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**Watchdogging Intelligence  
Lionel Olmer**

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William E. Colby; Bobby R. Inman; William Odom; Lionel Olmer;  
Lee Paschall; Robert Rosenberg; Raymond Tate; A. K. Wolgast

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Information Resources Policy, Harvard University, Maxwell Dworkin 125,  
33 Oxford Street, Cambridge MA 02138. (617) 495-4114

E-mail: [pirp@deas.harvard.edu](mailto:pirp@deas.harvard.edu) URL: <http://www.pirp.harvard.edu>  
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## **WATCHDOGGING INTELLIGENCE**

**Lionel Olmer**

**Director of International Programs, Motorola, Inc.;**  
**Formerly Acting Executive Secretary,**  
**President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board**

**Though Lionel Olmer is affiliated with Motorola, he speaks here as the former Acting Executive Secretary of the now defunct President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board — where a variety of private-sector figures were involved in a quasi-governmental function in an interesting manner that helps illuminate how the government's brain and nervous system work. Olmer is still involved in advising the intelligence community through his position as consultant to the Intelligence Oversight Board that was created by Executive Order in the aftermath of soul-searching over maintaining the community's integrity.**

The President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB), as you know, was created by President Eisenhower in 1956 and abolished by President Carter in early 1977. I care about that institution, because I was convinced during my service in the White House (and the past three years have reinforced my conviction) that any president needs an institutionalized source of advice on foreign intelligence which is independent of the bureaucracy and which is provided to him by men and women of broad experience in whom he has confidence and who enjoy a public reputation for judgment and probity. I think the members of the PFIAB fit that definition. The last time I was asked to make a speech about the PFIAB, I did so before a handful of responsible Carter administration officials. They were clearly taken by my remarks. I was utterly convinced I had per-

suaded them that the PFIAB was a "must save institution" warranting attention even during the darkest hours in the night of the long budgetary knives. Only a few days later came the official notice signed by Mr. Carter that the PFIAB was not needed any longer, because under his administration the intelligence community and the national security apparatus would be shipshape and the Board would be redundant. I might say that redundancy is not the chief crime of which that administration may be accused in the future, but that pronouncement's accuracy and wisdom is not the subject here.

The basic facts concerning the establishment of the Board, its composition over the years, and so on are very easily obtainable. I hope to give you something much more interesting: one person's insight into the process of private sector advice on sensitive matters to the President of the United States. So I will concentrate my remarks on the anecdotal side of the Board's activities. Please bear in mind during the discussion that although the term "oversight" was used when the Board was created in 1956, its meaning was substantially different from what the word came to mean beginning in 1974. As originally applied to the PFIAB, it signified watching over the intelligence process to assure the adequacy and effectiveness of intelligence. It did not include matters dealing with the propriety and legality of intelligence. Maybe it should have. But such was not the case, and none of the members with whom I served ever felt they had a mandate in that area.

A Board has value to the President who appoints it and to whom it must exclusively report. It also has value to the entire intelligence community. And finally, to a lesser, but nonetheless important extent, it can be of value to the public at large. As regards the President, it is my feeling that however essential good intelligence is, and however from time to time it may determine whether or not given activities should be undertaken, the entire subject must not occupy a substantial part of any president's time and attention. There are simply too many things of crucial importance to the country for the Chief Executive to ponder at any length substantive budgetary or administrative intelligence issues. Thus, say, during the 10 percent of the time he spends on intelligence matters, the President is often likely to receive a distilled "least-common-denominator" presentation of alternatives, frequently representing the self-perceived best interest of the agency presenting them, and sometimes bereft of an indefinable quality — perhaps somewhat like what a Supreme Court Justice said about pornography: it is something you know when you see it — the quality of sound judgment.

I think the PFIAB over the years demonstrated its capacity for sound judgment on innumerable occasions. I will suggest four areas. First, economic intelligence, which indeed was first given life as a direct consequence of PFIAB activity. Second, accelerated construction of satellites for intelligence purposes, which would have lagged for years without the strong push it received from the Board. Third, a presidentially directed, government-wide program to deal with Soviet electronic surveillance in the United States, a subject which was virtually taboo for discussion even within the intelligence community until the Board brought it to the President's attention. And fourth, the now notorious "A team-B team" experiment in competitive analysis, which was officially resisted in every part of the intelligence community until the Board convinced the President of its merits.

Leo Cherne was Chairman when the Board was eliminated, and was a member or Chairman when three of these areas were pursued. His own creative ability to direct the energies of a group as different in background and experience as the PFIAB, and his

enormous vitality, were what made it possible to manage this diverse portfolio. In my judgement Cherne's personal contributions demonstrate why and how such a board should have been considered a national treasure.

The value of the PFIAB to the intelligence community itself might be likened to a doctor's prescription for unpleasant-tasting medicine; the patient doesn't have to like it to know that it is supposed to do him some good. Many times people in the intelligence community expressed to me their view of the utility of the Board, either with respect to a specific issue then being deliberated or in the abstract, as in "It's good to know there is a group of wise men with full access to all the data and with direct access to the President. That's one way of keeping the bureaucrats on their toes." I would add that the Board's existence by its very nature gave some within the community hope that contentious issues, which to their minds had been papered over, would be fully aired and examined by a Board immune from agency mindsets or jurisdictional disputes.

Finally, the Board can serve the public interest partly in the same way it serves the intelligence community's interests: by being seen as an independent entity by those whose faith in institutions and the process of government is, to say the least, not unshaken. I would contend that the taxpayer who knows that six to ten billion dollars out of the treasury is being spent for largely secret purposes is likely to take some assurance from the awareness that a group of people, of the caliber of Jim Killian and Edwin Land, have had the opportunity to evaluate the system produced by those funds, and to make their views known to the President.

The Board can also be represented as a "safety valve," available for consultation on truly important issues or to conduct postmortems into why the system didn't work in a particular situation. In the former instance, President Nixon publicly stated on announcing the ABM treaty that the PFIAB would conduct an annual threat assessment to assure him that the intelligence on Soviet strategic forces was adequate. In the latter kind of situation, President Nixon asked the Board to look into reasons why intelligence failed to provide warning of the 1973 Arab attack on Israel. President Ford also used the Board in the postmortem kind of way.

In a perfect world where complete information on any given issue is available and would be presented to the decision maker in a coherent and impartial way, I suppose there would appear to be very little justification for an instrument such as the PFIAB. Even in such a utopia, however, I'd argue that such a Board would still have significant utility. At the very least, it gives the President an opportunity to ask for another opinion, to discuss issues that concern him with people, some of whom might very well have occupied his seat as head of government. That kind of exchange simply cannot take place within the bureaucracy. Jimmy Carter said that his administration would not have need of a PFIAB. I suspect, however, that some senior people within the Administration, and perhaps even the President himself, may at some point during the past three and a half years have wished that the PFIAB did still exist.

