

Chapter 12

Protection of the Agency Against Threats of Violence—Office of Security

During the period of widespread domestic disorder from 1965 to 1972, the CIA, along with other government departments, was subject to threats of violence and disruption by demonstrators and self-styled revolutionary groups.

In the fall of 1968, a bomb destroyed a CIA recruiting office in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Bomb threats required the evacuation of other Agency buildings on several occasions. Agency recruiters on college campuses were harassed and occasionally endangered. Protesters held massive demonstrations, sometimes with the announced purpose of preventing operation of the government.

Throughout this period, the government was determined not to permit such activities to disrupt its functioning. The Office of Security of the CIA was charged with the responsibility of ensuring the safety of CIA buildings, employees, and activities and their continued functioning.

Three programs to accomplish this mission are of particular concern to our inquiry:

- Assistance to recruiters on college campuses.
- Infiltration of dissident groups in the Washington, D.C., area.
- Research and analysis of dissident activity.

A. Assistance to Recruiters

In light of the increasingly hostile atmosphere on many college campuses, the CIA's Deputy Director for Support (now Administration) directed the Office of Security in February of 1967 to institute a program of rendering assistance to Agency recruiters.

CIA field offices made contacts with college and university officials to determine the general level of dissident activity on each campus—and the nature and extent of activity directed against the CIA in par-

ticular. The Office of Security then advised the recruiter scheduled to visit a particular campus of its findings and recommendations.

We found nothing to indicate that the CIA collected this information by any means other than openly published materials and conversations with law enforcement and other authorities.

If a recruiter elected to visit a campus where there were indications of trouble, the Office of Security would provide him with monitoring and communications support.

If trouble arose while the recruiting interviews were in process, appropriate warnings were communicated to the recruiter, law enforcement agencies in the vicinity were alerted, and arrangements were made for terminating the interviews and leaving the campus. The Agency had a clearly-expressed policy of avoiding confrontations.

If the recruiter elected not to conduct interviews on a college or university campus, the Office of Security would arrange for alternative interviewing space in off-campus facilities, if possible. Where necessary, similar monitoring and communications support was provided at the off-campus site. In some instances, the campus atmosphere was so hostile that scheduled recruitment visits were simply cancelled.

The program of assistance to recruiters was discontinued in 1970. By that time, revisions in the Agency's recruitment program eliminated the need for such security precautions.

B. Infiltration of Dissident Groups in the Washington, D.C., Area

A second program conducted by the Office of Security involving dissident activity was aimed at providing timely advance notice of impending demonstrations in the Washington, D.C., area in order to protect the facilities, employees and operations of the Agency. The Director of Central Intelligence knew of this program and approved its initial scope and purpose.

This project began in February 1967.¹ It was initially aimed at monitoring² public demonstrations which might develop into picketing of Agency buildings. Almost from the outset, however, it became a project for placing "assets" in suitable organizations in order to obtain information concerning intended demonstrations directed at

¹ There was testimony from one Agency employee that he had been asked as early as 1964 to monitor certain groups. If such monitoring did occur, it appears to have been confined to one or two men operating on their off-duty hours.

² According to Director Helms, to "monitor" a group is merely to attend its public meetings and hear what any citizen present would hear; to "infiltrate" a group is to join it as a member and appear to support its purposes in general; to "penetrate" a group is to gain a position of leadership and influence or direct its policies and actions.

CIA properties. ("Asset" is a term used by the CIA to refer to agents and informants other than employees.)

A small number of persons employed by the CIA, either directly or through an Office of Security proprietary, and several of their relatives were recruited to work on this project on a part-time basis. In the early phase of the project, only four or five such part-time "assets" were involved. They were instructed to mingle with others at demonstrations and meetings open to the public, to listen for information and pick up literature, and to report promptly on any indications of activities directed against Government installations, particularly CIA installations.

By April 1967, four specific organizations in the Washington metropolitan area had been designated for infiltration—the Women's Strike for Peace, the Washington Peace Center, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Congress of Racial Equality.

