



Culture of Arrogance Hampers CIA

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Porter Goss has just resigned his post as director of the Central Intelligence Agency. His executive director, Kyle "Dusty" Foggo, is apparently under investigation. Goss' designated successor, Air Force Gen. Michael Hayden, faces a tough confirmation fight.

What is going on at our premier intelligence agency?

The Goss appointment, back in September 2004, was yet another political effort to deal with serial leaking of CIA classified information. Many agency analysts, both employed and retired, have been in veritable revolt against the general strategy of the war against terror - in particular, the

effort to depose Saddam Hussein and birth a democracy in his place. Somewhat quiet during the once-popular three-week victory over Saddam, CIA hands increasingly have been loudly assuring us that they were not responsible for someone else's messy three-year reconstruction in Iraq.

Paul Pillar, a national intelligence officer at the CIA from 2000 to 2005, publicly insisted that counterterrorism should not be a matter of war. Indeed, he wrote prolifically in the middle of the ongoing Iraq war that it was all a colossal mistake.

Retired CIA analyst Ray McGovern, who endlessly trumpets his former service, recently shouted down De-

fense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld at a public forum and has insisted that American foreign policy is captive to Israel.

Another former analyst, Michael Scheuer, wrote a scathing critique of the war against terror. Writing under the pseudonym Anonymous, Scheuer, while still employed at the agency, also voiced the similar refrain that Israel is the cause of many of our troubles in the Middle East.

Recently fired CIA analyst Mary McCarthy leaked classified information about purported agency detention centers to Dana Priest of *The Washington Post*, who won a Pulitzer Prize for the story.

The list of often-praised leakers and loud former and present CIA war-time critics goes on.

During the Cold War, suspicious liberals would often try to curb such CIA freelancing. They'd allege that its cowboy operatives made up their own rules, from Iran to Guatemala - or that after retirement they tended to rejoin the political ranks of the hard right.

Back then, the CIA's retort was that such insiders knew the real stakes involved in fighting global communism. Some of these misguided op-

eratives supposedly followed a higher calling and felt that the ends - our survival - often justified the means, of either breaking the law or becoming loud public hardliners.

Yet now liberals are sympathetic to this new generation of similarly self-appointed CIA lawbreakers and partisans. But intelligence analysts should never undermine the policy of their elected governments, either through unlawful leaks or posing as in-the-know loud public critics privy to classified information.

Instead CIA officers should do what they were hired to do before appointing themselves partisans - especially since their record at intelligence gathering and analysis has been pretty awful for a long time.

The United States, thanks in large part to a clueless CIA, has been unable to anticipate everything from the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and the fall of the Shah in Iran in 1979 to, more recently, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Then, of course, there was the failure in advance of September 11. In the last few years, the U.S. got wrong Saddam's weapons of mass destruction capability, while underestimating the extent of the WMD arsenal in Moammar Gadhafi's Libya.

So Gen. Hayden will have his hands full justifying an intelligence agency that is ever more political and ever less competent.

Remember that we already have intelligence agencies galore in the State Department and the individual branches of the military. We are also unsure whether a CIA simply replicates much of the also costly FBI, National Security Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency.

So, if appointed CIA director, Gen. Hayden's task should be either to merge the agency with another intelligence bureau or radically downsize it.

The problem is not just that the CIA consumes too much money, has too many employees and gathers too

much superfluous intelligence while missing the landmark events of the age. Or that too many analysts can't do their own assigned disinterested jobs. Or even that both Democrats and Republicans periodically try to rein the CIA in with their own political appointees when they suspect it has become openly hostile and insubordinate.

No, the deeper worry is that there has grown up at the CIA an entrenched enclave and an arrogant "we know best" attitude in which self-appointed moralists are often convinced that they can make up their own rules and code of conduct. Gen. Hayden will have to end that culture - or end the agency as we know it.

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