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Dr. N. William Wawro
44 Walbridge Road
West Hartford, Connecticut 06119

Dear Bill:

I promised to think about essay topics on "Aspects of the Intelligence Community's Organizations and Operations" which might be of interest to your daughter for use in the course she has with Lyman Kirkpatrick. I have done so and am enclosing herewith a list of five, with a few sentences of elaboration on each.

I wish I were more confident than I am that one or another of these might at least suggest a manageable and interesting subject. The difficulty I have encountered in trying to make practical suggestions is that, given my immersion in the intelligence business for a number of years, my mind runs to questions which could be handled by a professional but are probably too sophisticated and too dependent on a working knowledge of the Intelligence Community to be easily approachable by an outsider. Mr. Kirkpatrick could write an essay on any one of the five without effort. I would be hard put to it, however, to recommend source material on the basis of which your daughter could do so. She probably, however, has access to some sort of bibliography of publications on Intelligence from which she could select enough material to permit her to write a paper that would be interesting to her and stimulating to others.

As I told you in our telephone conversation, I will be delighted to meet her and to talk to her about these or other aspects of the intelligence business when she is home for Thanksgiving, if she believes that would be of any help at that date. I hope your forthcoming trip is a great success.

Best regards,

Yours,

Richard M. Bissell, jr.



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1. Administrative Control of the Intelligence Community -- The Intelligence Community includes the whole of the CIA, three Department of Defense agencies together with the intelligence directorates of the three military services, a bureau of the State Department, and for certain purposes the FBI, and (formerly) the Atomic Energy Commission. The Director of Central Intelligence is both the Chief Executive Officer of the CIA and, as it were, the Chairman of the whole intelligence community, with a vague responsibility for all intelligence activities. Beginning with President Eisenhower, every President has urged the DCI to exercise stronger coordination of the activities of the whole Intelligence Community. Yet with the exception of a limited authority to review the budgets of intelligence components, the responsibility for operations, for originating budgets, and for hiring, firing, and promotions have remained decentralized, with the sole exception of the CIA itself. Some of the most controversial continuing questions about the organization of the Community have to do with the degree of authority the DCI can exercise and should possess. None of them has in fact been able to exercise very much outside of the CIA and recently Admiral Turner seems to have had a request for broad powers turned down. This set of questions could be examined either historically or as a study in optimum government organization, or both.
2. The Estimating Process -- National intelligence estimates are supposed to embody appraisals of existing situations abroad and judgments concerning their probable evolution covering military, technological, political, and economic matters. They are supposed to reflect the views of the whole intelligence community and they are, or used to be, produced in effect by committees of the Intelligence Community. Since a reorganization carried out by Schlesinger, I am not sure how the process works. The questions that can be asked about it are numerous and interesting. Has the procedure in fact produced valid appraisals of facts and analyses of trends? Does the effort to include the views of a number of agencies yield watered down conclusions which are merely the least common denominator of the several inputs? Have the estimates been useful and persuasive; have policy decisions been based on them or more largely on judgments arrived at in the separate departments, especially State and DoD? Is there a better way to arrive at conclusions which are reasonably clearcut yet take into account differing views?
3. Roles of the CIA and the State Department -- It is sometimes argued that a primary function of the State Department (or of any Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and of the network of embassies abroad, is to collect information and to analyze it except for specialized matters, notably military intelligence. It is said that in the performance of its basic functions of intelligence and analysis the CIA is inevitably duplicating the State Department. A counter argument is that no decisionmaking department, such as State or DoD, can be wholly objective in its reporting and analysis of what is going on abroad. The temptation is too strong to turn in reports that will support the current policy line of the department. This is the reason it is argued that there must be an independent intelligence agency and that its appraisals must be accepted as the bases for policy decisions. Along side of this potential duplication in intelligence collection and analysis, there is the fact that the operations side of the CIA frequently opens conduits for the exchange of information and of influence with foreign governments that parallel the main channel running

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from the State Department through embassies to foreign ministries. There is no doubt that on occasion the CIA channel has been more effective than the official one. Given these allegations of duplication, what is the proper role of the Agency?

4. Relations with Foreign Intelligence Services -- Quite aside from all their unilateral activities, the intelligence agencies of the United States, principally for this purpose the CIA, maintains official liaison with the intelligence service, and quite often the internal services of many other countries. These are exploited primarily to obtain an exchange of intelligence but occasionally they involve operational collaboration as well:

It is with these liaison relationships, often, that the conduit referred to in the preceding paragraph is opened up. How valuable have these relationships proved to be? Are there dangers in contacts with and support to foreign internal security services? Alternatively, can the U.S. afford not to maintain relationships which will yield valuable intelligence, including information about the friendly country itself and will open up possibilities for collaboration against the Communist bloc and in third areas?

5. Effectiveness, Legality, and Secrecy -- It is of the essence of covert operations that they must be conducted in total secrecy, or at least that compartmented parts of the operations must be so shielded. It is also of their nature that they frequently require persuading the nationals of other countries to do things that are illegal for them in those countries. Moreover, although the targets of intelligence operations, both those designed for intelligence collection and those involving political action, are or should be foreign governments and other foreign instrumentalities, an intelligence service has to protect itself which often involves some degree of activity directed at American citizens, if only surveillance. Given these requirements, is it possible to have effective secret intelligence operations while maintaining high standards of legality? For instance, an intelligence officer must be able to lie if he is to maintain a cover and conceal what he is doing. Congressional Committees cannot have a need to know about intelligence operations unless they can maintain a higher standard of security than they ever have in the past. Do those responsible for the conduct of covert operations require some limited and defined right to depart from strict standards of legality if they are to be effective?

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