The part-time agents were instructed to attend meetings of these organizations, to show an interest in their purposes, and to make modest financial contributions, but not to exercise any leadership, initiative or direction. The Agency provided funds for their suggested financial contributions.

They were also directed to report how many persons attended the meetings or demonstrations, who the speakers and leaders were, what they said and what activities were conducted and planned.

These "assets" reported regularly, usually in longhand. The reports were not confined to matters relating to intended demonstrations at Government installations. They included details of the size and make-up of the groups and the names and attitudes of their leaders and speakers.

By late June 1967, the Agency sought to obtain whatever information it could regarding the sources and amounts of income of each of the infiltrated organizations.

One infiltrator was sent to dissident rallies in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore. One was called upon to maintain a continuous check on the movements and activities of certain prominent dissident leaders whenever they arrived in Washington, D.C. Infiltrators were charged from time to time with obtaining specific information on individuals, groups or planned demonstrations.

In some instances, the Agency identified leaders or speakers at a meeting by photographing their automobiles and checking registration records. In other cases, it followed them home in order to identify them through the city directory. Photographs were also taken at several major demonstrations in the Washington area and at protest activities in the vicinity of the White House.

In September 1967, the National Mobilization Committee to End the War was added to the list of monitored organizations in anticipation of large demonstrations planned for the Washington, D.C.. area in the following month. The assets were instructed to gather biographical data on its leaders and participants, and information regarding the location of the organization's office, the source of its funds, and the identity of other organizations which would participate in that demonstration.

In mid-August 1968, additional organizations were added to the list for monitoring: the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, School of Afro-American Thought, Washington Ethical Society, American Humanist Association, Black Panthers, War Resisters' League, Black United Front, Washington Mobilization for Peace, Washington Urban League, Black Muslims and Niggers, Inc.

Assets were instructed to include within their reports the details of meetings attended, including the names of the speakers and the gist of their speeches, any threatening remarks against United States government leaders, and an evaluation of attitudes, trends, and possible developments within the organization.

Funds and personnel adequate to carry out the program in full were never made available. There are strong indications in the CIA's files, and there was testimony before the Commission, that some of the named organizations were never monitored at all. On the other hand, some of them had already been infiltrated before August 1968.

On one occasion, in the course of infiltrating one of the dissident organizations, an asset learned that the organization was receiving financial support from a foreign source. The Director of Central Intelligence and the President were informed of this development. Concerned that further investigation of this matter might involve the Agency in forbidden domestic activity, the Director made immediate arrangements to turn the information and the asset over to the FBI. From that point forward, the asset engaged in no further activity on behalf of the CIA.

Information gathered in the course of this program was regularly supplied to Operation CHAOS. Indeed, both testimony and circumstantial evidence indicate that the broad sweep of the information collected was in part a result of requests levied on the Office of Security by that Operation.

By the latter part of 1968, the Washington Metropolitan Police Department had developed its own capability to collect information on dissident groups in the area, and the Office of Security phased out its project. In his testimony, Director Helms confirmed that these two events were related. The Office of Security has continued to maintain liaison with police departments in the Washington area.

During the period of the operation of this program (February 1967 to December 1968), the maximum number of agents employed at any one time appears to have been twelve. None of them was a professionally-trained intelligence gatherer. All were residents of the Washington metropolitan area. Most of them were manual laborers. They were paid nominal salaries by the CIA, in most cases \$100 per month or less. Except for several housewives who were otherwise unemployed, all of these assets had full-time jobs unconnected with dissident groups or activities. During major demonstrations in the Washington metropolitan area, some of them were called upon to put in long hours on evenings and weekends, and for this extra service they received compensation on a modest hourly basis. The primary motive of these assets appears to have been patriotism rather than pay.

C. Research and Analysis on Dissident Activity

In 1966 and 1967, the Deputy Director for Support ordered the Office of Security to prepare several studies relating to dissidents and dissident groups. One of the studies centered on the individuals and groups who were charging the CIA with involvement in the assassination of Malcolm X, the Black Muslim leader. The study provided background information relating to those accusing the CIA.³

Shortly thereafter, the Deputy Director for Support ordered a further study on dissidents in general. Such a study was prepared, relying primarily upon public news sources.

