

Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency
and its Vital Role in the Cold War Era

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency and its role in the Cold War. Great detail highlights the timeliness of the CIA's creation and dynamic role over the years that followed its founding. For half a century, attempts to understand the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics dominated the CIA's agenda. Thus, careful study of this era is important to understanding the progression of intelligence within the United States. The avenue of research for this thesis was a collaboration of published books, online journals, credible websites, and personal interviews. The development of the CIA consisted of much trial and error. Despite the blunders that the agency made, the CIA's achievements would make its existence significantly worthwhile.

Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency
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The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) generates thoughts of secret agents, classified documents, and mysterious dealings in foreign affairs. In order to understand the CIA's function today, it is important to know the reason behind its founding. Alfred McCormack, former Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, offered special insight with his observation about the need to study global interactions. McCormack stated, "The first objective ... is to know and understand the other countries and peoples of the world well enough to live with them in peace- to shape our policy, as it affects other peoples, towards the aim of peace. The second objective is to be prepared for war if it occurs."¹ To carry out such a vision, the creation of an organization such as the CIA became crucial during the beginning of the Cold War. The development of the CIA unified the intelligence community and became a major guide for U.S. policy makers during the complexities of the Cold War Era.

The onset of the Cold War ushered in a new phase for the United States and former Soviet Union. For almost half a century, the two superpowers competed for superiority. It was a suspenseful period between the two states, each fearing the other would use their military capabilities. The United States created the CIA at the beginning of the Cold War to gather and analyze intelligence on foreign governments. In addition to carrying out operations to combat communism in other nations, the CIA played a major role in devising the intentions, capabilities, and overall status of the Soviet Union. The

1. Edward T. Folliard, "Intelligence Agency Created by Truman: Information for 'Security' Is Goal; State, War, and Navy to Be Represented," *The Washington Post (1877-1954)*, January 23, 1946, <http://www.proquest.com>, (accessed February 23, 2008).

CIA was a crucial component in the Intelligence Community in helping prevent the Cold War from becoming an active nuclear war.

The CIA carried out collection, analysis, and operations as its primary functions. These methods were determined by the intelligence requirements that were decided by the executive authorities and communicated to the agency. There was one position Congress made clear when drafting legislation for the agency's creation: the agency would not enforce law or manipulate policy. Its role would be to aid the policy maker in foreign affairs by providing objective intelligence analysis.²

There was a crucial need for the development of the CIA. The agency offered a center point in which to filter the mass amount of information transmitted within the Intelligence Community (IC). World War II was over and America had begun to exercise its new role as a superpower. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) served in helping the United States gather intelligence and carry out "special services" during the war.³ Other intelligence agencies participated in the scramble to collect and analyze intelligence information. Although the State, Navy, and War departments all worked in the same building, they often worked independently of each other. However, with so many agencies gathering information compartmentally, it was difficult to present clear, efficient, and frequent updates to the president. Another problem was that there did not exist a designated person to report to the president, except for the occasional Foreign

2. "The National Security Act of 1947," <http://www.texascollaborative.org/SilverblattModule/act2-1.php>, (accessed March 28, 2010).

3. Allen W. Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence* (Guilford, Connecticut: The Lyons Press, 2006), 31

Service officer.⁴ The nation lacked a united intelligent system and needed to organize the various departments and agencies via a central agency in order to achieve this.

Colonel William “Wild Bill” Donovan was the head of the Central Office of Information (COI), later renamed the OSS, and was a major proponent for the creation of the CIA. During October 1944, Donovan prepared for President Franklin Roosevelt a memorandum that outlined reasons why a central organization was necessary in the post war era and its function in the Intelligence Community (IC).⁵ This plan explained the CIA’s role as the central leader in acquiring and analyzing intelligence. This meant the agency would filter through collected data and compile a daily update to the president concerning important information vital to the nation’s interest. Furthermore, Donovan suggested that this core intelligence service should receive its designated operations from the president rather than the military.⁶ As a result, the CIA would function as a direct operational agency to the president.

