simply because we are tiptoeing through some highly classified areas, sources and methods, and distribution questions.)

Several instances in the last couple of years have demonstrated that that approach not only can work, but can make high-quality information available at the lowest tactical levels very rapidly. It produced an interesting reaction. While the operators were happy to have the information for an exercise, they quickly grew tired of having to deal with the volume on a daily basis when it didn't have direct relevance to what they were doing. And there was some substantial concern at several levels in the intelligence profession that they were not involved in the process of deciding what to take out of compartments — that the decision was being made on a higher level.

So you set up to create information flow, both in the compartmented levels and down through the intelligence chain and out in the most rapid way to the operators. You then run into a different problem, and that's the one of cross-confirmation: when intelligence people are not sure that a given compartmented piece of information is the same as a sanitized one that's available somewhere else. How you confirm that is one of your problems.

A final point on your question: I am persuaded that trying to deal with security clearances by limiting the number of allocated billets is asinine in the extreme, and that security is achieved by making sure that those who have to deal with the information understand the hazards if they misuse it. Much of our problem with leaks comes from people who really do not understand the sensitivity of the information available to them. So if you believe that someone may have to understand or use information derived in some sensitive way, you're far better served by throwing the net over them and clearing them so that they understand that. That doesn't mean you then flow to them day by day everything that can be acquired by that means. You give them the information that is relevant to what they are dealing with at a given point in time. This is an area in which I hope to make some progress in the years ahead.

Oettinger. May I just pursue that point, because in a number of other areas the notion of exercising seems to play an important role. There's a fair amount of complaint that there's not enough exercising. I think I heard you say that the continuing flow of information at a high volume might deaden people or, at least, they don't want it. What would be a useful or viable approach to exercises in a situation like that?

Inman. You can make a good deal of progress through exercises, and there are some good examples of that. Again, the problem is manpower-intensive. It takes a good deal of time and effort to orchestrate exercises. Often, in particular, the real world doesn't cooperate to give you a flow of information in the volume or with the relevancy you need for the exercise. So you have to artificially construct intelligence, make it really good, and that takes a substantial staff. Where that investment has been made, I believe the results have been very promising. But, because it's a substantial investment, and you're already strapped to deal with the day-by-day problems, it does not happen with great frequency.

Oettinger. Over the last few sessions much of what we've heard, particularly from the field commanders, was that we're lost without exercise, and that in the absence of exercise most of the bits and pieces don't really fit together, not only information but everything else. If the investment is not made in exercising, why bother with everything else, since it won't help in the end?

Inman. I am in strong disagreement with some of that. Again it comes from the experience in the Seventh Fleet and on the combat operations side, not from my last series of jobs. There is a tendency at a number of levels to say that what needs exercising is control of the collection operations, so those activities have to be pulled away from their peacetime missions to direct the exercise collection. The litany goes, "If they don't exercise collection in peacetime, they won't be able to use it effectively in war." But they don't need to exercise the collection process the whole time as long as they're willing to tell those who are exercising it what their operational needs are, and as long as they will focus on information need and information flow rather than on control of assets. It came down to recognizing that you often didn't care who was doing the collecting; it didn't matter who you got to collect the information if they were competent at it and could flow it to you quickly enough so that it had the potential to be useful.

The second lesson you quickly learned was that you could be drowned. In a crisis, suddenly there was not a great difference between the kinds of interest at the national and tactical levels, for everybody wanted to follow the same problem. But you did not have the manpower or the communications capability to receive and sort through everything you got. In 1972, when the Indo-Pakistani Conflict task force was sent out to the Indian Ocean, there was an immediate "Turn on everything you know about that section of the world" response. Well, when you say that to the large technical operations, they indeed know how to turn on that kind of process. They start flowing huge volumes of data; the computer may well be selecting anything which may be relevant in the broadest sense. And the poor guy in the field is drowned. In about two or three days he says, "Please turn it off," because he simply cannot assimilate the information or make sense of it to make smart operational decisions.

Student. I wonder if, in the same context, we could talk about the level of command you are having to deal with now. With national command authorities, and looking at the problems of crisis management, of preparation for war, do you see the same kinds of things holding true? From time to time we see difficulties with crisis management in terms of the computer-driven infrastructure under the Joint Chiefs, that sort of thing. I believe the Army Chief of Staff, General Meyer, said recently that there was a greater need for commanders to rationalize their information demands than there was to improve the hardware. Do you see the same kind of thing at the national command level right now, in terms of the ability to have the civilian leadership actually exercise its actual command authority, and to know where to go for the information, what kinds of things to look for — particularly with the change of administration now?

