

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CIA FROM INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AGENCY INTO COVERT ACTIONS, 1947-1953

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Abstract

There are many studies and books on the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) which have been focused mainly on the covert actions of this agency, occurring through the years in many countries, but why this agency was transformed into becoming the institution we know today, has received little, if not at all, attention, from scholars and researchers. A number of major and minor myths have grown up during the last decades, years about the CIA and the craft of intelligence. Sometimes these myths have grown out of news stories or books purposely launched to “flush” out the facts, or from a lack of understanding regarding intelligence. Allen Dulles, the CIA director from 1953-1961, wrote, “It is hardly reasonable to expect proper understanding and support for intelligence work if it is only the insiders, a few people within the executive and legislative branches, who know anything whatever about the CIA. Others continue to draw their knowledge from the so-called ‘inside stories’ by writers who have never been on the inside.” The purpose of this paper is to analyze the establishment and transformation of the CIA from intelligence gathering to covert action during the beginning of the Cold War. Covert action has been a unique aspect of America’s international engagement during the Cold War and a practice that has done more than anything else to define the public image of the CIA. The CIA’s covert actions were numerous, therefore this study will examine in detail only certain operations and events which led to a slow and gradual transformation of the Agency from its initial purpose and some which were in violation of the CIA charter. This paper will present analysis on the impact which the US Presidents had in the Agency’s framework; their support for the Intelligence technological improvement; their decision-making in the CIA’s covert actions and the legality of such activities. The main primary sources are taken from the hearings before congressional committees, memoirs of former CIA directors and operators, presidents, analytical books from people on the inside and outside, defenders and critics of the Agency, so that we could present a fair analysis on the subject.

Keywords: CIA, OSS, General Donovan, Roosevelt, Allen Dulles, Harry Truman, covert, action, US Presidents, National Security Council, DCI, Italy, Korean War, Cold War.

FROM OSS TO CIA

The need for a strong and competent intelligence agency became apparent after December 7th, 1941, when, despite a number of warnings, Pearl Harbour was surprised by the Japanese attack. It was obvious that the country's old-fashioned, decentralized intelligence system, which could not pick out the "significant sounds" from the background noises, was disastrously inadequate.

President Franklyn D. Roosevelt had met the need for coordinated intelligence in part by creating the wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS) under Major General William J. Donovan. America's wartime Office of Strategic Services, which was formed in October 1941, was a vast and powerful activist intelligence organization which was an outgrowth of an earlier, much smaller agency known as the Office of Co-ordination of Information. As a functional organization the OSS established the primary guidelines which its peacetime successor, the Central Intelligence Agency, was to follow.

The Office of Strategic Services was originally conceived as a civilian agency. William J. Donovan and US World War II President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, envisaged the OSS as a type of intelligence-gathering, world-wide US government agency under the jurisdiction of the War Department, modelled after the prestigious Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which would have perhaps been satisfactory except that in time of war, civilians, even the highly mobile and skilled ones which would serve the OSS, would be totally conspicuous and therefore handicapped, in a world of uniforms.

President Roosevelt and General Donovan persevered in their efforts to maintain the civilian status of the OSS, but regardless of this, a gradual and inevitable process of militarization took over. There were members of the OSS who deplored the militarization, but when the United States declared war on the Axis powers and General Donovan appeared in uniform, tacit acceptance within the organization was unanimous. Wars were not fought by civilians; they might be supported by them, but only people in uniforms fought them, and whatever else was envisaged for the OSS in its earliest days, it was not organized to become another non-combatant police establishment. It was created to abet conflict, clandestine, covert, secret war, but still war.¹

With the war won and the orthodox armed forces going through the customary reversions, the OSS, with no such precedent, did not revert. It had no basic organization to revert to. It was entirely war-born. As long as President Roosevelt lived, (he died one month and four days before the German surrender in Europe in 1945) General Donovan's agency was secure against encroachment by the armed services.

¹ Paine, Luran. "The CIA at Work." Transatlantic Arts, 1977. P.11

However, the OSS did not enjoy the same relationship with Roosevelt's successor in the White House, President Harry Truman, whose view was basically that there was no longer any need for an Office of Strategic Services. He seemed also to concur with the chiefs of the armed services that espionage should be a part of the military establishment, and that for all else the FBI would be adequate.