In a February 1945 article published in *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, Walter Trohan described and analyzed Donovan’s proposal. He described Donovan’s proposed agency as “the general intelligence service, which would outrank all existing federal police and intelligence units, including military intelligence, naval intelligence, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Secret Service, the Internal Revenue [Service]

4. David F. Rudgers, *Creating the Secret State: The Origins of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1943-1947* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas), 6.

5. Ibid, 34; Walter Trohan, “New Deal Plans Super Spy System: Sleuths Would Snoop on U.S. and the World,” *Chicago Daily Tribune (1872-1963)*, February 9 1945, <http://www.proquest.com/>, (accessed February 22, 2008), 1-2.

6. Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence*, 34.

agents, and the Federal Communications Commission.”⁷ President Roosevelt supported the existence of such an agency, and finally on April 5, 1945 called for a consensus of opinion among the Chief Executive agencies of foreign intelligence and internal security, concerning such an agency. However, before any action could take place, Roosevelt passed away.

With the sudden death of President Roosevelt, Vice President Harry S. Truman took the oath of office on April 12, 1945. President Truman followed through with the vision of a central intelligence agency and turned it into a reality. Truman recognized the Soviet threat on America’s freedom and security more than Roosevelt.⁸ Consequently, Truman sought to improve U.S. intelligence and prepare America for the upcoming struggle with the Soviet Union.

During his administration, Truman was fully aware of the power struggle between the FBI, OSS, Military Intelligence, and the State Department.⁹ However, he was careful to not act hastily in creating the organization for fear of causing destructive competition amongst the agencies. He also did not want to form an agency that could later be corrupted and used for unintended purposes.¹⁰ On January 22, 1946, Truman ordered the formation of a National Intelligence Authority (NIA) that would supervise intelligence organizations. It would consist of the Secretaries of State, War and Navy, and a personal representative of the president. Admiral William Leahy was the first appointee. Next, he took steps to create the Central Intelligence Group (C.I.G.). Admiral Souers was the first

7. Trohan, *New Deal Plans*, 1.

8. Dr. Charles Murphy, interview by author, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, April 8, 2008.

9. Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence*, 35.

10. *Ibid.*, 35.

to fill the role as head of the agency, but resigned six months later. However, he did assist General Hoyt Vandenberg in becoming his successor as the head of the CIA.¹¹

In 1947 Truman encouraged enactment of the National Security Act, which created the Central Intelligence Agency. The act put the CIA under the authority of the newly created National Security Council. The Lovett Committee, led by Robert A. Lovett, played an important role in suggesting the concept that the CIA should have an independent budget and be held responsible under a National Intelligence Authority.¹² Congress approved NSC to fulfill that role, and its members consist of the president, secretary of state, the secretary of defense, and other major presidential advisors on foreign affairs.¹³ The purpose of placing the NSC over the CIA was to regulate the agency, and ensure that it functioned as it was designed. The law stated that there would be limits on the CIA such “that the agency shall have no police, subpoena, law-enforcement powers, or internal security functions.”¹⁴ The CIA is the only agency, by law, put under the NSC whose main function is to advise the president.

The Director of the CIA given an important role in overseeing the agency and reporting personally to the president; the president named the director and then the Senate had to confirm that individual. This same process takes place in appointing the deputy director of the CIA as well. Traditionally, the president appointed both a civilian and a military representative for the two positions. By law, both posts could be filled by civilians, but legislation prevented both appointees from being associated with the

11. Ibid., 36.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 36-37.

14. Ibid., 259.

military.¹⁵ Congress put this restriction on the CIA to prevent it from being dominated by military interests. After fifteen years, there were a total of four Directors. These four in consecutive order include Rear Admiral Roscoe Henry Hillenkoetter, General Walter Bedell Smith, General Allen Dulles, and John A. McCone.

The CIA has to get approval from the president for every operation prior to carrying it out (except those done by regular routine). That includes both overt and covert (secret and non-secret) operations.¹⁶ First, the CIA gets its approval from the NSC and then its plans are sent to the president for final approval. However, the president can override or bypass the NSC.¹⁷ Allen Dulles, (the third Director of the CIA) describes the CIA as a servant of policy, not the maker of policy.¹⁸ Such regulation of the CIA should lower any public fear of the CIA becoming an autonomous agency powered by internal self interests. This was an important fact that helped decrease public skepticism of the new government agency.