In any event, I see no movement now towards its recreation from any quarter within the executive branch. You may be aware that Senator Wallop of the Senate Intelligence Committee has introduced an amendment to the Intelligence Charters legislation (S2284) which would create such a Board to be composed of members appointed by the President and the Congress. This might be better than no Board at all, but I doubt the President

could develop the kind of personal rapport with it which, I believe, only a Board of his own appointees makes likely. I don't know if this administration has yet taken a position on Senator Wallop's amendment. My guess is that it would not oppose it very strongly, and that, if it picked up strength on the Hill (which it so far hasn't), the administration would accept it. But this is truly long-term prognosis, since I don't think the Charters legislation will go anywhere in this Congress; and before much longer virtually all the wheels of government will grind to a crawl as the nomination process ends and the campaigns get fully underway.

**Student.** The Carter administration seems to pride itself on what it has done as a reaction to the overcentralized control that was a creature of the Nixon-Kissinger Board area. It seems to feel that it has opened up the intelligence bureaucracy and increased debate to the point where dissent becomes quasi-institutionalized. And it conceives the Presidential Review Memorandum, and indeed the National Security Council staff, as the policy making level with direct access to the President. To the extent that that's true, is that a good or bad thing, and can you see any kind of synthesis between what you had before and what has evolved since?

**Olmer.** It's very difficult for me to answer your question, because I don't believe it's true. I guess I would have to erase my own mindset that it is not true, and that what exists is, if not chaotic, the antithesis of orderly decision making. And imagine what it might be like. Again, in a perfect world it might work that way. I don't know.

**Student.** DIA doesn't feel bad about coming in with a dissenting opinion to something that comes out of the CIA; and that essentially comes up, is looked at on the National Security Council staff, and is resolved there as a policy making issue.

**Olmer.** I only know the process from afar — I served as a consultant to a Board which by executive order addresses only legality and propriety. I was retained because I'm a lawyer and have some experience in intelligence. But I see no intelligence product, and what I know about the system now in that sense is cocktail party talk. I don't have the sense that dissent is truly welcome any more now than it was before; and it wasn't welcome before. I don't think it has been institutionalized as you suggest. If it were, I think that probably it might go a long way toward serving some of the functions PFIAB served, but I don't think it would serve all of them. I'm afraid I haven't answered your question well, but it's a big question, it's a topic for a seminar in itself.

**Oettinger.** But let me try to encourage you to pursue it by rephrasing the question. At the heart of it is the question: regardless of personalities (the interesting thing about the PFIAB is that it survived administrations of both parties and very different characters for a period of time), and under any president with any kind of staff structure, can dissent or evaluation be institutionalized within the bureaucracy as effectively as within a board of the PFIAB's quasi-public character that is not on the government payroll? Does it make sense not just to have a clean break between what's inside government and what is private sector, but to have (and this is only one example; there have been others, some of which also have been dismantled by the Carter administration) diffuse boundaries where it isn't quite clear whether a given activity is government or private sector?

**Olmer.** There were instances that to me, and I think to the President, proved the Board's utility, when the President would be confronted by several alternatives. Under Kissinger's national security system, option B was generally the one that he wanted and selected, and things were organized to make option B the most attractive. But in any event alternatives were clearly presented. It still left the President sometimes not feeling satisfied — in fact, it left Kissinger feeling unsatisfied. There were periods when he would say, "The papers submitted to me don't really present alternatives. They present a single choice and don't develop the opportunities for other kinds of decisions, and their impact, and their long range implications." It's entirely another matter to bring someone in from the outside without any of the trappings of bureaucracy. They really don't look on it from the point of view of the State Department, which has a constituency, or the Defense Department. The NSC staff is supposed to be capable of truly objective reasoning and presentation, but it just doesn't work that way. In fact, one of the hazards, it seemed to me, in the Nixon/Ford administration under the Kissinger system, and even under the Carter system, is that the NSC takes on a life of its own and there is an inherent rivalry between the people at the top — Kissinger and Brzezinski — and the people in the rest of the government. And that rivalry is never going to be accommodated by the President saying, "Well, we have a Cabinet form of government, and we tried that for a while and that didn't seem to work, so we're going to substitute a strong man." That has just created a deep rift between elements of the government and the White House staff. Not all things should be thought of as suitable for the kind of purpose the PFIAB served. But the big ones, and some less big, ought to be referred to a body which tends to be oblivious to the deepseated rivalries and bitter arguments that prevail even on the substantive divisions.

We're talking in the abstract. Every single one of the things I mentioned is specific and can, I think, be discussed almost with complete openness because it is already a matter of public record. Many of the kinds of concerns that you raise would perhaps be better understood in the light of how they were specifically dealt with than in the abstract.

**Student.** We know that Presidents have to varying degrees called on advice from sources other than inside the government. Roosevelt did that superbly and rather informally. Let's agree with you that outside ventilation is a useful thing. But you've mentioned "institutionalization." Roosevelt, for example, used cronies or other ad hoc mechanisms. Can you support the notion that institutionalization plays an important part as well as the interaction of the private sector?

**Olmer.** Among the things that the administration said when the PFIAB was disbanded was that whenever, and if ever, there appears to be a need for such a Board it would be created for selected ad hoc purposes. It has been done. It was done with respect to the Soviet brigade in Cuba. Mr. Carter brought in a group of 18 or 20 people and they sat around the table for a day and talked about it. There was one public reference to the group's creation, and none to what they said to him or whether it was found useful. My point is that, first, it is very difficult to develop rapport on an ad hoc basis. The President instead needs to be able to call on particular people because of the track record they've demonstrated with respect to giving him advice. Second, it's very convenient to have the people in the intelligence community and the public aware that there is a standing body regularly examining these kinds of issues. I think that that argues against the ad hoc approach of saying "If I think I have a need I will then seek out wise men and have them

address the issue." It seems better to me to have both a staff monitoring what's going on in the intelligence community and a group of people who meet regularly to ask what's happening.