General Donovan argued for the continued existence of the OSS against the beliefs of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Congressional committees and others. He contended that a reversion to pre-war status of the US Intelligence was unthinkable. He said time and again that what was needed was an independent agency, of civilian status, separate from army, navy, or air force control, to function in peacetime as an intelligence organization whose responsibility should be the accumulation of intelligence. Donovan also sought to persuade President Harry S. Truman of the importance of its liaison with the British Secret Intelligence Service and of the danger of losing access to British intelligence.

Truman's mind however was already made up against the establishment of a post-war foreign intelligence agency. He signed the Executive Order 9621, which wound up the OSS. When Donovan finally resigned, the OSS was taken over by the War Department. Its demise was subsequently quite rapid. The name was changed to "Office of Strategic Services Unit - War Department" and later it was changed again and became known as the "Central Intelligence Group - War Department." On January 22nd, 1946, President Truman established the "National Intelligence Authority," composed of the secretaries of state, of war and of the navy. Its function was to plan, develop and co-ordinate all intelligence activities.

In 1947 the Cold War began in earnest. On March 12th, Truman appeared before a joint session of Congress and asked for \$400 million to help save Greece and Turkey from the Communist threat. "Containment" of the Soviet threat became for the next forty years the basis of American foreign policy. The onset of the Cold War led to the proposal for the establishment of a central intelligence agency.

On February 26th, 1947, a bill was sent to Congress, which, with a few amendments, became law on July 26th that same year as the National Security Act. The act created the National Security Council (NSC), and also established the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "for the purpose of co-ordinating the intelligence activities of the several Government departments and agencies in the interest of national security." The director of the CIA held the additional title of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI)

with authority, in principle but never fully in practice, over the rest of the foreign intelligence community.²

It was the National Security Act which breathed life into an independent Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), making it an adjunct of the executive branch of the United States government. Its duties were defined about as well as it was possible to define the functions of an organization whose purpose was to collect intelligence, largely through indefinable and unorthodox methods.³

The CIA was to advise the National Security Council. It was to evaluate information, which had a bearing upon national defense or national commitments, and it was to co-operate with other US intelligence organizations. It was not to participate in the formulation of policy.

The National Security Act did enable the U.S. to develop a large, modern, and often impressive intelligence service. It also opened the door to abuses which were to startle the country upon their disclosure a generation later. These abuses did not come about automatically. When the Cold War reached a seemingly alarming stage some months later, the NSC authorized covert operations. In doing so, it ushered in a new phase in which the CIA was no longer content to report and analyze events abroad but was to try also to influence them on behalf of American interests.⁴

Section 102 placed full responsibility for the CIA actions, which might be considered as beyond the traditional intelligence function, at the door of the National Security Council, but, since the gentleman residing at the White House was senior to all members of the Council, it was the President of the United States who had *carte blanche*. The CIA involvements and undertakings were ordered by the NSC. They were sanctioned by the Secretary of State, the Director of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, the Secretary of Defense, the Vice President of the United States, key members of Congress, all of whom, in this area, were subservient to the President.⁵

The most important parts of the National Security Act's dealings with the CIA are dealt with in the Title I, "Co-ordination for National Security - Central Intelligence Agency,"⁶ a most significant heading. Perhaps the most important duty of the CIA, and its head, the director of Central Intelligence, was the co-ordination of the total intelligence efforts of the United States.

² Andrew, Christopher. "For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush." (Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995) pp. 169-170.

³ Paine, Luran, p. 17.

⁴ Donovan, Robert J. "Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S Truman, 1945-1948." (New York: W-W-Norton & Company-Inc, 1977) pp. 308-309.

⁵ Ibid, pp. 18-19.

⁶ National Security Act of 1947. July 26th, 1947. Title 1, Section 101. Source: U.S. Senate. Hearings before the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. First Session, Volume 7, December 4 and 5, 1975 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976) Appendix B, p. 211.

The initial provisions of the law provided for the appointment of a director of Central Intelligence by the President of the United States with the advice and consent of the Senate, and specified that such appointees might come from active or retired commissioned officers of the armed services or from civilian life. This provision was amended by Congress in 1953 to provide for a deputy director and stated that at no time should both positions be occupied by military personnel.