The CIA's creation brought various improvements to the system of intelligence and strengthened security for America. Although the CIA had similarities to the OSS, the new agency was not completely modeled after its predecessor. The CIA borrowed intelligence techniques from foreign intelligent agencies, including Great Britain and Israel.¹⁹ In fact, only a few years after the CIA was established, it was holding regular

15. Ibid.

16. Murphy, interview; Dr. Stephen Bowers, interview by author, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, April 8, 2008; Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence*, 258.

17. Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence*, 258.

18. Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence*, 258-259.

19. Murphy interview.

cooperative meetings with British intelligence.²⁰ They took place both in Washington D.C. and in London. Such positive relations with British intelligence provided the CIA with opportunities to monitor foreign broadcasts, and build up an arrangement of spies in other countries. This relationship with the British later benefited the United States during the Cold War. For instance, during the late 1940s, British intelligence was willing to share with the CIA information concerning the Soviet Union and the situation in Europe.²¹ As a result, America had assistance in its attempt to provide security for its homeland against any possible Soviet threats.

As soon as the CIA was able to function, the agency wasted no time in performing its duties. Early on, the Director of the CIA was corresponding directly to the president on important issues. In the mid 1940s, a CIA team began putting together information gathered from the whole intelligence community, in order to make more efficient estimates on a range of issues. This group was first called the Office of Research and Estimates (ORE), and later renamed the Board of National Estimates (BNE). In September 1947, the CIA began to submit monthly assessments of the world's status to the NSC.²² Thus, the CIA was on its way to improving the dissemination of intelligence information, in order to provide deeper insights to the American foreign policy makers.

An important way that the CIA collected data was through covert operations. These types of operations were significant because it gave the agency a means to gather information that otherwise may have been unavailable. Later, Dr. William Langer

20. Ibid.

21. Trevor Barnes, "The Secret Cold War: The CIA and American Foreign Policy in Europe, 1946-1956. Part I," *The Historical Journal*, no. 2. (Jun., 1981): 401, <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0018-246X%28198106%2924%3A2%3C399%3ATSCWTC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U>, (accessed February 23, 2008).

22. Ibid., 400.

petitioned in favor of the CIA receiving funds to conduct covert operations at an NIA meeting.²³ By February 1947, the CIA Director General Vandenberg reported to the president that clandestine operations were strategically being formed in foreign nations. However, in order to get official authority on covert action, the director testified privately, in April 1947, to the Senate Armed Services Committee. Suspicion of the Soviets was building rapidly at the time, and secret missions were one way to attain information on the adversary without attracting too much attention on attempts to contain communism in Europe.²⁴

Eventually the CIA realized that its internal structure, pertaining to its various departments, was too compartmentalized and restricted the effectiveness of the agency's mission. Each division acted as its own entity and thus lacked efficient information sharing methods. To fix the problem, all the departments were moved into the same building. This meant that issues dealing with espionage, counter espionage, and psychological warfare were addressed through information sharing, and thus handled with greater understanding between the various sections of the agency. Furthermore, Allen Dulles describes a unique aspect of the CIA. The agency analyzes and organizes data from clandestine operations with the same importance that it would concerning information from other government agencies.²⁵ In other words, the CIA weighed information gathered from other agencies as equally important to information that it

23. Ibid., 405.

24. Ibid.

25. Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence*, 37.

collected. This leveled the field of intelligence information, thus making the various sources equally viable.

In the early years of the Cold War, the CIA used different tactics to collect, analyze, and respond to information concerning conflict with the USSR. The CIA hired local USSR residents to observe the Soviet forces and inform the United States of any sudden activity.²⁶ By using local Soviet citizens for this task, as opposed to U.S. spies disguising as tourists, the CIA is more likely to spy on the Soviets without raising any suspicion. Another tactic the CIA implemented over time was conducting U2 flights over Soviet bases and other areas of importance, for the purpose of taking ground photos of the enemy territory. As technology increased, the CIA used methods such as phone tapping, and intercepting broadcasting systems. Furthermore, open source intelligence was important as well when investigating an issue. These unclassified documents included newspapers, scientific publications, journals, pamphlets and any other information that was available to the public.