**Student.** I'd like to focus on your four topics and your definition. You talked about the value and necessity of an oversight board, a board that can examine intelligence to assure accuracy and efficiency of foreign intelligence, which is an admirable goal. But in my own experience and knowledge of the PFIAB and the items you mentioned, that was not what the Board did. That didn't appear to be its function. I have some knowledge of two of the four items you mentioned. They originated with small groups or individuals in the bowels of bureaucracy who wished someone would pay attention to their topics — such as economic analysis — and the PFIAB seemed to pick up random (I have not seen evidence of any systematic search), sexy issues which caught the attention of these very intelligent, very wise but very busy individuals who didn't have a great deal of time to devote to foreign intelligence, which is an ongoing flow of tremendous complexity. It did not in fact appear to exercise the kind of oversight you were talking about. Instead it became another channel to the highest level for people pushing pet projects. The U.S. benefited by the fact that somebody did pick up these pet projects; but an equal number if not more projects, which would also be beneficial if someone picked them up, did not catch the attention of the PFIAB. My point is that while in the abstract an outside board that can exercise this kind of oversight would seem essential, without the baggage of the bureaucracy — which includes knowledge and background — no such board can function in that way. I don't mean that an institutionalized dispute panel and a wildeyed guess examiner is not useful — but that's not an intelligence oversight board.

**Olmer.** Which are the two topics you are familiar with?

**Student.** Economic intelligence and bloc electronic intelligence. I was aware of blocs that were pushing both, and promoting them, and getting nowhere until finally the PFIAB took notice.

**Olmer.** In the case of economic intelligence, certainly, the CIA engaged for a number of years in producing reports labeled "Weekly Economic Intelligence." To be specific, Ray Cline used to froth at the lack of decent economic intelligence, and could not get any budget when he was at INR to do anything he thought worthwhile. He used to anger everybody by using INR's budget for external consultants on economic intelligence matters, which nobody else seemed to do. But I'm talking about a period that predates even Ray Cline. In 1971 selected members of the PFIAB, which then included Governor Connally, took a world trip to selected embassies, and based on that trip and a reading of the available intelligence they concluded that the President was ill-served — that intelligence was not adequate from the President's vantage point.

There are all kinds of intelligence users. The military has a great need for tactical intelligence, for early warning intelligence on a tactical basis. The PFIAB did not address those things as such, though they might have been touched on incidentally in its examination of intelligence as seen through the eyes of the President. But when the Board issued a report on economic intelligence in 1971, a number of specific things happened that would not have happened had that report not been endorsed by the President and, as it

turned out, Kissinger. Among those results was establishment in the Treasury Department of a National Security Center, which focused for the Secretary of the Treasury regular, consistent economic intelligence reporting and required the Treasury Department to provide some guidance on its interests to the intelligence community. There seemed to be a great decoupling in economic intelligence, and perhaps in many other areas, between what the intelligence community was doing and what users of economic intelligence required. The community went on its way and did what it thought was required; sometimes it matched, but very often it didn't bear much relevance to what the Secretary and others, like the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, would have wanted. That report is cited to this day as having had a deep and lasting effect on the elaboration of the system for reporting on economic intelligence.

As for electronic intelligence — in 1974, almost by happenstance, the PFIAB, which at the time included Rockefeller before he became Vice-President, listened to a briefing by a mid-level official from the National Security Agency. That briefing went off like a skyrocket in Rockefeller's eyes. He asked how many people had been briefed on that subject — which involved the degree to which the Soviets were intruding upon the privacy of American citizens, specifically in New York and Washington. The answer was that nobody was interested. He said, "You mean Kissinger hasn't heard this?" No, he hadn't. "Well, he's gonna hear it!" Rockefeller went to Kissinger, and Kissinger got that briefing before the day was out.

Nor was that the end of it. There was sufficient evidence to persuade the most reasonable of men that the government was not going to move on that issue. It didn't want to move. It didn't want to grapple with it. The State Department viewed that problem as hampering its efforts to negotiate with the Soviets, as an interruption in the development of orderly and harmonious relationships that it would rather not address. State was able to raise some questions, and suggested that it was just too complicated an area to bother — "How can we object to them doing it to us when we do it all over the world? Better leave it alone."

Most members of the PFIAB did not agree with that. I don't really know what President Ford's reaction would have been, left to his own devices, but he wasn't left to his own devices. Mr. Rockefeller felt so strongly about the issue personally that, against the argument of Kissinger, his friend and protégé, he took the matter to the public. He vowed he would find a way to do it without revealing sources and methods; and by now it's proven that he didn't.

That's an example of a case in which nothing would have been resolved if it had not been for that high-level group that said, "Mr. President, this is something that you cannot forget (though your advisors would just as soon have you forget it) — for these reasons something's got to be done." The President did go ahead and say something ought to be done. Now, having given an order did not assure that activity would be implemented. It was a matter of great astonishment to me that although the President directed that only a million and a half dollars, literally a paltry amount of money in governmental terms, ought to be spent for improving our capability to know in this area, the money wasn't appropriated. And it took a year and a half for that to get done, in spite of constant heart-ache among the Board, the President, the National Security Advisor, and the Secretaries of State and Defense. I don't disagree with much of what you said — I don't think it was meant to be the opposite of my argument — but in those two areas with which you've



expressed some familiarity, I just feel that nothing would have happened without the Board.

**Student.** It may well be that you are right on the issues of bloc economic and electronic intelligence. I recall in 1967 the FBI intercepted something that it wasn't supposed to be listening to, which contained segments of something that the other people weren't supposed to be listening to. That led to a report from the FBI, and there were people pushing this idea in front of various audiences. It seems to me that the PFIAB was just another audience. My argument is that nothing about its being an outside institutionalized body made it any more effective, and any other interagency group might have done as well.

**Oettinger.** Are you saying that there is a limited number of channels to the President and that, in trying to play those channels, some get through and some don't? That, by adding the PFIAB, you may be adding another capillary or maybe even an artery, but that, except for altering the number of things that reach the President and maybe changing the mix slightly, so what? That if you added one more interagency coordinating committee the result might not have been awfully different? Is that your argument? Or is the PFIAB a qualitatively different element?

**Olmer.** I think the PFIAB added a dimension which is simply not available from within the bureaucracy. Sophistication and perceived lack of self-interest are, without any elaboration, the two things I think the outside board was and would be capable of contributing.

**Student.** I just want to address the question of bloc collection.

**Olmer.** It wasn't bloc collection, but Soviet — and Soviet Embassy specifically.

**Student.** Wasn't most of the community's opposition to pursuit of that question coordinated opposition — that is, a position arrived at after interagency consideration? Or was it that people interested in the subject agreed not to talk about it? I think there is a difference in the Board's actions from case to case. They acted in the face of asserted opposition, for one thing. If they had just picked a subject at random on which the community had not reached an agreed position, that would be a different question.

**Olmer.** I don't think I could say there was collusion evident in the intelligence community not to address the issue. Sometimes the bureaucracy is like jello — you can't get your hands on it. Certainly we never found any official who said "I am the one who has disagreed with the President's order that \$1.5 million be spent, and you'll have to take it up with me." You couldn't find the opposition. But you did find a lot of people in favor of SALT and the pursuit of SALT through the Congress, and that's a very difficult matter when you're going to follow it up with a detailed briefing on what the Russians are doing right around the corner from the White House.

