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U. S. News Background: An Efficient Intelligence Service Begins to Take Shape

Gen. Smith Ends Feuds

Makes Progress in Setting Up
Co-ordinated Intelligence Unit

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WASHINGTON.

AMERICA'S intelligence services are beginning to make sense for the first time in a long time—meaning that they are co-operating instead of competing—and the betterment is due in large part to the efforts of Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, a military man with a civilian mind.

This fact and numerous items of supporting evidence emerge from a study of the services, which only six months ago were bogged down by intermural differences which made some critics think that some services were more interested in building their own particular "empires" than in working together for the common good.

One point of particular interest in a capital, where jealousy and back-stabbing are common, is that men in all branches of intelligence agree that the lion's share of the credit belongs to Gen. Smith, who was appointed by President Truman as head of the Central Intelligence Agency last Aug. 13 and took over actively on Oct. 1.

Gen. Smith, former commander of the 1st Army and former Ambassador to Moscow, succeeded Rear Adm. Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, who caught some Congressional barbs on the grounds that the C. I. A., under him failed to warn of the impending attack on South Korea, by Korean Communists.

The rank of the two men—the senior of all lieutenant generals and a very junior rear admiral—has a part in the picture and will be discussed.

The problem that confronted Gen. Smith can best be illustrated by a description of the complexity of the over-all intelligence set-up and the estimates the agencies must make as to how best to protect the country's secrets — and how best to keep informed on what other countries are doing.

Estimates made for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for example, are arrived at by the Joint Intelligence Committee. This is made up of the heads of Army, Navy and Air Force intelligence branches, plus the Marines. Over-all national intelligence estimates are co-ordinated by the Central Intelligence Agency but involve the help of the Inter-Departmental Intelligence Advisory Committee. This committee includes State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the C. I. A. and the Atomic Energy Commission, in addition to armed services agencies.

So—"all" that Gen. Smith had to do was to be sure that the gears of the machinery of the agencies meshed and that some of the reasons for criticism were removed.

HOW much has been done up to now is shown by a comparison of the situation of today with that of last summer. A survey made last summer for the New York Herald Tribune by Robert S. Bird and Ogden R. Reid raised certain points. Some of these points—and today's comments on them—follow:

Last summer:—"It is the duty of C. I. A. under the direction of the National Security Council to correlate and evaluate intelligence touching national security. This has not been done and is not being done, except in haphazard fashion."

Today.—"Done."

Last summer:—"A small high-level group, freed of all other duties save that of carefully collating and evaluating all material on the national security, was recommended by the Hoover commission to fill the gap. But after two years nothing has been done."

Today.—"Done."

Last summer:—"Up to now the services still withhold planning and operational information from C. I. A. The Joint Chiefs of Staff refuse to turn over to C. I. A. any of their 2,000 supersecret strategic papers that are the nation's over-all military planning, and would be the blueprints for action in countless different areas. Our operational secrets are as much hidden from C. I. A. in some cases as those of the Kremlin."

Today.—This is no longer true. The C. I. A. gets all the intelligence information it seeks from the military services. Evaluation of such data is a joint job but final responsibility and final say-so in the case of dispute rests with the C. I. A.

Last summer:—"The national security should give C. I. A. the power to collate and co-ordinate all relevant intelligence, and should delineate clear lines of intelligence responsibility among the services and the State Department."

Today.—"Done."

Last summer:—"C. I. A. should be headed by a civilian or a retired service officer . . . strong enough to be a catalytic agent between the State and Defense Departments and command the respect of them and of Congress and the President."

Today.—Gen Smith is the man.

Last summer:—"C. I. A. should weed out any of its second-rate personnel acquired during its rapid expansion."

Today.—This is being done.

THE beginning of the story actually dates back to February, 1948, when Sidney W. Souers, then executive secretary of the National Security Council, was asked by the President to review what had been done in C. I. A. in the way of co-ordinating and evaluating intelligence. A three-man committee worked for a year on the problem and came up with a report making many recommendations for the correlation of intelligence.

The committee was made up of

Allen W. Dulles, William H. Jackson and Mathias F. Correa. Its conclusions were accepted by the N. S. C. but were never implemented, reportedly because they went directly counter to the principles on which Adm. Hillenkoetter was running C. I. A. at the time.

Adm. Hillenkoetter's policy, so his critics said, was to "empire-build" for C. I. A. at every opportunity. It resulted in duplication, and in competition and friction with other agencies.