In December 1967, the Office of Security launched a program under which it was to maintain for several years a continuing study of dissident activity throughout the United States. The stated purposes of this project were to identify threats to CIA personnel, projects and installations, and to determine whether there was foreign sponsorship or ties to any such groups.

All field offices were directed to forward to headquarters whatever relevant information they might find in their respective geographic areas. Such information was to be obtained from willing sources and from newspapers and similar publications. No penetrations, infiltrations or monitoring of dissident groups was ordered or expected.

A substantial flow of material, primarily newspaper clippings, began arriving at headquarters in early 1968. At that point, there was only one employee in the Office of Security charged with the responsibility of studying and evaluating such incoming material. In short order, the arriving material inundated him.

³ No evidence was found which would support such a charge.

The Office soon created a special branch to handle the task. The branch began operation in May 1968. Its staff varied slightly in size from time to time, normally consisting of four or five persons.

One of the jobs of this branch was to organize and study the material from the field offices. It also gathered relevant information from a variety of other sources, including:

- Newspapers of general circulation in Washington, D.C., New York and Chicago;
- Underground newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Free Press* and the *Berkeley Barb*;
- The communist press, such as *The Worker* and *People's World*;
- Organizational publications, such as the *Black Panther*;
- All college papers the branch could get and had time to read;
- Any relevant newspaper clippings it found;
- News magazines; and
- Books and articles in general.

These materials dealt with activities and plans of dissident groups, the names and travels of their leaders and speakers, and the attitudes and intentions of such figures.

The branch had little or no input from the separate element within the Office of Security engaged in monitoring dissident groups in the Washington metropolitan area during 1967 and 1968. It used no infiltrators, penetrators, or monitors.

Occasionally, the branch asked local police department intelligence officers for information on dissident activities, and it always received cooperation. It also received the minutes of meetings of police department intelligence officers from the Washington metropolitan area held from time to time to plan for the handling of demonstrations and potential riots. Finally, it received continuing reports from the FBI relating to activities of dissidents and dissident groups.

The end products of this branch were weekly and special reports called "Situation Information Reports" (SIR). These SIR's usually consisted of two sections: one an analytical approach to events which had been occurring; the other a calendar of forthcoming events. For the most part, the SIR's were published weekly. The only regular recipient of the full SIR's outside the Office of Security was the Chief of Operation CHAOS. A United States Secret Service agent regularly came to the Agency to pick up a copy of the calendar of forthcoming events. Branch personnel and the Secret Service agent also conferred whenever their information conflicted on the times and dates of forthcoming events.

The SIR's were not furnished to the FBI. Neither were copies fur-

nished to local police departments. They were never released to the press or otherwise made public.

In addition to providing information from which to prepare the SIR's, the materials received from the field and studied by the special branch were used for several other related purposes:

(1) The Office of Security developed some insight into dissidents and dissident groups. It could identify certain individuals whose participation in an event would suggest the possibility of violence. It analyzed the relationships between some of the individuals and groups and noted the frequent alterations and reorganizations of some of the groups.

(2) It developed files on dissident groups and their leaders for reference purposes. These files were intended, in part, for use in making security clearance determinations on applicants for employment by the Agency. (According to those in charge of security clearance evaluations, participation in the activities of a dissident organization, even one that was prone to violence, did not necessarily disqualify an applicant for employment with the Agency, although it was considered relevant to his objectivity and willingness to accept Agency security discipline.)

(3) The Office of Security obtained information which helped it assess risks posed to CIA offices, recruiters, agents and contractors by upcoming demonstrations and other dissident activity.

Although estimates varied somewhat, approximately 500 to 800 files were created on dissenting organizations and on individuals related in various ways to dissident activity. The chief of the special branch "guessed" that somewhere between 12,000 and 16,000 names were indexed to these files.