With the creation of the CIA arose more opportunities for professional careers in intelligence. During the end of World War II, the CIA trained thousands of intelligence personnel to serve the nation temporarily. Civilians, including teachers and professionals in specific fields, were hired to serve as officers in intelligence. The military also had a sector that specialized in intelligence related work. To some it was viewed as “a graveyard assignment,” that would last only temporarily.²⁷ However, the CIA changed the status of intelligence employment, by providing opportunities for select individuals to

26. Bowers, interview.

27. Ibid., 167.

pursue a selection of careers. Of course this opened up the need to provide intelligence staff with the same benefits as the Foreign Service, in which the military offered. This included the expectation that CIA employees would remain for long durations with the agency. Committed employees brought two major benefits to the field of intelligence. The first was that the agency was able to sustain knowledgeable and experienced officers through both times of war and peace. Secondly, a large turnover was costly and risky to the agency. Short-term personnel were a disadvantage to the agency because of the expense in screening, hiring, and training employees. Also, if there was a large turnover of CIA officers, there was a greater risk of classified information leaking out to the enemy.²⁸

Another interesting aspect of intelligence professionals in the CIA was (and continues to be) their discouragement from participating in political matters, except when directed to do so by the agency's authorities. This includes every person in the agency from the Director of the CIA on down to the new hire. To enforce the importance of this, the agency established a rule outlining these conditions and violation of it results in termination of employment with the agency.²⁹ Prohibition of meddling in political matters is a reasonable policy since involvement in politics creates bias, and could interfere with the CIA's role when handling certain information. However, CIA workers are permitted to maintain their freedom in voting during elections.

Since the agency's founding, the CIA's capabilities and application of its intelligence has fluctuated with the different presidents, each with their own special

28. Ibid., 167-168.

29. Ibid., 264.

interests and views on the Cold War. Some presidents relied heavily on the CIA to provide intelligence on foreign affairs, and others were more suspicious of the agency. This was partially due to the amount of espionage that occurred between the Soviets and the Americans. Spies were a constant threat in intelligence agencies, since this was the primary way to find out the intentions of the enemy. When double agents were discovered infiltrating the CIA, the agency's credentials and reliability was questioned.³⁰

When referencing the CIA's adversary, the former Soviet Union, it is important to understand there were two main intelligence groups that supported the communist empire. The first was the NKVD, called the Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti (Committee of State Security), and also known as the KGB. This group was the Soviet government's security agency, and their roles ranged from suppressing internal resistance within the USSR, to infiltrating the U.S. government.³¹ The other was Glavnoye Razvedovatel'noye Upravlenie (the Main Intelligence Administration), called GRU for short. The GRU primarily handled the Soviet's foreign intelligence. The CIA battled with Soviet intelligence, seeking to know the other agencies' secrets. This led to the perpetual employment of spies by the two countries.

The KGB eliminated many of its agents that were accused of espionage, whether or not they were involved with criminal behavior against their nation. The CIA would have its own process of dealing with spies, but not at the same severity and paranoia as the KGB. Although each nation had its own intelligence capabilities, it was not unusual for each to misunderstand, or make assumptions about the other's capabilities and intentions. For example, a NATO war exercise, called Able Archer, brought the two

³⁰ Bowers, interview.

³¹ *KGB*, <http://library.thinkquest.org/10826/kgb.htm>, (accessed February 8, 2010), 1.

nations to the brink of an actual nuclear war. This happened when the Soviet Union mistook the simulation for an actual attack. The Soviet Union's fears subsided when they realized it was a false alarm, since troops were not actually being mobilized on the ground.³² This is just one example of how the tensions of the Cold War made each highly skeptical of the other superpower.