Inman. You'll forgive a cynical approach in response, maybe from having spent too many years watching too many changes of administration. Whether the President changes or not, much of the leadership at the next level tends to change every four years if not sooner. And there is always a learning curve. In some cases you're fortunate — it's only a few months — other times it runs at least a year; and particularly if they stop to study organization you can be sure that it will run longer than a year. There is a tendency to get fascinated early with the nuclear command and control procedures, and to learn how to operate that mechanism. But they do not tend to deal as quickly with command and control problems for contingencies or for crisis monitoring. Frankly, every administration that I've watched since the 1950s has had to get involved in its first crisis before it really focused on how it could get the system to perform, either to really refine its needs, or to decide how it would operate the process.

This is an area where worries about leaks do enormous damage to effective human communications, which is a major factor in making this process work better, faster, more smoothly. A new administration's people come in, they've either looked with horror on, or have benefited from leaks by, the previous administration. They get started; they suddenly start reading about their agenda for the National Security Council sessions, or the results of a meeting which only five or six people attended, whose details they consider classified. That does not encourage them to involve as many people as might be able to

contribute to contingency planning or crisis management. When you limit the number of people you involve, you run a high risk that you will fail to consider elements essential to the plan. This is not a forum where I really can get into any great detail on the hostage rescue, but I believe very strongly that the extreme compartmentation in the planning involved exacted a pretty severe price. Some of the command and control information flow portions worked very well, but that was fortuitous.

Student. You indicated the value of determining intentions through communications intercepts. That's an area I deal in all the time. A lot of people are looking at the Soviets and saying, "My goodness, look at all the jammers they have; therefore we should have a lot of jammers." Now, if we ever get ourselves kneedeep in communications jammers, do we hang ourselves as users of information and gatherers of intelligence, or is that effect limitable to a tactical front?

Inman. That's a topic on which I have very strong views. I'm sorting through an acceptable unclassified answer to it, and finding that pretty hard. Let me simply say that from my experience over the past 20 years, in a conflict situation when the military commander really understood intelligence, demanded a lot from it, and really used it, the decision in most instances went for exploiting as opposed to jamming. In the case of radars, or things like that, the decision is very quickly to jam, for you want to suppress the enemy's ability either to detract from or detect your signal. But in communications intelligence, in the instances I can recall, in conflicts running back pretty far (real conflicts as opposed to exercise), the commanders who really understood intelligence and made logical use of it usually decided to continue exploiting rather than to jam.

Student. How do you interpret, then, the Soviets' heavy investment in jamming equipment?

Inman. There is a different side of that equation. One of the things you always have to decide, when you jam, is your potential for disrupting. If there is substantial redundancy in communications, command and control, so that there's a pretty good likelihood of having alternate paths to turn to, then the instant gain from jamming is not very high, and you'll vote for exploitation. But if the communications capability is drawn down to a single path, or at least to very little redundancy, the gain in totally disrupting operations by massive jamming, since there aren't going to be alternate paths to follow, may be such that you may be inclined to try. In Czechoslovakia in 1968, my recollection is that the Soviets actually took a pretty sophisticated, as opposed to a brute force, approach to the problem. I think that generalization is about as far as I can go in describing that experience.

Student. You pointed to the high correlation between intelligence people and the country they cover and the quality of intelligence that we're getting, and that we seem to have an increasing problem with sensitive understanding of languages. How do we go about closing that gap?

Inman. It's going to take a dedicated effort that the government will have to sponsor to bring substantial enhancement to area study and language study — efforts and incentives in a much broader framework than we have now. I have been carrying on a dialogue about this with selected congressmen, people in government and a few people in industry over the last several years as I have had to come to grips with the shortage of quality linguists. You find a lot of people who are willing to study languages, but you have to take the time to train them — a couple of years' investment. They're not there in the market, ready to buy, at least not in the broad range the intelligence community needs.