Section 102 (d) spelled out the "raison d'être" of the CIA, under the rather general heading and not too clear wording, as follows: "For the purpose of coordinating the intelligence activities of the several Government departments and agencies in the interest of national security, it shall be the duty of the Agency, under the direction of the National Security Council ...".⁷ The reason that this clause has caused confusion rests in the first five words, "For the purpose of coordinating ...". Many of those who believed that the CIA had too much power, or did things it should not have done, claimed that this clause showed the intent of Congress that the CIA should have only coordinated the activities of the other agencies and should not have been engaged in collection or action itself. The balance of this sub-section would seem to belie this contention.⁸

The first provision provided that the agency was to advise the NSC concerning such intelligence activities of the government as concerned national security. This meant that it reported on information, and presumably operations, to the NSC, and that it was *the* voice of intelligence to the policy makers. Allen Dulles wrote that the Act of 1947 was "an openly acknowledged arm of the executive branch of government, although, of course, it had many duties of a secret nature." Furthermore, Dulles argued that the structural plan and the broad scheme of the CIA were in a sense "unique." It was intended "to fill the gaps in the existing intelligence structure without displacing or unduly competing with other existing US intelligence units in the Departments of State and Defense."⁹ Another feature of CIA's structure, according to Dulles, which did not come about all at once but was the result of "gradual mergers which experience showed to be practical and efficient,"¹⁰ was the incorporation of all clandestine activities.

In Section 102 of the Act, it was further stated that the CIA should be authorized "to perform such other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security as the National Security Council may from time to time direct."¹¹ This was the key part of the Act, Section 102, responsible for so much which subsequently created

⁷ National Security Act of 1947. Section 102 (d), p. 213 of the source.

⁸ Kirkpatrick Jr, Lyman B. *The Real CIA: An Insider's View of the Strengths and Weaknesses of Our Government's most Important Agency* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968) p. 78.

⁹ Dulles, Allen. P. 50.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 51.

¹¹ National Security Act of 1947. 102 d (5), p. 213 of the source.

the furores in the United States and abroad. It was also, in the way it was worded, a tacit admission that there were definite "indefinables".

Congress had accepted the agency as a coordinating, producing, and operating agency. It also knew it was authorizing foreign espionage and counter-espionage, and it certainly provided considerable freedom of action in additionally authorizing "such other functions and duties" as the NSC might direct. At the same time, Congress was aware of the pioneer character of the legislation and fearful of spawning a Gestapo, it therefore denied the agency any police or internal security functions.¹² According to Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, in an atmosphere of Cold War tensions, the Congress allowed itself to be persuaded by the intelligence professionals. With the passage of the National Security Act, it allowed the new agency special exemptions from the normal congressional reviewing process, and these exemptions were expanded two years later by the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949.¹³ According to Senator Frank Church however, "the legislative history of the 1947 Act failed to indicate that Congress anticipated the CIA would engage in covert political warfare abroad."¹⁴ Tyrus G. Fain observed that "the language of the 1947 Act did not expressly authorize the conduct of covert action, and Congress apparently did not intend to grant such authority."¹⁵

Nowhere in the 1947 Act, according to the final report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations in 1976 known as the Church Committee, was the CIA explicitly empowered to collect intelligence or intervene secretly in the affairs of other nations. But the elastic phrase, "such other functions," was used by successive presidents to move the Agency into espionage, covert action, paramilitary operations, and technical intelligence collection. Often conceived as having granted significant peacetime powers and flexibility to the CIA and the NSC, the National Security Act actually legislated that authority to the President.¹⁶

Loch K. Johnson noted that the executive branch included the catchall phrase in its draft of the 1947 Act to allow for the possibility of imaginative options which might

¹² Troy, Thomas F. *Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency*. Frederick, Md.: Aletheia Books, 1981. P. 408.

¹³ Marchetti, Victor, John D. Marks, and Melvin L. Wulf. *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*. New York: Knopf, 1974. P. 8.

¹⁴ Church, Frank. *The Intelligence Community: Public Documents Series*, ed Tyrus G. Fain (London: R.R. Bowker Company, 1977) p. XX.

¹⁵ Fain, Tyrus G. *Development of the Intelligence Community*. The Intelligence Community, p 12.

¹⁶ United States Senate. *Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities*. Foreign and Military Intelligence. Frank Church, Chairman, Book I (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976) p. 21.

arise in the future, and Congress gave its approval, along with the necessary funds in the coming years, with few questions asked.¹⁷

The transformation of the Agency from intelligence gathering to covert action was a gradual one. Despite the ambiguity of the functions set out by the Act of 1947, the main reason for the transformation was the Cold War and its unusual circumstances, which led the executive and the legislative branch to encourage the CIA into covert action

The term "covert action" may be defined as intervention by one state in the internal affairs of another for the purpose of extending political and economic control through means which are not visible or acknowledged.¹⁸ Truman never intended the CIA to do more than collect all the available information and to present it to the president. In his memoirs he clearly mentioned the purpose of the CIA; "The other valuable agencies created by the act were a Central Intelligence Agency under the Security Council, to correlate and evaluate intelligence activities and data ..."¹⁹ He did not intend the CIA to operate as an international agency engaged in covert activities, yet it was he who shaped the modern United States intelligence community and authorized the Agency to engage in covert activities.

