

Chapter 16

Domestic Activities of the Directorate of Science and Technology

In the past two decades, the CIA has placed increasing emphasis upon gathering foreign intelligence through technical and scientific means.

In 1963, Director John McCone sought to coordinate the scientific development of intelligence devices and systems by creating the Science and Technology Directorate within the CIA. Most of the scientific and technological endeavors had been previously undertaken by the Plans (now Operations) Directorate.

The Science and Technology Directorate is presently responsible for all of the research and development engaged in by the CIA in all fields of science and technology. Projects range from complex satellite systems to the development of miniature cameras and concealed listening devices.

The Directorate also is engaged in developing countermeasures to neutralize new scientific and technological devices developed by foreign intelligence services.

Private industry provides much of the research and development of new intelligence gathering devices on a contractual basis.

In addition to engaging in research and development, some branches of the Science and Technology Directorate provide operational support in the field for use of intelligence gathering devices developed by the Directorate.

Other branches of the Directorate themselves engage in the task of foreign intelligence-gathering abroad, utilizing technical intelligence gathering devices not developed for use by operations agents.

The Commission investigated a number of projects of the Science and Technology Directorate which have affected persons living within the United States.

Most such activities were lawful and proper, although there have been scattered improprieties described below.

A. The Testing of Scientific and Technological Developments Within the United States

While the research and development of new CIA scientific and technical devices is naturally undertaken within the United States, the evidence before this Commission shows that with a few exceptions, the actual devices and systems developed have not been used operationally within this country.¹

However, the Agency has tested some of its new scientific and technological developments in the United States. One such program included the testing of certain behavior-influencing drugs. Several others involved the testing of equipment for monitoring conversations. In all of the programs described, some tests were directed against unsuspecting subjects, most of whom were U.S. citizens.

1. The Testing of Behavior-Influencing Drugs on Unsuspecting Subjects Within the United States

In the late 1940's, the CIA began to study the properties of certain behavior-influencing drugs (such as LSD) and how such drugs might be put to intelligence use. This interest was prompted by reports that the Soviet Union was experimenting with such drugs and by speculation that the confessions introduced during trials in the Soviet Union and other Soviet Bloc countries during the late 1940's might have been elicited by the use of drugs or hypnosis. Great concern over Soviet and North Korean techniques in "brainwashing" continued to be manifested into the early 1950's.

The drug program was part of a much larger CIA program to study possible means for controlling human behavior. Other studies explored the effects of radiation, electric-shock, psychology, psychiatry, sociology and harassment substances.

The primary purpose of the drug program was to counter the use of behavior-influencing drugs clandestinely administered by an enemy, although several operational uses outside the United States were also considered.

Unfortunately, only limited records of the testing conducted in these drug programs are now available. All the records concerning the program were ordered destroyed in 1973, including a total of 152 separate files.

In addition, all persons directly involved in the early phases of the program were either out of the country and not available for

¹ A few audio-surveillance devices developed by the Science and Technology Directorate have been used by the Office of Security in the course of investigations of persons within the United States. In addition, several devices developed by the Agency have been used by other federal agencies in operations conducted within the United States.

interview, or were decreased. Nevertheless, the Commission learned some of the details surrounding several tests of LSD conducted on unsuspecting subjects between 1953 and 1963.

The possibility, and the importance, of testing potential behavior-influencing drugs (including LSD) on human subjects was first suggested in 1953. It was also suggested at that time that Agency trainees might be utilized as test subjects. Any such testing was to be carefully supervised and conducted only in the presence of a qualified physician.

Following laboratory testing of LSD and other potential behavior-influencing substances, a few tests were run on voluntary participants. Commencing in 1955, under an informal arrangement with the Federal Bureau of Drug Abuse Control, tests were begun on unsuspecting subjects in normal social situations. Testing was originally conducted on the West Coast. In 1961, a similar testing program was initiated on the East Coast.

In 1963, the Agency's Inspector General learned of this program and questioned the propriety of testing on unsuspecting subjects. The Inspector General reported that in a number of instances, test subjects became ill for hours or days following the application of a drug. There was one reported incident of hospitalization, the details of which could not be learned by the Commission because of the destruction of the records and the unavailability of witnesses.

The Commission did learn, however, that on one occasion during the early phases of this program (in 1953), LSD was administered to an employee of the Department of the Army without his knowledge while he was attending a meeting with CIA personnel working on the drug project.

Prior to receiving the LSD, the subject had participated in discussions where the testing of such substances on unsuspecting subjects was agreed to in principle. However, this individual was not made aware that he had been given LSD until about 20 minutes after it had been administered. He developed serious side effects and was sent to New York with a CIA escort for psychiatric treatment. Several days later, he jumped from a tenth floor window of his room and died as a result.²

The General Counsel ruled that the death resulted from "circumstances arising out of an experiment undertaken in the course of his official duties for the United States Government," thus ensuring his survivors of receiving certain death benefits. Reprimands were issued by the Director of Central Intelligence to two CIA employees responsible for the incident.

² There are indications in the few remaining Agency records that this individual may have had a history of emotional instability.

As a result of the Inspector General's study of this drug program in 1963, the Agency devised new criteria for testing substances on human subjects. All further testing of potentially dangerous substances on unsuspecting subjects was prohibited. Between 1963 and 1967, some testing of drugs continued, but only on voluntary subjects, primarily inmate volunteers at various correctional institutions. In 1967, all projects involving behavior-influencing drugs were terminated.

It is presently the policy at CIA not to test any substance on unsuspecting persons. Current practice in all experimentation is to adhere strictly to Department of Health, Education and Welfare guidelines concerning the use of human subjects, and all current CIA contracts carry language to that effect.