An even more pressing need is not in collection, but on the analytical side, in depth of understanding. There are some things that you can do in the very near term: incentives to sustain language capabilities, fellowships, restoring advanced language study. I've floated some other ideas which have not been popular with my military colleagues. I would be willing to consider disestablishing the present military language school which now exists and using it as the nucleus to extend language study to campuses. I've explored that, and found that while some institutions may be reluctant to do it, a substantial number of others would be very enthusiastic to have that very substantial influx of students. It would produce additional teaching opportunities for graduate students. I'd like to see tax incentives to encourage industries to make grants to language studies. We may get a rider to introduce that in this session of Congress. I don't now how it will fare in the current climate, or how that fits in with the broader economic problem.

Unfortunately, trying to push more government activity in funding language education and the rest of it, at a time when one is trying to very sharply cut the size of government activity, is dicey. And, you know, there have been a number of studies — the Murphy Commission, and there was another one a year or two ago — looking at the language question, and nothing ever comes out of them. Nothing ever happens to create a substantial spurt. There may be enough forces at work now, particularly in terms of the degree to which one can demonstrate that you really do get a quality improvement by that investment in effort. It may be hard to document, but we are going to try.

Student. We had a program early in the 50s to send both military and government people to the universities to study language. It was a very good program. I'd like to see it revived.

Inman. The Army and the Navy each had their own language institutes, and they did some pretty good work at times. Then they were consolidated into a single one, and the bureaucracy worked a lot of hardship holding down grade levels so that there was no input of youngsters and, at the grade levels at which they are hired, no great encouragement to stay on. Since the program was also implemented in a fairly bureaucratic way, the problem was compounded. The Air Force used universities much more. And I'd been particularly interested in the Syracuse program — that spurred my interest because, as I have gone to other agencies, some of the best linguists I found had gotten their start as linguists in the military and from Syracuse. Once again in this area, as in so many others, we're going to have to rediscover the wheel, but hopefully we will at least rediscover it, that is the essential part.

Student. Do you support migration of managers from industry into the intelligence community at a high level? Is that taking place at all right now? And if not, is there a possibility that that sort of thing can take place?

Inman. You can have, and need to have, a mixed migration in some areas — certainly in managing research and development activities. In other areas — the resource allocation process, financial management, contracting, the rest of it — you need to bring in a mix of people who have experience in that area, who have seen it from that side. It's proven useful in looking from the analytical side at new technology, or at technology being employed or being developed in other countries. It is not a custom now, however, to bring managers from industry into the analytical process, or even into higher-level management of many agencies. We may see some interesting changes in that in the months ahead. There are some forces that work that would try, for instance, using lawyers rather than academics as analysts, to see how they would address those bits and pieces and lay out the information.

What I'm getting at is a current problem we're having, in addressing, in trying to understand, the nature of revolutionary violence: terrorism, wars of national liberation, or some combination thereof. People who have looked at that problem narrowly for a long time have become very defensive. They do not have hard evidence; they've had very little collection activity; because they're low on the priority list they have a fairly small body of data to deal with; they have reached their conclusions about what they know. And it's painful for them at that point to go back and lay out what precisely they do know, identify where the gaps in their knowledge are, scrutinize their judgments about the process. Is there information there that they would not be able to collect? We may try to see how lawyers would approach that problem of weighing the evidence that's there, seeing what's missing and sorting it out.

That's a very long-winded way of saying that it's hard for somebody with no experience to move into management levels in the intelligence community, and be effective fairly quickly. If you're prepared to invest some time, then it's a very healthy thing, bringing in new ideas and new approaches. But since they are expected to arrive and begin being effective immediately, it's very hard.

Student. Would startup costs be such a detriment? Wouldn't the increased objectivity, or perhaps the fresher look of someone migrating, be a worthwhile benefit?

Inman. I see it as probably the principal impetus to cause you to want to have at least some fresh flow in. Retaining objectivity is the hardest part of this process.

