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POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Merge and Purge: Reforming the CIA

"The CIA Under Turner—The Pleasures of His Company" by Dom Bonafede, in *National Journal* (Dec. 17, 1977), 1730 M St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Amid dissension within and public antagonism without, the Central Intelligence Agency embarks on its fourth decade uncertain of its "vanguard" role in the American intelligence community. Admiral Stansfield Turner, its sixth director in as many years, has the unenviable task of leading the beleaguered agency through an era of reform. His duty: to balance the demands for openness in a free society against the needs of national security.

After the recent disclosures of CIA abuses, Congress took steps to curb the power of the "virtually autonomous" agency, writes Bonafede, a *Journal* staff writer. Prohibitions against assassination and domestic spying, elimination of paramilitary operations, and congressional scrutiny of all agency expenditures over \$5,000 are some of the new constraints.

These changes, combined with the purge of 20 percent of the CIA's 4,500-man operations division, have shaken morale and spurred the resignations of senior agency officials.

Yet, if President Carter has his way, even more changes are in order. He is seeking fuller public disclosure of the overall U.S. intelligence budget, estimated at \$6 billion annually. Under his CIA reorganization plan, all intelligence activities, including those of the State, Defense, Treasury, and Energy departments, will be placed under Admiral Turner's budgetary control. The emphasis will be on "accountability instead of autonomy."

Conservatives fear that these proposals could compromise the effectiveness of the U.S. intelligence effort. Others argue that granting to Turner or any one man such overall power is inviting the abuses the new system is designed to prevent. One conclusion is certain, says Bonafede: "the old CIA belongs to history."