**Student.** Was the Board trying to reverse a greenhorn position, or gainsay the agency? That would seem to border on policy making. Or did the Board say, "Look, this is the subject. You people may want to pay more attention to it than you have. We have some definite ideas on it, but you ought to get your position and then come back and tell us?"

**Olmer.** That was certainly done. The Board was not perfect in the bureaucratic sense. It may have seen a sexy issue and run with it; that is true. On the other hand if the natural course had been allowed to run, nothing would have happened anyway. Some people, hearing an intelligent briefer describe a given situation, felt it important not to wait for the monthly round table of wizards to decide that that issue belongs second on the list of things they report to their agency head, who chooses four items from that list to go to the NSC, which decides that two from that list go in to the President. Their judgment was, "I'm going to take care of that right now because this is of overriding importance." Now, that judgment can be wrong. That's what you pay for. The President might accept it or reject it. The Board certainly was not required to get feedback from the President's own mind or from the decision making process.

**Student.** Could you perhaps illustrate some of the things you've looked at in the abstract in terms of the satellite programs?

**Olmer.** Two specifics. One I only know from reading the historical record and talking with people who were present; the other I did witness.

In the beginning there was a great deal of argument over how much money should be spent on the project leading to the development and launching of the United States' first intelligence collector in space. Some said it was not yet really technically feasible, though it might be very shortly, and that to attempt to do it immediately would only cost us a great deal of money for very little return — and as you know, even though inflation is under control, we have to watch the budget very carefully. Some said we should spend our money on recruiting the one guy in the Kremlin who knows what's going to happen next — feeling that technical intelligence is really inferior to having a good human source. (For a variety of reasons, held by sincere people, it may have been.)

Among those who took a different view were Edwin Land, Bill Baker of Bell Telephone Laboratories, and James Killian. They argued, both within the intelligence community and directly to President Eisenhower, that this was one of those junctures in the decision making process where boldness was worth the risk of budgetary failure. Out of that kind of process came the decision to go full speed ahead on an intelligence satellite system. People who really have nothing to gain from being complimentary (more than one, and on more than one occasion, so I've varied my sources) have told me that Land in particular was very much responsible for Eisenhower taking that position.

The instance I witnessed was when President Nixon was confronted by the Director of the CIA and the Secretary of Defense. He had been presented with this terrible argument on paper that the Director of Central Intelligence had the power to make the satellite decision. That was his function as the nation's chief intelligence officer. But the issue was whether to spend one hell of a lot of money for a satellite that could put the President in a position to know what is happening in any given instance.

One could argue that this organization of the government was wise, that the process did work itself out, and the President was given the results of that process, and therefore all parties should live with it. That's not the way things really happen. I was present a year or two after the basic decision to spend a potful of money, when Nixon turned to Land and asked him, "Did I do the right thing?" Land said, "You did, but you need to do more." Nixon said, "Tell me what I need to do." Land spent a couple of weeks on his

own (he was one who didn't just take the hundred dollars a day he was entitled to), and reported personally to the President what he thought ought to be done. And it was. Now, it is not for me to say that that particular action was wise, but that's the way the world works. I maintain that it is a useful process.

**Student.** It would seem that it would be worthwhile having somebody like Land — so involved in photography and particularly able and possibly also professionally interested in things like satellite photography, somebody well ahead of the state-of-the-art of technology — to go over that sort of decision on an ad hoc basis, and provide a non-organizational or possibly industrial view. He might be industrially biased in favor of going ahead with a very expensive system, but I think Land's reputation for integrity would guarantee that he wouldn't just be doing it to benefit Polaroid's R&D lab or his own technology. So I think in many cases it's very useful to have the outside viewpoint that is not biased by any particular institutional rivalry — possibly combined with the expertise of anybody within the government — within the level that could reach the President's ear. But my question is this. You said Governor Rockefeller decided to push the whole issue publicly in such a way that the source of the issue was jeopardized. How would you recommend that a system or issues of that importance be discussed publicly without jeopardizing the source?

**Olmer.** Well, to his credit, Rockefeller submitted a text of what he proposed to say. Interestingly, in that instance no argument was made that sources and methods were jeopardized — it was just that it was bad policy to do it. If you are asking me whether we ought to have a secrecy law, or what I think of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the electronic wiretapping act which has created a judicial panel to review applications for wiretapping, I think it is very cumbersome. There were a number of specific abuses; and I suppose we will have to live for a time with the kinds of restraints imposed by the process now in existence before institutions and government processes come to be trusted again. I do know that in consideration of administration support of that bill President Ford convened a group that included the PFIAB, among them Edward Bennett Williams and the Attorney General. And it was one hell of a rousing seven-sided argument about the country's needs for national security, as against the potential abuses. It was argued out. But I don't know its full effect.

**Student.** In my judgment it seems desirable to have the cases on issues debated publicly as Governor Rockefeller did. But how do you go about institutionalizing, "cleaning" the intelligence?

**Olmer.** I don't know the answer to that question. A number of efforts are being made by a variety of other institutions; one of them is the American Bar Association, which created a Committee on National Security and Law. It has held a series of seminars, forums in which officials within the government and others are invited to participate in a debate in issues just like that: to what extent can we discuss publicly things that we think are very important? What is the public's right to know? I don't know any other way of doing it. It is an unsatisfactory answer, but I don't know a better answer.

**Student.** One measure of the effectiveness of an institution is the character of its enemies. I've heard it said that the proximate cause of the demise of PFIAB was Stansfield

Turner's opposition to its continuing existence. Do you have any independent knowledge of the truth or falsity of that allegation?

**Olmer.** No. A number of people have been fingered. I absolutely do not know. I have no knowledge of anyone taking a particular point of view. I can suspect that Turner would not have been delighted to have the PFIAB sitting looking over his shoulder and watching what he was doing, but on the other hand I could just as easily imagine Brzezinski opposing it. It's very interesting that Kissinger was a big supporter of the Board. Maybe that was his way of accommodating the enemy.

**Student.** Obviously intelligence floods in rather than merely flowing. Could you tell us how the Board selected what it heard and what it paid attention to?