Oettinger. Along that line, we've seen in the papers some mention of reviving the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) or something like it. In last year's seminar, Lionel Olmer, who was the PFIAB's last executive director, said that the

that is the essential part.
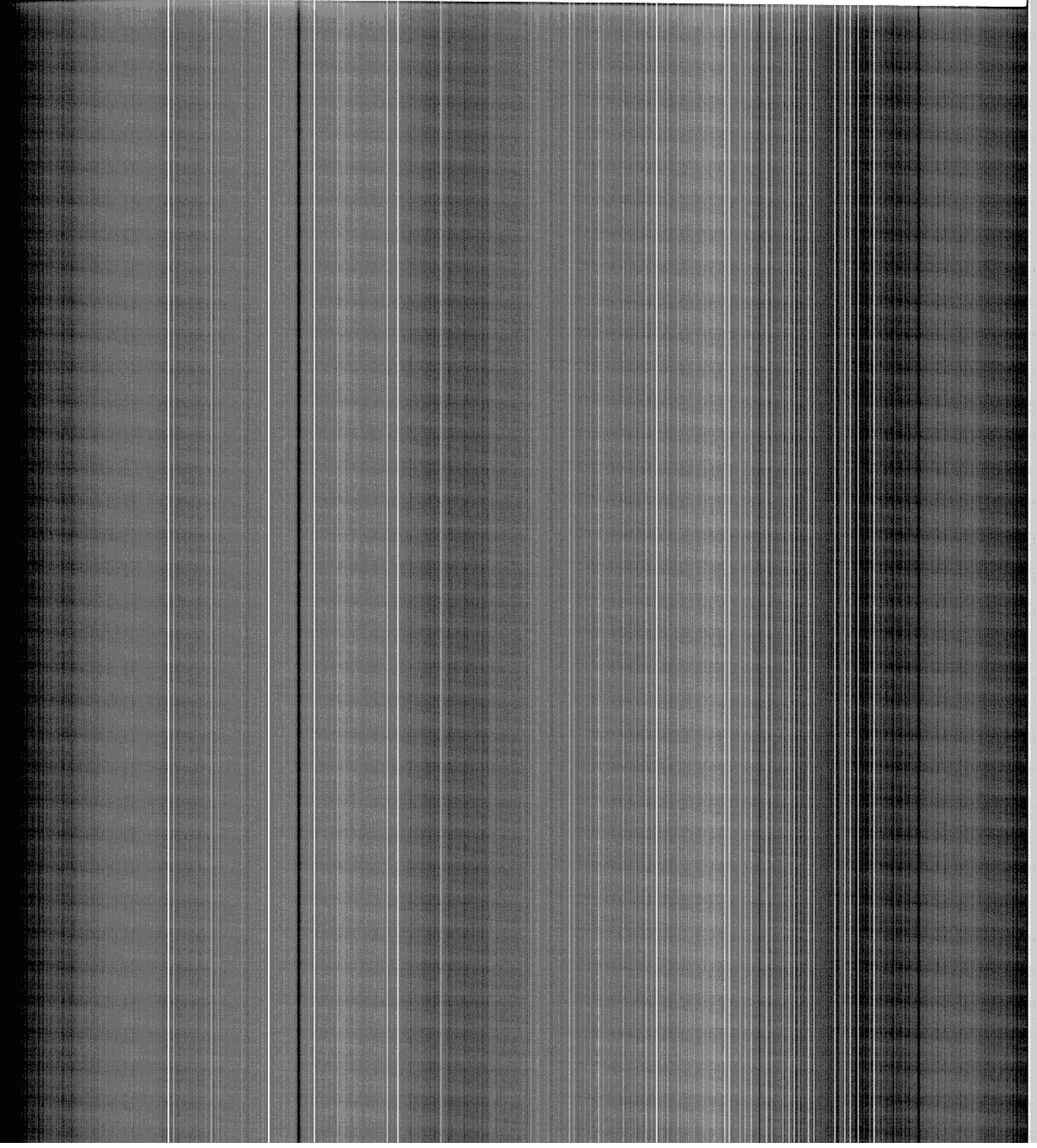
Dual-track, in this case, means attacking the level of overclassification on the one hand, and trying to get out as much information as possible at a low level of classification, and on the other hand expanding compartmented clearances where that appears appropriate. So that in monitoring a crisis, you could move an entire crisis center into operating at the highest level at which you believe you will have information pertinent to the crisis.

Student. As I understand it, then, you believe as I do that there are two problems, one of actually increasing the control of classification, the other of decreasing it. And because of the overclassification problem there's a lack of credibility and a certain amount of skepticism, while on the other side we are not really controlling a lot of the information we need to.

Inman. I strongly agree, yes.

Student. I wonder if I could get you to put on your Deputy Director of Central Intelligence hat for a moment and tell me whether you have formed any strong opinions so far on the needs for future direction in the national counterintelligence effort, both within the Agency and within the services.