ITALY AND THE KOREAN WAR

The earliest covert action authorized by Truman was prompted by fear of a Communist victory in the Italian elections of April 1948. The first numbered document issued by the National Security Council, NSC 1/1 of November 14th, 1947 warned that "The Italian Government, ideologically inclined toward Western democracy, is weak and is being subjected to continuous attack by a strong Communist Party." The NSC recommended, in addition to public support for the beleaguered Italian government, a program to "actively combat Communist propaganda in Italy by an effective U.S. information program and by all other practicable means, including the use of unvouchered funds." Truman approved NSC 1/1 on November 24th. On December 14th, the President signed NSC 4/A giving responsibility for "psychological warfare" to the CIA. A week later, the agency set up the Special Procedures Group (SPG), which

¹⁷ Johnson, Loch K. *America's secret power: The CIA in a democratic society*. Oxford University Press on Demand, 1989.

¹⁸ Kumar, Satish, p. 2.

¹⁹ Truman, Harry S. *Years of Trial and Hope, Memoirs by Harry S. Truman. 1946-1952. Volume II*, (New York: A Signet Book, The New American Library, 1965) p. 69.

laundered over \$10 million from captured Axis funds for use in the Italian election campaign.²⁰

Some of the SPG's laundered millions were secretly handed over to the Italian Prime Minister, Alcide de Gasperi, to help finance the campaign of his Christian Democratic party. Other millions went on media campaigns to spread black propaganda against the Communists and extol the virtues of their opponents. Truman took a personal interest in both overt and covert attempts to support the Christian Democrats and defeat the Communists. Despite equally active Soviet involvement in the elections, the Christian Democrats won 307 of the 574 seats. The defeat of the Communists at the polls is historically viewed by the CIA not only as their first bust also as one of their most outstandingly successful covert operations.

The apparent success of covert action against the Communists in Italy led to its rapid expansion. In May 1948, George F. Kennan, head of the State Department planning staff and the leading apostle of containment, proposed the creation of a permanent covert action group able to engage in far more than psychological warfare. A month later Truman signed NSC 10/2, ordering the creation within the CIA of the Office of Policy Co-ordination (OPC) to plan and engage in covert action.²¹ Later on however, it should be noted that Kennan became skeptical about such operations and the role of the intelligence in Soviet-American relations when he wrote "I myself have had the occasion to see instance after instance in which American intelligence authorities have mounted, or have attempted to mount, operations which have constituted, or would have constituted, a direct abuse not just of Soviet-American diplomatic relations in the formal sense but of the very possibilities for reaching a better understanding between the two governments."²²

Proceeding from the premise that the Soviet Union and its satellite countries were embarked on a program of 'vicious' covert activities 'to discredit and defeat the aims and activities of the United States and other Western powers,'²³ NSC 10/2 gave the highest sanction of the government to a plethora of covert operations: 'propaganda, economic warfare, preventative direct action including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation

²⁰ Andrew, Christopher, pp. 171-172.

²¹ NSC 10/2. June 18th, 1948. National Security Council Directive on Office of Special Projects. Section 1-3. Source: Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis. Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978) pp. 125-128.

²² Kennan, George F. The Cloud of Danger: Some Current Problems of American Foreign Policy, (London: Hutchinson & Co Ltd, 1978) p. 210.