Gen. Smith has made a major change in C. I. A.'s philosophy on the procuring, processing and distribution of intelligence. He took the view that if intelligence was being inadequately reported or neglected in one or other of the departmental spheres, it was not C. I. A.'s job to rush in and repair omission. For example, if field reports on North African political matters were inadequate, he would not throw ten C. I. A. men into the area; he would ask the State Department, in whose hands this type of intelligence lies, to get busy and deliver.

One effect of Gen. Smith's policy has been to sharpen up the intelligence of the various departments and give them a new sense of responsibility and obligation. The "new look" in C. I. A. has been reflected in the work and attitude of the other departments and the morale of their people has gone up enormously.

In justice to Adm. Hillenkoetter, it should be pointed out that there is a great gap between a junior rear-admiral and the senior lieutenant general of the United States Army: that Gen. Smith had infinitely more experience in the field; that his tour of duty in Russia was particularly valuable; and, finally, that he is a man of unusual mental powers and administrative ability.

ONE of the major changes introduced by Gen. Smith—one that had been long advocated by State's intelligence, and recommended by the three-man board—was the very tricky matter of how far to go in recommendations.

Previously the intelligence bulletin had been just that. One read it and formed his own conclusions about the line of action which should be followed as a result.

Gen. Smith took the view that the bare statement of fact was not sufficient. It was decided to point out the consequences of alternative courses of action which could be taken. This meant that intelligence was being put on the table for consideration, and dealt along with non-intelligence factors. It became something on which a decision had to be taken, not something to be shuffled from incoming box to outgoing box.

His concepts of how intelligence should be obtained, how it should be handled and how far intelligence agencies should go in recommendations, were shared completely by the State Department, and Gen. Smith's move naturally made for good understanding and co-operation between the two agencies, as well as between them and the other intelligence agencies.

There has now been set up a small, high-level group: Mr. Jackson, who is Gen. Smith's deputy; William L. Langer, historian, and Calvin B. Hoover, economist. The group concerns itself solely with the collation and evaluation of intelligence. It gets together on a round-the-clock system of alerting. Defense can give them a problem on a twenty-four-hour basis for fast and thorough evaluation.

Special attention is being given at the moment to the problem of over-compartmentalization, which in the past was so rigid that the right hand didn't know what the left was doing. Psychological warfare is being correlated in with intelligence.

Getting rid of "deadwood" inherited from war-time outfits has proved very difficult, but it is being done gradually.

For one thing, the prestige of Gen. Smith, and the quiet work which has been going around about the reorganization of C. I. A. under him, has had the effect of attracting good men.

ITEM—Relations with the Allies are very much better as they gain increased confidence in our security. Co-operation is good, and we have great confidence in their security.

Item—The problem of "cover" for agents abroad has not yet been solved. They are very conspicuous abroad, chiefly because they have not solved the problem of how to account to suspicious souls for the amount of time and money they have on their hands.

The new esteem in which the C. I. A. is held is illustrated by two comments, one from a Navy source and one from an Army source:

Navy—"The three directors of service intelligence are constantly in touch with one another. They weigh together estimates of what this intelligence means. To do this they must know each other very well, respect one another, and act in mutual confidence. And that is exactly what is happening. This basically sound working relationship still gives them all a wide and safe latitude for presenting differences of opinion, arguing over important points, and even pounding on the table to expound an honest conviction. The important thing is that they operate within what might very well be called a contract of mutual responsibility."

"No schematic diagram can give any idea of the man-hours, the personal ties, the varied backgrounds, or the relentless drive re-

hind national intelligence estimates. Gen. Smith has brought with him an energy, mind, experience and sense of co-operation that are well-nigh extraordinary. He has selected highly competent deputies and built up a board of widely experienced advisers. United States intelligence, from the service level on up through the national level, is being relentlessly pursued and closely co-ordinated."

Army—"The military services and the C. I. A. carry on a co-ordinated and thorough intelligence 'milking' of all business men, engineers, refugees, etc., with recent residence in Russia and Iron Curtain countries for all available 'background information' on activities there. A painstaking study and analyzing of all available trade and commerce data on Russia also is carried on constantly in accordance with the intelligence axiom that any country in the world can be 'undressed' through this method by anybody with the know-how and patience to stick at the task.

"All three services are working together and with the C. I. A. in a harmonious and co-ordinated intelligence program for which C. I. A. has final responsibility and there is constant liaison with the State Department and vice versa."