Inman. An honest answer is that I really have not yet been able to devote much attention to the problem. There's an awful lot of smoke to the effect that we have particularly shorted our attention to the counterintelligence problem over the last decade, both in resources applied to it and by restricting the collection of information that is essential to an aggressive counterintelligence effort. I don't know whether that's valid or not, or to what degree either of those factors is responsible. I have a sense that manpower is a greater problem than the restrictions — manpower enough to cover the activity of hostile intelligence services in sufficient depth and detail. When that's been done exhaustively and continuously and is shown to be ineffective, then I will perhaps be more easily persuaded that one should turn to the restriction in collecting information on US citizens side of the equation. I am not yet persuaded that we have applied enough resources to manpower to see how satisfactory the results will be. I hope that in the months ahead we will obtain an independent survey of this entire area by someone who brings neither institutional biases nor a lot of past baggage with him, to try to take stock of where we are and what we need to do. A lot of people were eager to throw out anything that might be a constraint in order to get started in doing more counterintelligence, and I guess I, having watched the damage to the intelligence community the last time around, would rather have a clear understanding this time of exactly what it is we are trying to get at before we lurch off in all directions. That is not necessarily the popular view.

McLaughlin. Let me return to the analytical side for a moment. You mentioned the need for languages, area studies, whatever. It seems to me that in the 1960s places like Cambridge were filled with people working in critical language programs or on area study

Board served a function somewhat like what the questioner envisaged.* What's your sense of that kind of mechanism as an alternative or a complement?

Inman. I bring a biased view to the problem. I believe that the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board was a very helpful mechanism when it existed. It was a way, I found on occasion, of arousing interest in problems that the bureaucracy was stifling, and the Board was perfectly willing to take fresh looks at new or old problems. I became a strong advocate for the view that we needed it, and I think we have sorely missed having one in the last four years. The Senate Select Committee essentially tried to recreate one, by creating a blue-ribbon panel which was rather narrowly focused. It did some useful things, but, you know, technology doesn't need all that much push. Technology carries a pretty substantial push of its own, and the need arises in a whole variety of other areas, quality-of-analysis things that don't have any constituency to push them. It was there that something like the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board was helpful, and when it is recreated in the very near future I believe it will be very helpful again.

Student. Earlier you said that the problem of pressing for increased accessibility of classified material was the need to have managers or recipients understand the hazards. Is it a question of understanding or of belief? Have we not, because of the reported overclassification, created a great deal of skepticism as to what the hazards may or may not be?

Inman. I believe a dual track is necessary. I agree with the premise of your question, that overclassification has added to the problem, has cheapened people's sensitivity to the dangers of mishandling the information they have. People tend to be saturated by the number of codewords with which they have to deal. I have accused analysts from time to time of writing at the highest possible classification level with as many codewords as possible, in the belief that they were more likely to get their work read at the highest levels. They usually deny it, but still I have a lingering suspicion that there is a strong element of truth there. And the incentives approach does need to be changed in that regard; you do have a problem on the user side. The user says, "Are you withholding something from me? Why can't I see it at whatever level?" — so that, again, there's a tendency to write at the highest level with the most codewords. If you take the time, you can distill the essence of almost any point at a classified but noncompartmented level. It is only when you get down to the very tough questions or decisions, particularly in the crisis monitoring area where events are moving very fast, or in a key foreign policy decision area, that the upper decision-making levels may indeed have to work at a full classification level. You don't have the time to stop and do the neat sanitizing of a dual-track approach.

*See Lionel Olmer, "Watchdogging Intelligence," in *Seminar on Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence, Guest Presentations — Spring 1980*, Program on Information Resources Policy, Center for Information Policy Research, Harvard University, December 1980.

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making the decision, this would be one area in which I would do some early swift surgery to cut the size of the government bureaucracy and go back to a single body. But I do not know that that's what the policy decision will be at all, and I would be loath to make any predictions about how it will go.

I don't think the government needs to play a role in the private sector's interest in cryptography, because I believe this is a case where market forces ultimately are what will work. An excellent study was done last year at the Carnegie-Mellon School of Engineering and Public Policy which addressed this entire area; it added some light by including a substantial survey of what the market in the private sector really is. They talked to a number of corporations, and found they were not waiting with bated breath for all kinds of marvelous new devices in a time of low profit margins. Unless there was a clear indication that they were massively losing some proprietary interest, they simply were not prepared to invest in cryptography to protect their secrets.