**Olmer.** It was inadequate in that regard, and a number of suggestions were made to improve it. Among them were recommendations of the Murphy Commission on the Organization of the Government for Conduct of Foreign policy. Then Senator Mansfield of the Murphy Commission made that criticism of the Commission report itself, and of the PFIAB, which he couldn't buy. The Board had a two-person professional staff and several secretaries. It relied to a great degree on the staff's speedreading skills and contacts with certain elements within the intelligence community. I felt reasonably persuaded that I was superficially aware of almost all the important issues within the intelligence community at any given time. That didn't mean that the Board personally addressed all the ones that I felt were important. Remember I said at the outset, "Adequacy of intelligence from the vantage point of the President." Eventually most things did surface, and we did raise them for the attention of the Board, and brought in people from within the community to express themselves, initially to the staff and subsequently to the President. The leaders of the intelligence community had a standing invitation, and most of them used it to come in and meet privately with the Board. It was not a perfect system; it had a lot of holes, and if it were recreated I would be the first to suggest some ways of amending it — among them an increase in staff.

**Student.** What system would make this kind of forum really effective?

**Olmer.** First I think I would take a different tack in selecting the members of the Board. The membership was spotty, in that some members had a deep interest in the subject and were so well disciplined that you could count on their reading every single thing you put in front of them — you'd be very cautious about what you got them wrapped up in, because they would take you at your word in applying themselves. Others had their own secular interests. Land, for example, did not get turned on by economic intelligence, but he did get turned on by satellite reconnaissance. The Board was briefed on the project to raise a Soviet submarine in the western Pacific, and after it failed I can remember the postmortem — I have never heard anyone at that high level get raked over the coals on technical points. Though Land had had no opportunity to prepare, he suddenly seemed to know all about the stress of metals and the chemistry involved and he took apart Secretary-level people in an unsolicited way.

So what you want to do, among other things, is design the Board to cover a variety of intelligence areas with people who have great interest, expertise and background. The

second thing would be to provide a staff that is discriminating and has a number of contacts within the community, yet doesn't feel terribly tied and obligated to the community. Those are some of my suggestions. I've given people a host of others.

**Student.** If there is a continuing staff how would you keep it from becoming another segment of the bureaucracy?

**Olmer.** You can make it a "condition of employment." For instance, no staff member of the Intelligence Oversight Board can also be a member of the existing intelligence community. You have to sever all ties, which means that the IOB was and is staffed with people who have had no background whatsoever in the process of intelligence. That was one reason I was retained as a consultant.

**Student.** How useful was the Board staff? And to what extent was the Board used by disgruntled or disaffected members of the intelligence community?

**Olmer.** Most of the Board members wanted to believe that the staff was of marginal utility. They were quite gracious toward the staff, but they believed, really, that there was limited need for the staff. And to a great extent that was true. But it was their perception that it was essential to retain a limited number of staff to project the impression within the intelligence community that they were the instrument to be dealt with. The staff was merely a conduit, and the members did not want to get tailored. When I say that a member would read what you put in front of him I didn't mean it in a disparaging sense at all.

Your second question was whether access to the President was abused by disgruntled officials within the community using the Board as their conduit. I think not to any great extent. There was the instance I mentioned dealing with satellites. The other instance, having to do with Soviet surveillance, had, I think, no agency head implication at all. The members were pretty smart guys, and many of them had a political sense, even the scientists. They could smell a rat. Most of the time they knew when somebody was attempting to snooker them.

**Student.** Did the Board deal with people below the agency head level?

**Olmer.** Sure. In the A Team-B Team experiment, which included competitive analysis, I remember being told initially by a very senior agency official that it had been exactly what he was going to do — that he was going to establish an experiment in competitive analysis on the Soviets' strategic threat, and that if they'd back off he'd just move right in there, since he thought the Board was really stealing his thunder. I knew that that was false. I don't feel that I was manipulated in that way. Somebody might take issue with that.

**Student.** Do you feel that the Board in some ways felt it could at least get another fair hearing as a moderator against an advocate who might otherwise choose to leak information to gain his ends, as seemed to plague the Carter administration in the SALT negotiations?

**Olmer.** That's a very interesting concept. I don't think it worked that way. The Board for a long time prided itself on no leaks, and the introduction that the Chairman would

make to someone coming before the Board for the first time generally was "I want you to understand that you can be completely forthcoming in our committee, because we've had no leaks." I think one of the reasons the Board was done away with may have been the perception that the Board was responsible for the leak on the A Team-B Team competitive analysis.

**Student.** I meant if a person went to the Board and said "I have a hot issue," did his Board appearance tend to dissuade him from leaking — could that work? Did the Board serve as a safety valve?

**Olmer.** No, I don't think it did.

**Student.** Do you think people would try and exploit going to the Board and ask the President at the same time?

**Olmer.** I don't think you could hire men of the caliber suitable for the Board and have them serve as sort of an Ann Landers post on intelligence issues.

**Student.** Do you think that would be useful, though? It seems it might be, because one of the problems in the intelligence community is compartmentalization — if you see a problem it is very easy for the level above you to stifle it by slapping some sort of departmental security clearance on it. Are you thinking of abuses, or are you thinking of substance?

**Olmer.** The abuses that exist now are handled in the IOB, where people are instructed by their agency heads that they can come to the Intelligence Oversight Board and avail themselves of that Board, composed of men of great probity — Bill Scranton is one, former Senator Albert Gore is another — and disgorge themselves. On the substantive side, it would be worth a try.

**Student.** To take a particular example, I think it would be more important for the Board to serve as a safety valve for people like a General Keegan, who has a feeling for the Soviet space program. Maybe if he had had a hearing . . .

**Olmer.** He tried while he was still on active duty. All I can say is that he made his views known, and they were accepted by a number of people I know; but having said that, what do you do? That's where you cross the line into policy. I neglected to say that the line between policy and operations, or policy and the provision of intelligence, is sometimes not very clearly drawn and is very difficult. The two chairmen I served under would take great pains to say "We're not in the business of making or recommending policy." Obviously, however, there were occasions when they, and the Board, were accused of doing just that.

**Student.** Well, isn't that nonsense on the face of it? Because to the extent that one surfaces one more option, one is influencing policy.

**Olmer.** Well, that is absolutely right in the A Team-B Team case; an effort was made to say, "We're not trying to tell you you ought to cancel SALT — we're merely trying to tell

you that the process by which you got the intelligence wasn't adequate, so you may be or have been dealing with insufficient information; we really don't care what the outcome is, we just want you to examine that proposition." Nobody ever believed that the PFIAB didn't go into that with the mindset that the Soviets were a specific kind of threat and that the Board merely wanted a forum to produce an estimate to justify its belief. That impinged on the policy side.

