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**The Congressional Intelligence Committees
Thomas K. Latimer**

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The Congressional Intelligence Committees

Thomas K. Latimer

Thomas Latimer has devoted his entire career to intelligence-related work for the U. S. government. After receiving a doctorate in history from Georgetown University, Dr. Latimer became a current intelligence analyst with the Central Intelligence Agency. He was a member of the National Security Council staff from 1970 to 1973, and then served as Executive Assistant to the Director of Central Intelligence. In 1974, he moved to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, serving first as Special Assistant to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense and then as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for C³I. Since 1977, Dr. Latimer has been Staff Director of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S. House of Representatives. He was awarded the Intelligence Medal of Merit in June 1973 and the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Medal in both 1975 and 1977. He has lectured widely on intelligence-related topics at universities and in government training courses.

Oettinger: As you know, our first guest is Thomas Latimer. I won't go into much of an introduction because you've all had a chance to look at his biography and know that he has experience both on the executive and the legislative side of the world. I had asked him in the letter of invitation and now again to give us his views on the current state of the relationship between Congress and the Executive in intelligence, command, and control. His career has happened to span all three of those subheadings. With that I turn it over to you, with thanks for braving the weather.

Latimer: You didn't have to turn the weather on so nicely for me. Just to rub it in, yesterday in Northern Virginia it was 71 and I played golf; but, I'm glad to get back home.

I've been playing around with this business for the better part of 30 years, and it strikes me that several things have happened in this period of time, particularly in the last 12 years, that may be of some interest to you. When I started in the Pentagon, in the Office of Secretary of Defense, we had two separate organizations: one to concern itself with communications, another to concern itself with

intelligence. By the time I left, these had been combined and we had something which in the typical Pentagon-ese became C³I — command, control, communications, and intelligence. Now I'd like to tell you that there was some overriding intelligent reason to combine these disparate units. In point of fact it was a budgetary constraint, and that's the one big thing I've learned over the years: that almost everything that happens, happens because of budgets, not because it makes a lot of sense otherwise. Somebody thought there was a great deal of savings to be made if we could get rid of one of these Assistant Secretary levels and combine all these. What they really did was to put the name on the door, but in fact, the communicators never communicated with the intelligence people, and the intelligence people never communicated with the communicators, and I believe it's that way today.

Now about a dozen years ago, a new factor interjected itself, at least into the intelligence realm, and because of that into the national security policy making realm. And that was that the Congress began to get hold of intelligence and get its arms

around intelligence. I think about a year and a half ago, the then-Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (now deputy to General Brent Scowcroft), Bob Gates, gave a speech in which he described intelligence as now being halfway between the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch. I hope that's not the case, but I think he has highlighted a new factor at play in national security policy development.

Up until fairly recently, the President and his advisors had a monopoly on national security policy decision making. In large measure, that's because they had information that was not available to most members of Congress. With the advent of these intelligence committees, at least some members of the Senate and House now have the same information database that the Executive Branch has, and they're using it. Very few, as yet, have quite understood this new factor, but those who have, have become players. Les Aspin (D-WI) was on our intelligence committee and then went on to become Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and all of a sudden the House Armed Services Committee has become a big player in national security policy. I don't mean just in how much money we put into the budget. The whole concept of the Midgetman missile, wherever it came from, got its big push from Capitol Hill, by members of the Senate and members of the House who could understand, in great detail, every bit as much as the Executive Branch what the pros and cons of that missile were for our defense. In the whole argument over Star Wars — I think President Reagan's efforts foundered simply because there were people on the Hill who had access to the same kind of information that the people in the Executive Branch had, and were able to come to different conclusions than President Reagan did.

What I'm saying in a nutshell is that in recent years, the Congress has become, if not more of a player vis-à-vis the Executive Branch, at least a more effective player in the national security arena. If the Founding Fathers, in fact, wanted to have a checks and balances system, I'm here to tell you that it's working. It works very well. Whether thinking it through or not, the American people seem to have settled into a pattern of elections that almost ensures that we will have, at least in our time, permanent checks and balances. We're having Republican Presidents and Democratic Congresses, and that makes a big difference. It's very hard for the President to get through a controversial policy, particularly in the national security arena, when he's going up against well-informed members of Congress.

Let me get a little technical with you on just how the Congress can check and balance the President. The first is rather obvious — through legislation. They write laws that can hamstring the President. If you ever get the time to look at the Defense Authorization Bill or the Defense Appropriations Bill and the reports that go with them, you can see that not only do they look at the large measures, but they also get into some real nitty gritty as to who's going to build what where, how many parts, and what district they're going to be built in, and, in effect, which company gets to build them. This power of the purse, by design of the Founding Fathers, is where the Congress gets its power, and I can tell you in the intelligence world that's really what these new committees did back in the 1970s.

Oettinger: When you use "committees," you're referring to the select committees?

Latimer: That's right, the Select Committees on Intelligence, created in the mid-1970s. The first thing they did was to get their hands around the budgets of intelligence and what are called intelligence-related activities. One of the things you find when you're working on the Hill is that everybody knows the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the FBI. However, you also find the military services are engaged in a whole lot of activities that they call combat support. You can use the old adage, that if it looks like a duck, and it quacks like a duck, and it hangs out with ducks, it's probably a duck. To the people on the Hill, these combat support operations sure look like intelligence, so in coordination with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs they worked out a definition of these activities and there's a separate budget, the national intelligence budget, and then you have the tactical intelligence and related activities budget. If you look at that, pretty soon you decide, "Wait a minute, we've got all this intelligence coming in — whom is it going to, and how's it getting there?" and that puts you into communications.

Oettinger: Let me add a footnote to that because in our proceedings of last year, you'll find a paper by Craig Wilson* outlining in more detail some of those budgetary programs that Dr. Latimer has referred to, if you want more detail.

Latimer: Craig works in that C³I office. One of the reasons that the Intelligence Committees began to

*Craig L. Wilson, "Planning and Budgeting for Defense Intelligence Resources," in *Seminar on Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence, Guest Presentation, Spring 1989*. Program on Information Resources Policy, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1990.

look at communications was because nobody else on the Hill was paying any attention to it. Any of you who have worked in the government know that, in order to get some program really funded on a continuing basis, you've got to have some pretty powerful bureaucratic "ooga ooga." You've got to have some sugar daddies up on the Hill. Communications simply doesn't have that kind of clout in the Pentagon; it never has. Military services all want to build things: tanks, airplanes, missiles, submarines, aircraft carriers. They don't want to worry about the, to them, rather esoteric business of communications. So intelligence has begun to push the communications, on the ground that they need communications in order to talk securely and transmit all this good stuff all around the place. So the communicators are kind of riding along behind the intelligence people.

Oettinger: I'm missing something in what you're saying, even granting that communications/intelligence connection. If you're referring to the select committees, how do they get that away from the Appropriations Committees and the Armed Services Committees?

Latimer: The Intelligence Committees are authorizing committees. The way the Congress works is, the President's budget comes over and the so-called standing committees authorize activities and personnel. The Appropriations Committees appropriate the money. When God's in His heaven and all is working right, we're not stuck with the continuing resolution. The appropriators can't appropriate money for something that hasn't been authorized, and they can't appropriate more money than has been authorized. So the Intelligence Committees are authorizing committees. The Armed Services Committees have cared little about communications, and committees of Congress are just like any other bureaucratic human organization: everybody will make a power grab for everything. And so, if the Armed Services Committee doesn't care about communications, and the Intelligence Committee does, they grab it. They grab communications security. They grab computer security, none of which is written in their charter, but they grab them because nobody else has.

Another way that these committees, all committees, exercise some control over these activities is through what is known as oversight. About 15 years ago, Tip O'Neill* decided that all the committees were going to emphasize oversight — oversight of

whatever it was: Agriculture, Commerce, Armed Services. That was supposed to be a continuing activity. Some committees have taken it seriously. What it means is, they spend a lot of time pestering the Executive Branch as to what they're doing, getting reports in great detail. It drives people in the Executive Branch crazy; they call it micro-management, but it is a way for the Congress to get some control over the various parts of the executive budget.