Over the years of the Cold War, many agencies arose to meet the demanding needs for intelligence worldwide. In the United States alone, there existed over a dozen agencies, both civilian and military. For example, the Defensive Intelligence Agency was created in the 1960s and consisted of military and civilian personnel. However, the CIA would have the prominent role in the Intelligence Community. The agency would have the immense responsibility of combining the intelligence gathered from other agencies, as well as its own, and producing the President's Daily Brief and long term intelligence that informed presidents on specific international affairs.³³ With a larger intelligence community, the CIA had more resources in which to gather intelligence from.

At the time of the CIA's beginnings, the War Department handled the majority of Soviet Analysis. However, on March 5, 1948, General Lucius D. Clay sent a "War Warning" through a cable to inform Washington of Soviet capabilities.³⁴ The CIA believed the USSR was unwilling (and unlikely) to provoke a war with the United States, whereas the military dramatized the Soviet military buildup and programs. It is possible that the U.S. Army may have used this situation as an opportunity to increase their

32. Bowers, interviews.

33. Gerald Haines and Robert E. Leggett, eds, *Watching the Bear: Essays on CIA's Analysis of the Soviet Union*, (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2001), ix.

34. *Ibid.*, ix.

defense budget. Nevertheless, Clay's warning was the turning point for the CIA. The agency's mission broadened to include research on a variety of topics such as economics, transportation, geography, etc. Since the State Department (DOS) and the military had a perceived monopoly on political and military analysis, the CIA focused more on scientific and economic analysis of the USSR early on. However, the CIA took on more responsibilities as time progressed. In the early 1950s, the DOS allowed the CIA to manage analysis and economic investigations of the Soviet Union and its East European neighbors. This opened the door for the CIA to conduct analysis of specific areas and broaden their understanding of the Soviet Bloc in a variety of issues.

The CIA's role eventually developed to include studies on the intentions, capabilities, and overall status of the Soviet Union. More specifically, areas of focus included the Soviet's economical, political, military, scientific, and technological advancements. The CIA was particularly skilled at observing and analyzing the Soviet economy, which essentially impacted the other spheres of the Soviet Union. Max Millikan stated, "The agency's economic analysis contributed to a better understanding of the threat posed by the Soviets in both economic and military spheres, and restrained a general tendency to exaggerate that threat."³⁵

The CIA took on the primary role of analyzing Soviet technological advances in relation to its economy and military. For instance, the agency concluded that the Soviet's poor planning and management attributed to a slower progression in technology. Furthermore, the agency noticed that the Soviets were investing more than they were

35. *Ibid.*, x.

importing, thus adding to a weaker economy.³⁶ The CIA even held its own Economic Division, which gained attention over the decades.³⁷ It became the best known analysis in the West on the Soviet Union. Even some top Soviet officials depended on the CIA's records in understanding their own economic situation, since many of their own sources were so unreliable. The CIA produced the JEC papers, in which 40% were reviewed by the Soviet's.³⁸ However, the CIA was not always 100% accurate. For instance, its 1977 estimates of oil reservation in the USSR were too low.³⁹ In 1982, the agency claimed that Soviet defense spending was growing 4-5% per year, when in reality it had been slowing down since 1975.

During the Cold War, the United States competed with the USSR in its technological advances. The CIA was innovative in its collection capabilities and analytical techniques. Some of these included integrating Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) with its collection.⁴⁰ The United States developed the U-2 High Altitude Reconnaissance Aircraft, and speed-based imaging satellites, which were indispensable to U.S. intelligence.⁴¹ This allowed for earlier detection of Soviet Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), and revealed the truth about the missile gap theory. Other programs arose in the United States with technological advancements including the Oxcart Program, and the Corona Satellite Imagery. These programs produced high flying spy planes with

36. *Ibid.*, xi.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*, 25.

39. *Ibid.*, xiii.

40. *Ibid.*, xvii.

41. *Ibid.*, xviii.

photographic capabilities. As a result, expansive areas were documented to visually assess Soviet territory and weapons.