**Student.** Was the PFIAB ever used as a post mortem for a short-term crisis like the Korea tree cutting?

**Olmer.** Not to my recollection. There was a very interesting incident that occurred in October 1973, within days of the Arab-Israeli war. The Board met with President Nixon. The Chairman at the time was Admiral George Anderson (Ret.). He was also a retired ambassador to Portugal, but everybody called him Admiral. He is a very patrician looking man, a handsome figure, probably 70 years of age, and he sat directly opposite the President in the Cabinet room. Mind you, the intelligence estimates up to that point were uniformly of the view that there was no likelihood of hostilities in the Middle East in the foreseeable future. Nixon, as was his wont, gave a "tour d'horizon" of his own and came around to the Mediterranean area of the world. He looked over the table, and said, "Admiral, there is something that really concerns me in the Mediterranean, and that is the adequacy of our naval forces. I know it is a little out of your area of intelligence but I'd like the PFIAB to take a look at it, specifically the adequacy of the U.S. Navy in the Mediterranean vis-a-vis the Soviet Union." Two days later the war broke out. The Board took about two months, met with a wide variety of people, did a little traveling, and submitted about a 16-page report which was very critical of the Navy. Now some people knew George Anderson didn't agree with certain Navy policies, and this report might be a forum in which to take them to task — especially Zumwalt, who had authorized long hair and "freedom for the sailors" and all that. On the other hand Zumwalt was one of the people who asked if he could make 300 copies of the Board's report and send it to every flag officer in the Navy because he believed it was an important document. That's the only thing that approximates what I think you were driving at.

As for the A Team-B Team case, that's the thing I continue to get asked about more than almost anything else. I had spoken to several Senators and staffs on the Senate Intelligence Committee. I noted that candidate Bush spoke out on it several weeks ago and alleged that he was the driving force behind the effort, which was news to me. I don't know, maybe I'm reflecting my age; maybe it is no longer an issue.

**Student.** When the A Team-B Team was first started, what was its main motivation? The deck was clearly pretty stacked with people as far toward the respectable right as they could find. Why didn't they stay with that, instead of looking for an outside objective opinion and mixing and mating a Warnke with some comparable conservative?

**Olmer.** Of course, at the time Richard Pipes was an obscure professor of history and, while he perhaps had some views on Soviet Russia, they really were not widely known outside of Cambridge and his own family. They are now. At the time I believe he felt that the community offered one of the least hazardous estimates of the Soviet strategic threat, and that the experiment was intended to balance that with someone who takes, not necessarily an opposite view, but a "hardline" view.

**Student.** This is a recurring problem — if you generate a spectrum of views, whether it is extreme left, extreme right or six points in between, who will synthesize it? Is that left to the President? He doesn't have enough time, so someone else has to do it — but not that many can be involved; sooner or later you reach a maximum. Realistically, the final choice will be done by Number One. But the minute you decide to reduce the number of alternatives you will present, to arrive at a balanced whole, you are suppressing dissent and coloring the denominators with respect to the A Team-B Team, or any other example. How in your experience has the Board, or those associated with it, struck that balance in a variety of situations? It seems to me that there is no one answer, so I would be interested in hearing about different balances where you'd lean toward a net assessment, or toward presentation of a variety of alternatives, and why.

**Olmer.** Let me go back and talk about process and substance. It was the Board's view for a long time that net assessments were required. One member had recalled that they'd been done for ten years after World War II, but that it had all been forgotten about since — it was a lost art — and it really was something the President needed to look at. Not so much how many strategic missiles we have as against the Russians, but a net assessment of likely scenarios: U.S. submarines against a Soviet antisubmarine capability, for example. The argument was put many times over, in writing and verbally, to members of the NSC staff and to Henry Kissinger. None of them seemed to disagree with the desirability of doing that, but all of them would either say "I have tried and I can't get it done," or "It is too complicated and it is impossible to do," or "What has been done is just insufficient and I'd be embarrassed to show it." There came a time when some studies were actually done out of an office headed by a fellow named Andy Marshall, who has survived all these years and is somewhere in the Defense Department doing a similar kind of thing on a very limited basis; he may look at two kinds of aircraft or two kinds of ships. Perhaps it was the Board's view that the net assessment would reveal the inadequacy of the intelligence on the Soviet strategic threat.

Remember that the Board's concern in that area was initiated sometime around 1971 or 1972 with the ABM business; perhaps that was the safety valve, for Nixon was getting a lot of criticism for that. He said, "I have this outside group of distinguished people who are going to examine annually what the intelligence community produces on the Soviet threat and advise me of the adequacy of our intelligence." At first that was done almost as a line-by-line evaluation of the adequacy of what came out of the CIA. Maxwell Taylor submitted the first one and he literally said, "The Board agrees with this, we disagree with that." By and large it was an affirmation of the estimate. Emboldened by the lack of criticism of its very light criticism, the Board began to get more critical, and by 1973 it repeatedly recommended that an independent group of people from outside the community ought to look at, and develop alternative views to, the institutional view. The people within the community said it really wasn't necessary to do that, that sufficient alternative views were developed at the lower levels, and that there was a distillation of those views. Perhaps it would have been the wise thing merely to criticize severely, but that was attempted and it was unsuccessful. The Board's severe criticism of the National Intelligence Estimate in 1973 and 1974 did nothing but alienate the Director of Central Intelligence and a number of people on his staff.

**Student.** It sounds like the two ways to use consultants. You can stack the deck and be stingy and tell them what you want to hear from them and they go out and find it for you.



Better consulting firms like McKinsey at least pretend to try to start from scratch and look the whole thing over. It seems as though the B Team was the former. In essence you went to a consulting firm you knew would look at the problems in specific ways, knowing that you were going to get a particular answer back. Is that correct? My perception is that the outside overview is a good thing. I don't think the decks should be stacked, so that when it comes back there is a predictable response and you know they're going to come back with a very hard line so you can use it.

**Olmer.** Some members of the Board probably understood that. But most members were not aware that that was how it was going to turn out. In fact, the Board distanced itself greatly from the selection of specific members. I dealt personally with the man from CIA who was in charge of managing the process, and he kept trying to get me to approve members of the B Team. The PFIAB members refused to get involved in approving or disapproving the people the CIA selected. Now, that's not a complete answer, because it could well have been the CIA's impression that its selection was what the Board wanted.

**Student.** Was the Board bending over backwards to distance itself?

**Olmer.** The PFIAB itself did not participate in the selection of members. The two hardest-line people were, I think, Dr. Edward Teller and Dr. John Foster. Foster, at the time with TRW, had formerly been Director of Defense Research and Engineering, and he had never heard of Pipes. In fact, he named a couple of people who were not available. When he asked me what I thought, I said I didn't think we should involve ourselves in vetting the people they propose. I told him, "As I understand it, you want to get an alternative view. Let them figure out how to develop an alternative view." You have to realize we were breaking new ground. Then once it was decided to do it, we were moving rather quickly. We were fighting a time scale; the estimate was coming out, and we really hadn't a lot of time to get going. I'd like to go back knowing what I know now, and redesign it from the beginning. And I do agree it would be a very useful thing to institutionalize. Turner says it's been done, but I don't think it has. He hired Robert Bowie, who has since retired, and it just never got off the ground. In fact the PFIAB before it was axed met with Bowie on his first day in the agency with Turner and we had a three-hour discussion of the A Team-B Team.