Now I think this is kind of important if you believe that power corrupts, especially power that's exercised in secret, and that of course applies to the intelligence people, but it also applies to the Armed Services Committee. There's a phenomenon known as the black programs. These are specially compartmented programs to which very few people are allowed access. Nobody knows about them, and these things have begun to proliferate. It turns out that the members of Congress, if they're not careful, can authorize and appropriate lots of money for things they don't know anything about. But, after all, they feel rather strongly they've been elected by the American people, if nothing else, to find out what the Executive Branch is doing with the people's money. So they resist these black programs.

Student: Is it true that the black programs are managed less efficiently than the ones that operate in the open?

Latimer: That's a question. Now, some people will say just the opposite: that because they don't have to go through the regular bureaucratic red tape, they are much more efficiently managed. I don't know because it's hard for Congress to know what they don't know. Are they being managed efficiently, or are they not? Some I would suspect are — the famous U-2 that the CIA and the Lockheed "skunkworks" developed was done very quickly and very efficiently. But I would submit that the Iran-Contra business wasn't terribly efficient, and it was done very secretly. So you just don't know the answer to that question, but what you do know, if you're a member of Congress, is you can't tell unless you have access, unless you can send auditors in, unless you can find out.

Oettinger: There's more to it than meets the eye here. There's a wonderful description by Harvey Sapolsky on the Polaris Missile Program,* which if

*Thomas P. O'Neill (D-MA), Speaker of the House, 1977-1988.

*Sapolsky, Harvey M., *The Polaris System Development: Bureaucratic and Programmatic Success in Government*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972.

you have not read it, is well worth reading. He's a political scientist at MIT who was given access to the Navy's records about the Polaris program by Bob Frosch, who was the Secretary of the Navy, and is now Director of Research at General Motors Labs, and it addresses that question. I think there was a little bit of both: there was some efficiency, and Sapolsky detailed it. There was also a fairly elaborate program of pulling the wool over both the Congress' and the Executive Branch's eyes, in a somewhat benign way, because it enabled them to do their work rather well. That was a successful program; you'll find others that weren't that successful.

But that leads me to a question I want to put to you. My observation is that in this tug-of-war between the President — and I'm deliberately saying "the President" and not "the Executive Branch" — and the Congress, I take Bob Gates' remark that you recited earlier about being halfway in between to mean that this may in fact provide the operating agency, whether an intelligence agency or an agricultural agency, with a kind of no man's land in which to hide and do its own thing and play the Executive off against the Legislative, and I wonder whether that's just a nightmare of mine, or...?

Latimer: I think in many cases that's the way it works. A smart bureaucrat will make himself a friend of the chairman and ranking minority member of whatever committee oversees his operation, so that you can bet that if you're going to be a successful Secretary of Agriculture, you'd better be a real good buddy with the Chairmen of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees. In a minute I'll get to the dread leak of information, and that's not just classified material; it goes on all the time in the Executive Branch when they find an impasse in OMB (the Office of Management and Budget), and OMB says, "No, you can't have x-number of bucks." You immediately let your favorite Congressman or Senator know that and build up a firestorm against your own administration. That gives the President, in every administration that I've had anything to do with, great difficulty if his own Cabinet is being disloyal to him. But that's the way the government works, willy nilly.

McLaughlin: Tom, before you go on, let me interrupt because Tony didn't say the magic words in talking about Polaris. What Sapolsky was talking about was the PERT (program evaluation and review technique) system. Sapolsky's position was that the PERT was a whole Potemkin village behind

which the rest of the Polaris program operated, and when the people from Congress or the Executive wanted to find out what was going on, they got the tour of the Potemkin village under the label "PERT." In the meantime, Admiral Raborn's staff were conducting Polaris just the way anybody else has ever managed a program, and that is having people fly all around the country living out of a briefcase and knocking heads. The problem was that PERT became institutionalized. People started believing their own BS about the PERT system, and that has become 7 percent of the budget of every major weapons program ever since, without people realizing it was supposed to be a charade, not for real. That's the Sapolsky thesis.

Latimer: I've mentioned several of the ways that the Congress can check and balance the Executive Branch: through legislation, the power of the purse, the oversight. One other way is the Senate advises and consents on every cabinet officer, every military officer, and on many of the agency heads. So in intelligence, the Director and Deputy Director of Central Intelligence have to be confirmed by the Senate, and in the case of one recent instance, at least, we're told that the President decided not to nominate a gentleman for Director of Central Intelligence because he was afraid that it might cause a great deal of furor in the Senate. This is a powerful tool that can be used, but it isn't used very often. For the most part the Senate goes along with the President, although I've seen that in recent cases the Senate has become more and more cautious, or more difficult, depending on where you sit in this regard.

I think the key for any President, or his Cabinet, or his other subcabinet officers, is the ability to think through carefully what their policies are, have good rationales for them, and present them strongly to the Congress. Where there's any doubt, where there's any backbiting, where people come running up from the Executive Branch whispering behind the backs of the President and his key advisors to their favorite Congressman, then your programs are going to be in deep, deep trouble.

I alluded to the leaks problem. That is probably the most difficult thing that faces any administration, certainly over the last 20 to 25 years. It's one thing to come up before a congressional committee in a classified setting, in a closed executive session, and to give members classified information. Everybody understands what's going on. What we're talking about is two things. One is someone in the

Executive Branch coming up behind the scenes and whispering to one of his chums up on the Hill, a staffer or a member of Congress, in effect contradicting what the President's proposal is. The second, and I don't think enough can be said about it, is the relationship between our federal government and the press, the media. Particularly in the national security/intelligence arena, every major news organization or newspaper in the country assigns its best investigative reporter to that beat, and they are good. The national security/intelligence reporters are the best journalists in the country. They're up on the Hill, they're around the intelligence agencies, they're after retired people, they're after military, they're over in the Pentagon, they're at the State Department, and they work very hard at it.

There are plenty of people who, when they become disgruntled, have no trouble getting hold of someone in the press who will run with whatever story they give them. This complicates the President's job enormously. We're told that early on in the Bush Administration they had a discussion in the White House with only a handful of people. It was reported in the press the next day. If you're in the Executive Branch, you kind of wonder, "How can I talk to even my closest associates?" I worked in the White House and I worked over in the Pentagon, and it was very disturbing to come from a meeting with the Secretary of Defense, discussing a sensitive matter, and you hardly get back to your office when one of the contractors is on the phone saying, "I understand somebody else is going to get this contract." I knew somebody in that room couldn't be trusted. It's a very difficult situation to try to run an office, and develop policy, and implement it, if you don't think you can trust the people working with you.

Student: The scenario that you drew was some disgruntled person in the administration whispering to the staff. Are there no congressional-initiated leaks?

Latimer: There probably are, but remember that the Executive Branch develops the policies. The Executive Branch has the secrets, and the old adage is true: the President proposes and the Congress disposes. Sure, Congressman and Senators can talk inadvertently or on purpose, but most of the things that anybody knows about and wants to talk about are Executive Branch things. If you're in the Executive Branch and you come over and brief one of your favorite congressmen, he may go and talk about it; that happens.

You raise a point, though, that I should mention, that it isn't just disgruntled people who leak information, it is also proponents of the President's policies who leak things. In a Presidential campaign, you might theoretically have someone who wants to prove his boss was tough on the Russians, and so he would leak information about one covert action or another where this administration was showing the Russians how tough we were, or perhaps that we had developed something like stealth technology, to let everybody know how tough our President and our administration are on defense matters. So leaks are used both to promote policy and to undercut policy.