The Soviet's political realm was of particular interest to the CIA, because the Soviet's communist policy drove the USSR. It was also in direct opposition to America's ideology and system of government, and thus the CIA paid close attention to Soviet policy. The CIA had been observing Soviet politics as early as 1946, when it was formerly known as the Central Intelligence Group (CIG). This continued throughout the Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, post Brezhnev, and finally the Gorbachev time of power.⁴² The CIA asked experts to pay close attention to their specialized areas of study, and encouraged them to avoid bias in their conclusions. Despite this, critics claim that the agency was too cautious and conservative when evaluating Soviet foreign policy issues.⁴³ In the view of Douglas F. Garthoff, a former analyst and senior CIA official, the agency was more focused on the military threats of the USSR instead of looking for opportunities to improve U.S. interests in foreign policy.

Although the CIA may have overemphasized the Soviet's military capabilities, it was not always easy to interpret the Soviet's intentions. In the 1950s and 1960s, rumors were spread of a bomber gap theory, or missile gap theory between the USSR and the United States, claiming the Soviet's had the advantage in missile technology.⁴⁴ By 1958, the United States was operating U-2 flights and America's technological intelligence negated the bomber gap theory. The missile gap theory was uncovered in 1961 by

42. Haines and Leggett, *Watching the Bear*, xiii.

43. *Ibid.*, xiv.

44. *Ibid.*, xviii-xix.

Satellite Photography, which revealed the U.S. Air Force had overestimated the number of Soviet military weapons.

However, there was still concern that the Soviet nuclear capabilities were either equal, or superior to the United States. Sometimes the lack of CIA Human Intelligence in the USSR made it difficult for U.S. officials to know what the Soviet's were thinking. A bilateral fear between the two nations escalated in 1983 when the North Atlantic Treaty organization (NATO) conducted an exercise called Able Archer, a nuclear missile assimilation on the Soviet Union. The Soviets mistook the war game for a real attack and prepared for a counter attack strike. Communications indicated that NATO had released the missile, but in reality this was not taking place. Thankfully, the Soviet's realized that it was a false alarm, and withdrew their standby position without releasing a nuclear missile. The 1980s were distinguished with fear of Moscow's growing military power. However, the tension was greatly reduced when the Soviet's leader Yuri Andropov died on February 9, 1984. As a result, President Reagan's fears turned towards a more hopeful future between the two nations. During the whole span of the Cold War, the United States spent an estimated \$2 trillion on its strategic nuclear forces during the Cold War.⁴⁵ Fortunately the nuclear weapons were not actually employed in a nuclear battle with the Soviet Union, but used instead as a tool to warn the Soviet's of America's capabilities and deter them from exercising their strength against the United States.

During President Richard Nixon's administration, attempts were made to improve the world situation. Reagan called for Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) to begin

45. *End of the Cold War, The*, <http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/subs/history/timeline/end/index.html>, (accessed April 15, 2009).

to address ways in which to limit the use of nuclear weapons.⁴⁶ SALT I talks occurred between the years 1969 to 1972 and created a temporary nuclear limits agreement between the USSR and the United States called the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. It was followed less than a week later by the Basic Principles of Relations agreement, an attempt for peaceful co-existence between the two nations. SALT II created for another treaty, but was rejected by the U.S. Senate.⁴⁷ Reagan was able to make these decisions with the assistance of CIA reports.

These attempts of peace were overturned by President Ronald Reagan's arms buildup in the 1980s. However, President Reagan did take steps towards peace, even though he prepared for the worst. In 1982, President Reagan abandoned SALT and instead adopted the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty Talks (START) by 1983. It took over a decade for major progress to occur with these talks and a treaty was signed on July 31, 1991 between the United States and USSR. This followed with other treaties that would reduce the number of nuclear weapons each contained in their arsenals.⁴⁸ Through each of the president's administrations, the CIA provided intelligence on current situations and future projections of U.S. decisions, as it did for the Reagan administration.

As the CIA developed over time, the overall Intelligence Community (IC) progressed as well. For example, the Office of Soviet Analysis made important organizational changes in 1981 when it combined military, political, and economical analysts into one room. This created a multi-disciplinary approach to intelligence. Also,

46. CIA, <https://www.cia.gov/>, (accessed April 15, 2009).

47. *Cold War*, <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1881.html> , (accessed February 5, 2010).