The great majority of individuals and organizations indexed, or on whom files were opened, were dissidents and dissident groups. This was not true in all cases. Exceptions included Dr. S. I. Hayakawa of San Francisco State College and Father Theodore M. Hesburgh of Notre Dame University, because they were publicly involved in coping with dissident activities.

Few if any of the files opened during this project were destroyed before the commencement of the Commission's work. The Agency intends to retain these files until the current investigations are concluded, when it will destroy them as permitted by law.

In January 1971 the field offices were directed to limit their activities in support of this project to sending in newspaper clippings and the literature of dissident organizations. In late 1972, publication of the Situation Information Reports was discontinued because dissident activity had tapered off markedly. In June 1973, the entire project relating to dissident individuals and groups was discontinued.

During the lifetime of this project (late 1967 to mid-1973), several incidental uses were made of it by the Office of Security:

(1) Branch personnel prepared a special report evaluating risks that dissidents would interfere with CIA contract projects at about twenty universities.

(2) On at least one occasion, a branch officer briefed the police departments of Arlington and Fairfax Counties, Virginia, on what to expect from large demonstrations planned for the Washington metropolitan area.

(3) A branch officer delivered a briefing to security officers of the Atomic Energy Commission on the subject of dissident groups in connection with a training program on home-made bombs.

(4) Branch personnel served at the Command Center operated by the Office of Security during several large demonstrations in order to provide continuing analyses of developments and an assessment of risks to Agency personnel and installations.

During the same period of time, the FBI maintained its own program of reporting on dissident activity. CIA officials testified, however, that the FBI reports concentrated primarily on whether the person or organization was subversive, whereas the needs of the Office of Security extended beyond loyalty or subversion. This was so in connection with screening employment applications and in assessing the degree of risk to Agency facilities and operations by any particular organization or combination of organizations. Knowledgeable FBI officials did not dispute these observations, which were offered to explain why CIA mounted its own effort rather than using FBI reports.

Conclusions

The program under which the Office of Security rendered assistance to Agency recruiters on college campuses was justified as an exercise of the Agency's responsibility to protect its own personnel and operations. Such support activities were not undertaken for the purpose of protecting the facilities or operations of other governmental agencies, or to maintain public order or enforce laws.

The Agency should not infiltrate a dissident group for security purposes unless there is a clear danger to Agency installations, operations or personnel, and investigative coverage of the threat by the FBI and local law enforcement authorities is inadequate. The Agency's infiltration of dissident groups in the Washington area went far beyond steps necessary to protect the Agency's own facilities, personnel and operations, and therefore exceeded the CIA's statutory authority.

In addition, the Agency undertook to protect other Government departments and agencies—a police function prohibited to it by statute.

Intelligence activity directed toward learning from what sources a domestic dissident group receives its financial support within the United States, and how much income it has, is no part of the authorized security operations of the Agency. Neither is it the function of the Agency to compile records on who attends peaceful meetings of such dissident groups, or what each speaker has to say (unless it relates to disruptive or violent activity which may be directed against the Agency).

The Agency's actions in contributing funds, photographing people, activities and cars, and following people home were unreasonable under the circumstances and therefore exceeded the CIA's authority.

With certain exceptions, the program under which the Office of Security (without infiltration) gathered, organized and analyzed information about dissident groups for purposes of security was within the CIA's authority.

The accumulation of reference files on dissident organizations and their leaders was appropriate both to evaluate the risks posed to the Agency and to develop an understanding of dissident groups and their differences for security clearance purposes. But the accumulation of information on domestic activities went beyond what was required by the Agency's legitimate security needs and therefore exceeded the CIA's authority.

Recommendation (16)

The CIA should not infiltrate dissident groups or other organizations of Americans in the absence of a written determination by the Director of Central Intelligence that such action is necessary to meet a clear danger to Agency facilities, operations, or personnel and that adequate coverage by law enforcement agencies is unavailable.

Recommendation (17)

All files on individuals accumulated by the Office of Security in the program relating to dissidents should be identified, and, except where necessary for a legitimate foreign intelligence activity, be destroyed at the conclusion of the current congressional investigations, or as soon thereafter as permitted by law.