Oettinger: Aside from Walker-type espionage, my impression is that on the whole, the proportion of congressional to Executive leaks is relatively low, I mean surprisingly low on the congressional side. On the Executive side you have the grunted-disgruntled kind of thing, but there is another element which I wonder if you could shed some light on from your experience, where it's not so much a leak, it's not so much a deliberate revelation of something, it's a policy decision that says, "I'm going to present yea or nay." Some of the most damaging "leaks" have come from fairly high up in an administration in the absence of weighing, perhaps consciously or inadvertently, the cost of the revelation versus the advantage of saying something for a particular policy aim. Can you comment on that: is it a reasonable observation or am I full of nonsense?

Latimer: No. That is a good observation, particularly in the area of intelligence when someone will divulge a piece of intelligence for a perfectly legitimate policy reason, a consequence of which may be to destroy an intelligence source. The person divulging the information either doesn't understand what the consequences are of the disclosure, or doesn't care, or thinks that the results of the disclosure outweigh the damage done to the intelligence source. That does go on and it is a problem.

As far as thinking through the consequences, my own impression is that our government is after all in the hands of politicians, and the politicians tend to deal with today's problem. They don't do a lot of thinking about what does this mean, or what are the consequences going to be two or ten years from now. They just don't think in those terms; they don't even think of themselves as being around that long, necessarily. So they tend to deal very much as you and I do: they pick up the morning newspaper, they watch the evening news, they read their weekly

magazines, and whatever is going on that day is what they tend to be interested in.

We have in the development of the defense budget a supposed five-year defense plan. It has no relationship to reality beyond next year and isn't intended to, but that was an effort back in the McNamara days to try and put some continuity and some long-term planning into the process, but it just doesn't work that way.

Student: I'd like to go back to something you said earlier. I notice that people in the Pentagon use the phrase "micromanagement," and the people on the Hill use the phrase "oversight."

Latimer: It means the same thing.

Student: And you use the phrase "checks and balances." Does that mean that you think the process is working well, or have you been on both sides?

Latimer: It all depends. Sometimes it works very well. In our case I can think of examples in which our committee has saved the taxpayers billions of dollars by micromanaging. In other cases, I can think of examples where the Congress has cost the country dearly in opportunities that were let slip, because the Congress tried to manage a program that it wasn't really qualified to manage. So you almost have to take it on a case-by-case basis. I do know that the Congress pesters the Executive Branch with a lot of requirements, so that a lot of man-hours are taken up with responding to questions from the members of Congress. The payoff for the American people is hard to judge. The system works. The problems that we face today, for example, in national security policy planning, given the events that are going on in Europe, are not affected one way or the other by this back and forth between the Executive and Legislative Branches. I don't think there's anybody in the Executive Branch or in the Congress who is capable of intellectually comprehending what's going on, and coming up with a plan to deal with it.

Student: I have two questions that are related. Let me see if I can put them together. Could you comment on the philosophy of having rotating membership on the House Intelligence Committee? I think they can only serve three terms, and then they have to get out. And, could you talk about how much of the committee behavior is staff driven?

Latimer: O.K. The two Intelligence Committees are unique creatures on the Hill. Allow me just to

talk a little bit about them and if I get off your questions bring me back. They're both select committees, but they're not like select committees. Most select committees are created for a specific period of time to study a particular problem, make a report, and go away. They don't legislate. The Iran-Contra committees were typical select committees: they did their study, made their reports, and disappeared. The Senate and House Intelligence Select Committees are permanent; they're like standing committees, they're there year after year. They have to have membership from certain other committees, unlike any other committee; they have to have people from Armed Services, Appropriations, Judiciary, and Foreign Affairs. Their membership, as you indicate, rotates. Eight years is the maximum; you can be on the Senate Committee for eight years, and on the House Committee for six years, after which you go off.

I understand why they did that. I think that probably is not a good idea any longer, and I would say that they ought to be permanently on those committees, much like any other committee. The natural attrition will take care of rotation, I believe, in satisfactory fashion.

The big problem that this rotating membership causes is the lack of institutional memory. Some of these issues and problems go away and then come back. It may take them 10 years in their orbit of the earth to come back into our view again. By that time all the members that knew anything about it are gone.

Student: Does the staff stay on or do they elect other staff?

Latimer: It depends on the chairman. Some staffers stay on committees on the Hill for years and years. I was there for 12 and retired. So the chairman can bring in his own staff or leave the current staff. It just depends on what the chairman wants to do, and how he wants to do it.

As far as the staff goes, again it's much like whether it's checks and balances, or micromanagement. If you have a good staff and a strong membership, they work well together and complement each other. You can have a situation in which a staffer appears to have more power than even the members have. You can also have a case in which the chairman so dominates things that the staffers are just gophers. Any committee is more or less a reflection of its chairman, and so it depends on how he uses his staff, but he's free to do pretty much what he wants to do with his staff. He can hire professionals or he

can put someone who's not so professional in there; it depends on him.

In my experience, on our committee, we had strong chairmen of the House Intelligence Committee, and I believe strong chairmen of the Senate Intelligence Committee, and the staff do what the chairman tells them to do, and not anything else. That was a good feeling for me, coming over from the Executive Branch, where I didn't much care to have staffers on the Hill trying to run my programs, and it made me feel a little better that anything our staff was assigned to do, they were assigned by the chairman with his blessing and his knowledge. I think that gives you some more clout when you're dealing with the Executive Branch too, because invariably people in the Executive Branch say, "Oh, that's just some staffer, I'll go to the chairman," and if he goes to the chairman and the chairman says, "Yeah, I told him to do that," that only has to happen once or twice before the word gets around.

Oettinger: If I might add a couple of comments to that. This continuity question applies on both sides. The amount of amnesia in the Executive Branch, especially in the White House, is something that in an ordinary corporate entity or a university would be regarded as completely nutty. There are some good accounts by Fred Demech in 1987,^{*} and by Lionel Olmer in 1980^{**} in our seminar proceedings on some of that.

Going back a little to the structural point about the role of the committees, I'd like you to comment on that a bit more if you might. There's an account back in 1982 by Bill Miller,^{***} who was then one of the early staff heads of the Senate Select Committee, on the origins of these committees during "Watergate" and related periods. Clearly, a lot of water has flowed over the dam since then and I imagine that the role of the committees has now considerably changed, but the structure and the history are still the same. I wonder if you could comment a bit, in light of that question, on how

much of this is influenced by the funny history and then the need to adapt. I think the rotation, when it was born, was part of the notion that we're not about to take Watergate and a lot of things on the Executive side and then create a counterpart on the congressional side where an in-group of folks is just going to mirror-image the Executive Branch. So it was born in a period of great distrust, when rotation made sense, and so the question is, "How has that evolved?" "Can you comment on that?"

Latimer: Well, let me go back. You've raised a good point about the Executive Branch. What we've found is, because a number of our House Intelligence Committee staff had been in that business for a dozen years, these Executive Branch heads of agencies come through and they are brand new, and our people know more about their agencies than they do, so that puts them in a difficult spot as well.

But you're right, Tony, the origin of these two Intelligence Committees came out of the first Pike and Church Committee investigations. In the mid-1970s, for the first time since 1947 when the CIA was created, Congress, prodded by press reports, decided we'd better look at what we created and what's been going on. What are these people doing — not just the CIA, but Army Intelligence, the National Security Agency, FBI — and how much money are they spending? Nobody on the Hill knew how much money was being spent by our government on intelligence and counterintelligence, and they thought we'd better find out. So they had these two House and Senate truly select committees doing an across-the-board study of U.S. government activities related to intelligence. You might recall the late Senator Everett Dirksen said, "A billion dollars here and a billion dollars there, and pretty soon you're talking about some real money." They found that in the intelligence world we were talking about some real money. So there was a combination of things. They found that some of the intelligence people were engaging in inappropriate activities: opening the U.S. mail, slipping LSD mickeys to people to see what would happen to them, illegal wire taps. All sorts of things where people thought, our intelligence people ought to be spying on *them*, not on us.