48. *Ibid.*

the IC and CIA began to branch out and partner with private companies in collecting information. This was due to the IC's desire to think outside the box and need to seek out nontraditional methods of studying issues and targeting the enemy's weaknesses. The IC looked into technological advances to aid analysts in evaluating high amounts of collection. Other ways the IC improved was recruiting more qualified candidates and providing improved training for new agents. Hiring employees with traveling experience was a plus, especially if the person had lived in another culture for a while. This was significant, because possessing agents who were familiar with other countries helped prevent mirror imaging, which is the view that another country shares the same values and worldview as one's own country. Finally, professionals were sought out to contribute their expertise to the agency. They were found in the business world, the university, the military, the government and elsewhere.⁴⁹

Director of Intelligence (DI) and leading expert James Noren explained that the IC and CIA had success in achieving five main goals. The first was in assessing their available resources to understand present and future military threats. The second was investigating their resources in order to identify the location and nature of military threats. Noel Firth and James Noren commented that without the defense spending estimates, "The prevailing view of Soviet military programs would have been more alarmist and U.S. defense spending during the Cold War would have been much higher."⁵⁰ The third goal was observing the Soviet's economic arena, believing that this would reveal the Soviet's true intentions. The fourth was providing decision makers with

49. Haines and Leggett, *Watching the Bear*, 231.

50. *Ibid.*, xi.

suggestions to weaken their enemies' capabilities, thus decreasing potential threats (Counter Intelligence). Finally, the fifth was in contrasting the strengths between the eastern and the western powers.⁵¹

On the contrary, the Central Intelligence (CI) experienced some setbacks. For example, The National Estimates closed down its board and staff in 1973. It was replaced by the National Intelligence Officers, who drafted geographic and subject related National Intelligence Estimates (NIE). This was a disadvantage because the careful process in reviewing each estimate was compromised in this exchange. In other words, an important structural element was lost, because the new board did not review each national estimate, unlike the previous method that did.

Studying the CIA and its involvement in the Cold War is a tedious endeavor. The CIA was not perfect, and was full of intelligence failures. However, each mistake educated the agency on how to improve its methods of creating intelligence, and relaying it in a timely manner. Perhaps the most difficult role the agency was given was the task of understanding the enemy's precise intentions at specific times during the Cold War. Finding out another's capabilities was a complete contrast from knowing whether the enemy would use (and how it would use) its power against the United States. For this reason, the CIA strived to be one step ahead of the enemy, yet still found it difficult to predict an adversary's motivations and level of threat.

Highlighted below are some of the failures and successes the CIA encountered during the Cold War era. For instance, the CIA underestimated the time it would take for the Soviets to develop the atomic bomb, largely due to the fact that the Soviets stole information from the United States during the development of the bomb, known as the

51. Ibid., x.

Manhattan project. The Soviets did this by recruiting inside members of the project to spy and share information with the Soviets. In another instance, the CIA failed to realize the Soviets would invade Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, Operation Zapata, code named Bay of Pigs was a failure, and so was the assassination attempt of Fidel Castro. Also, although the CIA was able to dispel major myths of the Soviet capabilities, it still tended to overestimate the Soviet military deployment and arms buildup. Finally, the agency was unable to foresee the sudden collapse of the USSR before 1991.⁵²

On the other hand, the CIA aided U.S. policy makers with intelligence in a variety of issues on many nations, including the USSR. Although the CIA did not see that the Soviet Union was on the brink of destruction as such a rapid rate, the agency was aware that the Soviet economy was in danger of implosion. In other foreign affairs, the CIA helped organize operations to fight communism and was successful in Guatemala and Iran. Finally, the CIA used reconnaissance to identify the Soviet missiles in Cuba that were aimed at the United States, consequently providing President John F. Kennedy with timely intelligence to plan a strategic response. Raymond L. Garthoff describes how the CIA's analysis was not always correct, neither was it always accepted, but it was "more correct, more often."⁵³

The CIA performance was a major asset to the U.S. decision makers in understanding its enemy, the USSR. Although the Intelligence Community contained a plethora of skill, knowledge and capabilities, the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency was paramount. The CIA put a great deal of effort and energy into developing its

52. Haines and Leggett, *Watching the Bear*, 230.

53. *Ibid.*, xix.

collection and analytical capabilities to meet its consumer's demands, thus making it a dynamic entity.⁵⁴ It was also less influenced by institutional interests than the military intelligence services were.⁵⁵ The overall success of the CIA is recognized in the fact that the Cold War tensions never escalated to an actual nuclear war. Thus, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 not only indicated the end of the Cold War, but symbolized a time of peaceful celebration after a long fear of a potential nuclear combat between the two opposing sides.

