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Today and Tomorrow

By Walter Lippmann

Mr. Katzenbach's Committee

Speaking for the three-member committee appointed by the President to inquire into the CIA affair, Mr. Katzenbach said last week that the committee would be able to report its conclusions and recommendations early in March. He went on to say that in the interval



Lippmann

it should be realized that the CIA has been acting according to the law and has been following national policies laid down by the highest officials of the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Administrations. Although in the first moment of panic, some members of the Administration dissociated themselves from the secret operation, there was never any question that it was authorized. Katzenbach said also that the men directing the program have been far-sighted and courageous Americans. I believe this to be true, I regard Mr. Helms as an admirable Director of the CIA. Many of the men working these programs have been and still are my personal friends, and for me at least there is no question about their character or their motives.

What I find somewhat dis-

turbing in Mr. Katzenbach's letter is the last paragraph. There he sounds as if he thought that the issue is whether the Central Intelligence Agency is "indispensable to the security of the Nation." That is not the issue at all. No one in his senses who knows anything about international politics and intelligence work can have any doubt that in a world of armed powers, it is most necessary to know as much as possible about their plans, capabilities and intentions. The question before us today is whether the activities of the CIA, which are outside genuine intelligence, that is to say its black propaganda, its interventionist operations, its "dirty tricks" are truly in the national interest.

THIS QUESTION is not answered by crying out that the CIA is an organization of patriots who are on our side in the conflict with foreign powers. That is a good way to decide which football team to cheer but it is no way to think and talk about the most serious activities in the United States Government. In the real world, rather than in that of patriotic slogans and emotions, the CIA has carried on a number of secret activities which, once they were uncovered, have had a disastrous outcome. Instead of enabling some students,

some scholars, some journalists to argue the American case abroad, the disclosure of the secret payments to some has cast suspicion on any American who goes abroad. Can there be any doubt that an activity which has such a result is a great failure.

What Mr. Katzenbach's committee of three should not fail to consider is why these actions, carried on by able and patriotic men, have been self-defeating. The reason, I venture to argue, is that black propaganda, secret interventions, intrigue and subordination are incompatible with our open society. They are the methods of a totalitarian state and without a totalitarian environment of secrecy and terror, they are unworkable. This most unpleasant and embarrassing affair is the proof that an open society cannot act successfully like a totalitarian society.

IF, INSTEAD of fighting the problem presented by the disclosures, the Katzenbach committee seeks to solve the problem, it will begin with the demonstrated fact that the totalitarian method has not worked here at home. Then the committee will have a foundation on which to build in order to restore the international credit of the United States.

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