²³ NSC 10/2, Section 1.

groups'.²⁴ The acquisition of these missions had a profound impact on the direction of the Agency and on its relative stature within the government. The initiation of covert operations did not originate within the CIA, but with senior U.S. officials, among them Secretary of War, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and George Kennan, Director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff.²⁵

NSC 10/2 also formally adopted the principle of "plausible deniability". Contrary to the maxim prominently displayed on Truman's desk, the buck, as far as covert action was concerned, was not to reach the Oval Office. Covert operations, Truman ordered, were to be "so planned and executed that any U.S. Government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if uncovered the U.S. Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them."²⁶ Yet, according to Gregory F. Treverton, plausible deniability had not protected presidents; what it had done was permit a looseness in the chain of command.²⁷ On many occasions one of the means of protecting the President from embarrassment was not to tell him about certain covert operations, at least formally. According to Bromely Smith, a former official in the National Security Council, the concept of "plausible denial" was taken in an almost literal sense: "The government was authorized to do certain things that the President was not advised of."²⁸

Truman was the first president to found a peacetime covert action agency. In August 1948 he approved NSC 20, authorizing guerrilla operations behind the Iron Curtain using Soviet émigrés recruited in the West. The preface to NSC 20, drafted by Kennan, claimed optimistically that, though "it is not our peacetime aim to overthrow the Soviet Government," covert action could create "circumstances and situations" that would make it difficult for the "present Soviet leaders ... to retain their power in Russia."²⁹

On January 31st, 1950, Truman directed his secretaries of state and defense to conduct a wide-ranging re-examination of objectives in peace and war. The result of that review was the NSC 68 of April 7th. NSC 68 interpreted the Cold War as an elemental struggle between the forces of Western light and Eastern darkness, between freedom and slavery. NSC 68 restated the doctrine of "containment" of the Soviet

²⁴ Saunders, Frances Stonor. *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Books, 2000) p. 39.

²⁵ United States Senate. *Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operation with Respect to Intelligence Activities*, 1976, p. 105.

²⁶ NSC 10/2, section 5.

²⁷ Treverton, Gregory F. *Covert Action. The CIA and the Limits of American Intervention in the Postwar World* (London: I.B.TAURIS & CO Ltd, Publishers, 1987) p. 5.

²⁸ United States Senate. *Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities*, 1976, p. 46.

²⁹ NSC 20. August 18th, 1948. *U.S. Objectives with Respect to Russia. Section 3 "Specific Aims"*. Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis. *Containment*, p. 190.

expansion and foresaw a major role of covert action within the Soviet bloc. Though it did not spell out this role in detail, it called for "intensification of ... operations by covert means in the fields of economic warfare and political and psychological warfare."³⁰ According to John Lewis Gaddis, the world crisis, as dangerous in its potential as anything confronted in World Wars I or II, rendered all American interests vital, all means affordable, and all methods justifiable.³¹ According to Senator Church, the roots of the covert operations grew out of the obsession with the Cold War. Every upheaval was likened to a pawn on a global chessboard, to be moved this way or that, by the two principal players. This led the CIA to plunge into a full range of covert activities, designed to counteract the competitive efforts of the KGB.³²

During 1949, covert operations within the Soviet bloc had started to take place in Poland, the Ukraine and Albania. The details of some of these operations and the work of the CIA with the émigrés are mentioned by Kim Philby in his autobiography *My Silent War*³³ and well described by Nicholas Bethel in *The Great Betrayal*.³⁴

An important event in the CIA's transformation was the Korean War. When the war broke out, the CIA came under attack at once, accused by the Truman administration of having failed to provide sufficient or proper warnings that the Soviet-backed North Koreans would consider open hostilities. According to Lauren Paine, the CIA's hard intelligence, gathered through its considerable Asiatic intelligence network, had been keeping US Commander General Douglas MacArthur and others, including President Truman, informed concerning a Communist Chinese troop accumulation along the Manchurian-Korean border for months before the Red Chinese struck.³⁵

With the outbreak of the war there was an immediate upheaval. The most important was the appointment of the new CIA director, General Walter Bedell Smith, who replaced Admiral Hillenkoetter. Bedell Smith was to establish three main directorates - Plans, Intelligence, and Administration.³⁶ He headed the CIA at a crucial

³⁰ NSC 68. April 14th, 1950. United States Objectives and Programs for National Security. Section 9, D 2, (7). Ibid, pp. 435-436.

³¹ Gaddis, John Lewis. *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) p. 95.

³² Church, Frank. *The Intelligence Community*, p. xxi.

³³ Philby, Kim. *Soviet spy*. In 1949, Philby was the SIS representative in Washington, as top British officer working in liaison with the CIA and FBI. He sat on Special Policy Committee directing the ill-fated Anglo-US attempts to infiltrate anti-Communist agents into Albania to topple the Enver Hoxha regime. He wrote about the operations in Albania and Ukraine in; *My Silent War. The Autobiography of a Spy* (London: Arrow Books, 2003) pp. 153-159.