**Student.** Do you feel that by means of mandatory rules internal dissent could be given voice in the NIE? And that if there is dissent different views among the analysts would have to be represented?

**Olmer.** Of course you have that; dissents are footnoted.

**Student.** You do have the opportunity to dissent, but nothing says you have to do it. Nine times out of ten, unless dissent is significant, people are going to manage to join in an agreement just to save them from writing out the dissent.

**Olmer.** I understand what you are saying, but I don't know that mandating dissent would assure it. In the course of considering the proposed Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the Attorney General determined that any person in the U.S., resident alien, tourist or otherwise, was entitled to equal protection under the Constitution. That meant

that AMTORG, the Soviet trade organization in New York, could not be targeted for intelligence purposes without warrant; and the warrant must allege criminal acts. The proposed Act shut off a number of things which were being done, and this prevailed for a long time, perhaps a year. It was on again, off again. And the arguments kept getting weaker and weaker. People whose agencies were most involved in the process of targeting, say, AMTORG, got tired of making the argument and losing, or else felt they were using up credibility they needed for more important things, and felt they'd better not press too hard on this one or they mightn't get listened to on the next one.

**Student.** That is one powerful reason for using outsiders. Whatever else, good, bad or indifferent, the outsider has less to lose, and if he blows his credibility or overextends his welcome there is always his principal turf to go back to, so his judgments can be more independent.

**Olmer.** The B Team analysis has, I think, made part of the conventional wisdom the proposition that the Soviets were indeed seeking a war fighting capability and were seeking superiority. As time goes on you begin to look back and ask how it is possible that people in the business of defense and intelligence couldn't agree that the Russians are trying to be Number One.

**Student.** On the other hand you can point to innumerable Soviet strategic forces analysts in the community who said exactly that and got hooted off the stage, and then joined a compromise consensus. But if dissent had to be written down —

**Olmer.** That has some merit, but I'm not sure that after a while the bureaucracy wouldn't crush the people who persistently dissented. Nor am I persuaded that the people who need to read the dissent would in fact read it, when already they don't read the NIE in chief.

**Student.** Possibly one reason they wouldn't want to was that the Americans were pursuing policies which were also leaning toward war fighting, and they didn't want to start the debate since programs like the MIRV and the MARK 12-A were sliding by without the debate. If you started asking whether the Soviets were pursuing a war fighting capability, people might ask what the U.S. was doing, and whether the Soviets were responding to that.

**Olmer.** To my mind, the thing that tipped the balance in favor of conducting the experiment has not been made a lot of — not many people are aware of it — that Director Colby fought very hard to prevent this experiment from taking place, in writing and personally before the President. He finally agreed to the Board's recommendation that we conduct a track record study to see how well the Agency had done over a period of five or ten years on two or three selected issues like air defense, Soviet strategic objectives and missile accuracy. The Agency was asked to hire a couple of consultants of its choice merely to look at the historical record and come back and tell the Board how well it did. It selected two people on active duty and one recently retired person from within the Agency; they tried to get me involved substantively, and thank goodness the judgment of the PFIAB prevented me from participating in that.

At the Board's recommendation, to support the proposal for an experiment in competitive analysis, CIA produced a "track record" study about 75 pages long. It was so astonishing that Bush (Colby was gone by then) had absolutely no option but to accept the A-B Team proposal. The study was so condemnatory of the performance of the community over a period of ten years on those three issues that it left no room for argument that something ought to be done. It would be delightful to go back now and really take that report seriously, and see how it might be institutionalized and perhaps even made ad hoc in a broader sense.

**Student.** Has that document come out in any kind of sanitized version?

**Olmer.** You mean unclassified? No, I'm sure it has not.

**Student.** There was no attempt to sanitize it?

**Olmer.** There was an attempt to bury it very deep in a time capsule.

**Student.** I think you just proved your own point, by saying it is not generally known . . .

**Olmer.** I don't think it is generally known; in fact, when I related the story to a past Chairman he had all but forgotten it. I don't blame him for forgetting. If the President only deals with intelligence ten percent of the time, how much of the time does an outside person deal with it; and how much of that is spent on very elaborate questions in the management category, such as clearances for people?

**Student.** You've mentioned, in connection with the Intelligence Surveillance Act, bringing in the Attorney General and discussing the legality of specific collection against foreigners in the U.S. The PFIAB has received a lot of criticism for not noticing the illegality of Agency operations during the period. On this one issue President Ford did consider legality, and at some length. But was it only because of a new morality that this was considered? Had there been any consideration of legality of actions before?

**Olmer.** Not in my time. I think I understand the thrust of your question. The Board got involved in that particular issue because it felt that we were shooting ourselves in both feet, that we were to an unwarranted degree reacting to perceived social pressures. And the perfect example was the fact that we were protecting the Soviet KGB in the United States. I think it was a Chairman of the House Commerce Committee dealing with telecommunications who wanted to examine the degree of AT&T's participation with agencies of government from World War II forward. A variety of very technical and elaborate legal arguments were put forward. The Board got into it initially because it perceived that the adequacy of intelligence was being injured; it arranged to get invited. I do think the Board should have been more conscious of the propriety of certain intelligence acts in the past; it did not involve itself, I suppose, because it felt it had no mandate, that it was a ticklish area and it should stay where it had a clear line of demarcation. The IOB, created under President Ford and retained by Carter, addresses only those kinds of issues. Under Ford the IOB was composed of three members who were also members of the PFIAB, and it was intentionally done that way to give them some feel for real intelligence issues. I think that was very useful.

I wanted to respond to a question you asked earlier. There was one other ad hoc case we looked at: the disappearance of Nicolas Shadrin, a Soviet Navy Captain. He turned up missing in Vienna on Christmas 1975 while on an intelligence mission for the United States. He had defected from the Soviet Union as captain of a Soviet ship in 1959. He had come to the U.S. and been used by the FBI and the CIA, and he disappeared. He and his wife, who defected with him, became U.S. citizens and lived in Alexandria, Virginia. After his disappearance she considered suing the government. Ford asked the Board to look at what the intelligence community had done to assure that all possible means were used to determine his whereabouts. That effort lasted about six weeks. Probably there are other instances that I'm just not familiar with.