One of the things that each of these Church and Pike Committees recommended was that permanent oversight committees be created to monitor the activities of the intelligence community to make sure there wouldn't be any further violations of American civil liberties. There haven't been very many instances that I can recall, in these last 12 or

^{*}Fred R. Demech, Jr., "Making Intelligence Better," in *Seminar on Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence, Guest Presentations, Spring 1987*. Program on Information Resources Policy, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1988.

^{**}Lionel Olmer, "Watchdogging Intelligence," in *Seminar on Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence, Guest Presentations, Spring 1980*. Program on Information Resources Policy, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1981.

^{***}William G. Miller, "Foreign Affairs, Diplomacy and Intelligence," in *Seminar on Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence, Guest Presentations, Spring 1982*. Program on Information Resources Policy, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1983.

13 years, in which the intelligence community has engaged in the kinds of activities that got people concerned back in the mid-1970s. Remember, we're talking about 1975, 1976, 1977 — the post-Vietnam era, so we're talking about a big drawdown, not only in the military, but also in our intelligence assets. You had the Carter Administration come in, very dubious about intelligence and what it ought to be doing. These two new permanent select committees took a look at the resources available in the U.S. government for intelligence activities and came to the conclusion that they were woefully underfunded, and they launched a period of rebuilding, refinancing, and restructuring the U.S. intelligence system. So, while remaining aware of their duty to each House to make sure the intelligence community is not doing anything illegal, they also became very strong advocates of a strong U.S. intelligence service.

Student: Regarding the last comments you made about the drawdown in the military and intelligence communities after Vietnam and Watergate, do you feel that there is going to be a direct relationship between the need for military intelligence, and economic/political intelligence, and the actual size of the intelligence community? For example, if we actually do have, say, a peace dividend where we're going to cut back on actual military presence, are we going to cut back intelligence, or is that something permanent that the federal government needs and always will need?

Latimer: The intelligence people have an interesting argument. Their argument is that during a period of rapid growth in defense spending, you have to have a rapid growth in intelligence spending in order to parallel that. Then they say, when there's a decrease in defense spending, you need an increase in intelligence spending in order to offset that. So no matter how you slice it, you need more intelligence. How persuasive that argument is going to be over a period of time is not clear.

However, in the last dozen years, what has happened to intelligence is that the requirements have begun to change and to expand. Years ago, when I first got into the intelligence business, we worried about the Soviet military threat, North Korea, the People's Republic of China, and later to some extent Cuba, and that was about the extent of our concerns. Today, we still have those kinds of concerns; we also have Third World debt, narcotics, international terrorism. Each of these is a major requirement to levy upon intelligence. Now I don't

see international narcotics, international terrorism, international debt, these kinds of problems, going away. I would say that in a few years, if not already, intelligence analysts will look back upon the golden era of stability in the Warsaw Pact, when you could safely indulge in what analysts always do: tomorrow things are going to be very much like they are today. Faced with chaos, you have some real intelligence problems.

So my guess is that for a while intelligence will probably win their argument that they need at least to hold the line, rather than being scaled back. Plus, while there are billions involved in intelligence, you don't have any big ticket items; you can't say, "Well, I'm only going to build x-number of B-2 type intelligence things." You don't have those kinds of things to go after in intelligence. Mostly you have people, and you can't save a lot of money really quickly on people.

Oettinger: Let me just underscore a couple of things that you said. The reading on *Whither Intelligence* ends up, if you've read it, with some comments about "complexity — the endless frontier." This is a very concrete example of what is meant by that. The number of things that one needs to look at in a chaotic, changing society is so much greater than in the stable situation. What you did not mention was, even with the changes in the Soviet Union and increases in arms control, etc., there are requirements for information gathering and so on that are ongoing. So you can see arguments for increasing budgets, whether they are believed or not.

But that leaves the other point, the shift that you described between the committees as watchdogs, and the committees as advocates. In the Executive Branch, it seems to me that intelligence and command and control, and so on, remain one among the zillions of items on the President's and the Office of Management and Budget's platter. What has happened is that the two institutions that were created as watchdogs have, if I hear you correctly, suddenly turned into advocates, and since intelligence is their name, that's the only thing they do. Now, with the relationship between the select committees as authorizing committees, and the rest of the Congress, what's happening? Can you expand a little bit more on that, shift into the advocacy role and what that means in terms of checks and balances within the Congress, and vis-à-vis the Executive Branch?

Latimer: I don't want to overemphasize the word "advocates," because they also constrain these intelligence agencies and will kill or deny funds for

activities they don't approve of. So they're not rubber stamp committees by any stretch of the imagination. But what they have provided for the first time is a knowledgeable body of members who know what's in the intelligence budget request and what's useful and what isn't. So the intelligence people have, for the first time, a knowledgeable committee to come to, to explain in great detail, in full classification, exactly what it is they want, and why they want it. The committees can then come back and say, "Well, did we get what we paid for?" In fact, if you build one intelligence widget, for a great deal of money, on the grounds that it's going to promise you a great deal of return, these committees are in the position to come back and say, "Well, we looked for the return, and we don't see that it's worth it, so you can't have your second widget."

What has happened, also, is that the rest of the members of the House and Senate have come to feel more or less comfortable with the fact that there are these Intelligence Committees that meet behind closed doors, hear from all these spooky people, find out what is being done, and authorize it. Each year at this time the President sends over his budget for the next fiscal year for the whole Executive Branch. Each of the committees of Congress takes its part, has hearings, and writes an authorization bill, authorizing Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, intelligence, whatever it may be. Unlike the other bills, when your intelligence authorization bill comes to the floor, there's no money. It's in a classified annex that's stored in the Intelligence Committee. Now the other members of the House, if they wanted to, could come up and read that classified annex and find out. In point of fact, they by and large do not do so. They trust the members of those two committees to do a good job. So it's a very unusual situation in which the Congress is authorizing money, and most members of the Congress don't know how much money they're authorizing. It puts a lot of burden on these committee members, but it's a responsibility that they take.

I didn't mention how you get on this committee, but it's not like other committees in Congress where you're voted onto the committee by your colleagues. These members are hand-picked by the Speaker of the House; the Republican Leader picks the Republican members, but the Speaker appoints them all. So it's a select committee, it's a prestigious committee, it's a committee that other members have a great deal of confidence in.

Oettinger: Could you go back to the earlier question, then, of short-term versus long-term, in

light of all of these things? On balance, then, you prefer extended membership to rotation?

Latimer: I would.

Oettinger: How do you relate that to what you just discussed?

Latimer: I think that the longer members are on our committee, the more they understand and appreciate, and the better judgments they can make on these various issues, including budget issues. They're all bright and capable members hand-picked by the leadership, as I said earlier, so they're usually the best people that you can get. But the fact of life in Congress is, all these members are on a number of committees. I mentioned that you can run to get on whatever committee you want to. Naturally, you try to get on whatever committee is important to your constituents. If you're from an agricultural part of the country, you want to get on the Agriculture Committee; if you're from a port, maybe you get on the Merchant Marine Committee. You're not on the Intelligence Committee because it's of any use to you politically, or because it's of any interest to your constituents. For most of the members, I doubt that their constituents even know they're on them. But it's important that they spend some time on intelligence, even if they are busy.

Only the chairman of the committee or the chairman of the subcommittee and the ranking minority member have to be there. If there's going to be a hearing, they have to open the hearing, and they have to stay through the hearing, so by definition the chairman and the ranking minority member know more about what's going on than the rest. But that's only two of the members. In point of fact, even though all the members of the committee have access to the same kind of information, people in the intelligence community always want to give their information to as few people as possible, so they tend to come up and talk to the chairman. Some of it's worth telling the rest of the members about; some of it isn't. But, just by the nature of the job, the chairman and the ranking minority member know the leaders of the intelligence community. They see the head of the National Security Agency (NSA), they see the Assistant Chief of Staff of the Air Force for Intelligence more than anybody else does. By being there, by meeting with these people, by reviewing the budgets, you get to know what's going on in the intelligence business. By the time you've been on the committee long enough to get to be chairman, you may be rotating off. So you don't have this continuity, and I think that it's much more important.

