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By Peter Edson

Sifting Intelligence



IF the Russians decided to throw their navy and air force into the Korean war against the United Nations, would we have ample advance warning?

If the Russian army decided to move against Iran, would leaders of the anti-Communist countries know what to expect?

If the Balkan satellite countries were ordered to attack Yugoslavia, would Marshal Tito be given proper support in time?

These are just a few of the key questions with which the Government's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is concerned daily. They are the same sort of questions which the U. S. faced before Pearl Harbor and before the North Korean attack last June.

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THERE was great debate after both these events over whether our intelligence services gave adequate warning. Army and Navy intelligence services both maintained that they had furnished adequate information. The fault was said to lie in failure to evaluate the information correctly.

It was to remedy this defect that CIA was created by Congress three years ago. That the defect was not entirely corrected is evident from what happened in Korea. But the argument still rages in Washington over whether the Korean attack caught us off guard because of an intelligence failure or a command failure.

When Lieut. Gen. Walter B. Smith was made CIA

director last October, one of his principal moves to strengthen the organization was to improve its system for making estimates of intelligence reports. He created an Office of Estimates. Its head is now Dr. William Langer, Harvard and Columbia University professor and wartime chief of analysis in Office of Strategic Services.

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DR. LANGER'S staff is small. Its function is, briefly, to receive intelligence reports from Army, Navy, Air Force, State Department, FBI, Atomic Energy Commission and other Government agencies, as well as from CIA's own staff. These reports are pulled together and evaluated. Then a report is prepared which will give the President, the Department of Defense and the State Department the information they need to have in order to make their policy decisions for diplomatic or military moves.

Sometimes, of course, the estimators assigned to any "task force" cannot agree on what interpretation to make of their intelligence. The problem then passes to the Intelligence Advisory Committee. This group is headed by Gen. Smith. Its other members are W. Park Armstrong Jr., of State Department's intelligence research and the heads of intelligence for the three armed services: Maj. Gen. Alexander R. Bolling, Army G-2; Rear Admiral Felix Johnson, chief of ONI—Office of Naval Intelligence; Maj. Gen. Charles P. Cabell, A-2 for the Air Force.

The reports are constantly revised and brought up to date. And by this system, Gen. Smith believes that the Government is now equipped to avoid the intelligence breakdowns of Pearl Harbor and Korea.