There are clearly some areas — bank transfers, for instance — where cryptography will be used in the interest of all of us investors or depositors. The technology is already on the market to protect that against any level of threat that could reasonably be expected to be interested in trying to follow fund transfer. I guess on the question of the protection of health records and all the other things, I punt. I'm not sure I understand the nature of the privacy worry, but if there is one, I tell you again, the quality of cryptography already available in the US public sector more than protects against *any* potential cryptanalytic or cryptographic threat in that area. No foreign government is going to spend large sums of money to try to mount a cryptanalytic attack against the health records of US citizens. And no US government element, no intelligence agency, is going to be able to marshal the money to mount an attack on any part of it without that being highly visible to four layers of budget analysts examining how they're spending everything more than $50,000, $25,000 or whatever it is.

If I seem a little heated in my response, it's because I have listened to the arguments about the weaknesses in some of the systems that were coming onto the market — that for only $10 million you could build a capability to attack. Even accepting the validity of that estimate, who in the hell is going to spend $10 million to do it, and how will they do it without two select committees, two appropriations committees and a whole array of other people being very conscious of it? So it is an invalid threat, held up as a specter to worry people that their government might somehow turn again toward using the intelligence agencies to spy on their citizens.

Student. Admiral, I can remember being down in Camp Lejeune, I think it was in early 1979, and an issue of *Signal* hit the streets that had an address of yours* in it. It left everyone in my organization agog, because we weren't even allowed to think about those sorts of things outside the secure areas. How successful have you been in imparting your

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*Address by Vice Admiral B. R. Inman, Director, National Security Agency, to the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association, February 1979.

grants, in massive numbers. Was there useful yield from that? Or is it perhaps the failure to get a yield from that which we're seeing today?

Inman. There was a massive program in the 1950s, and I believe there was a very substantial yield from that, in database. Not a large volume of great attention-getting papers that changed the whole direction in which the country moved, but greater depth of knowledge and understanding of what was going on in the world. But those who were studying during the 1960s either decided not to go to the jobs, or the jobs were not there because we'd gone into that decade-long drawdown in the whole national security account. They weren't hiring Foreign Service Officers, and they weren't hiring intelligence analysts on the input side. (I won't make any judgments about how effectively they were using those they had.)

But, remember, there was an aura, too, of avoiding involvement in the society as a whole. You couldn't trust your government, so why would you want to work with it? So there's a lot of baggage from that time that must be left behind if you're really going to begin to rebuild capabilities. You can't measure by looking at those who were in the schools in the 1960s, particularly in the late 1960s, because the opportunities to use them disappeared. You have to go back to the 1950s to find a correspondence, and what you find there is substantial work producing a very comprehensive database — but in that time frame you didn't have the capability to quickly update it, access it, or use it in the variety of ways we now consider necessary.

Student. My question is about some of the issues in public cryptography. Aside from the prepublication review system set up by the public cryptography study group, how do you think policy, or unclassified development of cryptography, will go? I think in 1979 Commerce and Defense were jointly tasked to prepare some of the elements in a national policy on cryptography, and I'd like to know how you see it developing.

Inman. In 1977 the government made a policy decision that two separate government elements were needed to deal with the question of communications security. I don't remember what the final written product cites as the reason for that, but the dialogue that accompanied it held that you have to have two elements because you couldn't trust an intelligence organization to be involved in the part of communications security which related to the private sector. I rejected that argument then, and I do so even more strongly now, from four years of having watched the performance of the checks and balances we have. What's been demonstrated in those four years is that you can't manufacture capability, competence, in that area just by making a policy decision to try to do it separately. Indeed, the National Security Agency has had a monopoly on experience in communications security for the government, based on the 1952 decision to join communications security and signals intelligence activities in the same basic organization, drawing back and forth on the same talent. The specter that that somehow might be subverted to spy on the public was not a factor that worried those who made that early decision. That specter, which was false, did however drive the 1977 decision to create two bodies. I do not find the results of four years' separate effort very productive, and if I were

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McLaughlin. Last year, to paraphrase, you said that, at the risk of offending both the CIA and DOD, you could see centralizing the human capabilities of CIA and perhaps switching covert operations to DOD. I'd like to compare that with the point you've been making about the loss of faith in the intelligence community. Do you feel that switching covert operations to DOD would possibly remove from the intelligence community some of the stigmas that developed during the 1960s and '70s? Would that be an added benefit, apart from what it does for the organizations themselves?