I know the original idea was that they were afraid that some of the members might be co-opted by the very people they were supposed to be overseeing. I see no indication that any of these members are about to be co-opted by anybody. They take their jobs very seriously, and I think it would just on balance be better, if they have to have rotation, at least to extend it. The Senate at least has eight years rather than six like the House. Any additional time on there would be good for the process.

Student: Assuming that the current political environment continues and military requirements draw down, would you ever see these Intelligence Committees becoming more involved in, say, domestic intelligence, as they were once, specifically as it relates to narcotics? I know historically the FBI and others have shied away from doing that because of the abuses in the past, but it seems there's some movement in that direction again.

Latimer: There are two things here. You've got the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the FBI, and Coast Guard, and others involved in the anti-narcotics problem. There are other committees of Congress which have jurisdiction over those elements. The Intelligence Committees have jurisdiction over the FBI's intelligence and counter-intelligence, counterespionage, activities. The Intelligence Committees have interest in any intelligence aimed at the international narcotics trade. They don't get involved in trying to help the local sheriff find pot fields, or anything like that.

One of the problems that has impeded, or at least made the U.S. foreign intelligence community proceed slowly in getting involved in the international narcotics business, is that the goal of the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Administration is to arrest someone and send him to jail. That requires court proceedings, and laws of discovery in which a defendant, in order to defend himself, can ask, "Where did you get the information that led you to me, and caused me to be arrested?" That process can be destructive of intelligence sources. The first thing they do is, the defense attorney will send a notice to every department he can think of in the government, asking, "Have you engaged in any wiretap or other communication intercept relating to my client?" Well, suppose one of our intelligence agencies, while looking for something else, stumbled across communications between two narcotics traffickers, one of whom we could get hold of and arrest. It may well be that's a good thing if you wanted to throw this guy in the slammer, but it may well be that the

intelligence agency doesn't want anybody to know that it can listen or is listening in on this particular kind of chatter. So you've got this built-in tension. The CIA may come up with a clandestine source, who for one reason or another might know something about narcotics, and they might not want to blow that source in connection with a narcotics case. So it gets to be very difficult when you get intelligence into the law enforcement business.

Oettinger: Could you pursue that just a little bit, because it seems to me that you alluded a little earlier to the tactical versus strategic intelligence problem between the military services and the national intelligence budget area. It seems to me that what you just described, that is the relationship between the national intelligence agencies, or the military intelligence folks, and all of this swarm of law enforcement agencies of various kinds and degrees and jurisdictions, is creating a pot of things where the old issues of services versus jointness and so on might look like child's play.

Latimer: It's a tangled web, it's very difficult, and a number of people, for a number of years, have been trying to sort through how we, the United States government, can make the best use of the information we have available to do what's good for America. That sounds like apple pie, like motherhood. In point of fact, each department, and agency, and military service gets tunnel vision. They're very parochial, they want to do what's good for them, and they don't like to cross over and contribute to another cause that isn't theirs, and so it gets more difficult. We have that in the military, trying to get the Army, Navy, and the Air Force to cooperate and work together. Sometimes you wonder if we're all on the same side. So it gets even more difficult when you get outside a department and go interdepartmental.

Oettinger: But it seems to me that I've heard you also give what I regard as a strong argument for some separation. Namely, that if you get too cozy, as between stuff that has a law enforcement character and stuff that has an informational character, you may end up losing both, because you blow the sources on the one hand, and you have material which won't stand up in court on the other. That would argue that you keep those activities as separate as you can.

Latimer: Well, there are some who try that, but there are good-hearted, good-minded people in the Executive Branch who try to work through these

difficulties. One of the problems that has led the Congress to write, and the President to sign into law, the Classified Information Procedures Act was started by a drug case in which a chap who had access to a lot of intelligence information threatened to divulge that information in the process of his trial. The powers that be decided it was wiser not to bring him to trial rather than risk the disclosure of the information he had. So, the Classified Information Procedures Act was written in order to give guidelines to the judge, the prosecutor, and the defense attorney as to how to handle classified information associated with trials. In the Oliver North case and the John Poindexter case there are continual arguments back and forth, but at least now there's some legislation that gives some guidelines to everyone involved. So it's a very, very difficult problem. There probably is no solution to it. It probably is one of those problem areas that just continually has to be worked.

Student: In the Legislative Branch, the members of Congress are constantly lobbied by people who represent various PACs (political action committees). In the Executive Branch is there a counterpart in terms of access to the chairman, in terms of doing research for a particular department or agency to promote its needs?

Latimer: Well, the PACs do work on the Executive Branch as well as they do on the Congress. They're continually in there lobbying. Not only those kinds of things, but the defense contractors are forever bouncing between Capitol Hill and the Pentagon, lobbying for their particular systems. So there's a lot of that. What you find in the intelligence world is a lack of this, and some members have expressed their interest in how different the Intelligence Committees are. In almost every other committee of Congress, the President makes his proposal, and witnesses from the Executive Branch appear and make their argument, their case, for why they need whatever they want. Then representatives from interest groups, the public, come forward and give their testimony as to why what the President is doing he ought to do more of, or less of, or not at all. The members sit there and listen to that, and they listen to their own staff who tell them, "We've looked into the pros and cons, and here is what we think you ought to do," and they can go back home and hear what their constituents have to say about all this.

You come to intelligence and you're in a closed room, and there's the Executive Branch witness.

There are no PACs, no public interest groups, because nobody knows what's in the intelligence world, and nobody knows whether it's good or bad or indifferent. So the members feel, "Well, I'm only hearing one side of this story, where am I going to get the other side?" and the only place they have to turn is to their staff. Now in point of fact, people being people, and bureaucrats being bureaucrats, what you find is other parts of the government start coming forward to you, if not formally, informally. So that you have a Director of Central Intelligence, and he supposedly is the number one man and he presents the budget for all the intelligence agencies. No sooner does he get through his presentation, and often before he ever gets up there, representatives of other parts of the intelligence community who don't think they got a fair shake are up telling you why they ought to get more money and someone else ought to get less. But it is different from what you see in the rest of the Congress.

Oettinger: By the way, on that score, Norm Wood, who will be coming later, is moving from being the Air Force's Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence to being the Head of the Intelligence Community Staff that you were just referring to. You may again want to put some questions to General Wood, looking at the same thing from a different angle.*

Student: You mentioned early on that intelligence organizations have shifted from being under the Executive to kind of being in between the Executive and the Legislative Branches. I have two questions. Over the years, since you've been involved early on with the Central Intelligence Agency as an analyst, do you think that the quality of our intelligence has suffered at all because of this tension now? Have the National Intelligence Estimates perhaps become more politicized, with a little bit of desire to say, "Well, we've got to please the Congress, we've also got to please the President?" So have we suffered anything there? Also, since the mid-1970s, with the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) now being replaced with every administration — three DCIs in four years, or something — do you see a need perhaps to try to stop that? Can we have a more long-term permanent DCI to kind of insulate the process from politics, now that it's in the middle, so that we get unbiased intelligence that both the Legislative and Executive Branches can look at and make their decision?

*See General Wood's presentation later in this volume.

Latimer: It's hard to answer the first part of that question. There's an ongoing project, on which some folks here at Harvard are trying to assist, on improving the quality of political intelligence support to policy makers. I'm not convinced it's as bad as people make it out to be. You can always find the cases where somebody has missed the boat and that'll probably always be with us, but I'm continually impressed with how very good the intelligence has been in recent years. I'd say that if you go back to 1947, one of the reasons President Truman and the Congress came up with the idea of a National Security Council and a CIA was the idea that had we had such mechanisms in place, the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor might not have happened. (The attack might have happened, but it wouldn't have been a surprise.) If that's your criterion, then in these last 43 years it's worked: there hasn't been any surprise attack on the United States. The one time we came closest to it, when Krushchev put the missiles into Cuba, intelligence arguably did a good job, and found them out in time for the President to take steps to defuse the situation. So, if that's one criterion that you want to use in assessing how good they are, they've been pretty darn good.