2. The Testing of Communications Intercept Systems Within the United States

Monitoring of foreign conversations is an important aspect of modern intelligence collection. Several new systems developed by the Agency for use overseas have been tested in the United States. In the process of this testing, private communications, presumably between United States citizens, have sometimes been overheard.

In many cases conversations were overheard but not recorded. In other cases, conversations were recorded for evaluation purposes but the recordings were kept only until the testing was concluded, at which time they were destroyed.

No evidence was found that any such tests were ever directed against persons for the purpose of learning the content of any communication. In most instances, the speakers were never identified. Nor was any evidence found that the Agency disseminated or ever attempted to exploit the contents of any intercepted or recorded conversations.

3. Other Testing Within the United States

Various branches of the Science and Technology Directorate are involved in the testing of other new devices and procedures such as chemical warfare detection equipment, new means of measuring physiological responses in humans and photographic interpretation systems.

Conclusions

It was clearly illegal to test potentially dangerous drugs on unsuspecting United States citizens.

The testing of equipment for monitoring conversations should not be directed against unsuspecting persons in the United States. Most of the testing undertaken by the Agency could easily have

been performed using only Agency personnel and with their full knowledge.

Recommendation (27)

In accordance with its present guidelines, the CIA should not again engage in the testing of drugs on unsuspecting persons.

Recommendation (28)

Testing of equipment for monitoring conservations should not involve unsuspecting persons living within the United States.

B. Other Selected Activities of the Science and Technology Directorate

1. The Manufacture and Use of Documents

The Agency maintains a capability for producing and providing to its agents and operatives a wide range of "alias" credentials. Most such documents purport to be of foreign origin. Some, however, are documents ordinarily issued by other branches of the U.S. government or by private United States businesses and organizations.

Among the United States "alias" documents furnished from time to time to Agency personnel and operatives are Social Security cards, bank cards, professional cards, club cards, alumni association cards and library cards. The Agency has recently stopped producing alias driver's licenses, credit cards and birth certificates, unless needed in a particularly sensitive operation and approved in advance by the Deputy Director of Operations.

While the Agency does not produce false United States passports, it has in the past altered a few by the addition of entries to evidence travel which had not actually occurred.

The purpose of alias documents is to facilitate cover during CIA operations. These documents are not "backstopped," i.e., manufactured with the consent and knowledge of the company or organization whose card is being manufactured. They are useful only as flash identification. Only the Social Security Administration has been told that the Agency is manufacturing its cards.

The Commission found no evidence that any Agency employee has ever used false documentation of this kind to his personal advantage.

Conclusions

Alias credentials are necessary to facilitate CIA covert operations overseas, but the strictest controls and accountability must be main-

tained over the use of such documents; recent guidelines established by the Deputy Director for Operations appear adequate to prevent abuse in the future.

2. Overhead Photography of the United States

In 1966, the Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology commenced a formal study on the use of aerial intelligence photography for civilian purposes. This study was commenced with the approval of the Director of Central Intelligence and in cooperation with the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Interior, the Agency for International Development and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

In 1967 the study resulted in the establishment of a steering committee in the office of the President's Science Adviser, with membership from the United States Geological survey, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and other interested civilian agencies. This committee was designed to act as an interface, by which the intelligence community could assure the public that it was not involved in selecting or determining the end use of its aerial photographs of domestic areas.

The Director of Central Intelligence agreed to provide photography to civilian agencies pursuant to the steering committee's request, provided there would be no interference with intelligence needs nor any significant cost increase.³

The photographs of the United States actually turned over to civilian agencies were taken primarily for military mapping purposes. Since that time, aerial photography systems have been used for such diverse civilian projects as mapping, assessing natural disasters such as hurricane and tornado damage and the Santa Barbara, California, oil spill, conducting route surveys for the Alaska pipeline, conducting national forest inventories, determining the extent of snow cover in the Sierras to facilitate the forecast of runoff and detecting crop blight in the Plains States. Limited equipment testing and performance evaluation is also conducted, using photographs taken of areas within the United States.

In 1973, the Office of the President's Science Adviser was abolished, and the special steering committee controlling the civilian use of aerial photography ceased to exist. Efforts are underway to establish a new committee to undertake this activity.⁴ In the meantime, the Director of Central Intelligence has entered into agreements with several

³ While the Agency engineered and developed most of the operational aerial photography systems, it is no longer responsible for the operational aspects of those systems.

⁴ The President has recently announced his intention to reestablish the Office of the President's Science Adviser.

federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, which permits them access to classified overhead photography.

Conclusions

The Commission can find no impropriety in permitting civilian use of aerial photography systems.⁵ The economy of operating a single aerial photography program dictates the use of these photographs for appropriate civilian purposes.

Recommendation (29)

A civilian agency committee should be reestablished to oversee the civilian uses of aerial intelligence photography in order to avoid any concerns over the improper domestic use of a CIA-developed system.

⁵ It is arguable that at least one present use of aerial photography is law enforcement in nature and outside the scope of proper CIA activity. This use involves photography with infrared sensors to detect areas of high concentrations of industrial pollutants in the air and in various bodies of water. Data obtained from this activity could conceivably be used as the basis for a criminal action brought under environmental legislation. The Commission believes, however, that the legislators, when they prohibited the CIA from engaging in law enforcement activities in their 1947 enactment of the National Security Act, could not have contemplated the systems presently in use. It should be noted that the CIA did turn down a request from the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Unit of the Treasury Department to help locate moonshine stills in the North Carolina mountains using infrared photography, on the ground that such activity was law enforcement in nature.