Inman. The pace of public opinion has moved at a far faster rate during this past year than I foresaw. My excuse is that I work the foreign problems, not the US problems. But certainly after the November election, the emphasis shifted very substantially away from needing to distance yourself from past approaches to the problem, and toward getting on as rapidly as you can with rebuilding capabilities. I do not now see any prospect of efforts to restructure the current intelligence community by major organizational changes. There is simply no constituency to try moves like splitting the CIA into several different agencies, or doing the human intelligence job differently. Even though the result might be better, the margin is not clear enough to warrant the time and turbulence that would be involved. Therefore the clear impetus is on getting on with trying to rebuild and improve the capabilities with the basic organizational structure we have. That's going to lead us to some interesting questions. How can you upgrade DOD's clandestine human intelligence efforts if you are not going to put them under the CIA's clearly more competent human intelligence collection capabilites? In terms of covert action, the real challenge is going to be to make sure that this time we can keep a clear view of the difference between clandestine human intelligence collection and covert action operations. The passage of the Clark Amendment and the subsequent decisions in the 1976 time frame declared to the Soviets and Cubans that they didn't have to worry, we weren't going to do anything or make any investment in that area. The government's capability dwindled very rapidly, and ended up very small. Therefore any rebuilding process is going to be slow and will take a substantial amount of time. Under those circumstances, shifting the activity to totally different sponsorship or even less experienced leadership — even though it would be useful from an intelligence professional's point of view, if only to get some distance from the "dirty work" side of the house for the sake of public image — is just not doable. So it will not, in my judgment, likely occur. There, I did make a prediction.

Oettinger. Appropriately hedged though: "Will not, in my judgment, likely occur!" I think you're covered.

position and outlook to other senior officers and managers in the intelligence structure about being open, about talking about the processes that take place and the resources that are available to decisionmakers?

Inman. The jury is still very much out. I came back to Washington to be Director of Naval Intelligence in September 1974, euphoric about coming as a brand new flag officer to run an old institution. About two months later the Church Committee got started, and the Pike Committee not long after, and the euphoria disappeared very rapidly. I watched at very close hand the damage done to the US intelligence community in loss of public, congressional and Executive Branch support at precisely the time when we should have been assessing the impact of drawdowns from 1969 to 1974-75. We went in the exact opposite direction. It will take us another five years to really begin to pick that process back up.

Looking at it from a little broader perspective, one of the major problems is that we had no constituency on the need for quality intelligence capability in this country. The place where we might have had a constituency — the foreign policy establishment — was in disarray from the Vietnam experience. And there really was no mechanism in Congress to do it. So I made a conscious judgment call that one had to work to try to develop a constituency for quality intelligence effort. And I believe an essential part of that is maintaining the public's confidence that that quality intelligence capability will be used to maximum effectiveness against foreign targets, and not against domestic ones. That has led me into some difficulty, which the media have covered in greater detail than I cared for. I get lots of words of encouragement and support from some of my fellow practitioners, but they are reasonably content to have me out there visible in front. If this proves to be effective, I think others will pick it up. Certainly we've gotten some strong support from the Congress; I think they've been more open, more knowledgeable about this country's need for a strong, quality intelligence capability.

Student. You mentioned the problem of maintaining objectivity among your analysts. Is there a conscious personnel program that allows the analysts to periodically go back to school, refresh their capabilities or change areas, so that they don't get into conceptual ruts?

Inman. A lot of that had been given up. There used to be such programs in earlier times, and that too was a casualty of the spirit of "What can you do without." We hope to reinstitute some programs. We will need congressional support. In that area, as in a variety of areas, Congress took the attitude that we shouldn't invest in *education* of military personnel. It was all right to invest in some *training*. We went through a period in the 1970s when you really weren't supposed to spend any money educating. That attitude toward the military spread over into Executive Branch decisions with regard to the civilian components of the intelligence community. There is some work to be done, but it's clearly an area where one has to give them time and opportunity to withdraw, to take a fresh look at the problems. I do believe in rotational assignments. I think that's been one of the things that's helped us through a tough period. But again, when you're trying to develop great expertise in regard to a country, it's pretty hard to take somebody who has devoted a lot of time to the Chinese language and suddenly put him down as your analyst in Latin America.

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