Whether, and to what extent, Congress becoming more and more a consumer of intelligence plays in this, I don't know. A lot of it depends on the courage of the analyst, and the fortitude of the intelligence leaders. There are plenty of times when intelligence officers see the world one way and the White House sees it another way, and puts enormous pressure on the analysts to conform. After all, most policy makers don't want intelligence to inform policy; they want it to confirm policy, and they don't want to hear that the world isn't the way they think it is. That can happen to members of Congress as well, who can get very irate at some of the things they hear from people in the intelligence community, but I don't know that that has had any real effect, as yet, on the quality.

As for your National Intelligence Estimates, I will give great umbrage to a number of people, but I've always regarded them as immaterial. I don't think policy makers read them, or if they do they only want to be sure that they support whatever the policy makers already decided to do. A great deal of effort and a great deal of intellectual power go into writing them, but I've never felt that they really played very much in the policy-making arena, very much, if at all.

Oettinger: That's funny, because the emphasis in sort of the lore and scholarly literature on intelli-

gence is very heavy on that, going back to Sherman Kent at Yale, who initiated it. Bill Casey had from those days an image of the National Intelligence Estimate being a sort of crown jewel. But my mind tends to be like yours, that it's an intellectual sport that has on the whole relatively little to do with influencing anybody about anything.

McLaughlin: It got inflated by the intellectuals on the DDI (Deputy Director of Intelligence, CIA) side, while DDO (Deputy Director of Operations, CIA) was actually doing things.

Oettinger: Yeah, I guess that's part of it.

Student: I might agree that at the policy level, the decision-making level, it probably hasn't a lot of impact. But where they really do have an interesting impact is at the next levels down, within the community itself, where it acts as a vehicle for the spread of information to people who might not see it otherwise. Then it goes into other estimates, and so on. In other words, it has an awful life of its own that continues. But it's an interesting life, and sometimes it's good. It shows us where there's a hole.

Latimer: I would agree that the process of analysts getting together and trading and arguing back and forth is a good one. I'm just saying the end product is not necessarily worthwhile.

The discontinuity of directors was a major problem in the 1970s, as you mentioned. I think we had five in three years or something, and to have that kind of turmoil and turbulence at the top is bad for any organization. On balance I believe they'd be wise to go somewhat the way they have with the Director of the FBI: a set term beyond which you can't be re-upped, a 10-year term, whatever it may be, and the beauty of that is you would force your Director of Central Intelligence into a longer life than any one President, so he would not necessarily be regarded as a political appointee. The downside of that is, if your Director of Central Intelligence is going to be of any use to anybody, it's going to be only insofar as he has access to the President of the United States. And if the President regards him, as Presidents tend to, as, "This guy was here before, he's one of them, he's not one of mine, I don't want to see him," then the Director of Central Intelligence's role is greatly diminished, so there's a downside to that too.

Oettinger: That's one of these things that has been a perennial wrestling match and it may be that the Deputy Director might have that longer life, but that

the head is a political appointee who has this coupling role with the customer, if you will. I think it's another one of those ladders where the arguments go back and forth and which simply do not stay settled because the arguments pro and the arguments con, longer or shorter life, all have such vitality and they're so reasonable that it just depends on which ones you're inclined to weigh more at what moment in time.

McLaughlin: Before we take any more questions, we'll ask Tom if he has any other points he wants to make.

Latimer: I don't think that I have any other points to make.

Student: You said the congressional committees were originally established to find how much the intelligence community at large was spending and to get control of the budgets. Then I wonder how much control they actually have. For instance, in terms of the military, talking about intelligence being a lot of people, the Department of Defense doesn't break out military intelligence personnel in the budget.

Latimer: Yes, they do.

Student: What about airplanes and systems, do they do that?

Latimer: They're all required, and we work hand in glove. The Intelligence Committees have counterparts, cleared staffers on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and on the Armed Services Committee, and we trade information back and forth to make sure we know about those aircraft, about the people, the boats, whatever it may be. As you know, when you're talking about a \$300 billion defense budget you're going to have some of what the retail merchants call shrinkage; something goes out the window on you every once in a while that you can't keep track of, but by and large, yes, they do well.

Where you could have a problem is in the 1949 CIA act (this is not the 1947 act that created the CIA, but the 1949 act that gave it more authority). Unlike other parts of our government, the CIA can spend money and accept money, no matter what it was authorized or appropriated for. So that the Intelligence Committee can say, "Here's how much money the CIA can have for the coming year." If the CIA can convince the Secretary of Defense, he can start shoveling them money, and airplanes, whatever he wants, from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines. They can get money from the Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of the

Treasury, wherever they want to get the money from, if the Office of Management and Budget approves. They are authorized to do so. Now the Intelligence Committees have said, "Wait a minute, anytime you do that, we want to know about it." But you can find lots and lots of money and things going back and forth, into and out of the CIA, with only the Intelligence Committees exercising any kind of oversight and knowledge over it.

Oettinger: Tom, could you comment on this point of money moving back and forth? It would seem to me that the War Powers Act and similar actions would influence the degree to which a President might prefer to act through the Defense Department or through the intelligence agencies in order to meet the letter or the spirit, or obey the letter or the spirit, of things like the War Powers Act. Could you comment on your experience on that score, and whether it has made any significant difference one way or the other as the Congress and the President have arm-wrestled over that?

Latimer: You've raised a point. I've been surprised that we haven't had any questions about the so-called covert action business. And that's really one of the options that's open to the President. You'll often see people describe the covert action as an alternative — between diplomacy, use of military force, or covert action. I would regard that as a misperception of how to use covert actions. Covert actions, to be successful, should not be a substitute for either military action or diplomacy, but rather a supplement to each. If you have a diplomatic effort, and somehow a covert action can support that diplomacy, that's well and good. If you have an ongoing military action and there's something that the intelligence community can do covertly to support that, that's fine. But when you come to regard covert action as the one and only way you can implement your foreign policy, you're heading for trouble.

Oettinger: But isn't that a consequence of the War Powers Act in driving the President in that direction?

Latimer: I don't think so. Long before the War Powers Act there was the overthrow of Mossadegh in Iran, and Arbenz in Guatemala. That was considered to be a very convenient way of solving a foreign policy problem. You did not have to tell the Congress about it, you did not have to worry about appropriating money specially for such operations, and you didn't have to worry about the War Powers

Act. It was just done and that was wonderful. The world isn't what it was back in the 1950s, and I just believe that it's not likely that anything important in our foreign policy can be successfully carried out through a covert action. But the temptation is there, as you suggest. Any President can get terribly frustrated when he's faced with a difficulty — some situation abroad he doesn't like. He doesn't want to invade, and his State Department tells him, "We've done everything diplomatically and economically we can think of and the problem won't go away." And there's your Director of Central Intelligence saying, "Let me at 'em, Chief." It's a very tempting thing to say to the CIA, "You go and fix the problem covertly." It gives people in the administration the illusion something is being done to make their problem go away, when in point of fact, nothing very effective may be getting done, and it may even become counterproductive.

Oettinger: So, in that light then, you would regard the overt and explicit use of military in Panama as a preferable option.

Latimer: Definitely. In Panama, in Grenada, you had some problem you wanted to take care of; that's the way to take care of it. That's why we have trained, proficient military forces. Put them in there, have them do it. If the problem is that serious, and it really affects our national security that much, go ahead and use the arm that we have specifically trained and made ready to do that kind of job.

Student: So what role does the operations side of covert action have?