Not only was the CIA influential in the intelligence community, but it had an impact on the globe. In many cases, the function and value of the CIA was not completely grasped by other nations, let alone U.S. citizens. The CIA gained a prestigious reputation for itself because of its efforts against communism around the world. The CIA monitored foreign nations, and conducted covert operations when necessary to collect needed information. These operations gave the CIA its secret agent (spy) stereotype, and launched many ideas for movies and means of entertainment in the American culture. Thus, the CIA became known as an agency against the forces of communism, but little was known to the average U.S. citizen how the agency actually operated and disseminated its intelligence.

There are various open source intelligence resources that provide access to better understand the CIA's role in the Cold War. Although not all the secrets of the Cold War were released, there is enough obtainable data to do an extensive study on the CIA's position of the global conflict. For instance, there are sources such as books written by former (or current) CIA agents/ Directors. There exists CIA unclassified reports that can

54. *Ibid.*, 231.

55. *Ibid.*, xix.

be used to compare primary source documents with secondary information from critics. These previously confidential documents provide an inside perspective on how the CIA functioned and viewed the nations of the world. Furthermore, there are online credible sources such as the CIA's official website (www.cia.gov), which includes vital information in the agency's history. This is also an important source to seek out in order to learn the CIA's official opinion about issues it was involved in. Other sources include scholarly journals and newspapers that contain the public and media's opinion on the CIA and its operations. Finally, if available, one can conduct personal interviews of former intelligence agents/ analysts of the Cold War era and hear first hands accounts of the U.S. struggle against the former Soviet Union.

Understanding the history of the CIA in the field of intelligence requires an understanding of the CIA's influence on the citizens of America, and the agency's view of the world. This attainable information is beneficial for people from all disciplines and backgrounds to grasp. Whether it is the policy maker, business professional, current intelligence agent, or curious citizen, everyone can benefit from understanding the CIA's involvement in the history of U.S. intelligence.

Although issues and leaders change throughout time, there will always be a need for intelligence in this unstable world. It is vital to America's national security that the past successes and failures of the CIA are not forgotten, or ignored. The current situation of America has been impacted by the CIA's contributions in the past. Take for instance the events of the CIA's invasion of Cuba in the Bay of Pigs, and the lessons learned from that failure. On a brighter note, America enjoyed success in the Cuban Missile Crises because of the CIA's contributions. Despite the outcome, the CIA played a significant

role in advising policy makers during the Cold War, and beyond. The CIA has been the eyes and ears of policy makers in major international events affecting the United States in the mid to late 20th century. The Cold War was the platform in which the CIA built its foundation and gave the agency the motivation to progress into the capable entity it is today.

According to Alfred McCormack, the CIA has succeeded in its overall vision, in knowing the world and being prepared for war if necessary. Although the CIA has its blemishes, the agency has succeeded in leading the United States in its important role in the world and has accomplished much since its founding. To reiterate the importance of the CIA, it literally changed how America viewed the role of intelligence. Furthermore, the CIA attempted to unite the fourteen plus intelligence bodies as it cooperated with each in carrying out its mission. As a result of the agency's designation, U.S. Presidents and leaders of foreign policy were informed on world affairs better than ever in America's history. Furthermore, the agency created a more influential and attractive image for intelligence employees, creating a unique and professional elite in the government sector. Yet still, the CIA developed into an important monitor of world activities that would prove to be crucial in later years throughout the Cold War. As envisioned from the CIA's beginning, the agency became a prevailing authority that greatly impacted the world throughout the mid 20th century, and it continues to do so in the present.

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