³⁴ Bethel, Nicholas. *The Great Betrayal. The Untold Story of Kim Philby's Biggest Coup* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984.) Describes CIA involvement with the émigrés, giving them military training and financial support, for the purpose of overthrowing the regime of Enver Hoxha. Chapter 7. CIA prepares its men, p. 127-150, financial support, Chapter 8, p. 170.

³⁵ Paine, Lauren, p. 24.

³⁶ Freemantle, Brian. *CIA* (London: Michael Joseph/Rainbird, 1983) p. 31.

period in its history. The Korean War was the final blow needed to force the US to revitalize its defense establishment and to build a modern intelligence system.³⁷

The Korean War, which had generated the criticism and reorganization of the CIA, also aided the Agency. During the Korean War (1950-1953), the CIA personnel and budget increased spectacularly. OPC's personnel grew from 302 in 1949 to 2,812 (plus 3,142 overseas contact agents), operating from forty-seven foreign stations in 1952. Its budget skyrocketed during the same period from \$4.7 million to \$82 million. As the Korean battlefield stabilized in mid-1951, OPC moved increasingly into guerrilla warfare. Between April and December 1951 it trained and dispatched forty-four groups of Korean guerrillas behind enemy lines to harass Communist communication and supply lines from China.³⁸ The CIA hired spies, saboteurs, infiltrators, and in some instances, it also bought politicians, educators, North Korean defectors, and highly positioned professional people, all of whom aided the United Nations' war effort. With the end of the Korean War, the CIA's value as a competent agency was established.

The Korean War not only had an impact in the field of intelligence but also brought into being a new perception of the Cold War. It paved the way for future covert operations to take place over a wider geographical area. As Richard J. Aldrich wrote, "The wider impact of the Korean War cannot be overestimated. It sped up the militarisation of the Cold War and extended it from a largely European-Mediterranean conflict to a global confrontation. It threatened to turn the Cold War into a "hot" war."³⁹

PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN

It was the Truman presidency which shaped the United States' intelligence community. In 1946, he ordered the inauguration of the daily summary, forerunner of the president's daily brief, the first document seen each day by most of his successors. He promoted the National Security Act, which founded the CIA. He authorized the beginning, and during his second term, the rapid expansion of peacetime covert action by U.S. intelligence agencies. In addition, in 1952, as one of his final acts as president, he founded the National Security Agency.

Although Truman did not intend the CIA to be more than an intelligence agency, the Agency was empowered to challenge the KGB and use all its methods to prevent Soviet expansion and the spread of Communism. The loss of the nuclear monopoly and

³⁷ Kirkpatrick Jr, Lyman B., p. 121.

³⁸ Andrew, Christopher, p. 193.

³⁹ Aldrich, Richard J. *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence* (Woodstock & New York: The Overlook Press, 2002) p. 289.

the infiltration of Soviet spies such as Kim Philby, Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess at high levels of intelligence made the U.S. realize that, in the new epoch, the intelligence function and covert action could be successfully utilized to achieve goals, which armed invasion or intervention were unlikely to achieve as successfully.⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

The CIA was established as a result of the need for a strong intelligence agency to co-ordinate and gather intelligence. The National Security Act was ambiguous in determining the real nature of the CIA, which was under the command of the President and the NSC. Truman may not have wanted the Agency to get involved in covert action but the facts show that he was responsible for its transformation by signing NSC 4/A encouraging the CIA into psychological warfare. Subsequently he was to add his signature endorsing NSC 10/2 and NSC 20/2 which established the OPC, designed to plan and engage in covert action and guerrilla operations behind the Iron Curtain. NSC 68, composed and signed by the highest level of the government, including the President, demanded the intensification of covert action. It can therefore be established from the research presented in this first chapter that the transformation of the CIA from intelligence gathering to covert action was inevitable and emanated from the policymakers and not from within the Agency. During this period the CIA had special exemption from any Congressional reviewing process. Its operations in themselves were remarkably successful therefore the Agency did its job well. According to Ray S. Cline, 'the CIA got a lot of credit, which it only partly deserved, and much later was to get most of the blame when covert action program got out of hand,' as was seen in the later years 'blame that also largely belonged to the policymakers, not only to the instrument of covert action, the CIA.'⁴¹

⁴⁰ Paine, Lauren, p. 26.

⁴¹ Cline, Ray S. *The CIA Under Reagan, Bush and Casey: The Evolution of the Agency from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Washington: Acropolis Books, 1981) p. 126.

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