**Student.** How does the present institutional arrangement you have described deal with new priorities and, perhaps, new events, new perceptions? I have in mind that the intelligence community to a very large extent traditionally focuses on military strategic matters, and secondly on the Soviet Union. How can one deal with issues emanating particularly from the developing world that do not have to do with military matters and can't be picked up by satellite? (I'm not talking about the traditional human-versus-technology argument you have alluded to.) How can one deal with this, how can one even focus on it, from the point of view of collection and from the point of view of analysis?

**Olmer.** You pose a \$64.00 question. I think if the President of the United States were given an accurate appraisal of the limitations in our capability to report on third world activities and prospects he would be just astonished at our weakness. It's a matter in the first instance of budgetary priorities. That takes some money.

**Student.** This is the second time this has come up. Why isn't the President given an accurate description?

**Olmer.** Well, you've had people here who are a lot closer to Jimmy Carter than I am.

**Oettinger.** I think it's not just Jimmy Carter, that's the whole point.

**Olmer.** I said earlier that no matter how important we think intelligence is, or how it may occasionally determine things we do, no President is going to spend more than, say, ten percent of his time on it. So when somebody suddenly comes forward and says "In Afghanistan there is going to be something," that implies that we know something. But if you really went behind that statement and said "Tell me, what are our assets, how do you know it, who is doing the best work on the subject," we would be absolutely flabbergasted. Suppose tomorrow in West Africa the leader of the Ivory Coast (the model of stability in West Africa) was suddenly taken off. That's one of our large interests, I'd like to think, with all kinds of resources available. It's an open country. I have been there several times. But I cannot imagine how we would manage to learn much more than we know from reading a newspaper.

It's a copout, I realize, to say it's a matter of budgetary priorities. First, a mistake is a mistake, and you're not looking for forgiveness, you're just measured on the bottom line, as we say in business. Secondly, it's largely that people in the government don't want to know about anything except what they feel they must. They don't go through a rational

process of deciding that, but it turns out that way. Brzezinski is not particularly concerned about the Ivory Coast this week, and don't anybody try to give him 15 pages about what might happen.

To take another example, Central America is (by the account of businessmen I met at a couple of conferences in Miami within the last three weeks) an absolute tinderbox. These are not particularly bright or incisive people; they have to be informed. They have a lot of assets there, and it makes them very concerned. They really do see dominoes falling — Costa Rica going, which is supposedly the model of democracy in Latin America. How many people in the U.S. government do you think really give a damn about Costa Rica?

**Student.** Well, what effect does a Board have on that?

**Olmer.** I can remember talking to an acquaintance in the intelligence community on a particular issue, and he would say such-and-such and I would say "No fooling." And I'd sit down and write a memo and give it to the Chairman of the Board and he'd say "Wow, terrific, who knows?" And I'd say, "Nobody knows." And he'd run to see his mentor, who in one or two cases might have been the Vice President. But often you are left with a bowl of jello until something happens, a public blowup like the A Team-B Team matter. That had one effect at least — it made people focus on a particular issue of concern.

**Student.** Isn't this another case where there is high benefit from the public/private sector connections? This problem is unresolvable within the bureaucracy. There is limited attention span and a limited budget. There are too many places and too many things that may blow tomorrow to take much attention away from the things that are blowing today and have blown yesterday. So I've come to feel that it cannot be tackled systematically by having an organization with a desk that is manned (except superficially) to deal with everything that could blow. But you do have businessmen, journalists, and academics who are routinely dealing with Costa Rica or the Ivory Coast. We've heard testimony here that in crisis after crisis a lot of the apparatus goes by the board anyway, and people pick up the phone and talk to their buddies. If your network includes, one or two phone calls or referrals removed, a cross section of businessmen, clergymen, Peace Corpsmen, people who have been to Costa Rica or the Ivory Coast, you are better off than if you have nobody in the apparatus who ever dealt with anyone outside — and the lack of that, to me, is one of the biggest sins in the current state of things.

**Olmer.** I wanted to inject this. Foreigners will sometimes use American businessmen whom they perceive as prestigious as a back channel. And the intensity of that application will increase with the decrease in respect for the American intelligence system and process. There was a time when Mr. Colby, rightly or wrongly, was heavily criticized by his counterparts, particularly in Europe, for being much too open, and they were not telling him things. Some of those things did get back by other means. One means of acquiring such information is to have someone who is identified as close to the President's National Security Advisor, or maybe even to the President himself.

**Student.** Indonesia was an unstable country, and was certainly perceived as such by most American companies putting money there. But there was a military dictatorship in Indonesia, so therefore Indonesia appeared stable as compared to India, which goes through a crazy election process.

**Olmer.** There is a tendency to laugh at what right wing Cubans say about Castro-inspired revolutions throughout Central America. Not for any absence of sincerity or conviction in the way they express their views, but because of a feeling that maybe they don't know anything. They seem to be proven right more often than not, however. Those are the kinds of people I was just referring to, who may tend to seek out American business contacts.

Let me summarize. I have high hopes that a Board will be reestablished. I thought somebody might pick up on my assertion that a Board appointed jointly by the President and Congress would not be as effective as one appointed only by the President, that it might spark some comment. I think that that is so merely because there really ought to be a perception that they are the President's men.

There never was an argument made to the Carter Administration that the members ought to be retained. I talked myself blue in the face with all manner of people sent up from the new occupants, who were dealing with organization, substance and so on on matters like how best to serve the President. The members made the point clear that they all were quite willing to resign, but that they felt strongly that a couple of them ought to be retained simply for continuity. Some members had been on that Board since Eisenhower first appointed them — people like Gordon Gray, Land, Bill Baker, and maybe others who were no longer interested in it and merited retirement. But by all means President Carter ought to think hard about the sorts of people who advise him on these matters. In the end it became just a very high-level political issue; and I suppose I'm grateful for that much at least — it was not handled at a low level. The people who ran the OMB study, including Lance himself, recommended keeping the Board. It cost \$100,000 a year. That was nothing.

**Student.** Are some of those people still around?

**Olmer.** Well, the Senate Intelligence Committee created a scientific panel that Bill Baker serves on. The NSA created its own scientific advisory panel, Turner did the same thing; all the agencies did. But it is one thing for an agency head to claim he has his board of wise men and quite another for the President to announce he has one.

**Student.** I'm not saying that agency panels supplant the Board in any way, merely that the institution has been reconstituted in a new form.

**Olmer.** I might say, in defense of the President's intelligence process, that some analysts tell me Admiral Turner is a good man to report to on substantive issues in areas they have been asked to address. That he is very bright, he listens to as many sides as anyone cares to raise, and he will make judgements based on his perception; and nobody, on narrow substantive issues such as economic intelligence or military matters, really faults him for going too far off the reservation. That comes from some whom my own biases make me ready to criticize; but whether or not the feeling is prevalent, a number of people in the intelligence community do at least feel they have a representative.