Latimer: I should have made a distinction between the clandestine collection of information — spying — and covert actions. Covert actions are not intelligence activities; they are activities to implement policies — coups, slipping money to a foreign political party, propaganda placements around the world, that sort of thing. I have heard it argued, and I think with some persuasiveness, that the clandestine arms of our intelligence services are best employed in gathering much-needed information that cannot be gotten any other way. Covert action is the mortal enemy of the clandestine collection of information, because your officers tend to be the same people. Their sources may often be the same people. By its very nature, a paramilitary-type covert action is not going to stay covert very long. It's either going to work, in which case everybody brags about it, or it isn't going to work, in which case the agents are discovered, or caught, shot, or tortured, and your assets are blown.

Oettinger: There's another side to that argument, which you'll find woven through the threads of past years of this seminar, which is that the only way to have an effective covert action is to have it closely tied to the information gathering, because otherwise it's the blind leading the blind. If you look at the three appearances of Bob Inman in the seminar, starting with his coming here as Director of NSA, and then later during his Deputy Director of Central Intelligence phase, and then his more industrial phase, you'll see his comments changing on that score, depending on where he sat and what the period was. Essentially, that mirrors arguments that seem to be going on for 30 years over the association of covert action with intelligence. I think one of Inman's last remarks was, "Yeah, probably, on balance, it's not worth falling on one's sword to undo the way it is now, even if you prefer to have it some other way." I don't know where you come in on that. On balance, are you happy with covert action being linked to intelligence?

Latimer: It's certainly true that if you're going to carry out a covert action, you'd better have good intelligence support for it. My argument is simply, given the handful of people that are in the business and the way it has evolved, they are often the same people, so that your so-called station chief is collecting intelligence, and he's running the covert action. Now, at one point they had them separated, and they ended up recruiting the same sources and going against each other, and it became a bit of a competition. My argument really is that I'm dubious that the best interests of the United States are served by these large covert actions.

Now we have a new phenomenon in recent years: the overt-covert action, in which you have people bragging about their support for the Nicaraguan Contras, and people boasting about what we do for the Mujaheddin in Afghanistan. Now how these are covert, I don't quite know. That's a very strange situation, but they're called covert actions, even though everybody talks about them.

McLaughlin: I guess I have one other definitional problem, and if you read those Inman transcripts from the past you'll get some clarification, but

*Bobby R. Inman, "Managing Intelligence for Effective Use," in *Seminar on Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence, Guest Presentations, Spring 1980*; "Issues in Intelligence," in *Seminar on Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence, Guest Presentations, Spring 1981*; and "Technological Innovation and the Cost of Change," in *Seminar on Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence, Guest Presentations, Spring 1986*. Program on Information Resources Policy, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1981, 1982, 1987.

there's covert action and there's covert military action. One of the things that I've tried to get on the record in some of these past sessions is that there are different ways of handling covert military action. It's possible that some covert activities are better housed with intelligence, with payoffs here and there, because it's also part of the intelligence game. But when it comes to trying to handle shipments of Stinger missiles, and other such things, and training people in the field, there are certain principles that you get in military organizations that seem to work better. The British traditionally use the SAS (Special Air Service) for covert military activity, but they were career military people. Whereas we've had Mobs for Jobs, and Cuban groups, and various other groups that were not necessarily professional military all the time. So that's another whole theme of the argument about who's in charge and how these things get coupled together, and whether or not they should be under defense, or under the intelligence system. That's another set of distinctions.

Latimer: That's become blurred particularly as the military has developed these unconventional warfare units. Just how are they to be used, under what circumstances, and what's their relation with the CIA covert action people? When do you use one and not the other, or both, and who controls?

Student: Who?

Latimer: I haven't done enough homework recently, but the Tonkin Gulf episode in which there were the two U.S. Navy destroyers cruising around the Gulf, and another type of clandestine operation going on in the Tonkin Gulf, and did they each know what the other was doing, and what was the coordination? Was there any?

McLaughlin: We used our friend Task Force 57?

Latimer: Maybe.

McLaughlin: And Ed Wilson selling explosives to Libya.

Latimer: That is one of the problems. Our committee had looked at that some time ago. What do you do with former intelligence people who then sell their services and their abilities to foreign governments, or foreign entities? Should you do anything about it, or decide it's a violation?

McLaughlin: It's like Congressmen going to work for lobbying firms when they leave office and still have access to the cloakroom.

Student: There are several definitions of C³I. Can you elaborate on how you define this term?

Latimer: I'm not able to be of much help on that. As I've mentioned, we used to have something called DTCCS (Defense, Telecommunications, Command and Control Systems), and that was an office within the Office of Secretary of Defense, and then there was an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. They had little or nothing to do with one another, and then they were merged together, as I mentioned, largely for budgetary reasons rather than any particular other reason. The communicators tended to be technically oriented people who were concerned about communications systems, about the allocation of the various wavelengths that certain people get, whether you're aviation, or this government, or that government, and there was an office within the Office of the Secretary of Defense that defended the needs of the military.

McLaughlin: Spectrum allocation.

Latimer: Yes, spectrum allocation for all these various things. There were other people who concerned themselves strictly with the systems that were used to communicate. Other people were concerned about, in those days, mostly strategic command. They had created the Worldwide Military Command and Control System (WWMCCS), and they were concerned about how, if we get into a nuclear exchange, we communicate our commands to the various outsiders. Well, you put all these people together, and it was a shotgun wedding; it really wasn't a very satisfactory affair. Particularly since I didn't get the impression that the military services gave a really high priority to the communications part of the operation. A great deal of effort was spent on the big strategic command problem.

Oettinger: Partly because those were initiatives that had come out of CINCSAC (Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command).

Latimer: That could well be, but it was also something the President was interested in, the Secretary of Defense was interested in, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs was interested in.

Student: Sir, don't you think also partly because it was a very clearly defined, very simple mission, everybody understood that mission.

Latimer: That's right, it was something where everybody could understand what was needed and then go about and try to do it. Get the hardware to fix it.

Oettinger: This seminar owes its birth in part to that not being all that easy, because some of that building up of the strategic C³I only took place in the Carter White House at a time when Bill Odom was Zbigniew Brzezinski's military aide. He had a captain named Tom Leney, who was working with him in the White House West Wing basement on what became one of Carter's PD number something or other. I remember getting a call from Odom saying, "I've got this captain working on the tele-communications side of this, and can you help him out?" We sat and discussed a number of things and it was clear that the understanding in the White House, in those days, on this set of problems, was somewhat limited. That was summer, it must have been 1979, and in 1980 Leney came here to the Kennedy School and said, "Given this experience, maybe we ought to get some folks together to try to shed some light on all of this." That was the first year of this seminar and Leney was a student in it. He has now just come back from Europe and is working for the Army Chief of Staff. Odom was one of the guests in the first year and that's how we got started. It looks easier in retrospective than it did in prospective.

McLaughlin: But at the next level, one of our early guests was Jack Cushman, the retired Lieutenant General, former commander of the 101st and one of its battalions in Vietnam. Jack was very upset at this whole idea of connectivity for tactical purposes, including coming in and saying, "To the best of my knowledge, in every war, at least since the First World War, we have had Army and Marines fighting next to each other in the same theater, and to the best of my knowledge under present tactical doctrine this will continue to happen. And here the Marine Corps has gone off and developed their own fire control system, which will not interface with any Army fire control system, and we are going to be cheek-to-jowl in the next tactical warfare situation where neither the Army nor the Marine Corps can provide tactical fire support or artillery support." Of course, we proved that was true in Grenada, even though in the meantime it got fixed and the Marine Corps was required to subscribe to the Army fire control system. In Grenada the Army and the Marine Corps, as normal, could not communicate even though they had the same brand of radio. No one bothered with the same keys.

Oettinger: Let me go back to the earlier question for a moment before we leave it, because if you want to see a technical person's view of how the

terminology evolved along with the politics and the budget as Tom refers to them, read Ruth Davis' presentation to the seminar back in 1988,* and also Tom Coakley's draft, where Coakley has done a valiant job going through several years and trying to tease out what the various definitions might be. But I suggest that looking for some agreed-on definition of the terms is interesting only as an exploration of what various people have thought as they looked at different parts of the elephant. I mean it's the blind men and the elephant, and there is no agreed-on fundamental set of definitions, and the problem of making explicit what you're talking about is something that each of you should be prepared to face in your papers. What is it *you* mean by what you're talking about? You cannot expect there to be a definition of intelligence, of command, or control that everybody agrees to in some kind of mystical, mysterious, and wonderful way. Unless you can point to one, I don't think it exists.

Latimer: That's quite right.

Student: Sir, given the fact that strategic command and control appears to be certainly further along, with the guidance of Congress, than tactical command and control, could you give us your views on why intelligence and tactical command and control and any other types of communications are not in a better state? What do you think the state of those items is, and what do you see as the future? Are they good enough now, or if you don't think they are, will they ever be better and more synergistic?

Latimer: My impression is that they're not as good as they need to be. A great deal of effort has gone into trying to make them better, with relatively little success. Part of it is cultural. Most of the military officers I've run into who are in command-type, combat arms-type jobs don't know very much about intelligence. They don't know what intelligence can do for them, and they haven't had any experience with it. Often they're not cleared for it, and it's just not part of their feel of what their job is. They do know command, they know they're going to get orders and they know they've got to give orders, and they want to be able to talk to the people they command and to receive orders from the people above them.

*Ruth M. Davis, "Putting C³I Development in a Strategic and Operational Context," in *Seminar on Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence, Guest Presentations, Spring 1988*. Program on Information Resources Policy, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1989.

What happens too often, with intelligence people, is they want to give you, the consumer, everything. They want to be able to turn the fire hose on and inundate you with information, and you're a commander down there and you don't want to know all that stuff. You don't know exactly what it is you want to know, but you probably feel like Henry Kissinger: he didn't know what he wanted, but he'd know it when he saw it. That's what the commander is; he knows he wants to know what's over that hill, what's firing at him, how many of them are there, where are his people, can he get some air support, can he get some artillery support? That's what he wants to know. He doesn't want all this extraneous data pouring in, particularly if it's classified, and it has to go over in a corner somewhere and be deciphered, and it's not right there when he needs it. So there's kind of a built-in prejudice.

The short answer is, I don't think that it's a problem that's easily solved. It's another one of these problems that has to be worked at, because every time you get a couple of people, an intelligence officer and a commander, working well together, one or the other or both rotate out and then you're stuck all over again with recreating this relationship. I had hoped that over a period of time, as more and more officers got exposed one way or another to intelligence, they would begin to understand what intelligence can do for them and how it could do it, but it's very difficult, and very frustrating. You'll even find theater commanders who will tell you, "I know there's an intelligence asset, and they tell me it's in my theater, but I never see anything from it, I don't know where it goes, I don't know what they do with it." There's a great sense of frustration from not being able to control their own intelligence assets.

Oettinger: As you said before, the military are sometimes the agents for a national intelligence program and the commander may have some of those folks under him and may not understand that they're doing one job and it's not his job.

Latimer: It's very complicated. I was told a story once of a former Director of Central Intelligence leaving the Oval Office and going down into the West Wing of the White House and asking to get a secure phone so he could phone the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs because the President had just told the Director of Central Intelligence he wanted to fly a reconnaissance aircraft over a certain foreign country, and the director didn't want to tell the President that he didn't control this particular

intelligence asset, that it was in the hands of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

So it gets to be terribly complex as to who does control and operate. If you're commander in chief of a certain region and there's trouble brewing in your area and you say to CINCSAC, "How about letting me have your asset for my area," and CINCSAC says, "Wait a minute, I've got my own priorities to fulfill," it gets to be terribly complicated. I don't doubt that your commander in most cases would say, "I don't know what that stuff is, I don't know what good it's going to do me, so clear my communications waves and capabilities for what I do know and am comfortable with."

Student: Sir, you made a remark about the intelligence requirements in Vietnam and low intensity conflict in general, as opposed to, say, modern warfare in your more conventional battlefield. Do you think we're training military officers to deal with that kind of information requirement?

Latimer: I hope so. But I'm not that familiar with what our military are being trained for in connection with intelligence for a large-scale or small-scale battle. We grappled with that in Congress some years ago and the decision was made jointly by the Executive Branch and Congress to try to find ways of taking so-called national assets and feeding them down to the local commanders. My impression is that probably wasn't really the way to go. We probably would have been better off giving more assets to the various local commanders for whatever kind of conventional or unconventional warfare. The requirements are not that much different, it seems to me. I heard horror stories in Vietnam of an infantry battalion getting into a firefight; meanwhile, very nearby was an Army Security Agency unit which could have given them some warning or some help, but that information was going back to Saigon and back to Fort Meade, Maryland. It wasn't really going directly to the combat unit. It doesn't seem to me it matters whether you're in a little firefight in a corner of Vietnam or whether you're on the NATO versus Warsaw Pact front, it's the same kind of problem. The question is, how do you get information very quickly to the fellow who needs it? We did learn how to do that, partially, at least the Air Force did in Vietnam, and then as far as I can make out we've promptly ignored that.

Oettinger: But it remains a perennial tug-of-war for the very reasons you pointed out earlier, that the use of information blows its sources, or tends to. For that reason, there is a perennial tug-of-war between

the folks who collect it and the folks who want to use it.

Latimer: Well, there is, Tony, but, though I hate to keep harking back to Vietnam, we did learn how to "sanitize" this information. A guy who's being shot at isn't going to ask you, "Where'd you get that information?" as long as it turns out it's pretty good information. Then the next time you call him he's not going to question you, he's going to go ahead and take your information. So I think there are ways to get information to the people who need it quickly and in a fashion that does not blow it.

But I'll tell you, strangely enough, intelligence professionals are the world's worst at protecting their own sources. You and I can pick up the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* every day. We can read all sorts of stories and we don't know who the source is. Now why can't the intelligence community be as good at protecting their sources as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*? I can remember one of the chairmen of my committee taking a look at an intelligence report and it had all these code words after it. And he said, "What do all those code words mean?" and I told him and he said, "Do I need to know that?" and I said "No, you don't," and he said, "Then why are they telling it to me?" So the intelligence people, with great neon-lit fingers, are pointing at their own sources every time they publish something. They don't need to do that, but they want to get credit for it.

McLaughlin: Let me give the other side of that. One of our previous speakers discusses this, and the tendency of the intelligence people being sufficiently paranoid these days, or for the last decade or so, that every time they produce a piece of intelligence for policy making, the response is, "Yeah, but why do we trust them? Why should we believe you on this one?" The constant pressure is to produce sources, to produce evidence that yes, this is real.

Latimer: I've heard that, but my answer to that is, who do you really care about if you're intelligence and supporting policy? You care about the President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, maybe the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. If he wants to know what the source is, I don't have any problem with the Director of Central Intelligence going down and telling him, "All right, here's the source of this piece of information, and you ought to know, you're the only one who knows that. So if it comes out in the *Washington Post* tomorrow, I know and you know and I'll see to it that the President knows where that came from." I don't have any problem with that. It's something else to turn that same piece of information out and send it out worldwide, including to the *Pueblo* and God knows where else.

Student: It strikes me that few of the readers of the *New York Times* have the resources of a national adversary to discover sources. There are often times when a certain bit of information can come from only one place, or at least is narrowed down. In the *New York Times* they don't have that. All they have to do is sanitize, or call it "deep throat" or something of this nature. I don't think it's quite fair to make that connection.

Latimer: There's a good bit of truth in what you say, but I have rarely seen a piece of intelligence that's that important that cannot be sanitized. Your agency does it all the time. My point was, the intelligence people don't really try to get their information out while protecting their sources. Quite the opposite; they try to draw attention to their sources.

Oettinger: On that wonderfully controversial note, we've got to get our speaker back to the airport, heaven help him. We really appreciate your coming very much.